

"DIMPLES"

by

JMS and Miljohn Ruperto

Copyright 2008, 2009
All rights reserved.

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (MORNING)

ISABEL, a very pretty teenaged girl in a tailored silk dressing gown, dawdles on the sofa in the parlor of an elegant hotel suite.

In the distance we hear the sound of the SHOWER RUNNING.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Isabel gets up to answer it. A stout, middle-aged maid pushes in a wheeled CART, with a coffeepot and covered plates. Isabel thanks her and shuts the door.

She uncovers a little pot of strawberries and cream, and eats one of the berries with pleasure.

Her eye lights on a NEWSPAPER, *The Washington Clarion*, which is tucked into the cart. She pulls it out.

ISABEL

Douglas, you're on the front page
of the newspaper!

She walks, still with her eyes on the NEWSPAPER, towards the sound of running water, which continues uninterrupted. She stops next to the door to the bathroom.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Look at this, Douglas! There's a photograph of you! It's quite a nice one. Although, the photo is taken from your right side. Hmm. I think your left side is the more flattering, don't you agree?

(pauses, as she reads)

"Power Mad Macarthur." Well, that's not very friendly, is it? "Power Mad Macarthur: Newly De-Classified Documents Reveal That Hoover Never Authorized Attacks on Bonus Marchers."

The sound of water abruptly stops as the tap is shut off.

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

What's that you say?

ISABEL

(Continues reading)

"It has been more than two years since that tragic day when General Douglas Macarthur ordered a vicious attack on our own soldiers, brave veterans of the Great War, who marched peacefully --"

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Let me see that.

The door opens just a crack, releasing steam into the hallway. A man's arm reaches out and snatches the paper from Isabel's hands. The door shuts.

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN) (CONT'D)

(Pause)

God damn it.

Isabel looks hurt for a moment. Then she makes an exaggerated, childish pout at the slammed door and sticks out her tongue.

She wanders back to the parlor and pours herself a cup of coffee, goes to the sofa and picks up a magazine.

The door to the bathroom opens and we see the silhouette of a man in a bathrobe as he goes to the office next door. It's Macarthur -- although we'll never see his face.

Isabel looks over, but the office door slams shut.

Isabel gets up and tiptoes over to listen at the office door.

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN) (CONT'D)

Give me Whitney 3558.

ISABEL

Douglas? Is everything all right?

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Everything's fine, baby. Go ahead and start breakfast without me.

Isabel pauses a moment, turning something over in her head. Then she plunges right in.

ISABEL

Last week you said we could take a trip somewhere, maybe down to Virginia Beach. Couldn't we go today?

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Dwight, it's me. Yes, of course I saw it. Christ almighty. It's that bastard Drew Pearson. Over at that new journal, *The Clarion*.

ISABEL

Douglas?

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Hold on, Dwight.

(Louder)

Belle, sweetheart. Keep quiet a minute. Daddy's on the telephone.

ISABEL

Well, I was just wondering if we could take that trip you promised. I could ask the hotel to pack a picnic for us.

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Baby, something important has come up. I'm going to have to go up to New York to take care of some business.

ISABEL

Well, maybe we could go tomorrow then?

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Baby. It's not a good time.

ISABEL

But Douglas, it's been over three months since I came to America, and all I've seen of this country is the inside of this hotel suite. When am I going to get to go out, do something, see something?

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Sweetheart, I don't think I'll be back from New York for a little while, a couple of weeks at least.

ISABEL

(Panicked)

A couple of weeks! But you only just got back from Europe!

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

Baby, not now. I'm on the telephone. We'll talk about this later.

ISABEL

But Douglas, what am I supposed to do, locked up in this hotel room day after day? I'm bored to death!

MACARTHUR (OFFSCREEN)

(Sternly)

Belle, I'm going to have to ask you to behave yourself. I'll discuss this with you another time.

(Then, in a quieter voice)

Sorry about that. Listen, let's pow wow with Richardson and his people over at the Lafayette Room this afternoon. Get Franklin in there too.

(Pause. Then, angrily)

No. No! You tell that crippled coward that this isn't the kind of thing that just blows over in a few days. We've got to do something, and do it now. And I'm not talking about his usual chickenshit glad-handing.

(Short pause)

Well if that's what he thinks, he can just think again --

Midway through Macarthur's tirade, Isabel has drifted away from the office door and back into the parlor. She looks out the window, biting her lip.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (DAY)

The suite is empty except for Isabel.

Isabel sits slouched way down on the sofa in the parlor, her chin nearly touching her chest. Her feet are up on the table in front of her.

She is utterly bored. She sticks out her lower lip and blows her hair out of her eyes.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (NIGHT)

Again, the suite is empty but for Isabel. Swing music plays on the phonograph.

Isabel, wearing yellow satin tap shorts and a matching camisole, is practicing dance steps from a magazine, which is laid out on the floor.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (DAY)

Isabel is still alone. She sits in front of the mirror, wearing her dressing gown and doing facial exercises. She's got a magazine with illustrated instructions propped up next to her.

She starts making faces at herself, and then tries to make as grotesque a face as she can, using her fingers to push up her nose and pull down the corners of her eyes.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (DAY)

Isabel is still alone.

The furniture is pushed to the sides of the room and Isabel, wearing a men's shirt, does calisthenics in the center of the room.

An exercise program on the RADIO barks out the calisthenic instructions.

RADIO VOICE:

And now, leg raises! Left one!
Right two! Left one! Right two!

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (NIGHT)

The song "Thinking of You" from "Five O'Clock Girl" plays on the PHONOGRAPH.

Isabel, alone, sits by the window, looking out into the dark. She is wearing a white nightgown.

She puts her head down in her arms, and it is not clear whether she is drowsy or crying.

FADE OUT.

ROLL OPENING CREDITS

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (DAY)

Same hotel suite, same parlor. Isabel is curled up on the sofa, idly filing her nails. She is wearing a filmy green silk gown. The RADIO plays the Mills Brothers, loudly.

The doorbell RINGS and Isabel jumps up.

The door opens and it's a hotel maid, MILLIE, with the lunch cart. Millie is a pretty blonde girl about Isabel's age.

She is obviously angry at Isabel, and initially treats her with exaggerated politeness.

MILLIE

Good afternoon, miss. I've got lunch for one here for you. I was told Mr. M is out of town?

ISABEL

Millie! Boy am I glad to see you! They've had some old troll servicing this room. Where have you been?

MILLIE

Where have I *been*? Well, let's see, Miss Isabel. A month ago, after you begged me to let you out of your room, my boss Mr. Giddins got a call from the captain of a gambling ship off the coast of Cuba, complaining that you were underaged, drunk, and fleecing his passengers. I've been scrubbing pots behind the kitchen ever since.

(Examining her hands with dismay)

Oh, my poor nails. They'll never be the same.

ISABEL

Oh, Millie, I'm sorry I got you in trouble. But you're back, they let you out of the kitchen, huh?

MILLIE

(Taking a cookie from one of the plates and nibbling at it)

The new afternoon maid is out sick today. I'll be back to kitchen duty as soon as she gets better.

ISABEL

Don't be sore, Millie. I said I'm sorry. Sit down and have some lunch with me, won't you? I've been dying for some company.

MILLIE

(Looks at her a long moment, then relents)
You poor kid. How long has he been gone this time?

ISABEL

(Busies herself putting together a plate of food for Millie, who is now sitting down)
Eighteen days now. He was supposed to be gone just for two weeks. That's what he said, but then I got a telegram, and now he says he's been delayed. So, who knows how long he'll be.

MILLIE

(Biting into a chicken leg)
The jerk. I don't know why you put up with it. I sure wouldn't. Not even --
(gesturing at Isabel's clothes and the elegant room)
--for all of this.

ISABEL

(Shrugs, trying to be unconcerned)
What else can I do? Even if he let me out of this hotel room, I've got no place to go.

MILLIE

(Shakes her head, while buttering a roll)
Well, it steams me up, the way he treats you.

ISABEL

It does, huh? Well, what would you say to helping a girl out?

MILLIE

(Putting down her food and
looking at Isabel evenly)
Oh, no you don't.

ISABEL

Listen, Millie, I'm just desperate.
I know I got you into a lot of
trouble before, and I'm sorry, I
am. But I've been stuck in here
alone for eighteen days with no one
to talk to and nothing to do. I'm
going to go out of my head if I
don't get out of this room!

MILLIE

Belle, you know I'd help you if I
could, but I'm going to lose my job
if I let you out again.

ISABEL

Oh, Millie, I wouldn't get you into
trouble. I'm not going to run away
again. I won't even leave this
hotel if you want. I'll stay in the
bar downstairs. Nobody even has to
know I set foot outside this room.

MILLIE

How do you expect me to believe
that you won't leave the hotel?

ISABEL

(Bitterly)

You know very well that Douglas
took away my only pair of street
shoes after I ran away. Where am I
supposed to go now, dressed like
this, in bedroom slippers and no
coat?

It's a convincing argument. Isabel's dress, though beautiful,
is suitable only for a boudoir.

MILLIE

(Shakes her head)

I'm going to end up in the
poorhouse because of you.

ISABEL

I promise you I won't get caught.
And even if I did, no one will know
you had anything to do with it.

(MORE)

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Listen, what time does your Mr.
Giddins leave for the day?

MILLIE
(Reluctantly)
Eight o'clock.

ISABEL
Well, won't you just come by and
unlock the door after that? I'll
slip back in before anyone ever
notices I'm missing.

MILLIE
This is the last time, Belle.

ISABEL
The last time, I promise. Whatever
you say.

MILLIE
Just be careful, will you?

Isabel impulsively grabs Millie for a little hug.

ISABEL
Thanks, Millie! I really owe you!

MILLIE
You're not kidding. Be careful!

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR (EVENING)

Millie looks around the empty corridor nervously as she
unlocks the door.

The door swings open and Isabel tiptoes out, in a celadon
silk gown and high-heeled silk bedroom slippers.

Isabel gives an excited little shriek.

ISABEL
Oh Millie, you're the best! I knew
you'd come through!

MILLIE
(Excited too, but trying
to sound stern)
For heaven's sake, shush! And don't
let the door lock behind you. I
won't be here to let you back in.

They start down the corridor together, and Millie gazes at Isabel admiringly.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

You do look awfully pretty, Belle.

(Teasing)

You haven't planned some rendezvous with a mysterious gentleman, have you?

ISABEL

As if I've ever had a chance to meet a gentleman!

MILLIE

Well, I'd better get going before someone sees me talking to you. Mind you be careful, Belle. Remember, if anyone asks you how you got out of your room --

ISABEL

I promise, I won't tell a soul. I'll tell them --

(She pauses, thinking)

I'll tell them I climbed out of the window!

MILLIE

In those shoes!

INT. HOTEL BAR (SAME EVENING)

Though elegant, the Chastleton bar is far from fashionable - its clientele is mostly made up of middle-aged Washington bureaucrats and elderly society matrons.

Isabel tiptoes into the bar and looks around furtively. Once she is satisfied that no one here knows her, she walks in with a self-conscious elegance.

In her bright silk gown and sparkling jewelry, she is totally out of place among the tweeds and gray suits.

The pianist, BILLY, is playing Chopin on the grand piano. He notices her and smiles, and she smiles back gratefully.

With his fingers still pounding the keyboard, he leans towards her as she passes.

BILLY

Hey Belle! Good to see you back here. Is the old man with you, or did you sneak out by your lonesome?

ISABEL

Hi, Billy! I'm here by myself.

BILLY

Well good for you. You should come down and see us more often. What do you want to hear? I'll take a request, just from you.

ISABEL

(Childishly delighted)

Really? Oh let's see. What was that one that you played last time, (humming, half-singing)
La, la, la-la, I've got, la la, I've got, la la, who could ask for anything more?

BILLY

Aha!

Billy transitions seamlessly from Chopin into an enthusiastic rendition of Gershwin's "I've Got Rhythm." A couple of the elderly ladies shift in their seats to give him a questioning look, but most of the patrons don't even notice.

Isabel happily waltzes to an unoccupied little table near the piano, and sits down, looking very pleased with herself. She taps her feet in time to the music.

The waitress, RITA, a good-looking woman in her early thirties, with dark hair and an attitude, comes over to take Isabel's order.

RITA

Hi honey. Haven't seen you here in a while. You're breaking out of the big house, huh? What can I get you?

ISABEL

Hi Rita. I'll have a - a - What was that drink you gave me the last time, terribly elegant, with the cherry candy?

RITA

One pink lady, coming up.
(Turns away)

ISABEL
Oh, and Rita?

RITA
Yeah?

ISABEL
Can I charge this? And say that I ordered it delivered to my room, huh?

RITA
Sure thing, honey. He finds out I've been serving you drinks down here in the bar, and it's my neck in a noose, right next to yours.

BILLY
Hey Belle!

Both women turn to face him.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I'm playing this number for you!
You've gotta dance for us!

RITA
Go on and dance, you might as well make the most of your night out, you poor kid.

ISABEL
(To Billy)
Well, but I haven't got anyone to dance with!
(Turns to Rita)
Rita, will you?

RITA
Me!

ISABEL
Come on, Rita! Let's dance.

Isabel takes Rita's arm and tries to get her to dance.

RITA
(Laughs and shakes her off)
Oh, no. I've got work to do, honey.
(Beat)
Maybe you can get Mr. Pearson here to dance with you.

This last is directed at OWEN PEARSON, who has just entered the lounge. Owen is young, slender and handsome.

RITA (CONT'D)

What can I get you, Mr. Pearson?
The usual?

OWEN

Yes, thanks, Rita.

RITA

One bourbon and water.

OWEN

(Nodding at Billy)
It's pretty lively here tonight.
For a moment there I thought I'd
wandered into the wrong bar. What's
the occasion?

