

THE ROOM

A full-length play

By Michael Franco

Current Revisions by

Michael Franco - October 2006

Michael Franco - June 2007

Michael Franco - August 2007

Michael Franco - September 2007

Michael Franco - May 2020

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

VINCENT ASTOR - son of John Jacob Astor - philanthropist
KERMIT ROOSEVELT - son of Theodore Roosevelt - businessman
MARSHALL FIELD III - son of Marshall Field II - businessman
MARION MYLES - singer at The El Morocco
ADAM - manager of the El Morocco
BAND LEADER - band leader at the El Morocco
TOWNSHEND - Astor's butler
DALTON - Astor's valet
SOPHIE - Astor's cook
MILLICENT - Astor's maid and secretary
WILLIAM RHINELANDER - philanthropist
NELSON DOUBLEDAY - publisher
DAVID K. E. BRUCE - lawyer, married Alisa Mellon
WINTHROP ALDRICH - banker, oversees the Chase banking concerns
SOMERSET MAUGHAM - writer and British operative
CONSTANCE MORGAN - socialite, teacher and relief worker
PRESCOTT BUSH - banker
HANS GROENIGER - German banker partner of Bush
GRETA KNUESAL - consort and partner to Groeniger
MARGARET GLANZBERG - actress
DOROTHY THOMPSON - the first lady of American journalism
SINCLAIR LEWIS - writer, husband to Dorothy Thompson
WILLIAM DONOVAN - lawyer, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient
CHRISTA WINSLOE - writer, sculptor formerly the Baroness Hatvany
HELEN ASTOR - Astor's wife.

SETTINGS

The Apartments of Vincent Astor at 34 East 62nd Street in Manhattan.
The El Morocco Night Club.
A hotel room in Moscow.
Dalton's bedroom in the Astor Apartments.
A hotel room in Vienna.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The action of the play takes place in the apartments of Vincent Astor at 34 East 62nd Street in Manhattan and various locations in New York City between the years 1927-1939.

The built set should be two rooms. A sitting room and a dining room, a foyer separating them. Center in the foyer is the front door. Hallways to the rooms from both sides.

A band stand built stage left. The El Morocco Nightclub.
A live jazz band plays on the stage and will play throughout and between scenes.

PRODUCTION

The Room had it's World Premiere, September 28, 2007
At The Open Fist Theater in Los Angeles, California.

Written and Directed by Michael Franco
Produced by Paul Plunkett, Amanda Weier and Weston Blakesley
Original Story idea by Steven Rosenthal
Production Design by Michael Franco
Costume Design by Diane Crooke
Lighting Design by Cricket Sloat
Sound Design by Tim Labor
Set Design Michael Franco
Musical Direction by Alexander Burke
Publicity by Phillip Sokoloff
Graphic Design by Adama Bitterman and D Morris
Props by Mary Seidel and Kim Swennon
Artistic Director for The Open Fist - Martha Demson
Stage Manager - K.T. Ramsey
ASM - Rahab Mitchell
ASM - Noel Balacuit
Board Operators - Andrew Schlessinger and Pamela Heffler

SPECIAL THANKS

Tommy Burruss, The Center Theater Group, Joel Daavid, Martha Demson, Henry Dittman, Bill Elder, Supatra Hanna, Hep & JCB, Ben Hedge, Dawn Holiski, Jimmy Kieffer, Amy & Ryan Honey, Donna Marquet, Marius Mazmanian, William McCormack, Kelly & D Morris, Jeff Peters, The Sacred Fools, Rod Sell, Elle Sollinger, Sweet Lady Jane, Chris Warren, Colin Walker, Pat Towne and Paul Dillon

CAST
OPENING NIGHT SEPTEMBER 28, 2007

VINCENT ASTOR	SHAWN MACAULAY
KERMIT ROOSEVELT	JOHN GEGENHUBER
MARSHALL FIELD III	DYLAN MADDALENA
MARION MYLES	DONNA GIFFEN
ADAM	ADAM BITTERMAN
BAND LEADER	ALEXANDER BURKE
TOWNSHEND	WESTON BLAKESLEY
DALTON	BILL JACKSON
SOPHIE	REBECCA ROSENAK
MILLICENT	MARY SEIDEL
WILLIAM RHINELANDER	TROY VINCENT
NELSON DOUBLEDAY	RICHARD KNOLLA
DAVID K. E. BRUCE	SAM SALDIVAR
WINTHROP ALDRICH	COLIN CAMPBELL
SOMERSET MAUGHAM	BJORN JOHNSON
CONSTANCE MORGAN	TERESA WILLIS
PRESCOTT BUSH	WESTON BLAKSLEY
HANS GROENIGER	MARCUS MARIA JUNG
GRETA KNUESAL	REBECCA ROSENAK
MARGARET GLANZBERG	MICHELLE LEMA
DOROTHY THOMPSON	AMANDA WEIER
SINCLAIR LEWIS	EDMUND WYSON
WILLIAM DONOVAN	MICHAEL MCGILL
CHRISTA WINSLOE	STEPHANIE TERRONEZ
HELEN ASTOR	TERESA WILLIS
UNDERSTUDIES	PAUL DILLON, MICHAEL FRANCO

Letter from the playwright - Why this play now?

This is absolutely my favorite period in History. Pre World War One, Pre Revolution to Post World War Two. The rise and falls of Fascism, Communism, Capitalism and the grand experiment of a Representative Democracy. Great writers all over the world writing. Steinbeck, Bulgakov, Joyce, Sartre, Hemingway, O'Neill, Faulkner, Miller and Nabakov. The end of the Jazz Age, the welcoming of the Atomic Age and even though the shine was starting to come off the penny, America still had an innocence.

Of course these characters knew it was an illusion as early as 1927. The collapsing world economies of the late twenties giving birth to the depressions of the thirties. The forties and the destruction and death that man unleashed on man further proved the point. The ugliness and fear of the fifties, fear of the other, fear of the Atomic monster that had been birthed in the last decade and was standing patiently by. The shame of McCarthyism and Racism, stains that couldn't be easily wiped clean. Finally, the assassinations of the sixties proving that the dream was indeed over.

These are real people that I'm writing about and the fact that the OSS and ultimately the CIA were born out of conversations held by these people in these rooms is fact. That being said I have tried to craft a story that is ultimately about people in this remarkable time. So even though I have tried to be accurate to history, it is an entertainment, I have taken license. I've tried to create a compelling story based on historical events and hopefully I have been successful in that regard.

I feel that the Fascism that swept Europe in the thirties is alive here in America, waiting to rise up and prey on all our worst fears. Pit us against one another as our new Dear Leader steals hand over fist, sells us out, turns us into Fascist dictatorship. We should be paying better attention. We need to learn from our history and remind ourselves of just what is possible.

I love the idea of America. An idea conveyed to me in the Capra movies with Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart. Gary Cooper. That was the America I believed in. The idea of America conveyed in documents like the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. Those are the ideals we aspired to. Just like in those movies. Those are the people we would like to be. The people we'd like to think we are, who we'd like the rest of the world to think we are, but we are not those people.

As I watch CNN and see the faces of the dead scroll by I think of my own military experience. I realize that this is a very different country from the one that I'm writing about, a very different country from the one I wore a uniform to defend. It's frightening how quickly a decade of progressive reform can be erased. The world has become a much more dangerous place in the last six years.

I'd like to thank my friend Steven Rosenthal for bringing this story to me and allowing me to create this work, It would not exist without him. For my parents.

Michael Franco
Edinburgh, Scotland 2006

THE ROOM

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The built set should be two rooms. A sitting room and a dining room, a foyer separating them. Center in the foyer is the front door. Hallways to the rooms from both sides.

A band stand built stage left. The El Morocco Nightclub. A live jazz band plays on the stage and will play throughout and between scenes. The band plays a standard of the day as the pre-show.

At rise, the stage is in half light. Furniture in the apartment pushed to the middle and covered in sheets. The band finishes a song and the stage fades to black.

ACT ONE

DRINKS AND DINNER - 1927

*In the darkness we hear the BAND
LEADER count it in...*

BAND LEADER

(snapping his fingers)

One, two, three four...

*The band starts to play.
MARION MYLES takes the stage and
as soon as she hits her mark two
follow spots find her and she as
she starts to sing the lighting in
the El Morocco comes up to a glow.
Lights on tables, people at the
tables. She is dressed elegantly
and as she sings we see ADAM, the
Manager in a tuxedo watching from
the bar Marion and the band finish
their song as the lights fade to
black on the stage.*

LIGHTS FADE.

IN THE BEGINNING - 1927

*In the darkness SFX - 15 seconds of
Radio.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER

That's Marion Myles and the Alex Burke Orchestra from the El Morocco's, Zebra Room...

*Light's up come up center to reveal
VINCENT ASTOR, heir to the Astor
fortune. MARSHALL FIELD III, son of
the department store magnate and
KERMIT ROOSEVELT, son of Theodore.
All magnificently dressed in formal
wear sitting on the parquet floor
in the sitting room finishing a
bottle of Irish whiskey. The music
fades and plays under the scene.*

ROOSEVELT

Why are we here again, and not at the Stork? Or the Copa?
(pointing to the radio)

The El Morocco? We should be out celebrating the return of
the young Mr. Field from London.

ASTOR

(pouring whiskey)

I wanted to show you the place.

ROOSEVELT

Okay, we've seen it.

FIELD

Moving out of Ferncliff?

*Roosevelt tries to motion to Field
unbeknownst to Astor. Astor catches
him immediately.*

ASTOR

I'll maintain a presence at Ferncliff --

ROOSEVELT

(getting up)

He's giving it to her.

ASTOR

My personal staff will be here.

I'll be spending the majority of my time here.

*Roosevelt starts to prowl around
the room looking under sheets*

FIELD

You let her have Ferncliff?

ASTOR

It was easier.

ROOSEVELT

You keeping all this stuff?

ASTOR

It came with the place.
I'll have my staff review what we are keeping.

ROOSEVELT

I'll bet old Dalton can't wait to get in here.

*Roosevelt pulls a sheet off one
of the pieces and uncovers a great
overstuffed chair.*

Good Christ! This you simply must keep.

(sitting)

All I need now is my newspaper and my cigar and I'll be
right at home. It'll be just like the club down to the last
detail, no women and no fun.

*Field gets up off the floor walks
toward the furniture pulls a sheet
off to reveal another chair
matching the first.*

FIELD

Amazing. It's the exact same chair. How many of these are
there?

ASTOR

(getting up)

A few, I think. Not sure, really.

*Field pulls another sheet again the
same matching chair.*

FIELD

A few?

ASTOR

Six.

FIELD
(motioning for Astor to sit)
 Would you care to?

ASTOR
(sitting)
 You're too kind.

Field sits. A silence.

ROOSEVELT
 This will never do --

FIELD
 What?

ROOSEVELT
 I mean this really is going to be a men's club, isn't it?

FIELD
*(bouncing up and down in his
 chair)*
 It's very comfortable.

ASTOR
(rising)
 I'm off to investigate the plumbing.

ROOSEVELT
 We're missing everything.

ASTOR
*(tossing Roosevelt the bottle
 of Irish)*
 Amuse yourselves.

*Astor heads off. Roosevelt and
 Field sit awkwardly. Roosevelt
 fidgets, goes for his cigarette
 case. Opens it, grabs a cigarette,
 can't find his lighter. Field
 lights his cigarette for him.
 Roosevelt offers him one.*

FIELD
 No, thank you.

*They sit in the chairs. Another
 awkward silence. Roosevelt looks
 around for a moment and then ashes
 on his shoe. Field watches him.*

Ash tray.
ROOSEVELT

What?
FIELD

Is there an ash tray?
ROOSEVELT

FIELD
(looking around the room)
I don't know. I'd have thought about that before I started to smoke if I were you.

I have the Whiskey.
ROOSEVELT

They regard each other for a moment. A battle of wills, The ash on the cigarette growing longer.

FIELD
(rising)
Good God, so happy to have returned back into your service.

Field starts to look around under sheets.

ROOSEVELT
She's turned him into a twist?

FIELD
What's that?
(finding an ash tray)
Here we go.

*Field crosses back over hands
Roosevelt the ash tray relieves him
of the scotch and takes his seat.*

ROOSEVELT
I'm serious, you know.

FIELD
It's inappropriate and absolutely none of our business.

*Taking a drink from the bottle,
handing the bottle to Roosevelt.*

ROOSEVELT
(drinking)

Look at him. Inherited two hundred million when John Jacob went down with the Titanic. He used to be fun and now all he does is crusade about and give his money away. It's tedious, really--

FIELD
(taking the bottle)

Your voice.

ROOSEVELT

He married her!

(loudly)

God knows I tried to talk him out of it. The word around town is that she's more of a man than--

FIELD

Vincent's not the one with a challenging marriage.

*They share a look. Field hands him
the bottle back.*

ROOSEVELT

Challenging marriage, that's very good Marsh.

ASTOR
(entering)

What did I miss?

FIELD

Kermit's convinced that you've gone homosexual.

*Astor sits again, Roosevelt tries
to take a drink, bottle empty.*

ROOSEVELT

We're not going to Elmo's or the Stork, or anywhere are we?

*Placing the empty bottle at his
feet, he retrieves a flask out of
his jacket.*

Thank God, I prepared for this unfortunate eventuality.

*Roosevelt takes a drink hands the
flask to Astor.*

FIELD

You should throw some parties.

ROOSEVELT

Wild and decadent parties.

ASTOR

I'm sure I'll throw some parties.

FIELD

Invite loads of famous and important people--

ROOSEVELT

And then show them films.

FIELD

We could show films, it's a good idea--

ROOSEVELT

It's a joke.

Astor hands Field the flask.

FIELD

(drinking)

Invite all our big shot friends.

ASTOR

Doubleday, Bill Rhineland.

FIELD

I'd invite Winthrop Aldrich.

ROOSEVELT

Why would you invite him? He's Rockefeller's man.

FIELD

He's alright, smart.

ROOSEVELT

*(taking the flask away from
Field)*

David Bruce.

FIELD

(drunkenly nodding)

David Bruce!

ROOSEVELT

*(drinking handing the flask
to Astor)*

This isn't any fun if all your going to do is agree with me. I'm telling you we need to invite some women or mark my words this place will become a haven for homosexuals.

ASTOR

It seems to me that you are fixated on the practice of homosexuality this evening. Is there something you would like to share with Marsh and I, something you'd like to tell us?

ROOSEVELT

Give me back my Whiskey.

Astor hands him back the flask.

FIELD

You could invite your cousin.

ROOSEVELT

I'll invite him, but he won't come.

FIELD

Oh, why not?

ASTOR

Because he's a homosexual like his cousin?

ROOSEVELT

Uh, huh.

ASTOR

Seriously though, You know why Marsh.

ROOSEVELT

No, no, no... It's not the polio. It's the politics.

FIELD

Still swimming at Ferncliff?

ASTOR

When he's in New York, the heated pool is good for him I suppose.

ROOSEVELT

You suppose, you see him more than anyone.

ASTOR

I doubt that's true, I mean I do see him, any way here's to Franklin.

ROOSEVELT

I am obliged to drink.

Drinks, passes the flask to Field.

ASTOR

A salon, I suppose.

FIELD

Where we could invite lot of famous people--

ROOSEVELT

And sleep with them!

Astor and Field take to Roosevelt.

What? The women! We sleep with the women!

FIELD

What's wrong with you?

ROOSEVELT

Don't know really.

They regard one another.

FIELD

We could do plenty of exciting things?

ROOSEVELT

Are we going to have secret handshakes and wear funny hats?

FIELD

I like funny hats.

ASTOR

Then you may wear one if you wish.

FIELD

That's very good. I could wear a fez or a turban

ASTOR

(getting up)

Right, there's still time to get to Elmo's.

ROOSEVELT

(on his feet)

Bully, let's go!

FIELD

I like funny hats. I hadn't considered them until just now.

ROOSEVELT

Marshall, up!

FIELD

I think I'd like to stay here.

ASTOR

Oh, no you don't, you're going.

ROOSEVELT

This is your welcome home, brother. We have to celebrate.

FIELD

I feel as though I have celebrated enough.

*Astor and Roosevelt regard Field
for a moment, take to one another
and take him up by the arms.*

ROOSEVELT

Here we go.

*They steer Field to the door and
exit as the lights and music start
to fade.*

LIGHTS OUT.

THE EL MOROCCO - 1927

*In the darkness the band starts up.
Light's up in the El Morocco. It's
the end of the night. Seated at a
table in various states of disarray
are Field, Roosevelt, Astor and
Adam. Marion approaches.*

MARION

Hello boys.

ROOSEVELT

(jumping to his feet)

At last!

*Roosevelt kisses her hand and pulls
out a chair.*

MARION

(sitting)

Well, well you boys must be starved for attention.
Marshall, we haven't seen you in quite some time.

ADAM

He's just returned.

ASTOR

Held hostage by his wife in jolly old England.

MARION

Welcome back, Mr. Field. The knights of the round table
reunited again and out looking for trouble, I presume.

ASTOR

You have us mistaken.

ROOSEVELT

She doesn't have me mistaken.

MARION

You see.

FIELD

(secretively)

I think you could say we are tight.

MARION

I see.

ASTOR

Guinnevere my love, you must not tell a soul.

MARION

Your secret is safe with me, Arthur.

ROOSEVELT

Why is he Arthur?

MARION

Because you're, Lancelot. You can't be Arthur if you're
already Lancelot, silly.

ADAM
It wouldn't do.

ROOSEVELT
I suppose that's true.

ADAM
Absolutely.

FIELD
Who am I?

MARION
You boys really are tight, aren't you?

FIELD
We don't know who we are.

MARION
You don't?

ASTOR
Well, I have a vague idea--

MARION
Quiet, why, you're Galahad of course.

ADAM
Of, course.

FIELD
Galahad, right?

MARION
That's right.

FIELD
Galahad's okay.

*The band starts to heat up.
Adam gives Marion a nod.*

MARION
That's me boys. You gonna close it out?

ASTOR

I think there is a very good chance of that.

MARION

Stay out of trouble.

ASTOR

Again, I think you have us mistaken, my lady.

MARION

You forget that I know you.

ADAM

(nodding)

She does, she does know you.

ASTOR

Nevertheless, You have been sworn to secrecy.

MARION

I'll never give you away.

ADAM

No one is gonna say nothin!

ROOSEVELT

Shhhhhh! Secrets, we're very big on secrets these days.

ADAM

Got it.

MARION

(rising)

Oh, my, must go.

(to Astor)

I'm putting you in charge.

ASTOR

Are you sure that's wise?

*Marion leans in kisses Astor gently
on the mouth.*

MARION

Poor, sad Arthur. I'm gonna sing you a song.

*Marion heads for the stage and does
a song. Lights fade as she and the
band finish the song.*

LIGHTS OUT.

DINNER 1 - FALL - 1927

*In the darkness SFX -
15 seconds of radio. Light's up
in the dining room in the middle
of dinner preparations. TOWNSHEND,
the perfectly put together butler.
DALTON, the ancient butler and
valet. SOPHIE, the cook and
MILLICENT, maid and secretary go
about their tasks.*

TOWNSHEND

I trust that you have all settled into your rooms without too much trouble.

MILLICENT

It's wonderful, Mr. Townshend.

SOPHIE

I have a view of the Park, it's really spectacular.

MILLICENT

It's ridiculous is what it is, park views for us! Pinch me, I must be dreaming.

TOWNSHEND

I'm glad you ladies are pleased. Table looks lovely. Kitchen seems to be well in hand. So, perhaps we should talk about the extent of our duties here.

SOPHIE

Uh, oh. It sounds very serious Mr. Townshend, should we take a seat?

TOWNSHEND

Nothing so dramatic as that, a few simple rules emphasizing that we shall all be conducting ourselves in a professional manner at all times.

MILLICENT

Of course.

TOWNSHEND

And we shall make no mention outside of these rooms as to what occurs here including guests and conversation.

SOPHIE

Oh, it's going to be like that --

MILLICENT

Two extra bedrooms besides ours and Mr. Astor's.

SOPHIE

I'm sure they won't be going to waste. Naughtier than Ferncliff, I expect --

TOWNSHEND

These are the best people and they shall be treated accordingly --

SOPHIE

The best people? Until they start knocking on my door at three in the morning. Instead of Mrs. Astor at Ferncliff, now will have to fend off Mr. Astor and his drunken friends.

TOWNSHEND

You both have locks on your doors. If that's a real concern to either one of you, I encourage you to use them.

SOPHIE

They are awfully cute though.

TOWNSHEND

Cute?

SOPHIE

You know, the way puppies are cute, like that.

MILLICENT

I might just leave my door unlocked. What do you think about that Mr. Dalton?

DALTON

I think that the two of you sound like a couple of incorrigible sluts.

SOPHIE

Mr. Dalton!

DALTON

Listen to yourselves, with your high pitched squealing. You sound like schoolgirls. My room has a view, isn't it lovely, aren't they adorable, like puppies, I could just eat them all up!

Laughter.

MILLICENT

I think you are the one that is incorrigible, Mr. Dalton!

DALTON

I'm not the one talking about leaving doors unlocked, or puppies, or whatever the two of you were blithering on about, it's patently ridiculous!

MILLICENT

(trying to conceal her smile)

I see. Well then, I shall try to be better.

SOPHIE

I promise to be better too!

DALTON

Ridiculous.

TOWNSHEND

Well now, I trust we are finished with our fun.

SOPHIE

From here on out we shall behave like perfect ladies.

MILLICENT

Perfect in every way.

SOPHIE

Dedicated to our service!

TOWNSHEND

Then let us get back to it. Drinks before dinner in the sitting room. Dinner served promptly at seven-thirty. Now all foolishness aside, I chose you all personally and I know we will do well together.

SOPHIE

(heading for the kitchen)

Thank you, Mr. Townshend. We shall not disappoint!

MILLICENT

(following)

And there will be no foolishness --

SOPHIE

Of any kind --

MILLICENT

Whatsoever!

Sophie and Millicent exit into the kitchen as Townshend does a final inspection of the table and Dalton starts to open the wine. We hear the women giggling from the kitchen.

TOWNSHEND

(shrugging)

Young girls, what can be done?

DALTON

I do not know. All the same, I'd like to thank you Mr. Townshend. It's no secret that I never got on with Mrs. Astor. I had outlived my usefulness --

TOWNSHEND

Nonsense.

DALTON

All the same.

TOWNSHEND

(laughing to himself)

Incorrigible sluts, that really was quite good.

DALTON

You've obviously kept me in service for a reason.

TOWNSHEND

I'll ask you to help with the coats and we will do drinks together!

DALTON

Very good.

Astor enters from the front door center and heads into the dining room.

ASTOR

Gentlemen.

DALTON
(taking Astor's coat and hat)

Master Vincent.

ASTOR

Dalton, Mr. Townshend.

*Dalton exits stage with the coat
 and hat as Astor and Townshend walk
 into the sitting room.*

Everyone settling in, any problems?

TOWNSHEND

The staff is very pleased, sir.

ASTOR

Dalton looks like he got a new lease on life, any problem getting the girls out.

TOWNSHEND

It was a fairly complex negotiation.

ASTOR

I can only imagine.

TOWNSHEND

Drink, Mr. Astor?

ASTOR

I'll wait or the others.

TOWNSHEND

Very good, sir.

The front bell rings.

ASTOR

I guess I wont be waiting long.

*Townshend heads to the front door.
 He is met by Dalton. Astor takes a
 cigarette out of the box on the
 bar, lights it. The front door
 opens to reveal Marshall Field and
 WILLIAM RHINELANDER, a leading
 philanthropist in his own right.*

TOWNSHEND

May we take your coats?

FIELD

Of course. Hey Dalton, This is Bill Rhineland.

RHINELANDER

Mr. Dalton.

DALTON

(taking the coats and hats)

Mr. Rhineland, Mr. Field.

Dalton exits with the coats.

TOWNSHEND

If you'll follow me.

FIELD

I've seen you, You're ...

TOWNSHEND

Townshend, Mr. Field. I was at Ferncliff.

FIELD

There you go. Bill Rhineland.

TOWNSHEND

Sir.

Into the sitting room.

Mr. Field and Mr. Rhineland.

ASTOR

Hello, gentlemen. Drink?

FIELD

Whiskey for me.

RHINELANDER

Please.

ASTOR

Townshend, if you would.

Townshend heads behind the bar and starts to make the drinks.

