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.
Generally?

EDNA

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

I think you ought to try harder.

I don't see what else I can do.

Pause.

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

Slight pause.

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

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.

What is your point, Mr. Harvey?

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.

It's well past dinner time.

Okay, tomorrow's roast.

Tomorrow's Wednesday. We're having veal.

Sounds delicious.

It will be. I make very good veal.
I'm sure you do. Mrs. Pokurski, in my opinion, your husband doesn't want anyone's veal but yours.

Pause.

Is that a metaphor?

Cal shrugs.

Take it as you like.

You're very cheeky, Mr. Harvey.

Don't worry. No extra charge.

I think I know my marriage better than you do.

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.

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

That isn't what I was --

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

I understand, I understand! I am repulsive.

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.

Then why all the suspicion?

It is not a suspicion. A woman knows.
But how do you know?

It's hard to describe.

Give it a try.

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.

In other words, he's happy.

I suppose so.

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

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

And there's no other warning signs?

Such as what?

Well, some women complain of, uh ...

Pause.

Yes?

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

He stops himself, tries again.

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, 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 breathtakingly 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.

Thanks. So do the rats.

Is that a figure of speech?

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

Thank you.

Desmond sits down opposite the desk.

What can I do for you?

Are you a religious man?

Cal is surprised. Slight pause.

Do I look like a religious man?

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

I guess what I meant to say was: no.

Were you, at one time?

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

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

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.

Because of your parents.
Yeah. Well, grandparents. I think they took my parents, and my parents took me.

But it didn't take.

No, not really. Why? Are you religious?

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

Pause.

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

I read the papers.

Not just the funnies?

The war's in the funnies too.

Why are you not overseas, fighting for your country?

I get seasick.

And that was enough for an exemption?

I argued my case well.

Have you any political convictions?

What's your case, Mister?

I'm coming around to it.

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

You're a very clever man.
Is that why you're so interested in my conversation?

This isn't conversation. This is an interview.

Really? Who's interviewing who?

I suppose it's mutual.

Are you some kind of reporter?

Do I look like some kind of reporter?

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

Yes, you do.

Political convictions?

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

You don't know my business.

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.

Are you Catholic?

Pause. Cal scrutinizes Desmond.

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.

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 un buckles 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.
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.

Who the hell are you?

Who do you think I am?

I'm not much for riddles, Rumplestiltskin.

How much of the Torah do you remember?

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

What is that, a Jewish thing?

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

You better get the hell out of my office.

I don't think you want that.

Cal crosses around the desk and looms over Desmond.

Who are you?

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

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.

Who are you?

You can call me Desmond.
I can call you hamburger. Shall we make the name fit?

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

What do you want?

I want you to admit the truth.

What truth?

You're Jewish.

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

You're as Jewish as they come.

Cal slaps him again.

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

Pause. Cal releases Desmond's shirt.

(hoarsely)

How do you know?

I was informed.

By who?

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.

A bit louder, please.

(forcefully)

Saul Glazer.

Desmond nods.

Where were you born?

Romania.

How long have you been Cal Harvey?

Since I fell in love with a Christian woman.

And what happened to her?

She found out.

Pause.

Don't you feel better?

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.

Slight pause.

May I have some of that good Scotch?

No.
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?

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.

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.

You're not serious.

DESMOND
I am entirely serious.

You believe in curses?

DESMOND
I believe in what I see.

And you've seen curses?

DESMOND
I've seen patterns.

And you attribute them to curses.

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

Cal me Cal.

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

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.

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.
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.

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?

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?

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

What did the machine look like?

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

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

I believe so.

Why would your husband use a telegraph machine?

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

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

What else could it be?

Cal shakes his head.

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

You don't believe me.

I didn't say that.

You were shaking your head.

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

Just in general?

Right! Exactly.
As a form of calisthenics, perhaps?

Cal smiles.

Mrs. Pokurski, you're an intelligent woman.

(stonily)

That's very kind of you, thank you.

You must know how this story sounds.

How does it sound?

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.

Do you treat all your clients like this?

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

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

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

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.
These are photos of Rita Hayworth.

Yes, I know.

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

I know that too.

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

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?

That is precisely what I'm telling you.

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

I'll look into it.

I'm very much obliged.

Edna stands up and gathers her things.

(holding out the folder)
Don't forget these.

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

I suppose you're right.

Thank you for taking this seriously, Mr. Harvey. As you can imagine, I'm very anxious to have my husband back.
I'll do everything in my power, Mrs. Pokurski.