BILLY

We're celebrating Belle's break --

Rita gives Billy a warning look.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Er, we're celebrating - Belle's
birthday!

OWEN

Ah!
(Slight bow to Isabel)
Well, happy birthday, Miss Belle.

The camera focuses on Owen and Isabel as they talk.

In the background, we see the bar manager enter the lounge. Rita spots him and hurriedly turns away, busying herself with glasses at the bar.

The manager goes over to the piano and begins to berate Billy angrily. Billy stops the swing mid-measure and sulkily begins to play Bach.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Well, it looks like there won't be
much more dancing tonight. Would
you like to sit down? I'm Owen
Pearson, by the way.

ISABEL

It would be a pleasure, Mr.
Pearson.

OWEN

(Pulling out her chair)
Please, call me Owen.

ISABEL

My name is Isabel Rosario Cooper.
Everybody around here calls me
Belle.

OWEN

You look like you're on your way to
some grand birthday event. Surely
this crowd of maiden aunts and
newspapermen isn't the intended
audience for that gown?

ISABEL

I'm supposed to stay in the hotel,
but...I was thinking I might step
out a little later on. You wouldn't
happen to know --

She looks around quickly to make sure no one's within
earshot, but comes face to face with Rita, who is passing by
the table with a tray of drinks.

RITA

Know what, my dear?

ISABEL

(Slumping back in her
seat, dejected)

Nothing. As I was saying, I was
thinking I'd spend the evening
here, quietly listening to piano
music, before I go back to my room
and get into bed.

Rita smiles, satisfied, and walks on. Owen looks from Rita to
Isabel, puzzled.

OWEN

Well in any case, congratulations
on your birthday, Belle.

ISABEL

I may as well confess that it isn't
really my birthday today. Billy and
Rita were just having a bit of fun
with me.

OWEN

(Bemused)

I wouldn't have thought that the Chastleton Arms Hotel bar would be much fun for a young girl's birthday party, anyway.

ISABEL

Oh, I don't know. Last month I sneaked -- I came here for my seventeenth birthday, and Rita threw a little party for me. It was quite a lot of fun.

OWEN

Your *seventeenth birthday!*

He turns to Rita, who is just now arriving at the table with her tray.

RITA

Let's see. One bourbon and water, and one pink lady, with extra cherry candy.

OWEN

(To Rita)

Do you know, this girl is seventeen!

RITA

(Winks at Isabel)

We don't put much gin in it.
(More seriously, to Owen)
I've been given charge to look after Belle for the evening, Mr. Pearson. You'll keep an eye on her for me, won't you?

Rita walks away. Owen is quite confused now.

OWEN

And what's a seventeen-year-old girl doing in the Chastleton Arms Hotel bar on a Friday evening, dressed up to the nines?

ISABEL

Looking for handsome young men to buy her drinks, naturally. What about you? What are you doing here if you find it so dull?

For a moment, Owen considers pursuing his questions about Isabel, but decides to let her change the subject.

OWEN

(Shrugs)

Oh, I like it dull. My fiancée is in Baltimore this weekend to visit some friends of hers, and I'm on my own. Sophie approves of this place - she figures I'm not likely to get into any trouble here. And it's a quiet place for me to unwind after work.

ISABEL

And what kind of work do you do?

OWEN

I'm a journalist. My brother Drew started up a newspaper here in town -- *The Clarion*.

ISABEL

(Thinking)

The Clarion. I think I've heard of it.

OWEN

You may have. It's a small outfit, and it's pretty new yet, but it's a good little rag. It's already creating a bit of a stir. We've got a new series on General Macarthur that we think will make people sit up and take notice.

Isabel is taken a bit aback, but covers it well.

ISABEL

General Macarthur. Well, that's very interesting.

(She shakes her head, as if to clear it)

I think I'd like another cocktail, how about you?

OWEN

(Checking his watch)

I think I'd better say good night soon, to be honest.

ISABEL

Oh, stay for another drink, won't you? It's been ages since I've talked to another human being.

OWEN

(Smiles kindly)

Well...all right. One more drink, and then I've got to go.

ISABEL

Goody!

(Motioning at Rita)

One more bourbon and water here, please! And one pink lady!

FADE OUT.

INT. HOTEL BAR (SAME EVENING)

A couple hours later. The bar is almost empty, and the manager has apparently gone home. A recorded jitterbug tune plays on a Victrola.

Rita and the bartender are slow dancing, dreamily - and way out of step with the music.

Millie is here too. She is flirting with Billy, who has stopped playing the piano and is obviously very drunk.

Owen and Isabel are laughing, and dancing a fast, sloppy jitterbug. They're pretty drunk, too. The table they previously occupied is covered with empty glasses.

OWEN

Ouch!

ISABEL

(Drunkenly)

Hey! Watch that foot, mister!

OWEN

What do you mean, 'watch that foot'? You stepped on me!

ISABEL

Because your foot was in the way. So watch that foot!

OWEN

Let's sit down a spell.

ISABEL

Good idea. Brother, am I ever exhausted.

The two flop down at a nearby table.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

(Feebly, to no one in particular)

Waiter, another drink please?

OWEN

(Looking at Rita and the bartender)

I don't think you're going to get that drink.

(Beat)

I don't think you need it, either.

Millie leaves Billy, who has fallen asleep, and walks over to where Isabel and Owen are sitting.

MILLIE

Belle, you haven't introduced me to your gentleman!

ISABEL

Oh, right! Millie, I'd like you to meet -- what's your name again?

OWEN

Owen Pearson. It's very nice to meet you, Millie.

MILLIE

Glad to meet you too. Belle, you sly thing. You didn't tell me you were coming to the bar to meet a beau.

ISABEL

Owen? Oh no, Millie, you've got the wrong end of the stick. I just met Owen this evening. And he's already got a girl. He's engaged. To -- what did you say her name was?

OWEN

(Smiling and unconsciously playing with his RING)

Sophie. Sophie Livingston.

MILLIE

Engaged! Is that your ring? How lovely!

(To Isabel)

When my sister got engaged she and her fiance exchanged rings, plain like that one, but silver. I think plain bands are very sophisticated, don't you?

OWEN

It is plain, but Sophie had it inscribed on the inside --

ISABEL

Oh, do let's see!

Owen slips off the ring and Isabel takes it from him as Millie crowds in to look at it.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

(Reading)

"Tempest 3, i (54-57)"

She looks up, confused.

OWEN

It's a citation to a play from Shakespeare. Act 3, scene 1 from *The Tempest*. Sophie's a literature student at university.

MILLIE

Shakespeare! Oh, I adore poetry. How terribly romantic. What does it say?

OWEN

I'm not sure I can remember it off hand.

MILLIE

Oh do try!

OWEN

Let's see - "I would not hope" - or is it wish? "I would not wish" -
(Shakes his head ruefully)
I can never get it right. Sophie's the one with the ear for poetry, not me.

MILLIE

Well, what about her ring, did you inscribe a quotation for her too?

OWEN

No, like I said, I don't know much at all about literature. I picked out a more traditional ring, with little emeralds in it. That's her birthstone.

MILLIE

That sounds beautiful.

ISABEL

Emeralds! Bother the poetry, she clearly got the better deal.

RITA

(Approaching the table)
Hey kids, what's going on over here? Are you done dancing or what?

MILLIE

(Playing with the ring)
I'm wiped out. But hey, Rita, there wouldn't be a chance of another drink, would there?

RITA

I'll see what we've got left. Might as well be hung for a lion as for a lamb....

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM (MORNING)

Owen lies atop his bed, fully dressed in last night's clothes. He squints against the light, groaning.

OWEN

(Clutching his head)
Oh...my head....

As he touches his hand to his head, a sudden realization hits.

OWEN (CONT'D)

(Looking with alarm at his hand)
My ring!

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (SAME MORNING)

Isabel wakes up. She is lying on the sofa, still in last night's clothes. Determined to go back to sleep, she closes her eyes and rolls over - onto something hard.

ISABEL

Ouch!

Isabel picks up the ring up off of the sofa and examines it.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Oh!

She sets the ring down, puzzled. Just then, a LOUD KNOCKING comes from the front door.

MALE VOICE

Miss Cooper? May I come in?

ISABEL

Yes, I'm here.

The door unlocks and opens, and a young BELLHOP enters, holding a LETTER.

BELLHOP

Miss Cooper? I'm sorry to disturb you.

ISABEL

Yes? What is it?

BELLHOP

I -- I've got a letter here for you.

ISABEL

(Taking the letter)

Thank you.

BELLHOP

I'm supposed to wait here while you read it, but I think I'd better let you have some privacy.

Isabel isn't listening -- she has already forgotten all about him. He slips out.

As Isabel reads the letter, the smile fades from her face.

MACARTHUR'S VOICE

Dear Isabel.

INT. HOTEL SUITE HALLWAY (DAY)

The door to the bathroom is ajar. Through the crack, we see Isabel sobbing on the floor, as though her heart would break.

MACARTHUR'S VOICE

It is with sorrow and displeasure that I inform you that you will no longer be staying at the Chastleton Arms Hotel. This morning I was informed of your nighttime activities, by one of my colleagues who happened by the hotel last night.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM (DAY)

Isabel, her face totally expressionless, packs her clothes into a large suitcase. The clothes are all slippery satins and laces -- she apparently has no street clothes whatsoever.

MACARTHUR'S VOICE

You may imagine the shock and shame with which I received this information. I am deeply disappointed by your insubordination.

INT. HOTEL SUITE, MACARTHUR'S OFFICE(DAY)

Isabel takes the tray of change and dumps it all into a little satin purse.

She hesitates, and then boldly tries one of the desk drawers. It is locked.

Isabel gets a long, thin ruler from the top of the desk, and jimmys open the drawer. Inside are passbooks, various little ledgers, and - aha! - a roll of bills.

She peels off a couple of bills and puts the rest back. She starts to close the drawer, and then changes her mind. She takes the entire roll.

MACARTHUR'S VOICE

You will be returning to Manila. I have arranged passage for you on a ship that departs from Baltimore at 4 p.m. My assistants will arrive this afternoon to escort you.

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (DAY)

Isabel takes off her crystal earrings and wraps them in a handkerchief. She puts the knotted package on the table next to the door. She writes a note: "For Millie, XOXO Isabel."

She looks around the hotel suite, which is tidy and empty.

MACARTHUR'S VOICE

I have asked my colleague to write this letter and arrange its delivery to you. I sincerely hope and expect that you do not deviate from these instructions in any way.

INT. HOTEL SUITE PARLOR (DAY)

The door to the suite is opened by a BELLHOP, who assists Isabel with her suitcase. Two MPs, RED and O'REILLY, wait in the corridor.

She follows the bellhop out of the suite, wearing the most appropriate clothes she has -- a short green satin dress, a knitted lace cardigan and high-heeled bedroom slippers.

The door swings shut, leaving us in darkness as Macarthur's voice intones the end of his letter.

MACARTHUR'S VOICE

Thank you for your company and your discretion, during these past months. I am sorry that our friendship has come to such an abrupt ending. I wish you luck in your future endeavors. Yours sincerely, Douglas Macarthur.

INT. CAR

Isabel sits in the back of the car as it speeds through metropolitan Washington. She looks out the window with dull eyes. Red and O'Reilly sit in the front.

EXT. BALTIMORE HARBOR SEAPORT

Isabel, accompanied by Red and O'Reilly, walks up the pier toward the ship.

ISABEL

Thank you gentlemen. I can take it from here.

O'REILLY
Actually Miss Isabel, we've been
instructed to see you onto the
ship.

Isabel frowns. This is clearly not the answer she wants.

ISABEL
(Forcing a smile)
As you like.

The MPs walk with Isabel to the deck of the ship.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Here we are, gentlemen. You've seen
me onto the ship.

O'REILLY
I guess we have.

ISABEL
(Shaking hands with each
of the men in turn)
Well, thank you very much for your
help, both of you. You've been very
kind.

O'REILLY
Have a good trip, Miss Cooper.

RED
Good luck, Miss Cooper.

ISABEL
Until we meet again, gentlemen.

Isabel walks down the deck of the ship. The MPs stay behind.
A porter takes her bags.

PORTER
You're in cabin 22, ma'am. Right
this way.

ISABEL
That's all right. If you'll take my
bags in, I'll follow in a minute.

PORTER
Very well, ma'am.

The porter goes downstairs with her bags. Isabel looks back
at the pier. The two MPs are watching her. One of them waves.
Isabel waves back, smiling.

Isabel walks toward the far end of the ship. She smiles and waves at the MPs one more time.

As the deck fills with people, the MPs' view of Isabel is obscured. She walks up to the railing and executes a neat dive into the water. A WOMAN standing nearby screams.

WOMAN

Help! Help!

A sailor rushes to the scene.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(Pointing at Isabel, who
is swimming rapidly away)
That woman! She fell -- no, she
jumped into the water!

SAILOR

Man overboard!

There is a flurry of activity as sailors rush to the scene. Onlookers crowd the railing to see Isabel.

The MPs, from their vantage point on the pier, strain to see what is happening on the ship. RED turns to O'REILLY and shrugs.

O'REILLY

(Shaking his head)
People get so excited when they
take their first trip on the sea.
You'd think they'd never seen the
ocean before.

RED

(Peering over to the end
of the ship)
She's a pretty gal, Miss Cooper.

O'REILLY

(Whistles)
You're telling me.
(To a passerby)
Say, what's happening over there?

PASSERBY

Some crazy girl just jumped into
the water! She's swimming away!

Red and O'Reilly are simultaneously hit by the same realization. They look at each other, panicked, then run back toward the ship.

EXT. LINDEN STREET

A damp, bedraggled Isabel walks up the steps of a brownstone and rings the doorbell. The door is opened by a stern middle aged matron, who looks Isabel up and down.

MATRON

Yes?

ISABEL

I'm looking for Millicent Mathis if you please? My name is Belle Cooper.