RHINELANDER

It's good to see you Vincent. I suppose it takes Marshall returning home to bring you back out into the world. Glad you're staying in the city again.

ASTOR

Well, as you know I've been quite busy and had been staying at Ferncliff.

RHINELANDER

We should do something together, a party, something for both our charities.

FIELD

You guys do love to give your money away. I prefer to spend mine.

RHINELANDER

You don't have as much as we do.

FIELD

True. I invited Winthrop Aldrich can't wait to hear what he has to say about you two socialists and your philanthropies.

ASTOR

Kermit is bringing David Bruce and Nelson Doubleday.

RHINELANDER

Sounds like a board meeting. Aldrich, he's Rockefeller's man with Chase right?

ASTOR

That's right, and Marshall it's just a different way of looking at it. Some see all the good that money can do and all some others see is that making money is good. Both points of view are correct.

Townshend arrives with the drinks.

FIELD

I think you'll both agree that having money is quite a bit better than not having it.

ASTOR

Of course, but the two ways of thinking are not mutually exclusive. Thank you, Townshend.

The front bell rings. Dalton appears from offstage and answers the door. Kermit Roosevelt arrives with the great publisher NELSON DOUBLEDAY, and DAVID K.E. BRUCE, lawyer and former member of the Maryland House of Delegates.

RHINELANDER

It's the trade off. For having all this money and working in a system that understands how to grow a business economy you give back.

ASTOR

Exactly, you build a school, a museum, a hospital something for the common good and then you can continue to make obscene amounts of money in relatively regulation free peace.

At the door.

ROOSEVELT

Dalton, great to see you.

DALTON

Good to see you looking so well Mr. Roosevelt, may I take your coats gentlemen.

ROOSEVELT

Please, I haven't laid eyes on you in ages.

DALTON

We didn't see you much out at Ferncliff.

ROOSEVELT

That might have something to do with the fact I was never invited.

DALTON

That would do it.

Dalton exits with the coats.

TOWNSHEND

(arriving)

Mr. Astor, Mr. Field and Mr. Rhinelanders are in the sitting room if you'd like to follow me.

Entering the sitting room.

Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Doubleday and Mr. Bruce.

Townshend immediately gets the drink order and heads back behind the bar.

DOUBLEDAY

Marshall, good to have you back!

FIELD

Good to be back, I was ready to come home.

BRUCE

You did the whole season there?

FIELD

If it was up to my wife, we'd still be there.

BRUCE

So, it's a welcome home party.

FIELD

So, David when are you heading off to Washington?

BRUCE

I'm not. I was in the Maryland state house.

FIELD

Kermit told me it was the Congress.

ROOSEVELT

One of those. State house. House of Representatives. Senate. Delegates. One of those. Everyone seems to be running for something these days.

ASTOR

This coming from the son of a former president, no less.

RHINELANDER

Kermit, we keep hearing all about Franklin. Looks like he's being groomed for the national stage, how are they going to bring that off?

ROOSEVELT

Well for starters they do not photograph him from the chest down. America does not like seeing the apparatus, the hardware if you will. Vincent saw him more than any of us while he was up at Ferncliff, ask him?

ASTOR

That's hardly the case.

ROOSEVELT

How about it, Vincent? Is cousin Franklin going to run for something? This is what happens when you are the proverbial black sheep. No one ever tells you anything.

FIELD

Quit complaining, you've worked hard to achieve that status.

BRUCE

I have to be honest, I was getting restless. I'd really like to see if I could gain a diplomatic posting.

DOUBLEDAY

Regretting leaving the military?

BRUCE

Just feels like I've been stuck for quite some time.

FIELD

So, you've foregone a political career. Don't tell me you're going to actually practice law?

BRUCE

Might not have a choice.

ASTOR

What's your excuse Kermit, you never go anywhere?

BRUCE

Because, I've already been everywhere.

Townshend arrives with the drinks.

ASTOR

(raising his glass)

Gentlemen, welcome to my new home in the city and welcome home to young Marshall Field the third. Here's hoping he can take control of his marriage and stay in the country for a bit.

FIELD

So were going to talk about marriages?

ASTOR

Touche.

Every one raises a glass and toasts. The front bell rings again.

FIELD

That will be Aldrich, always running late.

Dalton opens the front door and in walks WINTHROP ALDRICH, a member of the Rockefeller inner circle. He seems harried and annoyed. He quickly hands Dalton his coat and hat.

ALDRICH

Where are they?

DALTON

In the sitting room, about to go into dinner.

Aldrich heads for the sitting room. He's met by Townshend leading the gentlemen into the dining room.

ASTOR

Winthrop Aldrich --

FIELD

Starting to think you weren't going to make it.

ALDRICH

So sorry, I hope you haven't been waiting on me.

ASTOR

We were just heading into the dining room, fall in and make sure you know everyone. Everyone this is Winthrop Aldrich, I'm sure his reputation proceeds him. Winthrop Aldrich, this is everyone. Drink?

ALDRICH

Please.

Townshend nods and doubles back to bar. Dalton leads the party across the foyer and into the dining room. As they take their seats.

ROOSEVELT

Hello Aldrich, good to see you.

ALDRICH

It's been some time.

BRUCE
(offering his hand)

David Bruce.

ALDRICH
 Alisa's husband.

BRUCE
(smiling)
 I hope to someday to make my own mark.

ROOSEVELT
(sitting)
 And we all hope the same.

*Townshend has arrived with
 Aldrich's drink.*

FIELD
 No one told you to marry a Mellon.

ASTOR
 She's richer than you are too, Marshall.

FIELD
 Isn't everyone?

ASTOR
 Win, do you know Nelson Doubleday?

ALDRICH
 Only by reputation. A pleasure to meet you.

DOUBLEDAY
 Good to meet you.

ASTOR
 This is Bill Rhineland.

ALDRICH
(shaking hands)
 Nice to meet you too, surprised we haven't met before.

RHINELANDER
 It seems we don't share the same circles.

ASTOR
 You do now.

*As soon as everyone is seated.
Dalton starts rounding the table
pouring the wine. Millicent and
Sophie appear from the kitchen and
serve the salad course.*

ROOSEVELT

Thank God, there are some women about.

FIELD

Quiet.

ASTOR

So, this is my wonderful staff. I think most of you know Dalton. This is Townshend. This is Millicent.

ROOSEVELT

Hello, Millicent.

MILLICENT

Gentlemen.

ASTOR

And Sophie, who is responsible for this wonderful meal.

ROOSEVELT

Hellooooo, Sophie --

FIELD

(to Roosevelt)

No.

ROOSEVELT

No?

SOPHIE

(smiling)

No.

*The table erupts in laughter,
Sophie and Millicent quickly serve
the salads and retire to the
kitchen.*

ROOSEVELT

Since when do you mandate my behavior with the help.

FIELD

I had almost forgotten how obnoxious you are when you drink heavily before dinner.

ROOSEVELT

It's true, point taken.

ASTOR

Are we alright, now we've established that there will be no preying on the staff, male or female.

ROOSEVELT

Point taken!

ASTOR

So Marshall, why don't you tell us about your sojourn in England.

FIELD

It was fine. Saw some old friends from the Cambridge days. Made it up into Scotland. Played a lot of golf. Went to a lot of parties. That sort of thing.

BRUCE

Did you get to the continent at all, or did you just stay on the Island?

FIELD

To be honest with you given the current situation in Europe. I thought it prudent to stay on familiar ground.

DOUBLEDAY

I think you were quite right to do so, Somerset speaks of it all the time.

FIELD

Somerset? Somerset Maugham, Somerset?

ASTOR

(to Roosevelt)

You see the little stars spinning around in his eyes.

ROOSEVELT

Like pinballs.

DOUBLEDAY

He's been living in France, but he may be returning to England for exactly the same reason. I'm trying to get him to America. Get him out to Hollywood.

ASTOR

If he ever finds his way to New York, obviously we'd love to receive him here.

DOUBLEDAY

I'll bring him along to dinner next time he's in town.

ALDRICH

I'm sure we're all watching the labor unrest in Germany.

RHINELANDER

We were speaking about it, just today.

ROOSEVELT

That's great, Bill. Are you going to bore us all with how the world is going to hell in a hand basket.

FIELD

(laughing)

You're in a surly mood.

ASTOR

Kermit, you need to be nice to our guests or they won't want to come back.

ROOSEVELT

More booze for me to drink if they don't.

BRUCE

You must have some news, Marshall?

ROOSEVELT

He doesn't, he just hopped from golf course to golf course from London to Edinburgh.

ALDRICH

Are the Communists marching into Spain?

ROOSEVELT

He doesn't know.

FIELD

I'd heard, that they were too busy killing their own. Revolution and all that. I did meet some Communists.

RHINELANDER

It's the Fascists that are on the rise all through Europe, Spain, Germany for sure. I'm sure you're very well aware that the German economy is in complete collapse.

ALDRICH

I've heard the same.

BRUCE

I think that's how Fascism takes root in the struggles of the poor and labor.

DOUBLEDAY

I think that's right.

ALDRICH

I think that's more the playbook of the Communists.

FIELD

I did meet some Communists!

ROOSEVELT

How incredibly dull and boring. How about someone we know, did you see anyone we know.

FIELD

I saw Joe Kennedy!

DOUBLEDAY

How is the old bootlegger?

FIELD

With his entire family and on his best behavior. We played golf in Scotland.

ALDRICH

It's been said that he has a secret room full of money.

ROOSEVELT

He needs it too, with the size of that family, you know, Catholic.

ASTOR

Kermit, will you be silent and let Marshall tell us about his Communists.

ROOSEVELT

Oh, very well.

FIELD

Well, they were very rich Communists.

RHINELANDER

Isn't that against the rules?

FIELD

I was confused by this as well.

Millicent and Sophie appear from the kitchen. Townshend and Dalton clear the salad plates, Dalton hands the salad plates off to Millicent as Townshend and Sophie serve the entree's. Dalton takes up the wine and moves around the table.

TOWNSHEND

Bon Appetit.

Sophie, Millicent and Dalton have retired to the kitchen. Townshend attends table.

ASTOR

So, tell us about your Communists?

FIELD

We drank vodka and ended up in an argument.

ROOSEVELT

Drunk on vodka with the workers.

FIELD

I don't think that you could call them workers.

ASTOR

Well, what did you argue about?

FIELD

I asked them to explain Communism to me, seeing as how they had taken great pride in introducing themselves to me, as Communists.

BRUCE

Seems fair.

FIELD

After several vodka's and much conversation in great detail about the glories of the revolutionary state, I remarked that their system of government sounded like stealing.

RHINELANDER

How did that go over?

FIELD

Not so well. Actually got quite heated, but how upset could they be. As I've said they were very rich Communists.

DOUBLEDAY

So much for the Proletariat.

ALDRICH

It's not funny at all! The Soviet Union is exporting communism all over the world. They're a big part of the problem in Germany.

RHINELANDER

What about National Socialism in Germany, it's fascism pure and simple, just like Spain.

ALDRICH

The National Socialist's in Germany seem to be providing some stability.

RHINELANDER

With their brown shirts and their axe handles. I can't agree with you on that, Mr. Aldrich.

DOUBLEDAY

Mob rule over there, according to Somerset.

FIELD

And that's why I didn't leave Britain. Didn't sound like there was any fun to be had at all. The most danger I encountered was general ridicule over Prohibition.

ROOSEVELT

(raising his glass)

Well, Prohibition is laughable.

BRUCE

As long as your rich enough to get around it.

RHINELANDER

It's a ridiculous law in the first place.

ASTOR

Made Joe Kennedy rich and he's not the only one. It's a law we choose to ignore, because I suppose we can.

ALDRICH

Rank does have it's privileges.

ROOSEVELT

It's about the declining morality of the country in general.

FIELD

This coming from you?

ROOSEVELT

It's no secret that I am on the moral decline. Quite proud of it actually. Therefore I am an expert on the subject.

RHINELANDER

The real question is whose pockets are we lining when we go downtown for a drink.

ROOSEVELT

You're the gloomy guy aren't you?

ASTOR

It's a fair point, become a cottage industry for some.

ALDRICH

Joe Kennedy for example.

Dalton enters and does another round of pouring the wine and then attends and clears plates as necessary.

ASTOR

I'll say it again. He's not the only one.

DOUBLEDAY

It's supply and demand, some one is gonna see an opportunity.

ASTOR

I imagine that most of them are a good deal rougher than Joe Kennedy.

ALDRICH

I very much doubt that the whiskey you were pouring earlier or the Pommard we are drinking now put one penny in Joe Kennedy's pocket.

ASTOR

(laughing)

Joe Kennedy is who Marshall see's on the golf course in Scotland. It's the people that work for Joe Kennedy that I'm uncomfortable with.

RHINELANDER

Meanwhile the Fascists continue to rise to power in Europe.

ALDRICH

The Russians.

BRUCE

So Win, do you really think that the collapse of the German economy will effect the whole of Europe.

ALDRICH

I do. Germany and Spain with their fragile economies are easy pickings for the Communists. They are too strong a presence in the world as it is.

RHINELANDER

I'll agree with you on the fact that the collapse in Germany will effect Europe and I'll venture to say that it will effect us here as well.

DOUBLEDAY

That's going to far. You can't really believe that a failed Germany could have any effect on our economy here in America.

RHINELANDER

I do believe it and I'll say it again, I believe that the Fascism gaining support and power is much more of a threat to the free world than the Russians.

ALDRICH

Are you a Communist Mr. Rhineland, or just another confused Communist sympathizer?

RHINELANDER

It's none of your business whether I'm a communist or not. I will tell you that I agree with Marshall in so much that I think that Communism is stealing. I agree that ultimately Russia could and will become a threat but you are ignoring the imminent threat that is right now and that is Fascism.

ALDRICH

(smiling)

A well reasoned argument, one that I'm not sure I agree with in it's entirety, but I do agree that what happens in the world markets can and will effect us here. In that we are in total agreement.

ROOSEVELT

Worked it out, have you?

(to Vincent)

And you just love it don't you, look at how happy you are. As for me, I prefer the company of women rather than sit here and listen to the bitter world warbling from the likes of you. I'm going to Elmo's.

ASTOR

What do you think gentlemen, a table at the El Morocco?

Townshend nods to Dalton who goes for the coats.

ALDRICH

I think I've already had quite a full evening.

RHINELANDER

You're going to go with us to the El Morcoco.

ALDRICH

Wouldn't miss it.

DOUBLEDAY

So, were settled then.

ASTOR

Gentlemen.

The gentlemen rise from the table and start toward the foyer and the front door. They are met by Dalton who is comically buried in coats.

ROOSEVELT

Dalton, is that you in there?

Townshend starts grabbing coats and hats off the pile that is Dalton.

TOWNSHEND

(to Astor)

Should we prepare the guest bed rooms for this evening.

ROOSEVELT

Most definitely.

FIELD

I'll be claiming that second bedroom, Mr. Townshend.

ASTOR

Mr. Townshend, under no circumstances are you to admit Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Field to these rooms with out my express and possibly written permission. Is that clear?

TOWNSHEND

Very good, Sir.

ROOSEVELT

Is that really necessary?

ASTOR

I have young women in my employ and it is my absolute responsibility --

ROOSEVELT

Enough, already.

(digging for his coat)

Dalton, you are in there?

DALTON

(from under the coats)

It is I.

Roosevelt recovers his coat and hat and uncovers Dalton.

ROOSEVELT

There you are!

He clasps him on the shoulders and gives him a little shake.

We will have to take two cars.

RHINELANDER

I can drive.

ASTOR

Out, out, out. We shall be late!

(to Townshend and Dalton)

Good night, gentlemen. Apologize to the ladies for me and well done this evening.

DALTON

Very good, Master Vincent.

TOWNSHEND

The spare rooms will be ready.

ASTOR

Exactly.

*Astor exits after the others.
The front door closes - a beat.*

TOWNSHEND

I think that went very well. What do you think?

DALTON

I think I opened too much Pommard.

TOWNSHEND

Do you like Pommard?

DALTON

I do.

*Townshend and Dalton head back into
the dining room.*

TOWNSHEND

So do I. Invite the ladies. Let's have our dinner and finish it. What do you think about that?

DALTON

I think that is a very, very good idea.

BLACKOUT

THE EL MOROCCO - 1927

In the darkness the band starts to play. Spots lights fade up to reveal Marion setting her ablaze as she starts to sing. Adam, smoking, watching everything from behind the bar. The bar is crowded and busy. Astor and his party enter.

Adam waves them over and motions them to the tables down front.

SONG.

The audience is in silhouette as Marion brings the song to a close as the silhouettes applaud and Adam puts out his cigarette.

FADE TO BLACK

LETTER FROM MOSCOW - 1928

In the darkness SFX - 15 seconds of radio. Stage lights comes up to a glow. CONSTANCE MORGAN, (30'S), sits at her dressing table. Cigarette in hand, bottle of vodka and glass on the table. She is writing a letter.

CONSTANCE

Dearest Vincent, I hope this finds you well at home in New York. I write to you from my freezing hotel room at The Metropole. Jonathan is out drinking or playing cards or whoring, or perhaps all three with his new found proletariat friends. For my part I cannot wait to get back to New York. Your last cable was so amusing. I'm glad that you and Bill Rhineland are keeping company. He was instrumental in helping us attain funding for our work here which is a bust anyway. You do make me feel like a little bit of spy which is nothing to joke about over here. The Russians are extremely wary of foreigners. Most of the people I meet are afraid to even speak to me, even if they could. I don't trust our translator one bit. I don't let on but I've learned a good bit of Russian after being here for six months. At any rate I'm convinced that he works for the Secret Police. As for your question about the government, Stalin has taken complete control over every arm of the Communist party. He expelled Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev and they all held very high positions in the party. No one dares to oppose him. Who knows what will happen to any of them, let alone their families. People seem to just disappear and they are never spoken of again. I know that some people have a suitcase by the door so when the OGPU come for them, their family wont be disturbed or hurt. I have met Stalin. I have had dinner with him and his poor wife. He is crude, oafish, doesn't seem particularly bright but just brutal enough to rule over this sad place. All they talk about is Collectivism. They are all obsessed with it because Stalin is obsessed with it.

CONSTANCE CONT.

I've overheard that farmers are slaughtering their own herds rather than trust that Collectivism has a chance in hell of working. Those who are caught committing this crime against the state are killed with knives as to not waste bullets. There is a famine coming to this country. One created solely by Stalin. He's destroying the farming system and now, what's worse is, he's lost interest. Now he's decided to devote his time 180 degree's in the other direction directing everyone to now focus on rapid industrialization at the same time. He can't accomplish one let alone the other. They call it The Five Year Plan. Stalin enforcing the quota's that he has set for the production of iron, steel and electricity. Unreasonable and completely unattainable. I feel as though I'm watching the entire nation being taken apart from the inside out. The classless society is a joke. There are two distinct classes the proletariat and the workers, or as we can more commonly observe, the rich and the poor. While the Politburo eats well and stays warm, the workers, the people are starving and freezing in the streets. Ancient churches being bulldozed over in pursuit of the new progress, whole cities being sealed and forbidden to visit. What kind of world will exist here in ten years, twenty, I can't imagine? It all looks very ugly to my point of view.

The lights start to fade up in Astor's dining room in New York to a glow. Astor reading the letter to Field, Roosevelt, Doubleday, Bruce, Rhineland and Aldrich.

Especially tragic for these poor people who have endured over a solid decade of war, purge and struggle.

Light starts to dim on Constance.

Jonathan is ready to head back home and my work here has been a complete and utter failure. I'll see you in New York soon. When do I get invited to one of these classy dinner parties? Take care of yourself and give everyone my best! Write back to me soon.

Lights up as Vincent reads the last line of the letter in unison with Constance.

ASTOR & CONSTANCE

Constance Morgan, September 22, 1928. Moscow, Russia.

Lights fade to black on Constance Morgan in Moscow.

DINNER 5 - 1928

*As the lights come up full on the
Astor dining room, after dinner.
Dalton standing by the bar*

ASTOR

(putting the letter down)

That was written a month ago.

RHINELANDER

Five year plan my ass. He's exporting grain while his own people starve.

ALDRICH

What sense does it make unless he doesn't care how many die? Unless, it's a calculated trade off for the cash they take in on export.

ROOSEVELT

I don't want to talk about Russia anymore.

ALDRICH

Market dropped 22 points today.

ROOSEVELT

I don't want to talk about the market either.

FIELD

What do you expect with a Republican in the White House?

DOUBLEDAY

Well, Hoover's certainly not my favorite.

ASTOR

Typically ineffectual.

ROOSEVELT

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah blah!

ALDRICH

I'm telling you a correction is coming.

RHINELANDER

I think so too.

BRUCE

What does that even mean?

ROOSEVELT

He means that the Jazz Age is over since the death of Arnold Rothstein.

FIELD

Are you really and truly this drunk, this early in the evening? How is it possible?

ROOSEVELT

I am simply doing my level best to maintain the status quo of my drunkenness.

ASTOR

There he is.

ALDRICH

Trust me on this, shore up your investments. Kermit is right whether he knows it or not, the prosperity of the twenties is over and the bubble is about to burst. The economy has changed. The problems in Europe are on their way here.

RHINELANDER

The one thing we agree on.

DOUBLEDAY

The conventional wisdom --

ALDRICH

Yes, yes, the conventional wisdom says that our economy is bullet proof, but I'm telling you, it's coming and its going to be bad.

DOUBLEDAY

I just don't see the connection between what happens in Europe and here.

RHINELANDER

It was the war --

BRUCE

The war?

RHINELANDER

The war and the new trade agreements that most countries have entered into afterwards were the catalyst.

ALDRICH

I think we are witnessing a transition from a traditional nation state economy into a world economy. A global economy. The depression that is happening in Germany is already effecting the markets in Paris and London.

BRUCE

It's coming here?

ALDRICH

Mark my words. Sooner than later.

DOUBLEDAY

All this talk about Germany, I did a little digging, came across a very interesting book by this National Socialist Adolph Hitler, ever heard of him?

ALDRICH

Trade union leader?

RHINELANDER

No, he's one of the leaders in The National Socialist party, right? A Nazi, right?

DOUBLEDAY

That's the guy, his book is called Mein Kamph. It means "My Struggle," wrote it when he was in prison.

BRUCE

Why was he in prison?

DOUBLEDAY

Treason.

ROOSEVELT

Don't they hang you or shoot you for treason? Or shouldn't they?

BRUCE

They do that in Spain. They shoot everyone in Spain. I know that for sure, but apparently not in Germany.

DOUBLEDAY

Doesn't like the Jews.

ROOSEVELT

Who does.

DOUBLEDAY

Seriously. The Nazi's promote this idea of racial purity which is quite strange because this Hitler fellow wasn't even born in Germany.

ROOSEVELT

Was he secretly born a Jew and is so self hating that he wants to destroy all Jews?

DOUBLEDAY

I don't think so. He was born in Austria. I'm not kidding though, big problem with the Jews. Blames them for all of Germany's social and economic problems.

ALDRICH

(sarcastically)

The poor Jews.

ROOSEVELT

Hey, quit stealing my material.

ASTOR

The Jews are an easy target.

ROOSEVELT

They did kill Christ after all --

FIELD

Kermit, please.

ROOSEVELT

I know I'm right about that.

ALDRICH

Germany's biggest problem besides Versailles --

ROOSEVELT

The place?

FIELD

The treaty.

ALDRICH

As I was saying, Germany's biggest problem besides the unfairness of that treaty is --

The rest of the Gentleman join in unison.

ALDRICH & ALL
THE COMMUNISTS!

RHINELANDER
You never stop!

ALDRICH
The Communists make up thirty percent of the German government. Tell me that's not a threat!

FIELD
You really do come a bit unhinged in regard to these Communists.

ROOSEVELT
I've heard enough about Communists, I'd rather get back that Austrian guy and his love of the Jews.

ALDRICH
(heated)
Laugh all you want, but the Communists are the biggest threat to the free world!

BRUCE
Okay, okay --

ALDRICH
I'm right about that and I'm right about the fact that a correction is coming and everyone in this room had better be ready for it!

ROOSEVELT
Duly noted, Professor.

ALDRICH
I'M NOT KIDDING!

ASTOR
Win, relax.

ALDRICH
(annoyed)
Not everything is a joke you know!

ASTOR
(to Dalton)
Do you mind?

Dalton immediately takes up the bottle and starts rounding the table topping off the wine glasses. Townshend has emerged out of the kitchen and follows behind Dalton clearing the last of the dessert plates and emptying ashtrays.

