

JOE, ANDREI

12

START

JOE. Quite a change from your wayward youth.

ANDREI. I don't think much about those days.

JOE. You entrapped me. *(Beat.)*

ANDREI. It was just a job.

JOE. How many of those "jobs" did you do?

ANDREI. A few.

JOE. You were a contemptible little trick.

ANDREI. And you were procuring a whore, what did you expect?

JOE. I suppose now you're some sort of spy. "Attaché," indeed.

ANDREI. I am an attaché.

JOE. And what else?

ANDREI. Nothing else. A music fan.

JOE. Don't insult me. You were a tour guide working for the KGB, now you're an Embassy aide and nothing else?

ANDREI. I never worked for them. If they asked I did a job. A half a dozen times at most. If you think I had a choice, then you don't understand our system. I got out as soon as I could. I clawed my way into the diplomatic branch.

JOE. And they owed you after all the work you'd done.

ANDREI. It wasn't like that.

JOE. Oh, wasn't it.

ANDREI. I earned my way.

JOE. On your knees.

ANDREI. You don't understand. I took your advice. I used my languages. What you suggested. Fine, maybe I began that day the thing you thought I was. But I refused to remain one. And I am not one now. Don't you see? In a way I owe this life to you. *(Beat.)*

I came here to say thank you. And "I'm sorry," too. For any ... distress I may have caused. Will you accept my apology?

JOE. You honestly came here expecting that I would?

ANDREI. I didn't expect. I hoped.

JOE. Nevertheless I'll have to disappoint you. *(Beat.)*

ANDREI. Alright. Then there's only one thing left to do. *(Andrei reluctantly opens his magazine, takes out a small envelope. He hands it to Joe.)* For you. Negatives. I obtained them — well, never mind how. They're yours now. You can burn them. You can do whatever you want.

JOE. Well. This is quite a risk you're taking.

ANDREI. I feared it might be the only apology you would accept. *(Beat.)*

JOE. I see. *(Beat.)*
ANDREI. Goodbye, Joe. And thank you again. *(Andrei turns to go.)*

JOE. Andrei, wait. It's I who should be thanking you. It's not every day a subject for a column drops into one's lap. I'd been struggling to find something for the next one and now you've come to my rescue.

ANDREI. I don't understand.

JOE. "The new Soviet hypocrites." "A chance encounter on a park bench with a fickle Embassy aide — we'll just call him 'Andrei' — gave me new hope for America's not-so-distant triumph in the Cold War ... Seduced by very the pleasures of the West they claim to hate, these 'decadent-niks' — something like that — "are secretly longing not for Stalingrad but for San Francisco" ... it'll write itself. Not many do. I'm in your debt. *(Beat.)*

ANDREI. You can't.

JOE. Don't be silly, you've given me a splendid idea for the sort of piece that will be talked of all over town. Do you imagine I'm going to pass it up?

ANDREI. They'll know it's me.

JOE. Not necessarily.

ANDREI. Of course they will.

JOE. I'll only use your first name, A-N-D-R-E-I, and don't worry, I won't say anything that isn't scrupulously accurate. I liked the bit about your bosses buying hi-fis, for example.

ANDREI. Please. I'll lose my job. I'll be ruined, humiliated —

JOE. *(Shouts.)* Don't talk to me about humiliation!

ANDREI. I'm sorry. Should I say it again? I'm sorry about Moscow. That's why I brought you these — *(Joe throws the envelope back at him.)*

JOE. I don't need these. They couldn't mean less to me. It's far too late and I don't give two shits about Moscow anymore. You did your worst there and you didn't lay a glove on me. Do you know what I did with those ridiculous photographs those thugs who came to my door showed me? I took them straight to our Ambassador. Then I went to the FBI, and the State Department. I said, here it is. Here's what I've done. Here's what I am. If my career's to end, I want you to end it, not those depraved blackmailing psychopaths over there. And they didn't end it. And that is the difference between my country and yours. Christ, you disgust me. You think you've got us beat. You think you've got us on the run in Vietnam, you've got our youth running riot in the streets, naked

and stoned out of their minds, you think you're *winning*. Well, not while I'm around, thank you very much. If you don't think I won't go absolutely to the limit to defend what I hold dear, you don't know me very well, and you don't know this country very well.

ANDREI. No —

JOE. Study the history! You thought you had us fixed with Cuba but JFK, a better man by far than any your country has ever produced, outfoxed you, God bless his soul, and then after Dallas you probably thought you'd caught another break — maybe you were involved with Dallas — I scoffed at that at the time but now I'm not so sure — and you surely thought LBJ the big dumb cowboy would go easy on you but I bucked him up, by God, I stiffened his spine, and even if he's not man enough to finish the job, somebody else will, Nixon will, he will burn you bastards out of the jungles and we will win there, there and everywhere, God knows what miserable filthy tricks you'll stoop to next, but we will match you stunt for stunt and *we will win*. So fuck Moscow, sir. And please enjoy your final afternoon at your Embassy or in the record shops or however you choose to spend it. (*Beat.*)

ANDREI. I suppose I cannot stop you.

JOE. No, you cannot.

ANDREI. My sister — (*Joe shrugs. Andrei goes. Joe is alone. The set changes around him to his study.*)

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