MATRON

Hold on.

She opens the door and Isabel walks into the tiny parlor of the boarding-house. The matron walks up stairs and returns in a minute.

MATRON (CONT'D)

She says you can go on up. It's the door on the left, first landing.

INT. MILLIE'S ROOM

Millie opens the door of her tiny, bare little room, and sees Isabel.

MILLIE

You got kicked out too, huh?

ISABEL

What do you mean? You don't mean to say -- Oh Millie, I'm so sorry!

MILLIE

Well, those are the breaks. Aw, honey, don't cry.

She reaches out to hug Isabel, and then springs back.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

You're soaking wet!

ISABEL

I jumped off the ship. I had to do it, Millie. They were going to take me back to the Philippines.

MILLIE

(Shaking her head
admiringly)

You are the darnedest kid. We'll
have to get you into some dry
clothes.

(Eyeing Isabel, dubiously)

Maybe you can fit into something of
mine.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLIE'S ROOM

Isabel is now wearing one of Millie's dresses, which is a
little too long for her, and drying her hair with a towel.

Both girls are sitting on the bed, and Millie has brought up
a tray of coffee.

MILLIE

So what are you going to do? Where
are you going to stay?

ISABEL

You don't suppose I could stay
here, do you? I wouldn't ask, only
I haven't got anyplace else.

MILLIE

Well, the matron is going to throw
a fit, but we'll find some way to
soften her up. Although heaven
knows how we'll pay the rent now
that I've lost my job.

ISABEL

It's my fault that you lost your
job, Millie, and I'll make it up to
you, I promise. I'll find new jobs
for both of us!

INT. CLARION OFFICE (DAY)

The *Clarion* newspaper office is tiny and crowded and very
busy. The entrance is on the left, and another door, to Drew
Pearson's office, is on the right.

SOPHIE, a pretty, serious-looking young woman, stands talking
to the receptionist, PAULETTE.

SOPHIE

When you see him, ask him to ring me, won't you?

PAULETTE

I'll do that, Miss Livingston.

SOPHIE

Thank you.

Sophie turns and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CLARION OFFICE

We see Sophie pass out of the *Clarion* office and into the hallway of the office building. Owen is just outside the *Clarion* door.

When Sophie enters the hallway, Owen flattens himself against the wall. Sophie does not see him.

INT. CLARION OFFICE (DAY)

Owen walks in, straightening his tie.

PAULETTE

Mr. Pearson! There you are. Miss Livingston was here looking for you not two minutes ago. She asked that you call her.

OWEN

Thanks, Paulette.

PAULETTE

Oh, and Mr. Pearson? Mr. Pearson is waiting for you in his office. You'd better go see him first.

Owen begins to walk toward Drew's office.

He is almost immediately accosted by CUNNINGHAM, a small man about sixty years old, in a wrinkled shirt and tie and smudged glasses.

CUNNINGHAM

Owen! It's a good thing you're here. I need you to go over the galleys for our next Macarthur story. Have you heard?

(MORE)

CUNNINGHAM (CONT'D)

It seems we've created quite a buzz with our special feature on Macarthur and the Bonus Army. Subscriptions are up, and the phones have been ringing off the hook! Drew is the man of the hour! Ah! Nearly forgot - speaking of your brother, he's been looking for you. Go ahead. It sounds important.

OWEN

Thanks, Mr. Cunningham.

Owen pats Cunningham on the back and strides to the door opposite the entrance.

INT. DREW PEARSON'S OFFICE

DREW PEARSON's office is tiny, furnished with just a little desk stacked neatly with papers, and a couple of chairs.

Drew is Owen's brother and about ten years older than Owen. He is seated at his desk. Owen enters and Drew looks up. He's always happy to see his little brother, but he looks exhausted and anxious.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Cunningham tells me that the Macarthur series has turned a lot of heads, huh? Congratulations, big brother!

DREW

Thanks, Owen. It really is something, isn't it?

OWEN

(Looks at Drew carefully)
It is. So why aren't you happier, Drew?

DREW

(Rubbing his forehead)
I am, I am. It's just that - well, I got a call from Macarthur's secretary, Dwight Eisenhower, this morning. Told me it would be "in our best interest" to cease mentioning Macarthur altogether in our paper, from here on out.

OWEN

What did you tell him?

DREW

Just before Eisenhower called me, I got this letter from the widow of Eric Carlson, one of the Bonus Marchers who was killed.

He picks the LETTER up from his desk.

DREW (CONT'D)

(Reading)

"I write to President Roosevelt every day, asking him why my husband is dead, and why my children are still hungry. But today I take this time to write to you instead, Mr. Pearson, to thank you. It gives me hope to know that we have not been forgotten."

DREW (CONT'D)

(Folding the letter thoughtfully)

What could I say? I told him that I don't have a choice.

OWEN

You do have a choice, Drew. And you're choosing right.

Drew nods gravely. He knows the consequences will be dire.

DREW

I know, Owen. At least, I sure hope so.

OWEN

Is there anything I can do to help?

DREW

Maybe there is something. You know that hotel near the railway station? The Chastleton?

OWEN

Chastleton Arms? I was there just last night.

DREW

I've heard that Macarthur had some private business there. It's just a rumor, mind you, but it might not be a bad idea to poke around a bit. There might be something to learn.

OWEN

I'm on my way there right now, as it happens. I'll try to find out what I can.

DREW

Good.

Drew shakes his head as if to clear it. He's just remembered something.

DREW (CONT'D)

Hey - why don't you give Sophie a call first? She was over here just now looking for you. You two haven't had a falling out, have you?

OWEN

To tell you the truth, that's why I've got to hustle over to the hotel. I'm a bit embarrassed about this, Drew, but last night I had a bit too much to drink at the bar, and I think I may have misplaced Sophie's engagement ring.

DREW

I hope you haven't done anything you regret.

OWEN

No, no. Nothing you need to worry about, I promise you. But I'd better find that ring before Sophie sees me without it.

DREW

I don't disagree with that. Good luck. And see what you can find out about that Macarthur lead, will you?

OWEN

I'll do what I can.

INT. HOTEL BAR

Rita dries glasses with a towel as she speaks to Owen.

RITA

Nope. Sorry. I haven't seen any ring. Have you asked at the front desk?

OWEN

(Slumps)

Oh, no. Sophie's going to *kill* me.

RITA

Why don't you have a drink. You look like you could use one.

OWEN

(Pouring himself a whiskey)

Thanks, Rita. I don't know where it could be.

RITA

Don't worry, honey. It'll turn up.

OWEN

I sure hope so. I just don't know where to look.

(Remembering)

Say, you wouldn't happen to know -

RITA

Know what, honey?

OWEN

Well, I heard a rumor about General Douglas MacArthur. That he's been hanging around this hotel.

This is the last thing Rita expected to hear, and she's instantly on guard.

RITA

General who? No, I haven't heard anything about that.

OWEN

You know something, Rita, I can tell.

RITA

Honey, I don't know anything about any General Douglas anybody.

(Meaningfully)

And if I did, it would be more than my job was worth to tell you.

Listen, about that ring --

OWEN

Yeah?

RITA

Don't worry. It'll turn up. I'll ask the maids and see if they find anything.

INT. MILLIE'S ROOM

Millie and Isabel sit on Millie's bed, each looking through a newspaper.

MILLIE

Here's something. "Now Hiring Experienced Young Maids, for Prestigious Downtown Hotel."

ISABEL

Ugh, a hotel maid? Haven't you had enough of that?

MILLIE

(Shrugging)
Hm, I guess so.

The girls go back to browsing.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

How about this. "Nursemaid wanted. For four children, two girls, two boys, aged two through thirteen. Must have references."

ISABEL

Four children! Yikes. No thank you.

The girls are quiet as they look through the ads.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Say, I have an idea!
(Sets down paper)
Remember the time I hopped on that ocean liner to Cuba?

MILLIE

(Rolling her eyes)
Boy, do I.

ISABEL

One of the gentlemen I met on the cruise ship has a nightclub here in the city.

(MORE)

ISABEL (CONT'D)

I'll bet he'd hire us to perform in one of his shows. Wouldn't that be fun?

MILLIE

What kind of show? Remember, Belle, I'm a good Catholic girl.

ISABEL

No, no. Ramon said it was a real classy joint, with international performers. Piano, singing, that sort of thing. We won't do anything your mother wouldn't approve of, I promise you. Maybe we could put together a song and dance number!

MILLIE

Me, put on a song a dance number! I can't sing and I can't dance.

ISABEL

That won't matter. We'll find something for you to do, you'll see.

INT. BACKSTAGE AT CLUB CHI CHI

There is a general hustle and bustle in the backstage of this small and rundown, but not disreputable, nightclub.

There are workers hammering props, two men moving a piano, and a couple of young dancers, dressed in street clothes and carrying enormous feathered headdresses.

RAMON, a small, middle-aged man with a pencil moustache and a baggy suit, talks to Isabel and Millie.

RAMON

Let's see. Can you sing? Can you dance? Do you play any instruments?

ISABEL

Well, *I* can sing. And I dance rather well, too, I've been told.

RAMON

(Smiling fondly)

Of course you can, Belle. I remember very well how beautifully you dance!

ISABEL

Millie here, unfortunately, doesn't know how to sing or dance. But surely you've got some job that she could do. Maybe she could wait tables?

Millie glares at Isabel, who ignores her.

RAMON

(Thinking a moment)

Ah! I have just the thing for both of you! Belle, my pretty darling, you would be perfect for a new act that I would like to try out. Yes! It is truly fortunate that you walked in here today. A headlining act, Belle, and you will be the star!

Isabel's face lights up.

RAMON (CONT'D)

And Millicent, such a pretty face, such a graceful figure! One of our young ladies left town quite suddenly a few weeks ago. Not even a goodbye. It was quite a shock. But you look like you might fit nicely into her dress.

(Assessing Millie's figure)

Yes, yes, I think you'll do just fine.

Millie looks at Belle, glumly.

ISABEL

Thank you so much, Ramon! This is going to be such fun!

RAMON

My pleasure, bonita.

MILLIE

(Unhappy)

Oh, this is going to be just terrific, all right.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB CHI CHI

Millie is onstage, dressed in a glamorous satin gown and high heels. She's assisting a magician, an elderly man dressed in a tuxedo.

Millie opens a box and a rabbit hops out. She feigns shock as the rabbit scampers away. The audience laughs and cheers.

Millie and the magician bow and exit, to much applause.

INT. BACKSTAGE AT CLUB CHI CHI

The crowd is still applauding as Millie exits the stage.

Isabel is preparing to go onstage. She's dressed in a hobo costume - oversized patched trousers, suspenders and a misshapen stovepipe hat, with dirt smudged on her face.

MILLIE

(Breathless with
excitement)

Oh this is so much fun, Isabel!

ISABEL

(Darkly)

I don't see why you get to be the
magician's assistant and I have to
be a hobo.

MILLIE

Oh, darling, don't look so glum.
You know very well that they need
you for the musical number, because
you are such a talented singer and
dancer. *Bonita*.

(Giggling and pulling
Isabel's hat brim)

Anyway, you look absolutely
adorable!

Isabel fixes her hat, gives Millie a very dark look and stalks away.

INT. CLUB CHI CHI

Isabel's dark cloud evaporates the moment she steps onstage. Her face lights up and she is *on*. She is joined by two men in hobo costumes.

They sing "Ain't We Got Fun," while performing a hilarious slapstick dance routine.

INT. CLARION OFFICE (DAY)

Owen and several other men are working at their typewriters. A couple of other men work on the mock-ups. They are tense and quiet. Something is up.

The door to Drew's office opens, and Drew pops his head out.

DREW

Owen. Steinsapir. Greenberg. Will you come in for a moment? Mr. Cunningham, you'd better hear this too.

INT. DREW PEARSON'S OFFICE

Drew paces nervously in his tiny office. The men file in. Cunningham and Owen sit down in the only two chairs available. The others stand or lean against the wall.

OWEN

So tell us, Drew. What did he say?

DREW

(To the other men)
Well, men, as you know, our friend Douglas Macarthur is less than happy with the coverage he's been getting from this paper.

OWEN

Cut to the chase, Drew.

DREW

(Deep breath)
Nine hundred thousand dollars. Douglas Macarthur has filed suit against *The Clarion* - and me - for libel, to the tune of nine hundred thousand dollars.

The men take a moment to digest this information. One of the men lets out a low whistle.

STEINSAPIR

Nine hundred thousand! That's going to sink this paper!

OWEN

Drew, we're going to fight this, right? No jury is going to - I mean, every fact you wrote in those articles was true!

DREW

Owen, the funds Macarthur has at his disposal are practically unlimited. He's made it clear that he's going to throw every dollar he's got behind this lawsuit. If we win the case in superior court, he's going to take it to the court of appeals, on up to the Supreme Court if he has to. This isn't going to be just one battle. It's going to be a war.

(Deep breath)

A war *The Clarion* just doesn't have enough money to fight. He'll bankrupt us with a judgment or he'll bankrupt us with legal fees. Either way, *The Clarion* goes under. And he wins.

OWEN

(Watching his brother carefully)

Drew, what are you saying. What are you planning to do?

DREW

(Burying his face in his hands)

I don't know. I don't know.

(Looks up)

He says that if we run a front-page retraction . . . he'll drop the suit.

The men are stunned and silent for a moment.

OWEN

(Watching Drew closely)

You're not going to retract the articles. I don't believe it for a minute.

GREENBERG

Mr. Pearson, with all due respect, we just can't do that.

STEINSAPIR

(Speaking on top of Greenberg)

Those articles told the truth!
We'll lose all our credibility if we retract them!

CUNNINGHAM

(Shaking his head)

The boy's right. It goes against the grain of everything this paper stands for.

Drew looks at each of the men in turn, finally turning to Owen. He gives a little sad smile.