BRUCE

You know I met some of these National Socialists, Nazi's.

ROOSEVELT

Really, you must tell me where?

BRUCE

At a cocktail party that Alisa dragged me to. They were actually very nice. She was a knockout.

FIELD

I want to meet some Nazi's. I've already met Communists, now I want to meet Nazi's and you know, compare.

ROOSEVELT

The Fraulien. Did she have a naughty smile?

BRUCE

She did.

ROOSEVELT

I assumed as much. She's working you.

BRUCE

Probably.

ASTOR

Well, Of course they're going to seem nice, they're here begging for money.

ALDRICH

There are a lot of prominent and legitimate business interests here looking for capital to rescue their business and their people out of this current economic distress.

ASTOR

Really, their people? Is that it? Or is it that the little Austrian fellow is building a war chest, which is in direct violation of the treaty?

ALDRICH

Germany has been saddled with the unfair burden of Versailles long enough.

RHINELANDER

There it is.

ASTOR

Are you and Chase doing business with them?

ALDRICH

Who else but the Nazi's will deliver Germany from the Communists?

RHINELANDER

Again with the Communists.

ALDRICH

We can't do business with the Communists!

RHINELANDER

That's the whole thing isn't it?

ASTOR

Sounds to me like you're rationalizing the business you're already doing with the Nazi's.

ALDRICH

At least the Nazi's understand business and there is money to be made in Germany, their workforce, their manufacturing.

ROOSEVELT

What is everybody on about?

FIELD

Shh, let the big kids talk.

ROOSEVELT

Do wake me when it's over.

DOUBLEDAY

If their economy is in collapse where is the money coming from to fund their political ambitions?

ASTOR

Win just told us. It's coming from here, from us.

ALDRICH

Business will always see an opportunity.

ASTOR

Even though it's in direct conflict with the stated policy of this government? I mean it's a crime, right?

BRUCE

Not to mention a blatant violation of international law.

Dalton moves to pour into Aldrich's glass.

ALDRICH

(heated)

Please! Who is enforcing that law? Certainly not the league of nations!

Aldrich gestures and bumps Dalton as he's pouring. Wine is spilled.

DALTON

I beg your pardon, sir!

ALDRICH

(angrily)

You old fool!

In an instant the temperature in the room has gone up.

DALTON

I'm very sorry, sir.

ALDRICH

Idiot. Look at the mess you've made! Well get me another napkin!

ASTOR

That's enough, Win.

Townshend comes in and taps Dalton out, hands Aldrich another napkin.

ALDRICH

Really, Vincent look at this mess, perhaps he's a little old for this type of service.

(grabbing the napkin from Townshend)

What do you want? Get away from me!

ASTOR
(voice raised)

THAT'S ENOUGH!

The room goes silent. Both Sophie and Millicent poke their heads out from the kitchen to see what all the commotion is about. Townshend retreats back to Dalton.

DALTON
I am so sorry, Master Vincent!

ALDRICH
Master Vincent, indeed!

ASTOR
(rising)
Mr. Townshend, Mr. Dalton if you wouldn't mind escorting the ladies back into the kitchen.

DALTON
Master Vincent --

ASTOR
If you please.

Townshend, Dalton and the ladies retire back into the kitchen.

FIELD
What do you say that the rest of us adjourn to the sitting room and raid the Irish.

ALDRICH
(wiping his coat)
Yes, by all means another drink is exactly what you all need.

ASTOR
You will apologize to Mr. Dalton before you leave these rooms tonight and you will never speak to anyone in my employ in such a manner ever again.

ALDRICH
I will not.

ASTOR
I trust that you will.

ALDRICH
If I refuse.

ASTOR

(starting to move)

Then you and I will have a very serious problem.

Astor starts to step toward Aldrich intercepted by Roosevelt, blocking his path, shaking his head, "No."

ALDRICH

Please, Vincent, you are embarrassing yourself.

Astor tries to push past Roosevelt. Roosevelt pushes him back. Field grabs hold and starts pulling him out. Astor starts to struggle as Doubleday and Bruce try and help restrain him.

FIELD

Who needs a drink?

RHINELANDER

I'll play bartender.

FIELD

(to Astor)

You alright.

ASTOR

(composing)

Yes, by all means a drink

(to Aldrich)

You will apologize!

Rhineland, Doubleday, Bruce, Field and Astor move across the Foyer into the sitting room. Roosevelt hangs back leaning against the wall, lights a cigarette offers Aldrich. He takes one. Roosevelt lights it for him and goes back to leaning against the wall.

ALDRICH

(exhaling)

Jesus Christ.

ROOSEVELT

(nodding, smoking)

I know, right.

ALDRICH

I mean, really --

ROOSEVELT

(taking up his wine glass)

That was great. When Vincent started having these dinners I thought it was going to be Rhinelander who was going to be the pain in the ass, but I was wrong, it's you.

ALDRICH

You, sir, are a pitiful drunk.

ROOSEVELT

Never the less.

ALDRICH

(starting to rise)

I've had quite enough.

ROOSEVELT

(imposing)

SIT. I'm going to tell you the part of the story that Vincent wont. What Vincent wont tell you is that old man worked for John Jacob Astor since before Vincent was born. Known him the whole of his life. John Jacob treated him like a dog. Don't know what it is in a man that makes him treat another man like that. Like they were less than. In any case and in point of fact I would go as far to say that the old man you insulted was more of a father to Vincent than John Jacob ever was. John Jacob had no interest in being a father, so when he was swallowed by the sea and that old man wasn't, Vincent thanked God. Do you understand that?

ALDRICH

Yes.

ROOSEVELT

(looking up from his cigarette)

Yes, what?

ALDRICH

Yes, I understand.

ROOSEVELT

I've got one question for you Win, old buddy. You ever take a beating?

ALDRICH

(rising)

That's it.

ROOSEVELT

(coming off the wall)

SIT DOWN! Don't make me tell you a third time!

ALDRICH

*(dropping back into his
chair)*

You threatening, me?

ROOSEVELT

Of course not, but then again I'm not sophisticated like you and Vincent. I'm not sophisticated at all. I just dress well. I'm asking you a simple question. You ever take any hard knocks?

ALDRICH

I suppose not.

ROOSEVELT

I didn't think so. I've got a theory. You want to hear it?

ALDRICH

Do I have a choice?

ROOSEVELT

(grinning)

Of course you have a choice. There are always options.

ALDRICH

Tell me your theory.

ROOSEVELT

Everyone should be beaten down at least once. Beaten down to their knees so you know what it takes to get back up again.

ALDRICH

How, working class of you.

ROOSEVELT

That and the understanding that if you don't act right it's a real possibility out there in the world that you could catch a beating. For some folks it takes more than once. Then there are some folks that get beaten down every damn day for no Goddamn good reason and somehow they find the strength to get back up again. I admire them, respect them because they understand and they still get up and put one foot in front of the other.

ALDRICH

Admirable.

ROOSEVELT

(smiling, smoking)

You really are a prick, aren't you? You will apologize.

ALDRICH

If I don't?

ROOSEVELT

Then you'll made an enemy of Vincent Astor and everyone else sitting in that room. What do you have to be so proud about anyway? What did you ever do? You really think he's less of a man because he answers the door and takes your coat?

Roosevelt stubs out his cigarette.

ALDRICH

Jesus Christ.

ROOSEVELT

I know, right.

Roosevelt shrugs, turns and heads out of the dining room across the foyer toward the sitting room. Aldrich sits for a beat, look around the empty dining. Throws his napkin on the table.

ALDRICH

(under his breath)

Goddammit.

Aldrich gets to his feet. Walks to the kitchen and door and begins to knock.

ALDRICH

Mr. Dalton?

CROSS FADE TO.

EL MOROCCO - 1929

A single spot comes up on Marion Myles.

*She sings a slow, sad ballad and
as the song ends the spot slowly
iris's out.*

FADE TO BLACK.

BLACK FRIDAY - 1929

*In the darkness SFX - 15 seconds
of radio. The front door bell rings
as the stage fades up to half
light. After a moment the door bell
rings again, The front bell gives
way to intermittent banging. The
bell rings again and we hear a
voice from the hall.*

ROOSEVELT (OFF)

(banging)

VINCENT, OPEN THE DOOR!

*A light come on in the hall Stage
Right and Townshend appears tying
his robe, heading to the door. The
bell rings again, more pounding.
Townshend opens the door to reveal
a very drunk, distraught and
disheveled Kermit Roosevelt.*

TOWNSHEND

Are you alright, Sir?

ROOSEVELT

VINCENT!

TOWNSHEND

Mr. Roosevelt, what has happened? Are you injured?

*Dalton appears in his bathrobe
holding a revolver.*

DALTON

Is everything alright, Mr. Townshend.

TOWNSHEND

What are you doing with that?

DALTON

Felt appropriate.

*Sophie and Millicent in their robes
peeking into the foyer.*

MILLICENT
(stage whisper)

What's going on?

SOPHIE
(stage whisper)

Dalton has a gun trained on Roosevelt!

MILLICENT
No!

ROOSEVELT
VINCENT!

Astor emerges in his robe.

ASTOR
Kermit, what the devil?

ROOSEVELT
Disappearing into thin air, people too!

ASTOR
What is wrong?

ROOSEVELT
You know what's going on out there, don't you? You know all about it.

*Astor notices the gun in Dalton's
hand.*

ASTOR
(to Dalton)
What are you doing with that? That's not helping.

DALTON
It sounded like we were under attack.

ROOSEVELT
You know about people disappearing, swallowed by the icy sea!

ASTOR
It it loaded?

DALTON
Of course.

ASTOR
Please put it away immediately.

DALTON
Yes, Master Vincent.

ASTOR
(to Townshend)
Could you get some coffee started?

SOPHIE
(from the hallway)
I'll take care of that.

ASTOR
Is the whole household awake?

MILLICENT
(from the hallway)
Yes.

Townshend turns on the light and lighting comes up in the foyer. As the lights come up Kermit slides down the wall into a sitting position on the floor. Dalton passes Sophie and Millicent as he goes to put the gun back in his room.

MILLICENT
You have a gun?

DALTON
Of course I have a gun.

Dalton heads to his room. Millicent follows Sophie though the dining room and into the kitchen.

MILLICENT
Should he have a gun?

ROOSEVELT
I don't want any coffee. I want a drink!

ASTOR
What has happened to you?

ROOSEVELT

Do we know anyone who threw themselves off a building, Vincent?

ASTOR
(to Dalton)

Help me get him up.

Townshend and Astor each take an arm and pull Roosevelt up and on to his feet.

ROOSEVELT

Do we know anyone that's blown their brains out, Vincent?

Astor and Townshend walk Roosevelt into the sitting room and deposit him into one of the over stuffed chairs.

ROOSEVELT

No, no, no. No one in our set. We all took steps.

ASTOR
You're talking about the market crash?
(to Townshend)
Go see what can be done in the kitchen, if you don't mind.

TOWNSHEND

Very good, Sir. I'll also make sure one of the bedrooms is prepared.

ASTOR
(nodding)

Thank you.

Townshend exits. Astor sits down next to Roosevelt who is struggling with a cigarette. Astor lights it for him.

What has happened?

ROOSEVELT

My brother in law put a revolver under his chin and pulled the trigger. His children found him.

ASTOR

Good heavens, no...

ROOSEVELT

I've seen death before, but his kids, kids aren't supposed to see that. We could have stopped this.

ASTOR

No one could have stopped this.

ROOSEVELT

You could have.

ASTOR

No.

ROOSEVELT

You could have tried.

ASTOR

We've been telling anyone who would listen for two years. No one wanted to believe it.

Dalton enters with Sophie and a coffee service.

ASTOR

Thank you, Dalton, Sophie.

Roosevelt struggles with his coat.

Here help me get him out of this thing, he's soaked.

Dalton and Astor get Roosevelt's coat off, Sophie pours coffee.

SOPHIE

Should I be preparing some food, sir?

Sophie pours coffee puts it in front Roosevelt. Roosevelt pulls out a flask and pours it into the coffee. Townshend and Millicent enter.

ASTOR

I think we're alright, I think you can all go back to bed.

ROOSEVELT

NO! You always pour me a drink. Have a drink with me.

TOWNSHEND

It's very late.

ROOSEVELT

No, I said everyone sit down and have a drink.

*Roosevelt starts to pour whiskey
from his flask into the coffee
cups.*

Everybody Have a drink on me.

*Astor nods, the staff nervously
take a cup.*

ASTOR

Where are the children and your sister?

ROOSEVELT

At my house. They are at my house until further notice, but let me ask you a question, let me ask you one question Are you buying right now, are we, buying? You and Aldrich, The Rockefeller's and the Mellon's and all those other miserable bastards?

Roosevelt looks around the room.

What's the matter with everyone? DRINK!

ASTOR

You know what we do? You know that we have the liquidity. You also know I don't involve myself in the day to day. You know that?

*Sophie and Millicent take a sip
from their cups. Look to one
another.*

SOPHIE

Thank you so much Mr. Roosevelt, but we shall be going.

MILLICENT

Yes, thank you.

ROOSEVELT

No!!

SOPHIE

(rising)

Yes. It's very late.

MILLICENT

Mr. Townshend we are going to make up the guest room.

TOENSHEND
(nodding)

Thank you, ladies.

*Sophie and Millicent exit out of
the sitting room.*

ROOSEVELT
There they go, but you boys are staying.

ASTOR
Yes.

TOWNSHEND
What can we do, sir?

ROOSEVELT
You can have another drink. That's what you can do!
That's what I'm going to do! So what do I tell them, Vincent?
That it was just business and bad luck that made their father
blow off the top of his head. You know I half admire the
bastard, putting the gun under his chin, knowing, pulling the
trigger.

DALTON
Mr. Roosevelt, please.

ASTOR
(sternly)
Tell them whatever you need to tell them and by all means
have another drink because, after all that is what you do
best.

ROOSEVELT
That's not very charitable, brother.

ASTOR
Is that what you're looking for, charity? Instead of being
home with your family where you're needed, you are here.
Drunk and feeling sorry for yourself, looking for someone to
blame. There is no one to blame.

ROOSEVELT
There is always someone to blame.

ASTOR
Then blame your brother in law. I'm sorry he saw no other
option for himself. He took his own life. He abandoned his
wife and children. I'm sorry he made that decision but
there's nothing we can do for him now. This is simply the
way things are.

ROOSEVELT

The way things are.

ASTOR

Your sister and those children are what's important now. For once in your life you are going to have to take some responsibility and make sure they are provided for.

ROOSEVELT

I don't know that I'm very good at that. My marriage is a joke. My attempts at business are really just an attempt to look busy. I don't do anything because I really don't know how to do anything. My sister and her children deserve better.

DALTON

Better than what, Mr. Roosevelt, better than you? I've known you most of your life and behind all your bluster and shenanigans you have a pure and good heart and that's the most important thing. They are lucky to have you. I know you'll do right by them.

ROOSEVELT

A good heart.

DALTON

Yes, my boy!

Sophie and Millicent return.

SOPHIE

The bedroom is ready.

ASTOR

Thank you, ladies. Come on old friend, time for bed. Help me get him up.

Townshend and Astor get Roosevelt to his feet.

Mr. Townshend and I are going to put Mr. Roosevelt to bed.

ROOSEVELT

I get to sleep here tonight.

SOPHIE

Lucky you.

ROOSEVELT

You know Sophie, you are an amazing woman.

SOPHIE

I know.

ROOSEVELT

No, I'm being very serious. You are amazing!

SOPHIE

It's only because I feed you.

ROOSEVELT

Everything you're saying right now is the truth.

ASTOR

Dalton, will you call Mrs. Roosevelt and let her know that we will be keeping her husband for the night and that he shall be returned to her in the morning.

DALTON

Right away, Master Vincent.

Dalton exits.

ASTOR

Mr. Townshend, if you would.

ROOSEVELT

They're going to tuck me in.

SOPHIE

How lucky for you.

ROOSEVELT

Don't you want to tuck me in?

SOPHIE

(shaking her head)

You really are a mess, aren't you.

ASTOR

Ladies, thank you, leave the tray till the morning.

MILLICENT

It's no bother. I'll take care of it, Sir.

ASTOR

Then we shall see you in the morning.

ROOSEVELT

I'll see you in the morning too!

*Townshend and Astor walk Roosevelt
out to the guest room. Millicent
starts to put the cups on the tray.*

MILLICENT

I'm still not sure of what's happened.

SOPHIE

Something terrible, that's for sure. I've never seen him in
such a state.

Dalton enters.

MILLICENT

What's happened, Mr. Dalton?

DALTON

Mr. Roosevelt's brother in law took his own life this
evening.

MILLICENT

Oh, no!

TOWNSHEND

(entering)

Well?

SOPHIE

Is Mr. Roosevelt alright, it's horrible, Mr. Dalton told us.

TOWNSHEND

I think he'll be better in the morning after some sleep,
I think we all will be.

MILLICENT

Poor Mr. Roosevelt, he looked like a --

DALTON

A little lost puppy?

TOWNSHEND

Mr. Astor is going to stay with his friend for a bit and then go back to bed, he suggests that we all do the same.

*They make their good nights.
Millicent and Sophie head to the
kitchen, Dalton follows. As they
exit.*

MILLICENT

Mr. Dalton, I wanted to ask you about that large revolver. Do you think it's wise --

DALTON

I have had that weapon since before your mother's, mother was born.

SOPHIE

I think that might be her point.

*They disappear. Townshend remains
for a moment, lights a cigarette
and blows put the match.*

BLACKOUT.

In the darkness the band starts to play. Lights fade up.

THE EL MOROCCO - 1929

*The Adam stubs out his cigarette
behind the bar watches the crowd.
The bar is quiet. The band plays
a slow number. A party enters, Adam
knows them. Germans. One comes up
to the bar. His name is, HANS
GROENIGER. He is a banker.*

GROENIGER

Do we seat ourselves?

ADAM

It's late, anywhere you want.

GROENIGER

Is there a serving girl?

ADAM

You mean a waitress, yeah, I'll send her over, or you can order from the bar if you'd rather, like I said, it's late,

GROENIGER

We prefer to be served

ADAM

I'll send her right over.

GROENIGER

Food?

ADAM

Like I said, it's late. Kitchen's closed. I'll send the Waitress.

GROENIGER

Do you know Prescott Bush?

ADAM

I do.

GROENIGER

Is he here?

ADAM

Do you see him?

GROENIGER

No.

ADAM

Then I don't think he's here.

GROENIGER

There isn't a more private room where he might be?

ADAM

No.

GROENIGER

We are supposed to meet with him here.

ADAM

Well then, you'll see him when he comes in.

GROENIGER

So, you'll send the serving girl?

ADAM

I'll send the waitress.

*Groeniger looks confused and walks
back to his party.*

Fucking Germans.

Lights fade in The El Morocco.

FADE TO BLACK.

DINNER 12 - MAUGHAM AND MAYHEM - 1930

*In the darkness SFX - 15 seconds
of radio. Lights come up in the
sitting room. Townshend and Dalton
are working the drinks table.
Constance Morgan has joined the
party along with the writer,
SOMERSET MAUGHAM. In attendance
Astor, Roosevelt, Field, Doubleday,
Rhinerlander, Aldrich and Bruce.
The conversation is heated and
fast.*

DOUBLEDAY

You are an old fool!

MAUGHAM

That's not the point, Nelson --

DOUBLEDAY

It most certainly is the point. Marx wrote that Capitalism
would fall in exactly this manner! He predicted it!

ALDRICH

So, now you're quoting, Marx?

DOUBLEDAY

Stop it!

MAUGHAM

This is no vindication of Marx and our friend Joe Stalin is not living the Proletarian life, I'm sure Mrs. Morgan can agree with that. No, it will be their economy that fails first. It's just a matter of when.

CONSTANCE

I agree with Somerset completely.

DOUBLEDAY

And the economy?

RHINELANDER

A harsh correction.

ASTOR

One that is going to take us years to recover from.

ALDRICH

It's going to get worse before it gets better.

CONSTANCE

I believe that as well. Have we seen the bottom to it?

ALDRICH

I think we have, what does Jonathan think?

CONSTANCE

Most people lost all their money during the crash, I lost my husband.

ALDRICH

I'm so sorry.

CONSTANCE

No need to be sorry. I traded him in, like a car.

The room goes quiet for a moment.

BRUCE

(laughing)

Like a car, be careful fellows or your wives might do the same.

CONSTANCE

And I'm sure with good reason, but I'm curious Mr. Maugham, how is it that you've come to know the inner workings of modern Russia so well. It's changing so rapidly.

MAUGHAM

I was stationed in Petrograd before the Revolution, assigned by her majesty with one purpose. To try and prevent the Revolution.

ROOSEVELT

That one didn't work out so well, did it?

MAUGHAM

No, not so well, but I submit to you no one in this room knows the Communists better than I do. I have spent two decades watching that shambles of a country stumble forward.

CONSTANCE

It's as if they approach every decision knowing what would work perfectly well and then they decide to do the exact opposite thing.

MAUGHAM

Mark my words, it'll take another two decades before we have to worry about Russia, if they even survive that long. It's Germany that worries me.

ALDRICH

Oh, it's a load of rubbish.

MAUGHAM

Mark me, This Hitler and his National Socialists are growing stronger everyday.

BRUCE

After the last elections the Nazi thugs battled the Communists, battled the Anarchists. They literally left the streets of Berlin littered with bodies.

ALDRICH

It's the same old argument we've had from day one. I won't be baited into it again. How do we know that any of this is true in the first place?

RHINELANDER

We both know people who have witnessed the violence first hand.

ASTOR

What do you expect when people are starving?
I think our friend Dorothy Thompson is in Germany right now.

FIELD

I suppose I'm naive but I suppose I expect the governments of Spain, Germany and even Russia to take care of their own, that's all.

ROOSEVELT

I love you brother, but you can't be serious. It's always been about class and cash, always has been, always will be. It's no different here and you know it.

MAUGHAM

The National Socialists gained 107 seats in the Reichstag, They are building an Army, manufacturing weapons. Mr. Hitler is winning elections and we all know what it takes to win elections.

DOUBLEDAY

What are you poking at, more cloak and dagger meandering?

MAUGHAM

It takes money to win elections. It takes money to wage war, mark me, Germany is preparing for war.

ALDRICH

Nonsense, Germany is simply trying to rebuild her economy.

MAUGHAM

Who is being naive now? When Germany rises and starts to bark who will stand in their way? England, America? Certainly not France. Spain is divided. France is weak. Who here can tell me how, in violation of International law, in this time of global depression, Germany is able to fund this effort.

ASTOR

That topic has crossed this table before.

ALDRICH

It's taken me a long time putting it together but I think I can tell you exactly how. At Chase I've become aware of certain business opportunities involving American banking concerns and German and Dutch banks.

FIELD

Dutch banks?

ALDRICH

It's lucrative, people on both sides of the ocean are making a lot of money.

ASTOR

Chase?

ALDRICH

Not yet. You familiar with Brown Brothers?

ASTOR

Marginally?

ALDRICH

What about Harriman or the Union Banking Corporation?

ROOSEVELT

We know Union Bank.

ALDRICH

Look at those three companies. Who owns them? Who are the officers?

RHINELANDER

I'm not sure I follow.

ALDRICH

Who is running the Union Banking Corporation? Well, there's Fritz Thyssen and he just happens to own the Van Heydt banks along with his partner and receiver in New York, Harriman. Then there is Groeniger, a German and Von Shceepvaart, a Dutchmen. They have the controlling interests in several of the major banks in Holland.

FIELD

What's the connection?

ALDRICH

Guaranty Trust, owned by Knight Woolery acts as an American receiver for these banks. Brown Brothers, owned by Prescott Bush and Ellery James act as yet another receiver. And all the names that I just mentioned comprise the Board of Directors of the Union Banking Corporation.

BRUCE

So, they're laundering money for the Nazi's?

ASTOR

They're getting the money from us and they have their own banks?

ALDRICH

In essence, yes.

MAUGHAM

I trust you're sure about all of this?

ALDRICH

I'm sure.

RHINELANDER

You haven't reported to anyone?

ALDRICH

Report it? Report it to whom? It's all I can do to keep Chase out of it.

CONSTANCE

This is all illegal, is it not?

ASTOR

It's a very gray area.

ALDRICH

Then there are the corporations, big ones lobbying to freely do business with Germany.

BRUCE

Like who?

