

ACT ONE

The stage is dark - dark and quiet - but not for long. A LOUD EXPLOSION sounds from offstage - distant, but not too distant. An equally loud FLASH OF LIGHT accompanies the cacophony. Another EXPLOSION follows - then another - then another - growing in intensity - each accompanied by one or more FLASHES OF LIGHT. We are in a war zone of some sort. Where, we don't know. Why, we don't know. All we know is that we can feel the intensity of the fighting in the air. The noise becomes almost unbearable for us as it rises and crescendos in greater and greater levels of clamor.

Another LOUD EXPLOSION and another BLAST OF LIGHT - but this one is different from the rest. It seems to be the end of the barrage. Instant silence follows the finale. The LIGHT, however, remains. It has lit up the figure of a gangly, bald twig of a man standing center stage. His name is JOHN DOS PASSOS and HE looks like a college professor who has become ensconced too long behind his lectern. We sense a calm, serene air about the man which might easily be mistaken for opaque banality - but not quite. There is an inner drive within that propels DOS PASSOS towards climbing further heights of life in search of some larger, dream-filled purpose.

With a curious mixture of calmness and intensity, DOS PASSOS peers out at us and speaks:

DOS PASSOS

What makes a man? I have often wondered - wondered and wandered - wandered for an answer that always seems to elude me. Is it the flesh and bone we see before our eyes? Is it the spiritual soul inside that somersaults like a breeze in our lungs? Or is it something grander still? It seems, indeed, at this time of history, that man only exists in the plural - as "men" - "men" who come together to fight for a cause that they cannot hope to understand or win on their own. Perhaps that unity of purpose is

DOS PASSOS (CONT)

what makes us uniquely human - and, if so, then we live in an age for celebrating that humanity. The year is 1937 and borders between countries have been replaced by borders between causes - communism, fascism, socialism, capitalism - ideas greater and grander than countries could ever be. Perhaps, just perhaps, a man is made by the cause to which he dedicates his fortune and his future... which is to say that anyone who does not take a cause might as well have been born a mongoose.

A SPOTLIGHT rises on a desk at the back of the stage. A stalwart-looking, handsome, determined man, aged 30-40, is sitting behind it - JOSÉ ROBLES. We immediately sense a certain grandiose bearing about HIM that demands our respect and excites our curiosity. HE wears official-looking attire that indicates some indeterminate position in both military and governmental circles. JOSÉ ROBLES has heard DOS PASSOS speak and looks up to address HIM:

ROBLES

Ah, my friend, you sound homesick.

DOS PASSOS

I am - and for a home that isn't even mine. It's your home and I am most envious of you.

ROBLES

Envious... of me?

DOS PASSOS

Let us say "admiring."

ROBLES

You are the world-famous novelist.

DOS PASSOS

You are the one who's the soldier.

ROBLES

You flatter me. I am not a soldier.

DOS PASSOS

In my eyes, you have always been at least that.

ROBLES

Not when there are actual men dying in the field.

DOS PASSOS

Yet you at least set foot on the battlefield. I have never stepped within a thousand miles of a skirmish. I write about other people doing things without having done any of those things for myself. You are different. You ride the waves of history like a Neptune riding the ocean.

ROBLES

For man, there is only one answer - action.

DOS PASSOS

I would expect nothing else... from a soldier.

ROBLES

Or anyone - for who else will act if man does not?

DOS PASSOS

And so you have acted.

ROBLES

No. Not just me. All men - all true men. It is our time to act, to take the future, to shake it loose from its cage. The people of Spain have spent too long sitting down, opening our mouths, waiting to be fed. The monarchy turned our country into a museum filled with victories from the past. People came here to stare at what we used to be. I want people to come here and stare at what we are. And after that? They can come here and they can dream about what we soon will be.

DOS PASSOS

A country of free men?

ROBLES

A country of active men.

DOS PASSOS

Yes. I know the difference. We have grown evermore lethargic back in the States. The Depression still depresses, although the employment lines grow shorter. They shrink, however, thanks only to friendly fiats from Washington. We don't move anymore unless a bureaucrat points and says "go there."

