

INT. EUGENE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

LOUISE enters the room. EUGENE sits at his desk.

EUGENE

Well, Mrs. Reed. Sit down. What can I do for you?

LOUISE

Hello, Gene. How are you?

EUGENE

Fine. And you?

LOUISE

I'm fine.

He goes over to her, hesitates in front of her, then crosses and closes the hotel room door.

EUGENE

Sit down. How's Jack?

LOUISE

He's fine. He's in Russia.

EUGENE

Is he?

LOUISE

Yes, he's trying to get recognition from the Comintern for the Communist Labor Party. You see, they've split into two different factions.

LOUISE puts her coat down, goes over to an armchair, sits down.

EUGENE

And you? Left alone with your work again?

LOUISE

No. Well, actually yes, but my work is different now. I do a lot of lecturing about what I saw in Russia.

EUGENE

Ah, yes, Russia. Russia's been good for you and Jack. Given you a way to meet people, given him a reason to leave home. Russia. Russia.

LOUISE

Are you really that cynical or are you angry with me?

EUGENE

I'm really that cynical. Why would I be angry with you?

LOUISE

Gene, if you'd been to Russia, you'd never be cynical about anything again. You would have seen people transformed. Ordinary people.

EUGENE

Louise, something in me tightens when an American intellectual's eyes shine and they start to talk to me about the Russian people...

LOUISE

Wait...

EUGENE

Something in me says: "Watch it. A new version of Irish Catholicism is being offered for your faith"...

LOUISE

It's not like that...

EUGENE

And I wonder why a lovely wife like Louise Reed, who's just seen the brave new world is sitting around with a cynical bastard like me instead of trotting all over Russia with her idealistic husband. It's almost worth being converted.

LOUISE

(getting up)

Well, I was wrong to come.

EUGENE

You and Jack have a lot of middle-class dreams for two radicals. Jack dreams that he can hustle the American working man, whose one dream is to be rich enough not to have to work, into a revolution led by his party. And you dream that if you discuss the revolution with a

(MORE)

EUGENE (CONT'D)

man before you go to bed with him, it'll be missionary work rather than sex. I'm sorry to see Jack and you so serious about your sports. It's particularly disappointing in you, Louise. You had a lighter touch when you were touting free love.

LOUISE

Boy, you've become quite the critic, haven't you, Gene? Just leaned back and analyzed us all. Duplicitous women who tout free love and then get married, power-mad journalists who join the revolution instead of observing it, middle-class radicals who come looking for sex and then talk about Russia. It must seem so contemptible to a man like you, who has the courage to sit on his ass and observe human inadequacy from the inside of a bottle. Well, I've never seen you do anything for anyone, I've never seen you give anything to anyone, so I can understand why you might suspect the motives of those who have. But whatever Jack's motives are, how...

She hesitates to go on.

EUGENE

I seem to have touched a wound.

LOUISE

You're a wounding son of a bitch, and whatever I've done to you, you've made me pay for it.

She turns to leave the room.

EUGENE

Louise?

She leaves, slamming the door.