ALDRICH

Like the Ford Motor Company.

BRUCE

Henry Ford, the auto-maker?

DOUBLEDAY

Another one who doesn't like the Jews.

MAUGHAM

What do you mean?

DOUBLEDAY

You remember, I brought it to your attention. He was forwarding that nonsense, what was it? The Elder's of Zion?

CONSTANCE

The Elder Protocols of Zion?

DOUBLEDAY

That's it! Ford paid to have it published and he's the only American that's mentioned in Mein Kamph!

ROOSEVELT

You certainly don't see anyone telling Henry Ford who he can and can not do business with.

ASTOR

Why not?

ROOSEVELT

Because he's Henry Ford.

ASTOR

But his company is crucial to America's national defense. There must be regulation, I mean this goes back to the formation of this country. It's like if Standard Oil got in bed with a foreign oil producing partner and then got swallowed up. Standard Oil, can't happen.

ALDRICH

I think the thinking in the New World Order is that Corporations are bigger than countries.

RHINELANDER

So, after all these years you've proven the opposite point.

ALDRICH

What?

RHINELANDER

That Germany is the bigger threat.

ALDRICH

Here is where it gets downright spooky. All of the men I just mentioned with the exception Thyssen were all tapped at Yale, 1917.

ASTOR

Really?

FIELD

All members of the order?

ROOSEVELT

A modern day illuminati.

DOUBELDAY

Right up your alley, Somerset.

ROOSEVELT

Those clowns, I thought they just put on dresses and bugged one other.

CONSTANCE

Not a Yale man, eh?

ASTOR

Are you really telling me that, that Yale lot is responsible for funneling all that money into Germany?

ALDRICH

Brown Brothers and Guaranty Trust receive the money and transfer it into Union Banking. The Dutch and German banks draw from them directly.

MAUGHAM

These are dangerous times. Japan invading Manchuria. The Japanese Prime Minister assassinated for signing the London Naval Treaty.

DOUBLEDAY

Aren't you being overly dramatic?

MAUGHAM

What could be more dramatic than the assassination of a Prime Minister? As we sit here, the world is being carved up in rooms far from New York, London or Paris. War will be upon us. Whether you like it or not, whether you believe it or not.

DOUBLEDAY

Next you'll be on about agents and spies.

MAUGHAM

There are men in far flung places that are extremely interested about the conversations that go on in these rooms. What conclusions are being reached, political leanings?

ASTOR

You're not serious.

MAUGHAM

Oh, but I am. For that matter, how do you know that I am not here in the employ of the British Government right now.

ASTOR

Are you?

MAUGHAM

Would it surprise you to know that your activities are known here and abroad? Yes Nelson, Agents and Spies.

DOUBLEDAY

Sounds like one of your stories, Somerset.

ASTOR

You give us too much credit. We are strictly social.

MAUGHAM

Then indulge me. How is Governor Roosevelt?

ASTOR

Why would you ask me that?

MAUGHAM

Do you deny your friendship with the Governor? If you are trying to keep it a secret, you are doing it poorly.

ASTOR

We are social acquaintances.

ROOSEVELT

He swims in his pool.

MAUGHAM

That is not the impression in some circles and might it not be safe to say that the Governor is entertaining the idea of taking a run at the Presidency?

ASTOR

I suppose that is a possibility.

MAUGHAM

I think the conclusion could be drawn that the opinions expressed and forwarded in these rooms might very well find the ear of the next President of the United States. That's London's opinion, but I suppose I'm being overly dramatic.

ASTOR

That's very interesting, Somerset. Am I to understand that you speak for London?

MAUGHAM

In so much as the same informal manner that I believe you speak for the Governor.

CONSTANCE

Excuse me, but what has just occurred here?

MAUGHAM

I am talking about the gathering and sharing of information.

ASTOR

I think that's better left to the experts.

MAUGHAM

I'd love to. Where are they? These experts. I think that are sitting right here in this room.

ASTOR

I think you give us too much credit.

MAUGHAM

In this room, in not less than two hours I have learned exactly how the Nazi's are funding their war.

RHINELANDER

So, you're saying that London doesn't have the information that Win just provided us here?

MAUGHAM

I can assure you they will by tomorrow morning.

ASTOR

So, what are we suggesting here?

MAUGHAM

I think it may become important in future to have a way for England and America to communicate with out red tape or publicity. A back channel.

ASTOR

(to Bruce)

Are you still friends with Bill Donovan?

BRUCE

I am.

ASTOR

Would you see if he would be interested in coming to our next dinner. He might have some insights.

FIELD

Congressional Medal of Honor, Bill Donovan? He's in New York?

BRUCE

He's working at a law firm in the city. I'll invite him along next time.

ASTOR

And Somerset, please whenever you are in New York. Are you heading back to Europe immediately?

MAUGHAM

No, not right away and perhaps not for some time.

DOUBLEDAY

Somerset is going off to Hollywood to ply his trade.

FIELD

Are you going to write for the movies?

MAUGHAM

A lot of mediocre writers like myself seem to do quite well out there in, what do they call it, "the land of milk and honey?"

DOUBLEDAY

Great writers working in Hollywood right now, it's a golden age. I'm telling you. You won't regret it.

ASTOR

Then let us drink to the land of milk and honey.

MAUGHAM

And pray that translates into gin and money.

*The group laughs and toasts, as
we...*

FADE TO BLACK.

THE EL MOROCCO - THE RISE TO POWER - 1931

*In the darkness the band starts
to play. The lights come up to
half, back lighting the scene.*

The band starts to cook though their song. Marion joins them on the stage and begins to sing.

Astor, Roosevelt and Field stand at a bar table. Seated at a table down front are PRESCOTT BUSH, of the Union Banking Corporation and Brown Brothers and his German counterpart, who we saw earlier, Hans Groeniger. Also at the table a pretty young actress and friend of Marion Myles, MARGARET GLANSBERG AND GRETA KNUESAL, consort and associate of Groeniger's.

Marion finishes her song and leaves the stage as the band leader counts in the next song. Marion joins Bush and Groeniger's table.

ASTOR

It's official?

ROOSEVELT

Cousin Franklin is running and I have been asked to maintain a low profile.

FIELD

Surprised?

ROOSEVELT

Not in the least. They'll trot me out at the end to talk about dear old dad.

Adam approaches Astor's party.

ASTOR

Is that Prescott Bush that Marion is sitting with?

ADAM

That's him.

ASTOR

Who's with him?

ADAM

The cute brunette is Marion's friend, Margaret. The other two, German. Been getting a lot of German's in here all of a sudden, you catch my meaning.

FIELD

German, Americans?

ADAM

German, Germans.

ASTOR

Germans?

ROOSEVELT

Nazi's?

ADAM

Nazi's.

ASTOR

How can you know that they're Nazi's?

ADAM

The swastika lapel pin gives them away.

ASTOR

Fair enough.

ADAM

They are not my favorite people, if you'll excuse the intrusion of my opinion.

ROOSEVELT

(rising to get a better look)

So those are some real live Nazi's sitting over there with Prescott Bush. I got to hand it to Win, he called it straight all the way down the line.

FIELD

Except for Russia.

ASTOR

(laughs)

I think it's possible that a Russian, perhaps a woman, really wronged Win in some manner and he's predisposed.

Roosevelt starts to move toward Bush.

ASTOR

Whoa, where you going?

ROOSEVELT

I want a closer look at those Nazi's.

FIELD

Easy.

ADAM

Mr. Roosevelt, please. We don't want no trouble in here.

ROOSEVELT

Trouble? From me? Adam. Why would you say that?

FIELD

Because, he knows you.

ASTOR

What's Marion doing with them?

ADAM

Looking out for her friend. Bush, his crowd. They're coming in all the time now. Act like they own the place. I'll tell Marion you want to say hello.

ASTOR

If she needs a life line.

ADAM

Perfect.

Adam moves off. The waiter arrives with a fresh round of drinks.

ROOSEVELT

(raising his glass)

Gentlemen, I drink to another Roosevelt in the White House.

Aldrich and Rhinelander enter. Adam directs them over to Astor's table. Bush takes notice and motions to Groeniger. Astor takes it all in, missing nothing.

ROOSEVELT

It's the Katzenjammer kids, Hans and Fritz.

ALDRICH

What?

ROOSEVELT
You guys are best friends now.

ALDRICH
Is he drunk already?

Astor and Field nod together.

RHINELANDER
We just heard about Franklin throwing his hat in the ring.

ALDRICH
You must be very excited.

ROOSEVELT
Like proud parents witnessing the birth of a new nation.

ALDRICH
Bitter, much?

FIELD
He's unhappy that he doesn't have more of a role.

ROOSEVELT
I might like to be of use to someone, some day.

FIELD
Why would you disrupt such a well established pattern of behavior?

ASTOR
Kermit's apparent irresponsibility is nothing more than an affectation, an act. I have seen the proof of this.

FIELD
It's true.

ROOSEVELT
Quiet, the both of you. I have a reputation to cultivate and maintain, but for now I have my eye on a leggy German blond.

*Bush and Groeniger are both up
and heading towards Astor's table.*

ASTOR
Oh, oh.

ROOSEVELT
Win, behind you --

ALDRICH

What is it?

BUSH

Winthrop Aldrich, I thought that was you.

ALDRICH

(turning)

Prescott, I'm sorry I didn't see you. Do you know everyone here? Kermit Roosevelt, Marshall Field, Bill Rhineland and Vincent Astor. This is Prescott Bush.

BUSH

(to Astor)

It's so nice to meet you, Mr. Astor. I'd like to introduce you to my very good friend, Hans Groeniger from Berlin.

GROENIGER

It's very nice to meet you, Gentlemen.

ROOSEVELT

You left the ladies alone at the table, Hans.

GROENIGER

I'm sorry, what?

FIELD

Your English is perfect.

GROENIGER

I attended University here in the United States.

BUSH

Classmates at Yale.

ROOSEVELT

Win, you are amazing.

BUSH

(awkwardly)

We've all heard about Franklin running and the race is on. Of course, I'm backing the other guy.

ALDRICH

Of course.

BUSH

Hoover is going to bring us out these current economic doldrums with a solid and aggressive policy favoring foreign trade.

RHINELANDER

Well, of course you'd think so.

BUSH

(laughing)

I'm banking on it.

GROENIGER

You must join us at our table for a drink and let us introduce you to our friends.

Marion, Margaret and Greta are chatting down front, Marion craning her neck to see what is happening.

ALDRICH

We were just heading out.

Roosevelt inexplicably reaches out and touches Groeniger's lapel pin.

GROENIGER

Excuse me.

BUSH

You can spare us a minute, Winthrop. Let Hans and I walk you through some of the great growth opportunities for you and for Chase.

GROENIGER

I think you might be very interested in what we have to say.

BUSH

Hans has controlling interests in some Dutch banks that are helping Germany get back on its feet.

Roosevelt starts to reach out and touch Groeniger's lapel pin again. Field grabs his hand, pulls it back.

ALDRICH

I'd rather do this another time.

ROOSEVELT

Let's join them.

ASTOR

I suppose we can sit down for a moment.

BUSH

(leading)

Excellent. Follow me, right down here. Let me introduce everyone.

ALDRICH

(pained)

Vincent.

FIELD

(to Astor)

No good will come from this.

ASTOR

I know, but it's like a train wreck, you just can't take your eyes off it.

BUSH

Right this way! Let me introduce everyone to Greta, Margaret and Marion Myles, this is Vincent Astor.

ASTOR

(kissing her hand)

Of course we know, Miss Myles.

MARION

Arthur, this my good friend Margaret.

MARGARET

Mr. Astor.

ASTOR

So nice to meet you Margaret, please, call me Vincent? This is Marshall Field, Kermit Roosevelt, Winthrop Aldrich and Bill Rhineland.

GROENIGER

May I present my partner, Greta Knuesal.

ASTOR

Lovely to meet you.

ROOSEVELT

(pointing to Greta)

Look, she has one too, I'm Kermit Roosevelt.

GRETA

How lucky I am. An Astor on one side and a Roosevelt on the other

Roosevelt takes a seat next to Greta.

FIELD

(sitting next to Margaret)

I'm Marshall, so nice to meet you,

MARGARET

Thank you for sitting down.

FIELD

Of course and Marion you are in lovely voice tonight.

MARION

You are sweet to say so.

As everyone is getting seated, Bush waves Adam over.

GROENIGER

Greta and I are here in partnership with our banking counterparts here in the United States on behalf of Dutch and German banks offering tremendous opportunities for growth.

Greta and Kermit stare into each others eyes, both enjoying the game they are playing.

GRETA

Tremendous growth.

ROOSEVELT

(touching the swastika on Greta)

You're banking system is in complete collapse.

GROENIGER

You seem fascinated by our lapel pins.

ROOSEVELT

I like shiny things.

GRETA

I see.

BUSH

This is what we wanted to talk to you about. Why I wanted you two to meet, The possibility for growth is unlimited.

Aldrich shifts uncomfortably. Adam arrives at the table.

Champagne for everyone and we need glasses.

ADAM

Right away, Sir.

Adam is off. Greta and Kermit are locked in.

ROOSEVELT

And how are you finding New York?

GRETA

We've met so many nice people in New York.

ROOSEVELT

Sympathetic to the cause?

ASTOR

(pivoting)

We hear so many rumors about life in Germany these days.

GROENIGER

It's no secret that business and industry are thriving again in Germany and of course the resolve of the German people grows stronger everyday.

ROOSEVELT

(to Greta)

How's your resolve?

GRETA

Why, Mr. Roosevelt what do you mean?

ROOSEVELT

I think you know exactly what I mean.

Awkward beat at the table.

BUSH

Kermit's cousin, Franklin is running for President and Kermit's father was President.

GROENIGER

(to Kermit)

You must be such a disappointment.

ROOSEVELT

(smiling)

Indeed, I am.

BUSH

He won't win of course.

GRETA

The new Germany is excited to work with America toward building a new future, no matter who becomes the President.

FIELD

The new Germany? What happened to the old one?

GROENIGER

My country is suffering from the excesses of the former republic.

GRETA

We are hoping to build a happy future once again.

ROOSEVELT

That is so great.

GRETA

I'm sorry?

ASTOR

(pivoting again)

So, Margaret, are you a singer as well?

MARGARET

(nervously)

Well, I can sing a little, more of a dancer.

MARION

Margaret, is a wonderful actress.

FIELD

Anything we might have seen?

MARGARET

I'm in Girl Crazy at the Alvin, with Ethel Merman and Ginger Rogers. My part is quite a bit smaller than theirs but before that I was Kim in Showboat at the Zeigfield.

ALDRICH

The Paul Robeson production?

MARGARET

Yes, that's right.

ALDRICH

I had no idea we were in such esteemed company.

MARGARET

I was extremely fortunate.

RHINELANDER

So what's next?

MARGARET

Well, I'm contracted at the Alvin for the next three months, but, oh never mind, it's nothing.

MARION

Go ahead and tell it, I don't know how you're not bursting.

MARGARET

After Girl Crazy closes, Ginger and I have been invited to go Los Angeles. Ginger already has something and I've been put forward for a few things.

FIELD

Anything, you can talk about?

MARGARET

Aw, I don't want to jinx it --

BUSH

Win, this set up is perfect for you boys at Chase. Very little risk.

ALDRICH

We were listening to Margaret --

BUSH

(not listening)

The potential for growth is off the charts and you can go in quick and be in and out before anyone is the wiser and still make a killing.

ALDRICH

I'd rather not have this discussion.

BUSH

Suit yourself, but I'm telling you you're making a mistake.

RHINELANDER

I don't mean to sound uninformed but isn't what your suggesting in violation international law and Versailles?

GROENIGER

When Hitler becomes Chancellor he will reject Versailles. The German people will be able to grow and prosper once again.

ALDRICH

Reject it? Germany has been ignoring it for years.

ASTOR

So, Hitler is your plan for the future?

GRETA

He is the only future for Germany.

ROOSEVELT

I'm sure Mr. Ford would agree.

GRETA

Excuse me?

ROOSEVELT

I'm trying too, I promise.

GRETA

You are very funny, Mr. Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT

I know.

GROENIGER

Obviously, you have some preconceived notions about my country.

ROOSEVELT

Well, now that you mention it there's that whole Jew thing.
*(pointing to their lapel
 swastika's)*

You don't like the Jews. Hitler doesn't like the Jews. The Jews did this, the Jews did that. It's a thing right? Explain that for me, What do they call it?

RHINELANDER

The Jewish problem.

ROOSEVELT

The Jewish problem, explain that to me?

GROENIGER

We don't speak of such things in polite society.

BUSH

Let me apologize for Mr. Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT

Don't you ever apologize for me!

*Waiters arrive with Champagne.
Amid the popping corks and pouring.*

BUSH

(to Aldrich)

Big corporations on board. People you know. Why the cold feet?

ALDRICH

This is becoming uncomfortable.

BUSH

A toast to new opportunities.

*A less than enthusiastic response.
Roosevelt doesn't drink.*

Seriously, though we should think about setting up something this week?

ASTOR

Why the hard sell?

BUSH

Excuse me?

ASTOR

How many times does the man have to say, No. It's becoming tedious.

MARION

I should be getting back to the band.

MARGARET

I should be going as well.

BUSH

No, NO! Let's not break up the party. The champagne has just arrived.

GRETA

Don't be silly Margaret, it's still early.

Marion is up from the table.

MARION

(to Margaret)

Stay or go, up to you. I owe a couple more songs

(to Field)

You got my girl, Galahad.

FIELD

I've got her.

GROENIGER

(quietly to Aldrich)

We can come by your office if you prefer to meet more discreetly. Greta and I will be heading home to Germany soon.

ROOSEVELT

With a big bag of money to give to Uncle Adolph.

GROENIGER

What did you just say?

ROOSEVELT

You heard me, Hans.

GROENIGER

I am not accustomed being spoken too in such a manner.

ROOSEVELT

You should get used to it.

ASTOR

(a caution)

Kermit.

ROOSEVELT

This is great. It really is and the two of you are really charming. Are all the Germans here begging for money as charming as the two of you.

BUSH

This is outrageous!

GROENIGER

I think you better get your man under control, Mr. Astor before someone decides to teach him a lesson?

ROOSEVELT

You don't think that someone is going to be you, do you Hans?

GROENIGER

If we were in different company.

ROOSEVELT

Don't let that stop you, I'm for you!

ASTOR

Hitler will assume power?

GRETA

It is his destiny. Just look at what he has already done. Germany is growing strong again. The people are working again. There is hope again.

GROENIGER

The Communist threat has been all but erased.

GRETA

The criminal Gypsy problem --

ROOSEVELT

And the Jews of course.

GROENIGER

You Americans are such hypocrites. You despise the Jews as much as we do, you just refuse to admit it. Germany has simply addressed it's race problems.

MARGARET

(rising abruptly)

If you'll excuse me --

GRETA

My dear, what's the matter, it's early?

GROENIGER

Your country was ushered into prosperity on the backs of your Negro slaves, or have you forgotten your own history?

BUSH

This kind of talk is getting us nowhere. We've got problems, the Germans have problems. We deal with them in different ways, it's no reason to let it interfere with the business of intelligent men. I mean they're just Jews.

RHINELANDER

There it is.

GROENIGER

The Jews are a blemish on the face of mankind worse than the Negro and should be wiped from the face of the Earth.

MARGARET

(tossing her napkin)

Mr. Astor, Mr. Roosevelt, Gentlemen --

FIELD

Let me take you to the bar. If you'll excuse us.

Field and Margaret move to the bar.

BUSH

Well, what in the world was that about?

MARION

I believe that was about Margaret's last name being Glanzberg.

GRETA

A Jew sitting here with us?

ROOSEVELT

Can you believe it?

RHINELANDER

(Rising to Marion)

May I escort you to more pleasant company?

BUSH

Let's not break up the party. We have all this champagne!

MARION

(to Rhineland)

If you would be so kind.

RHINELANDER

Gentlemen, uh, Fraulein.

Rhineland and Marion head toward Margaret and Field at the bar. Adam lights a cigarette watching the table like a hawk as Margaret and Marshall fill him in.

ASTOR

(rising)

Well, Mr. Bush, seems like you've made a lot of friends this evening. Thanks for the talk. The drink. I think we'll be taking our leave as well.

Astor, Aldrich and Roosevelt all stand up. Bush grabs Vincent's arm.

BUSH

Are you telling me that the great Vincent Astor is taking up the cause of the Jews. Next thing you know you'll be inviting them to sit at your table, promoting them at Harvard.

ASTOR

Yes, well. Best to your family and all that.

BUSH

(grinning)

And how is your wife?

ASTOR

(shaking off his hand)

Probably having dinner with yours.

BUSH

(starting to rise)

How dare you!

Bush rises and grabs Vincent's arm again.

ASTOR

If you don't take your hands off me I'm going to beat you senseless, do you understand me?

Bush takes his hands off Vincent. Aldrich pushes Bush back down into his seat.

ALDRICH

I'd stay seated if I were you.

GRETA

All this silliness over a Jew.

ROOSEVELT

I don't know how to express this, but the more you speak the uglier you become --

ASTOR

And that's a real shame because you are tediously beautiful.

GROENIGER

(rising)

I've had enough of your insults.

ROOSEVELT

Then do something about it!

Groeniger makes a move, too slow, Roosevelt takes a glass of champagne and throws it in Groeniger's face. Adam is on the move.

Do something about it, you Nazi son of a bitch!

Roosevelt takes another glass off the table and throws that in Groeniger's face.

ROOSEVELT

You just going to stand there?

Groeniger attempts to pick up a glass to retaliate, again too slow. Roosevelt slaps him so hard across the face Groeniger is staggered. He drops the glass. It shatters.

ROOSEVELT

Are you going to do something, or not?

(voice rising)

You gonna do something, or are you going to just stand there and drip? I want to see that German resolve you were talking about?

BUSH
(shouting)
 THIS IS AN OUTRAGE!

ADAM
(landing)
 Gentlemen. Do we have a problem here?

ROOSEVELT
 I don't see a problem.

ASTOR
 We were just making our good nights.

Marion has taken the stage and is waiting for the situation down front to resolve. All eyes in the club on the action. Roosevelt still toe to toe with Groeniger

I think we should walk away, Kermit.

ROOSEVELT
 Is that what you think?

ASTOR
 Yes.

ROOSEVELT
 So, is that it, Hans? I guess that's it. Well, if there's nothing else? Miss Knuesal, Mr. Bush, Hans.

Roosevelt turns to walk away and Groeniger tries to grab him by the shoulder spin him and punch him, but again Roosevelt gets the better of him again. He blocks the punch and counters with a devastating right cross dropping the German to the floor.

ASTOR
 I don't really know what to say, so I will simply say good night!

Astor and Roosevelt turn and head for the bar. Bush shouting after them as Groeniger gets to his feet.

BUSH
 I HAVE PLENTY MORE TO SAY!

ADAM

Then you'll have to say it to me.

BUSH

You're part of this Winthrop, there will be repercussions! Wait till word gets out. How do you think the Rockefeller's will react to this?

ALDRICH

I think I'll be okay.

*Groeniger has gotten to his feet,
Winthrop tosses him a napkin.*

Clean yourself up, you're a mess. Miss Knuesal, good night.

*Aldrich follows his friends to the
bar.*

ADAM

I'll have the Waiter bring your bell. Do me a favor settle up quickly and quietly. I'd rather not have to come over here again, if you can understand my meaning.

BUSH

I've never been treated in such a manner.

ADAM

(walking away)

I know. Ain't it horrible.

*Adam walks back toward the bar
gestures to the stage and the Band
Leader goes to the microphone.*

BAND LEADER

We'd like to welcome Marion Myles back to the stage for another number.

MARION

I trust that the boxing exhibition is finished for the evening.

*The audience bursts into laughter
and applause. The lights start to
fade leaving Marion and the band in
silhouette until she begins to sing
and the spot light finds her
holding her through the song. Astor
and his crew make their apologies
and good-byes during the song.*

As Marion finishes the song the lights fade to black.

FADE TO BLACK.

DINNER SEVENTEEN - THE KINGS OF THE WORLD - 1932

As the band finishes their song the lights come up in the Astor dining room. The party has grown. Dalton and Townshend serve table. Astor, Roosevelt, Field, Rhineland, Bruce, Doubleday and Aldrich are joined at the table by Maugham, the author, SINCLAIR LEWIS. His wife, DOROTHY THOMPSON and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient WILLIAM DONOVAN. Dinner is in full swing.