You're a good man, Mr. Harvey.

Well, I've known worse men.

Good luck.

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.

Am I interrupting anything?

Just ... reviewing a case.

Anything interesting?

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

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.

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.

Absolutely.

DESMOND

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

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.

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.

DESMOND
I'm ... fond of the girl.

CAL
You're a regular sweetheart.

DESMOND
Very fond.

Cal frowns.

CAL
I don't think I take your meaning.

DESMOND
You will.

Desmond crosses to the door.

DESMOND
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.

CAL
Bon voyage.

DESMOND
Thank you.

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

DESMOND
Mr. Harvey?

CAL
Cinderella?

DESMOND
Behave yourself.

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 Harvey.

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

You call him Desmond?

Of course. What else would I call him?

I call him Cinderella.

(grinning impishly)
He must not like that much.

I suppose not.

Pause.

May I sit down?

Yes! Sorry, yes.

Thank you.

She sits in the chair. Cal hovers awkwardly.

Can I offer you a drink?

No, thank you.

You don't drink?

Not before noon.

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  

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  
(covers 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.
Yeah. Let's go with that.

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

Well, I'm an old-fashioned guy.

I don't think you are.

(flatter)

I'm not.

Do you know what money is?

The stuff dreams are made of?

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

Other than Swedish, right?

You joke, but I think you follow me.

I think I do.

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.

I never looked at it like that.

Most people don't.

Cal cocks his head curiously.
You learned all this from an English nanny?

Sarah grins.

I didn't say my father taught me nothing.

Very wealthy man, your father.

He's done well.

What's his business, again?

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

Not a haberdasher, then?

He has his fingers in many pies.

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.

Are you putting on a little show for me?


You have a funny way of talking.

Let's not get personal.

Why not?

Pause. Cal stares at Sarah.

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.
Perfectly.

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

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.

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

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.

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

Desmond isn't here.

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

How will he find out?

Maybe I'll tell him.

Why would you do that?

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.

You're a funny man.

SARAH

Funny like Charlie Chaplin, or funny like a smell?

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.

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.
SARAH

No hurry.

CAL

(grabbing a pen and some loose paper)

Here. Write a memoir.

Thank you.

SARAH

Any time.

As Sarah exits, her gaze lingers on Cal.

Happy working.

SARAH

You too.

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?
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.

EDNA

Release him?

CAL

Absolutely.

EDNA

What does that mean?

CAL

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

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

EDNA

How much do I owe you?

CAL

Let's call it even.

EDNA

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

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?

EDNA

(a bit bewildered)

Yes. All right.

CAL

(standing up)

Can I help you with your things?

EDNA

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

CAL

Let me get the door.

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.
SARAH
I don't believe you.

CAL
I didn't think you were so naive.

SARAH
I didn't think you were so sentimental.

CAL
Honey, you got me all wrong.

SARAH
Maybe.

CAL
Definitely.

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

CAL
I've seen him.

SARAH
What's he like?

CAL
Very ordinary. Why do you care?

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

CAL
I was paid to take an interest.

SARAH
All right then, I'm bored.

CAL
You should work on your memoir.

SARAH
I'm not a writer.

CAL
No? What do you do in there?

SARAH
I draw.

CAL
Can I see?
First tell me about the husband.

Why are you so curious?

Sarah shrugs.

I told you. Bored.

Viktor Pokurski is not the cure for boredom.

Please?

All right, have it your way.

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

Here's the file. Knock yourself out.

You kept a file?

Cal shrugs.

It was a job.

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

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.

This is very thorough.

I'm a professional.

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.
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.

SARAH

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

CAL

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

SARAH

I told you I wouldn't mind sharing.

CAL

Actually, you went further than that.

SARAH

Yes.

CAL

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.

SARAH

That's about right.

CAL

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

SARAH

You'd like more of a challenge.

CAL

Yeah, I guess so.

SARAH

Why?

CAL

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?

SARAH

But you are reading it.
I can't seem to help it.

And it's making you hold back.

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

So what do you want me to do?

I can't help being a refugee, Cal.
I can't help needing you.

I know that.

So what can I do about it?

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

Physically?

Sure, why not?

You're much stronger than I am.

Yeah, but I'm not gonna fight you.

Not even to get what you want?

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

I thought all men were that kind of guy.

Who told you that?

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

Well, it was more complicated than that.
How so?

SARAH

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.

I never quite put it together that way before.

Glad I could help.

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

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

I'm not a king.

I'm not a mythical Greek beauty.

I guess we're not that important.