ROBLES

I know. That is why I left. The revolution in Spain reminded me about the world that shrieks and writhes beyond Columbia - beyond the books - beyond the lecterns. I had grown too content to dream up the future in my head. I knew I had to be a part of what was happening in my country.

DOS PASSOS

So you left.

ROBLES

So I left.

DOS PASSOS

And I did not.

ROBLES

It is not your country.

DOS PASSOS

Today, José, Spain is everyone's country.

ROBLES

(A little forebodingly.)

Let us hope it stays that way.

DOS PASSOS

(Not understanding.)

Surely, Franco is losing.

ROBLES

But we are not winning.

DOS PASSOS

You will. You must. The world will not let you fail. Hitler in Germany. Mussolini in Italy. There cannot be Franco in Spain. The knuckles of the civilized world are bone-white from too much clinging to our humanity. We can't let go - not this time - or we will all fall into the abyss. God only knows what awaits us if the fascists win over the world.

ROBLES smiles again.

ROBLES

That is why you are a writer.

DOS PASSOS

A writer, but not a man of action.

ROBLES

"The pen is mightier than the sword."

DOS PASSOS

You can tell that a writer wrote that.

DOS PASSOS and ROBLES smile together.

DOS PASSOS

Is Margara well?

ROBLES

She is.

DOS PASSOS

And Coco and Marguerite?

ROBLES

Both well.

DOS PASSOS

And you? You are safe, my friend?

ROBLES

No, thank God - for that would mean I am not fighting in the battle.

DOS PASSOS

I am coming to see you.

ROBLES

You are not serious, Dos!

DOS PASSOS

Yes. I am coming in a few months, in April. I am working with a genius director from Holland - Joris Ivens. Perhaps you have heard of him? He is a friend of you, of me, of the revolution and he is producing a film to draw attention to the savagery of Franco and his army. I am coming to Madrid for the filming. I will be one of the narrators in the film. It's called "The Spanish Earth" and it will shine light on your new republic for all the world to see. The world cannot keep its eyes closed anymore. It has done that for far too long.

ROBLES

Yes, it is true - and it has been equally far too long since I last saw you.

DOS PASSOS

Five years.

ROBLES

Six years.

DOS PASSOS

All the more reason to see you.

ROBLES

I will count the days.

DOS PASSOS

I will count them with you.

ROBLES

And, when they are done, I will count the hours.

Another LOUD EXPLOSION causes the SPOTLIGHT on ROBLES to fall. DOS PASSOS is now standing on the stage alone. HE looks at the loneliness around HIM and then turns to us with a smile:

DOS PASSOS

What does make a man? Perhaps... his friends.

ANOTHER LOUD EXPLOSION causes the LIGHTS abruptly to rise on the set. We are in the lobby of the Hotel Florida. The hotel itself is bathed in a lurid gaudiness of stucco painted over with an unsightly (if intriguing) cacophony of pastel. One might perhaps be able to describe the décor as a cross between a grimy motor lodge in Arizona and an elite resort in Barcelona. Sometimes one impression wins, sometimes the other - and, indeed, it's rather enjoyable that way. We can't help but stare at the hotel as if it were some relic of the age that should be treasured before it is bombed into rubble.

In terms of layout, the lobby is large, open, airy, with very limited furniture. There is a couch and some chairs around the center of the stage to create some illusion of comfort. There is a front door off to one side of the stage that exits onto the tumultuous streets of Madrid. A reception desk for the concierge stands rather proudly in back of the stage. A small door behind the desk leads into a small office. A stairway is also present that leads up to a second and even a third story of the building. Off to the far side we find a small carved-out area with a small dining table, a clock on the wall, and glass doors that lead out into a garden just beyond.

Most noticeable of all - a huge banner strung across the wall proclaiming: "Welcome, allies from America!" - courtesy of the Spanish government. Various other posters broadcast patriotic declarations: "Viva la República!" "Viva el Socialismo!"

At first, DOS PASSOS remains alone onstage amid this tacky site - until:

MALE VOICE

Dos! You bastard!