MAUGHAM

Will you be going to the inauguration, Kermit?

ROOSEVELT

I have been invited. I mean I suppose they had to invite me, I am family.

FIELD

Vincent has been invited as well.

RHINELANDER

We're you going to mention it?

ASTOR

I don't have to say a word with these two around.

DONOVAN

(lifting his glass)

To President Roosevelt!

The table toasts.

ROOSEVELT

You see how it is, constantly drinking to my cousin Franklin. It's unavoidable, I of course am obliged to drink.

DOROTHY

(to Astor)

Any truth to the rumor that you'll be filling a cabinet post?

ROOSEVELT

That would just be the best.

ASTOR

Don't worry Kermit, I'm sure the President has his own plans.

ROOSEVELT

If there is a plan, I can promise you that I don't know a thing about it.

FIELD

There's our boy.

ASTOR

So, how are you finding Hollywood, Somerset?

MAUGHAM

I had no idea that there were so many ex-pat Englishmen sucking on the decaying breast of Hollywood for the milk of money, the opium of life.

LEWIS

That's quite good.

MAUGHAM

Really, seemed more your style than mine.

LEWIS

Maybe so.

MAUGHAM

At any rate, it's all about the movies and now with the talkies it certainly doesn't hurt to be able to put a few words together.

DOUBLEDAY

They are lucky to have you there.

LEWIS

(indicating Doubleday)

Your agent?

MAUGHAM

Publisher.

LEWIS

Very nice.

DOUBLEDAY

Perhaps, Mr. Lewis will make his way to California.

DOROTHY

First American to win the Nobel, Somerset.

MAUGHAM

Aren't you the proud and preening wife.

DOROTHY

The Nobel, The Pulitzer --

LEWIS

I turned down The Pulitzer.

DOUBLEDAY

It still counts.

LEWIS

Out of the three books that I wrote in that period, Arrowsmith was the weakest.

MAUGHAM

Didn't they change their rules or something like that?

LEWIS

I don't want to talk about it, I'm tired of talking about me, it's all I do anymore. Dorothy, is the writer now. I doubt I'll see California anytime soon.

DOROTHY

We are heading back to Europe.

DOUBLEDAY

I've seen the galleys's on your book, "I saw Hitler," when will it be out.

DOROTHY

Next month, we should be in Vienna by then.

LEWIS

Can't wait.

DOROTHY

Quit grouching, darling.

BRUCE

Not looking forward to going back?

LEWIS

I'd rather have bamboo shoots stuck in --

DOROTHY

It seems that when I work it makes my poor husband feel inadequate. You should have seen it when I was interviewing Hitler, absolutely unhinged.

LEWIS

Spent six solid days with that little Austrian prick. He wanted to sleep with you.

ROOSEVELT

Is that true?

DOROTHY

I don't think so.

ASTOR

So, your book is based on the original article that you wrote for Cosmopolitan?

DOROTHY

Yes, it is.

DOUBLEDAY

It's good Dorothy, hard hitting, though I can't imagine that you'd be very popular in Germany right now.

DONOVAN

Not with you write. I'd concerned about your security.

LEWIS

Exactly.

DOROTHY

Someone has got to write the truth about what's happening over there.

LEWIS

Okay, but why does it have to be you? I agree with Mr. Donovan, I think it could be dangerous for you now and that's without the book being out.

RHINELANDER

You do know that the Nazi's are refusing to join the government unless Hitler is named Chancellor.

ALDRICH

That will never happen.

DONOVAN

I wouldn't be so sure.

DOROTHY

I didn't take it seriously. It never really occurred to me that he would get this far. Now look at him.

ALDRICH

There are people in some circles that say that you exaggerate the conditions. That things aren't really that bad.

LEWIS

(angry)

Who say's that?

ASTOR

(to Aldrich)

You really need to stop listening to that Rockefeller set.

ROOSEVELT

It's the Republicans, isn't it.

FIELD

And you were doing so well, Win.

DOROTHY

Should I provide you witnesses, Mr. Aldrich, a man perhaps so you can trust the words you're hearing.

ALDRICH

I suppose that's the success of the German propaganda machine.

ASTOR

It also depends on who you are, by birth I suppose.

DOROTHY

That's exactly right. If you are a Gypsy, Leftist, homosexual or a Jew you might find your self in a labor camp rebuilding the new Germany.

DONOVAN

Conversely, You might feel differently about Herr Hitler if you were noble born, or part of the aristocracy.

ASTOR

Or turning a blind eye

BRUCE

But, I thought that Hitler lost the election.

DONOVAN

As I understand it, Goring is the President of the Reichstag and they just had a vote of no confidence for the Papan government.

RHINELANDER

Do you really think that Hindenburg will name Hitler Chancellor?

DOROTHY

Hitler will be Chancellor. He's been groomed for it. I heard him speak a few years ago and believe me, someone has been working with him, because back then he could barely put two words together. Now he is a captivating and moving speaker.

LEWIS

It's true, he gets all those Nazi's all wound up. They love him, more wine, please.

DOROTHY

By this time next year Hitler will be in power and he won't be wasting any time building his Aryan nation.

BRUCE

At the risk of becoming unpopular, I wonder if it's really any of our business what Germany does inside it's own borders.

MAUGHAM

The real question is what are we going to do about it when Hitler decides that he wants to expand those borders? Does the world sit idly by and do nothing.

ROOSEVELT

As good Americans I just assumed we'd all profit from it.

DONOVAN

Just business as usual for the average war profiteer.

ASTOR

That does seem to be the order of things.

FIELD

If I was a Jew in Germany --

DOROTHY

You'd what?

FIELD

I'd be thinking about getting out.

DOROTHY

And go where? Where in Europe can they go? If there is war, it will sweep through Europe destroying everything in it's path.

DOUBLEDAY

Including the Jews.

MAUGHAM

Especially the Jews. There is no lack of anti-Semitism both here and abroad.

ROOSEVELT

I've said it before, they did kill Christ!

DOROTHY

That is in incredibly poor taste.

ROOSEVELT

A lot of people hold it against them

ASTOR

Don't let his performance throw you, he's got it in for all religion.

ROOSEVELT

Well, they're all just so full of crap, aren't they. All organized religion is just an exercise of power over people anyway. I've seen more death slung around in the name of Christ. I guess I find that in poor taste.

Dalton and Townshend emerge from the kitchen and start to clear the dinner plates.

DOROTHY

Yet, you'll do nothing, just let it happen?

ROOSEVELT

Dorothy, you must understand that I don't have anything against the Jews, I just don't care about them in the same way that I don't care about the Christians or the Communists.

Dalton takes up the wine and starts round the table as Townshend takes a tray into the Kitchen.

MAUGHAM

There are those in the British Foreign Office saying the plight of the Jews is an exaggeration. As we said earlier it is the result of well placed German propoganda, but it is also about an innate racism, a mistrust of the Jews both here and abroad and Mr. Roosevelt's joke while crude may be indeed be truer than any of us might like to admit.

DOROTHY

How does a writer living in Hollywood have any idea of what those in the British Foreign Office think?

RHINELANDER

No matter what the British Foriegn Office thinks I am convinced that Hitler will start rounding up the Jew just like he did the Gypsies.

Dalton empties the bottle just as Townshend comes out with an empty tray and a new bottle. Dalton hands off the empty, takes the new one and continues to pour the table.

BRUCE

What do you think Mr. Lewis, you been quiet for quite a while.

LEWIS

That is because I am quite drunk and at this moment I am not thinking about anything at all. More wine, please.

Dalton refills his glass

LEWIS

(raising his glass)

Anchors away!

DOROTHY

That's the spirit, dear.

DONOVAN

Do you really think that Hitler will wage war and on who?

LEWIS
(drinking)

He starts with the weak, maybe Czechoslovakia, maybe Poland, but he wants Paris. He wants London. He wants to pay everyone back who benefitted from Versailles. I'm telling you, he's a vengeful little prick.

ROOSEVELT
 Look who perked up.

LEWIS
(pointing)
 Can't help it, married to, what do they call you?

DOROTHY
 The First Lady of American Journalism, dear.

ASTOR
 Who calls you that?

DOROTHY
 Everyone.

*There is light laughter. A sigh.
 Dalton finishes pouring the new
 bottle and places it on the side
 table and heads into the kitchen.
 Townshend attends table, emptying
 ashtrays and lighting cigarettes.
 After a beat.*

There will be war.

MAUGHAM
 Only England will stand in their way.

ASTOR
 England will never be able to do it alone.

MAUGHAM
(meaningfully to Astor)
 That needs to be understood.

DONOVAN
 Acting now is better than acting later, it doesn't matter, like it or not we're going to have to act before this war makes it's way to our door.

ALDRICH

An attack on American soil. That will never happen!

DONOVAN

If I know anything, I know this. Anything can happen.

ASTOR

So, how quickly will you leave for Germany?

DOROTHY

Within a fortnight.

ASTOR

So soon.

DOROTHY

The real question I have for you is what are you going to do with the information that you have learned here this evening?

ASTOR

I don't know that I'd planned on doing anything with it.

DOROTHY

Really?

ASTOR

Really.

DOROTHY

(to Maugham)

What a disappointment. I mean, you know what you have here. You have Vincent Astor who has the ear of the newly elected President of the United States entertaining a member of the British Foreign Service --

MAUGHAM

Dorothy, I assure you --

DOROTHY

Assure me all you want. You are what you are and have always been, so please. We have the chairman of the board of the Chase banking concern, the son of one President and confidant to the other. Publishing, Philanthropy. Mr. Donovan, you seem to know a lot, I wonder who you report to? I just find it hard to believe that we are all just going to sit back and do nothing, You all have stronger stomachs than I do, Or maybe you just need more convincing?

MAUGHAM

I don't need any more convincing.

RHINELANDER

Neither do I.

ASTOR

It's not a matter of convincing. I think Kermit's right. Of course we feel bad for a moment when confronted with the harsh realities, but if I know anything it's that America would sell it's own mother to make a dollar.

DONOVAN

It's gonna take more than putting some Gypsies and Jews into camps to get American boots back on the ground in Germany again.

BRUCE

So, their lives aren't as worth as much as ours? Is that what you're saying?

DONOVAN

I'm saying that it's not our problem and after the last great war there is an isolationist element in government and in the psyche of the people.

MAUGHAM

Like it or not, I think we all know that it's going to be our problem soon enough.

ASTOR

Over the past few years we've met in these rooms shared and formed opinions, helped each other in business, looked out for one another. Perhaps we have developed a common thinking, though we have not always agreed, I think we can all agree on this.

FIELD

(to Roosevelt)

From on top of the soap box.

ROOSEVELT

Absolutely.

ASTOR

Human life cannot be devalued because you happen to be born to the wrong family, at the wrong time, in the wrong country, or your skin color isn't the right color for your current geographical location.

DONOVAN

Are you kidding? It happens all the time. Maybe you don't see it from up here looking down.

This is a job for you and Rhinelander's charities. It's not the job of the American government to interfere in another nations affairs.

MAUGHAM
(*laughing*)

Meddling in other government's affairs is the one thing that both our governments are really good at.

ASTOR
We need a counterpart to the Mr. Maugham's British Foreign Office.

DONOVAN
I think so.

DOROTHY
An American intelligence agency?

From the kitchen a loud crash is heard, a scream. Everyone turns toward the kitchen door. Townshend starts for the kitchen door. Millicent pops out before he can get there.

MILLICENT
It's Mr. Dalton!

BLACKOUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

THE EL MOROCCO - INTERMEZZO - 1933

The band starts up in the darkness,

Marion takes the stage and sings something slow and sad. Lit starkly by a single spot.

As she finishes her song, she steps out of the light.

BLACKOUT.

STANDING GUARD - 1933

Dalton's bedroom. Dalton in his bed. Curtains open, light streaming in. Vincent sitting in a chair next to the bed, a book in his lap.

DALTON

No more reading, Master Vincent.

ASTOR

Alright, then.

Millicent enters with a fresh pitcher of water.

MILLICENT

How are we feeling this morning, Mr. Dalton?

DALTON

All this fuss over me, it's ridiculous! I want to get up! I want a glass of whiskey!

MILLICENT

(fluffing pillow)

Here, let me fix your pillow.

DALTON

All this fussing, you could be a good lass. You could bring me a whiskey.

Astor and Millicent share a look and a smile.

MILLICENT

Not at nine in the morning, Mr. Dalton.

DALTON

Awful, awful girl.

MILLICENT

You can be as cross as you like, Mr. Dalton. It wont do you any good. Would you like some water?

DALTON

I don't want any water!

MILLICENT

If you'll behave, I'll have Sophie make you some steak and eggs.

DALTON

I don't have to behave!

MILLICENT

Never the less, no Jamesons for you at nine in the morning, Sophie would have my head. So, would you like some water?

DALTON

Tea!

MILLICENT

I'll bring you some tea. Mr. Astor will you be having breakfast?

ASTOR

Yes, I'll have it in here.

MILLICENT

Of course, Mr. Astor. If there is anything you need or want --

ASTOR

(looking at his book)

Thank you , Millicent. That will be all.

Millicent exits looking crestfallen.

DALTON

A very beautiful girl.

ASTOR

(reading)

Yes.

DALTON

You know she fancies you?

ASTOR

She works for me.

DALTON

A woman like that can help you find all the answers.

ASTOR

Uh, huh.

*Townshend enters with Mr.
Roosevelt.*

TOWNSHEND

Mr. Roosevelt.

ASTOR

(standing)

Kermit, pull up a chair.

*Townshend helps with the chair as
Millicent comes in with tea for
Dalton.*

ASTOR

Have you eaten?

ROOSEVELT

I could eat.

ASTOR

Could you ask Sophie to do another breakfast for Mr. Roosevelt?

MILLICENT

Right away, Mr. Astor.

*Millicent exits and Roosevelt takes
a seat. As Townshend and Astor have
a quick word, Dalton signals
Roosevelt, making gestures to see
if he has his flask. Roosevelt
nods, Dalton offers up his tea cup
and Roosevelt secretly fills it
from his flask. Townshend exits.
Astor sits back down none the
wiser.*

DALTON

Good of you to come see me.

ROOSEVELT

My pleasure.

ASTOR

How's the tea?

DALTON

Perfect.

ROOSEVELT

So, what have you boys been up too this morning?

ASTOR

Dalton is trying to talk me into sleeping with the help.

ROOSEVELT

I didn't think Townshend leaned that way.

*Dalton, laughing, sitting up in his
bed to better drink his "tea."*

ASTOR

Shall we play some cards.

DALTON

You already owe me hundreds of thousands of dollars.

ROOSEVELT

Good heavens!

ASTOR

He cheats.

ROOSEVELT

I see, I've got nothing on for today. Count me in.

DALTON

That Millicent reminds me of my Laura.

ROOSEVELT

She is a beauty and you could do worse, hell I stood up
at your wedding and you already did do worse, considerably
worse.

DALTON

(sipping his tea)

You see.

ASTOR

That's not right.

DALTON

But, it is true.

ASTOR

What is it that you're drinking over there?

DALTON

My tea.

ASTOR

(looking at Roosevelt)

Just don't let Millie or Sophie catch you or there will be hell to pay.

DALTON

(staring straight ahead)

Ah, Parnell, God damn you to hell! I left my Laura and my Sean'y, came to America with you.

ROOSEVELT

Who's Parnell?

ASTOR

Don't know, sometimes he talks to me as if I was John Jacob.

DALTON

(angry)

Followed you to Ferncliff! I WANT TO GO HOME! I'M GOING HOME!

Dalton starts to try and get out of the bed. Roosevelt and Astor have to restrain him.

Who are you people, why am I in my bed clothes? Where is my revolver?

ASTOR

Easy, old friend. Settle down.

ROOSEVELT

Take it easy, don't struggle!

As quickly as the spell had come on, it passed just as fast and we can see that Dalton has returned to himself. Looking up at Vincent and Roosevelt standing over him.

DALTON

A spell?

ASTOR

(relaxing)

Yes.

DALTON
(sitting back up again)

Did I spill the tea?

ROOSEVELT

No.

Roosevelt hands the tea cup to Dalton, who sips greedily. After a beat. Townshend, Millicent and Sophie all enter. Townshend pushes in a food cart. Millicent brings in the bed tray. Sophie starts to set the side table for Astor and Roosevelt.

SOPHIE

Hope you're all hungry.

TOWNSHEND

Gentlemen.

Townshend seats Astor and Roosevelt at the small set table in the room. Sophie uncovers a tray, and takes it to Dalton. He seems to be guarding his tea. Sophie sniffs the air, she smells something. Millicent and Townshend serve the table, uncover the trays.

ROOSEVELT

Looks and smells wonderful.

ASTOR

Have the papers arrived?

TOWNSHEND
(handing newspapers)

Yes, they're just here.

ASTOR

Who wants some of the paper?

Vincent starts to hand out sections of the paper to Roosevelt and Dalton. Sophie takes up the teapot.

SOPHIE

More tea, Mr. Dalton?

DALTON

No, I'm just fine, thank you. Well, dig in everyone.

Sophie starts to walk away, sniffs the air again, spins on Dalton and grabs the tea cup, smells the contents.

SOPHIE

MR. DALTON!

ASTOR

(to Roosevelt)

Told you so.

ROOSEVELT

What, it's okay.

ASTOR

Eat quickly!

Millicent and Vincent catch each others eye and share a smile, it seems to take Vincent aback but Millicent holds his eye.

SOPHIE

I suppose I don't even need to ask, but just for laughs, which one of you geniuses thought it was a good idea to let Mr. Dalton start drinking this morning?

Roosevelt and Astor don't say a word, eyes down, silently eating their breakfast. Sophie zeroes in on Astor.

SOPHIE

You know better!

ASTOR

(not looking up)

I do.

SOPHIE

(to Roosevelt)

So, that leaves you.

ROOSEVELT

*(not looking up, trying not
to laugh)*

Can I plead, no contest. The fifth?

*Everyone in the room stifles a
giggle. Sophie is really mad.*

SOPHIE

So, you all think it's funny, do you? I personally would like to see Mr. Dalton out of that bed and restored to health and DRINKING BEFORE TEN IN THE MORNING IS NOT GOING TO HELP IN THAT CAUSE!

*Sophie slams the tea cup down and
pulls the plates out and away from
Astor and Roosevelt.*

ASTOR

I don't think we were quite finished.

SOPHIE

(on the move)

Oh, you're finished.

*Sophie takes the plates and walks
straight out the door. You can hear
her down the hall.*

If you want to act like children, no problem! I can treat you like children. Everybody thinks it's SO FUNNY to get the EIGHTY-NINE YEAR OLD MAN drunk before noon, Hee-larious. And if anyone is interested, I HAVE HIS REVOLVER, what do you think about that ...

*Sophie has grumbled away leaving
everyone in the room looking to one
another.*

ASTOR

(quietly)

I told you to eat quickly.

Everyone bursts into laughter.

SOPHIE

(O.S.)

IT'S NOT FUNNY!!!!

MILLICENT

Oh my God, okay, I'd better go talk to her.

Millicent flashes one more smile to Vincent. She is smitten. She exits. Everyone notices.

DALTON

You see.

TOWNSHEND

Can I bring you anything back in?

ASTOR

Not worth the risk. She didn't grab the toast and jam. Go see if you can mend some fences for us, eh.

TOWNSHEND

Very good, Sir.

Townshend exits.

ROOSEVELT

She didn't take his breakfast.

DALTON

I need my strength, would you hand me my tea cup.

Roosevelt places the cup on the tray.

ROOSEVELT

(brandishing his flask)

Trade you a little more of this for a piece of bacon.

DALTON

Deal.

ROOSEVELT

(pointing with bacon)

Is Sophie married, because I am now in love with her?

ASTOR

Sophie is not married, but you are very married.

ROOSEVELT

Tedious. Give me sports.

FADE TO BLACK.

A LETTER FROM VIENNA - 1933

*In the darkness SFX -
15 seconds of radio. A German
announcer describing the events of
the Reichstag Fire.*

*A light comes up on Dorothy
Thompson in a dressing gown at her
dressing table writing from her
hotel room in Vienna.*

DOROTHY

Dearest Vincent, Firstly how is Dalton? I know he is very dear to you. As you might imagine the news here is grim as well. As I'm sure you know the Reichstag was set ablaze a few weeks ago. Today in Berlin, Hindenburg suspended constitutional law and granted Hitler's secret police special powers. The SA and the SS have sworn forty thousand men into their ranks in the last few days.

Hitler is Chancellor and the Communist members of the Reichstag are being arrested as I write this. The Nazi's placed the blame for the fire on the Communists and the Jews. Hitler has called it a Communist plot from the beginning, but my sources are telling a different story. It was the Nazi's who set the fire. These Nazi's will kill their own for political advantage. They have told the biggest lie possible and they are getting away with it. Even before the fire, the streets of Berlin were bloody. They are telling the German people that they are under attack. Under attack by the radical Jews. Under attack by the Communists when no such thing has occurred. They set the fire themselves to manipulate this political result and it has worked. There is a groundswell of support for Hitler. Are the people so afraid that they'll believe anything? Or are they turning a blind eye? People here in Vienna are frightened too. They know that it's just a matter of time before he annexes Austria.

It's bad on the personal front as well. It feels like my marriage is over. At least the loving part. Doubtless there will be years of hostility and acrimony.

I suppose he's done with me. I've done my job, after all. I bore him a child. He has a son to ignore. He hates all my friends. Hates it when I work. Hasn't written a word himself in months. Treats our son like an annoyance. What did I expect, he proposed to me on our second meeting. He seems jealous of my work, can you believe it, the Nobel and the Pulitzer and he's feels threatened by what I write?

We deserve to be happy don't we? Are we so selfish that we shut everyone else out.

DOROTHY CONT.

Is that the excuse we make for ourselves? We don't ever really let anyone get close enough to love us. Or, is it that we don't love ourselves enough to believe that we are worthy of love in the first place. I want to be happy. There's a woman I met in Berlin. Another writer, Christa Winsloe. We haven't made love yet, but... I'm sure this is the last thing you want to be bothered with but I know you have some experience in this regard.

I plan on leaving for Berlin tomorrow and I'll stay there and see what develops. I'll wire you if anything desperately exciting occurs. Take care of everyone. It is what you do best. Know that Dalton is in my prayers and give my love to everyone who traipses through your rooms. I do miss our dinners and I'll be in attendance the next time I'm in New York, if you haven't given my place away. All my love and best to all. Dorothy Thompson, March 19, 1933. Vienna, Austria.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE DEATH OF A FRIEND - 1934

*In the darkness SFX -
15 seconds of radio. Lights up
in the sitting room. Vincent Astor
dressed in mourning clothes, still
wearing his top coat sprawled into
one of the great chairs. He holds a
glass in his hand. The front bell
rings, Townshend appears. He is
dressed in mourning clothes as
well. He answers the door, Marshall
Field and Roosevelt enter the
apartment dressed in black as well.*

FIELD

How is he?

TOWNSHEND

It's difficult for him. It's good of you Gentlemen to call upon him at this time.

ROOSEVELT

Least we can do.

TOWNSHEND

Mr. Astor is in the sitting room.

ROOSEVELT

Thank you.

FIELD

(handing his coat)

How are the ladies?

TOWNSHEND

We're all a bit shaken. Sophie and Millicent are in the kitchen preparing a bit of food. We shall all miss him terribly.

ROOSEVELT

Held on a long time, didn't he?

TOWNSHEND

Stubborn, till the end.

FIELD

We'll go in.

TOWNSHEND

Very good, Sir.

Townshend walks down the hall with the coats as Field and Roosevelt walk into the sitting room. Astor doesn't get up. Field heads directly toward the bar.

ASTOR

Hello boys, nice of you to come by, drink?

FIELD

Way ahead of you. You?

ROOSEVELT

Please.

FIELD

(handing Roosevelt a glass)

Just pouring Irish tonight.

ROOSEVELT

Indeed.

Townshend enters.

ASTOR

Why don't you invite the ladies and let's all have a drink.

TOWNSHEND

I'll invite the ladies, Sir.

Townshend exits.

ASTOR

Anyone else coming?

FIELD

Rhineland and Aldrich send their regrets.

ROOSEVELT

David and Alisa had another event this evening. Bill Donovan is going to come over.

ASTOR

It was good of them all to come to the funeral anyway. It was a good turnout. You know that he had been with me since the day I was born.

FIELD

He had a long run.