DREW

I was hoping that you would say that. To tell you the truth, my mind was pretty much made up, but I felt I couldn't make a decision like this without the approval of my board.

(Drew nods at the men)

Then we are agreed, gentlemen. We'll fight this thing to the end.

(Beat)

Make no mistake, this will be the end.

(Beat)

Well. We'd better give the news to the rest of the staff.

The men shuffle and rise. Drew remains sitting a moment longer at his desk, looking blank. Owen comes behind him and rests his hand gently on Drew's back. Drew stands up and they walk out the door together.

INT. CLARION OFFICE

The men enter the main office. It's obvious that no one has been working. All staff turn expectantly towards the men. Drew leans against a nearby table and faces them.

DREW

First of all, I want to thank each one of you for your work with *The Clarion*, our series on Douglas Macarthur in particular. As you are probably aware, the series has created quite a stir. The articles have even caught the attention of the General himself. Unfortunately, the reaction from that quarter has been rather less than enthusiastic.

Drew pauses here to light a cigarette. The staff shift uneasily.

DREW (CONT'D)

The General has filed a lawsuit against this paper for libel. We -- I and the rest of your Board -- have decided to fight the charges.

(Quietly)

The General is hoping that by this lawsuit, he will silence us. I hope that you will agree with me when I say that we will not be silenced. We will not be bullied. This paper will not be used to help the powerful and the corrupt deceive the American people.

(Beat)

We are going to fight this. I am asking for your support in this fight. It isn't going to be easy. We have the truth, and the right, on our side. On his side, he has power, money, and resources that we cannot hope to match.

(Beat)

The next few months are going to be difficult, and I don't know how long *The Clarion* will be able to survive. Should any of you decide that you need to find another job, I won't hold it against you, and I will be happy to provide a reference on your behalf.

The staff is silent for a moment. Then, one of the men, DANMEIER goes to Drew to shake his hand.

DANMEIER

We're with you all the way, Drew. I'm proud to be a part of this team.

DREW

Thank you.

CUNNINGHAM

Men, you've got a brave leader here.

The staff nod and generally voice their approval and support. A couple of the men get up to talk to Drew and Owen and Cunningham. One of them men, REYNOLDS, shakes his head.

REYNOLDS

Well, Drew, I sure hope you beat this.

(MORE)

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Douglas Macarthur is a tough
opponent to go up against.

(An aside)

It's funny, it seems like Macarthur
just can't stay out of the news.
Did you see the story on the wire
today? It seems he's getting
married, to some heiress.

DANMEIER

I saw that too. Part of the J.P.
Morgan banking family.

PAULETTE

The man's a sleaze, if you ask me.
I heard he got rid of that teenaged
mistress of his.

DREW

(Absently)

Teenaged mistress?

PAULETTE

You never heard about it?

OWEN

Heard what?

PAULETTE

(Conspiratorially)

Well, my sister works at the
Olympia Hotel, at Dupont Circle,
right across from this other hotel,
the Chastleton Arms? And her chums
at the Chastleton said that he kept
a girl there.

Everyone's listening now, and Paulette clearly relishes the
attention.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

A young little thing, from the
Philippines. Kept her locked up,
too, poor girl, like she was walled
up in a tower.

(Shrugs)

I guess now that he's getting
married, he's gotten rid of the
girl.

REYNOLDS

Well. A marriage, mistress and a
lawsuit. Our friend the general
certainly keeps himself busy.

PAULETTE

I've never seen her, but they say
that she's a real pretty thing,
like a little China doll.

The realization hits Owen like a ton of bricks.

OWEN

Good God.

DREW

What is it, Owen?

OWEN

(Pulling on his coat and
heading for the door)
I don't want to say until I know
something for sure, but let's hold
off on looking for new employment.
For the time being.

INT. HOTEL BAR

It's a relatively busy night. Rita is pouring drinks. There are a number of men seated at the bar, all wearing nondescript businessmen's suits and coats. Several are wearing hats.

Owen enters.

OWEN

Rita! Just the person I'm looking
for.

RITA

Well, you know where to find me.
Bourbon and water, Mr. Pearson?

OWEN

(As he accepts a drink
anyway)
I'm here on business, actually.
You remember that night last week,
when I lost my ring here?

RITA

Hasn't it turned up yet?

OWEN

Not yet. But do you know the girl
who was here that night? Belle?

RITA

(Slowly, on her guard)
Belle, yeah, that rings a bell.
What about her?

OWEN

Have you seen her since? You
wouldn't happen to know where I
could find her, would you?

RITA

What do you need her for? You think
she knows where your engagement
ring is?

OWEN

Could be. I'd like to ask her a
couple of questions.

RITA

She wouldn't take your ring, if
that's what you're thinking.

OWEN

I'm not trying to get her into
trouble.

(Beat)

But I think she might be able to
help me with something. And, if
she's in need of some assistance
herself, I might be able to give
her a hand.

Rita pauses and looks at Owen appraisingly. She makes up her
mind and then looks around, quickly.

RITA

Well, I suppose it wouldn't do any
harm to tell you.

(Whispering)

I haven't seen Belle for a while.
But I heard that Belle and Millie
are working some vaudeville act
downtown - at Club Chi Chi, I think
it's called. I haven't seen them
myself, but some of the other girls
have been keeping in touch.

OWEN

Thanks, Rita, I really appreciate
your help.

RITA

Aw, it's all right. We've gotten a couple visits from guys who try to pump us for information about Belle's whereabouts. Creepy looking guys. So I've been trying to keep quiet. But I know you won't hurt her. Tell her hello from me if you see her, won't you?

OWEN

I sure will.

RITA

Good luck finding that ring.

OWEN

Thanks, Rita. Keep an eye out for it for me, won't you?

RITA

You know I will.

As Owen leaves, Rita turns back to mixing drinks. One of the men at the bar - the one furthest from Owen - gets up and walks out. He's wearing his coat and his face is shaded by his hat.

The camera follows this man out of the bar and into the street. Light from a streetlamp strikes his face and we see that it is O'Reilly.

O'Reilly walks out of the bar and goes to a telephone booth on the street outside. He dials a number.

O'REILLY

Can I talk to the General?

(Pause)

Yeah, boss, it's me. I know where she is.

INT. CLUB CHI CHI

Millie, dressed in a lovely silver spangled gown, stands on a balcony onstage, serenaded by a young man in a tuxedo, singing "Dreaming of You," while violins play in the background.

Suddenly Isabel and three other girls, dressed ridiculously in butterfly costumes, burst onstage and sing a spirited chorus of the song, tap-dancing all the while.

The audience applauds. Red and O'Reilly sit in the back of the hall. Red squints at Isabel, and then takes a tiny photograph of Isabel out of his pocket.

RED
That's her, ain't it?

O'REILLY
(Without looking at the
photo)
Yep, that's her all right.

INT. BACKSTAGE AT CLUB CHI CHI

Isabel rips off her butterfly wings. Ramon helps her.

ISABEL
I don't see why Millie never has to
be the butterfly.

RAMON
Darling, you make such a very cute
butterfly. Also, Millie's singing -
pfft! People would walk out!

A STAGEHAND enters.

STAGEHAND
Boss, there's a guy here, says he's
looking for Isabel Cooper.

RAMON
(Eyebrow raised)
A friend of yours?

ISABEL
I don't know who it could be.

Owen enters.

OWEN
Hello, Belle!

ISABEL
Mr. Pearson!

RAMON
Are you a fan of our little revue?

OWEN
The show was pretty incredible, I
must say.

(MORE)

OWEN (CONT'D)

But actually I was here to ask Miss Cooper for her assistance with some, er, legal matters.

ISABEL

Let me get dressed for my next act and I'll talk to you outside.

OWEN

Great. Thank you, Belle.

RAMON

Okay. Remember, Belle, you are on again in fifteen minutes!

Owen exits. Millie walks in.

MILLIE

Say, isn't that the guy from the Chastleton Arms?

ISABEL

Yeah, I wonder what he wants?

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CLUB CHI CHI

The street is busy with restaurants and clubs.

Owen walks out of the club, followed by Belle and Millie. Belle has changed into her hobo outfit, and Millie's still wearing the gorgeous evening gown.

ISABEL

How can I help you, Mr. Pearson?

OWEN

This might sound a little funny to you, but, er, would either of you ladies happen to know what happened to my engagement ring?

Millie is completely surprised. Belle is startled but struggles to look composed.

MILLIE

Your ring? You don't mean to say that you've lost it!

Owen nods, ruefully.

OWEN

Unfortunately I have. I know it's a long shot, but I had to ask.

ISABEL

I'm afraid we haven't got your ring, Mr. Pearson. I'm sorry. Millie, you and I had better go back in.

OWEN

Wait - there's one other thing. I'm also looking for information about Douglas Macarthur. I had heard that you might know something about him.

Isabel and Millie exchange uneasy glances.

ISABEL

What if I did? What kind of information are you looking for?

OWEN

It seems my brother and I have got ourselves in a bit of a jam. You remember I told you about that newspaper series we were running about General Macarthur? It turns out that they got the General pretty riled. He's going to try to put us under.

ISABEL

I'm sorry to hear that. But what can I do about it?

OWEN

(Watching Isabel carefully)

Did you know that General Macarthur announced his engagement today?

ISABEL

(Stunned)

No, I didn't know that.

OWEN

He's marrying an heiress, the daughter of a rich banking family.

MILLIE

(To Isabel, with concern)

Aw, honey, are you okay?

ISABEL

(Shakes her head)

I still don't see what any of this has got to do with me.

OWEN

Douglas Macarthur has built a reputation for being a clean cut American hero. I'm sorry to put it this way, but if people found out about his affair with a young girl from the Philippines, well, they might be inclined to view him differently. Once my brother and I tell Macarthur that we have this information, we might be able to persuade him to rethink his threat to sue us.

ISABEL

Ah. I see. You want to use me, to blackmail him? To save your brother's paper?

OWEN

I'm sorry. It must sound terribly crude. I won't insult your intelligence by telling you anything but the truth. If there was any other way, any way that didn't involve you, we would do it. I guess I thought that maybe you had been hurt by him too -- and that you might be willing to help us out.

Isabel considers for a moment, but really, her mind had been made up the moment Owen had made the suggestion.

ISABEL

Okay. Sign me up. What do you need me to do?

OWEN

(Disbelieving)
Really? You'll help us? Belle, I'm so grateful --

ISABEL

Never mind. I'm doing it purely for my own reasons. Let's just say that I haven't had the chance to say goodbye to him yet.

OWEN

But I thought we could at least pay you something for your trouble --

ISABEL

(Smiling coquettishly)
Well, if you insist on thanking me
I won't say no. Hey --
(Turning to Millie)
Will it be enough that Millie and I
can move out of that awful boarding
house of hers? Oh! And Millie,
wouldn't you love to take a trip to
California?

OWEN

(Clearly unprepared for
this, and backpedaling)
Um, I --

CUT TO:

CLUB CHI CHI

Red is watching two tramps perform a vaudeville comedy routine, and laughing uproariously. O'Reilly is fast asleep next to him.

TRAMP NO. 1

And then what did you say?

TRAMP NO. 2

And then I says, "That's no lady,
that's my wife!"

Red laughs so hard that he jostles O'Reilly awake.

O'REILLY

What happened, did you see her?

RED

(Still laughing)
"That's my wife!" Ha! See who? Oh,
the girl? No, haven't seen her.

O'REILLY

You dumbbell, we're supposed to be
keeping an eye on the girl!
(Checks his watch)
It's been a while. Come on, let's
check outside.

O'Reilly gets up and Red follows reluctantly, his eyes still on the stage.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CLUB CHI CHI

Owen, Millie and Isabel are huddled together, talking.

OWEN

(Scribbling on a piece of
paper)

Here's the number and the address.
If I'm not there, you can talk to
Drew, my brother.

Red and O'Reilly come on the scene.

RED

There they are!

O'REILLY

There you are.

ISABEL

Here I am. What do you want?

O'REILLY

You've missed your ship. Our boss
wasn't too happy with us about
that. He's sent us after you to
make sure that you don't miss the
next one.

RED

Yeah, we're going to make sure you
have a bon voyage, if we have to
tie you to the mast and stay with
you all the way to Singapore.

OWEN

Sorry gentlemen, but Belle is a
free woman, and she's not going
anywhere unless she wants to.

RED

Ha! You wimp, you think you can
stop us?

O'Reilly's got a point -- Owen is about half his size.
Still, Owen squares his shoulders and faces him bravely.

OWEN

I think I can try.

While Owen and the MPs argue, Isabel quietly grabs hold of a
metal trash can standing nearby. As the men face off, she
tips it over and rolls it at the MPs with all her might.

ISABEL

Run!

The MPs are knocked over. Owen and the two girls run as fast as they can.

O'REILLY

(Stumbling)

Stop!

RED

Yeah, stop!

Red whips out a pistol and fires a warning shot into the air. It hits a streetlamp, which shatters, scattering broken glass over the two men and plunging them into darkness.

O'REILLY

You idiot, what are you doing!

O'Reilly takes off Red's hat and slaps Red across the face with it.

RED

Ouch!

EXT. STREET

Owen, Isabel and Millie are running. They turn a corner and stop, gasping, in front of a movie theater.

ISABEL

(Out of breath)

You think we lost them?

OWEN

(Peeking around the corner)

I think they stopped running a few minutes ago.

ISABEL

(Collapsing on the sidewalk)

Oh, let's rest a minute. I've got such a stitch in my side!

MILLIE

I've never been so scared in my life! Belle, I think those fellows were trying to *kill* you!

ISABEL

Brr, how creepy! Let's get out of here. I feel like I'm being watched!

OWEN

Good idea.

MILLIE

Oh, my poor feet. My shoes are killing me.

OWEN

Here, let me lend you a hand.

MILLIE

(Leaning on Owen as she loosens the straps on her shoes)

Thanks. Let me just unbuckle -

The theater door opens and a small crowd, mostly college students, exits. Among the crowd is Sophie Livingston, with a couple of girlfriends.

When Owen sees her, his face lights up involuntarily.

OWEN

Sophie!

Sophie turns and sees Millie, in her glamorous gown, holding Owen's arm. Isabel, in her hobo outfit, is sitting a short distance away, on the ground.

SOPHIE

Oh!

Millie immediately lets go of Owen's arm. Owen, meanwhile, is completely unconscious of her.

Sophie is staring at Millie, totally outraged. Owen's delight turns to confusion as he registers Sophie's fury. He follows her gaze and turns to Millie.

OWEN

(Confused; not thinking)
Sophie, this is Millie --

SOPHIE

Never mind the introductions. I guess I finally know why I haven't heard from you all week.

OWEN

(It finally dawns on him
what Sophie must think)
No, no, that isn't it at all.
Sophie, this is just a friend of
mine -- Let me just explain --

Then Sophie sees Owen's ring finger. She is hit by a fresh wave of hurt.

SOPHIE

So I see that you're not even
acknowledging our engagement
anymore! Honestly, Owen, I never
expected this from you.

Sophie bursts into tears. Her two friends surround her and glare at Owen.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

At the very least, I thought you'd
have the decency to tell me you
wanted to break it off.

FRIEND NO. 1

Come on, honey. Let's get you home.

MILLIE

Wait, you've got it all wrong. Owen
and I -- that is, Mr. Pearson and I
--

FRIEND NO. 2

Don't you speak to her!

OWEN

Sophie, wait just a moment. Listen
to me.

SOPHIE

Owen, please, just leave me alone.

She walks away, flanked by her two friends, towards a standing cab. As she passes Isabel, Isabel beseeches her.

ISABEL

Oh, no! Wait, please --

Sophie looks at Isabel, who is still wearing her pathetic hobo outfit. Although Sophie is consumed by shock and grief, she is struck by the plight of this young woman who appears to be in even more terrible circumstances than herself.

SOPHIE
(Shaking her head through
her tears)
You poor thing. Here --

She puts a coin in Isabel's hand and gets into the cab.

Isabel stares at the coin in her hand, completely bewildered.

INT. DREW PEARSON'S OFFICE (DAY)

Isabel, Millie and Owen sit facing Drew, who sits behind his desk.

Drew is visibly agitated. But Owen looks even worse than Drew. He hasn't slept in days. He's pale, he has dark circles under his eyes - he looks awful.

DREW
So let me get this straight. You want to go to Douglas MacArthur and tell him that we have Isabel Cooper with us, and that unless he withdraws his lawsuit, we'll go public with the story of his -- begging your pardon, Miss Cooper -- teenaged Filipina mistress?

OWEN
That's about the size of it.

DREW
(Shaking his head)
I'm impressed, Owen. It sounds crazy, but it just might work.

ISABEL
So, when will we set off the fireworks?

DREW
Our trial is set for the first of the month, so we haven't got much time. And we've got a lot of work to do before then. Based on what happened last night, we can bet that MacArthur will come after us, lock, stock and barrel.

OWEN
He'll come after Belle first. We'd better take precautions for her safety.

DREW

Good point. Where are you living,
Miss Cooper?

ISABEL

I'm staying with Millie, at her
place on Linden Street.

DREW

If Macarthur has found out where
you work, it won't be long before
he figures out where you live.
Owen, could you ask Paulette to
find a hotel for the young ladies?

OWEN

If we tell Paulette about this,
it'll be all over town by tomorrow
morning.

DREW

Good thinking. Maybe you should
take the ladies yourself, Owen, if
you wouldn't mind.

OWEN

No problem. I'm on the job.

DREW

Thanks, little brother.

EXT. CITY STREET - OUTSIDE BURCHARDT HOTEL

Owen, Isabel and Millie are getting out of Owen's parked car.

MILLIE

Thanks for escorting us to the
hotel, Drew.

OWEN

(Getting the suitcases out
of the trunk)

It's no problem.

(Rueful)

It looks like I won't have much
else to do in the evenings, now
that Sophie's not speaking to me.

MILLIE

Oh, dear. Haven't you tried to call
her?

OWEN

I've tried everything I can think of. She won't take my calls. I guess she told the matron at her dormitory not to take down my messages, either.

MILLIE

If we could only sit her down and explain everything, I'm sure we could clear this whole thing up.

OWEN

It will still be hard to explain how I lost her ring.

ISABEL

Owen, about that ring -- I've got a confession to make.

Owen and Millie both turn to look at her, surprised.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

I - I found the ring the day after we met, and I meant to try to find you and give it back to you. But then when Douglas' men took me to Baltimore, I had nothing - except for your ring.

(Beat)

I - I'm afraid I gave it to a cab driver, in exchange for a ride back to Washington.

(Deep breath)

I'm really sorry, Owen.

Owen, overcome with grief, is speechless. He sets the suitcases down on the street.

MILLIE

Oh, Belle.

ISABEL

(Looking at Owen)

I didn't think I had another choice. And - well, I didn't think I'd ever see you again. I wish there was something I could do.

It's like a frantic bit of hope in Owen is extinguished. He's devastated, but also calmer than before. He nods.

OWEN

I understand, Belle. I don't blame you.

(Beat)

I wish I could just talk to Sophie. If there were only some way to explain this to her.

(Shakes his head)

But maybe that's impossible. She'd never understand.

Isabel watches him anxiously. She feels terrible. Owen sees her expression and softens.

OWEN (CONT'D)

(Patting her on the shoulder)

It's okay, Belle. Thanks for telling me. Let's go inside.

He picks up the suitcases again, and the trio head into the hotel.

EXT. CITY STREET - PHONE BOOTH

O'Reilly is inside a phone booth on a busy city street. Red is crammed into the booth next to him, trying to listen.

O'REILLY

Boss -- bad news. I think we've lost her for good.

INT. OFFICE - C.U. MACARTHUR TALKING INTO TELEPHONE

The scene is cropped so that the upper part of MacArthur's face is not visible - only his mouth. Eisenhower is visible in the background, sitting behind MacArthur.

MACARTHUR

What happened, wasn't she at the theater?

EXT. CITY STREET - PHONE BOOTH

O'REILLY

She was, but she got away from us.

RED

(Chiming in)

We were this close, boss!

INT. OFFICE - C.U. MACARTHUR TALKING INTO TELEPHONE

MACARTHUR

Did you try the theater again?

EXT. CITY STREET - PHONE BOOTH

O'REILLY

(Elbowing Red aside)

We've gone every night this week,
and there's been no sign of her.
The manager says she skedaddled
that night, missed her second act,
and hasn't been back since.

(Pause)

Oh, boss, there's something else I
should tell you. When we caught up
with her outside the club, she
wasn't alone. She was with one of
the girls from the club, but there
was someone else, too. A guy.
Didn't recognize him.

INT. OFFICE - C.U. MACARTHUR TALKING INTO TELEPHONE

MACARTHUR

A man? What did he look like?

EXT. CITY STREET- PHONE BOOTH

O'REILLY

He was twenty-fiveish, medium
height, medium build -

RED

(Interjecting)

Nah. Skinny. Skinny guy.

O'REILLY

Brown hair, I think. Looks like a
million other guys in this city.

INT. OFFICE - C.U. MACARTHUR TALKING INTO TELEPHONE

MACARTHUR

Did he seem to be acquainted with
Isabel, or with the other girl?

EXT. CITY STREET- PHONE BOOTH

O'REILLY

Dunno. He seemed pretty friendly with the both of them, you ask me. Anything else we can do for you, boss?

INT. OFFICE - C.U. MACARTHUR TALKING INTO TELEPHONE

MACARTHUR

I'll call you with further instructions if necessary.

Macarthur hangs up the telephone and turns around to face Eisenhower.

We now see the back of Macarthur's head, in the foreground, and Eisenhower in the background.

EISENHOWER

They are unable to locate her? This is terrible, sir.

MACARTHUR

And she apparently has a co-conspirator, a young man.

EISENHOWER

If her existence becomes widely known, this could be troubling indeed.

MACARTHUR

And she has no reason to remain discreet, now. We've got to find her.

EISENHOWER

And if we can't find her?

MACARTHUR

We'll have to be prepared to deal with the fallout if her story becomes public.

EISENHOWER

(Thinking)

We must be prepared to discredit her.

INT. BURCHARDT HOTEL SUITE

A neat, well-maintained hotel room. Nowhere near as elegant as the Chastleton, however.

Millie and Isabel play cards at a table by the window, but without much interest. There is a KNOCK at the door. Millie gets up to answer it.

Owen enters, carrying a white BOX. Owen looks just as wrecked as before, if not more so. He's pale, unslept, and his clothes are rumpled.

OWEN

Good morning, ladies.

MILLIE

Hi, Owen. Come on in.

OWEN

(Entering the room)

Just stopping by to see how you two are doing, if you need anything.

MILLIE

Nothing I can think of. Belle and I are just playing cards. She wins every time. I don't know how she does it.

From her seat at the table, Isabel pulls a card out of her sleeve and winks at Owen -- she's been cheating. Millie, whose back is to Isabel, does not see her.

Owen tries not to smile.

OWEN

I'm glad to tell you that you won't be stuck in here much longer -- Drew and I are having our meeting with Macarthur's people this afternoon. You girls must be bored to death. You've gone from being cooped up in one hotel room to being cooped up in another.

ISABEL

It's not so bad. For one thing, the fact that there are a couple of guys with guns looking for us out there makes being locked up in here seem like a pretty good deal.

(MORE)

ISABEL (CONT'D)
 (Spying the box in Owen's
 hand)
 So what's that you've got there?

OWEN
 I picked up some pastries for you
 girls. Cherry turnovers.

ISABEL
 (Taking the box and
 opening it)
 Mmmmm!

OWEN
 (Mournfully)
 They're Sophie's favorite.

MILLIE
 She still won't speak to you, huh?

OWEN
 I've done everything I can think
 of. I've taken to standing outside
 her dormitory, waiting for her to
 come in or out. I figured she'd
 have to go through that door to go
 to classes, but somehow she's still
 managed to avoid me.
 (Beat)
 I did get to speak to one of her
 roommates, though.

ISABEL
 (Putting down the box)
 And?

OWEN
 It seems that Sophie's so upset
 she's decided to move back to Los
 Angeles, where her parents live.
 She's made arrangements to transfer
 to a college in California.

MILLIE
 She wouldn't just leave! Without
 even giving you a chance to talk to
 her?

OWEN
 You don't know my Sophie. Once she
 gets it into her mind to do
 something, she doesn't listen to
 anybody. Her roommate said she'd
 bought her train tickets already.

(MORE)

OWEN (CONT'D)

She's leaving in just over a week.
The date of the trial, in fact.

(Brokenly)

I won't even get a chance to see
her before she goes.

MILLIE

Belle, we've got to figure out a
way to help Owen.

Isabel picks up a pastry and points it decisively at Owen.

ISABEL

Millie's right, Owen. We're going
to figure out how to get you out of
this mess. You'll see.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Drew and Owen sit on one side of a massive oak table;
Eisenhower and several uniformed men sit facing them.

EISENHOWER

So have you any response to our
proposal, gentlemen?

DREW

Yes.

(Deep breath)

Every word in those articles was
the truth, Major Eisenhower. And
you know it. General Macarthur
knows it too.

(Beat)

We can't hide the truth - it's too
important. At General Macarthur's
orders, the United States Army shot
at and killed American men --
American veterans! For nothing more
than the crime of asking that their
government give them the money that
they earned for their service. The
public deserves to know what
happened!

EISENHOWER

Very touching, Mr. Pearson. I take it that you are fully aware that if you do not retract those articles now, you will be facing us in court next week, in a trial that is likely to bankrupt not only your newspaper, but yourselves, personally?

DREW

I've given the matter some thought. But I think we have a bit of information that you may not be aware of. If you press on with your lawsuit, we not only will refuse to retract our earlier articles, but we will publish another story. An interview with a young lady named Isabel Rosario Cooper, who has agreed to provide us some biographical information about the General which will, we believe, be of substantial interest to our readership.

Eisenhower takes in this information, impassively. Drew and Owen look at each other. This is not the reaction they had expected.

EISENHOWER

And you think this feeble attempt at what can only be termed extortion will dissuade us?

OWEN

Extortion? With all due respect, sir, I think that this is a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

EISENHOWER

Well I'm sorry to disappoint you gentlemen, but your little plot is not going to work. We know about Miss Cooper, of course we do. We've been wondering where she'd run off to, and it seems to be our misfortune that she has fallen into your hands. Regardless, we've been preparing for the possibility that she may be inclined to indiscretion regarding her relationship with the General.

DREW

What do you mean?

EISENHOWER

I mean that we've got a slew of people - witnesses, if you will - Miss Cooper's childhood friends, her former landlords, her neighbors, who are ready to tell the world that Miss Cooper is delusional, a liar, a thief, a cheat, no better than a common street prostitute. Perhaps even criminally insane. By the time we're done dragging her name through the mud, her words won't be worth the paper they're printed on. There won't be a person in this country who will believe a thing she says. The public will clamor for her deportation, her commitment. She won't be able to show her face on the street.

OWEN

(Bewildered)

None of that is true. Isabel never -

EISENHOWER

(Cutting him off)

A slew of witnesses, Mr. Pearson. Witnesses with impeccable credentials, honest faces, clean backgrounds -- oh, trust me, I selected most of them personally. You'd sooner doubt your own grandmother than think for a moment that any of these upstanding citizens would tell a lie. Not to mention, the General Douglas MacArthur himself. It's their word against the word of -- who? A little nobody, a Filipino stowaway, an Oriental tramp. Do you really think she stands a chance?

