

THE GUMSHOE AT WAR

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SCENE ONE

Lights up on the inner room of a private detective's office. Backwards lettering on frosted glass. Two chairs, a desk, a sofa in the corner. CAL sits behind the desk, leaning back; across the desk sits EDNA, a shabbily, but neatly, dressed woman in her seventies.

EDNA  
You must be mistaken.

CAL  
I really don't think so.

EDNA  
You followed him?

CAL  
I did.

EDNA  
And you didn't see anything.

Cal picks up a notepad and consults his notes.

CAL  
Your husband leaves work around seven o'clock every day. Some days, he stops to get groceries. Some days, he takes the long way home through the park. On one occasion -- it was Tuesday -- he bought a sandwich at a delicatessen and sat on a bench eating it for about twenty minutes. He exchanged a few words with a man walking a dog.

EDNA  
What did they say?

CAL  
I couldn't hear it.

(returning to his notes)  
He has a regular newsstand that he visits mornings and evenings. It's run by a Russian with horrifying halitosis. Your husband is practically the only customer; it's a wonder they're still in business. He's back at the house by eight o'clock at the latest, and you generally have dinner ready for him.

EDNA

Generally?

CAL

On Thursday it was still in the oven when he got home.

EDNA

It was a roast. A roast takes time.

CAL

I'm sure it does. The point is, Mrs. Pokurski, I just don't see when your husband would have time to have an affair.

EDNA

Maybe he goes out at night.

CAL

He doesn't.

EDNA

How can you be sure? Did you stand watch all night?

CAL

Mrs. Pokurski, are you a heavy sleeper?

EDNA

Not anymore. My back troubles me something awful.

CAL

And does your husband snore?

EDNA

Like a foghorn.

CAL

Do you suppose you would notice if the snoring were to suddenly stop?

EDNA

Of course I would. I would assume he had died.

CAL

That's what I thought. He doesn't go out at night.

EDNA

Well, then, when does he see her?

CAL

Mrs. Pokurski, there *is* no her.

EDNA

But I'm absolutely certain! A wife knows these things. I'm one-hundred-percent certain that my husband is running around, and all I'm asking you to do is prove it!

CAL  
I've tried, Mrs. Pokurski. I really have.

EDNA  
I think you ought to try harder.

CAL  
I don't see what else I can do.

Pause.

CAL  
Mrs. Pokurski, do you know how much money you've spent on this investigation?

Slight pause.

EDNA  
(with dignity)  
I don't believe that's relevant.

CAL  
Close to thirty-five dollars now. Now, understand that from my point of view, you are the ideal client. You pay on time, your checks are good, you never threaten me with physical violence, and as far as I can tell you'll keep on employing me till kingdom come, regardless of how little result it has. You're the closest thing I'll ever have to a steady job, and the mercenary side of me would love to keep your business.

EDNA  
What is your point, Mr. Harvey?

CAL  
My point is, I'm acting against my better judgment when I tell you to save your money, go home to your husband, forget your suspicions, and get started on that roast.

EDNA  
It's well past dinner time.

CAL  
Okay, *tomorrow's* roast.

EDNA  
Tomorrow's Wednesday. We're having veal.

CAL  
Sounds delicious.

EDNA  
It will be. I make very good veal.

CAL  
I'm sure you do. Mrs. Pokurski, in my opinion, your husband  
doesn't want anyone's veal but yours.

Pause.

EDNA  
Is that a metaphor?

Cal shrugs.

CAL  
Take it as you like.

EDNA  
You're very cheeky, Mr. Harvey.

CAL  
Don't worry. No extra charge.

EDNA  
I think I know my marriage better than you do.

CAL  
I have no doubt. But sometimes we need to be directed to what's  
right in front of our faces. I'm telling you the way I see it.  
I think your husband is happy with what he has. You're a very  
lovely woman, Mrs. Pokurski.

EDNA  
Do *not* attempt to seduce me. I will have none of it.

CAL  
That isn't what I was --

EDNA  
The fact that my husband has been running around with some floozy  
does *not* imply that I would ever *stoop* to the level of --

CAL  
I understand, I understand! I am repulsive.

EDNA  
You are not repulsive. You are, in a certain light, not even  
unattractive. But I will thank you to remember that I am a happily  
married woman.

CAL  
Then why all the suspicion?

EDNA  
It is not a suspicion. A woman *knows*.

CAL  
But how do you know?

EDNA  
It's hard to describe.

CAL  
Give it a try.

EDNA  
He seems more ... animated than usual. For the last three months or so. He's livelier. More alert. More energetic. He tries to suppress it, but I know him too well.

CAL  
In other words, he's happy.

EDNA  
I suppose so.

CAL  
And this leads you to conclude that he must be unfaithful.

EDNA  
I've known Viktor Pokursi for over sixty years, Mr. Harvey. "Happy" is not his strong suit.

CAL  
And there's no other warning signs?

EDNA  
Such as what?

CAL  
Well, some women complain of, uh ...

Pause.

EDNA  
Yes?

CAL  
Has there been a ... decline in the, uh ...

He stops himself, tries again.

CAL  
Is it that you've noticed a certain ...

He stops himself, tries again.

CAL

Would you say that your husband is ...

Pause.

EDNA

Yes?

CAL

Let me put it differently. Your husband is seventy-four years old. He's hunched over like Quasimodo. He owns three shirts, all stained. He makes thirty cents an hour at a hardware store. His original teeth are in parts unknown. He chews with his mouth open. He wheezes. He tells the same bad joke every day to the same grinning newsstand owner without even realizing the guy doesn't speak English. Now, I'm not saying Viktor Pokurski isn't a wonderful man. A wonderful father, a wonderful *grandfather*, a wonderful *great-grandfather*, a wonderful *great-great-grandfather*, and God only knows what else. What I *am* saying is, the last time Viktor Pokurski was what might be considered a *catch*, Napoleon was on the throne of France, and the ink was still drying on the Magna Carta. Is it *conceivable* he's having an affair? Yes. It's conceivable. Is it *likely* that in the few spare moments he has between working, eating, and snoring sweet nothings into your ear, he's been able to find a willing *participant* in that kind of shenanigan? No. It is not likely. It is *breathhtakingly* unlikely. The man is a dullard in the body of a troll, and quite frankly the fact that *you* still have any interest in his decaying and declining faculties of seduction is the kind of miracle that gives hope to all men. No offense.

There is a considerable  
pause.

EDNA

Are you telling me that my business is no longer welcome here?

CAL

I am *not* telling you that. I've never turned down money in my life, Mrs. Pokurski, and I'm too old to learn new habits. Your money is good here. Your money will always be good here. When I tell you your money would be better spent elsewhere, it is entirely out of the kindness of my heart.

Edna stands up, pulls a  
checkbook out of her purse,  
writes a check, tears it  
off, and holds it out toward  
Cal.

EDNA

Keep looking.

Cal hesitates, then takes  
the check.

CAL

Yes, ma'am.

EDNA

I'll come by the same time next week?

CAL

I'll be here.

EDNA

Good.

Edna turns to leave. At  
the door, she turns back.

EDNA

You know, you're not exactly Valentino yourself, Mr. Harvey.

CAL

I'm painfully aware.

EDNA

Good night.

CAL

Good night, Mrs. Pokurski.

Edna exits. Cal blows a  
breath out through pursed  
lips. He contemplates the  
check, slapping it against  
his palm. He shakes his  
head and puts the check  
aside.

Cal picks up a newspaper,  
spreads it open, and leans  
back in his chair to read.

DESMOND enters quietly,  
wearing an overcoat and  
carrying his hat. Cal,  
engrossed in the paper,  
doesn't see him. Desmond  
is sleek-looking and eerily  
calm. His eyes are clear  
and piercing; his voice,  
when he speaks, is soft  
and deep.

Standing just inside the doorway, he contemplates Cal for a long moment.

DESMOND

Any good news?

Startled, Cal looks up.

DESMOND

I'm sorry I startled you.

CAL

How did you get in here?

DESMOND

Through the door.

CAL

The building's locked after nine o'clock.

DESMOND

Must've been an oversight.

CAL

What do you want?

DESMOND

I want to talk.

CAL

You got money?

DESMOND

Plenty.

CAL

You got a case?

DESMOND

I believe so.

CAL

Take off your coat.

DESMOND

No, thank you.

Cal raises his eyebrows.

CAL

You cold?

Desmond looks around him.

I like your office. DESMOND

Thanks. So do the rats. CAL

Is that a figure of speech? DESMOND

A joke. We don't have rats. That I know of. Sit down. CAL

Thank you. DESMOND

Desmond sits down opposite  
the desk.

What can I do for you? CAL

Are you a religious man? DESMOND

Cal is surprised. Slight  
pause.

Do I *look* like a religious man? CAL

I'm not sure I know what a religious man looks like. DESMOND

I guess what I meant to say was: no. CAL

Were you, at one time? DESMOND

So far I'm not seeing the money in this. CAL

We'll get to that. Please. Indulge me. DESMOND

Cal thinks this over for a  
moment.

I guess when I was a kid I must have been religious. Certainly  
went to church often enough. CAL

Because of your parents. DESMOND

CAL  
Yeah. Well, grandparents. I think they took my parents, and my  
parents took me.

DESMOND  
But it didn't take.

CAL  
No, not really. Why? Are you religious?

DESMOND  
In times like these? I really don't know.

Pause.

DESMOND  
You're aware there's a war in Europe.

CAL  
I read the papers.

DESMOND  
Not just the funnies?

CAL  
The war's in the funnies too.

DESMOND  
Why are you not overseas, fighting for your country?

CAL  
I get seasick.

DESMOND  
And that was enough for an exemption?

CAL  
I argued my case well.

DESMOND  
Have you any political convictions?

CAL  
What's your case, Mister?

DESMOND  
I'm coming around to it.

CAL  
Well, you're certainly taking the long way around. You mind if  
we stop off at Albuquerque? My horse could use a rest.

DESMOND  
You're a very clever man.

CAL  
Is that why you're so interested in my conversation?

DESMOND  
This isn't conversation. This is an interview.

CAL  
Really? Who's interviewing who?

DESMOND  
I suppose it's mutual.

CAL  
Are you some kind of reporter?

DESMOND  
Do I look like some kind of reporter?

CAL  
I really don't know what a reporter looks like.

DESMOND  
Yes, you do.

Pause.

DESMOND  
Political convictions?

CAL  
I'm a card-carrying none of your business.

DESMOND  
You don't know my business.

CAL  
Yeah, what line are you in? Normally I can place a man, at least within the right ballpark. You're not a reporter, not a doctor, not a priest, and not a military man. You might be a lawyer, but if so you're the damnedest lawyer I ever saw. What are you, selling insurance? Selling Bibles? Selling me a honey of a land deal in Central America? It's only fair to warn you, I have most of my assets tied up in some good Scotch.

DESMOND  
Are you Catholic?

Pause. Cal scrutinizes  
Desmond.

CAL  
I'm having trouble following your train of thought.

DESMOND  
You said "priest." It made me wonder if you were Catholic.