ROOSEVELT

I actually met Dalton before I met you.

FIELD

Nothing from Helen?

ASTOR

She wouldn't walk across the street.

Millicent and Sophie enter with some food trays. Millicent lands her tray.

MILLICENT

Mr. Astor, let me hang up your top coat.

ASTOR

(removing coat)

You shouldn't have gone to all this trouble.

SOPHIE

It's no trouble.

Millicent gets Astor to give up his coat. The front bell rings.

FIELD

That should be Donovan.

MILICENT

(to Townshend)

I'll go, I'm going anyway.

TOWNSHEND

Thank you, Millicent.

Millicent goes to the front door. Opens it, admits Donovan.

MILICENT

May I take your coat? Everyone is in the sitting room.

Millicent takes Donovan's coat and heads down the hall as Donovan walks into the sitting room.

ASTOR

Good timing, We were just about to raise a glass to the man himself.

DONOVAN

Count me in.

Townshend pours drinks, hands Donovan a whiskey. Millicent enters, Sophie hands her a glass.

ASTOR

(raising his glass)

To Dalton!

ALL

Dalton!

They drink.

MILICENT

Miss him terribly.

SOPHIE

Like a father to our little group.

MILLICENT

A very cranky father --

SOPHIE

With a revolver.

ASTOR

My only father, really. There's not a moment in my life where I don't see him.

SOPHIE

He always called you, Master Vincent.

ASTOR

Called me that from the very beginning. John Jacob brought Dalton back with him from Ireland. I had assumed he had no family. I think I was five or six years old when I found out that he'd had a wife and son and that they had died in a fire back in Ireland.

SOPHIE

Oh my God.

ASTOR

He didn't go back for the funerals. I think he regretted that bitterly. John Jacob would joke that he had won him in a poker game from a man named Parnell. Funny, I never asked him about that, isn't that funny?

MILLICENT

He had a naughty sense of humor.

TOWNSHEND

A sharper tongue and the intellect to back it up.

SOPHIE

And let's not forget, the revolver...

Everyone laughs. A beat.

ASTOR

Actually, where is that revolver?

SOPHIE

I've got it, don't you worry about it.

ASTOR

Very good, another drink.

Townshend takes up the bottle of Jamesons and refills everyone's glass.

TOWNSHEND

(to Millicent and Sophie)

He was very protective of the two of you.

ASTOR

All of us.

MILLICENT

We'd get him so mad.

TOWNSHEND

The two of you did like to wind him up.

MILLICENT

He'd puff up and turn red and then you got the --

SOPHIE

(laughing)

"The look."

MILLICENT

(nodding her head)

"The look."

ASTOR

Believe me, you know I know "the look."

DONOVAN

I guess, I didn't know him long enough to pick up on it.

MILLICENT

(mimicking)

He would stiffen up, rise up, puff up and then this huge sigh, then you either got the sidelong glance down the nose --

ROOSEVELT

Or, you got the full on eye roll and then the stare.

MILLICENT

Exactly.

ASTOR

There was also what I called The Dog, a head tilt, the look and then the disgusted sigh and head shake.

Beat.

SOPHIE

We should eat, there are sandwiches.

MILLICENT

Can I get you something? You haven't eaten a thing since breakfast.

ASTOR

Don't feel much like eating, Millie.

MILLICENT

I'm making you a plate. Anyone else?

DONOVAN

(making a plate)

You don't have to serve, I can help myself.

ASTOR

That goes for the rest of you bums, as well.

FIELD

Tonight is about Mr. Dalton and Mr. Jamesons.

ASTOR

(picks up the Jamesons)

And it seems that we've run out of both.

TOWNSHEND

(rising)

We can do something about the latter and I truly wish that we could do something more for the former.

ASTOR

Now that sounds like something Dalton would say. I remember things he said to me from when I was child to now, a lot of things I still quote to this day.

TOWNSHEND

Another bottle?

ASTOR

Another bottle.

*Townshend exits. Millie hands
Vincent a plate.*

DONOVAN

So, he worked for your father --

ASTOR

John Jacob.

FIELD

He was John Jacob's man.

DONOVAN

How did you wrestle him away?

ROOSEVELT

Well, John Jacob did go down with the Titanic.

DONOVAN

You all know the story, I guess I was asking how Dalton was lucky enough to miss going down with him on the Titanic.

ASTOR

(holding a sandwich)

I can solve that for you, when it was time for me to go to school, I took Dalton. It was that simple. John Jacob was bitter about it. He said I'd relieved him of his good luck charm, maybe he was right.

FIELD

If you hadn't taken him with you --

ROOSEVELT

He would have gone down with the ship.

SOPHIE

That's unbelievable, no wonder he loved you so much. You saved his life.

ASTOR

(taking a bite)

He loved me before that, I think I became the replacement for the son that he had lost in Ireland and he was certainly more of a father to me than John Jacob ever was.

MILLICENT

I would walk in his room, you would be there either reading to him, or letting him beat you at cards, or talking. He knew how much you loved him.

ASTOR

You know he never spoke ill of John Jacob, even when I did.

TOWNSHEND

So, Mr. Dalton got on well with your father?

ASTOR

(another bite)

Hated him, but he knew how and when to keep his mouth shut?

SOPHIE

Keep his mouth shut, Dalton?

FIELD

Why did he hate John Jacob?

ASTOR

(drinking)

My father traded in human beings and I think Mr. Dalton regretted leaving his family.

TOWNSHEND

I believe that to be true.

ASTOR

There was some business between them, but John Jacob died before I could ask him and after his wife and children had passed. I never broached the subject with Dalton.

ROOSEVELT

So, he never spoke about it?

ASTOR

Only in the spells that he would occasionally have.

ROOSEVELT

Parnell?

ASTOR

Yes, there was a man named Parnell?

MILLICENT

What do you think happened?

ASTOR

I think Parnell owed John Jacob a great deal of money and Dalton was indentured to Parnell and was given over to John Jacob to satisfy that debt.

DONOVAN

And you never spoke of it?

ASTOR

Never. If he would have wanted to speak about it with me, he would have. When he was having one of his spells, he would say things. Names, places, Parnell, his wife and son.

TOWNSHEND

And then he'd come right back.

ASTOR

As if nothing had happen.

MILLICENT

You spoke for hours.

ASTOR

We spoke a lot these last few months about Germany and Spain.

SOPHIE

Is that what you boys did in there? I thought you just told naughty stories.

MILLICENT

Only when Mr. Roosevelt came to call.

TOWNSHEND

He was sharp till the end.

ASTOR

Well, I can tell you this, anytime Hitler and his Nazi's were mentioned. "The Look."

TOWNSHEND

A strident anti-fascist, and a republican from Ireland.

ROOSEVELT

That explains the revolver.

DONOVAN

With Hindenburg dead, Hitler is Chancellor and Fuhrer.

FIELD

I don't understand what that means?

DONOVAN

It means not only does he make the law. He is the law.

ASTOR

That's a lot of power.

DONOVAN

And that is a very dangerous thing. The war in Europe we've been talking about in these rooms for the last few years. It's coming.

ASTOR

All motivated by the money. The money is the machine that devours everything in it's path and what it inspires is worse.

ROOSEVELT

What would that be?

ASTOR

You know, Marsh knows, anyone with money knows. So many of the people actually doing the work in this country are going to be the same ones about to do the fighting and dying.

DONOVAN

It's always been so.

ASTOR

That's why these corporations and banks are doing business with the Nazi's. It's just making money and they don't care where the money comes from, as long as it keeps coming.

ROOSEVELT

Burden of money, eh? Oh, boo hoo hoo! Is there anything more tedious than the rich complaining about the fate of the poor?

ASTOR

That Nazi with Bush was right. We built our economy on slave labor for a hundred years. We are a nation of hypocrites!

DONOVAN

I didn't risk my ass for a nation of hypocrites.

ASTOR

(bit drunk now)

Ah, but you did Bill, you did.

SOPHIE

Easy boys, just because we are a little tight there's no need to start nibbling on one another.

FIELD

I just think that the majority of people are happy not knowing. As if they were sleeping.

ROOSEVELT

German people as well, I'm sure they'd rather not look behind the curtain.

ASTOR

We better not sleep too long or we're gonna wake up to a new map of the world.

ROOSEVELT

Agreed.

ASTOR

I mean we do aspire to be better, don't we? That's what inspires men like you Bill, to go out and do the heroic thing.

DONOVAN

I believe in America is the greatest country in the world.

ASTOR

As long as you have the money. Money is freedom, without it we're just as bugged as the poor bastards working on one of Stalin's Collective Farms. Actually, we're worse because at least in Russia, the State provides some services.

SOPHIE

In this country you can starve --

ASTOR

And the government will let you. In Germany the highest ideal they aspire to besides money, of course, is Hitler. He's growing stronger daily with the money that America has been providing him.

DONOVAN

They are building an army.

ASTOR

You're going to have to fight him Bill, we all will.
Perhaps, I am drunk. In any case I propose another toast to
Mr. Dalton.

Everyone raises their glasses.

ALL

MR. DALTON!

FADE TO BLACK.

DINNER 22 - NIGHTFALL - 1935

*In the darkness SFX -
15 seconds of radio. Lights up in
the sitting room. Drinks after
dinner. In attendance Astor, Field,
Roosevelt, Aldrich, Doubleday,
Bruce, Rhineland, Maugham,
Donovan, Dorothy Thompson and her
friend the former Baroness, CHRISTA
WINSLOE HAVATNY.*

*Townshend, Astor, Roosevelt,
Rhineland and Aldrich are at the
bar. Townshend is making drinks.*

ROOSEVELT

When you told me that Dorothy was bringing her lover,
I assumed that --

ASTOR

Surprise.

ALDRICH

She and Sinclair divorcing?

RHINELANDER

They have a young son, right?

Townshend hands Astor his drink.

ASTOR

This is literally gossip at the watering hole, ask her.

*Astor heads into the main
conversation.*

CHRISTA

Thank you so much for receiving me here.

ASTOR

You're welcome here, anytime.

DOROTHY

(in the middle)

There are two military arms in Germany right now. The SA evolved from the Brown shirts into the para military force they are now. They helped Hitler rise to power headed and were headed by Eric Rohm.

MAUGHAM

(writing in a notebook)

Eric Rohm.

DOUBLEDAY

You're writing this down?

MAUGHAM

Yes.

DOROTHY

Then there is Himmler's, SS. They are Hitler's private army.

MAUGHAM

You had said that there was infighting going on with his staff and between the two groups. Is that a weakness, something that could be exploited?

DOROTHY

I'm not sure, I think Hitler uses it as a check and balance.

Christa takes this opportunity to sit on the arm of Dorothy's chair with her drink.

CHRISTA

It keeps one group from gaining more power or doing anything at all with out the knowledge of the other. He employs the same tactic on his staff.

DOROTHY

Like having two lovers --

CHRISTA

Pitting one against the other. A lot of members of the SA are deeply disillusioned. It seems that they had taken the "Socialism" part of National Socialism, seriously.

DOROTHY

You have to understand the SA gained power when the economy was in shambles, unemployment was above sixteen percent.

CHRISTA

The idea of food, clothes and stability had become a reality when they put on their brown shirts. Now, they watched as the party moved further away from the social and economic principles that they had touted earlier. There rose an increasing and vocal dissent in the SA. So, Herr Hitler decided that a purge was in order.

DONOVAN

Hadn't these people been loyal to him for a decade?

CHRISTA

It was the Socialist/Communist element he feared most of all. He thought that it could be turned against him.

DOROTHY

And with Rohm in control of over two million troops, they convinced Hitler that the stage was set for a coup.

BRUCE

Who convinced him?

CHRISTA

Himmler, Goebbels, Goring and Heydrich. They were allied against Rohm and they all went to work on Hitler, convincing him that he needed to take action.

DOROTHY

You must remember, the Gestapo were formerly the Prussian State Police absorbed into the SS in direct response to Rohm growing so powerful.

DONOVAN

And?

DOROTHY

They convinced him.

DONOVAN

You seem to know a lot about Hitler.

CHRISTA

I do. I have observed his rise to power with great concern. I was married to the Baron Havatny, a nice and kindly man who bestowed me with a more than satisfactory pension after our marriage was dissolved. It allowed me to do my writing, my art and get invited to those types of parties.

FIELD

So what happened to Rohm?

CHRISTA

Hitler liked Rohm. During the "Beer Hall Putsch," Rohm was the first one to throw his support behind Hitler.

DOROTHY

Himmler and Heydrich manufactured evidence against Rohm, implicating him in a plot where he was supposedly paid by France to overthrow Hitler.

DONOVAN

They hated him that much.

CHRISTA

They feared him. He had too much power. Remember, the German army was only allowed to number one hundred thousand according to Versailles. Rohm had seriously suggested the SA absorb the army. That would have brought a fighting force of two and a half million soldiers directly under Rohm's control.

ALDRICH

Sounds like he had too big a piece of the pie.

CHRISTA

That and the fact that Rohm was a homosexual.

DOUBLEDAY

This is playing out like one of your novels.

MAUGHAM

Better. This is all true.

DOROTHY

The scene is set, for "The Night of Long Knives."

BRUCE

We heard a thousand people were killed in a single night.

DOROTHY

Maybe more. On June, 30th everyone who opposed Hitler, everyone who was perceived as threat, guilty or not were eliminated.

CHRISTA

Hitler had ordered all SA leaders to Munich and took charge of Rohm's arrest himself. With an SS escort Hitler knocked on Rohm's door disguising his voice, saying that he had a message from Munich. Rohm called back that the door was open. Hitler burst into the room, grabbed Rohm by the throat. Rohm was naked in bed and refused to dress. When the SS searched the rooms, two young naked men were hiding in the next room. They were all arrested. Hitler knew that Rohm was homosexual and it didn't bother him until he could see a way to turn it to his advantage. As for Rohm, he's simply disappeared.

RHINELANDER

Do you think he's dead?

CHRISTA

Probably.

DONOVAN

Too dangerous after all this to leave him alive.

ROOSEVELT

Got to hand it to him, it's clever.

ASTOR

Well, now there can be no doubt that Hitler is in complete control of every branch of the German government.

DOROTHY

It wasn't just the Socialists they went after. It was anyone who didn't swear unconditional allegiance to Hitler.

MAUGHAM

Dolfuss?

CHRISTA

That was done every simply. Eight Austrian Nazi agents walked into the Chancellory and assassinated him.

DOROTHY

It was supposed to be a coup.

CHRISTA

As soon as word of the assassination reached Mussolini he started mobilizing, massing troops on the Austrian-Italian border.

DONOVAN

I feel like I'm just asking the same question over and over, why?

MAUGHAM

It's the smart move. Now, Hitler can't just take Austria. Mussolini wants to wet his beak, making sure that Hitler knows that he will have to deal with him.

CHRISTA

The assassins turned themselves in and were executed in quick fashion. Hitler will take Austria. He sees it as part of the German homeland.

ASTOR

Certainly, his homeland.

MAUGHAM

But, to echo Mr. Donovan, why kill Dolfuss? They were cut from the same cloth by all accounts.

CHRISTA

Dolfuss wanted an independent Austrian state. It didn't matter in the end that Dolfuss was as fierce an anti-Semite as Hitler. He had drawn a line in the sand to try and keep Austria out of Germany's pocket and with that he had sealed his own fate.

DONOVAN

I suppose there is still a chance that Austria can remain independent with the Italians on the border.

ROOSEVELT

Don't count on it. It sounds to me like Mussolini wants to be a player. He's got skin in the game. He's on the Italian border because he wants a piece.

BRUCE

Looking at the map, Hitler needs Italy to protect it's underbelly and Mussolini knows it.

CHRISTA

The new Chancellor, Schussnigg, will do whatever Hitler directs from Berlin, no matter what the Italians do.

BRUCE

Is it true that you were threatened, told to leave Germany?

CHRISTA

It is absolutely true, I think we were lucky to escape.

DOROTHY

We took a train from Vienna. I had arranged for a car to be waiting for us in Salzburg, from there we'd drive to Berlin. I cannot fully describe what we saw on the road to the capital.

CHRISTA

People were hung from lamp posts, strung up by the crowd because they were Communists or Intellectuals. Gypsies or Homosexuals. Jews of course.

DOROTHY

And it wasn't just one town that we saw this, it was several.

CHRISTA

We'd drive through towns where angry mobs smashed windows and looted Jewish businesses, burned synagogues. Jewish stars painted on the ruined buildings.

DOROTHY

We made it to Berlin and checked into The Adlon. I had plans to meet Bob Lilly from AP in the hotel bar at seven. So we checked in, ordered some food to the room and relaxed until it was time for me to go downstairs and meet Bob. I went down to the bar as arranged, didn't see Lilly. Instead I saw two uniformed SS Officers at the bar. They seemed to be waiting for me. They knew me by name.

ASTOR

What did they want with you?

DOUBLEDAY

They informed me that I had forty-eight hours to leave German occupied territory.

ASTOR

Or what?

DOROTHY

I didn't want to stick around to find out.

CHRISTA

She came back upstairs, told me to pack and got on the phone to the US Embassy.

FIELD

What did you do then?

CHRISTA

We had another drink.

ROOSEVELT

Steady.

DOROTHY

The Nazi officer kept saying that it wasn't safe for a couple of unaccompanied women alone at night in Berlin. I asked him how he knew my name. He laughed and said not only did they know my name but they knew the name of the mongrel slut upstairs in my bed.

CHRISTA

(smiling)

Me.

DOROTHY

I asked him how they knew my hotel. "The Fuhrer is aware of all the anti-Nazi journalists spreading their lies here in Germany," he replied.

FIELD

How did they know you were there? Did you think it was your friend, Lilly?

DOUBLEDAY

Did you think he sold you out?

MAUGHAM

Relax, Nelson. You get so excited, dear boy.

DOUBLEDAY

The only excitement I ever get is by reading and publishing other peoples adventures. I never have any adventures of my own. I live vicariously through all of you.

DONOVAN

You don't want adventures, trust me.

ASTOR

So, what about it? Do you think he sold you out?

DOROTHY

I did at first. I even asked the German officer, he just smiled at me and repeated his warning. I told him that I was meeting someone. He replied that he didn't think Mr. Lilly would be able to make and then they snapped their boot heels together and left. As Christa said I went upstairs and called the embassy. They suggested that we leave the hotel, get in our car and head straight to the embassy.

DOUBLEDAY

What did you do?

CHRISTA

Got in our car and drove straight to the embassy. I was granted sanctuary and a travel visa to your country. I am very grateful.

DOROTHY

I told the Attache everything that had occurred from Vienna to Berlin. Then the Ambassador came and sat in with us, asked a few questions. I told them that I was sure that it was Lilly who had served us up to the Nazi's. They asked when the last time I had spoken to Lilly. It was the day we left from Vienna.

DONOVAN

Maybe your phone in Vienna was wiretapped, or maybe Lilly's in Berlin.

DOROTHY

The Ambassador just kept shaking his head as I spoke about Lilly. He's our guy, the Ambassador finally said. They gave us a room and we went to sleep.

CHRISTA

The next day we were told to leave the car that we were being flown to London. They were going to escort us and put us on the plane. We were told that we were in danger.

DOROTHY

I asked the Attache what had happened. He told me that they had found Lilly that morning with two bullets in his head. They didn't want to take any chances with us. They awarded Christa sanctuary and a Visa and put us on the plane.

MAUGHAM

So, you will live here now?

CHRISTA

For a time, it's dangerous for me in Europe right now. I didn't want to end up in a work camp or worse, but I will go back and fight the Nazi's. How do you find yourself here Mr. Donovan?

DONOVAN

I think my reputation precedes me --

DOUBLEDAY

It really is Agents and Spies, isn't it? Do you really report to the British Foreign Service?

MAUGHAM

Did you think I was just making up stories all these years, Nelson?

DOUBLEDAY

You're a writer, I imagined that you embellished.

DOROTHY

So, who am I speaking with when I'm speaking with you?

DONOVAN

I've been asked to keep an ear to the ground and report any pertinent information that I uncover or receive in regard to what is happening in Europe.

DOROTHY

Report to whom?

BRUCE

The opinions that are formed and come out of these rooms have reached the highest corridors of power.

MAUGHAM

And not just in the United States, in London as well.

CHRISTA

So, we have the ear of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Baldwin?

ASTOR

I don't know that we can say that directly. We are a social group. A salon. I'm sure that some of the people in this room are in conversation with those people --

DOROTHY

(heated)

Including you!

ASTOR

Including me, but we don't speak *for* The President and The Prime Minister. We are a group of business acquaintances and friends. I'm a Businessman not a spy and this isn't an intelligence agency, it's a dinner party.

DOROTHY

(heated)

People are dying. We saw bodies littering the streets from Salzburg to Berlin. People hanging from lamp posts. Bob Lilly, an American journalist murdered and I don't see it getting any better than that. That's the very best it's going to get! Meanwhile these sons of bitches and their whores are over here raising money to fund their ability to hang more people from lamp posts and worse! So, if we're not here to something about it, to do some good, then what the hell are we doing here in the first place?

ASTOR

I'm doing everything in my power --

DOROTHY

Everything in your power?

ASTOR

Yes, everything in my power to shed a public light on those Nazi's and American businesses and banks here raising money so they can prosecute this coming war.

ALDRICH

Don't forget the Communists?

ASTOR

(raising his voice)

What is it about the Communists? Just come out and say it once and for all!

ALDRICH

It's economic's!

ASTOR

What!?

ROOSEVELT

Their political and economic systems are foreign to us. We fear them because we don't understand them. We understand the Germans. They do business the same way we do. So, they don't seem so threatening to our very way of life.

ALDRICH

I think that's exactly right and those profiteers like Bush and Harriman can operate freely - there's no regulation, they just see the money that they can make --

ROOSEVELT

(lighting a cigarette)

Steal.

FIELD
(to Roosevelt)

That was very good!

ROOSEVELT
I'm not a complete idiot, you know.

FIELD
Apparently not.

*Donovan goes to the bar, Townshend
pours him another.*

ASTOR
Dorothy is right. We've been gathering and passing
information from London to Washington for the past few years
outside any government agency.

DONOVAN
You can bet your ass that Hoover and his G-men are extremely
curious about what goes on up here?

BRUCE
FBI is domestic, Dillinger and Prohibition, law enforcement.

ASTOR
This, isn't that.

DONOVAN
No, this is a covert and clandestine intelligence gathering
operation with a built in back channel to MI-5.

MAUGHAM
Indeed.

DOROTHY
I can't wait to file this story.

DONOVAN
You can't write about this.

DOROTHY
I can write about anything I want to.

ASTOR
You can write about what you saw from Salzburg to Berlin,
you don't want write about this.

If this experiment we're discussing comes to fruition we're going to want to operate in the shadows.

DOROTHY

It's a really good story.

ASTOR

You've had a lot of good stories. Let's just say I would consider it a violation of our friendship.

ROOSEVELT

And then you wouldn't be able to come to dinner and have the ear of those who have the ear of my cousin, the President.

(to Christa)

And that goes for you too, Baroness.

DOROTHY

Fair enough. So, wouldn't this Intelligence Agency evolve out of the military?

ASTOR

It could, though not in our present form.

*Donovan returning to his seat
carrying two drinks. Hands a drink
to Roosevelt.*

DONOVAN

(sitting)

Depends on who is bank rolling us, private individuals or the government.

ASTOR

Well, there's that. In the time being we can get this information to the President. Help to inform his opinion.

ROOSEVELT

It won't make a bit of difference.

DOROTHY

Why?

ROOSEVELT

Because his hands are tied and no matter what he may think personally he won't be stop Bush and Harriman and the rest of the bottom feeders from doing business there.

ASTOR

We shall see. Christa, thank you for getting our beloved Dorothy home to us.

CHRISTA

I think it's more of a matter of her saving me, but I will take credit for the smile on her face.

ASTOR

Well, lovely, you are both welcome in my home at any time.

DOROTHY

As long as we keep our mouths shut.

ASTOR

As long as you keep your mouths shut.

DOROTHY

And vice-versa.

ASTOR

Goes without saying.

After a brief laugh and as the lights fade to black, the party continues with a few going to the bar and another few breaking into their own side conversations.

FADE TO BLACK.

FAMILY MATTERS - 1936

*In the darkness SFX -
15 seconds of radio. Lights come up
in the sitting room.*

*Millicent is reading a book having
tea. Sophie joins her and makes
herself a cup.*

SOPHIE

Still, no word?

