

THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF DANCE

"PILOT"

Written by

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A **fictional** story, inspired by *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein* by
Martin Duberman and *American Girls in Red Russia* by Julia
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TEASER

1

EXT./INT. BOSTON PUBLIC THEATER (1924) - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A CLASS OF NORTHEASTERN PREP SCHOOL BOYS (14-15) bottlenecks THROUGH THEATER DOORS. Two PREFECTS (18) count heads.

Around them, THEATERGOERS in opulent gowns, suits, tails, ermines, minks, top hats, cloches.

SUPER: BOSTON, 1924

ROGER BAUM (14) - dark-haired, tall and ungainly, brow furrowed, enters the theater with a CLASSMATE (GRAHAM, 14).

ROGER

Pavlova is supposed to be one of the world's foremost ballerinas. Russian, escaped before the revolution.

GRAHAM

You've seen her dance before?

Roger and Graham enter the theater and take seats next to each other.

ROGER

No, I read the description in the Globe. I've actually never seen a ballet. I suspect it to be so much decoration over the music, which is the main event. I will say, I am curious about the version of Bach's *Süßer Tod* they're playing on the program.

Roger takes out a full-to-bursting black MOLESKINE and writes: Saturday, April 26, 1924.

ROGER

Obviously it's not as monumental as some of his other choral pieces, but I can't wait to see the orchestration. What are you most keen to see?

GRAHAM

Roger, watch out.

Two CLASSMATES stick their heads forward, emerging on either side of Roger's head, COLE (15) and RICHARD (14).

COLE
 (affecting girly voice)
 Hello, Baum!

ROGER
 Hello, Cole. How are you?

RICHARD
 Shut up, Baum.

They both titter. Roger ignores them, turns toward Graham --

ROGER
 Anyway, I'm sorry, you were about
 to say, your thoughts on tonight's
 program.

A third classmate joins in.

CLASSMATE #3
 Shut up, Baum! No one wants to hear
 you speak.

Cole and Richard giggle. The lights dim. Over a LOUDSPEAKER:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
 Welcome to the Boston Public
 Theater's program of symphonic
 music and European ballet.
 Tonight's first act will be Madame
 Anna Pavlova, performing a
 variation from the ballet Raymonda.

We hear KICKING sounds against Roger's chair back. He
 flinches and twists his body to the row behind to Cole,
 Richard, and the third Classmate.

ROGER
 (whispering loudly)
 Would you please stop kicking my
 chair?

RICHARD
 How many times do we have to tell
 you to shut up, Baum?

CLASSMATE #3
 Wait, why does he think we want to
 hear him speak?

They laugh. This time, Graham joins in the laughter, which
 visibly hurts Roger.

Glazunov's Raymonda Act III Variation IV begins. ANNA PAVLOVA (28) steps into the light and inhabits its initial haunting notes and proud, sad steps.

Roger is transfixed. The classmates behind kick his seat with more gusto, but Roger doesn't take his eyes off the stage. He brings his NOTEBOOK up and begins scribbling furiously a description of the performance.

As the variation swells to its climax, Classmate #3 reaches down and SNATCHES Roger's notebook out of his hands.

The piece ends. Roger slowly turns around, fully serious. The boys behind lean back, a ruthless GAME OF KEEP-AWAY about to begin -

Roger climbs across the row of seats, INTERCEPTS HIS NOTEBOOK, and begins SMACKING Richard across the face with it with astonishing brutality until Richard is CRYING AND BLEEDING.

2

INT. AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT - STILL IN FLASHBACK

A PREFECT (from Opening) drives. Roger slouches in the rear against the window.

PREFECT

It doesn't much matter to the school how it began, Roger.

(a beat)

That said, I'm frankly surprised you were able to cool him. If I'm being straight with you, you always struck me as a bit of a fairy.

Outside, Boston streets. Streetcars.

ROGER

How would I avoid that perception?

PREFECT

(laughing)

How would you avoid that perception? Well, if you want my advice, art is something an educated man should understand, but never lose himself within. And secondly, you might consider being less... expressive.

Roger presses his body to the door and his eye sockets against the glass of the window.

From his POV, the city streets give way to thickets of trees and moonlit clearings, a rural road.

The prefect begins to speak again but his voice becomes a LOW HUM, drowned out as (off-screen) **Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto #1** plays.

Suddenly, in a clearing, a dancer appears whom we have not yet seen. She does simple geometric ballet choreography, and appears as a reflection in continuous motion or mirage.

She's joined by two others, a man and a woman, who echo her steps.

The dancers increase in number until there's a full company, flickering in the mid-distance. Off Roger's concentrated expression --

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: **THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF DANCE**

END TEASER

ACT ONE

3 **EXT./INT. MANHATTAN BANK (1933) - DAY - PRESENT**

A line snakes around the block: people waiting to withdraw money.

SUPER: NEW YORK, 1933 - SEVEN YEARS LATER

A WOMAN (42) grips her 5-YEAR-OLD by the hand, crying and yelling as two ARMED SECURITY GUARDS throw her out of the bank.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN

How can you not see this ain't my
fault? I will lose my house! I'm
going to lose my house!

Inside, Roger - now **23**, still tall and out of control of his limbs, but now handsome, in an intense way, watches from the front of the line.

A teller window opens.

TELLER

How can I help you today, sir?

ROGER
I'd like to make a withdrawal.

TELLER
One second, please.

The teller speaks into a microphone.

TELLER (CONT'D)
(over the loudspeaker)
The bank will be closing in five minutes. Please make your way to the exit.

Roger bites his nails.

TELLER (CONT'D)
Account name?

ROGER
Baum. Should be under Roger Baum.

The teller riffles through a file cabinet. The security guards re-enter the bank.

TELLER
I'm sorry sir, but a freeze has been placed on your account. It was placed by the joint account holder, a Mr. Louis Baum?

4

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET OUTSIDE DINER - DAY

Roger jostles through a SEA OF DEMONSTRATORS in red sashes, marching with PICKET SIGNS through the street. Painted on them:

"Overthrow the Capitalist System"

"Fight for Noncontributory Unemployment Insurance"

"Organize or Starve"

DEMONSTRATORS
(chanting)
We won't pay for bankers' ills,
pass our unemployment bills! May
the bosses rue the day, you joined
the CPUSA!

Roger arrives, panting, on the sidewalk in front of the diner. LOUIS BAUM (60s), an imposing man whose portliness adds to his authority, checks his pocket-watch.

LOUIS
Quarter past twelve.

ROGER
Hello, father.

5 **INT. MANHATTAN DINER - DAY**

Louis and Roger sit at a booth next to the window.

A WAITRESS takes their menus and leaves. They smile at her weakly, wait until she's gone-

ROGER
Why did you freeze my account?

LOUIS
Why do you think?

ROGER
I'm not sure, but I need that money. I need to pay rent.

LOUIS
Ah, but it's not rent you've been paying, is it?

Louis brings out a ledger, points to a row of numbers.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Withdrawals. What's this?

ROGER
Five dollars. For ballet class with Michel Fokine.

Louis' finger scans the page.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Thirty dollars... oh, yes, I made a contribution to Friends of the Russian Ballet. They are setting up a ballet reading group at Radio City for Russian exiles.

To the last number: **\$1,000.**

LOUIS
And this one?

ROGER
I put down a deposit for studio space.

LOUIS
You want to be a dancer?

ROGER
No, no!

LOUIS
You're not trying to start a ballet company again, are you?

ROGER
I am, I do - still want to be an impresario, Father. A director. Now that the *Ballet Russes* has ended, it's possible that ballet will be lost forever. Alice -- you remember Alice Bach from college. Her father owns the New York Theater. If I can just get a season, I can start to --

Louis begins laughing.

ROGER (CONT'D)
What? It's not funny.

LOUIS
You just thought, "I am going to found an American Ballet" -- with *my* money?

ROGER
I mean, eventually, no... eventually I will have other investors, so...

LOUIS
No, Roger, you will not have other investors.

A BUSBOY brings their meals. One corned beef sandwich, for Louis, and one LOBSTER ROLL with EXTRA DRAWN BUTTER, for Roger.

ROGER
(hushed, to the busboy)
Thank you.

LOUIS
Are you asleep? You have no inkling of what is happening in the world?

ROGER
Yes, I know about the fourth banking panic.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

You're the one who is insulated from it in *Brahmin Boston*. But that has nothing to do with art. Mrs. Rockefeller is pouring money into visual arts, for example, contemplating a new modern museum-

LOUIS

Oh, so you're a Rockefeller, now?

Roger looks with sudden revulsion at the lobster he was savoring.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

You will return that \$1,000 down payment to Alice. And stop pursuing the idea of a ballet company.