I think you're right.

I guess we can kinda do what we want.

It seems that way.

What do you want, Sarah?

A lady never tells.

They drift together. They kiss. Cal pulls away.

I can't do it.

You're doing fine.

I can't do it.

Why not?
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
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.

Honey, you could not be more wrong.

How long has it been?

Hours.

Years.

What makes you say that?

You'll always find a reason not to.

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

Would you care to share it?

Not much, no.

Pause. She takes a step toward him.

Am I too young for you?

You're too young for anyone.

Do you think I'm untouched?

None of my business.

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

(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.
SARAH
Oil.

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.

I don't do happy.

SARAH
Can I make you pleased?

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.
That wasn't shouting.

Well, I spoke a little loudly.

You're allowed to speak loudly.

Sure, but it's not very nice.

You don't have to be nice.

What are you, my personal slave now?

More or less.

He stares at her.

That's not ...

I know. It's not what you want.

It's not right, Sarah.

I don't care what's right.

You should.

Why?

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

The world is falling to pieces.

Well, you shouldn't oughtta be helping it.

If I ran away, would you come after me?
Ran away where? CAL

You wouldn't know where. SARAH

Then how could I come after you? CAL

You're a detective. SARAH

Yeah, not a foxhound. CAL

Would you even try? SARAH

Pause.

I guess I would try. CAL

And what if you found me? SARAH

I'd give myself a medal. CAL

What would you do to me? SARAH

Something not very nice. CAL

You'd hit me. SARAH

No, I wouldn't hit you. CAL

You'd shout at me. SARAH

Like you've never been shouted at before. CAL

Slight pause.

That doesn't sound very threatening, does it? SARAH

There isn't much you could threaten me with.
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.

I get more done alone.

CAL  

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.
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.
The world needs to fix a few things first.

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.

Maybe it's best if we do.

I think the only weapon against war is love.

You're not talking about love, Sarah.

What am I talking about?

Breeding.

Pause.

When the war is over.

If there's anyone left alive.

Will that be the time?

I hope so.

Sarah strides forward and extends her hand to Cal.

Let's shake on it, then.

Cal looks at her, wondering and faintly amused.

We'll have kids when the war is over?

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

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

I hope I'm not intruding.

Not at all. Please, sit down.

Thank you.

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

Are you all right?

Yes. Thank you.

Would you like a glass of water?

I'm fine. Thanks.

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

You know, I would love a glass of water.

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.

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 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.

(in a tight, controlled voice)

Close the door, please.

Sarah turns and closes the door behind her.

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.

My word!

That's what I thought.

Cal, let me explain ...

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.

All right. Let's hear it.
They have my family, Cal.

Can you prove that?

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

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.

Mr. Harvey, who is this woman?

We're about to find out.

Pause.

(to Sarah)

Speak.

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.

I should've guessed that.

You're not the first one to be fooled.

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.

And were you?

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

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

Don't speak to her.

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

Mrs. Pokurski, would you like to --

(emphatically)

Cal.

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.

What is it, Mr. Harvey?

The Jews ...

Pause.

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.
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.

Ovens. It says, ovens.

She nods.

Yes.

He takes a step forward, brandishing the papers.

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

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.

Was my husband a spy, dear?

Sarah nods.

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.

Yes. He was.

You should be proud of him.
I always have been.

Edna looks up at Sarah again.

You killed him.

Yes.

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.

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 comfortably.

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.

Sarah.

She looks up at him, mastering her tears.

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.

I think so.

SARAH
Can you get him a message?

CAL
What are you going to do?

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

Why?

SARAH
See if we can straighten out a few things.

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.

So give it to them.

DESMOND
I fully intend to.

CAL
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?

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. Pitiable 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.
I'm proud of you.

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

Don't! Be proud.

Cal raises his hands in surrender.

I won't. I'm sorry.

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

What will we do with him?

East River is traditional.

Shouldn't we bury him?

After what he did to you?

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

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

Cal blinks at her. Then he nods.

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

Not in the park.

How about New Jersey?

Slowly, reluctantly, Sarah smiles.
SARAH

Perfect.

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

SARAH

What am I?

CAL

Not a butterfly.

SARAH

What, then?

CAL

A survivor.

SARAH

I'm a killer.

CAL

You're a survivor.

SARAH

I murdered that poor old man.

CAL

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

SARAH

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

CAL

It's a shame.

SARAH

Why?

CAL

They would be extraordinary people.

SARAH

They would be killers.

CAL

Maybe that's what we need.

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.