MILLICENT

They're supposed to be back already. Townshend went to pick them up, seems like he's been gone for ages.

SOPHIE

Train from Washington must be late.

MILLICENT

It's different now, everyone sneaking about and being sworn to secrecy, being followed. I don't know, it feels dangerous now.

SOPHIE

They're fine. They like it.

MILLICENT

Little boys plays cops and robbers.

SOPHIE

Gives them something to do.

MILLICENT

You know that it's much more important than that.

SOPHIE

Uh, huh. You in love with the boss?

MILLICENT

What?

SOPHIE

You heard me.

MILLICENT

Is it that obvious?

SOPHIE

It is to me. Dalton, Dalton probably knew before you did. Don't worry, the boys are all wrapped up in saving the world.

MILLICENT

Including, Mr. Townshend?

SOPHIE

Especially Mr. Townshend, I gave him the revolver. He's taken to carrying it about, wearing a trench coat, tilting his hat at a jaunty angle. I think he thinks he's Mr. Astor's secret agent bodyguard now.

MILLICENT

Oh, good lord.

SOPHIE

I know. I think your secrets safe, but I urge caution there's a lot going on inside of that man and not all of it is good.

The front bell rings.

MILLICENT

Maybe that's them.

SOPHIE

They wouldn't ring the bell.

MILLICENT

Maybe they need some help.

*The bell rings again as Millicent
and Sophie cross to the front door.*

SOPHIE

Kind of impatient. Maybe you should ask who it is.

*Millicent gets to the door.
The bell rings again. Sophie and
Millicent share a look.*

MILLICENT

(looking out the eye hole)

Who is it?

(recoiling)

It's, Helen Astor!

SOPHIE

No!

HELEN (OFF)

IT'S HELEN ASTOR, NOW OPEN THE DOOR!

MILLICENT

What do I do?

SOPHIE

(shrugging)

Open the door?

*Millicent opens the door and HELEN
ASTOR sweeps into the room dressed
in evening wear.*

HELEN

I've come to see Vincent. Where's that doddering old fool
of his. I half expected that he'd be getting the door?

MILLICENT

Do you mean, Mr. Dalton? Mr. Dalton passed away a little over
two tears ago.

HELEN

Really, pity. What was your name again dear?

MILLICENT

My name is Millicent.

HELEN

That's right, the one that got away. Hello Sophie you're looking well. Where is Vincent?

MILLICENT

He's not here, Mrs. Astor.

HELEN

Well, where is he?

MILLICENT

I'm not really sure, Mrs. Astor.

HELEN

Well, when will he be back? I need to drape him on my arm and be respectable for the evening.

MILLICENT

I don't know, Mrs. Astor.

HELEN

You don't know much do you? So, I'll wait. Who wants to make me a drink? Well, don't everybody jump at once!

SOPHIE

What can I get you, Mrs. Astor.

HELEN

Martini.

Helen removes her coat, hat and gloves heading into the sitting room. Dropping it all in a chair. Millicent and Sophie nervously follow her in. Sophie goes to the bar and starts making her martini.

HELEN

Can't imagine why Vincent wants to spend all his time here?

SOPHIE

I wonder.

HELEN

I'm not so bad. Where's the other one? Tewkesberry?

MILLICENT

Mr. Townshend is with Mr. Astor.

Sophie hands Mrs. Astor her drink.

HELEN

So which one of you is fucking my husband? Or perhaps he isn't able, Is that the case?

Sophie and Millicent stand by speechless. Helen takes a drink, spit take. Sophie rushes for a napkin

MILLICENT

Are you alright?

HELEN

Are you trying to kill me?

SOPHIE

(handing Helen a napkin)

I'm a cook, not a bartender.

HELEN

(to Millicent)

Get me some water.

(to Sophie)

You did that on purpose. How hard can it be, it's Gin.

SOPHIE

Maybe, I mixed up the ratio of Gin to Vermouth. Like I said I'm not a bar tender. I don't drink Gin. We mostly drink Irish around here. You know who made a good martini, Dalton.

MILLICENT

Here's your water.

HELEN

It's you isn't it?

MILLICENT

I'm sorry.

HELEN

You're the one fucking my husband.

MILLICENT

I can assure you --

HELEN

Did you know that on our wedding night, he wasn't able to perform. He came down with the Mumps on our honeymoon, honest to God. The Mumps, can you believe it? He was never much good after that, but I'm sure you know all about it. I guess, I'll make my own drink.

*Millicent's face is scarlet red
from anger and embarrassment*

SOPHIE

I think you've had enough fun, Mrs. Astor.

*Helen gets up and tossing the glass
and the napkin to Millicent. She
starts for the bar. Sophie steps in
her path.*

HELEN

What do you think you're doing? Get out of my way!

SOPHIE

Mr. Astor isn't here and I think it would be best if you left now. We will be more than happy to tell him you were here upon his return.

HELEN

I'll be having a drink and waiting for my husband.

SOPHIE

I don't think so.

HELEN

How do you think you're going to stop me?

SOPHIE

Physically.

HELEN

I should have broken you in properly when you were at Ferncliff.

SOPHIE

The way you broke Geraldine in?

The front door opens. Astor, Roosevelt, Field and Townshend enter. Townshend starts taking their coats. They hear the voices.

HELEN

You don't know what you're talking about?

SOPHIE

I know that you raped her with a rolling pin and I know that she hung herself after you had tired of her and put her out.

HELEN

You little bitch!

Helen tries to shove her way past Sophie. Sophie shoves her back. Hard.

How dare you put your hands on me.

SOPHIE

You take another step forward and I'll put you on the ground.

MILLICENT

Sophie!

HELEN

I'll have you thrown out of here on your ass.

Astor, Field and Roosevelt enter the sitting room. Sophie hasn't moved. Astor looking over his mail.

ASTOR

(entering not looking up)

Hello, Helen.

HELEN

(startled)

Vincent, Kermit, Marshall I haven't seen you all in ages.

There is an awkward silence. Astor looking through his mail. Sophie still hasn't moved and is intent on preventing Helen from moving one way or the other.

FIELD

I guess we're not running in the same circles.

HELEN

Vincent, would you mind calling off your bitch. I suggest that you have her put down. I think she's rabid, look at her absolutely foaming at the mouth.

Sophie starts to step toward Helen.

ASTOR

Sophie, Millicent, that will be all.

*Sophie breaks off and joins
Millicent as they start to exit.*

HELEN

No, Vincent I demand that you fire both of these ungrateful trolls immediately.

ASTOR

(not looking up)

No.

HELEN

What do you mean, no?

ASTOR

I mean, no.

HELEN

She put her hands on me. She assaulted me!

ASTOR

(looking up)

You look fine to me, not a mark on you. I'll have to have a word with her about that for the next time. Thank you ladies. Please send Mr. Townshend in.

MILLICENT

Good to have you home, Mr. Astor.

Sophie and Millicent exit.

ASTOR

Fellows, the bar is open. Help yourselves. What can I do for you, Helen?

HELEN

Kermit, would you be a dear and make me a martini and you will fire them both.

ASTOR

What do you want Helen, we're busy here?

HELEN

Doing what, giving more of your Daddy's money away?

ASTOR

(back to his mail)

I'd rather give it away then watch you spend it. What do you want?

HELEN

I want to take you out of here for tonight. I want my husband on my arm.

ASTOR

So, you need a respectable date?

HELEN

Something like that, now how about that drink? Mutt and Jeff can keep me company while you change your clothes.

ASTOR

I'm very busy right now.

Townshend enters with another stack of mail.

HELEN

The Butler.

TOWNSHEND

Mrs. Astor.

HELEN

My drink?

ASTOR

Kermit, if you don't mind. Would you make Helen one for the road. I'm not going with you, so after you've had your drink and finished terrorizing my staff and friends, please be on your way.

TOWNSHEND

Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Rhinelander have both telephoned and are on the way.

HELEN

So, you're having a little party with the boys. It's a wonder that people don't start talking about you. What is it that you boys do around here anyway?

ROOSEVELT

(handing her a drink)

I can promise you that it's nothing as scandalous as what you've got going on.

HELEN

Pity.

FIELD

We play a lot of poker.

HELEN

Well, to hell with the party, the least you could do is invite me to poker.

ASTOR

I know that this has been a lot of fun for you. God knows, it's great seeing you, but it's time for you to run along.

HELEN

Are you going to force me to start one of those screaming fights that will be horribly embarrassing for you and your friends. You will fire those two nit-wits and you will go change your cloths.

ASTOR

If you want to create a scene, fine, but do it quickly. You understand our arrangement. You stay at Ferncliff and do whatever it is that you do out there and I stay here and do my business. You must be under some false impression that I'm a cuckold. Nor am I a dog that obeys when you decide that you need me for something. If you want to change the arrangement, that's fine I'll divorce you.

HELEN

You couldn't bare the scandal. You wouldn't dare --

ASTOR

I know you like the way things are.

HELEN

I'm not kidding --

ASTOR

You like being Mrs. Astor? God knows you like the money. Finish your drink and get out.

HELEN

Do you really think you're going to put me out that easily?

Astor crosses to the desk and puts down the mail. Roosevelt hands him a drink.

ASTOR

Townshend, will you show Mrs. Astor to the door and as soon as Bill and Win arrive send them in here.

HELEN

You have got to be kidding.

TOWNSHEND

Mrs. Astor --

HELEN

You lay a paw on me I'll make you wish that it was you laying in the cold ground and not that old Irish fool --

ASTOR

(angry)

That's it.

Vincent sets his drink own crosses to Helen, takes the drink out of her hand sets it down, grabs her by the arm and starts leading her to the door.

HELEN

What do you think you're doing?

ASTOR

(stopping at the chair)

Pick up your things?

HELEN

No.

ASTOR

Fine. Townshend, if you please.

Vincent continues to take Helen to the front door. Townshend picks up Mrs. Astor's things and follows to the door.

HELEN

You're hurting me.

ASTOR

Please.

*They get to the front door,
Townshend opens it and Vincent
shoves her out the front door.
He takes her coat from Townshend.*

ASTOR

(throwing her coat)

Please do not come here again. I will be instructing the staff not to admit you.

(throwing her gloves and hat)

Have a nice evening.

*Vincent slams the door in her face.
Sophie and Millicent poke their
heads out of the kitchen as Astor
heads back to the sitting room with
Townshend in tow.*

Everyone alright?

FIELD

Jesus, Vincent.

TOWNSHEND

Anything you need, sir?

ASTOR

Perhaps that revolver. Have we heard from Donovan yet?

TOWNSHEND

He hasn't called, Sir.

ASTOR

Try David Bruce.

TOWNSHEND

Very good, Sir.

*Townshend exits passing Millicent
who is on the way in. Field and
Roosevelt lean on the bar watching
her and Vincent interact.*

MILLICENT

I'm very sorry about that Mr. Astor. She arrived at the door.
I didn't know what to do.

ASTOR

No one ever does.

MILLICENT

How was the trip?

ASTOR

Almost as frustrating as my return home.

MILLICENT

Sorry to hear that. Sophie is asking if you want her to
prepare anything or are you planning on going out for a late
dinner?

ASTOR

What's she got in mind?

MILLICENT

Sandwiches.

*Astor looks over at Roosevelt and
Field.*

ASTOR

What do you think?

FIELD & ROOSEVELT

Um, I don't know... Maybe we should --

MILLICENT

(to Field and Roosevelt)

REALLY GOOD SANDWICHES!

ROOSEVELT

Sandwiches sound great.

FIELD

Bill and Win will want to hear everything, so.

ASTOR

(grabbing mail off the table)

She's already making the sandwiches isn't she?

MILLICENT

She is.

ASTOR

(looking down)

Yes, tell her thank you.

MILLICENT

I'll let everyone know.

Field and Roosevelt are staring.

Anything else, anything at all?

ASTOR

(looking up)

I don't think ...

Vincent is lost in Millicent's eyes. They hold one another for a beat. Vincent recovers himself. Millicent blushes.

I think we're fine.

MILLICENT

(embarrassed)

Thank you, Sir.

She's gone. Roosevelt and Field are locked on Astor. Wry smiles on their face's.

ASTOR

What?

ROOSEVELT

When are you going to do something about that?

ASTOR

About what? Have a seat gentlemen, you're making me nervous.

FIELD

(indicating Millicent)

About that, her!

ASTOR

(sitting)

How do you know that I haven't already?

FIELD

Have you?

ROOSEVELT

He hasn't. You haven't have you?

ASTOR

Of course not.

The front bell rings. Townshend appears out of the kitchen, crosses through the dining room and to the front door, opens it. Winthrop Aldrich and Bill Rhineland. They hand Townshend their coats and hats.

TOWNSHEND

The other gentlemen are in sitting room.

ALDRICH

Thank you, Townshend.

RHINELANDER

We'll see our way in.

TOWNSHEND

Very good.

Townshend heads off with the coats as Aldrich and Rhineland head in to the sitting room.

ROOSEVELT

Hello boys!

RHINELANDER

What did we miss?

ROOSEVELT

You've just missed Helen Astor and the all the excitement that she brings into the room.

ALDRICH

Really?

ASTOR

Make your own drinks. Food is on the way.

*Astor hold up the newspaper.
It's the front page of the New York
Times. A photograph of Jessie Owens
and his medals.*

ALDRICH

According to wire services Hitler wouldn't shake Owens hand.

ROOSEVELT

Cant think of anything better than Owens taking down the
master race while wearing an American flag.

FIELD

Hitler wouldn't shake Jessie Owens hand? Half the people in
this country wouldn't shake his hand.

ALDRICH

Hitler is too busy shaking hands with Coca Cola.

FIELD

What does that mean?

ALDRICH

Someone high up in the administration let it be known that
it didn't look good for Coca Cola to be selling its number
one soft drink to the Nazi's. So rather than lose the revenue
and the new emerging market, they created a new drink.

RHINELANDER

Not something so innately identifiable to America.

ALDRICH

And Fanta Orange soda was born.

RHINELANDER

There are pictures of Hitler drinking it at the Olympics.
They created a whole new product specifically to sell to
Germany.

ASTOR

(lowering the paper)

Hitler marched three battalions out of Germany. Re-occupied
the Rhineland and the French did nothing. The world did
nothing. No one really thinks that he's going to stop there.

ALDRICH

You know that there are those who want a return to Isolationism. Think our involvement in the last war was a huge mistake and caused our current economic problems.

ASTOR

It's nonsense --

RHINELANDER

Convince Senator Nye of that.

ALDRICH

The problem is there is no declared conflict with Germany. We've got Coca Cola making them god damn soft drinks, for crissakes.

RHINELANDER

Congress keeps amending what little law there is on this anyway. So, there is no precedent, no regulation and no law. Any which way the wind blows. It's the wild west.

ASTOR

How much money do you think Union Bank and the rest have put into Hitler's pockets?

ALDRICH

Enough to rebuild his army, build an air force and buy influence.

ASTOR

Do we know everyone who is doing business with the Nazi's.

ALDRICH

By name, corporation and company.

ASTOR

Good. There will be a reckoning.

The front bell rings. Dalton heads to the door. Donovan enters with Bruce.

Sophie and Millicent come out of the kitchen carrying trays into the sitting room.

DONOVAN

Perfect timing.

TOWNSHEND

Shall I take your coats, gentlemen?

BRUCE

We'll just follow the food.

Townshend takes their coats.

TOWNSHEND

Very good, Sir.

Donovan and Bruce head into the sitting room. Donovan is tense.

ASTOR

Help yourselves, gentlemen. What is it, Bill?

DONOVAN

I just got the call and rushed over. Germany has signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan.

FIELD

Enlighten me?

ROOSEVELT

Germany is trying to figure out how to carve up the Soviet Union and it seems that they've decided to share it with Japan.

DONOVAN

(surprised)

That's exactly right.

ROOSEVELT

I pay attention.

DONOVAN

Look, it works for them politically as well.

ASTOR

Sure it does, Germany and Japan can say that they are fighting Communist aggression and all that.

ALDRICH

There are people in this country will eat that up with a spoon.

RHINELANDER

And until very recently, you would have been one of them.

ALDRICH

My thinking has evolved on this issue.

DONOVAN

Here's the worst of it, Germany has bombed Guernica in support of the Fascists in Spain.

BRUCE

They bombed civilians with no regard.

DONOVAN

This is just a test run for his air force. How did it go with the President?

ASTOR

He's listening.

ROOSEVELT

Just because you're yelling at him about the Jews doesn't mean he's listening --

DONOVAN

The Jews? Again with the Jews, Vincent? We've got to present the President with the big picture and you cannot continue to go in there and berate him on behalf of the Jews. We've got to give him the best result of our analysis.

ASTOR

That's exactly what I'm doing, Bill.

ALDRICH

You told him what we've uncovered in banking?

ROOSEVELT

We did, it's being looked at by both DOJ and the FBI.

ASTOR

I'm getting tired of watching men like Bush and Harriman and the rest of all those Yale pricks getting wealthy at the expense of the world.

ALDRICH

Vincent, what more can you do? You have unfettered access to the President of the United States, but you can't make his decisions for him.

FIELD

We did get the official green light to establish the back channel, Washington to London MI-5 through Somerset.

DONOVAN

We're doing that anyway. Look, we're gathering data. Forming best opinions and we are getting our intelligence to the President. We have been good at keeping a very low profile. I think we keep it that way.

ASTOR

Is there are a problem?

DONOVAN

Not yet, but we need to keep ourselves secret from the Communists, Fascists, Nazi's and sadly some members of our own government. There is no doubt that we have German agents among us.

ASTOR

What about the FBI?

DONOVAN

Do you trust that little son of a bitch, Hoover, cause I don't. He's been sniffing around us for years, something off with him. I don't want him in the loop until DOJ brings him in and that's separate from us.

ASTOR

(holding up the paper)

Agreed. Look at what they're doing. Exporting Fascism as the more comfortable political system as they road test their blueprint for war in Spain.

RHINELANDER

The Olympics are a great example of their propagandized new public image, A new stadium in Berlin. The new Germany and America paid for almost all of it.

ASTOR

They just rolled into the Rhineland and no one said a word.

ROOSEVELT

The world blinked and now the map is different.

ASTOR

No one in Europe wants this war and everyone seems willing to appease the Nazi's. We're seeing that in the region and all the way to London. What happens when they can't be appeased?

ROOSEVELT

Marshall, you were right all along. It's funny hats and secret handshakes after all. I'm making another drink.

Roosevelt, Aldrich, Field and Bruce head to the bar. Rhinelanders excuses himself. Donovan and Astor stay seated.

DONOVAN

(conspiratorially)

It's real now, Vincent.

ASTOR

I know.

DONOVAN

It's not just dinner parties anymore. I've been asked to work on this full time.

ASTOR

By who?

DONOVAN

You know who? Kermit is not going to be on the team. I'm taking Bruce.

ASTOR

Am I on that team, Bill?

DONOVAN

You have a special relationship with the President, besides, you don't want to work for me.

ASTOR

I don't want to work for you but I plan on working with you.

DONOVAN

Yes, of course, of course.

ASTOR

And you're sure there's no place for Kermit?

DONOVAN

I can't depend on him, can you? I can't risk it. If it becomes a government agency. --

ASTOR

If? Are we at cross purposes here?

DONOVAN

Of course not!

ASTOR

Do me a favor, let me know before you put the uniforms on.

DONOVAN

Hell, you'll probably know before I do.

The lights fade to black.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE EL MOROCCO - WORLD ON FIRE - 1937

*In the darkness the band starts to play. Lights come up in the El Morocco. Marion sings with the band. Adam watching everything from his perch behind the bar while speaking to Aldrich and Rhinelander.**Roosevelt and Field arrive and Adam comes out from behind the bar and takes them down front to their table as Marion finishes her song.*

ROOSEVELT

Been waiting long?

ALDRICH

Ten minutes, Vincent?

ROOSEVELT

He and Donovan are on their way back from Washington. I opted out, deciding to start day drinking instead.

RHINELANDER

Oh, goody.

FIELD

In point of fact, we weren't invited into the meeting.

ROOSEVELT

That, too.

FIELD

Bruce, went with them.

ROOSEVELT

He got to go, I have jealousy.

RHINELANDER

Did you see the wires? They're starting to carve up the pie. Hitler is saying that he'd be satisfied with the Sudetenland.

FIELD

And Chamberlin is buying it?

ALDRICH

Britain is in complete disarray after the abdication and their Prime Minister, Chamberlin isn't helping any.

RHINELANDER

Meanwhile Goring orders more planes for the Luftwaffe.

ROOSEVELT

Hitler will never be satisfied until he has the whole of Europe under his shiny Jackboot.

The Waiter arrives with the drinks.

ALDRICH

Spain is in complete disarray as well. Italy just sank a Russian merchant ship and the Japanese have attacked Nanking and Canton while they occupy Peking.

ROOSEVELT

Well, Marshall it looks like were all going to be wearing those silly hats that you're so fond of, it looks like mine will be an Army cap.

FIELD

The Army?

ROOSEVELT

Yes, the Army. I was Army in the last one. My father was Army. Calvary, if you'll remember.

FIELD

No thanks, not me. I've done my time. They'll have to fight this war without me.

ROOSEVELT

You know what this means, Marshall? No funny hats for you at all.

FIELD

Well, at least not of the military persuasion.

ROOSEVELT

There you go.

RHINELANDER

What about, Vincent?

ROOSEVELT

He was Navy. He won't go back. He wants something else.

RHINELANDER

What if it's the same thing that Bill Donovan wants?

ROOSEVELT

Carving up the pie again.

RHINELANDER

The world keeps spinning my friend, whether we pay attention or not.

ROOSEVELT

Amen to that, brother. Yes, by all means pay attention.

FIELD

You're in a foul mood.

ROOSEVELT

I know.

*Adam arrives with waiters in tow,
carrying champagne and glasses.*

ADAM

From Marion and the house.

ROOSEVELT

Thank you, Adam. My mood may brighten yet.

FIELD

Thank Marion for us and we'd be delighted if she'd join us.

ADAM

You got it.

ROOSEVELT

Adam, you pull up a chair too!

ADAM

Thank you. Are we expecting Mr. Astor this evening?

ROOSEVELT

We're expecting him, not sure if he's gonna show.

ADAM

(tense)

Got it.

FIELD

(noticing)

Adam, you alright?

ADAM

Yeah, no, it's nothing.

Marion arrives Adam pulls out her chair for her.

MARION

Thank you, sweetie.

ADAM

Of course, well enjoy the champagne.

Adam heads back to the bar.

FIELD

He okay?

MARION

His whole family is in Poland.

RHINELANDER

That's tough.

MARION

So, the Knights of the Roundtable, but we are missing Arthur, Lancelot's here, Galahad. So, what did I interrupt?

RHINELANDER

This one is talking about going back into the Army and this one is gonna stay a civilian and I haven't said.

MARION

So, what about it?

RHINELANDER

I'm with Marshall, I did my time in the last one. The war to end all wars, not bloody likely. Besides, I'm too old. War is a young man's game.

ROOSEVELT

I'll go back in a heartbeat. These Nazi's have given me a new sense of purpose.

MARION

Poor Lancelot, always looking for a fight.

FIELD

You may not know that our man Kermit here went and fought with the British in the Great War. Started out in the Middle East with the British and then joined the American Expeditionary Forces and fought in France. Won his share of medals too.

MARION

Well done, Lancelot.

ROOSEVELT

(smoking)

Daddy was a Rough-Rider, after all. Daddy built the Panama Canal, after all. Daddy was President, after all. I had to bloody well do something. After France, I made the single most important decision of my life.

MARION

And what was that?

ALDRICH

To devote your life to alcohol?

ROOSEVELT

I decided that I was never going to do anything that I didn't want to do ever again.

MARION

How did that work out for you?

ROOSEVELT

Ridiculously well, actually. Course, it does help to be rich and a Roosevelt and the son of a President, Cousin of "THE" President.

FIELD

Here we go.

ROOSEVELT

It's a lot of pressure actually, but as for war against those bastards in Germany, I'll go back and fight in the blinking of an eye.

MARION

Easy Lancelot, you'll have your chance I'm sure. Where's his highness?

FIELD

On a train from Washington. Should have been here by now.

RHINELANDER

Must have caught a later train.

Adam arrives with another bottle of champagne.

ADAM

Boys are asking if you want to do another one?

MARION

In a minute.

FIELD

Adam, sit.

Adam pulls up a chair, Marion waves a waiter over to open the bottle.