DOS PASSOS turns to face a huge volcano of a man standing on the stairway - ERNEST HEMINGWAY. HE is aged a vibrant 40 and looks not like a statue of some great bearded general who has managed to jump off his perch and stomp through the world like Godzilla. HEMINGWAY has a personality not unlike a vodka breath that can knock over unsuspecting people in a 50-mile radius. We can't help but feel nervous taking our eyes off this giant for even a second. Perhaps, in doing so, we will miss some great moment of history.

Spying the mountain before HIM, DOS PASSOS smiles patiently:

DOS PASSOS

It's nice to see you, too, Ernest.

HEMINGWAY

I suppose I should wish you a "good morning."

DOS PASSOS

I'd appreciate that, if it weren't the afternoon.

HEMINGWAY

Shit.

DOS PASSOS

I'm guessing you just woke up.

HEMINGWAY

I have.

DOS PASSOS

I shall refrain from asking.

HEMINGWAY

It doesn't matter. I'm telling anyway.

DOS PASSOS

Of course you are.

HEMINGWAY

I went to this little bar down the block - the Casa Cobana. The air was thick and the women were thicker. I mean thick - thick and juicy - like a guava.

DOS PASSOS

You need not elaborate.

HEMINGWAY

One of the women even had a name - Marta. "Call me Marta," she said to me - so I called her Marta. I called her "Marta" the whole damn night.

DOS PASSOS

And you lived happily ever after?

HEMINGWAY

No - the morning came and I didn't give a shit anymore.

DOS PASSOS

And here you are.

HEMINGWAY

And here you are.

DOS PASSOS

You look surprised to see me.

HEMINGWAY

I bet Juan that you would run crying back to Valencia before you were within ten miles of Madrid. I owe him three shots of anís. You have more balls than I thought.

DOS PASSOS

I am flattered.

HEMINGWAY

Don't be. You still have one more to go.

DOS PASSOS smiles wryly.

DOS PASSOS

You haven't changed a bit, I see.

HEMINGWAY

I don't see any improvements with you either.

DOS PASSOS

I would have to agree with you on those sentiments.

(A beat.)

How is the filming going?

HEMINGWAY

It's been going "swell." You might as well turn around and go home.

DOS PASSOS

I couldn't do that.

HEMINGWAY

You think we need you?

DOS PASSOS

It is more about my needing the cause.

HEMINGWAY

Killing fascists.

DOS PASSOS

Saving the Spanish people.

HEMINGWAY

By helping to kill fascists.

DOS PASSOS shakes HIS head wearily.

DOS PASSOS

You're like a little boy, Ernest.

HEMINGWAY

Better than being like a little girl, Dos.

DOS PASSOS

Perhaps.

HEMINGWAY

You know what happens to little girls?

DOS PASSOS

No.

HEMINGWAY

They grow up and they get fucked.

DOS PASSO

Of course.

HEMINGWAY

Do you want to grow up and get fucked?

DOS PASSOS

Not particularly.

HEMINGWAY

That's because it's always better to be the fucker than the fuckee. It's the same with the fascists. They're either going to fuck us or we're going to fuck them. It's not about workers frolicking like fairies in the corn fields together.

DOS PASSOS

Perhaps not - but we'll agree to disagree. I suppose I shouldn't be so spoiled either way. I'm just glad you've managed to find a cause greater than yourself. I'm sure a wonderful novel will come out of it - maybe even be a sequel.

HEMINGWAY

Only losers write sequels.

(A beat.)

By the way - congratulations on finishing your trilogy.

DOS PASSOS

I appreciate that - thank you.

HEMINGWAY

I saw your mug on the cover of *Time*.

DOS PASSOS

You liked the picture, I hope.

HEMINGWAY

It rivals anything by Picasso.

DOS PASSOS

You are too kind.

HEMINGWAY

No - I'm not. I took the goddamn thing and I tossed it out of the window.

DOS PASSOS

I take it you did not approve.

HEMINGWAY

I was conducting an experiment.

DOS PASSOS

Did you learn anything?

HEMINGWAY

Yeah - *Time* doesn't fly.

DOS PASSOS smiles wryly.

DOS PASSOS

For us, Ernest, I think it does - and has. We have been friends for a long time, you and I.

HEMINGWAY

Too long.

DOS PASSOS

I doubt friendship can ever be too long.

HEMINGWAY

That's because you haven't met you yet.

DOS PASSOS

Granted, yes, I lack a certain perspective.

HEMINGWAY

You do - and do you know what I lack?

DOS PASSOS

Do I only get one option?

HEMINGWAY

Food.

DOS PASSOS

That wasn't going to be my guess.

HEMINGWAY

So where is it?

DOS PASSOS

Where is what?

HEMINGWAY

Damn it, Dos - I asked you to bring food from Valencia. Franco's army is outside the city and they're blockading my stomach. I've been reduced to a sex and whiskey diet.

DOS PASSOS

My sincere apologies, then - to you and your liver. I'm afraid I forgot about picking up food in Valencia. I only have some chocolates and a bag of oranges.

DOS PASSOS gestures to a large suitcase near the reception desk.

HEMINGWAY

What the hell am I going to do with a bag of oranges?

DOS PASSOS

I'm sure you and Marta can think of something.

HEMINGWAY

Then what in God's name were you doing in Valencia?

DOS PASSOS

I was looking for someone.

HEMINGWAY

Looking for who?

DOS PASSOS

For whom.

HEMINGWAY

Screw you.

DOS PASSOS

A friend of mine - José Robles.

HEMINGWAY

I remember him.

DOS PASSOS

You've never met him.

HEMINGWAY

I have - in my nightmares - from your drawling on and on about him.

DOS PASSOS

He's my friend.

HEMINGWAY

Well, what the hell am I?

DOS PASSOS

You are my friend, as well.

HEMINGWAY

So you're going to let your "friend" starve?

DOS PASSOS

Oh, Ernest, I think you have enough grain in your silo.

DOS PASSOS is pointing at HEMINGWAY's stomach.

HEMINGWAY

I wish we weren't friends, so I could hate you.

GELLHORN

Why should that stop you?

DOS PASSOS looks up and notices a sphinx-like statue of a woman descending the staircase. HER name is MARTHA GELLHORN and SHE has a solid, hard, intense, but ultimately sexual nature about HER. SHE reminds one of a female praying mantis that would gladly bite off the head of her mate if given a chance. SHE also has an all-knowing way about HER that radiates a certain eeriness. HEMINGWAY immediately blooms with cockiness upon GELLHORN's entrance.

HEMINGWAY

Ah! Dos! I'd like to introduce you to Martha Gellhorn. *Collier's* sent her to report on the war. She's the best goddamn journalist I've ever known - Biblically or otherwise. She knows more about this war than anyone, including Franco.

HEMINGWAY (CONT)

(To GELLHORN.)

This is John Dos Passos, the second greatest novelist in America.

(To DOS PASSOS)

You may have met Gellhorn here.

DOS PASSOS

I'm afraid not, no.

GELLHORN

The pleasure is mutual.

DOS PASSOS

It's an honor to meet you, Miss Gellhorn.

GELLHORN

Please, don't call me "Miss." It makes me sound so virginal. I'm not, you know.

HEMINGWAY

I can vouch for that.

DOS PASSOS

(To GELLHORN.)

Should I call you by your first name?

GELLHORN

No.

DOS PASSOS

What should I call you, then?

GELLHORN

Don't.

GELLHORN extends HER hand roughly towards DOS PASSOS. DOS PASSOS considers the hand a moment and then shakes it.

DOS PASSOS

I understand you are a woman who knows many things. Perhaps you have heard of a friend of mine - José Robles.

GELLHORN

I've heard the name.

DOS PASSOS

Do you know where he is?

GELLHORN

No. I only keep track of important people.

He is my friend.

DOS PASSOS

Precisely.

GELLHORN

GELLHORN starts to move to the exit.

HEMINGWAY

(To GELLHORN.)
Where are you going now?

GELLHORN

I'm going to the top of the Telefonica Building to show my ass to Franco's gunners on the hill.

HEMINGWAY

Sounds like fun. I'll be up soon.

GELLHORN

Don't be late. I hate men who come late.