Roger gets up from the table, stung.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Now, now, do not throw a tantrum! Roger!

ROGER

I'm not, I'm using the restroom.

Roger speeds up his steps. Near the doorway, he SLAMS into REBECCA SINGER (24), a solidly built woman with close-cropped dark hair, fresh from the protest, sporting a red communist party sash.

A too-large TOKAREV TT-33 (Soviet) HANDGUN flies out of her overalls and onto the floor.

Rebecca picks it up and stuffs it back inside her garment, walking toward her friends in the booth.

6

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

A somewhat swanky apartment in midtown. One bedroom, large bathroom. Roger enters the apartment, moving a pile of IMPENDING-EVICTION NOTICES.

He flops on the king-sized bed. The décor is a shrine to Diaghilev's Ballet Russes and cats. We dart from one collector's item to the next.

Roger places a record on the phonograph, lights an oil lamp, and walks into the bathroom. He brushes his teeth, while with his other hand reading from a typewritten page.

Addressing himself in the mirror, rehearsing -

ROGER

Hello, Alice. Good morning, Alice. How do you do? I just wanted to let you know that I've decided to fully commit to the ballet company project. We have a real chance to create an American Ballet within three years' time. I simply need one whole season at the New York Theater, which you and your family graciously control. So generously control. Which you are in control of. And what's on the line is...

Roger spits out his toothpaste and crosses out a line on the page.

ROGER (CONT'D)

What's at stake is...

7

INT. NEW YORK THEATER - DAY

In the empty theater, we're staring at close range into the inscrutable face of ALICE BACH (23), a beautiful bohemian in the newest and surrealest of Schiaparelli creations, worn unselfconsciously.

Alice holds the letter, reads aloud its conclusion:

ALICE

...the future of art itself.

She looks at Roger a long moment, cocks an eyebrow.

ALICE (CONT'D)

The future of art itself. Ooh. Alright.

Roger exhales.

ROGER

Really?

ALICE

Yes, I have your down payment of the thousand, but, you need to come up with the rest, that's five thousand dollars in the next two weeks. Two thousand this Friday, three thousand next Friday.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

Otherwise there's a confidential donor who *theoretically* has the theater reserved for an evening of German chamber music.

(mouthing)

He's a Nazi.

(continuing as before)

If you, for some reason, can't pay me, you'll still be on the hook for half because, again, the space is summarily his. Not to mention that - well, you know. Depression and all that. Where do you plan to get the funds, if I may ask? Louis?

Roger grimaces.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Savings?

A beat. Alice's eyes grow wide. Roger's do too - he stammers.

ROGER

Well, I might-

ALICE

Oh! You were best mates with Nelson Rockefeller in college, weren't you? You fellas ran that literary magazine with E.E. Cummings and company. Should be easy, I suppose. That man is made of money.

ROGER

Alice, Nelson and I are not close anymore.

ALICE

Ah. Well, it does not matter to me where it comes from. Just, if you want this --

Alice gestures to the theater around them.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(affecting an Italian accent)

You give-a me this.

Alice rubs her fingers together.

ROGER

I can't ask Nelson. Alice, I will do anything not to beg him for it.

8 **EXT. STANDARD OIL BUILDING, MANHATTAN - DAY**

Roger stands, cranes his neck upward toward the imposing Rockefeller family headquarters. A big sign staring us in the face: **STANDARD OIL, JOHN. D. ROCKEFELLER BUILDING.** Gulp.

9 **INT. STANDARD OIL BUILDING LOBBY, MANHATTAN - MOMENTS LATER**

Inside, a lone desk presided over by a SECRETARY (35).

ROGER

Good day, madam, I am here to see Nelson Rockefeller.

SECRETARY

I apologize, Mr. Rockefeller is not in. Perhaps I can take a message.

Nelson walks into the building, passing by the desk.

ROGER

Nelson! Can you tell your secretary who I am?

NELSON

Baum?

Nelson stops by the desk and waves Roger through.

NELSON (CONT'D)

It's alright, Pauline.

(to Roger, quizzical)

I'm sorry, I don't have long. I have another of father's assignments: a new federal agency using the building. He wants a full report.

10 **INT. ELEVATOR, STANDARD OIL BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

Nelson and Roger lean against the elevator wall. An awkward silence.

ROGER

I think you will like this idea, Nelson. It relates to the idea I slightly articulated to you in college-

NELSON

Is this the ballet again?

ROGER

Yes. What do you mean, again?

NELSON

Oh, no. Not a good time, Baum. I need to clear my head for this briefing. If you'd like, you can tag along. Perhaps afterward I will have a few minutes.

ROGER

Afterward I can speak to you alone?

NELSON

If there's time.

ROGER

What agency is it, using your offices?

NELSON

The Bureau of Investigation, or something along those lines. It's a fledgling federal agency, mostly involved in crime busts. They are trying to expand, but can't do it without father.

ROGER

You don't mind me tagging along?

NELSON

It's not as if you're a security risk or something. Come on, to whom would you divulge national security details? Alice Bach? Roger, you're harmless.

The elevator dings its arrival.

11

INT. TWO-STORY CONFERENCE ROOM, STANDARD OIL BUILDING - DAY

Nelson and Roger take their seats in the UPPER GALLERY of a two-story conference room. On the lower level, GREYBEARDS sit around a CONFERENCE TABLE in three-piece suits, smoking cigars. Donning pince-nez to squint at their manilla folders.

JOHN RANDALL GANZ (25), a babyfaced but trying-to-be-grizzled, bowlegged cowboy of a young cop silently walks to the head of the table. He nods and the room goes dark, revealing the first in a series of illuminated slides.

First slide: pictures of PROHIBITION ARRESTS AND CRIME BUSTS.

GANZ

(gestures to the table)

In the past few years, you gentlemen have been responsible for breaking the chain of organized drug smuggling.

Cue slide of a MUGSHOT OF AL CAPONE. Slides of other gangster mug shots: John Dillinger, Homer Van Meter, Harry Pierpoint.

GANZ (CONT'D)

I congratulate you on your efforts.

The room begins to grumble. Ganz clears his throat loudly.

GANZ (CONT'D)

However, I fear in the well-earned triumph of this moment, gentlemen, we have been slow to realize the threat to the American way of life posed by a foreign body. This body has infiltrated every level of American society in the wake of the recent economic downturn. I'm speaking about the American Communist Party, or CPUSA.

New slide: pictures of the PROTEST we've seen. Demonstrators and banners. A HAMMER AND SICKLE.

IN THE GALLERY, Roger turns to Nelson.

ROGER

(mockingly, making air quotes)

"Infiltrated every level of American society."

NELSON

Shhh!

GANZ (O.S.)

In a 1929 survey, it was found that 96% of Americans could not correctly identify communism as a foreign-run violent extremist organization.

ROGER

(to Nelson)

That's because it isn't one. Our friends are not violent extremists. That's absurd.

Next slide: a MAP of Europe. Russia in red. Other countries in colors from light pink to neutral grey.

GANZ

We know their goal is to foment worldwide revolution and massacre the capitalists in all countries. So far, the only country in which their revolution has successfully occurred is Russia. But we have reason to believe there are plans for a violent overthrow in the US.

Off Roger: this stops him from giggling somewhat.

Next slide: An organizational FLOWCHART with titles: Premier. Politburo. Soviets (councils). In place of headshots of their members, question marks.

GANZ (CONT'D)

We do not even know who the American Premier is. There could be hundreds of foreign-run extremist organizations within the US. I am asking for a full overhaul of the department's budget and the establishment of a special task force to investigate the extreme threat of American communism. Thank you.

Lights come up. Roger raises his hand.

GANZ (CONT'D)

(pointing to Roger)
Yes, up there.

ROGER

(seriously)
What evidence do you have of violent or foreign elements in the CPUSA?

A few greybeards squint at the gallery and murmur assent.

GANZ

(gruffly)
That's precisely why the establishment of a specific task force of investigators is necessary.

GREYBEARD #1

(laboriously)

Mr. Ganz, I appreciate the question of the young man in the gallery. My nephew is a student at Columbia university. As part of the curriculum, he and his peers read Marx and Hegel. But I would hardly call any of their carousing activities *violent*. My guess is that they are trying to work out their feelings about the Wall Street crash.

GREYBEARD #2

Do you even know for certain of the existence of an *American politburo*?

A few at the table laugh, dry and throaty. Ganz scowls.

12

INT. NELSON'S OFFICE, STANDARD OIL BUILDING - DAY

Nelson and Roger enter Nelson's office, which features a large window looking down onto New York: cars and people like tiny moving black dots.

Nelson checks his watch.