Owen and Drew look at each other, fearfully. Eisenhower watches them and smiles.

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)

So in short, gentlemen, I don't think that the General will be inclined to drop his lawsuit. Oh -- and another thing, gentlemen.

(MORE)

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)

Do you know which judge has been assigned to hear our case? His name is Meredith Prescott. It just so happens that Judge Prescott is a close personal friend of mine.

Lucky, wouldn't you say?

(Leans back in his chair
and smiles)

I just thought you should know.

INT. BURCHARDT HOTEL SUITE (DAY)

Millie and Isabel sit on the sofa; Owen sits in a chair, and Drew paces back and forth.

MILLIE

Well, is there any chance that he's bluffing?

DREW

I wouldn't bet on it.

OWEN

So what are we going to do, just give in?

Isabel whirls on him.

ISABEL

We can't give in! I'm telling the truth, and there's no way I'll let him shut me up with a pack of lies. I'd like to look every one of his so-called witnesses in the eye and dare them to dispute what I say.

DREW

You're sure? You're still willing to go through with this?

ISABEL

More so now than ever. Aren't you? It's our only shot! If we can't get Douglas to drop the case, there's no way that crooked judge is going to give you a fair shake.

OWEN

Now, wait a minute. Drew, we can't let Belle do this.

DREW

We can let her make her own decisions, Owen.

OWEN

No. This isn't fair. If we go forward with Belle's story, the worst that will happen to us is that our attempt to force Macarthur to drop his suit will fail. We'll be back where we started. But for Belle, the consequences will be far more serious. Macarthur will see to that. Her reputation will be totally ruined. He may just be vindictive enough to try to have her deported.

DREW

Well, he may do that anyway. But --
(Sighs heavily)
You may be right. If only we had more than just Belle's testimony to rely on. Some kind of hard evidence.

ISABEL

Wait!

Drew stops pacing. All eyes turn to Isabel.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

What kind of evidence do you want?
I might have just the thing.

OWEN

What is it, Belle?

ISABEL

Would Douglas' letters do the trick? I must have dozens of them -- he wrote me at least once a week when I was in the Philippines, pages and pages. And when I was staying at the Chastleton, too, whenever he went away on business. He wasn't exactly shy about putting his feelings down on paper, either, if you know what I mean.

DREW

Letters! Good God, Isabel, you're a lifesaver. Do you have them with you?

Isabel stops. She remembers, and deflates.

ISABEL

No. No, I don't have them anymore.
(Thinking a moment)

Unless --

(To Millie)

Millie, do you know what was done
with all the things I left behind
in my room at the Chastleton?

MILLIE

I sure do. They're in the attic
storage, above the east tower.
Moving your boxes was one of the
last assignments I got before they
sacked me.

ISABEL

(To Drew and Owen,
triumphantly)

There you are! They're at the
Chastleton.

DREW

Millie, do you know for a fact that
Isabel's boxes are still in the
attic? Macarthur hasn't taken them?

MILLIE

I doubt it. The manager said that
they would be shipped to the
General at the first of the month.

OWEN

The first of the month. That gives
us just one week.

DREW

It gives us less time than that.
The trial is on the first of the
month, Owen. We'd better find those
letters before the week is up.

MILLIE

I hate to rain on this parade,
gentlemen, but it's going to be
mighty difficult to get those
letters. The storage room in the
east tower attic is kept locked.
The attic itself is usually locked,
too. The only person who has a key
to those doors is the manager, Mr.
Giddins himself.

(MORE)

MILLIE (CONT'D)

If you think that you're going to be able to get past Mr. Giddins, boy, you don't know Mr. Giddins.

Everyone is totally deflated by this information.

DREW

(Pacing again)

So, we're back where we started. No letters, no documents. Just Isabel's word against a whole pack of Macarthur's mercenaries.

OWEN

No, wait a second. The letters are at the Chastleton Arms Hotel until the first of the month. Millie, where are they going after that?

MILLIE

I told you. The movers are going to take them to the General. He has his own apartment a few blocks away, in Dupont Circle.

OWEN

They're going straight to his apartment?

DREW

And we can just forget about getting to them then.

OWEN

So that's our window. Our best chance of reclaiming the letters -

ISABEL

Is when the boxes are being moved! After the east tower is unlocked, and before the boxes reach Douglas' apartment!

OWEN

That doesn't give us very much time.

DREW

No, it doesn't. And Owen, you and I will be in court that day.

ISABEL

Then it's up to Millie and me to get the boxes.

OWEN

That's not going to work. You and Millie will be instantly recognizable to anyone at the Chastleton.

ISABEL

It may be tough, but if it's the only chance we've got, we'll have to take it.

DREW

(Looking at her with surprise and respect)
Maybe so.

The four conspirators lean towards one another to discuss their plan.

INT. DREW PEARSON'S OFFICE (DAY)

Owen is putting papers into a briefcase. Drew is nervously straightening his tie.

DREW

What time is it?

OWEN

It's two minutes later than the last time you asked. We've got plenty of time, Drew. Our attorney won't be there for another hour yet.

DREW

It's not just us that I'm thinking about.

OWEN

I know. I spoke to Isabel and Millie this morning, and they said they were ready for action.

DREW

(Shakes his head)
I don't know, Owen. Is this crazy, what we're doing? Maybe we're walking straight into the lion's den. And dragging those two girls in there with us.

OWEN

(Gently)

Come on, Drew. Stop fiddling with your tie.

(Brushing off Drew's lapels)

You look just fine.

DREW

(Picking up the briefcase)

Thanks, little brother. So. You think we have a chance?

OWEN

I guess we'll find out soon enough.

(Puts his arm around Drew's shoulder)

Let's go.

The men exit.

INT. LIMOUSINE (DAY)

Eisenhower and Macarthur confer in the back of a limousine. The limo is being driven by a uniformed chauffeur, through the streets of Washington.

Macarthur's face, as always, is hidden by shadow, so that his features are not discernible.

MACARTHUR

Have you heard from them since our meeting?

EISENHOWER

Not a word, sir. It seems they are determined to go through with this ordeal.

MACARTHUR

You'd think that this Pearson fellow would have better sense. I wonder if he's still planning to have Isabel denounce me?

EISENHOWER

He didn't definitively say, sir. But I rather doubt it. When I warned him of the consequences of bringing Miss Cooper to light, he seemed quite rattled.

MACARTHUR

Good. Although, with Pearson as reckless as he is, I guess you never know for sure what he'll do. And Isabel, too. She's unpredictable as hell.

EISENHOWER

True. I've taken all of the precautions we discussed, just in case. Our witnesses to Miss Cooper's character are all prepared to testify, and they can be mobilized at a moment's notice.

MACARTHUR

By the time this is over, Drew Pearson will think twice before he so much as mentions me in print.

EISENHOWER

He won't have the opportunity, sir. By the time Judge Prescott is through with him, he won't own a newspaper to mention you in.

MACARTHUR

That's right. Christ, what a headache this has been. Well, I suppose it will be over soon.

EISENHOWER

We must always be prepared for any surprises.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CHASTLETON ARMS HOTEL (DAY)

A hobo - Isabel disguised, of course - lies sleeping on a bench under a tree across the street from the hotel.

A MOVING VAN is parked at the curb just outside the hotel entrance. There are two huge DECORATIVE URNS next to the hotel entrance.

Two MOVERS in painter's uniforms come out of the hotel, carrying stacked boxes. They set them on the curb and go back into the hotel.

A third person in a painter's uniform comes walking up the street. It's Millie, her hair tucked up under her cap. She begins loading the boxes into the van.

After a few moments, the two movers return, with more boxes and a steamer trunk. When they see Millie, they put down their boxes and hurry over.

MOVER 1

Hey kid, what do you think you're doing?

MILLIE

Hi there. You're moving these boxes out of the Chastleton Arms Hotel storage, aren't you?

MOVER 2

What's this? Who are you, anyway?

MILLIE

(Holding out her hand)
Miles Mathis. The company sent me along to lend you a hand.

MOVER 2

(Ignoring the hand)
The hell they did. Why would the company send you along?
(Looking her over)
You're from the union, aren't you.

MILLIE

(Genuine confusion)
The union?

MOVER 1

I'll bet he is. Checking up on us, huh? Go ahead, you want to see my card? I got nothing to hide.

MILLIE

I - I - I'm not from the union, fellas. Honest. The company just sent me along to help. They said they wanted a third person on the job.

MOVER 1

(Shaking his head)
No, I don't like it.

MILLIE

Well, what's wrong? I'm not taking anything from you. With three men on the job, the work will go faster.

MOVER 1

That's exactly right, buddy. We get paid by the hour. The faster the work, the less I get paid. Understand?

MILLIE

Look, guys, I don't want to make any trouble. I'm just trying to do my job, same as you.

MOVER 2

Aw, Lou, forget it. Let the poor kid do his work.
(To Millie)
But not too fast, you hear?

MILLIE

All right, I get it. You want me to start stacking these boxes in the van, or what?

INT. COURTROOM (DAY)

Macarthur, Eisenhower, and two attorneys sit at the plaintiffs' table. Macarthur's face is not visible - he's partially hidden behind one of the attorneys. Drew, Owen and their attorney sit at the defendants' table.

The gallery is filled with onlookers. Many of the *Clarion* crew are there - Cunningham, Reynolds, Paulette, etcetera.

BAILIFF

All rise.

Everyone rises as the JUDGE enters the courtroom.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)

The court will now come to order.
The Honorable Meredith R. Prescott,
of the Superior Court of the
District of Columbia, presiding.

The judge gives a small nod to Eisenhower and Macarthur as he walks in. Eisenhower smiles broadly in response and looks at Drew to check that he saw it.

Drew did, of course, and sinks a little in his chair.

JUDGE

(Sitting)
All right.

(MORE)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

We're here today on the matter of,
let's see, plaintiff, General
Douglas Macarthur, versus
defendants Clarion Newspaper
Company and Drew Pearson.

The courtroom rustles with whispers when Macarthur's name is
stated.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

(Peering around the
courtroom)

We'll have order here, please.
There may be some important
personages coming through this
courtroom today, but I assure you,
everyone gets the same justice in
my court, regardless of their name
or their position.

(He smiles at Macarthur)

Now. Where was I. Ah. The suit
alleges that defendants
intentionally, knowingly or
recklessly published false and
defamatory matters about defendant,
on repeated occasions. The suit
further alleges damages of nine
hundred thousand dollars. Is that
correct?

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE

(Looking at Drew)

Now, these are some serious
charges. And quite a formidable
sum. Have the parties made any
efforts to amicably resolve the
matter?

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

We've made efforts, your honor.
They have not been successful, and
we would like to proceed with the
hearing.

JUDGE

All right. Does the defendant have
anything to say?

CLOSE ON DREW

Drew leans over to his attorney.

DREW

(Whispering to his
attorney)

Remember, we're stalling for time
until Isabel can get those letters.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

(Standing)

Your honor, it's true that the
parties have made some efforts at
settlement. However, because of the
rapid pace at which this case
proceeded to trial, we did not have
much opportunity to truly explore
all of our options. In fact, the
defendant believes that further
discussion could be fruitful.

JUDGE

Well, the day of the trial is
hardly the time to begin a new
round of settlement discussions.

(Looks over at Macarthur)

However, if the plaintiff is
willing to entertain such
discussions?

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

Your Honor, we've made it very
clear to the defendants that there
is only a single offer they could
make that would tempt us to
withdraw this lawsuit. Unless the
defendants are willing to provide a
full retraction and an apology for
the articles they published about
the General, we wish to proceed
with the trial.

JUDGE

(To Drew's attorney)

Well?

Drew starts to whisper to his attorney, then changes his mind
and addresses the judge himself.

DREW

Uh, your Honor?

JUDGE
(Surprised)
Yes?

DREW
If I may address the Court. We are not prepared to enter the agreement that the plaintiffs refer to. However, there has been some new information that has come to light, which I think will be of interest to the plaintiffs. It may cause the plaintiff to reconsider the possibility of settlement.

JUDGE
New information? Well then, by all means, let's hear it.

DREW
With all respect, your Honor, this information is of a rather, ahem, private nature. I think the plaintiff knows what I'm talking about, and I'm sure he would prefer that I share it privately.

Macarthur, Eisenhower, and their attorneys briefly confer, in hushed voices.

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1
If we may, Your Honor, we'd like to request a brief recess to discuss this new matter with the defendants. We're willing to listen to what the defendants have to say, but we'd rather not do so in open court.

JUDGE
Very well, then. Let's take fifteen minutes. The bailiff will show you into my chambers.

The parties rise and follow the bailiff out of the courtroom. Macarthur and Eisenhower huddle with their attorney, whispering, as they exit.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CHASTLETON ARMS HOTEL

Rita is watching from the door to the bar.

Millie, who is stacking boxes in the van, sees Rita and gives her a nod.

The movers come out of the hotel's main entrance, each with another armful of boxes. Mover No. 2 is carrying, among other things, a small GREEN CASE.

MOVER 2

(Setting down the boxes on
the sidewalk)

I think that's just about the last
of it.

MOVER 1

Yep.

Rita comes out to the street.

RITA

Hiya fellas. You're working awfully
hard today.

MOVER 1

(Looks her over,
admiringly)

Yes ma'am.

RITA

Why don't you come in and have a
drink? It's pretty warm out today.

MOVER 1

(Looking at Mover 2)
Weeelll....

MOVER 2

(To Mover 1)

I don't know. We've still got to
drive these boxes over to the
General's apartments.

RITA

Tell you what. It's been a slow
day, and I'm craving some company.
Come on in and have a couple of
beers, on the house. Now how can
you say no to that?

MOVER 2

I guess it couldn't hurt, just one
drink....

MOVER 1

We are getting paid by the hour,
after all. There's no need to rush
this job.