CAL  
I told you. I'm nothing.

DESMOND  
No man is nothing.

CAL  
Well, I'm as close as a man can get.

Cal stands up. He pats  
back his hair. He puts  
his hands on the edge of  
the desk.

CAL  
Listen, it's late. I'm beat. And I'm not getting any younger.  
If you have something you'll pay money to find out about, tell me  
so. Otherwise, regardless of how intriguing you are, I'm going  
to have to ask you to leave my office -- and if you don't, I'm  
going to have to ask you again.

DESMOND  
Is that a physical threat?

CAL  
Whatever works for you.

DESMOND  
I probably ought to mention that I'm armed.

CAL  
I got that sense.

DESMOND  
You're very astute.

CAL  
Holster over the right breast pocket?

DESMOND  
I'm left-handed.

CAL  
I gathered that too.

DESMOND  
Of course, I imagine you're not defenseless.

CAL  
I have my peace of mind.

Where is it?  
DESMOND

It's in my hand.  
CAL

During the previous exchange, Cal's right hand has slipped into the drawer of his desk. There is a frozen pause. Desmond looks at Cal's hand, then back at his eyes.

Very good.  
DESMOND

You wanna see it?  
CAL

Not at all. I trust you.  
DESMOND

It's no hard feelings, Mister. Honestly. I just want peace in my little corner of the world.  
CAL

There is a pause as the two men look at each other. Then, very slowly, telegraphing each movement, Desmond rises to his feet. He turns his back to Cal and takes a few steps away. He shrugs off his overcoat and places it on the coat rack by the door. He removes his jacket, revealing the holster. He hangs the jacket on the coat rack and unbuckles the holster. He hangs the holster up on the coat rack, pistol and all, and returns to his chair. He sits. Cal removes his hand from the drawer of his desk and closes it.

Are we friends now?  
DESMOND

Well, we're friendlier.  
CAL

DESMOND  
Will you answer my question about your political convictions?

CAL  
Will you tell me your name?

DESMOND  
You never asked for my name.

CAL  
Well, I wasn't that curious.

DESMOND  
But now you're curious.

CAL  
I'm getting there.

Pause.

DESMOND  
You can call me Desmond.

CAL  
But I might just as well call you Cinderella, is that right?

DESMOND  
Are you asking me if it's the name I was born with?

CAL  
Why bother asking? I know it's not.

DESMOND  
And how do you know that?

CAL  
You just told me. I "can call you" Desmond? Your gun's on the coat rack; I can call you whatever I want.

DESMOND  
And you, of course, are Calvin Harvey.

CAL  
I go by Cal.

DESMOND  
I know you do.

CAL  
Am I supposed to be impressed? It's on the door in capital letters.

DESMOND  
But it's not your name, is it?

Pause. Cal stares at  
Desmond.

CAL

Who the hell are you?

DESMOND

Who do you *think* I am?

CAL

I'm not much for riddles, Rumpelstiltskin.

DESMOND

How much of the Torah do you remember?

Cal blanches. He recovers  
quickly, but not quickly  
enough.

CAL

What is that, a Jewish thing?

DESMOND

It's too late for deception. I see the truth in your face.

CAL

You better get the hell out of my office.

DESMOND

I don't think you want that.

Cal crosses around the desk  
and looms over Desmond.

CAL

Who are you?

DESMOND

You just gave up your advantage. The gun's in the drawer.

CAL

I don't need that kind of advantage.

Cal seizes Desmond by the  
front of his shirt and  
hauls him up out of the  
chair.

CAL

Who *are* you?

DESMOND

You can call me Desmond.

CAL  
I can call you hamburger. Shall we make the name fit?

DESMOND  
There's really no need for this kind of display.

CAL  
What do you want?

DESMOND  
I want you to admit the truth.

CAL  
What truth?

DESMOND  
You're Jewish.

Still clinging to his shirt  
with one hand, Cal slaps  
Desmond across the face.

DESMOND  
You're as Jewish as they come.

Cal slaps him again.

DESMOND  
There is no such man as Cal Harvey, and there never was.

Pause. Cal releases  
Desmond's shirt.

CAL  
(hoarsely)  
How do you know?

DESMOND  
I was informed.

CAL  
By who?

DESMOND  
Your real name is the magic word. I will tell you everything. I  
will tell you *extraordinary* things. Just say the word.

There is a long, dense pause.  
Cal's eyes are wild at  
first; then he deflates  
and leans against the desk,  
his shoulders slumping.  
When he speaks, it is almost  
inaudibly soft.

Saul Glazer. CAL

A bit louder, please. DESMOND

Saul Glazer. (forcefully) CAL

Desmond nods.

Where were you born? DESMOND

Romania. CAL

How long have you been Cal Harvey? DESMOND

Since I fell in love with a Christian woman. CAL

And what happened to her? DESMOND

She found out. CAL

Pause.

Don't you feel better? DESMOND

Cal looks up at Desmond.  
Then, abruptly, he crosses  
back around the desk, yanks  
open the drawer, and pulls  
out his revolver. He points  
it at Desmond, fiercely,  
but with the utmost control.

I am a very good shot. I have killed men before. I will know if  
you're lying. Tell me who you are. CAL

Slight pause.

May I have some of that good Scotch? DESMOND

No. CAL

DESMOND

I wonder why you're so angry.

CAL

I'm not angry. I'm defending myself. I don't know who you're going to tell about Saul Glazer. If I shoot you now, no one will come running. This is the kind of neighborhood where people mind their own business, especially when there's gunfire involved. The building staff won't be in till six. I have eight hours to dispose of your body. I don't know what I'll do with it yet. Maybe I'll burn it in the furnace. Maybe I'll cut it up and feed it to the rats.

DESMOND

You told me you didn't have rats.

CAL

I bet I can find some rats.

DESMOND

Are you *sure* you're not angry?

Cal comes around the desk  
and points the gun right  
between Desmond's eyes.

CAL

Talk.

DESMOND

Put the gun away.

CAL

*I'm* giving the orders. Talk.

DESMOND

Not until you put the gun away.

Cal pulls back the hammer,  
cocking the weapon.

CAL

Last chance, Mister Mysterious.

DESMOND

(with sudden, scornful  
passion)

Do I look like a man who's afraid to die?

Pause. They remain frozen,  
staring at each other.  
Then Cal deflates. He un-  
cocks the revolver and  
returns it to its drawer.

He crosses to a cabinet and pulls out a bottle of Scotch and two glasses. He pours a generous helping of scotch, tosses it back, and smoothly refills the glass. He fills the other glass and hands it to Desmond.

CAL

*La chaim.*

DESMOND

*La chaim.*

They both sip their drinks. Cal leans against the front of the desk. Desmond takes another sip, licks his lips, and launches in.

DESMOND

I am in the employ of a very wealthy and powerful man. This man, as it happens, is a German Jew. He fled Germany for Poland during the rise of Hitler, and he fled Poland for France when the Germans invaded. As you may have heard, France herself has now fallen to the Nazis. It would appear that the presence of my employer in a given country is bad luck.

CAL

Don't tell me he's coming here.

DESMOND

(raising his eyebrows)

Why? Do you fear a German invasion? Mr. Hitler has his failings, but he is not unaware of the Atlantic Ocean. In any case, my employer is now in England.

CAL

They're not doing so hot, either.

DESMOND

They are a funny little island, filled with funny little people. I think they will fight to the last man.

CAL

You think it'll come to that?

DESMOND

Not if I can say anything about it.

CAL

Where do I fit into this little fairy tale?

DESMOND

It is not a fairy tale. It is a very modern and very dangerous reality. We are living in a time that will change the course of the future.

CAL

And what do you want me to do about it?

DESMOND

I want you to save a life.

Pause.

CAL

Anyone's in particular?

DESMOND

My employer has a child. A daughter. She was at school in Paris when the Germans took Paris. She did not escape with her father. I was sent in to get her out.

CAL

And did you?

DESMOND

Yes. I bribed my way into the city, traced her to where she was hiding, and smuggled the two of us out on a freight train bound for Lyon. In time I found us safe passage to Morocco, and from there to New York. All of this took many months, a small fortune, a great deal of ingenuity, and a great deal of luck. I am sparing you the details. Suffice it to say, it was the most difficult thing I have ever done.

CAL

Congratulations.

DESMOND

Thank you.

CAL

Why New York?

DESMOND

I had heard such extraordinary things about the bagels.

CAL

Why New York?

DESMOND

I wanted to put an ocean between her and Hitler. And also between her and her father.

CAL

You don't care for her father?

DESMOND

I care for him very much. And I take my responsibilities very seriously. If the man is, in fact, a curse, then it falls to me to keep his daughter as far away from him as possible -- at least until Mr. Hitler is subdued.

Cal stares at him.

CAL

You're not serious.

DESMOND

I am entirely serious.

CAL

You believe in *curses*?

DESMOND

I believe in what I see.

CAL

And you've seen curses?

DESMOND

I've seen patterns.

CAL

And you attribute them to curses.

DESMOND

In times like these, Mr. Glazer, it doesn't pay to ignore any warning signs.

CAL

Call me Cal.

DESMOND

I would, but I am hoping to appeal to your Jewish sympathies.

CAL

I've been Cal for over a decade. I'm used to it. It's my name. Also, I don't have any Jewish sympathies.

DESMOND

Well, that does make things challenging.

CAL

What is it you want from me, exactly?

DESMOND

I must soon return to Europe. My employer will be needing my counsel, and my help. I would like to leave the child in your care.

Pause. Cal sips his Scotch.

CAL

How much?

DESMOND

As I mentioned, you would be saving a life.

CAL

Yeah, but for how much?

DESMOND

Not to mention incurring the gratitude of a very influential person.

CAL

Yeah, that sounds nice. How much?

Desmond looks at Cal. Then he rises and crosses to the coat rack. Cal stiffens, and takes a step forward, but Desmond only retrieves an envelope from one of the hip pockets of his overcoat. He crosses back to Cal and holds out the envelope; Cal takes it and rifles through its contents. He raises his eyebrows.

DESMOND

Will that be sufficient?

CAL

(holding up the envelope)

These are pounds.

DESMOND

I told you: my employer is in England.

CAL

Yeah, but if England ceases to exist tomorrow, I'm not sure how the pound is going to hold up.

DESMOND

England will not fall.

CAL

Didn't you just tell me your employer was a curse?

DESMOND

I am already making arrangements to move him elsewhere.

CAL

Okay, but in the meantime.

DESMOND

If England falls, we will all have greater problems than your insolvency, Mr. Harvey.

CAL

I'm sure you're right. And if I'm going to have greater problems, I'd at least like to be spared the worry of carrying around a small fortune in funny money. Do you get me?

Pause. Desmond holds out his hand for the envelope.

DESMOND

I'll change this to dollars.

CAL

(handing him the envelope)  
That'll be fine.

DESMOND

You'll take the assignment, then?

CAL

For that kind of money? I'll do it in stockings and a corset.

DESMOND

That won't be necessary.