GELLHORN snarls and exits. HEMINGWAY turns and grins cockily at DOS PASSOS. DOS PASSOS stares back with a paper smile hiding a vague revulsion.

DOS PASSOS

So, Ernest, how's Pauline?

HEMINGWAY

Pauline who?

DOS PASSOS

Your wife.

HEMINGWAY

My current wife.

DOS PASSOS

Of course, yes.

HEMINGWAY

Same as always - getting older. How's Katy?

DOS PASSOS

She is doing well. She didn't come with me to Spain. She decided to stay back in Paris.

HEMINGWAY

Glad to know she hasn't left you.

DOS PASSOS

We've managed to stay together.

HEMINGWAY

It must be your mind.

DOS PASSOS

Is that what you like about Miss Gellhorn - her mind?

HEMINGWAY

Only when she's thinking about me.

DOS PASSOS

I'm sure she doesn't disappoint you.

HEMINGWAY

Wait till she takes her clothes off. It gets better.

DOS PASSOS

(Mockingly.)

Oh, to be Franco's gunners...

POSADA

Careful, my friend - those sentiments may get you arrested.

DOS PASSOS turns to find a good-natured looking man has entered through the front door. His name is JUAN POSADA and HE is Chief of Police of Madrid. HE appears not unlike a Sancho Panza who has managed to break out of his subservient role and take on the world. Perhaps HE is not quite ready for the responsibility, perhaps HE is still too jovial for the part, but we can't help but root for HIM nonetheless. POSADA is eminently likeable - perhaps too likeable - forever sporting a smiling façade regardless of the storm raging on around HIM. One wonders if HE notices the storm at all or particularly cares who it displaces. The answer is probably "no" either way.

Upon seeing POSADA, DOS PASSOS smiles broadly. HE goes to POSADA and THEY embrace.

DOS PASSOS

Juan.

POSADA

Dos.

DOS PASSOS

You look like a fascist in that suit.

POSADA

Is it not true? I look like one, yes - but, you know, I still feel like the little boy stealing bread from the grocer's cart. Who would ever think it? Now the little crook is Chief of Police of Madrid. I wear the uniform, yes, but my heart is still the heart of that little boy. And now? Now most of the men who used to arrest me have themselves been arrested.

DOS PASSOS

I suppose that's justice.

POSADA

I suppose that's life. I do not pretend it all is just.

POSADA smiles gently and then abruptly turns to HEMINGWAY:

POSADA

You owe me three shot of anís, Hem.

HEMINGWAY

I know, goddamit. You don't have to remind me.

POSADA

Ah, but I do.

HEMINGWAY

The Casa Cobana, tonight. Don't be late. Miss Gellhorn hates men who come late. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a date on top of the Telefonica Building.

HEMINGWAY loosens HIS pants, crosses to the front door, and turns sharply to DOS PASSOS:

HEMINGWAY

Don't do anything I would do. You probably wouldn't survive it.

HEMINGWAY drops his pants, showing off some gaudy shorts, and exits through the front door.

POSADA

I sense some fury in our friend.

DOS PASSOS

Fury, yes - but that is how Ernest expresses friendship these days. He spoke a different language when he and I were struggling writers in search of company. When poverty smiles on you, you are happy for companionship. When success slaps you in the face, you come to expect adulation. Companionship, in

DOS PASSOS (CONT)

comparison, is a rather awkward step down. It's worse when one of a pair is more successful than the other.

POSADA

You mean you... or him?

DOS PASSOS

No one knows. That's the problem.

POSADA

Ah, well, let us talk about other things. This is your first night in our beautiful city. I would say "Welcome to Madrid," but it is rather a mocking phrase.

A LOUD EXPLOSION sounds.

DOS PASSOS

Miss Gellhorn must be disrobed by now.

POSADA

She and Hem are attached at the hip.

DOS PASSOS

And elsewhere, as well, it seems.

POSADA smiles broadly.

POSADA

Did you just arrive?

DOS PASSOS

Yes, about half an hour ago.

POSADA

Have you checked into the hotel?

DOS PASSOS

Not yet, no. I haven't seen any member of the staff.