ROGER

Alright. As long as you've known me, I've been interested in the ballet, true? As a language.

NELSON

You do have a a way with words, Roger. Yes, a language, good grief.

ROGER

I'm proposing an American revival of the *Ballet Russes*. We now have a real chance for an American ballet. All I need is a choreographer, 12-14 dancers, and two to three years to give ballet a permanent American home. The best writers for the libretti. Best designers, the costumes. The finest composers, artists to do set design. You would be an instrumental part of planning the season. I am hoping to lure Nijinsky, Massine, Chanel, Braque. Tchelitchev.

NELSON
You have commitments?

ROGER
I, well, I purchased a hold on the space first. I- I spoke to Alice Bach at the New York Theater. I reserved a spot for the first season. I owe 2,000 by this Friday. And 3,000 next. To secure it.

A KNOCK at the door. Nelson walks to the door, opens it. J. Randall Ganz slips in, closing the door after himself with some urgency.

GANZ
May I speak to you in private?

ROGER
We're just talking-

NELSON
Of course. Baum is a college chum. Civilian, no risk.

GANZ
(to Nelson)
They nixed it. They will not grant a special force. So I wanted to ask you. Maybe you could put up a discretionary fund. We need individuals to pose as communists. The fund could serve as a reserve: reward money for regular information.

NELSON
Let's see. I could probably put up about 15, 16K, from the Rockefeller foundation. Unannounced.

Roger's eyes grow huge.

ROGER
Oh, my God.

NELSON
Regarding agents - you'll recruit internally?

GANZ

No, we don't have anyone I'd trust. Probably would have to put out a call. When can the funds be available?

ROGER

But, Nelson, don't you have to consult with your father, with the Board?

NELSON

I can get something together today, maybe tomorrow. You mentioned an advisory position for me in the Bureau the other day, was it?

GANZ

(to Nelson)

Yes, you'll have that position when we create the Washington Office. Without a doubt. Thank you, and good day, Mr. Rockefeller.

NELSON

Good day, Mr. Ganz.

ROGER

It was nice to meet you, Mr. Ganz.

Ganz ignores Roger and leaves. Roger turns to Nelson.

ROGER (CONT'D)

16,000 dollars?

NELSON

What is your question, Roger?

ROGER

You seem to have your own discretionary funds. That's swell!

NELSON

Baum...

ROGER

I find it would be in the best interest of the Rockefeller foundation... If I don't pay Alice by next week, the space will go to a packed house of lackeys from the Bund gyrating to Wagner. I just need 2,000 now.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)
3,000 by next Friday, and I'll
begin putting together some
choreographers.

NELSON
I'm sorry, Baum.

Nelson stands. Roger gets up to follow him.

ROGER
Why?

NELSON
I don't really want to say.

ROGER
Please, Nelson, ordinarily I
wouldn't ask. You know I wouldn't.
How many times did I ask you for
something when we were running Hart
and Hunt together?

NELSON
Give my warmest regards to old
Alice for me, won't you? Good to
see you, man.

Roger gets in Nelson's way.

ROGER
Why not? I mean, you'll spend
16,000 dollars, no problem, on some
wild catch-a-communist goose chase.
And you're hard up when it comes to
art? Do you not remember? Chasing
after Virgil Thompson in Italy,
trying to get him to stop drinking
and finish his manuscript? You and
I have changed the artistic world
together. We can do it again.

Nelson chuckles, but it's brief.

NELSON
Yes, well, we're not at Harvard
anymore, Baum. Now, are we?

Nelson claps Roger on the back and leaves.

INT. NEW YORK THEATER STUDIO - DAY

Dressed in ballet practice clothes, Roger steps into an
antechamber, separated from the studio by a GALLERY WINDOW.

Inside the studio, A COMPANY of YOUNG WOMEN (AND ONE MAN) dance tensely, with restrictive modern technique. **One of Aaron Copland's pre-1935 compositions** plays. Roger comes up beside Alice, who is watching through the window.

The Ballet Master, MICHEL FOKINE (74), once a legend of the Russian stage, now a hunchback in exile, emerges between them.

ALICE AND ROGER
Master Fokine.

MASTER FOKINE
Hello, dears.

Roger watches the dancers with interest.

ROGER
Monsieur Fokine, who are these dancers?

MASTER FOKINE
(in Russian-accented English)
I believe this is Red Dancers.

ROGER
"Red" dancers?

MASTER FOKINE
Red Dancers. Communist. Group of young Americans make socialist dance about "revolutionary" theme.

The music swells and the finale of the Red Dancers' piece starts. Rebecca Singer, the hard-mannered short-haired woman from earlier, runs onstage in a black costume which she rips off, revealing a resplendent RED TUNIC underneath, which prominently displays the words **1/6 of the World**.

She SPRINTS into the arms of the lone male dancer of the group, who thrusts her upward into a dramatic TORCH LIFT-

On Roger watching her, realizing it's not the first time he's seen

FLASH TO:

14 INT. DINER THRESHOLD - DAY (FROM BEFORE)

-- Rebecca's devil-may-care expression, the GUN FLYING OUT OF HER BAG --

BACK TO:

15 INT. NEW YORK THEATER STUDIO - DAY

Master Fokine starts to turn away, then leans in to Alice and Roger.

MASTER FOKINE

Why we starve in Russia, lucky to get out, and you kids do anything to join party, try and go there.

ROGER

You think they are party members?

Fokine nods a nonverbal *maybe, probably, what do I care?* The Red Dancers start to wrap up. Ballet students begin entering the studio. Out of Fokine's earshot --

ALICE

Did you ask Nelson?

ROGER

I wish I hadn't.

ALICE

I'm serious, Roger, how the hell are you going to come up with \$3000 in two days?

Roger gazes through the gallery window, sets his eyes on REBECCA, who is emphatically correcting another dancer --

ROGER

You're not going to like this, but I have an idea.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

16 INT. NEW YORK THEATER STUDIO - DAY (ABOUT AN HOUR LATER)

30 women of all ages, from sixteen year-olds to crones in headscarves, do *grand allegro* (big jumps) across the floor. Fokine taps time with a huge wooden STICK, yelling, a tableau out of a Degas painting.

Roger and Alice shuffle against the back wall, waiting for their turn to do the combination.

ALICE

You want to become an *informant*?

ROGER

I watched Nelson put up sixteen thousand dollars for this half-baked communist bait program. Think how simple it would be to get that reward. Who do we know who is not in some *Russia, the creation of the revolutionary Ideal* discussion group?

ALICE

So, your grand plan is to tell the *Bureau* where the editors of the *New Masses* get lit. And they'll hand over a small fortune?

It's Alice and Roger's turn to go. They're last.

ROGER

I suppose.

ALICE

This is the most crackpot, asinine idea I've ever goddamn heard.

ROGER

Why not? It could work.

They begin a dancey big jump combination - *failli assemblés, torjetés*, when Fokine SLAMS his stick against the ground, stands up, STOPS the PIANIST, walks to Roger --

FOKINE

Stop. Why are you here?

ROGER

I want to learn ballet.

FOKINE

You in my class three times a week, not improve at all. Why are you here?

Students laugh nervously.

FOKINE (CONT'D)

It's ok, we know each other. You want to start American Ballet Russes, yes? Ballet Américaine.

ROGER

That's right.

FOKINE

So you are here to learn what is ballet. Okay. Show me sissonne failli assemblé.

Roger *pliés*, does the big split jump and then the *assemblé*.

FOKINE (CONT'D)

No. Show me fifth.

Fokine shows fifth position of the arms, arms *en haut*. Roger copies.

Fokine holds Roger's arms where Roger had placed them, then brings Roger's arms two inches forward. Turns the palms of the hands inward, elbows outward. Arranges Roger's chin and gaze.

FOKINE (CONT'D)

You think ballet is Swan Lake, ah? Ballet is tutus? No. Ballet is difference between this --

Fokine molds Roger's fingers in a classical position, second, third, and fourth fingers visible.

FOKINE (CONT'D)

And this. Between two millimeters in the fingers. You see? There are one million ways to do it wrong. And how many ways to do it right?

ROGER

One.

Fokine nods. Steps away, showing off Roger's new arm placement. Turns to the class. Fokine takes his seat at the front once more.

FOKINE

Left side!

17

INT. NEW YORK THEATER STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca watches Roger being corrected from the other side of the glass. Beside her, SYLVIA CHEN (23), lithe, half Trinidadian, half Chinese, 100% socialist, Rebecca's girlfriend.

SYLVIA

He should be arriving soon, it's almost half past.

REBECCA

(watching Roger's correction)

Ballet teachers have a bone-on for every male who walks into their class.