CAL

Suit yourself. I got great legs.

DESMOND

I'll bring the girl by with the money. Ten o'clock tomorrow night?

CAL

You're a real night owl, you know that?

DESMOND

Mr. Harvey, will you please take this seriously?

CAL

Bring me the dollars, and I'll take it any way you want.

Slight pause. Desmond nods.

DESMOND

Understood.

Desmond begins gathering his things to leave.

CAL  
Hey, one last question. How'd you find me?

DESMOND  
My employer has certain ... contacts in the underworld.

CAL  
And you asked 'em who they were most afraid of?

DESMOND  
No. I asked them who could be bought.

Pause.

DESMOND  
Good night, Mr. Harvey.

CAL  
Good night, Cinderella.

Desmond exits, closing the door behind him. Cal remains standing in the center of the room, hands in his pockets, lost in thought.

Lights down.

SCENE TWO

Lights up on the same room, the following day. Cal and Edna are once again seated across the desk from each other. Cal is leaning back in his chair, bored.

EDNA  
I'm telling you, I know what I saw!

CAL  
I'm not denying that, Mrs. Pokurski.

EDNA  
You are denying it! You think I'm just a batty old lady.

CAL  
I didn't say that.

EDNA

But you were thinking it!

CAL

Well, look, I can't help *thinking* it!

Edna glares at him.

EDNA

I think you're being very impudent. And very rude.

CAL

(leaning forward in his  
chair)

I'm sorry, Mrs. Pokurski. I'm a little tired, that's all. Why don't you take me through this from the beginning. And I promise not to think anything insulting while you talk.

Grudgingly, Edna accepts  
this offer. She takes a  
moment to formulate her  
thoughts.

EDNA

I had gone to bed early. I had a bit of a headache. I was dimly aware of Mr. Pokurski climbing into bed beside me -- then I fell back asleep. The next thing I knew I was awakened, but I couldn't say by what. For once, my back wasn't hurting. Mr. Pokurski was snoring peacefully, as usual. Yet here I was, suddenly wide awake.

Cal blinks rapidly, trying  
not to fall asleep himself.

EDNA

I opened my eyes. The room was ever-so-slightly brighter than it ought to have been. At first I thought it must be the moonlight, but it was only a crescent moon last night, and anyway, it was cloudy out. I turned over onto my back -- I sleep on my side, you know, it's good for the circulation. And that's when I realized Viktor wasn't in bed beside me. I could hear his snoring, as loudly as ever, but he wasn't there.

CAL

What did you do?

EDNA

I looked around the room, and at once I saw him. He was at a small desk in the corner, hunched over something. I could hear just the faintest little tapping sound. And still the snoring went on and on, just as if Viktor were still lying beside me.

CAL

And you're sure this wasn't --

EDNA

(with conviction)

It wasn't a dream, Mr. Harvey. I know when I'm dreaming and when I'm awake. I shifted over to his side of the bed, careful not to make too much noise as I moved, and from that vantage point I could see the little flashlight that he clutched in one hand, and the gleam in his eye as he went on tip-tap-tapping on that black little machine. It was obvious that he was awake, even though he continued snoring. And there was a look on his face I haven't seen in years. It was a look of intense concentration. There was a sense of *purpose* in his expression. I didn't think Viktor could look like that anymore. It frightened me. It frightens me now to think of it. I don't mind telling you that he was quite the hothead in his day. Looking at him across that room was like looking at the old Viktor. Even his back was straighter. He was hunched over his work, but his spine didn't curve the way it does these days. It was as if he had grown twenty years younger in the hours between nine o'clock and midnight.

CAL

Did you speak to him?

She shakes her head gravely.

EDNA

I didn't dare. I rolled back over to my side of the bed and pretended to sleep. But I didn't sleep a wink for the rest of the night. After about half an hour, Viktor came back to bed, snoring all the way. I had this crazy flash of intuition that he was going to kill me, but he just settled quietly into bed and continued making that infernal trumpet-noise with his nose. As soon as it was dawn, I got up and went down to make breakfast. I was sure he would read the terror on my face, but he didn't say anything. He just left for work, and I came straight here.

CAL

Did you get a look at the machine in the light of day?

She shakes her head, rapidly.

EDNA

I couldn't find it. I looked everywhere I could think of. He must have it stashed away someplace.

CAL

But he never left the bedroom.

EDNA

I don't think so, no.

CAL

So it must have been in there somewhere.

EDNA  
I'm telling you, I couldn't find it! It wasn't for lack of looking.

CAL  
What did the machine look like?

EDNA  
It didn't look like much, in the dark. It *sounded* like a telegraph.

CAL  
And the pattern of the tapping ... sounded like Morse code?

EDNA  
I believe so.

CAL  
Why would your husband use a telegraph machine?

EDNA  
Because if he used a telephone, he could be overheard.

CAL  
And you think this has something to do with his ... indiscretions?

EDNA  
What else could it be?

Cal shakes his head.

CAL  
This is a hell of a story, Mrs. Pokurski.

EDNA  
You don't believe me.

CAL  
I didn't say that.

EDNA  
You were shaking your head.

CAL  
I wasn't shaking my head in disbelief. I was just, you know ... shaking my head.

EDNA  
Just in general?

CAL  
Right! Exactly.

EDNA  
As a form of calisthenics, perhaps?

Cal smiles.

CAL  
Mrs. Pokurski, you're an intelligent woman.

EDNA  
(stonily)  
That's very kind of you, thank you.

CAL  
You must know how this story sounds.

EDNA  
How does it sound?

CAL  
It sounds like one of two things. One: a dream. Two: something you invented in order to get my attention.

Edna glares at him haughtily.

EDNA  
Do you treat all your clients like this?

CAL  
Not at all. Most of them I treat much worse.

EDNA  
I don't believe you. I think this is because I'm old.

CAL  
No offense, ma'am, but you are old. The mind can play tricks on a person, especially at your age. I don't think you're a foolish woman. On the contrary, I'd say you have a pretty good head on your shoulders. And you trust your own perceptions, which is entirely natural. But your perceptions have begun to betray you. Your mind isn't what it was; that's a biological fact. I don't blame you for being suspicious. I have no doubt that everything you've seen and sensed is entirely real -- to you. But I'm a professional in the suspicion business. My mind may not be as first-rate as yours, but it is in a premium condition. When I tell you that in my opinion, your husband is not running around, you have every reason to believe me. I'm not soft-headed about people. I think most people are pretty rotten. I'm entirely ready to believe that your husband *thinks* about running around. I'm willing to believe he *wants* to. I'm willing to believe that given the opportunity, he would jump at the chance. But I don't see the opportunity! I don't see the lines of dames outside his door, and I don't see the time in his daily schedule to let them in.

(MORE)

CAL (CONT'D)

I think the man is too old, and too busy, and too damn *exhausted* to follow through on a carnal impulse. And I don't know if that's very comforting to you, but from where I'm sitting, it's the God's honest truth.

Pause. Cal searches Edna's face for signs that his tirade has sunk in.

EDNA

What if I told you I had photographs?

Cal's eyebrows shoot up.

CAL

I beg your pardon?

EDNA

Photographs. Evidence. Hard, physical proof.

CAL

Well, I suppose I'd ask you to produce them.

EDNA

I'll do just that, Mr. Harvey.

Edna reaches into her handbag and pulls out a folder. She holds it out to Cal.

EDNA

I found these during my search for the machine. They were in Viktor's suitcase. The one he takes with him when he travels.

CAL

He doesn't travel.

EDNA

Well, he *used* to travel.

Slight pause.

EDNA

Go ahead. Take them.

Cal hesitates, though he's not sure why. Then he takes the folder and opens it. He pages through a few large-format photos. Then he looks back at Edna.

CAL

These are photos of Rita Hayworth.

EDNA

Yes, I know.

CAL

They're publicity stills. From the studio. You can buy them at the drugstore.

EDNA

I know that too.

Cal straightens up and gestures forcefully with the folder, his other hand on his hip.

CAL

Are you telling me that your husband, Viktor Pokurski, the hunchback of East Ninety-Fourth Street, is carrying on a clandestine affair with Rita Hayworth via telegraph?

EDNA

That is precisely what I'm telling you.

Cal freezes, mid-gesture, hand on hip. Long pause.

CAL

I'll look into it.

EDNA

I'm very much obliged.

Edna stands up and gathers her things.

CAL

(holding out the folder)

Don't forget these.

EDNA

Those ought to remain in your care, don't you think? As part of the evidence file?

CAL

I suppose you're right.

EDNA

Thank you for taking this seriously, Mr. Harvey. As you can imagine, I'm very anxious to have my husband back.

CAL  
I'll do everything in my power, Mrs. Pokurski.

EDNA  
You're a good man, Mr. Harvey.

CAL  
Well, I've known *worse* men.

EDNA  
Good luck.

CAL  
You too.

Edna exits. She closes the door behind her. Cal slumps forward in a fit of silent laughter. He straightens up and examines the photos again, smiling and shaking his head. Then he grows interested. He cocks his head to one side. He nods appreciatively. He crosses to his desk chair and settles down into it, feet up on the desk, preparing for a leisurely perusal of Ms. Hayworth's many charms.

After a beat, the door opens quickly, and Desmond sweeps in. Hurriedly, Cal closes the folder and sets it aside. Desmond has already closed the door behind him. He considers Cal for a moment.

DESMOND  
Am I interrupting anything?

CAL  
Just ... reviewing a case.

DESMOND  
Anything interesting?

CAL  
No, just legal stuff. Say, aren't you a little early?

DESMOND  
I've had a change of plans.

Desmond is visibly more agitated than when last we saw him. He is controlled and focused, but with a nervous energy he can't conceal.

CAL

News from Europe?

DESMOND

*Bad news.* I must leave at once. I'm leaving the girl in your care.

CAL

Do you have my dollars?

Desmond produces a thick packet and holds it out toward Cal.

DESMOND

It wasn't easy to change it on such short notice.

CAL

Well, you don't get paid for easy.

Cal takes hold of the packet, but Desmond does not release it.

DESMOND

This is an appreciable sum of money, Mr. Harvey. I hope it is understood that the girl has just become your first priority.

CAL

Absolutely.

DESMOND

Her safety is to be unimpeachable. Secrecy is of the utmost importance. You will update me on a weekly basis.

CAL

How will I reach you?

DESMOND

I'll let you know.

Pause.

CAL

You do know you're still holding onto this, don't you?

DESMOND

I want to be clear about one other thing.

CAL

Fine. *I'll* let go.

He lets go of the packet,  
spreading his hands as if  
in surrender.

DESMOND

You understand that loyalty and ruthlessness are two sides of the same coin?

CAL

I never thought much about it.

DESMOND

Think about it now.

Pause.

CAL

Yeah, I think I see what you mean.

DESMOND

I am *extremely* loyal, Mr. Harvey.

CAL

And I'm extremely fond of money. You let me count those dollars? We have no problem between us at all.

Pause. Desmond tries to read Cal's expression, which remains fairly neutral. At last, Desmond relents and hands Cal the packet. Cal rifles through the contents for a few moments, then looks up.