POSADA

Forgive us. We are civilized, too, in Spain - but bread comes before etiquette. The city has not been the same since Franco's army besieged us last year. The government fled, I say with shame, but most of the people stayed. You see, my friend, the people are the root of the tree. Governments are merely the leaves - and, like leaves, they fall.

DOS PASSOS

I remember your saying that to me twenty years ago on that mountainside in Toledo. Back then I was more concerned about my falling than the government.

POSADA

That is because you are an American. Your governments don't fall. They just change colors with the seasons.

Another LOUD EXPLOSION.

POSADA

(Peering at DOS PASSOS intently.)
You noticed the Mexicans?

DOS PASSOS

How do you mean... "Mexicans?"

POSADA

That's what we call the Russians. It is a joke.

DOS PASSOS

I suppose you need as many as you can get.

POSADA

And more! They speak the same language as we, the Russians, but only of the heart. We would be dead by now if not for the international brigades they are organizing and the arms they are shipping to us. Comrade Stalin's support is turning many people here against the democracies. We do not get help from the American, French, and British governments.

DOS PASSOS

I'm afraid brave actions are not typically found on the resumes of our statesmen.

A gentleman comes down the stairway - RAMON MAYAGUEZ. HE looks intriguingly like José Robles. DOS PASSOS sees HIM and immediately shoots towards HIM.

DOS PASSOS

My God! José, is that...

DOS PASSOS freezes upon getting a closer glimpse of the man. MAYAGUEZ is clearly not José Robles. HE has a mustache that distinguishes his face and adds a dark, mysterious nature to the man. HIS dress is very matter-of-fact, colorless, drab, business-like. MAYAGUEZ is actually the hotel concierge. There is an ambiguous nature about the man that reminds one of the sinister. HE seems too composed, too quiet, too plain, as if putting on an act to cover up some burning secret.

MAYAGUEZ

You must be Señor Dos Passos.

DOS PASSOS

I am, yes. I don't believe we've met.

POSADA

You haven't. That's Ramon Mayaguez, the hotel concierge.

MAYAGUEZ has moved behind the
concierge's desk.

MAYAGUEZ

(To DOS PASSOS.)

I apologize, Señor, that I was not here to serve you. I was assisting another guest with her window. It shattered after the last barrage. We are short of staff.

DOS PASSOS

How many people work here?

MAYAGUEZ

Including me - one.

DOS PASSOS

You must be exhausted.

MAYAGUEZ

It is no worry. I have my work, you have yours.

DOS PASSOS

I am only narrating a film.

POSADA

Your film, Dos, could play an important part in saving the Republic. The American, British, and French governments will only declare for us if they are pressured by their people. For this, our story must be told - and you are a storyteller. The truth to us is worth even more than armaments.

(A beat.)

Almost.

DOS PASSOS

Is that why the government condescends to let Miss Gellhorn strip on top of the Telefonica Building?

POSADA

That, yes, and to raise the morale of the city.

DOS PASSOS and POSADA exchange a
cordial smile.

DOS PASSOS

(To MAYAGUEZ.)
I apologize, Señor.

MAYAGUEZ

There is no reason to apologize.

DOS PASSOS

I mean before - when you first entered. I thought you were someone else.

MAYAGUEZ

I am sorry I could not oblige.

POSADA

Who is this other lucky person?

DOS PASSOS

My friend, José. José Robles. You know him.

POSADA

I do - and, since the revolution, have come to know him more. He was working in the Ministry of War.

DOS PASSOS

Was?

POSADA

Is.

DOS PASSOS

I know him from all those years ago when I was in Spain. I met him on a train to Toledo. We have been close friends ever since. He came to the States and served as a professor at Columbia until the monarchy was overthrown. I told him I was coming to Spain a few months ago and was hoping to find him.

POSADA

Did you stop at the Ministry?

DOS PASSOS

Yes, in Valencia, when I first arrived.

POSADA

You did not hear anything about your friend?

DOS PASSOS

No, I'm afraid no one could give me any information. I asked the Minister, as well, during my welcoming...

POSADA

You asked the Minister?

DOS PASSOS

Yes, but he knew nothing.

POSADA

That is a pity.