MARION

Tell, Marshall.

ADAM

Aw, I don't want to bother. The only reason I was asking after Mr. Astor was he said if I was ever in a spot, you know, like that.

FIELD

If Vincent said he'd help, then you can depend on me to do what needs to be done in his absence.

ROOSEVELT

You know that goes for everybody here.

FIELD

Your family?

ADAM

Yeah, the parents, two sisters, little brother.

ALDRICH

Where are they, exactly?

ADAM

Poland, Warsaw area. Been following the papers? Them Nazi's are exporting their Fascist bullshit in all directions. If I don't get em out now, then... I don't know.

ALDRICH

Is it money?

ADAM

It's everything, you know. Everything, I don't know. Doesn't seem like there's a lot of time, you know.

FIELD

I will bring it to Vincent's immediate attention.

ALDRICH

(producing a card)

Give me a call, I think I might be able to be of some help in a couple area's.

ADAM

I didn't expect, Thank you --

ROOSEVELT

(to Adam)

We got you.

MARION

Now, I'll sing on the condition that you will all still be here when I'm done.

ROOSEVELT

You may rest assured of that, my lady. Sing us something cheery as we stare into the abyss.

MARION

I'll see what I can do because, after all these are such cheery times.

David Bruce enters the club, spots the party down front. Marion heads to the stage.

ADAM

Mr. Bruce, let me get you a glass.

BRUCE

Thank you, Adam. Gentlemen.

Adam leaves for the bar.

FIELD

Where are Vincent and Bill?

BRUCE

They're not coming.

ROOSEVELT

What do you mean?

BRUCE

I mean they're not coming. It didn't go well.

RHINELANDER

I thought we were all on the same page, what happened?

BRUCE

Two untenable positions came to light in our meeting with the President. It was uncomfortable.

ALDRICH

Uncomfortable for who?

BRUCE

Everyone in the room.

*Adam is back, pouring Mr. Bruce
a glass of champagne.*

ROOSEVELT

Spill it.

BRUCE

(nervously)

Vincent and Bill had different ideas about the direction of the work. They argued vehemently and in front of the President...

ROOSEVELT
SPILL IT!

BRUCE
Vincent felt blind-sided and betrayed by the decision to work through the Army moving forward.

ALDRICH
When did we decide to do that?

FIELD
Exactly.

ALDRICH
Who made that decision?

BRUCE
The Army --

ROOSEVELT
And?

BRUCE
General Donovan.

ROOSEVELT
General Donovan? When did that happen?

BRUCE
Recently.

FIELD
I knew we should have gone with him --

ROOSEVELT
Wouldn't have made a bit of difference. That pie had already been carved up, isn't that right David?

BRUCE
It's not like that.

ROOSEVELT
Oh, but it is. You went behind Vincent's back and set it up with the Army and you left Vincent out in the cold. Face it boys, we aren't invited to the party.

BRUCE
So, we'll be working through the Army. What's the difference?

ROOSEVELT

What's the difference? The difference is that we are no longer an independent intelligence gathering agency, we are now an extension of the military and you did it behind Vincent's back.

BRUCE

You're overreacting --

ROOSEVELT

But you came out okay, didn't you David? Oak leafs? Birds? Let's drop the pretense. You knew that it was going this way a year ago.

BRUCE

It's nothing personal, Kermit.

ROOSEVELT

It's completely personal David and you know that. You're a politician, that's why this is good for you.

BRUCE

Let me explain --

ROOSEVELT

Is there a place for Vincent? For any of us? Or is the pie already all gone?

Marion starts to sing, a nice up-tempo number.

BRUCE

I'd like to explain about that, it's too early --

ROOSEVELT

Explain it to me later, the lady is singing.

Roosevelt shuts him down. Pours himself another glass of champagne. The men drink in silence and watch the stage. The lights fade on the El Morocco. The only light on the stage is a follow spot on Marion and back light on the band. Marion finishes the song with a flourish, as we...

BLACKOUT.

DINNER THIRTY-THREE - THE LAST SUPPER - 1938

*In the darkness SFX -
15 seconds of radio. Lights up in
the dining room. Dinner is in full
swing. Townshend pours the wine as
Millicent clears plates and Sophie
serves the main course.*

*At the table Dorothy Thompson,
Christa Winsloe, Constance Morgan,
Roosevelt, Astor, Field, Aldrich,
Rhineland, Maugham, Doubleday,
Bruce and Donovan both wearing Army
uniforms. Donovan, a Brigadier
General and Bruce, a Lt. Colonel.*

CHRISTA

When do you leave for India, Somerset?

MAUGHAM

Quick trip to London, settle some old business then straight
away to India.

FIELD

It's a book, isn't it?

DOUBLEDAY

It had better be, or Mr. Maugham is going to have to come up
with a rather large sum of money to repay his advance and his
expenses.

MAUGHAM

I won't disappoint.

CONSTANCE

So, what's it about?

MAUGHAM

My book?

CONSTANCE

Of course, your book.

MAUGHAM

I've enjoyed my time in America. The main characters will
Americans. Ex-pat Americans living in Paris.

CONSTANCE

So, it's about America?

CHRISTA

Another book about a rich American man, just what we need.

MAUGHAM

No, he's poor or comes from working class, want's to be rich or better yet, he was rich and he turned his back on it all. I haven't decided. It takes place in Europe. In Paris.

ALDRICH

Why would he do that? It doesn't make sense.

MAUGHAM

It doesn't make sense to you. Perhaps my character, Larry, I'm calling him Larry. He has found something he values more than money, Something that transcends the material.

FIELD

What would that be? Religion, love?

MAUGHAM

Maybe both. I don't think its about religion and I think absolutely everything is about love. A spirituality he brought back from India, Nepal.

ROOSEVELT

Let me guess, an ambulance driver in the last war?

MAUGHAM

Well, we write what we know.

DOROTHY

What's the matter Vincent, you're awfully quiet?

ASTOR

I was just thinking about all the dinners we've had at this table, over the years. I was thinking about Dalton and Somerset's character Larry, I'd love to read that book.

MAUGHAM

I shall deliver a copy to you personally.

ROOSEVELT

Feeling sorry for yourself in front of the uniforms. It won't do. We're all good sports here, all on the same team here, aren't we General Donovan?

FIELD

Leave it.

DOROTHY

(changing the subject)

Makes me wonder what other business you have in London before leaving for India when the world is on the brink of war?

MAUGHAM

You have earned your title. No Dorothy, Nelson is paying for my trip to India, because I'm writing a book. Besides what would I be doing for England in India.

DOROTHY

Let me think ... Japan, China, Russia. I'm sure you'll keep yourself busy.

(to Donovan and Bruce)

Don't think that I don't see you two down there in your brand new uniforms.

ASTOR

What are you calling yourselves?

DONOVAN

We're still very early in the process.

ROOSEVELT

You've got a title don't you, you sanctimonious prick? Or is that classified too?

DONOVAN

You can call me Brigadier General, or Sir.

ROOSEVELT

I'm not back in uniform yet.

DONOVAN

They're calling me "The Coordinator of Information."

ROOSEVELT

What are they going to call you David? They don't just hand out those oak leaves for nothing, Lt. Colonel.

BRUCE

They're calling me his assistant.

ROOSEVELT

Silver Oak Leaf on your epaulets for being his assistant.

DOROTHY

(staring daggers at Donovan)

So, Vincent what part will you play in all of this seeing as how this was all your invention any way?

CONSTANCE

I wrote my first letter to you from Moscow a decade ago.

FIELD

This is the question at hand.

DONOVAN

Still very much in the planning stages.

DOROTHY

(to Vincent)

You're not part of the planning stages.

ASTOR

Apparently not.

DOROTHY

(to Roosevelt)

What about you?

ROOSEVELT

Definitely not.

DOROTHY

I see. So, what will you be doing Vincent, while the General and the Colonel are in the planning stages?

DONOVAN

Vincent will continue his work in New York.

DOROTHY

Is that what you're going to be doing Vincent?

ASTOR

Apparently, so.

DOROTHY

I'm curious as to what ONI and G2 think about all this, let alone the FBI - hell, the Congress? Tell me Somerset, what does MI-5 think about all this? I know I can at least get a straight answer out of you.

MAUGHAM

I'm sure I don't know.

DOROTHY

What do you think, Vincent? What does Naval Intelligence have to say about all of this?

DONOVAN

ONI hasn't been read in on this, we are a covert --

DOROTHY

(curtly)

Excuse me, I was speaking to Mr. Astor.

DONOVAN

Maybe you should direct those questions to me.

DOROTHY

If you don't mind Mr. Donovan, if I ask my good friend a question in his own home, I expect him to be able to answer. You really are, what is it that you called him?

DONOVAN

A sanctimonious prick --

DOROTHY

Thank you, what he said.

DONOVAN

That's about enough.

DOROTHY

Not nearly, enough.

ASTOR

Dorothy, leave it. The General is right. You should ask him. I'm completely in the dark. Though, I do think it's a keen trick on how you are able to do this with no operational oversight of any kind.

MAUGHAM

Complete upheaval in London. Anthony Eden resigned in protest to the latest appeasement.

BRUCE

Who's taking his place?

ROOSEVELT

Don't, you know?

MAUGHAM
(*nervously*)

Lord Halifax.

CHRISTA
German troops have occupied Austria, Italy is bombing
Barcelona.

MAUGHAM
Chamberlain stood in the Parliament and declared that England
and France are not bound in defense of Czechoslovakia.

ALDRICH
They sign The Munich Pact and then they turn around and
occupy another country.

FIELD
Churchill stood in the House of Commons calling the Munich
accords a betrayal of the Czech people.

MAUGHAM
A disaster of the first magnitude.

CHRISTA
They tried to arrest and expel 17,000 Polish Jews back to
Poland. Only, Poland won't let them back over the border.

RHINELANDER
Where are they?

CHRISTA
In a no man's land on the Polish-German border.

*Millicent and Sophie exit the
kitchen and descend on the table,
clearing plates refilling water.*

RHINELANDER
At Evian, The League of Nations addressed the fact that
no country will accept the Jews fleeing Germany and Austria.

CONSTANCE
Including this one.

DOUBLEDAY
My God, where can they go?

CONSTANCE
What's the solution?

ROOSEVELT

The creation of a Jewish state.

DONOVAN

That's far fetched.

ASTOR

It's not. What's the other option? Extermination? No nation on Earth will take them?

DONOVAN

GOD DAMN IT, Vincent. It is not the responsibility of the United States of America to defend Jews in Germany and Europe or any where else in the world for that matter. We have our own Jews here. Our only concern is for the Security of the citizens of the United States and their interests.

ASTOR

Some of those citizens are Jews with families in Europe.

DONOVAN

This is the whole thing. This is why you don't have a seat at the table. The President of the United States does not have time to argue with you over a few displaced Jews!

Millicent and Sophie disappear back into the kitchen. Townshend rounds the table doing drinks.

ASTOR

A few displaced Jews? What did you say Christa?

CHRISTA

17,000.

ASTOR

How many Jews in Germany, Austria and Poland seven or eight million. How many in Russia?

DONOVAN

Can't save them all. There are always going to be casualties.

ASTOR

So, if we have to have casualties it's better that they're people like Adam's parents and brothers and sisters.

DONOVAN

Luckily they knew somebody, right?

ASTOR

What about the other ten million? What happens after Europe falls? England? Russia? What happens when they've devoured everything and everyone in their path?

DONOVAN

You know we are not ready for war.

ASTOR

Then we had better get ready.

DONOVAN

Which is why this is going to be the last one of these dinners David and I can attend, We are being dispatched to England in the next few days.

ROOSEVELT

You're just full of news, aren't you.

DONOVAN

We are meeting with some of Somerset's contacts and making some introductions to MI-5. David will go to France.

ROOSEVELT

Well, you're finally going to get to do a little travelling after all, eh David?

DONOVAN

After London, I'll go to Bern, Switzerland to meet with Allen Dulles.

DOROTHY

That sounds a lot further along than the planning stages.

ASTOR

(smiling)

Yes, it does.

DONOVAN

Vincent, this is a military operation now. There's no place for you in that.

ASTOR

Seems like you made sure of that.

Astor raises his glass.

I drink to your success.

DONOVAN

That's good of you.

ASTOR

To the inevitable future.

*Everyone raises their glass, drink
as the lights ...*

FADE TO BLACK.

THE EL MOROCCO - ONE MORE ONCE - 1939

*In the darkness the band starts to
cook. A follow spot blazes on to
catch Marion as she starts to sing.
A slow ballad that builds into an
anthem and then coming back full
circle into a haunting ballad once
again. Marion finishes her song as
the spot iris's out.*

*Marion comes off the stage.
Adam takes her hand. Offers her a
cigarette, Lights it for her. She
gently kisses him on the head. They
share a smile and the lights...*

FADE TO BLACK.

BLITZKRIEG - IN THE END - 1939

*In the darkness SFX -
15 seconds of radio pertaining to
the Blitz on Poland.*

*Lights up in the sitting room.
We find Astor, Roosevelt and Field
sitting in the overstuffed chairs.*

*They are all in formal wear as they
were at the beginning of the play.
They are drinking Irish, as they
were at the beginning of the play.*

*Astor holds a bottle of Jamesons.
Roosevelt smokes, Field looks down
into his drink.*

Germany has invaded Poland. The war has begun. It is very late at night.

FIELD

Somerset is back from India.

ASTOR

In New York?

FIELD

No, he went straight to California.

ASTOR

Reading directly off the ticker. France and England have officially declared war on Germany

FIELD

So much for peace in our time. File that one away with the war to end all wars.

ASTOR

Platitudes for the multitudes, while the Nazi's sweep through Europe like locusts. Austria wasn't enough, Czechoslovakia wasn't enough, now Poland.

FIELD

That's done. Russia is attacking from their side and dividing the spoils with Hitler. The Communists fighting along side the Nazi's.

ASTOR

That will never last. Hitler will break that pact like he's broken every other. He'll use them until the time is right and then he will attack. It's only a matter of time before they start eating their own tails. While we sit here, bellies full, drunk and praying that it doesn't happen to us

Roosevelt laughs.

ASTOR

What's funny?

ROOSEVELT

You're right. Is that what you want to hear? I'll say it. Vincent Astor, you have been one hundred percent right about all of this every step of the way.

FIELD

What are you on about now?

ROOSEVELT

It doesn't make any difference how right you are or how much you care about the thing you're fighting for. The only thing that being right ever got anybody was being hated or made dead. All war is about two things Money or God. One or the other, sometimes both.

ASTOR

Doesn't do anything for those people on the St. Louis.

ROOSEVELT

We are really feeling sorry for ourselves today, aren't we?

ASTOR

Easy.

ROOSEVELT

Vincent, they don't care about the Jews. My cousin, your friend Franklin, the President of the United States is just another politician bought and sold and beholdng to the men who put him there. Until there is a direct threat to the Unites States or American interests and he's not going to do fucking thing about it except sit back and watch with his belly full, drunk and praying that it doesn't reach us here.

ASTOR

GODDAMMIT!

Astor spins and hurls his glass
against the wall. Silence. Lights
turn on behind doors down the hall.
The house is awake.

ROOSEVELT

You're in for it now.

Townshend is the first to appear
in his robe and slippers. Dalton's
revolver in hand.

TOWNSHEND

Are you alright, Sir?

ASTOR

I'm fine, just a fit of bad temper which I seem to be displaying more and more everyday.

Millicent and Sophie peek into the sitting room from the foyer.

FIELD

You break anything else, he's gonna shoot you.

ROOSEVELT

And you'd deserve it

ASTOR

I don't disagree. Did I wake everyone up?

TOWNSHEND

(looking into the foyer)

Yes, Sir.

ASTOR

Great. Please put that revolver away at once or I'll make you give it back to Sophie.

TOWNSHEND

Yes, Sir. Do we plan on breaking anything else this evening, Sir?

ASTOR

Hard to say.

ROOSEVELT

Keep the gun close.

Sophie and Millicent enter.

SOPHIE

(entering)

What's the matter with you? Don't you ever sleep? Acting like a child, getting in all manner of mischief with these two.

(to Townshend)

What is it with this gun? Put that away immediately before you shoot yourself or one of us. Jesus Christ, what's the matter with all of you?

ASTOR

We're in foul temper.

SOPHIE

Don't! TOWNSHEND! NOW!

Townshend about jumps out of his slippers.

TOWNSHEND

I'll, be --

Townshend rushes out.

SOPHIE

Coffee?

ASTOR

No.

SOPHIE

Good, I'm having a drink.

ASTOR

You should have the gun.

Millicent enters with a broom and a dustpan. Sophie pours a whiskey.

SOPHIE

Anyone else? No, I don't want to emasculate the poor man.

ROOSEVELT

I'll participate.

ASTOR

Let me do it Millicent.

MILLICENT

I'll do it, it's no problem.

SOPHIE

(handing Roosevelt his drink)

Aren't they darling?

FIELD

Mighty fine.

Townshend enters.

SOPHIE

Here, I poured you one.

TOWNSHEND
We're doing this?

SOPHIE
We are.

FIELD
Shall we sit?

SOPHIE
Why not.

*Field drops into and is swallowed
by the chair. Looking very relaxed
and very drunk. Sophie sits on the
couch. Townshend looking at Astor
and Millicent.*

TOWNSHEND
(referring to Millicent and
Astor)
What's happening there?

SOPHIE
God only knows. So, Mr. Field and Mr. Roosevelt, no plans to
join the military or move to Washington?

ROOSEVELT
The only constant is change.

SOPHIE
Nice.

Millicent and Astor join the group.

ASTOR
(to Millicent)
Drink?

MILLICENT
Sure.

*Sophie pats the couch next to her,
Millicent sits.*

SOPHIE
So what's the rumpus?

FIELD

Kermit was castigating Vincent for his unreasonable defense of the Jews. We hadn't even gotten to the real news.

SOPHIE

Uh, oh.

Astor arriving handing Millicent a drink, sitting in one of his great chairs.

ASTOR

I suppose it just a matter of what to do next. I don't know what to do next, I really don't.

ROOSEVELT

Sophie asked the same thing and I can tell you precisely what I will be doing?

ASTOR

What would that be?

ROOSEVELT

I'm leaving for England in three days, old sport.

ASTOR

You can't be serious.

ROOSEVELT

I told you I'd go back, I told you from this very chair. Donovan and Bruce can't have all the fun, besides a state of war exists between England, France and Germany and I intend to take full advantage.

ASTOR

Have the British offered you a commission?

ROOSEVELT

Not yet, but it will be sorted by the time I get there.

FIELD

Good to have friends in high places.

ROOSEVELT

Indeed.

ASTOR

You're out of your goddamned mind.

ROOSEVELT

A great excuse to stay drunk through the entire campaign, rigors of war and all that.

ASTOR

That's what I'm afraid of.

ROOSEVELT

Vincent, in point of fact, it's really the only thing I've ever been any good at. Besides, you don't need me anymore. You should be proud of me.

ASTOR

I'm scared to death for you.

FIELD

(raising his glass)

But, we will raise our glasses to you.

*Everyone raises their whiskey.
Astor, a bit reluctantly but ...*

FIELD CONT.

To my dear friend, the Lancelot to my Galahad, in service of our Arthur, I drink to us! To our sacrifice and success. To our friendship and to our love!

ALL

(toasting)

Here! Here!

ROOSEVELT

Been saving that one, haven't you? Proud of yourself aren't you?

FIELD

Little bit.

SOPHIE

(rising)

That's it for me. Obviously everyone is staying here tonight, fair warning, breakfast will be late. Behave yourselves and don't make me come out here again.

MILLICENT

I'll be turning in as well.

ROOSEVELT

Good night, ladies.

FIELD

See you in the morning.

ASTOR

Sorry for waking you up, I'll do my best not to break anything else.

SOPHIE

See that you don't. Good night.

Sophie and Millicent exit the sitting room. Astor gets up goes for the bottle.

ASTOR

One more.

ROOSEVELT

If you insist.

ASTOR

So, what am I supposed to do?

Returning with the bottle, free pouring.

ROOSEVELT

Keep on being the annoying conscience of my cousin.

ASTOR

Christ. Townshend?

TOWNSHEND

I shouldn't.

ASTOR

(pouring)

Then, you must.

FIELD

Vincent, you cant worry about things you can't control.

ASTOR

Are you kidding, that's all I do?

FIELD

This thing is out of your hands.

ROOSEVELT

And in the hands of Donovan and Bruce.

ASTOR

Jesus Christ.

ROOSEVELT

I know.

FIELD

It's been a good run, but it looks like I'll be going back to Chicago in a few months myself.

ROOSEVELT

Taking charge of the family business?

FIELD

Something like that.

ASTOR

(to Townshend)

It looks like it's you and me, my friend.

TOWNSHEND

Well, I'd been meaning to speak to you, Sir. You see I've had an offer.

A stunned silence. The men look at each.

ASTOR

An offer? Jesus, from ... You're kidding me, right.

TOWNSHEND

(giggling)

Yes, Sir.

Breaking into a guffaw that's infectious and everyone in the room is belly laughing, coughing and snorting, tears running down their cheeks.

SOPHIE (OFFSTAGE)

WILL YOU SHUT THE HELL UP AND GO TO SLEEP. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? YOU'RE CHILDREN! GO TO SLEEP!

They are each trying to drunkenly quiet each other.

ASTOR

You had me.

TOWNSHEND

I know!

More laughing

ASTOR

Ssh, ssh, ssh! We must be quiet. I know her. She will absolutely have our heads.

FIELD

I thought you ran this house?

ASTOR

You must be joking right, So this has gone from bad to worse. Both of my best friends leaving me. My wife holding some sort of lesbian conclave out of Ferncliff that I do believe that Dorothy Thompson and the Baroness joined.

FIELD

I think that's true, right?

TOWNSHEND

I think I'm gong to turn in, Sir. Sorry about that, Sir. Couldn't resist, think Mr. Dalton would have a good laugh over that one.

ROOSEVELT

I say so, too.

ASTOR

I was so angry that I was definitely going to start breaking things again.

TOWNSHEND

I was going to say the offer was from Ferncliff.

ASTOR

(laughing)

Oh, my God!

TOWNSHEND

But I couldn't keep a straight face, I couldn't get it out without laughing

They stifle their laughter.

ASTOR

Well done.

TOWNSHEND

(to Roosevelt & Field)

I trust you can find your rooms.

FIELD

Yes, Townshend. Thank you.

TOWNSHEND

Then good night, gentlemen. We shall see you in the morning.

Townshend exits

FIELD

That was funny. You alright?

ASTOR

I'm fine. Maybe I should go to London, Europe, see for myself.

ROOSEVELT

Come see me in London. Take me to dinner at the Savoy. You'll get to see me in a uniform, but I warn you, you're going to want one of your own.

ASTOR

I don't know, but I am feeling the need to get out on the water. Maybe a long sail would do me good.

ROOSEVELT

You'll never come to London. You'll keep the pool house working for Franklin at Ferncliff and unless he gives you something of substance you will always be bitter and jealous of Donovan because he took the job you wanted.

ASTOR

I know...

FIELD

So, do we send our boy off in style?

ASTOR

We do.

FIELD

I think we close it out at The El Morocco.

ASTOR

Alright, let's call it a night.

*The men get their feet and share a
boozy hug.*

FIELD

I am quite drunk.

ROOSEVELT

I shall get you to your room, Sir!

ASTOR

(to Roosevelt)

You're sure about all this?

ROOSEVELT

I'm sure that I don't belong here. At least out there,
there's a chance that I can do some good in the world.

ASTOR

Alright, then.

Another boozy hug.

ROOSEVELT

Come on, Galahad I've got you.

ASTOR

See you in the morning.

*Roosevelt and Field make their way
down the hall, as Astor holds back.
He looks around his sitting room,
finishes his whiskey. There is
Millicent, in her robe in the
entrance to the sitting room.
Vincent is startled.*

MILLICENT

Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.

ASTOR

I'm fine. Are you alright, what are you doing up?

MILLICENT

Can't sleep.

ASTOR

Drink?

MILLICENT

No.

*Millicent and Vincent stand across
the room from one another still
just looking at one another from
across the room, as we ...*

FADE TO BLACK.

THE EL MOROCCO - FINALE -1939

*Lights up in the club. Marion Myles
belts out a show closer as Adam is
at his post at the bar, with his
little brother in a tuxedo standing
next to him. Marion finishes her
song and the band plays us out,
through curtain call.*

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY