

YOUNG MAN. No. Maybe something to do with my sister, I don't know.

JOE. And you have no appeal in the matter?

YOUNG MAN. Of course not.

JOE. Barbaric country. You'd like America.

YOUNG MAN. I would like to go there. It's impossible, of course.

JOE. Someday, when your Soviet masters give up on this idiotic "experiment" and rejoin the civilized world — assuming of course we haven't already blasted each other into clouds of radioactive vapor — you can come, and I'll show you Washington.

YOUNG MAN. How would you introduce me? To your friends?

JOE. As my linguist.

YOUNG MAN. Are you free in America? More than here?

JOE. Oh my God, yes. Are you joking?

YOUNG MAN. I mean, about this. *(He indicates the two of them, the bed.)*

JOE. Oh. No. With that it's much the same. *(Beat.)*

YOUNG MAN. I'd like to see Washington. And the Grand Canyon.

JOE. Not convenient to one another, unfortunately, but they should both be seen, and in the company of a knowledgeable guide. The Grand Canyon I don't know much about, but nobody knows Washington like me. It's my territory. Everyone knows me, everyone fears me, so if you're with me, you are guaranteed a good table at restaurants.

YOUNG MAN. Why do they fear you?

JOE. I simply have a well-deserved reputation for speaking my mind, loudly. Have you heard of Joe McCarthy?

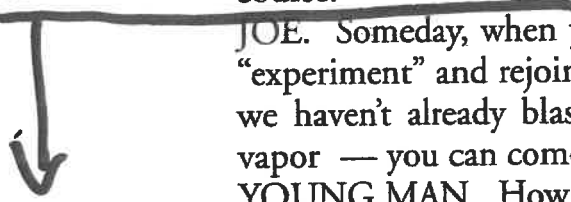
YOUNG MAN. The fellow who says everyone in America is a communist? We like him.

JOE. Yes, well, he's a contemptible thug and liar and a drunk, and he's causing considerable havoc right now. Everyone's quaking in fear of him. Except Stewart and me. We've been going after McCarthy with all guns blazing. Probably we're the only ones who could get away with it.

YOUNG MAN. I don't care very much about politics.

JOE. My boy, politics is life! Politics is human intercourse at its most sublimely ridiculous and intensely vital. You may as well say you don't care very much for sex.

START



YOUNG MAN. No, that I like.
JOE. Yes, I've noticed. Can't you spare me half an hour more?
YOUNG MAN. No, I'm sorry. I'm late already. (*Young Man goes into the bathroom.*)
JOE. Have you ever been with an American before?
YOUNG MAN. (*From off.*) No.
JOE. How do you know Atkinson?
YOUNG MAN. Atkinson?
JOE. The PAO.
YOUNG MAN. I'm sorry?
JOE. The Public Affairs Officer. At the Embassy. (*Young Man comes back in.*)
YOUNG MAN. Your Embassy?
JOE. Yes.
YOUNG MAN. I'm sorry, I don't know him.
JOE. But he told me about you.
YOUNG MAN. I don't know what you're talking about.
JOE. He told me that he'd take care of things. He's — well, he's like us, you see. (*Young Man shakes his head.*) I told him I was hoping to find some company and he said he'd help. Peter Atkinson. At the United States Embassy. Quite tall, reddish hair thinning a bit ...
YOUNG MAN. I don't know this man. I met you in the bar.
JOE. You came right up to me. I assumed Peter sent you.
YOUNG MAN. You offered to buy me a drink.
JOE. And you accepted so readily.
YOUNG MAN. Why should I not accept?
JOE. Well, because you're so young, and ... and I'm ... You can't blame me for assuming ...
YOUNG MAN. My God. You thought I was ... *procured* for you?
JOE. Your English really is splendid.
YOUNG MAN. Picked out for you? Like a prostitute? Is this the arrangement you have with your Embassy?
JOE. No, my God no, it's nothing official. Peter's an old friend and he's discreet and knows a man can get lonely in a foreign city. I ask for a warm body, he finds one.
YOUNG MAN. A warm body?
JOE. Oh dear. That doesn't sound right. Look, I'm just a bit confused —
YOUNG MAN. We had a conversation! I thought you were inter-

ested in what I had to say.

JOE. Please —

YOUNG MAN. Every day at work, I take the tourists around, I recite for them the history of this church or square, oh, Pushkin lived here, or Catherine the Great built this ... You, in the bar, were the first one to ask about me. I've never been asked so many questions in my life. Why did you do that if you thought I was —

JOE. That didn't matter. I wanted to know you.

YOUNG MAN. Yes, this is what I appreciated.

JOE. I want to make sure I understand this correctly. Are you saying you came here because you *wanted* to?

YOUNG MAN. Yes. (*Beat.*)

JOE. I'm sorry. I'm not at all used to this.

YOUNG MAN. What's the matter?

JOE. Nothing.

YOUNG MAN. Are you all right?

JOE. Yes, of course.

YOUNG MAN. I have to leave now.

JOE. I don't know your name.

YOUNG MAN. It's Andrei.

JOE. Andrei. I'm Joe.

YOUNG MAN. Yes, I know. Joe Alsop.

JOE. How do you know?

YOUNG MAN. You said.

JOE. Did I?

YOUNG MAN. When we met in the bar. I have a very good memory.

JOE. Did you know who I was?

YOUNG MAN. No. But I will look for you in the newspaper from now on.

JOE. How can you read my columns over here?

YOUNG MAN. I can't. But when *Pravda* denounces your columns, I will say, yes! Joe! I knew him.

JOE. Wonderful. I should like that. (*They shake hands, awkwardly.*) And thank you for ... the loveliest afternoon I've had in a long, long time. (*Joe holds Andrei's hand. Beat.*)

YOUNG MAN. I have to go.

JOE. Of course, of course. (*Young Man exits. Beat. Joe begins to get dressed. After a moment, a knock at the door. Joe starts. He goes to the*