DOS PASSOS

I understand, with the fog of war, that people can get lost. I don't suppose you would be able to...

POSADA

I'll check with my friends. I have many friends in the city. Everyone wants to be friends with the Chief of Police. I'm much better than a defense attorney.

POSADA smiles broadly.

POSADA

I will leave you now. I have work to do - too much work.

DOS PASSOS

I can only imagine. I appreciate your help with José.

POSADA

Of course, my friend. We will take good care of you. You are a guest of the Republic, after all.

POSADA gestures to the banner on the wall and smiles. HE then turns and exits through the front door. MAYAGUEZ walks towards the suitcase in front of the reception desk.

MAYAGUEZ

Come, Señor - I will take you to your room.

DOS PASSOS takes the suitcase before MAYAGUEZ can reach it.

DOS PASSOS

It's all right. I can find it myself. My baggage is my own burden. I suppose we all of us should pay homage to the principles of *socialismo*.

A LOUD EXPLOSION sounds and causes the hotel to shake. DOS PASSOS pauses a moment and looks at the room around HIM. A certain melancholy air falls over his person.

DOS PASSOS

You have a beautiful country, Señor. It means a great deal to me. I was here many years ago, when I was a young man. I wanted to fight in the Great War, but my father preferred a live son to

DOS PASSOS (CONT)

a dead one. He sent me to study in Spain instead and I poured out all my youthly energies into her fields and mountains and cities and slums... and people. I received back more than I could have ever hoped or dreamed.

(A beat.)

Spain to me is youth - and now? Now it is youth still. You have a new government, a new country, a new chance. You are the future and this old man wants to be a part of it - and perhaps a little less old in the process.

MAYAGUEZ extends DOS PASSOS a dangling set of keys.

MAYAGUEZ

Room three-hundred and eight.

DOS PASSOS takes the keys and nods. Another LOUD EXPLOSION sounds. This one is even louder and more furious than the one before. It is followed by an equally loud cry from someone outside. A scream of pain? A cry of fury?

DOS PASSOS

Has someone been hurt?

MAYAGUEZ

No - that is Señor Hemingway.

HEMINGWAY'S VOICE

You goddamn fascist sons of bitches!

DOS PASSOS

Who is he yelling at?

MAYAGUEZ

Franco's army.

DOS PASSOS

I don't think even his voice could carry that far.

HEMINGWAY'S VOICE

Hit me, you bastards! I dare you! I dare you!

ANOTHER LOUD EXPLOSION. Instant silence. DOS PASSOS and MAYAGUEZ wait for a sound - then:

HEMINGWAY'S VOICE

You missed me, you goddamn sissies!

DOS PASSOS

Franco needs better aim.

A hectic, hurried woman comes bustling down the staircase - JOSEPHINE HERBST. SHE is about 40, plain-looking, very banal, bordering on mediocrity, yet managing to retain a certain brilliance about HER. We sense that JOSEPHINE ("JOSIE" to her friends) is a well-meaning woman who is frustrated at being a second-rate journalist despite the hard work SHE puts into her craft. SHE therefore has the perpetual energy of an up-and-comer even though HER hair is starting to turn gray - and, with the bombing, grayer still.

Hectically entering, JOSIE rushes over to MAYAGUEZ like a fluttering bird in a most uncomfortable cage:

JOSIE

Señor Mayaguez!

MAYAGUEZ shudders in clear annoyance.

MAYAGUEZ

How may I help now, Señorita?

JOSIE

The other window in my room just shattered.

MAYAGUEZ

I will be upstairs in a moment to fix it.

JOSIE

You need better glass when there's a war on.

DOS PASSOS

Hello Josie.

JOSIE turns and suddenly recognizes DOS PASSOS.

JOSIE

Dos! Oh, my God. How long have you been here?

DOS PASSOS

Almost an hour now.

JOSIE

(Uncertainly.)
It's so good to see you.

DOS PASSOS

(Reacting to her uncertainty.)
Is it?

JOSIE

Yes. It's just... this war is getting on my nerves. I was hoping we'd be sleeping a little less close to the front.

HEMINGWAY'S VOICE

Fuck you, Franco!

JOSIE

...and near quieter guests.

DOS PASSOS

How long have you been here?

JOSIE

I arrived three days ago. It seems like three years.

HEMINGWAY'S VOICE

You'll never get to catch me alive!

DOS PASSOS

Who are you on assignment for?

JOSIE

The North American Explorer.

DOS PASSOS

I've never heard of them.

JOSIE

That's what I'm afraid of.

HEMINGWAY'S VOICE

I'll eat you assholes for breakfast!

JOSIE glances off towards the front door.

DOS PASSOS

I think Ernest thinks the war is between him and Franco.

JOSIE

It may come down to that.

DOS PASSOS

Heaven help democracy.

JOSIE

Honestly, Dos, I'm so glad you're here. Hem and that woman of his are driving me up these extremely thin walls. I'm sleeping in the room right above theirs. I hear almost everything, all night long. You can imagine how terrifying it is.

DOS PASSOS

You said you have been here three days?

JOSIE

Three long days.

DOS PASSOS

You were in Valencia before?

JOSIE

Yes.

DOS PASSOS

Did you hear anything about José?

JOSIE

José?

DOS PASSOS

José Robles.

JOSIE

Oh. Yes. I mean... No, I haven't. Why do you ask?

DOS PASSOS

I'm looking for him and I thought you might have heard something. You have connections.

JOSIE

You make me sound like a real journalist. A train in The Yukon has more connections than I do.

DOS PASSOS

Yes, but your connections actually lead somewhere.

JOSIE

I think you're getting me confused with Gellhorn.

DOS PASSOS

No, Josie - I've known you for many years. You could hunt down a fox better than the hounds. José's old address in Valencia was vacant when I checked there. He and his family have moved more than a gypsy caravan.

JOSIE

(Reluctantly.)
I'll do my best.

DOS PASSOS

(Truly grateful.)
Thank you.

HEMINGWAY enters through the front door and immediately turns and calls back out at Franco - who is safe and sound some 100 miles away:

HEMINGWAY

You wait! I'll get you, you fascist asshole! I'll tear you apart and shit on your bones!

HEMINGWAY turns towards MAYAGUEZ, DOS PASSOS, and JOSIE - and as if to explain:

HEMINGWAY

I hate fucking fascists.

HEMINGWAY snorts, crosses the stage, and exits up the staircase.

JOSIE

I didn't think Hem would hate fucking anybody.

JOSIE turns to MAYAGUEZ and is about to speak, when:

MAYAGUEZ

The window, yes - I will be up to fix it soon.

JOSIE nods at MAYAGUEZ and turns back to DOS PASSOS:

JOSIE

I'll see you later, Dos. I have to make sure the walls in my room are still standing.

JOSIE smiles at DOS PASSOS and walks up the staircase. DOS PASSOS looks after HER for a moment.

MAYAGUEZ

(As if a reminder.)
Room three-hundred and eight, Señor.

DOS PASSOS

Yes. Yes, of course. Thank you.

DOS PASSOS takes his suitcase and his coat, walks to the staircase, puts his coat on one of a series of hooks on the wall, and walks up the stairs. MAYAGUEZ

peers after HIM in deep thought. We sense there are a million things running through HIS mind. GELLHORN enters suavely through the front door.

GELLHORN
He's a square peg in a round hole.

MAYAGUEZ
He's a guest of the government.

GELLHORN
The government makes mistake, which will soon be corrected.

MAYAGUEZ peers at HER quizzically.

GELLHORN
You are surprised. Don't be. I know everything.

MAYAGUEZ
I thought only God knows everything.

GELLHORN
That's because He talks to me.

MAYAGUEZ
I believe Señor Dos Passos may well be useful.

GELLHORN
So is toilet paper, but it's still full of shit.

MAYAGUEZ nods calmly.

MAYAGUEZ
You are back early, Señorita.

GELLHORN
My ass was getting sunburnt.

MAYAGUEZ
I am sorry. Would you like your normal afternoon drink?

GELLHORN
I didn't think it was afternoon yet.

MAYAGUEZ
It isn't.

GELLHORN
Then yes.