CAL

Looks about right.

DESMOND

It's *exactly* right.

CAL

Who am I to disagree?

Pause.

CAL

Anything else?

Desmond hesitates.

I'm ... fond of the girl.

DESMOND

You're a regular sweetheart.

CAL

Very fond.

DESMOND

Cal frowns.

I don't think I take your meaning.

CAL

You will.

DESMOND

Desmond crosses to the door.

I'll send the girl in now. She's waiting just outside. I'll be on a boat within the hour. You'll hear from me when I reach England.

DESMOND

*Bon voyage.*

CAL

Thank you.

DESMOND

Desmond puts his hand on the doorknob. He stops. He turns to look at Cal again.

Mr. Harvey?

DESMOND

Cinderella?

CAL

Behave yourself.

DESMOND

With that, Desmond slips out of the room, closing the door behind him. Cal returns to examining the cash. He crosses to his desk, still engrossed in the money.

Behind him, the door swings open and SARAH appears. She is a beautiful young woman of perhaps twenty. She is dressed simply, but elegantly. Her manner is timid, but not cowed.

Sarah watches Cal for a moment, as he flips through the money, smiling to himself. At last, she speaks:

SARAH

Mr. Harvey?

Cal looks up, startled, and is even more startled when he takes in Sarah's appearance. Unconsciously, he tries to conceal the money behind his back.

CAL

(hoarsely)

Hello.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH

Hello.

CAL

You must be ...

He stops, at a loss.

SARAH

Sarah. Yes, I must.

She puts out her hand.

SARAH

It's a pleasure to meet you.

Cal starts to extend his hand, realizes the money is still in it, and hurriedly conceals the packet in a drawer. He crosses out from behind the desk, wiping his palms on his trousers.

He takes Sarah's hand.

CAL

Cal Harvey.

SARAH

Sarah Green. Sarah's my real name; Green is the alias. Desmond told me to get used to using it.

CAL

You call him Desmond?

SARAH

Of course. What else would I call him?

CAL

I call him Cinderella.

SARAH

(grinning impishly)

He must not like that much.

\*

CAL

I suppose not.

Pause.

SARAH

May I sit down?

CAL

Yes! Sorry, yes.

SARAH

Thank you.

She sits in the chair. Cal hovers awkwardly.

CAL

Can I offer you a drink?

SARAH

No, thank you.

CAL

You don't drink?

SARAH

Not before noon.

CAL

Of course. I mean, I don't either. I was only ...

SARAH  
You were being polite.

CAL  
Yes! Exactly.

SARAH  
It was very kind of you.

CAL  
Yeah, wasn't it?

Slight pause.

CAL  
Anyway ...

SARAH  
I'd like to tell you that I don't intend to be any bother. It's very good of you to take me in, and the last thing I want is to burden you in any way. Please, dispose of me in whatever way is most convenient to you. And don't hesitate to put me to work. I can type. I can do translations. I've never done any filing, but I'm quite certain I could learn.

CAL  
Your English is very good.

SARAH  
I had an English nanny. She raised me, really. Father has always had his mind elsewhere.

CAL  
No mother?

SARAH  
(shaking her head matter-of-factly)  
No.

CAL  
And now *I'm* going to be your nanny.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH  
I suppose that's true.

CAL  
I have to tell you, you're not what I was expecting.

SARAH  
No?

CAL  
(emphatically)  
No.

SARAH  
Were you expecting me to be more Jewish?

CAL  
No. More -- girl. Ish.

SARAH  
Younger.

CAL  
Yeah. That's what I mean.

SARAH  
I'm sure that was Desmond trying to play on your sentimentality. He must have imagined you would be more likely to take in a girl than a full-grown woman.

CAL  
He doesn't know me very well.

SARAH  
How do you mean?

CAL  
(covering up his real,  
salacious meaning)  
I just mean I'm, uh ... I'm not too fond of kids.

SARAH  
Then why did you agree?

CAL  
Well, you know, when a human being is truly, deeply in need ...

SARAH  
And then, of course, there was the money.

CAL  
Yeah. Of course.

SARAH  
(a bit playfully)  
You didn't think I didn't *know* about that.

CAL  
No. I guess ... I don't know what I thought.

SARAH  
You thought it wasn't polite to mention it.

CAL

Yeah. Let's go with that.

SARAH

Money doesn't cheapen everything, Mr. Harvey. That's old-fashioned thinking.

CAL

Well, I'm an old-fashioned guy.

SARAH

I don't think you are.

CAL

I'm not. (flatly)

SARAH

Do you know what money is?

CAL

The stuff dreams are made of?

SARAH

Yes. Exactly. Money is the way we talk about what matters to us. It's the most honest language we have.

CAL

Other than Swedish, right?

SARAH

You joke, but I think you follow me.

CAL

I think I do.

SARAH

Right-minded people often lament the way money has taken over the world. They're missing the point. Money has no value in itself. It never has, and it never can. It *takes* its value from human desire. That's what an economy really is: a way of exchanging desires. Wishes. Hopes. Even love and loyalty. All these things can be *expressed* with money. Does that cheapen them? Not at all. It gives them substance. It gives them agency. It helps them to shape the world.

CAL

I never looked at it like that.

SARAH

Most people don't.

Cal cocks his head curiously.

CAL  
You learned all this from an English nanny?

Sarah grins.

SARAH  
I didn't say my father taught me nothing.

CAL  
Very wealthy man, your father.

SARAH  
He's done well.

CAL  
What's his business, again?

SARAH  
It isn't a question of "again," Mr. Harvey. Desmond didn't tell you. And I won't tell you either.

CAL  
Not a haberdasher, then?

SARAH  
He has his fingers in many pies.

CAL  
Oh, so he's in the pastry business! Lot of money in the pastry business. Pies, cakes, tarts, croissants, éclairs. People will always want something sweet to put into their mouths. And after that, they'll want a pastry.

SARAH  
Are you putting on a little show for me?

CAL  
Me? No. Just talking.

SARAH  
You have a funny way of talking.

CAL  
Let's not get personal.

SARAH  
Why not?

Pause. Cal stares at Sarah.

CAL  
Listen, I don't have a very large apartment. And you can't stay here because I promised to keep an eye on you. You'll have to sleep in the bathtub. I hope that's all right.

SARAH

Perfectly.

CAL

I'm sure it's not what you're accustomed to ...

SARAH

I was in Paris when the Nazis arrived. No one knew what they would do with Jews when they'd secured the city. I hid in the basement of a linen factory with fifteen other girls. We foraged for scraps after dark. We ate out of rubbish bins. We slept in a pile to stay warm. I have no problem sleeping in your bathtub. If you have any use for me in your bed, I have no problem with that either. Don't turn me in to the immigration authorities. Apart from that, I'm all yours.

Pause. Cal swallows. He looks a little shocked.

CAL

That's a very ... practical way of looking at things.

SARAH

Please don't be offended. I'm not normally so blunt. You may be a very noble and compassionate man. If you are, so much the better. If you're not, you should know that I make no judgments. I only want to survive.

Another pause. Cal isn't sure what to say.

CAL

I think Desmond warned me to keep my hands off you.

SARAH

Desmond isn't here.

CAL

Your father doesn't sound like a guy who gets mad at the same person twice.

SARAH

How will he find out?

CAL

Maybe I'll tell him.

SARAH

Why would you do that?

CAL

People are nuts.

Pause.

SARAH

Think it over. There's nothing to decide right now.

CAL

Sure there is. Who gets the bathtub?

Sarah smiles slightly.

SARAH

I'd be happy to take the bathtub.

CAL

Yeah, but suppose I want it? After all, it's *my* bathtub. I think I oughtta have first pick.

SARAH

You're a funny man.

CAL

Funny like Charlie Chaplin, or funny like a smell?

SARAH

Both.

CAL

Thanks a lot.

Sarah stands up, or takes a step away.

SARAH

I suppose I ought to let you work.

CAL

Yeah, it's a busy day. Lots of work. You can kill time in the outer office. I'll see you at lunch.

SARAH

What if someone sees me?

CAL

Oh, yeah, good point. There's a storage room off to the left. Kill time there. You want a book?

SARAH

Do you have any books?

Cal looks around him. No books.

CAL

I'll get you a book tomorrow.

No hurry.

SARAH

CAL  
(grabbing a pen and some  
loose paper)  
Here. Write a memoir.

Thank you.

SARAH

Any time.

CAL

As Sarah exits, her gaze  
lingers on Cal.

Happy working.

SARAH

You too.

CAL

Sarah leaves, closing the  
door. Cal breathes deeply  
and runs a hand through  
his hair. He stands for a  
moment with his hands on  
his hips, head down,  
thinking. Then he crosses  
to his desk, sits down,  
put his feet up, and resumes  
leafing through the folder  
of Rita Hayworth photos.

CAL  
(impressed)  
Son of a gun ...

He flips to another photo,  
and another. Lights fade.

SCENE THREE

Lights up on the same room,  
the following day. Cal  
sits opposite Edna yet  
again. This tableau is  
becoming almost iconic in  
its regularity.

The two of them regard each other in silence for a long moment. Then Cal leans forward over his desk.

CAL

So I spoke to Rita Hayworth.

Pause.

EDNA

You did?

CAL

Yes. I called her agent, and I told him to put Rita on the phone. He didn't want to at first, but then I used your husband's name. His voice started to tremble a bit at the other end of the line. "Just a minute," he said. And I told him I would hold the line.

EDNA

And you spoke to her.

CAL

Oh, yes. There's no question it was her. That voice is unmistakable. Very sultry, very seductive -- but with a girlish quality to it that a man can't help but respond to.

Edna nods rapidly, biting her lip.

EDNA

I see. Please go on.

CAL

Well, I told her that you'd found out everything. The telegraph machine. The secret communications. The use of the snoring to lull you into complacency. I told her the whole story.

EDNA

And what did she do?

CAL

She listened. And when I was finished, she confessed everything. It had been going on for months, she said. It started as an innocent correspondence between a star and a fan, but she soon realized that she could talk to him in a way she couldn't talk to anyone in Hollywood. "This town is full of phonies!" she told me. And I said I understood.

EDNA

And then what?

CAL  
Well, then she started crying. She told me she felt guilty. She was afraid she had ruined your marriage. I told her it would take more than a cheap hussy like her to ruin a fifty-year marriage between two first-class human beings.

EDNA  
(wide-eyed)  
You said that?

CAL  
Yes.

EDNA  
(soft and awed)  
To Rita Hayworth?

CAL  
Oh, yes.

EDNA  
She must have been very angry.

CAL  
No, actually, she saw my point.

EDNA  
She did?

CAL  
Oh, yeah. But then you know what she told me?

Edna shakes her head  
vehemently, a childlike  
look on her face.

CAL  
She told me that Viktor had already broken it off. He said he loved you too much to do this to you any longer. He told her you were the only woman he'd ever really wanted. His dalliance with her had been a tragic mistake. He wanted his life back. And he asked her to release him.

He nods, gravely.

CAL  
(softly)  
And she did.

Pause. When Edna speaks,  
it's in a small voice.

EDNA  
She did?

Yes. CAL

Release him? EDNA

Absolutely. CAL

What does that mean? EDNA

CAL  
It's over, Edna. Your husband has chosen you, for the rest of time. That was the conversation you overheard the other night. That was the tap-tapping. He was saying goodbye.

Edna nods, taking this in.  
Then she looks up at Cal.

How much do I owe you? EDNA

Let's call it even. CAL

Oh, no, please! You've done so much for me; I can't tell you how grateful I am. Please, name your price. EDNA

CAL  
(holding up a hand)  
Edna, listen, I've recently come into some money. I won't be charging for my services for a little while. I was happy to help, and I'm glad it all worked out. Let's leave it at that, shall we?

Yes. All right. EDNA  
(a bit bewildered)

Can I help you with your things? CAL  
(standing up)

No, that's all right. I'll manage. EDNA

Let me get the door. CAL

Cal crosses to the door and opens it.

Edna gathers her things and  
moves toward the exit.  
For a moment, she pauses  
indecisively, facing Cal.  
Then, with an abrupt  
movement, she darts forward  
and kisses him on the mouth.

EDNA

Bless you!

Edna exits. Cal stands  
there dazed for a moment,  
holding the doorknob.  
Then he shakes his head  
and closes the door.

There is a knock at the  
door.

CAL

Let's leave it at that, Mrs. Pokurski, all right?

SARAH

It's me.

Cal opens the door. There  
stands Sarah.

SARAH

May I come in?

CAL

Sure, yeah ...

Sarah steps into the room.  
Cal glances around outside  
the door, then closes it.

CAL

You've gotta be careful crossing the outer office. You never  
know who's around.

SARAH

I was careful.

CAL

Did you see Mrs. Pokurski on her way out?

SARAH

I did. She was glowing. What did you do to her?

CAL

*She did it to me!*

SARAH  
(raising her eyebrows)  
Really?

CAL  
Well, it was an expression of gratitude. I just told her her marriage was going to be fine.

SARAH  
And *is* it going to be fine?

CAL  
Yeah, until she looks under the mattress and finds a picture of Veronica Lake.

Sarah takes a step toward  
Cal.

SARAH  
I have a confession to make.

CAL  
Save it. Jews don't do confession.

SARAH  
Am I supposed to go on feeling guilty forever?

CAL  
What, you're just catching on?

SARAH  
I overheard some of your conversation. From the storage room.

CAL  
Just happened to have your ear to the wall?

SARAH  
There's an air vent that bridges the two rooms. You never noticed?

CAL  
I guess I never *stored* anybody before.

SARAH  
I think it's sweet what you did.

CAL  
What, lying to her?

SARAH  
Reassuring her.

CAL  
I was just trying to get her out of my hair.

I don't believe you. SARAH

I didn't think you were so naive. CAL

I didn't think you were so sentimental. SARAH

Honey, you got me all wrong. CAL

Maybe. SARAH

Definitely. CAL

I withdraw my comment. Have you met the husband? SARAH

I've seen him. CAL

What's he like? SARAH

Very ordinary. Why do you care? CAL

I'm taking an interest because *you* took an interest. SARAH

I was paid to take an interest. CAL

All right then, I'm bored. SARAH

You should work on your memoir. CAL

I'm not a writer. SARAH

No? What do you do in there? CAL

I draw. SARAH

Can I see? CAL

SARAH  
First tell me about the husband.

CAL  
Why are you so curious?

Sarah shrugs.

SARAH  
I told you. Bored.

CAL  
Viktor Pokurski is *not* the cure for boredom.

SARAH  
*Please?*

CAL  
All right, have it your way.

Cal crosses to the desk and  
picks up a file. He holds  
it out for Sarah to take.

CAL  
Here's the file. Knock yourself out.

SARAH  
You kept a *file*?

Cal shrugs.

CAL  
It was a job.

SARAH  
You kept a file on a harmless old man whose wife suspected him of  
an affair with Rita Hayworth?

CAL  
It's nice to have something concrete to hand people. It makes  
them feel better about surrendering real cash.

Sarah starts paging through  
the file.

SARAH  
This is very thorough.

CAL  
I'm a professional.

SARAH  
I'm impressed.

CAL  
I don't care too much about impressing you.

SARAH  
I don't believe you.

CAL  
Believe what you like.

Pause. Sarah continues  
sifting through the file.  
Cal watches her.

CAL  
You know, if I were you, I wouldn't get too interested in Viktor  
Pokurski. His wife has a teensy bit of a jealous streak.

SARAH  
So I gathered.

CAL  
Anyway, I don't think he's your type.

Sarah looks up at him.

SARAH  
Are *you* jealous?

CAL  
It's been known to happen.

SARAH  
I mean right now. Are you jealous?

CAL  
Of what? Of who?

SARAH  
Of all the attention I'm giving to Viktor Pokurski.

CAL  
Why would I be jealous?

SARAH  
I don't know. You tell me.

CAL  
Look, I have no time to talk crazy. I'm busy. You want to go  
through the file, fine. But don't distract me. I've got work to  
do.

SARAH  
I'll be quiet as a mouse.

CAL  
I appreciate it.

SARAH  
You won't even know I'm here.

CAL  
I look forward to it.

SARAH  
I'll just sit here with Viktor and get acquainted.

Pause. Cal looks at her.

CAL  
Yeah.

Cal crosses to his desk and  
pretends to work. There  
is a long-ish pause.

SARAH  
He *is* very handsome.

CAL  
All right, now you're doing it on purpose!

SARAH  
(innocently)  
Doing what on purpose?

CAL  
Making me jealous.

SARAH  
I don't know what you're talking about.

They gaze at each other.  
It's a battle of wills.  
Cal loses. He lowers his  
head.

CAL  
Look, you're a very good-looking woman.

SARAH  
Thank you.

CAL  
It's not a compliment.

SARAH  
No?

CAL

If anything, it's a criticism. Good-looking women are the scourge of humanity. They run the world ragged. They turn everything upside-down.

SARAH

How do you mean?

CAL

(pointing)

See, that's it right there! "How do you mean?" Those big eyes, that innocent little pout, the soft voice -- they're all the adornments on the door to Hades. They lead men to their doom, and we never even see it coming.

SARAH

It sounds like you've had some bad experiences.

CAL

Not at all. Wonderful experiences. But there was always the piper to pay in the light of dawn, do you get me? There was always a catch.

SARAH

And that's my fault, somehow.

CAL

I didn't say it was your fault. It's a curse, being beautiful. It really is. You'll never know if a man really loves you, or just sees you as a dandy little prize.

SARAH

I think I can tell the difference.

CAL

I don't think we can tell the difference! We're so blinded and besotted, we don't even *ask* ourselves how we feel. We'd march through fire for you, without even taking the time to soak our boots. You've heard of the Trojan War?

SARAH

Once or twice.

CAL

There it is in a nutshell. One woman, a thousand ships. A whole civilization brought to its knees by a nice piece of skirt. It wasn't Helen's fault. She was *born* beautiful. She was born to drive men crazy -- and she absolutely did.

SARAH

You're not telling me I caused the War in Europe, are you?

CAL

No, but you could have.

Thank you. SARAH

It's not a compliment. CAL

No, I think it is. SARAH

Pause. They look at each other.

Are you saying you don't want to sleep in the bathtub anymore? SARAH

I'm saying I'll have to fill it with ice just to keep a cool head. CAL

I told you I wouldn't mind sharing. SARAH

Actually, you went further than that. CAL

Yes. SARAH

But this is the problem, Sarah. You made a point of saying that you were at my mercy, and I could do as I pleased with you. CAL

That's about right. SARAH

Thing is, I don't really want a girl at my mercy. Seems to take some of the fun out of it. CAL

You'd like more of a challenge. SARAH

Yeah, I guess so. CAL

Why? SARAH

I don't know why! I think I must be crazy. A fella like me gets a chance with a woman like you -- what kind of numbskull would he have to be to read the fine print? CAL

But you are reading it. SARAH

CAL  
I can't seem to help it.

SARAH  
And it's making you hold back.

CAL  
With all the strength I've got. Which, to be fair, isn't much.

SARAH  
So what do you want me to do? I can't help being a refugee, Cal.  
I can't help needing you.

CAL  
I know that.

SARAH  
So what can I do about it?

CAL  
I don't know. Fend me off. Keep me away.

SARAH  
Physically?

CAL  
Sure, why not?

SARAH  
You're much stronger than I am.

CAL  
Yeah, but I'm not gonna *fight* you.

SARAH  
Not even to get what you want?

CAL  
Of course not. I'm not that kinda guy.

SARAH  
I thought *all* men were that kind of guy.

CAL  
Who told you *that*?

SARAH  
You did. "A thousand ships." Wasn't that the point? They  
couldn't help themselves. They were under the spell of beauty.

CAL  
Well, it was more complicated than that.

SARAH

How so?

CAL

Well, you see, *one* of 'em was under the spell of beauty.

SARAH

Menelaus.

CAL

Right. And he was a king. And his *brother* was a king. So that's where you got trouble.

SARAH

I see.

CAL

Because if a peasant falls under the spell of beauty, that's a pity for him, and his wife, and probably his sheep, or what-have-you. But a *king* falls under the spell ... Well, now we got trouble. Because what is he gonna do?

SARAH

Raise an army.

CAL

Raise an army! That's right. And sail off into the blue. So now you got your thousand ships, you got your Trojan Horse, you got your arrow through the tendon, you got your beaches and your tents and your big long speeches, and kids being thrown off of battlements, and the whole place burning to the ground. And all because why? Because of a woman.

SARAH

Or because of a king.

Pause.

CAL

Come again?

SARAH

Wasn't Menelaus the face that launched a thousand ships? As you said, if it had happened to a peasant, we wouldn't be speaking about it now. Menelaus had powerful friends -- that's what turned a tryst into a tragedy. Humanity doesn't have a problem with beautiful women. Humanity has a problem with kings.

Cal frowns, thinking this over.

CAL

That's, uh ... that's an interesting way of looking at it.

Thank you. SARAH

I never quite put it together that way before. CAL

Glad I could help. SARAH

So what does that mean for you and me? CAL  
(looking up at her)

I'm not sure. I lost track of what we were talking about. SARAH

I'm not a king. CAL

I'm not a mythical Greek beauty. SARAH

I guess we're not that important. CAL

I think you're right. SARAH

I guess we can kinda do what we want. CAL

It seems that way. SARAH

What do you want, Sarah? CAL

A lady never tells. SARAH

They drift together. They  
kiss. Cal pulls away.

I can't do it. CAL

You're doing fine. SARAH

I can't do it. CAL

Why not? SARAH

Cal just remains looking  
resolutely away.

SARAH  
I didn't take you for a Puritan, Cal.

CAL  
It's not about that.

SARAH  
Then what is it?

CAL  
A kiss oughtta mean something. That's all.

SARAH  
It *does* mean something.

CAL  
It oughtta mean something nice.

Pause. They look at each  
other. Then Sarah picks  
up the Pokurski file and  
holds it to her chest.

SARAH  
I'm going to go draw.

CAL  
Good idea.

SARAH  
I'll see you at lunch.

CAL  
Yeah.

Sarah leans in and kisses  
him on the cheek. Then  
she moves toward the door.

CAL  
You're taking Pokurski with you?

Sarah stops. She turns.  
She looks a little guilty;  
then she smiles.

SARAH  
He really is very handsome.

CAL  
(shaking his head)  
Get outta here.

With a playful glance, Sarah leaves, closing the door behind her. Cal chuckles to himself, then grows pensive. He leans against the door and broods.

Lights down.

SCENE FOUR

Lights up on the same room, late at night. Most of the light comes from a desk lamp. Cal is seated at the desk, hunched over, poring over some documents. He takes a sip of coffee. Softly, the door opens, and Sarah enters, carrying the Pokurski file. She closes the door behind her and stands watching Cal for a moment.

SARAH  
You're working late.

CAL  
Yeah, it's this damn bank fraud case. I'm out of my depth.

SARAH  
Don't the banks have their own investigators for that kind of thing?

CAL  
It's not that kind of bank.

SARAH  
Not a legal bank, you mean.

CAL  
Not *strictly* legal, no.

SARAH  
How much of what you do is not *strictly* legal?

CAL  
What am I, a lawyer?

SARAH  
If you had to guess.

CAL  
There's a certain amount of gray area.

SARAH  
And you live in that gray area.

CAL  
That's where the money is.

Sarah takes a few steps  
toward the desk and holds  
out the file.

SARAH  
I finished reading this.

CAL  
(focused on the papers in  
front of him)  
Come to any staggering conclusions?

SARAH  
I think she's lonely.

Cal looks up at her over  
his brows.

CAL  
(archly)  
Yeah, you have a future in this business.

SARAH  
That's why she comes to you, isn't it? She doesn't get the  
attention she wants at home. She gets it from you.

CAL  
It's too bad she's not my type.

SARAH  
I don't think you *have* a type.

CAL  
You think I'm completely indiscriminate.

SARAH  
No, I think you're completely celibate.

Cal looks up. He stares at her.

CAL  
Honey, you could not be more wrong.

SARAH  
How long has it been?

CAL  
Hours.

SARAH  
Years.

CAL  
What makes you say that?

SARAH  
You'll always find a reason not to.

CAL  
In your case, it's a pretty good reason.

SARAH  
Would you care to share it?

CAL  
Not much, no.

Pause. She takes a step toward him.

SARAH  
Am I too young for you?

CAL  
You're too young for anyone.

SARAH  
Do you think I'm untouched?

CAL  
None of my business.

SARAH  
Would it ease your mind to know that I've had --

CAL  
(cutting her off emphatically)  
It absolutely would not.

Pause. They look at each other.

Then Cal returns to his papers. Sarah comes around the desk, looking over his shoulder.

SARAH  
Can I see what you're working on?

CAL  
It's just a bunch of numbers.

SARAH  
Balance sheets.

CAL  
Yeah.

SARAH  
Can I see?

Cal sighs and relents. He stands up and steps away from the desk.

CAL  
Knock yourself out.

Sarah slides into Cal's chair and examines the papers. Cal crosses out from behind the desk, rubbing his tired face. Sarah glances up at him.

SARAH  
Are you all right?

CAL  
Yeah, I'm all right.

SARAH  
I'm surprised that you're working at this so hard.

CAL  
Why's that?

SARAH  
You recently "came into some money." You told Mrs. Pokurski. You don't need to work for a while. But here you are, burning the midnight oils.

CAL  
Oil.

Oil. SARAH

CAL  
I took this case on before you showed up.

SARAH  
And you couldn't just say "forget it"?

CAL  
Not to this kind of men.

SARAH  
I think you like it.

CAL  
Like what? Staring at balance sheets?

SARAH  
Working. I think you like working. I think you like your job.

CAL  
It's not a crime to like the job.

SARAH  
But you pretend you don't like it.

CAL  
I don't pretend anything.

SARAH  
Now you're pretending not to be pretending.

CAL  
This is more tiring than the bank statements.

SARAH  
Do you want me to shut up?

CAL  
Is that on the menu?

SARAH  
Of course.

CAL  
Then yes, please.

SARAH  
All right.

Pause. Sarah returns to  
perusing the documents.

Cal scuffs the floor with  
his foot.

CAL

Look, I didn't mean that you should ...

Sarah looks up, but says  
nothing.

CAL

I don't want you to shut up because I said to shut up. You should  
shut up if you want to. I mean, it should be your choice.

Sarah just stares at him.

CAL

Stop looking at me like that.

Sarah looks down at the  
papers.

CAL

Well, don't just *ignore* me!

Sarah looks up at Cal.  
Then she looks away.

CAL

Is this some kinda game you're playing?

SARAH

No. Honestly. It's not. I just want to make you happy.

CAL

I don't do happy.

SARAH

Can I make you pleased?

CAL

I don't wanna be pleased.

SARAH

What do you want?

CAL

(raising his voice)

I want what everybody wants! I want to make some sense of this  
bank fraud case, and then go to sleep in my bathtub!

Pause.

CAL

I'm sorry I shouted.

SARAH  
That wasn't shouting.

CAL  
Well, I spoke a little loudly.

SARAH  
You're allowed to speak loudly.

CAL  
Sure, but it's not very nice.

SARAH  
You don't have to be nice.

CAL  
What are you, my personal slave now?

SARAH  
More or less.

He stares at her.

CAL  
That's not ...

SARAH  
I know. It's not what you want.

CAL  
It's not right, Sarah.

SARAH  
I don't care what's right.

CAL  
You should.

SARAH  
Why?

CAL  
Because I don't know, because otherwise the world falls to pieces.

SARAH  
The world *is* falling to pieces.

CAL  
Well, you shouldn't oughtta be helping it.

SARAH  
If I ran away, would you come after me?



CAL

Well, I would certainly say some unkind things.

SARAH

And then would you respect me?

CAL

What do you mean?

SARAH

If I showed that much independence. Running away from you. I wonder if that would make you respect me.

CAL

What makes you think I don't respect you?

SARAH

It's why you won't share the bed.

CAL

It has nothing to do with that.

SARAH

It has everything to do with that. You believe I'm a victim. You can't see me as a woman. You can only see me as scared little girl on the run from dark forces.

CAL

You don't strike me as scared.

SARAH

I strike you as weak. And you want someone strong. You don't like the way I depend on you. It makes me undesirable.

CAL

You're not undesirable.

SARAH

Then why are you sleeping in a bathtub?

CAL

Saves time in the mornings.

SARAH

Cal. Talk honestly with me.

CAL

You wanna be honest? Let's be honest. Why do you want me so much? It's not because you're scared? It's not because you need me? It's why, then? My sparkling personality?

SARAH

Don't sell yourself short.

CAL

Don't sell me a bill of goods. We meet two years ago in a café in Paris, you're telling me you give me a second look? You're telling me I take you to bed? In Paris? When things are good? I don't believe it. You want me now because I'm what you've got now. And I don't much like being a marker of the depth you've sunk to.

Pause.

SARAH

(softly)

This is why you're alone, Cal.

CAL

I get more *done* alone.

SARAH

There is always a circumstance. There is always a situation. If you refuse to owe anything to chance, then you will never *have* anything. Would I have given you a second look in Paris? No, I doubt it. *Lucky for us* we didn't meet in Paris! *Lucky for us* there's a war in Europe. *Lucky for us* I need you. If you don't know luck when it's staring you in the face, Cal, you will die a lonely, lonely death.

CAL

I'm not afraid to die alone.

SARAH

You're afraid of good fortune.

CAL

I'm not afraid of anything.

SARAH

You're afraid of everything! You think I'm weak? I'm strong enough to say I want you. And you're weak enough to pretend you don't want me.

CAL

I didn't say you were weak.

SARAH

You treat me like a china doll.

CAL

There are worse ways to treat a woman.

SARAH

Show me one.

CAL

And I didn't say I didn't want you.

SARAH  
So say you want me.

CAL  
What for? So you can win the argument?

SARAH  
So we can *both* win.

CAL  
I don't want you that bad.

SARAH  
Bad enough to admit it.

CAL  
(fiercely)  
Bad enough to *take advantage!*

Pause. Cal continues in a  
softer tone.

CAL  
You're not weak. You're in a weak position. If I exploit that,  
what does that make me?

SARAH  
I'm *asking* you to exploit it.

CAL  
And I'm asking you *why*.

Pause.

CAL  
What are you not telling me, Sarah? You're being terribly  
persistent, but you're avoiding the main point. I do this for a  
living, you know. I can tell when I'm getting the edited version.

Pause. Sarah looks away.

SARAH  
When my mother was my age, she had two children. Even then, things  
were not easy for Jews in Europe. My mother told me things would  
be different in my lifetime. I was her hope for the future. She  
died in the hospital when she bore her fifth child. She died  
with a smile on her lips. She said she had given the world five  
gifts.

CAL  
You want children.

SARAH  
The world needs children.

CAL

The world needs to fix a few things first.

SARAH

And when does that time come? When will everything be in readiness? Do we wait to have children until then? We might wait till doomsday.

CAL

Maybe it's best if we do.

SARAH

I think the only weapon against war is love.

CAL

You're not talking about love, Sarah.

SARAH

What am I talking about?

CAL

Breeding.

Pause.

SARAH

When the war is over.

CAL

If there's anyone left alive.

SARAH

Will that be the time?

CAL

I hope so.

Sarah strides forward and extends her hand to Cal.

SARAH

Let's shake on it, then.

Cal looks at her, wondering and faintly amused.

CAL

We'll have kids when the war is over?

SARAH

We'll fall in love when the war is over. We'll see what happens after that.

CAL  
Does this mean you'll get off my case about the bathtub?

SARAH  
I'll never mention it again.

CAL  
All right.

He takes her hand.

CAL  
It's a deal.

They shake.

SARAH  
Excellent.

Briskly, Sarah steps away  
and retrieves the Pokurski  
file. She starts toward  
the door.

CAL  
Where are *you* going?

SARAH  
I'm going to take a stroll.

CAL  
I'm not supposed to let you out of my sight.

SARAH  
I'll be back in five minutes. If I'm not, you can come looking.

CAL  
What makes you think I'll come looking?

SARAH  
You told me you would.

Cal smiles. Sarah crosses  
to the door and opens it.  
She turns in the doorway  
and addresses Cal.

SARAH  
By the way, there's no bank fraud. It was a mathematical error.  
You'll find it. Bottom of Page Three.

CAL  
You're joking, right?

SARAH

Not at all. I'm very good with numbers. Father insisted.

CAL

You may be useful to me after all.

SARAH

We can only hope.

Sarah shoots him a smile, spins jauntily, and leaves, closing the door behind her. Cal looks at the door, then at his desk. He crosses behind the desk and sits down in his chair. He picks up the papers and turns to Page Three. He frowns at it.

CAL

I'll be damned ...

Cal reaches for a pencil and makes a small correction to the document in front of him. He leans back in his chair, a faint smile on his face, staring at the page in his hand. Lights fade.

SCENE FIVE

Lights up on the same room. Cal is leaning back in his chair, hands behind his head, waiting. He looks at his watch. Then he straightens up and turns his attention to some papers on his desk.

There is a knock at the door. Cal looks up, curiously.

CAL

Come in!

Edna enters, looking pale.  
She closes the door behind  
her.

CAL  
Good morning, Mrs. Pokurski! I wasn't expecting you today.

EDNA  
I hope I'm not intruding.

CAL  
Not at all. Please, sit down.

EDNA  
Thank you.

Edna makes her way to the  
chair, a little unsteadily.  
She half-collapses into  
it.

CAL  
Are you all right?

EDNA  
Yes. Thank you.

CAL  
Would you like a glass of water?

EDNA  
I'm fine. Thanks.

Pause. Cal eyes her  
curiously. After a moment,  
she looks up.

EDNA  
You know, I would love a glass of water.

CAL  
Sure. No trouble.

Cal gets up and exits the  
room. Edna takes out a  
handkerchief and dabs the  
corners of her eyes. She  
breathes deeply. Cal re-  
enters with a glass of  
water and hands it to her.

CAL  
Here you are.

EDNA

Thank you, dear.

CAL

Not at all.

Cal settles against the  
front of his desk and folds  
his arms.

CAL

So. What did the old rascal do this time?

EDNA

He's dead.

There is a frozen pause.  
Cal's face goes pale.

CAL

I'm so sorry ...

EDNA

It's all right, dear. It was his time.

Pause. Cal struggles to  
think of something  
worthwhile to say.

CAL

Did he go peacefully?

EDNA

I believe so.

Edna takes a moment to  
collect herself, then goes  
on:

EDNA

It was in the night. When his snoring stopped, it woke me --  
like you said it would. I opened my eyes very carefully, in case  
he was up at the telegraph machine again. But he wasn't. He was  
lying right beside me, poor dear, on his back the way he always  
sleeps, and his mouth was open but no sound was coming out. I  
knew at once it was all over. The day Viktor Pokurski stops  
snoring is the day he dies.

CAL

Did you send for a doctor?

EDNA

There was no need. I didn't want to bother anybody till morning.

(MORE)

EDNA (CONT'D)

So I just rolled over onto my side and put my arms around him -- to keep him warm.

She pauses, overcome, but  
then soldiers on.

EDNA

We didn't sleep like that anymore. I flail about in my sleep, and it would disturb him. But it didn't matter now. I put my arms around him, and I held him so tightly, and I felt so close to him. As close as ever. But I knew that in the morning they would take him away, and so I held on, and held on, and held on, and the next thing I knew it was morning, and I had to get up and make the phone calls, and I left him there lying on his back in the bedroom, and went downstairs.

She smiles, and dabs at her  
eyes with the handkerchief.

EDNA

It's strange, but even though I knew I was alone now, that wasn't what bothered me. What bothered me was that *he* was alone.

She stops, again struck  
mute by emotion. Cal shifts  
uneasily, at a loss.

CAL

Do you need any help with the ... arrangements?

EDNA

No, dear, bless you. You've been such a help already. I only wanted to come by and let you know that the case is closed on Viktor Pokurski. And I wanted to thank you, too. I had one day with him that was completely free of suspicion, free of jealousy, free of fear. That may seem like a small thing to you. But it wasn't. It meant the world to me. Although I do wish I'd had more than the one day ...

Tears come into her eyes  
again, and she bows her  
head, embarrassed. At  
last, Cal steps forward  
and puts his hand on Edna's  
shoulder.

CAL

I'm very sorry to hear about your husband. He was a fine man.

EDNA

Yes. He was.

CAL

And he loved you.

EDNA

(in a tiny voice)

I know.

For a moment, they are motionless, with Cal's hand resting firmly on Edna's shoulder. Then she sniffs, and shifts in her seat, and Cal withdraws his hand.

EDNA

You know, I had the funniest dream last night.

CAL

You mean ... afterwards?

EDNA

No, I think it was before.

She shakes her head, as if to clear it.

EDNA

Oh, it's all mixed up in my head. I remember what you said about my mind. I can't trust it the way I used to. And you're right. When Viktor stopped snoring, and I slowly opened my eyes, I could have sworn I saw a woman in the doorway. A beautiful young woman. My first thought was "Rita! That conniving wench!"

She laughs.

EDNA

But it wasn't Rita. It was a very young woman, very soft and lovely. She had a needle, with a plunger in it -- you know, the kind that ...

CAL

A syringe.

EDNA

Yes. And she put it away into a little bag, and she gave one last glance at Viktor, and then she slipped through the door and was gone.

She smiles.

EDNA

Isn't it funny the things you imagine?

(MORE)

EDNA (CONT'D)

Even at the end, I was still so jealous. Having nightmares about lovely young women. I must be a very silly old thing.

CAL

What did she look like?

EDNA

It's very hazy. I must have been half asleep.

CAL

Fair skin? Dark hair? Big wide eyes?

EDNA

Maybe ...

Edna looks up at Cal  
curiously.

EDNA

Did you dream about her too?

Cal turns away and puts his  
fists on the desk, his  
head bowed. He stays this  
way for a long moment --  
long enough to make Edna  
concerned.

EDNA

Are you all right, Mr. Harvey?

Cal raises his head.

CAL

Sarah!

Pause.

CAL

Sarah, I know you can hear me. Would you come in here a moment,  
please?

Edna stares at Cal. Cal  
turns to look at her.

CAL

Do you have a weak heart, Mrs. Pokurski?

EDNA

(confused)  
No. Not at all.

Good.

CAL

Cal turns his attention to the door. After several long seconds, the door opens slowly, revealing Sarah. Her head is lowered, her face flushed. She carries the Pokurski file.

CAL  
(in a tight, controlled voice)  
Close the door, please.

Sarah turns and closes the door behind her.

CAL  
Mrs. Pokurski, this is Sarah. Don't be rude, Sarah. Look up.

With a mighty effort, Sarah looks up and meets Edna's eyes. Edna gasps and puts a hand to her chest.

EDNA  
My word!

CAL  
That's what I thought.

SARAH  
Cal, let me explain ...

CAL  
You better sit down first. You have a *lot* of explaining to do.

In a daze, Sarah casts about her for somewhere to sit. Cal fetches his chair from behind the desk and plunks it down between Edna and the desk's front edge. Sarah drifts over to it and sits down; Cal looms above her, leaning on his desk.

CAL  
All right. Let's hear it.

SARAH

They have my family, Cal.

CAL

Can you prove that?

SARAH

Can you prove it was me in Mrs. Pokurski's bedroom?

CAL

That's the beauty part; I don't have to. You're an illegal immigrant. All I have to prove is that you're here in New York, and you'll be shipped off to prison or straight back to good old Nazi-infested Europe. Not a pretty picture either way. You better come clean, princess. I may turn you in anyway, out of spite. But if you lie to me, I *certainly* will.

EDNA

Mr. Harvey, who *is* this woman?

CAL

We're about to find out.

Pause.

CAL

(to Sarah)

Speak.

SARAH

I was at school in Paris. That part was true. And I really did hide in a cellar when the Germans took the city. It's even true that Desmond was the one who found me. Only he wasn't there on behalf of my father. He was working for the SS.

CAL

I should've guessed that.

SARAH

You're not the first one to be fooled.

(resuming her story)

Desmond told me that his men in Germany had taken my father. They had my sisters too. He showed me little keepsakes -- paper dolls, and scraps of clothing, and things I knew they had. And he told me if I was very, very good, no harm would come to them. Only I would have to be very good indeed.

CAL

And were you?

SARAH

I had no choice, Cal. I did everything he said. Everything. He became a protector and a lover and a torturer all at once.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

At times I even thought I loved him. That was how deeply he crept into my soul.

CAL

What brought you to me?

SARAH

He never told me. He never told me anything except what my next order was. He wouldn't give me a chance to think ahead, or make any plans of my own. I didn't know we were crossing the ocean until I heard the ship's whistle. Half the time, I didn't know if I was in a train, or a boat, or a warehouse. He wanted to be everything -- even my eyes. I've never felt so helpless. Not even in the cellar.

CAL

What were his orders when you got here?

SARAH

To wait for his word. To tell you nothing.  
(more softly)  
To get close to you.

CAL

(hoarsely)  
Why me?

SARAH

He never told me!

CAL

You must have a pretty good guess.

She looks up at him, blankly.  
Then she holds up the file.

CAL

Viktor Pokurski?

SARAH

Read it.

CAL

I've read it.

SARAH

I've added a few pages. Transcripts. I found them in Viktor's cubbyhole, where he kept the telegraph. Desmond has the originals, but I copied them out. He doesn't know.

She turns to Edna.

SARAH

I'm so sorry, Mrs. Pokurski ...

CAL

Don't speak to her.

Cal considers the file. He makes as if to hand it to Edna.

CAL

Mrs. Pokurski, would you like to --

SARAH

(emphatically)

Cal.

Cal looks at her.

SARAH

You read it first.

Cal stares at her, then nods. He opens the file and turns to the new pages. He reads. His eyes widen. He slumps against the desk. He reads.

At last, after a long, awful moment, he closes the file, like a man in a dream. He stares straight ahead of him, unseeing. His face has turned the color of ash.

Pause.

EDNA

What is it, Mr. Harvey?

CAL

The Jews ...

Pause.

EDNA

Mr. Harvey, I've been alive a long time. I'm used to bad news from Europe about the Jews.

Cal shakes his head, still staring straight in front of him.

CAL

This is different. Not just beatings and fires and ghettos. They're going the whole way this time. Doing it like scientists. Like modern men. Doing it the way you rid a house of vermin. You don't just make an example of a few prominent offenders. You don't just pass laws or hand out propaganda. You make a project of it. You round them up -- and you burn them. Every last one.

He looks at Sarah.

CAL

Ovens. It says, ovens.

She nods.

SARAH

Yes.

He takes a step forward,  
brandishing the papers.

CAL

I swear before God, if this is a lie ...

SARAH

Cal, I only wish it were. Viktor knew. He's dead because he knew. If it were a lie, why go after him? It's only dangerous if it's true.

There is a long, awful pause,  
as they all privately try  
to take in the magnitude  
of what they've learned.  
At last, Edna turns to  
Sarah, gently.

EDNA

Was my husband a spy, dear?

Sarah nods.

SARAH

He was in contact with Polish freedom fighters. He passed their messages along to a network in New York. It was all there in his papers. He was a very brave man.

Edna nods to herself.

EDNA

Yes. He was.

SARAH

You should be proud of him.

EDNA

I always have been.

Edna looks up at Sarah again.

EDNA

You killed him.

SARAH

Yes.

EDNA

To protect your family?

