

and let somebody young with new ideas step in, maybe a woman or somebody of color, but honey, nobody with any real vision came forward and there was a lot of pressure on me to run again, so I caved and I did. This is the kind of thing I'd usually like to talk to you about, see if you think I did the right thing. Emma? If you're there? Please? *(Emma seems like she might pick up. Then, angrily.)* Okay, since this fucking machine is the only way to talk to you, let me tell you a few things you might not have thought of. When he first got involved in the spying, we're barely out of the Depression, that meant *thirty percent* unemployment, it meant you don't walk past a garbage can without someone elbow deep in it. This is the landscape of my father's childhood and young adulthood. Now who are the people speaking up on behalf of the destitute? The American Communist Party. Who is talking about racial equality, twenty-five years before the Civil Rights movement? Same answer. Who is calling attention to the fact that Russians are dying by the millions fighting fascism so that American hands can stay clean? Same answer, Emma. So who is my dad's allegiance to? Is it to J. Edgar Fucking Hoover? Is it to a president who fully intends to sell out the Soviets once Hitler is out of the way? No, it's to his party, it's to the honest working-class Russians who are dying so that he can be free. So that his kids, and their kids, that's *you*, could be free. You want to condemn him from where you're sitting, kiddo, from your Upper West Side / apartment, fine, but he's my father and I want nothing to do with it.

MEL. *(Having come upon him.)* Ben! *(Gently.)* Benji, Benji, Benji. *(She takes the phone from him and hangs it up.)*

End of Act One

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Mignell
Emma

ACT TWO

Scene 1

Emma's apartment. Emma is in PJs, smoking.

Miguel enters, quietly. She doesn't hear him.

Start

MIGUEL. Hey. *(She turns.)*

EMMA. Hey.

MIGUEL. I've been trying to call you.

EMMA. You have?

MIGUEL. Yeah, I think your phone's off the hook.

EMMA. Oh.

MIGUEL. *(Finding the phone indeed off the hook, and replacing it.)* "Oh." *(The phone immediately rings. Emma shakes her head. They wait it out. It stops ringing.)*

EMMA. It's good to see you.

MIGUEL. Yeah, you too.

EMMA. I have been feeling so terrible about /what I said.

MIGUEL. I know.

EMMA. No, let me say this, because it was actually completely not representative — it's not how I feel. At all.

MIGUEL. I know that, Em.

EMMA. Because I have so much respect for your work, I'm sure I haven't said enough that I think you have a fucking incredible political mind, and the left is very lucky to have you.

MIGUEL. I've also been told I have an amazing face.

EMMA. Miguel, I'm being serious.

MIGUEL. I know you are.

EMMA. I'm trying to tell you that I admire you, *so much*, and you've taught me a lot.

MIGUEL. *(Truly.)* Thank you.

EMMA. And I also think we've been really equal partners up to this point. *(Brief pause.)*

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MIGUEL. *(Unconvincingly, but really trying not to start a fight.)*
Yyyeah.

EMMA. Oh.

MIGUEL. No, in a lot of ways, yeah.

EMMA. You don't feel that way.

MIGUEL. Well ... I work for you. I mean, it's your fund and I work for you. I didn't think that was a controversial statement.

EMMA. It may not be, but it still makes me feel like shit, to hear you say it like that.

MIGUEL. How would you say it?

EMMA. I say you work *with* me. When people ask, that's what I say.

MIGUEL. But that's a euphemism. Isn't it? *(Brief pause.)* It hasn't bothered me, for the most part, I mean I'm a modern guy, and it is your fund, I came in / late.

EMMA. It obviously bothers you.

MIGUEL. Now it bothers me, yeah, when I'm trying to get Mumia off death row and home to his son and you're sitting here in your pajamas plying your — Sorry. Sorry. I didn't come here to get into another fight. *(He hands her a document.)* We finished a draft of the petition. Leonard wants your notes. I told him you have the flu. Nasty, stubborn, 1918-style flu. I told him you'd be back at work any day. *(She stares at the document.)*

EMMA. Do you think he's innocent?

MIGUEL. Who?

EMMA. Mumia.

MIGUEL. ... What?

EMMA. I've been wondering. I've been wondering about a lot of things.

MIGUEL. *(Calmly.)* I think he didn't receive a fair trial. I think he was railroaded by a racist judge, jury and prosecution. I think there's no way he'd be on death row if he weren't an outspoken political black man.

EMMA. Granted, but isn't it pretty likely he killed Daniel Faulkner? I just keep thinking, even though we're right about so many things, we're right he was railroaded, we're right the death penalty is racist, we're right the government systematically punishes vocal progressives, but even being right about all those things, the end result could be that we free a man who's guilty of murder.

MIGUEL. He's not guilty.

EMMA. But if he is? *(The phone rings. Miguel impulsively picks up.)*

MIGUEL. Hello?

EMMA. No-no-no! *(Lights up on Ben.)*

BEN. Hello! Hi. Miguel. Oh good, hi. It's Ben, Emma's dad.

MIGUEL. Hi Ben. *(Emma shaking her head.)*

BEN. *Como estas?*

MIGUEL. Good. Uh, good. How are you?

BEN. I've been better. As I'm sure you know. Is Emma there? *(Miguel looks pleadingly to Emma, who turns away.)*

MIGUEL. She is here. I'm, uh, I'm not sure if she's gonna get on the phone. Sorry.

BEN. Not your fault. *(Pause.)* You guys getting to relax at all? Going to the beach, or ...

MIGUEL. No. Well, yeah, a couple weeks ago we went to this thing, it's called Midsummer Night Swing.

BEN. Midsummer Night Swing?

MIGUEL. At Lincoln Center, it's uh. Swing dancing, you know, they hire a / band ...

BEN. Emma does swing dancing?

MIGUEL. No, no she really doesn't. At all. I don't either, but I can fake it. She ... it was pretty funny. *(Miguel is looking at Emma. She looks back at him.)*

BEN. Yeah?

MIGUEL. Yeah.

BEN. Well, I'm glad she has you. *(Pause.)* Has she made any decisions about the fund? If it's okay to ask.

MIGUEL. No. She hasn't.

BEN. She, uh. When we first spoke about it there was some talk about renaming it; I'm hoping that was just, you know, heat of the moment stuff. *(Brief pause.)*

MIGUEL. No, I don't think so.

BEN. Because, the idea that all these years later, she has to apologize for her grandfather's radical politics — that's, I don't know at your age if you can understand this, that's just the scariest kind of history repeating itself.

MIGUEL. But she wouldn't be apologizing for Joe's radical politics. She'd be apologizing that he spied for Stalin. *(Emma's hand flies to her mouth. Ben reels.)*

BEN. Well, thanks for pickin' up.

MIGUEL. I wish there was something I could do. *(Brief pause.)*