SYLVIA

(cajoling)

Well, we need men, don't we?

REBECCA

(too serious)

No, Sylvia, we do not. In most animal species, the male exists purely for the purpose of inseminating the female. And then dies within a day.

SYLVIA

Who, then, pray tell, will lift us?

REBECCA

(smiling)

That's the only reason I keep ours. One job.

Sylvia hugs her from behind. Then a quick kiss on the lips. Sylvia nods to the corner of the room. A MAN IN WORK SMOCK (41) rounds the corner from the hallway, nods at the two ladies.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(to Sylvia)

Go. I'll find you tonight.

Sylvia leaves, flashes a "good luck" half-smile. Rebecca approaches the man and they pass a WATER FOUNTAIN, rounding the corner together into the stairwell.

AROUND THE CORNER, IN THE STAIRWELL

Work Smock holds up a clenched FIST - red salute. Rebecca returns the gesture.

WORK SMOCK

How are the preparations for the recognition march coming along, comrade Singer?

REBECCA

We have three pieces, one of which is *One Sixth of the World*. It's the most substantial of the works, so far. I don't know if you caught any of our rehearsal?

IN THE ANTEROOM

Roger, out of breath, stumbles up to the water fountain, takes a few GULPS of water, and overhears the rest of the conversation between Rebecca and Work Smock --

AROUND THE CORNER, IN THE STAIRWELL

WORK SMOCK

Comrade Singer, I'm pleased with your progress.

REBECCA

I, thank you, sir.

WORK SMOCK

Can you stay a bit late at the John Reed Club?

REBECCA

I think so, why?

WORK SMOCK

I can't say. What marksmanship training do you have?

REBECCA

I'm sorry?

WORK SMOCK

How are you with weapons?

REBECCA

I learned to shoot in a women's defense class at Hull House.

WORK SMOCK

Good. We will see you tonight at seven at the John Reed Club on West 54th. Don't forget your identification. Good-bye.

Clapping from the class, it just ended. Off Roger - stunned at what he's just heard --

ROGER

(to himself)

Seven PM. John Reed Club. West 54th. Seven PM. John Reed Club. West 54th. Christ. Identification?

18 **INT./EXT. MONTAGE - DAY**

-- Roger buying a copy of *The New Masses* from a paperboy.

-- The pages of *The New Masses* strewn across the room, telephone to Roger's ear, calling numbers from the back.

-- A string diagram on Roger's bedroom wall of telephone numbers he's called that are and aren't answered.

-- A stack of inserts in the back of one of the papers that Roger shakes out onto the bed.

One is a PAMPHLET: ***The National Student Anti-War League***

Printed inside: **Meeting this afternoon, 4:30 PM: 309 Havemeyer Hall, Columbia University**

Alongside a printed PHOTOGRAPH of a handsome boyish blonde, TOM CAMPBELL (22), above a printed caption: **NSAWL Student President, Thomas Campbell**

-- Roger studying the photograph in the pamphlet. Close-up on a handkerchief barely visible poking out of Tom's sleeve. We see Roger's own handkerchief arranged just so inside his sleeve...

Roger leaps to his feet.

19 **EXT./INT. HAVEMEYER HALL, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - CONTINUOUS**

Roger emerges from the subway. Follows a group of students into a full-to-bursting Havemeyer lecture hall. Stands at the back.

From a podium, Tom Campbell holds forth to an audience of student protestors.

TOM

What have we learned from Harlan County? What did we learn from Harry Simms' death? We learned that we can never trust police involvement. We learned we can never trust this campus or others to hold workers' rights in esteem. I want to close with a reiteration of our demands, and I hope you'll repeat them after me. A Free College in Every City.

STUDENTS

(reading/chanting)

Free college!

TOM

Academic freedom for all students and instructors.

STUDENTS

(reading)

Academic freedom!

TOM

Full social and political equality for Negroes and other social minorities.

STUDENTS

Full social and political equality!

Roger holds up the photograph of Tom from the pamphlet from his perch at the back of the hall. They match. Bingo.

TOM

We won't pay for bankers' ills...

STUDENTS

Pass our unemployment bills!

TOM

May the bosses rue the day!

STUDENTS

We joined the CPUSA!

TOM AND STUDENTS

Organize or starve! Organize or starve!

20

INT. HAVEMEYER HALL, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - MOMENTS LATER

People file out of the auditorium. Tom lingers at the back. Roger approaches Tom.

ROGER

Are you Tom Campbell?

TOM

Yes. You are?

ROGER

I'm... Ronald. Kirschbaum. I'm an emissary from the Chicago branch of the CPUSA.

TOM

Oh, pleased to meet you. Wow, I.. Did you come just to see the rally?

ROGER

It's part of my trip. I wanted to ask -- I am impressed with the work you're doing here at Columbia. I was sitting in the audience, wondering, I mean, how can we be of service to you? Perhaps I could bring up any concerns you had for more support tonight at the New York CPUSA meeting.

TOM

Well, now that you mention it, I suppose I could ask around - get a list of requests from our members. But really, I appreciate you asking.

Tom gestures to another student.

TOM (CONT'D)

Tony is the treasurer. Maybe he could better direct your query....Tony?

Roger touches Tom's arm.

ROGER

(backpedaling)

Actually, I really want to hear from you.

A pause. There's a sexual charge.

ROGER (CONT'D)
You are attending the meeting
tonight, comrade? At seven?

TOM
I was asked to swing by...

ROGER
That gives us a few hours. I'm only
in New York for a spell. Perhaps
you know of a Navy bar where we
could have a drink?

Roger pulls the handkerchief slowly out of his sleeve.

TOM
A navy bar.

Tom chuckles wryly. It's on.

TOM (CONT'D)
I know of one. Mind going downtown?

ROGER
Not at all.

21 **EXT./INT. NAVY BAR/BROTHEL, SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - LATE
AFTERNOON**

Roger follows Tom through a crowd of burly men sporting large
pints of beer. Signs are in German.

Tom walks up to a bartender.

[Note: Italicized and bracketed dialogue is in German.]

BARTENDER
*[Greetings, what can I get you this
evening?]*

TOM
*[Greetings! My German] is a hair
rusty. My friend and I happen to be
feeling a bit lightheaded.*

The bartender nods and disappears. He comes back in a moment
with a large bottle of moonshine and two glasses.

BARTENDER
Follow.

Tom and Roger follow the bartender through a service entrance
down a flight of stairs. Into:

A GAY BROTHEL. A maze of private rooms, living rooms, MALE ESCORTS, TRANS ESCORTS, old men with bulging bellies and suited clientele, lots of NAVY uniforms...

The bartender leads them to a room.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
[How long?]

TOM
 (looks at Roger)
 I don't know. Charge us after.

The bartender sets down the alcohol, unlocks the room, and gives Roger the key.

BARTENDER
Is okay?

Roger nods.

22

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Tom pours the moonshine into the two glasses and begins unbuttoning his shirt. He's chattery and happy, starts to let his flamboyance out a little.

Handing Roger a glass -

TOM
 Cheers.

ROGER
 Cheers.

They down the disgusting poison -- Tom grinning, wiping the corners of his mouth, kissing Roger. Roger looks ill. Coughs.

TOM
 You know, it's not 1925. You don't have to pretend you hate the stuff.

Roger returns the kisses now, passionately.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Do they have these in Chicago?

ROGER
 In Chicago?

TOM
 You're visiting from Chicago, right?

ROGER

Right. They have a few. None with
the clientele of this one, though.

Tom beams. Roger swoops in. Starts unbuttoning Tom's pants. Takes them off of Tom. Tom is like a new person - and Roger is a nervous wreck, clumsy but not without a certain awkward charm.

TOM

I'm assuming you've done this
before?

ROGER

I have. Once.

Roger tosses Tom on the bed aggressively. Tom lies on his front, Roger panting above him. Roger starts to unbutton his pants, and then we see his face, uncomfortable, anxious, his breathing rapid...

TOM

Randolph, is everything alright?

ROGER

Yes, I'm sorry. I just- I'm just
not sure if I can, I'm not sure
what to do. I thought I would...
feel more comfortable by now.

Roger moves to the corner of the bed, crosses his legs. Looks down at his lap.

Tom after a beat comes behind Roger and puts a hand on his shoulder.

TOM

We don't have to do anything if you
don't want to. We can just talk, if
you'd like, Comrade.

Roger takes a deep breath.

TOM (CONT'D)

Or just...

Tom kisses Roger's neck.

TOM (CONT'D)

Do what feels alright.

ROGER

Well, that feels alright.

Tom swings around a plants a very tender kiss on Roger's lips.

TOM

And this?