Sarah nods. Edna reaches out a hand and puts it on Sarah's wrist. She squeezes, firmly but not painfully. Sarah meets her eye, wondering and afraid.

EDNA

I understand.

They remain like this for a long moment. Cal watches, transfixed. Then Sarah collapses forward and begins sobbing. Edna puts her arms around her comfortingly.

EDNA

There, there, dear. It's all right.

Sarah sobs into Edna's motherly embrace. After a few moments of this, Cal returns his attention to the papers. A dark look comes over his face.

CAL

Sarah.

She looks up at him, mastering her tears.

CAL

How did you get your orders from Desmond? The new ones.

SARAH

Slips of paper. He leaves them under a brick in the alley outside the building.

CAL

And you pick them up on your five-minute "walks."

She nods.

CAL

That means he's still in New York.

SARAH

I think so.

CAL

Can you get him a message?

SARAH

What are you going to do?

CAL

I'd like to meet with him. Face-to-face. Tonight, if possible.

SARAH

Why?

CAL

See if we can straighten out a few things.

SARAH

He's a killer, Cal. He's absolutely heartless.

CAL

I'm not exactly Santa Claus myself.

EDNA

Vengeance belongs to God, Mr. Harvey.

CAL

God can wait his turn.

Edna stares at Cal. Sarah  
lowers her head. Lights  
fade.

SCENE SIX

Lights up on the same room,  
late at night.

The lights are mostly out, but a desk lamp is illuminated, and Sarah sits behind the desk, quietly drawing. After a few moments, the door opens, and Desmond steps in, wearing his overcoat. He regards Sarah for a moment from the doorway.

DESMOND

What was so urgent, butterfly?

She ignores him. He takes a step into the room.

DESMOND

I don't like coming here. It's enemy territory. If you were any other agent, I would assume you'd been turned. But I trust you, butterfly. I wanted to show you that. And I want you to know that you can trust me.

Pause.

DESMOND

Darling?

He takes another step forward. His face grows hard.

DESMOND

I am *speaking* to you.

Cal, who has crouched unseen behind the couch, bolts forward and yanks the top of Desmond's overcoat down over his elbows, pinning his arms to his sides. Deftly, he reaches around the front of Desmond's torso and slips the gun from his holster; then he shoves Desmond backwards into the chair and trains the gun on him. All of this happens quickly, smoothly, as if in one motion. It ends in a frozen moment of utter helplessness for Desmond.

Cal stands panting triumphantly, the look in his eyes a little wild. He wipes his brow with his forearm.

CAL

Pull up your collar. You look ridiculous.

Glaring, Desmond restores his overcoat to its proper position, as Cal backs away a step or two.

CAL

Sorry for the subterfuge. I didn't think you much wanted to see me.

Desmond just glares.

CAL

Oh, come on, don't be rude. Say *something*.

DESMOND

You will burn in the fires of a righteous Hell, Jewish dog.

CAL

You know, I've always been partial to "Hello."

Desmond just glares.

CAL

Sarah, would you leave us alone for a moment? I think Desmond's embarrassed to speak in front of you.

SARAH

Of course.

Sarah crosses out from behind the desk, and, on her way to the door, kisses Cal pretty torridly. Cal keeps the gun trained on Desmond throughout. Desmond's fingers clench with impotent fury.

Sarah breaks the kiss and exits, closing the door.

CAL

Sweet girl. I can see what you saw in her. Still, it's always more fun when they want you, isn't it?

Desmond says nothing.

CAL

You know, so far this is a very one-sided interrogation.

No response.

CAL

Come to think of it, I like the sound of *my* voice better anyhow. Let me see if I can do the whole thing myself. You'll let me know if I foul up something important.

Cal pauses for a moment,  
collecting his thoughts.

CAL

You captured a Polish freedom fighter with a telegraph machine. Found out he'd been sending messages to New York. This man had been in the camps, and you knew only too well what sort of message he'd be likely to send. So you started sniffing around through your contacts here. Maybe heard something about a newsstand that stays open despite a lack of business. Followed Pokurski from there, and discovered that I'd been sniffing around too. Jackpot. If I was after the same thing, and I had it, you could get the dirt you needed without coming anywhere *near* Pokurski. After all, secret agents don't like to get too directly involved in things. That's how they stay secret.

Cal has been pacing, and  
has now reached the edge  
of his desk. He turns and  
looks over his shoulder at  
Desmond.

CAL

That about right so far?

No response.

CAL

Good.

Cal leans against the edge  
of his desk and continues.

CAL

So what kind of bait do you use on a broken-down Jewish gumshoe? A beautiful Jewish girl. And you had just the girl for the job, didn't you? The only catch was, I didn't know anything. So you had to send her in a little deeper than you planned.

Pause.

CAL

For the record, I don't think you bungled this caper too badly. Sarah's a bright girl, and you had her in your pocket. How were you to know the old lady was a light sleeper? Or that she was just a little less batty than she seemed?

Pause.

CAL

Don't beat yourself up, "Desmond." You did fine. The fact is, I didn't even outplay you. I just had some luck, that's all.

Pause. Cal leans forward  
toward Desmond.

CAL

But here's your problem now. I got friends in the newspapers. Jewish men, some of 'em. They'd give their best tie for a story like this. And I got no reason not to give it to 'em.

DESMOND

So give it to them.

CAL

I fully intend to.

DESMOND

Then do so. You took all this trouble to get me here so that you could what? Gloat? Ask my advice? Warn me? Why have you not gone to the newspapers already?

CAL

It's late.

DESMOND

Wake them up.

CAL

It can wait till morning.

DESMOND

It can wait forever. It will make no difference.

Pause. Cal stares. Desmond  
leans forward in his chair,  
a smug gleam in his eye.

DESMOND

But I am telling you something you already know. Am I not? It will make no difference. The newspapers are full of your war effort. They do not want this to be a war about Jews. They do not like Jews. Hitler is enormously popular here, if only as an enemy. He is on the cover of your comic books. He is a star.

(MORE)

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Jews are not popular. They are not bad enough to be hated, not good enough to be loved. They are inconvenient. Pitiabile as victims, yes, but victims are not very interesting. You Americans want "good guys" and "bad guys" and beautiful girls to rescue. You are not ready to be seen as a Jew-loving country. And so this story will never sell.

CAL

You're wrong.

DESMOND

Maybe I *am* wrong. Let's assume that. The story sells. It captures the public imagination. What then?

Desmond pauses significantly,  
as if waiting for Cal to  
answer. Then he goes on,  
with some enjoyment.

DESMOND

It will make no difference. You are at war with Germany anyway -- and the camps are behind enemy lines. Mr. Roosevelt will not bomb the camps. It might too easily look like cruelty, and anyway it would divert his forces. Will he send in special units to free the prisoners while the battle goes on around them? Can he afford to? He has a war to win.

CAL

I think he'll be interested to know what you're doing to your own citizens.

DESMOND

You don't think he knows already? It is a massive operation. We are very good at keeping secrets, but even we are not *that* good. Of course he knows! And he will do nothing! Because he lives in a Jew-fearing country, and he has bigger fish to fry!

Pause. Cal searches for a  
rebuttal. He finds himself  
stymied. Then he brightens.

CAL

If, as you're so eager to say, it "doesn't make any difference," why did Viktor Pokurski become a target? Why did he die?

DESMOND

We knew the origin of the messages, but we did not know their content. We were afraid he might know something truly damaging. Troop movements, or a secret battle plan. If we had known it was this? Only this? This little matter of cleaning up the house? We would hardly have bothered. So like a Jew, to treat the suffering of his people as a secret of the utmost importance.

(MORE)

DESMOND (CONT'D)

The Jews have always suffered. The Jews *will* always suffer. What the Führer offers is simply an end to your suffering.

Cal fumes, but can find  
nothing to say.

DESMOND

I'm sorry to be so blunt, Mr. Glazer. But you see, I very much doubt that I will be leaving this room alive.

CAL

You think I'm going to kill you?

DESMOND

I'd bet my life on it.

Cal smiles.

CAL

You have it all wrong, Cinderella. I've already beaten you. As far as I'm concerned, we're even.

DESMOND

That's very broad-minded of you.

CAL

On the other hand, you do have a bit of reckoning to do. Scales to be balanced. I'm sure you understand.

DESMOND

But not with you?

CAL

No. Not with me.

DESMOND

(nodding, frowning)

Oh. Yes. I think I see what you mean.

The door opens, and Sarah  
enters. She stands for a  
moment in the doorway.

DESMOND

Butterfly.

Sarah advances toward  
Desmond. Cal takes a step  
back to give her room.

DESMOND

I was everything to you. Remember the boats and the trains?

(MORE)

DESMOND (CONT'D)

I took you places. I taught you things. I made you a woman.  
Are you so ungrateful?

Sarah produces a syringe.

DESMOND

Your father and sisters! We can make an arrangement! I have  
great influence in the Party. They listen to me. We can come to  
an understanding.

SARAH

I know what's happened to my father and my sisters.

DESMOND

(his last effort)

I love you.

SARAH

I hate you with all my soul.

Sarah plunges the syringe  
into Desmond's arm. He  
cries out. He puts an arm  
around her. They remain  
locked in a strange embrace,  
as Desmond flails and kicks  
and then lies still.

Sarah releases him. She  
steps back, trembling,  
eyes locked on Desmond's  
corpse.

Cal sets the gun on his  
desk and goes to her. He  
puts his arms around her  
from behind. She continues  
staring at Desmond's body.

CAL

You're safe now.

SARAH

(a whisper)

Yes.

CAL

You ended it.

SARAH

Yes.

CAL

I'm proud of you.

She shakes him off violently  
and gives him a wild look.

SARAH

*Don't!* Be *proud*.

Cal raises his hands in  
surrender.

CAL

I won't. I'm sorry.

Sarah stares at him for a  
moment, then turns her  
attention back to the body.

SARAH

What will we do with him?

CAL

East River is traditional.

SARAH

Shouldn't we bury him?

CAL

After what he did to you?

She turns to look at Cal  
and speaks with quiet,  
immense conviction.

SARAH

We have to be better, Cal. The whole world has to be better.

Cal blinks at her. Then he  
nods.

CAL

Yeah. All right. We'll bury him. We can find a spot in the  
park.

SARAH

Not in the park.

CAL

How about New Jersey?

Slowly, reluctantly, Sarah  
smiles.

Perfect. SARAH

Pause. Sarah looks at Desmond's body. Cal looks at her. After several moments, she turns and faces him again.

What am I? SARAH

Not a butterfly. CAL

What, then? SARAH

A survivor. CAL

I'm a killer. SARAH

You're a survivor. CAL

I murdered that poor old man. SARAH

It's a war, Sarah. Nobody comes out clean. CAL

I changed my mind. I don't think I want children. SARAH

It's a shame. CAL

Why? SARAH

They would be extraordinary people. CAL

They would be killers. SARAH

Maybe that's what we need. CAL

Sarah stares at Cal for a moment. Then she buries herself in his arms.

He holds her close. They  
sway gently. Lights fade  
slowly, slowly to black.