(To Rita)

I think we might take you up on
your kind offer, ma'am.

The movers take off their caps and smooth down their hair as
they walk over to the bar entrance.

Millie looks at them questioningly.

MOVER 1 (CONT'D)

You, kid! You stay here and watch
the van.

MILLIE

Aye aye, sir.

After the men disappear into the building, Isabel lifts her
head, quickly looks around her, and points at the small green
case.

Millie opens up the case. There is a large PACKAGE of papers
and envelopes, tied together with a ribbon. She takes it out.

She hurriedly stashes the package in one of the decorative
urns.

INT. SOPHIE'S DORMITORY ROOM (DAY)

The room is pretty bare - all personal items have been put
away. A large steamer trunk stands by the door. Sophie
Livingston is putting a few last items into a valise.

A student, PENNY, walks in.

PENNY

(Looking around)

Wow, you're fast. Done packing
already, huh?

SOPHIE

Almost. I've just got to talk to
the matron and fill out some
paperwork at the Dean's office, and
then I'm headed for the train
station.

PENNY

And then it's California here you
come, huh?

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

Well, I won't pretend that I don't envy your destination a little, but I sure am going to miss you, Sophie. All of us are.

(Sitting down on the bed)

I wish you'd reconsider your decision. It's going to be a lot lonelier here without you around.

SOPHIE

Oh, Penny, I'll miss you too. I wish I had a reason to reconsider.

PENNY

Didn't Owen give any kind of explanation for what he did?

SOPHIE

No.

PENNY

Well, what did he say?

Sophie shrugs, noncommittally.

PENNY (CONT'D)

You don't mean to tell me you're still refusing to speak to him! Sophie Livingston! Didn't you even tell him goodbye?

Sophie shakes her head, sadly.

SOPHIE

You know, he's called or stopped by every day for the past couple of weeks. And I had been refusing to speak to him. I was just so angry. But I'm leaving today, and he hasn't called. The funny thing is, I'd actually like to talk to him, now.

(Shakes her head, ruefully)

Have you ever heard anything so ridiculously contrary in your life?

(Beat)

I know that he knows I'm leaving today. Maybe this is my answer, huh? Maybe this is his way of saying there's no reason for me to stay here?

Sophie begins to cry, and Penny gives her a hug.

PENNY

Aw, Sophie, honey, don't cry. I'm sorry.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CHASTLETON ARMS HOTEL

We hear the movers returning. Isabel is feigning sleep again. Millie is stacking boxes.

RITA (OFFSCREEN)

(Loudly)

Sure you boys won't have another? I could draw you another pint.

MOVER 2 (OFFSCREEN)

Thank you, ma'am, for your hospitality, but we'd really better not. We've still got a long day ahead of us.

The two movers exit the hotel, followed by Rita. Rita looks at Millie questioningly, and Millie gives her a quick nod.

RITA

Well, I wish you'd stay a little bit longer, but I guess I can't keep a man from his work.

MOVER 1

We sure do appreciate the drink and the conversation, ma'am. Maybe I'll see you again?

RITA

Stop by anytime.

MOVER 1

(Tipping his cap)

Yes, ma'am, I will!

Rita goes back into the bar. Mover 2 rounds on Millie.

MOVER 2

Kid, aren't you done with those boxes yet?

They shut the back of the van.

MILLIE

Actually, if it's just the same to you two, I'll head on back to the company now. They just sent me out to help you load up the van.

MOVER 1

Oh, no you don't. You're coming with us. It turns out that having a third man is pretty useful sometimes.

MILLIE

But -

Millie reluctantly gets into the van with the two men.

The van pulls away from the curb and drives off, with Millie looking longingly back at the hotel.

Isabel lies still for a few more moments. Then she gets up and heads straight for the urn. She reaches in and finds the package, which she buttons under her coat.

She walks off briskly in the opposite direction from the van.

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

Drew, Owen, Macarthur and Eisenhower sit around an oak table in the judge's chambers, each next to their respective attorneys. As always, Macarthur's face is hidden in shadow.

The judge enters. He nods at Macarthur and Eisenhower. Then he turns to look at Drew with distaste.

JUDGE

(To Drew)

So you've got some new information that you've got to share with us, is that right? Well, let's hear it.

DREW

The information concerns a certain young woman named Isabel Rosario Cooper. The plaintiff and I have had some discussions about this individual.

JUDGE

A young woman? Does this have anything to do with the lawsuit?

DREW

Only indirectly, your Honor. We believe that we have some information about this young woman that might cause the plaintiff to reconsider the utility of pursuing this lawsuit.

JUDGE

(To Macarthur)

Do you know what this is all about?

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

I think we do, your Honor. I think we've heard this all before.

(To Drew)

We've already given you our answer. Go ahead and expose your information. You know what will happen.

(To the judge)

If this is all the defendants have to say, Your Honor, I think we can go forward with the trial. There's no resolution to be made here.

DREW

Wait a minute, that isn't all. The last time we talked about this, I told you we had Miss Cooper ready to testify about your relationship with her. It turns out that Miss Cooper's testimony is not the only thing we have to rely on.

(To Macarthur)

We have letters. Dozens of letters, written by you to Miss Cooper, confirming everything that she has told us. You said that you had witnesses who could discredit Miss Cooper. Do you think they can discredit your words, your handwriting, and your signature?

Although we still don't see Macarthur's face, we see his body stiffen at this announcement.

Eisenhower looks shocked, and then recovers.

EISENHOWER

(Not at all sure of himself, but bluffing)

You may have letters, but letters can be faked.

DREW

True. But I am fairly certain that, in the end, the weight of the evidence will back up Miss Cooper's story. You may dispute the letters.

(MORE)

DREW (CONT'D)

But the longer the dispute drags on, the longer the controversy will stay in the papers. And the more General MacArthur's reputation will suffer.

EISENHOWER

Well, I think -

MacArthur puts up a hand to silence Eisenhower.

MACARTHUR

Dwight.

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 2

Wait a moment. Where are the letters? I'd like to see them before we make any decisions.

JUDGE

A good question. I think the plaintiffs have a right to look at these letters.

DREW

Well, actually, Your Honor, I, uh, I don't have them with me.

JUDGE

You don't have them with you? Where are they?

DREW

They're in a -- a safe place.

EISENHOWER

You know what? I think you're bluffing. I don't believe you have any letters.

Drew's ploy is falling apart.

DREW

I - I have the letters. I just don't have them here. I could get them.

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

Your Honor, I think it's pretty clear that this is merely a ruse on the part of the defendants to delay these proceedings.

(MORE)

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1 (CONT'D)

Given that we've wasted a good part of the morning already, I'd say it's worked pretty well. Let's not allow it succeed any further. I'd like to request that we proceed with the hearing.

JUDGE

(To Drew)

Anything else to say, or are you finished with your games?

DREW

Only that I do have the letters. If I could just have a little bit of time, I'm sure I could get them --

EISENHOWER

You're sure you could get them. That's very likely.

JUDGE

(To Drew)

If you don't have something to show these gentlemen, you'd better stop wasting their time.

(Cutting off Drew, who opens his mouth to interject)

Now I want no more of these spurious arguments, young man. Let's get on with this case.

DREW

(Defeated)

Yes, Your Honor.

The men rise and file out of the chambers.

INT. TAXI (DAY)

Isabel, still dressed in her hobo costume, clutches her letters and looks out the window as the taxi speeds through Washington.

They pass the manicured lawn of a college campus.

ISABEL

Driver, what school is this? This wouldn't happen to be Trinity College, would it?

CABDRIVER

It sure is.

Isabel thinks fast.

ISABEL

Could you let me off at the college, please?

CABDRIVER

(Pulling over)

I thought you said you were in a big hurry to get to the courthouse.

ISABEL

(Getting out)

I won't be but five minutes. Will you wait for me?

CABDRIVER

Sure, sweetheart. The meter's running.

INT. DORMITORY LOBBY (DAY)

Isabel walks into the open door. The MATRON is sitting at a large desk in the lobby. She looks Isabel over suspiciously.

MATRON

Yes? How can I help you?

ISABEL

I'm looking for Miss Sophie Livingston.

MATRON

Miss Livingston? I'm afraid you've just missed her.

ISABEL

Missed her? Oh, no! Do you know where she's gone?

MATRON

To the train station, I imagine.

ISABEL

How long ago did she leave?

MATRON

Why, not five minutes ago.

Without a word, Isabel turns and runs out the door.

INT. COURTROOM (DAY)

The men are seated as previously.

JUDGE

Let the record show that the parties engaged in a brief conference in chambers.

(To Macarthur's attorneys)

Does the plaintiff wish to make an opening statement at this time?

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

We do, your Honor.

(Standing)

General Douglas Macarthur is a name well-known to most patriotic Americans. He first rose to national prominence when he served our country with extraordinary courage in the Mexican Expedition. He then fought on the side of freedom and democracy in the Great War. His acts of exemplary courage, patriotism and heroism earned him the distinction of being the most decorated soldier in that war. He earned two Distinguished Service Crosses, seven Silver Stars, a Distinguished Service Medal, and two Purple Hearts for his courageous and dedicated work. After the conclusion of the war, he continued to serve this nation with honor and valor, as superintendent of the prestigious West Point Academy and as a commander in the American Colony of the Philippines.

ANGLE ON DREW AND OWEN

Drew is slumped down in his seat as Macarthur's attorney drones on.

DREW

(Aside to Owen)

I can't take much more of this.

OWEN

(Also whispering)

You aren't kidding. It's making my stomach turn.

DREW

Look at the judge, eating it up.
Isabel better get here soon.

OWEN

Don't worry. I'm sure she's on her
way.

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

Any patriotic American newspaper
would respect and even celebrate
General Douglas Macarthur for his
extraordinary valour in wartime and
his accomplished service in
peacetime. But one newspaper, *The
Washington Clarion*, chose to do
things differently. Perhaps it
hoped that it would generate some
sensation, or stimulate its sales,
by vilifying this great American
hero. It began to run articles --

FADE OUT.

INT. TRAIN STATION

Sophie, with a valise and a trunk at her feet, sits alone on
a bench in the middle of the busy train station. She stares
vacantly at the railroad timetable.

Isabel approaches. She is still dressed in her hobo costume.

ISABEL

Mind if I sit down?

SOPHIE

(Absently)

Please, be my guest.

Suddenly recognition dawns. Sophie turns towards Isabel.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

You! I know you, don't I?

ISABEL

(Gently)

I think you might.

SOPHIE

You're the lady hobo -- Begging
your pardon. I mean, I saw you that
night outside the theater! The
night --

Sophie trails off as she remembers what transpired that night.

ISABEL

Yes. Well. I'd like to talk to you about that night.

Sophie looks up, confused.

SOPHIE

Who are you?

ISABEL

I'm not what you think. I'm not a --
 (Looking down at her
 clothes)
 Well, I'm not actually a hobo.

Isabel sits down next to Sophie.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

My name is Isabel. I've been working with Owen and his brother, Drew.

Sophie is momentarily shocked.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Drew has been writing some articles for his paper about Douglas Macarthur, and I -- I used to know Douglas. So they asked for my help.

(Beat)

Anyway, he -- Douglas, I mean -- sent some of his lackeys after me and my friend, Millie. That's the girl you saw with Owen and me that night. Owen's been helping us hide.

(Beat)

Owen's been very kind to me and Millie. But that's all.

Sophie is doubtful, but hopeful, too.

SOPHIE

But --

ISABEL

(Cutting Sophie off)

I guess you had some kind of misunderstanding about me, or about my friend Millie, or how Owen knows us. I just wanted to tell you what really happened.

(MORE)

ISABEL (CONT'D)

(Pause)

Owen has been a good friend to me,
and I hate to think that I repaid
him by getting him into trouble --
with the person he cares about the
most.

Sophie is quiet for a moment as she digests this.

SOPHIE

How do I know you're telling me the
truth, and not just what I want to
hear?

ISABEL

Maybe that's a question you should
be asking him.

Isabel stands up.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm in a rush, I've got to
go. I just felt I owed it to Owen
to try to set you straight. He's
been just devastated these past few
weeks, and I hate knowing that it's
at least partly my fault.

(Beat)

Owen's pretty crazy about you, Miss
Livingston.

Isabel looks a moment at Sophie, who is still doubtful.
Isabel shakes her head.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Boy, I tell you, if I had a man who
talked about me the way that Owen
talks about you --

Isabel trails off.

SOPHIE

Yes?

ISABEL

(Shrugs)

I just mean that I wouldn't give up
anything I cared about that easily.

INT. COURTROOM (DAY)

A series of easels support blow-ups of *Clarion* articles. Along with the "Power Mad Macarthur" story, there is a story with the headline, "Is General Macarthur Dictating Policy in the Orient?" And "General Macarthur Urges Another Great War"

Macarthur's Attorney No. 1 is standing and addressing the judge.

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

I think these articles conclusively demonstrate that Drew Pearson and the *Clarion* repeatedly published statements about General Douglas Macarthur, statements that disparaged his character and damaged his reputation. General Macarthur has been called a tyrant, a demagogue, a warmonger, and an enemy of the working man. The injury to his name as a result of the defendant's irresponsible and malicious actions has been very grave.

JUDGE

(To Drew)

Mr. Pearson, you admit to having written these articles?

DREW

I do, Your Honor.

JUDGE

And do you have anything to say in your defense?

DREW

Only that every word of those articles is the truth.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

Your Honor, as you are aware, truth is a complete defense to a charge for defamation.

JUDGE

That's correct. But are you really prepared to prove to me that everything in these articles is true?

(MORE)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

You've made a lot of serious statements about the General, young man. There's a lot of alarming stuff in those articles.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

Your Honor, if you'd only give us more time. Because of the controversial nature of the newspaper articles, many of the sources agreed to provide Mr. Pearson with information only on the condition of anonymity. So they were not able to appear today. But if we had some additional time, I'm sure we could find an independent means of corroborating that the facts stated in Mr. Pearson's articles are true.