ROGER

Mmm, yes, that, too.

Roger grins and their kissing increases in passion. They fall back into the bed, start to get hot and heavy with each other. Tom unbuttons Roger's shirt, unable to get it off fast enough -

23

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - SUNSET

Tom lies in the bed, nude. Roger zips up his pants, panicked, frantically pulls his shirt on.

TOM

In Russia there are no sodomy laws, right? You wouldn't even need a speakeasy. Can you imagine? Wait, what am I saying? Didn't the Chicago branch just have an extended trip to the KUTV?

Tom sits up, caresses Roger's back.

TOM (CONT'D)

Tell me everything. I mean, everything you can. About Moscow.

ROGER

I'm sorry, Tom.

TOM

It's okay, Randolph, I know you can't say much. I don't want to know anything sensitive, just -- Have they created socialized dining facilities yet? It's so important, I mean, as you know, freeing women from domestic labor...

ROGER

I am so sorry. I'm really sorry.

TOM

No need to apologize. I know, I'm insatiably curious.

ROGER
No, I'm very sorry.

Roger takes out his pocketwatch: **6:30 PM.**

ROGER (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
Please forgive me.

In an INSTANT, Roger GRABS Tom's CLOTHING PILE, strewn on the floor, and runs out of the room. He LOCKS THE DOOR from the outside with the key the bartender gave him and runs toward the exit.

Bumping into several partially clothed SEX WORKERS and CUSTOMERS, he sprints down the hall.

Tom, NAKED, pounds on the door.

TOM
Help! Help! I was robbed!

Roger dodges confused people. Finds an exit fire door. To the
OUTSIDE

It's **dusk**. Roger fumbles for Tom's WALLET in the mush of Tom's pants that he's holding and finds --

IDENTIFICATION PAPERS for Tom Campbell.

Roger begins jogging toward the subway.

24 **EXT. JOHN REED CLUB, WEST 54TH STREET, MANHATTAN - NIGHT**

A line of MEMBERS enters through a front door. Roger checks his watch. **7:05**. Exhales.

His turn at the door comes up. A man behind a desk asks for identification. He shows Tom's IDENTIFICATION PAPERS.

The Desk Man nods and beckons for Roger to follow. A few RED DANCERS arrive and gather on the sidewalk behind them.

ROGER
(to Desk Man)
Thank you, comrade.

Off Roger, hesitantly triumphant --

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

25 **INT./EXT. JOHN REED CLUB - NIGHT**

Roger follows Desk Man into the John Reed Club - all dark wood paneling. Desk Man leads Roger past a room which members are lining up to enter.

Up a flight of stairs and into an

EMPTY LIBRARY

ROGER

Is the meeting in its usual location?

DESK MAN

Should be.

ROGER

Well, thank you, I'll just be going then. Downstairs, we passed it, correct?

The Desk Man finds a STACK OF POSTERS - posters we've seen earlier with "Organize or Starve" slogans - and places it into Roger's arms.

DESK MAN

That should be the lot.

They begin walking back downstairs, back to the

VESTIBULE BY THE MEETING ROOM

ROGER

Is there a convenient place to store these, while I go into the meeting?

DESK MAN

Oh, you are not authorized to attend the meeting. Only red card holders.

ROGER

What do you mean? I gave you identification papers.

DESK MAN

Not State-Issued Identification, Red Card. Party membership.

The Desk Man leads Roger

OUTSIDE onto the stoop.

Gathered, the RED DANCERS, except Rebecca. They hold hangers with costumes and carry duffel bags and a banner.

ROGER

How do I get a Red Card?

The Desk Man ignores him and walks up to Sylvia.

DESK MAN

You all present?

SYLVIA

All except one. Rebecca is likely on her way. Can you keep the door open for her when she arrives?

DESK MAN

Alright. You all go on after the singing of the *Internationale*.

SYLVIA

Excellent. I'll convey that.

DESK MAN

Wait in the hall. When the last member arrives, I'll show you to a room where you can change.

He opens the door to the dance group. Roger watches, dumbfounded, arms full of posters, as they just walk into the John Reed club past him.

A beat, then Rebecca runs up to the stoop. She's just in time-

REBECCA

(to the desk man)

Good evening.

DESK MAN

They're inside, waiting.

REBECCA

Thank you. Do I have time to smoke a cigarette?

DESK MAN

You have a few minutes.

Starving for a smoke, forgetting to disguise the urgency of her movements, Rebecca pulls out a cigarette and stuffs tobacco inside rolling papers. Sticks the filter in her mouth. Fumbles around for a lighter or matches. Rebecca turns to Roger.

REBECCA
Do you have a light?

Roger rummages in his pockets.

ROGER
I should, let me see, a moment.

He finds a MATCHBOOK from the WALDORF-ASTORIA, the hotel emblem and name proudly displayed on the cover. He hands it to her. She tries to strike it against the pad to no avail.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Sorry, it may be a little damp.

Rebecca balances on one leg and PULLS HER OTHER BOOT TO FACE HER. Strikes the match off of the boot sole and lights her cig.

A beat.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Why, you're a dancer, right?

REBECCA
I am.

ROGER
You're in the Red Dancers, is it?

Rebecca blows smoke and nods.

REBECCA
Mnhmm.

ROGER
Are you performing at the meeting?

REBECCA
In a few minutes, probably.

ROGER
I have a question for you. I'm... a student protest leader, as you can see. I was wondering -- how shall I put this? How does one get a red card?

Rebecca looks at him like he has two heads.

REBECCA

If you have to ask, then you are not eligible.

ROGER

Do you have one?

REBECCA

I can't say.... Alright, well, no. I hopefully will, soon.

ROGER

Then why are you allowed inside the meetings?

REBECCA

What?

Rebecca does a double take.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Wait, I recognize you from somewhere. You take class with Michel Fokine.

ROGER

Yes, I do. Do you also do ballet?

REBECCA

Ballet is a pre-revolutionary form. It can only ever express the aristocratic. It shows an idyll of peasant life meant to make the old ruling class feel good about oppressing the proletariat.

DESK MAN

(calling to her)

Are you almost ready?

Rebecca puts out her cigarette. Starts to move inside.

REBECCA

Your name?

ROGER

It's... Rog-- I'm Randolph. Kirschbaum.

REBECCA

Rebecca Singer.

ROGER

Wait, Rebecca, I have a question for you. Do you perhaps need another male dancer? When are auditions for the Red Dancers?

Rebecca glares at Roger as the Desk Man holds the door open for her.

REBECCA

We don't hold auditions.

She shuts the door, goes inside.

Roger stalks away, HURLS the posters down on the sidewalk angrily.

26

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, JOHN REED CLUB - NIGHT

A full conference room of the AMERICAN COMMUNISTS who we saw outside the JRC and in line for the meeting before. They listen, rapt. A grey-suited man with mustache, EARL BROWDER (41) lectures from a podium.

EARL BROWDER

All rise for the singing of the *Internationale*.

The room rises and begins SINGING. We go

BEHIND A MOVEABLE SCREEN set up in the rear of the room.

The Red Dancers, in costume, fidget, waiting to perform. They grab each other's pinkies and blow kisses to the sides of each other's faces.

EARL BROWDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And now, to perform an original composition entitled *1/6 of the World*, the Red Dancers.

A PIANIST in the corner of the room begins banging out **the Copeland composition from earlier** as the dancers except for Rebecca and Sylvia rush onto stage, performing the opening sequences of the dance.

Sylvia gives Rebecca a peck on the cheek and then runs in to do a SOLOIST role.

Alone, Rebecca pumps herself up.

27 **INT. JOHN REED CLUB - NIGHT**

Work Smock (the emissary who met Rebecca earlier outside the New York Theater dance studio) leads Rebecca down a hallway. She's still in costume, sweat beads on her face. Work Smock knocks three times at a door and deposits Rebecca in a

BOARD ROOM

Wooden table. Party officials, including Earl Browder, seated around it.

They stand as she enters. Fist salute. She returns it and they gesture for her to sit in an empty chair at the head of the table.

EARL BROWDER
Rebecca Singer?

REBECCA
Yes, Premier.

He addresses the other men in the room.

EARL BROWDER
So, this is the foot-soldier you've selected for me?
(he shifts his hands)
Alright, Miss Singer. How good are you with weapons?

28 **INT. LIBRARY, JOHN REED CLUB - NIGHT**

The last few Red Dancers (except for Rebecca), including Pauline (24) and Sarah (22) hang their costumes on a rack and make toward the exit.

SARAH
Good night, Sylvia.

SYLVIA
Good night, ladies.

Sylvia, alone in the library, checks the costume pieces. Folds the banner into a duffel bag. Takes a volume off the bookshelf - A HISTORY OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM, 1800-1925.

Rebecca walks through the doorway, visibly SHAKEN.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
How did it go? Are you alright?

Rebecca starts working the fastenings of the costume with abandon, trying to get out.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Wait, let me. The hooks.

She rushes over.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
What happened in there?

REBECCA
You know I cannot say.

SYLVIA
I know.

Rebecca and Sylvia work at the costume. When it's off, Rebecca starting to get back into her regular clothes -

REBECCA
I might have been given an opportunity to go to Moscow. Study at KUTV.

SYLVIA
Why, Rebecca, that's... marvelous!

REBECCA
Contingent on... carrying out a... mission.

SYLVIA
What sort of mission?

REBECCA
At the Soviet Union Recognition March. On Mayday.

SYLVIA
It's tremendous, Rebecca. You will be doing real work for the party.

REBECCA
We are doing real work for the party.

SYLVIA
No, I simply mean, you won't *only* be dancing and making compositions. You are moving up the ranks. You'll be instrumental! In revolutionary activation.

REBECCA

Did you think we were playing around? Dance is some sort of diversion, while the big men shoot people and achieve real revolutionary activation?

Sylvia just looks at Rebecca. Blushing. An outburst like this from Rebecca is clearly not an unusual thing.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Dance IS of the utmost importance to the party, Sylvia. Look at me. In the Soviet Union, the party is investing heavily into dance because of its power of kinesthesia. If I raise my arm, you feel the same muscles in your arm activate. Dance has the power to transmit the expression and comprehension of revolutionary desire.

SYLVIA

Alright.

REBECCA

Don't ever trivialize what we are achieving.

SYLVIA

Alright, Rebecca. I don't need the lecture. I take this and you very seriously. I'm sorry if I conveyed something different to you.

Rebecca puts a filter in her mouth. Rolls a cigarette, shaking. Takes the filter out to put it in the cigarette...

REBECCA

Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you.

SYLVIA

I love you too.

Sylvia goes over and pats Rebecca's back.

REBECCA

I didn't mean to get angry. It just, when you say things like that, it makes me doubt your mettle, it makes me go a little gaga.

After a beat.

SYLVIA

(sotto)

What are you being asked to do?

Rebecca doesn't say, just puts her cigarette to her lips and lights it with another of Roger's matches.

29

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT/HALLWAY/STAIRS - NIGHT

Roger gets to his door and there's a YELLOW TELEGRAM ENVELOPE crammed halfway underneath. He tears it open. Inside:

NEED THE 3,000 TOMORROW OR SPACE IS NOT YOURS

- ALICE

Roger crumples and shoves the telegram in his pocket. Puts his key in the knob and fiddles with it. It will not unlock.

Roger tries again, examines the key, then gets frustrated, and begins JIGGLING THE KEY in the lock WILDLY --

The DOOR OPENS. AN UNSHAVED MAN IN UNDERSHIRT (48) stands before Roger.

UNDERSHIRT MAN

Can I help you?

The room inside is BARE. Just white walls visible.

ROGER

Oh, I'm sorry. I must be on the wrong floor. So silly of me.

Roger steps away and looks at the door number. 6C. The man starts to close the door.

ROGER (CONT'D)

6C. Wait! This is the right floor. This is my room. What the hell is going on?

UNDERSHIRT MAN

Would you like to come inside?

The man steps aside. Roger enters the room and looks around. It's his room, but completely stripped of all decorations and belongings. Even of bed frame. The undershirted man watches Roger drift around it in a stupor.

Roger walks to the window. Looks out. At street level, ALL OF ROGER'S BELONGINGS LIE DESTROYED ON THE SIDEWALK BELOW. HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS pick out objects from the wreckage.

ROGER

No. No. When did you move in here?

UNDERSHIRT MAN

Just earlier today. Was this your place or something?

Roger races out of the room.

UNDERSHIRT MAN (CONT'D)

Good luck, man. Sorry about that.

Tracking him, we race with Roger through his hallway and to the elevators, slamming the down button repeatedly. He gives up and enters the fire escape, running down the steps two at a time.

30

EXT. SIDEWALK BESIDE ROGER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Roger sifts through the pile of rubble that was his earthly possessions: cat posters, broken bed, mattress. *Ballet Russes* memorabilia and decorations. Scores of books lying open, spines destroyed.

ROGER

My bed. My books. No. Oh no. No, this can't be happening. No, Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ! Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Roger sees the copy of *the New Masses* (the communist newspaper.) It's open to a page in the back describing a **SETTLEMENT HOUSE FOR UNHOUSED WORKERS** in the Lower East Side.

Reading,

ROGER (CONT'D)

For Proletariats experiencing homelessness for whatever reason. We welcome you! No questions asked. A safe, clean room and a bath towel and washcloth. Ten dollars per day.
(to himself)
Jesus Christ.

31 **EXT./INT. SETTLEMENT HOUSE, LOWER EAST SIDE - DAY**

Roger stands with two large trash bags of belongings on the Settlement House doorstep, presses a buzzer.

Sylvia opens the front door a crack.

 SYLVIA
 Good evening.

 ROGER
 Good evening. I'm wondering if you have any rooms free tonight.

 SYLVIA
 We have one more vacant room. Come inside. We just started quiet hours.

 ROGER
 Thank you.

 SYLVIA
 Be quick! Some of the residents have animals, so don't leave the door open. You can put your things there for now.

She gestures to the entrance. Roger hesitantly places the bags down in the mud room, looks around. Huge wooden CHESTS with belongings.

 SYLVIA (CONT'D)
 Don't be nervous.

 ROGER
 It's just. That's everything I own.

 SYLVIA
 You'll come back for it when I show you your room. Don't worry, it will all be here, right where you left it. We have a strict solidarity principle. Follow me.

Roger follows Sylvia down a dark HALLWAY. Rooms with the doors open reveal: SLEEPING FAMILIES OF 4, 6, 7 IN ROOMS, WORKERS sleeping in their clothes, legs and arms splayed.

A few small children (ages 5-8) run around. Sylvia whispers loudly at them.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Ernest! Carin! Do you know what
time it is?

ERNEST
No, Miss Chen.

SYLVIA
It's quiet hours. Where should you
be?

They walk in different directions to their respective rooms.

ROGER
How many people live here?

SYLVIA
On a regular night, anywhere from
10 to 50. We have some regulars.
And some who drift.

Sylvia stops by an office. She puts her hand up to the wall
by the door and fumbles around for a key, doesn't find it. A
co-worker is standing with his back to us, sorting files.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Tom, have you seen the key to 7?

The co-worker turns slightly - it's TOM CAMPBELL. Roger
flattens himself against the wall out of sight, just in time -

TOM
Oh, yeah, just checked the DeSouzas
out. Let me see.

He rummages in his pants and finds the key.

TOM (CONT'D)
Here.

Hands it to Sylvia.

TOM (CONT'D)
That's me.

Tom packs up a small bag. Is about to head out, past where
Roger is hiding.

SYLVIA
You going back home to the Upper
West Side, now, sir? Back to your
warm dorm after a long night in the
bowels of Manhattan?

Tom laughs.

TOM
You've got my number, Sylv.

Tom turns to leave. Roger runs into one of the rooms as Tom emerges into the hallway.

SYLVIA
Alrighty, then. Good night. And good luck finding the bastard who took your ID.

TOM
Thank you. Enemies of the revolution, they're everywhere.

Tom walks down the hallway and leaves. Sylvia emerges from the office with the key and looks for Roger.

SYLVIA
Where? That's strange.

Roger emerges from his hiding place, a room with a sleeping family.

ROGER
Was just looking for the washroom.

Sylvia crinkles her nose - *how would anyone have thought the bathroom was in there?*

SYLVIA
It's the second door on the left.

She points.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Your room is just up the stairs. You got lucky. A family of four railroad workers got moved to a line in Pennsylvania.

Sylvia hands Roger the key and two towels.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
A note. We have hot water, but not loads of it. Just be frugal -- you have about 30 seconds before it goes cold again, and if you use more than that, no one else will get any. So as a general rule, make your baths quick.

ROGER

Oh, okay. Thank you. I owe you ten dollars per night, right?

SYLVIA

You can pay me later, if you need.

ROGER

Thank you.

SYLVIA

Yes, good night. Oh, and one more thing.

ROGER

Yes.

SYLVIA

I did hear of one theft. One of the shift workers had his identification papers stolen. Your belongings *should* be safe in the lockers. We've never had a problem before. But if you did want to keep some of your valuables with you. Just as a precaution. Good night. Breakfast is at 5:30.