EISENHOWER

(Raised eyebrows)

Anonymous sources? I think that perhaps we will need to subpoena those sources.

Eisenhower looks meaningfully at the judge, who returns his gaze.

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)

This court has the power to demand that those individuals reveal their names. I think it would eminently unjust to allow Mr. Pearson's "sources" to make scurrilous accusations against the General, while hiding behind the protection afforded by their anonymity.

Drew is totally alarmed. He can't reveal the names of his sources -- they trusted him to keep their identities secret.

DREW

Now hold on here!

JUDGE

(To Drew)

Wait a minute, I think Mr. Eisenhower makes a very good point. You've written a number of things about General MacArthur, Mr. Pearson.

(MORE)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Things that may well be considered defamatory unless you are able to prove that they are true.

(Beat)

If you want to fight these charges, I think we're going to have to have the names of those sources.

DREW

(To his attorney, in a furious whisper)

He can't do that! We can't -

DREW'S ATTORNEY

Your Honor? Could we go briefly off the record while I confer with my client?

JUDGE

I think we'd better. Let's take five minutes.

(To Drew)

Now I want you to think about this very seriously, young man.

ANGLE ON DREW, OWEN AND DREW'S ATTORNEY

The three men huddle together to confer.

DREW

(Same furious whisper)

There is no way we are going to sell out my sources!

DREW'S ATTORNEY

Drew. I'm not sure we have a choice here. This judge has as good as said he's going to rule against us. You said that what you needed was to buy additional time, and if we name your sources, that'll buy us days, or even weeks, while we listen to their testimony.

OWEN

Meanwhile, their careers will be ruined. Maybe even their lives. Those people trusted Drew to protect them.

DREW

Damn it! If only Belle had been able to get those letters for us.

(To his attorney)

(MORE)

DREW (CONT'D)

I'll take a guilty verdict before I give up any of my sources to these sharks.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

(Shaking his head)

All right, Drew. It's your funeral.

(To the judge)

Your Honor, I think we are ready to go back on the record.

JUDGE

Very good then. Have you made a decision?

The Bailiff steps forward.

BAILIFF

Your Honor, before we proceed, it seems there is a delivery here for the defendant. They say it is urgent, Your Honor.

JUDGE

A delivery? Very well, have them bring it in.

The GUARDS at the rear of the courtroom open the back door. Isabel, dressed in a messenger boy's uniform, saunters in, with the stack of letters under her arm. Her face is partially obscured by her messenger cap.

She walks over to Owen and Drew, who look at her with relief - no, adoration. She puts the letters on their table.

ISABEL

(Whispering)

Here you go.

DREW

Thanks, Belle. We owe you one.

ISABEL

(Smiling)

Oh, I know.

Isabel turns to walk out of the courtroom. As she passes the plaintiff's table, she takes off her cap with a little flourish and a little bow towards Macarthur.

Macarthur and Eisenhower realize who she is. Eisenhower stands up, livid. Although we never see Macarthur's face, his head jerks up and his body reels backwards. He's shocked.

EISENHOWER

You!

Isabel, still walking, turns and blows a kiss at Eisenhower and Macarthur. She exits the courtroom.

Meanwhile, the judge has comprehended none of this.

JUDGE

Let's go back on the record, if we're done with that business. Plaintiffs, are you willing to name your sources?

Drew smiles at his attorney, who nods, and smiles back.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

(Standing up)

No, Your Honor, we are not going to name our sources. Instead, we would like to reiterate our demand that the plaintiffs drop this lawsuit.

JUDGE

(Confused)

What?

MACARTHUR'S ATTORNEY NO. 1

Your Honor, I think we're all a little tired of these theatrics. If the plaintiffs are unwilling - or unable - to name their sources, I think it's clear that there is nothing left to do but to reach a verdict on the evidence that has been presented by the plaintiff - the only verifiable evidence that we have.

JUDGE

I would have to agree.

(To Drew's attorney)

If the plaintiffs have no further evidence to present, we will close the record.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

Well actually, Your Honor, we do have further evidence.

JUDGE

In that case, you may proceed.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

Our first document comes from one Douglas A. Macarthur, and it is dated January 15, 1932. Drew, would you like to do the honors?

He passes a LETTER over to Drew.

DREW

(Standing and reading,
theatrically)

My dearest darling baby girl. It has been just five days since our last night in Singapore. These have been the longest five nights of my life. My arms ache to hold your sweet body. Though you are just sixteen years old, I feel your soul has been with mine for an --

The courtroom is rustling with whispers from the gallery.

MACARTHUR

(Bangs his fist on the table. His voice shakes with rage.)

What is this?!

DREW'S ATTORNEY

(All innocence)

Your Honor, I think we have a right to present our evidence.

DREW

Shall I continue?

EISENHOWER

You've made your point. You want to deal? We'll deal.

The judge is confused, and looks to Eisenhower.

JUDGE

Shall we go off the record?

EISENHOWER

I think that would be best, Your Honor.

(To Drew)

All right. What do you want?

DREW

I've told you what we want. We want you to drop this ridiculous lawsuit.

EISENHOWER

That's it? That's all you want.

DREW

That's all we want.

DREW'S ATTORNEY

Ahem!

DREW

What?

DREW'S ATTORNEY

(Privately)

You know, you haven't exactly paid me yet, Drew, and with all due respect, I've had my doubts as to whether I'm going to be able to collect on my fees.

(To Eisenhower)

We'd also like our attorney's fees in this matter.

EISENHOWER

All right. We have a deal then.

MACARTHUR

And we'll take those letters.

Drew looks at his attorney, who nods and shuffles the letters together, preparing to hand them over. But Owen intervenes.

OWEN

Wait a second. The deal is that you drop this lawsuit and we won't publicize what's written in those letters. We didn't say we would give the letters back to you. They don't belong to us, and we haven't got the right to hand them over. They belong to Isabel.

EISENHOWER

(Exasperated and furious)

All right, all right! What does --
(he spits out her name
like poison)

Isabel -- want for those letters?

OWEN

Well, they're pretty important to her, from what I understand.
 (Looking at Macarthur)
 I know that they mean a lot to her.

EISENHOWER

Yes?

OWEN

And I know she'd like to have the opportunity to leave Washington, you know, travel a bit. Have her independence.

EISENHOWER

(Impatient now)
 And?

OWEN

(Thinking fast)
 Ten thousand dollars. I think that would be fair, don't you, gentlemen?

EISENHOWER

Ten thousand dollars!

Even Drew looks shocked, but he stays quiet.

OWEN

Or we could, you know, just walk away from this, you'll drop the suit, the letters will be returned to Belle -

MACARTHUR

(Interrupting, furious)
 All right! Ten thousand. Now give me those letters.

Owen looks at Drew. Drew smiles back, impressed with his little brother.

DREW

I think we have a deal.

INT. CLARION OFFICE (NIGHT)

The newsroom has been transformed into a party. Staffers pour out wine and champagne and chatter excitedly.

The door opens and Drew and Owen come in, along with Drew's attorney and Millie, still in her mover's uniform. The staff erupts in spontaneous applause.

REYNOLDS

Hail the conquering hero!

CUNNINGHAM

Wonderful work, boys!

Drew grins, sheepish but clearly enjoying the excitement.

Paulette hands him a glass of champagne.

DREW

(To Paulette)

Thank you.

(Addressing the rest of
the staff)

Thank you, everyone. Thank you for all your hard work these past few weeks, and thank you for your support and for sticking by us.

OWEN

(Raising his own glass)

Hear, hear!

DREW

And now. It's been a long day, and I don't know about you, but boy does extortion make me hungry. How about we move this party over to Gadsby's? Dinner's on me.

A general cheer goes up.

OWEN

Oh, he says dinner's on him. Watch out, he'll take it out of your paycheck.

DREW

(Laughing)

Hush, Owen! Now where's the woman of the hour?

MILLIE

Belle? She said she had some errand to run. She ought to have been here by now, though.

DREW

I do wish she were here. We really owe this all to her. Well, we'll leave behind a note so she'll know where to find us.

(Putting his arm around Owen)

Come on. There's a bottle of bourbon at the bar with your name on it.

The crowd begins to move out the door, and Owen stays behind a step, to speak to Drew privately as the room empties out.

OWEN

If it's all the same to you, Drew, I'm actually going to beg off.

DREW

You're not coming?

OWEN

I'm happy for you, I really am. I'm just not much in the mood for a party.

DREW

(Beat)

Ah. Sophie, is it?

By now, the room is empty save for Owen and Drew. Owen nods.

OWEN

(Despairingly)

She's gone, Drew. I called her dormitory. She's really gone.

DREW

Ach, Owen, I'm so sorry. I've been so wrapped up in all of this, I didn't even think --

OWEN

(Waving away Drew's concern)

No, no. You've had a lot on your mind, Drew, I know that. And anyway, it isn't as though there's anything you could have done.

(Pause)

You know Sophie. Once she's made up her mind about something, she won't change it for anybody.

Drew pats him on the back, carefully.

DREW
I'm really sorry, Owen.

OWEN
Thanks, Drew. You go on ahead to your dinner. Maybe I'll catch up with you later on in the night.

DREW
You'll be all right?

OWEN
I will, if you ever get out of here. Go on, they're waiting.

Owen smiles at Drew, who smiles back as he walks toward the exit.

OWEN (CONT'D)
If I see Belle, I'll tell her you all are waiting for her.

Just then, Cunningham opens the door.

CUNNINGHAM
(Meaningfully)
Owen? You've got *someone* here looking for you.

Sophie walks up behind Cunningham, and peeps over his shoulder.

DREW
Ah! Sophie!
(Beat)
Well, I'll see you later then, Owen.

He nods kindly to Sophie as he exits with Cunningham, leaving Sophie and Owen alone.

SOPHIE
Hi.

OWEN
Hi.

Owen struggles to recover from his surprise.

OWEN (CONT'D)
I thought you'd be halfway to Los Angeles by now.

SOPHIE

So did I.

(Beat)

I made it as far as the train station. Your friend Isabel convinced me to come back here.

OWEN

Isabel?

SOPHIE

She found me at the station. She explained to me what really happened that night I saw you in front of that theater.

OWEN

I tried to tell you myself.

SOPHIE

I guess I didn't really give you a chance.

(Pause)

I am sorry, Owen. But you had been so strange, and so aloof, and I felt like you were avoiding me. And then I saw you, and you didn't have your ring, and I thought -

OWEN

Oh, Sophie. I lost the ring.

SOPHIE

Lost it!

OWEN

(Sits down heavily)

I took it off to - to show off the inscription, and then - well, then - it disappeared. It's gone.

SOPHIE

Oh, Owen!

OWEN

(Puts his head in his hands)

I thought I could find it, and I didn't want you to see me without it. That's why I was avoiding you. I didn't want you to know.

SOPHIE

Oh, darling, you should have told me.

OWEN

I know.

SOPHIE

(A sad half-smile)

You never cared for the inscription in that ring anyway. I never could get you to remember what it stood for.

Owen looks at her for a long moment. He recites, in a soft voice, the lines from *The Tempest*:

OWEN

"I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you;
Nor can imagination form a shape,
Besides yourself, to like of."

Sophie's eyes fill with tears. Owen stands.

OWEN (CONT'D)

My dearest Sophie, can you forgive me?

Sophie rushes to him and he embraces her.

SOPHIE

There's nothing to forgive. I'm sorry I ever doubted you, Owen.

OWEN

My darling!

He kisses her, for a long moment. Finally they disengage. Sophie is tearful but glowingly happy.

SOPHIE

(Wiping her tears)

I guess I've been pretty silly. I'm glad your friend Isabel was able to set me straight.

OWEN

I think there are quite a few of us who owe her our thanks. Where is she, anyway?

SOPHIE

Why, she's right outside. She said she'd give us a few minutes to talk. I asked her to keep an eye on my luggage.

Owen smiles at her. He is so happy.

OWEN

Well what do you say to dinner at Gadsby's? Drew's throwing a celebratory party, and for the first time in ages, I feel like I've got something to celebrate too.

SOPHIE

Wonderful! Let's go tell Isabel.

Sophie and Owen leave the *Clarion* office and go down to the foyer of the building. It is empty, save for Sophie's valise and steamer trunk, and small handbag.

There is folded SHEET OF PAPER on top of the valise. Owen picks it up and reads from it.

OWEN

"Sorry for rushing off without saying good bye, but I couldn't let Sophie's ticket go to waste, and her train for Los Angeles leaves at 7:30."

SOPHIE

My train pass!

She opens up the small handbag.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

It's gone!

OWEN

(Continuing to read the letter)

"I figure Sophie won't need it - I have a feeling that she'll find a reason to stay here in Washington. If I hurry, I can just make it. I'll write with my address once I'm established, so you know where to send my check for the ten thou. If you ever are in Hollywood, come and see me. Love, Isabel."

Owen folds up the letter.

SOPHIE

Without telling a soul! Does she even have a place to stay?

OWEN

I have a feeling she'll manage just fine. If I've ever met anyone who knows how to land on her feet, it's Isabel.

He puts his arm around Sophie and they walk toward the exit.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Now, what do you say to some dinner?

SOPHIE

Goodness. I just realized that I'm starved. You know what I'd like to eat? Lamb chops. With mint jelly. Doesn't that sound divine?

OWEN

(Kissing the top of her head)

I think that can probably be arranged. Come on. Let's see if we can catch up to the others.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN CAR (NIGHT)

The camera tracks a moving Pullman car. We're looking into the car through the glass of a lighted window, and we can see Isabel inside.

She looks out the window at the dark landscape. Her face is full of hope. Then she leans back and closes the curtains.

FADE OUT.

THE END.