Sylvia leaves. Roger closes the door to the ROOM she showed him - a tiny spartan dorm with one bunk bed and a large crack running up the wall. But still, a PLACE TO SLEEP.

NO BUNKMATE. He sits on the bottom bunk and puts his face in his hands.

Lets out a sigh of exhaustion and relief.

32

INT. ROGER'S SETTLEMENT HOUSE ROOM - PRE-DAWN

Roger sleeps in his clothes from the day before. It's pitch dark inside his room. A BABY'S SHRIEK pierces the silence.

Roger tosses and turns. More sounds start - twenty workers getting up and talking to each other. Roger tries in vain to get back to sleep.

ROGER

Goddamnit.

33 **INT. HALL BATHROOM, SETTLEMENT HOUSE - DAWN**

Roger waits in a LINE OF OTHER RESIDENTS for one bathtub. A WOMAN (55) climbs out.

WOMAN

All yours.

ROGER

Thanks.

Roger climbs into the bath. Draws the curtain, throws his towel over the rod. Exhales. SHIVERS.

He turns on the faucet. Feels the water become hot for a second (we see on his face) and then turn FREEZING again.

Starts to scrub himself, wincing as the cold washcloth hits his skin. Then he JUMPS - COCKROACHES skitter out of the drain across his feet.

NEXT PERSON IN LINE

Let's go! Hurry it up!

ROGER

One moment!

This chokes him up. He's fallen pretty far.

34 **INT. WALDORF ASTORIA LOBBY - 6 AM**

Roger walks through the swanky lobby in his crumpled suit from the day before. He looks like SHIT. He walks past the concierge. Well-dressed guests (the few who are awake at this hour) STARE.

A BELLHOP (38) stops him.

BELLHOP

No panhandlers. Get out.

Roger runs away from him. The elevator opens, revealing a WOMAN in an ERMINE with a small dog. Roger dodges her and runs to the stairwell.

35 **INT. LOUIS' ROOM AT THE WALDORF ASTORIA - MOMENTS LATER**

Louis opens the door in his bathrobe to see Roger, crumpled.

LOUIS

Roger?

Roger just walks into his father. His father embraces him.

ROGER
 (broken)
 I can't do this. I just can't. I
 just can't do this. I just can't do
 this. I need help. Father, I just
 can't!

Roger hyperventilates, pathetic and hysterical.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 I just can't, I thought I could but
 I can't. With New York, with the
 ballet company. I went to Nelson
 and I begged him. I begged Nelson
 for the money.

Roger is wracked by a fresh round of sobs.

LOUIS
 Okay. It's okay, son. Come inside.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

36 **EXT. NEW YORK THEATER - DAY**

Louis walks with Roger to the theater complex.

LOUIS
 Let's review, shall we? What is the
 first order of business?

ROGER
 Go up the stairs. Knock on Alice's
 door.

LOUIS
 No baby steps, please.

ROGER
 First, I thank her for her trouble.
 Then I ask for the thousand back,
 and tell her I forfeit the space.
 Then I see if Fokine's there and
 pay him for the back classes. And
 then come straight back. Our train
 leaves at two.

Louis puts a wad of cash in Roger's hand.

ROGER (CONT'D)

You know, when I first moved to the city, I was too intimidated to even make it up the steps. I didn't go to a ballet class here for months. I would just watch people file in, and sit in that café and write in my journal.

LOUIS

You've always been observant, Roger. You notice so much. It's a gift.

Roger smiles.

ROGER

Thank you, father.

LOUIS

The trouble is, no one wants to hear it.

A beat. This really hurts.

ROGER

It's true. You're right, no one wants to hear it.

He looks at Louis, expecting him to recant. Louis moves on, instantly.

LOUIS

I'm proud of you, son. This is the first step. It's alright to admit you were wrong, sometimes. You bit off more than you could chew. No shame in admitting you were caught up in your fantasy.

Roger turns, disappears into the stairwell.

37

INT. STAIRWELL, NEW YORK THEATER STUDIO - DAY

Roger pauses, begins having trouble breathing. Dance people pass, don't stop.

Rebecca runs up past Roger, dodging others going to class, almost running them over.

PASSERBY

Pardon me?

REBECCA
Pick a side!

PASSERBY
(to Roger, with
indignation)
You'd think it was a matter of life
and death, the way some people
carry on.
(whispering)
It's just dance.

Roger smiles weakly at the person.

38 **INT. NEW YORK THEATER STUDIO ANTECHAMBER - DAY**

Roger walks to Alice's door. Knocks. She opens it slightly.

ALICE
Hold on. I'll be right back.
(sotto)
Roger? Do you have my money?

Roger nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Listen, I'm almost done with a
client. Wants to stage a massive
season of only Portuguese sea
shanties. Can pay in cash. I'm not
asking where it came from.

She shuts the door. Roger walks back into the antechamber.
From the studio, we hear loud YELLING -

REBECCA (O.S.)
It's unfathomable to me that it's
the third week we've been
performing and yet you don't know
the choreography! And that's why
you screwed up the lift! You screw
up the steps, you screw up the
lift!

In the **STUDIO**

The dancers are frozen, witnessing the outburst. Sylvia looks
at the pianist while Rebecca stares daggers at the lone male
dancer of the Red Dancers, GEORGE (30).

SYLVIA
Rebecca, I'm sure it was not
intentional.
(MORE)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Can we try that ending section again, and then go into the new material?

REBECCA

It doesn't matter if it was intentional!

(to George)

You think we can't do this without you?

SYLVIA

That's enough. Rebecca. Stop.

GEORGE

I think you're going to have to do this without me.

George walks out, past Roger, who has been WATCHING. Rebecca watches him go.

REBECCA

(to the other dancers)

If any of you want to join him, if you don't want to be here, if you think this is a joke. Be my guest. Follow him. None of you? Now we have to re-choreograph the entire goddamn last movement. Let's do it once, so I can see what needs to shift.

The pianist is standing, waiting. Rebecca nods at him. He resumes playing the ending sequence.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

From the beginning of my last solo!

The now-familiar **Copeland piece** begins. Dancers make their last formations, Rebecca runs on, dances, and then, at this moment, Alice opens the door. The client leaves.

ALICE

Roger? I'm ready for you.

Roger ignores her. Instead he walks into the studio, as if pulled inside by gravity. He does the LIFT that he saw George do with Rebecca.

He holds Rebecca in the top of the torch lift, even as she wriggles and struggles. The pianist stops playing.

Roger lets her down, slowly. A long moment. They stare at each other. Roger, preternaturally calm.

REBECCA
What the hell was that?

ROGER
I'd like to join your company. I'm
a quick study.

Sylvia glances at Roger, at Rebecca.

SYLVIA
Roger? He's staying with us.

REBECCA
That's not what you said your name
was, when I met you outside John
Reed.

ROGER
Ah, it isn't?

REBECCA
No, you said Randolph. Randolph
something.

ROGER
Oh, yeah, I go by Roger.

A long beat. Rebecca looks as if she's about to blow a fuse
again, and then gathers herself, and instead, nods slowly and
regards Roger.

REBECCA
Rehearsals are Monday, Wednesday,
and Friday at 1:00 PM. I'll catch
you up on Monday before warm-up.

ROGER
Thank you. Thank you, all.

Roger strides past Alice on the way out.

ALICE
What the hell did you just do?

ROGER
Alice, do you trust me?

ALICE
I might.

ROGER
Alice, do you trust me?

ALICE
I don't know, you're frightening
me.

ROGER
Don't give my spot away.

ALICE
You have until the end of today.

ROGER
Alice, don't give my spot away. I
promise I will have that \$2,000.
You just need to trust me.

39

EXT. NEW YORK THEATER - DAY

Louis waits outside at the opening to the stairwell and
paces. Roger bounds down the steps, two at a time.

LOUIS
How did it go?

Roger walks purposefully past Louis, a spring in his step.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm proud of you. How did
Alice take it? Everything go
alright?

Roger gathers himself.

ROGER
She relinquished the spot
immediately.

LOUIS
That's wonderful! Oh, that's just
marvelous, son. Okay, now we need
to get going. We need to swing by
your place and get your things,
first, and then, that gives us
about a half hour to catch the
elevated to the train station.

ROGER
Father?

LOUIS
Yes, come on, we need to move.

ROGER

I- one thing. I may not go home with you today, just yet. I want to stay here, take care of a few things.

LOUIS

You don't want to come home?

ROGER

Not yet. Just have some loose ends to tie. I'm sorry, I know you'll be upset.

LOUIS

No, I understand. Say good-bye to people. Get your things together. You're doing the right thing.

Roger walks away from his father, bounding.

ROGER

Thank you.

LOUIS

I'll take the train back. You meet me in a couple days. When you've... tied up loose ends. As you say.

40

INT. ROGER'S SETTLEMENT HOUSE ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Roger starts putting up the posters he's salvaged from his old apartment. Ripped *Ballet Russes* posters.

From off-screen, we hear a RUMBLING NOISE, getting steadily louder. It becomes perceptible as loud chanting and banging.

[Note: bracketed text is in Russian]

WOMAN CHANTING CALL (O.S.)

[I dance!]

WOMEN CHANTING RESPONSE (O.S.)

[We dance!]

WOMAN CHANTING CALL (O.S.)

[I dance to break!]

WOMEN CHANTING RESPONSE (O.S.)

[We dance to break!]

In the hall, the Red Dancers, carrying kegs of beer and moonshine in wagons. The residents of the house poke their heads out, watch the procession -

RED DANCERS (UNISON)
We dance to break our chains, our
chains, we dance to break our
chains!

They get to the door, two younger dancers fiddling with the lids to two bulging, gigantic bottles of bubbly beer.

Rebecca and Sylvia start the BANGING on Roger's door in time with the chant.

RED DANCERS (IN UNISON) (CONT'D)
[Red Dancers! Red Dancers! Red
Dancers! Red Dancers! Red Dancers!]

Roger opens the door, overwhelmed --

The younger dancers SPRAY ROGER'S FACE WITH THE BEER, POUR IT ON HIM.

RED DANCERS (CONT'D)
[BOTTOMS UP! BOTTOMS UP! BOTTOMS
UP!]

Rebecca thrusts the handle of MOONSHINE at him. She holds up the bottom and pours it into his mouth, he leans back.

It tastes like poison, he can't get it down and it dribbles down Roger's cheeks. He sputters and doubles over.

The Red Dancers CHEER and clap him on the back. Bawdy. They start hugging Roger.

RED DANCERS (CONT'D)
[Sit and bleed! Sit and bleed!]

PAULINE
(to Roger)
Go sit on your bed.

Roger takes a seat. They form a circle around Roger. The women begin singing.

Rebecca steps forward and sits on the bed. She brandishes a SWITCHBLADE.

REBECCA
Give me your palm.

Roger flinches.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Do you, Roger Baum, promise to uphold the tenets for which we stand? For the equality of all mankind, of all marginalized sexes, races, and social classes. To dedicate yourself to the creation of a new, twentieth-century human. If so, say *da, Vozhd.*

ROGER

Da, vozhd?

REBECCA

Do you, Roger Baum, promise to give your all, to be industrious and hardworking, to represent the Red Dancers with everything in your soul? If so, say *da, Vozhd.*

ROGER

Da, vozhd.

REBECCA

With his blood, Roger becomes our brother. Welcome to the Red Dancers. Bring forth the contracts.

Sylvia produces two identical documents. Rebecca intertwines her left palm with Roger's and places them side by side.

RED DANCERS

[Red Dancers! Red Dancers! Red Dancers!]

Sylvia SLICES the switchblade across both their palms.

ROGER

Aaah!

Sylvia lays out the documents on the bed and gives Rebecca and Roger each a quill.

REBECCA

One for you and one for us.

Using her left palm as an inkwell, Rebecca signs both. Roger copies her and does the same.

ROGER

Who is the name and signature above Rebecca's?

PAULINE

The American premier. Or he will be
after the revolution.

REBECCA

You don't know who Earl Browder is?

A tense moment.

ROGER

I was only joking.

Sarah laughs. Rebecca looks at Sylvia seriously. Sylvia
flashes back a happy smile, like, *it's okay, Rebecca, chill.*

41 **INT. SETTLEMENT HOUSE - NIGHT**

Rebecca and Sylvia are among the last to go. They pick up
leftover streamers and confetti lazily as they walk down the
hall in silence.

The moment they are away from the eyes of their dancers, they
are back to the relationship strain from before.

SYLVIA

I have to clean this sty now.

Sylvia walks Rebecca to the threshold. As Rebecca moves to
leave, she turns back.

REBECCA

I'm being asked to assassinate
Mayor LaGuardia. At the Soviet
Union Recognition March on Mayday.

Sylvia tears up. Says nothing and embraces Rebecca. Off
Sylvia - empathy and fear and pride mixed.

42 **INT. STANDARD OIL BUILDING - MORNING**

Roger walks up to the Rockefellers' Secretary (from before.)
She looks Roger up and down.

SECRETARY

Mr. Rockefeller won't be in until
noon today.

ROGER

Oh, is that right? Does he have
anything tomorrow, or maybe Friday?

She turns her focus to her books. Roger sees a BUSINESSMAN pushing through the turnstile, and PIGGYBACKS after him, getting in the Elevator as it's closing.

SECRETARY

Stop, sir!

43

INT. STANDARD OIL BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

We see the placard for **J. Randall Ganz, Bureau of Investigation, Assistant Director**

Roger raps on the door three times, looking over his shoulder frantically.

GANZ

It's unlocked.

Roger enters.

GANZ (CONT'D)

Nelson isn't in yet.

ROGER

I'm not here to see Nelson.

GANZ

I don't have time for social appointments.

Roger goes to the door and locks it. Ganz pulls out a GUN and points it at Roger.

GANZ (CONT'D)

You might not want to do that.

Roger walks up to the desk and gives Ganz a long manilla envelope.

GANZ (CONT'D)

What is this?

ROGER

Look in the envelope.

Ganz gets up and moves to the door with the gun trained on Roger. Footsteps can be heard in the hall.

Ganz unlocks the door and pulls out of the envelope -- the PAPER from Roger's initiation, with the blood oath stains and EARL BROWDER'S SIGNATURE.

Roger holds up his scarred palm, rips off a BANDAGE.

ROGER (CONT'D)
I'm going to be your informant.

GANZ
(reading)
The *red dancers*? So what, you cut yourself and rubbed it over a forgery.

ROGER
Look at the name above mine.

Ganz sees Earl Browder's signature.

ROGER (CONT'D)
That's your American Premier.

GANZ
Goddamn. So it *is* Browder.

Security RAP on the door. Ganz puts away his gun. Motions for Roger to go hide behind the desk. Roger scurries behind, and -

Ganz sits just in time. Security open the door.

GANZ (CONT'D)
Yes?

SECURITY GUARD
Sorry to disturb you, sir, we're looking for an intruder. He slipped past security this morning.

GANZ
And you thought he'd be in here?

SECURITY GUARD
Apologies for the disturbance.

GANZ
Mm.

Ganz closes the door. Roger crawls out from under the desk. Ganz stands.

GANZ (CONT'D)
I don't like you. In fact, I hate sniveling brats who use New York as a personal playground.

Ganz rummages in his desk and takes out a shorter, thick envelope.

GANZ (CONT'D)
But, Robert...

ROGER
Roger.

GANZ
I don't care. If you can give me
about ten names of Browder's bureau
heads by next week...

He throws Roger the thick envelope.

GANZ (CONT'D)
Then you'll get what's in there,
multiplied by 5. There's a fire
stairwell three doors down on the
right. It will deposit you in a
back alley. Go now before I change
my mind.

Roger exits.

Ganz locks the door behind Roger, and walks back to his desk. Sitting, Ganz INSPECTS the contents of the Manilla envelope, the signatures and blood oath.

Electrified, he takes out a KEY from his pocket and unlocks a locked Desk DRAWER. He takes out a page of STATIONERY with two flags printed in its letterhead: an AMERICAN FLAG and a NAZI SWASTIKA FLAG. Between the flags at the top of the page, printed:

THE FRIENDS OF NEW GERMANY

Ganz places the page into the typewriter, dials it into place. Begins typing:

Dear Heinz,

I believe I have found our informant.

44

EXT. STANDARD OIL BUILDING, FIRE DOOR - DAY

Roger exits the building, starts running. Panting, a safe distance away, he shakes the envelope with his eyes closed, feels its contours, opens it:

30 gleaming hundred dollar bills.

Roger leans against a building. Vision goes blurry. **Surprise Me, by Mallrat feat. Azealia Banks, begins to play.**

As we refocus again, between people passing on the street, A DANCER appears, the ghostly apparition from the beginning. He or she leads us to a GROUP OF OTHERS, a GHOSTLY COMPANY in the street.

Roger begins running, the hints of a smile beginning on his face. Passersby stop and stare as he pushes through groups of people.

More dancers flicker in the mid-distance. Suddenly it's TWELVE dancers, six couples partnering on pointe. It's a SOLOIST doing rapid *chaînés*, *piqué turns*, *grand jetés*, along the tracks. It's a WHOLE COMPANY.

Deep breath, off Roger, manically grinning -

END PILOT