

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 something earthy, something real in the man that begs our trust.

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 - 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 what makes us uniquely human - and, if so, then we live in an age for celebrating such humanity. The year is 1937 and borders

DOS PASSOS (CONT)

between countries have been replaced by borders between causes - communism, fascism, socialism, capitalism. Perhaps, just perhaps, a man is made by the cause to which he dedicates himself... which is to say that anyone who does not take up a cause might as well have been born a mongoose.

A SPOTLIGHT rises on a table in the darkness. 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 may well be - 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 still, José, you are a man of action.

ROBLES

Like many men, Dos - for who else will act if man does not? I was on vacation in Spain when I learned that the monarchy was

ROBLES (CONT)

overthrown. My feet told me to return to Johns Hopkins and stand behind my lectern - but my heart insisted on staying. I couldn't leave it behind in Spain, so the rest of me stayed as well - and now here I am. I knew I would miss my life in America, but I knew something else, too. I knew that history was being written and I had to have a say in its words. I owed it to everyone who had suffered under the old regime, under any old regime, to show them that man can write a better story - and, more than that, that he can write it freely for himself.

DOS PASSOS

So you acted.

ROBLES

So I acted.

DOS PASSOS

And I did not.

ROBLES

Spain is not your country, Dos.

DOS PASSOS

Spain is everyone's country, José.

ROBLES

(Forebodingly.)

Let us hope it stays that way.

DOS PASSOS

(Not understanding.)

Why wouldn't it? Franco is losing.

ROBLES

Yes - but that doesn't mean we are 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.

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."

To a writer, perhaps.

DOS PASSOS

DOS PASSOS and ROBLES smile together. A tender pause graces the stage as the old friends share THEIR smile.

Is Margara well?

DOS PASSOS

She is.

ROBLES

And Coco and Marguerite?

DOS PASSOS

Both well.

ROBLES

Good. I will hold you to that when I see them myself.

DOS PASSOS

What do you mean?

ROBLES

I am coming to Spain.

DOS PASSOS

You are not serious, Dos!

ROBLES

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 all human liberty and he is producing a film that will 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. 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.

DOS PASSOS

Yes, it is true - but it is all the longer since I last saw you.

ROBLES

Five years.

DOS PASSOS

Six years.

ROBLES

All the more reason to see you.

DOS PASSOS

ROBLES

I will count the days.

DOS PASSOS

I will count them with you.

ROBLES

Yes - and, before we know it, they will turn into 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 now no longer in the world of the mind, but in the lobby of the Hotel Florida. The change from dark serenity to the tropically gaudy is a little difficult for the eyes to accept. Even DOS PASSOS blinks for a moment in the newfound light. A loud voice soon causes HIS ears to be just as tormented:

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 take it you slept late.

HEMINGWAY

I prefer to think that morning came early.

DOS PASSOS

Early or not, 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 assholes 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 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 me 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 - 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 the concept of food rather slipped my mind. I was rushing to Madrid to look for someone.

HEMINGWAY

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, sexual nature about HER. One can't help but think of a female praying mantis that would gladly bite off the head of her mate if given a chance. This ferocity is oddly paired with a godly, all-knowing aura, which is made all the more discomfoting by the fact that it is emitted in complete, cold silence.

Upon seeing GELLHORN, HEMINGWAY immediately blooms with cockiness:

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.

(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

Don't call me "Miss." It makes me sound so virginal. I'm not.

HEMINGWAY

I can vouch for that.

DOS PASSOS

Ernest says you are a woman who knows many things.

GELLHORN

He would be right.

DOS PASSOS

Perhaps you've heard of a friend of mine - José Robles.

GELLHORN

I've heard the name.

DOS PASSOS

Do you know where he is?

GELLHORN

(Matter-of-fact, not rude.)

No. I only keep track of important people.

GELLHORN heads for the front door.

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 that only barely manages to hide some deeply felt revulsion.

DOS PASSOS

So, Ernest, how's your wife?

HEMINGWAY

Same as always - getting older... and yours?

DOS PASSOS

Katy's doing well. She decided to stay back in Paris.

HEMINGWAY

Glad to know she hasn't left you. It must be your mind.

DOS PASSOS

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

HEMINGWAY

That depends on whether or not it's thinking about me.

POSADA

Ah, Hem, modest as always.

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 has a certain Sancho Panza-like bearing about HIM that might easily lull someone into a false sense of security.

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.

Thrilled to see POSADA, DOS PASSOS walks to HIM 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 shots 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 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

Of course. 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 encircled 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 American - your government doesn't fall, it just changes color with the seasons.

DOS PASSOS

Sometimes, not even then.

POSADA

(Peering at DOS PASSOS intently.)
I take it you noticed the Russians.

DOS PASSOS

I didn't know I was supposed to be looking for them.

POSADA

You're not - because none of us are supposed to know they are here. The Republic would be a corpse by now if not for the brigades they are organizing and the arms they are shipping to us. Comrade Stalin's support is turning many people in Spain 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. There is an ambiguous nature about the man that reminds one of the vague and the sinister. HE seems too composed, too quiet, too plain, as if putting on an act to cover up some burning secret that may well be known to know one other than God Himself.

MAYAGUEZ

You must be Señor Dos Passos.

DOS PASSOS

I must be, yes, and frequently am.

POSADA

This is Ramon Mayaguez. He is the escort for Iven's group, courtesy of the Spanish government.

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. I am the concierge, the cook, the cleaner.

DOS PASSOS

You wear many hats.

MAYAGUEZ

I have many faces.

POSADA

He means "heads."

DOS PASSOS

All this for the making of a film?

POSADA

Your film, my friend, could play an important part in keeping freedom alive here in Spain. The American, British, and French governments will only declare for us if they are pressured to do so by their people. For this to happen, our story must be told, and you are a storyteller. The truth for 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 suddenly.)

I apologize, Señor.

MAYAGUEZ

There is no reason to apologize.

DOS PASSOS

I mean before - when you first entered. I thought you were perhaps a friend of mine.

(To POSADA.)

You know him, Juan - José Robles.

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'm glad, then, because I was growing concerned. I haven't heard from José in a while and no one seems to know where he is. I even asked the Minister of Information during my welcoming reception in Valencia and...

POSADA

(Registering this in HIS mind.)

You asked the Minister.

DOS PASSOS

Yes, but he knew nothing.

POSADA

He is a busy man.

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.

DOS PASSOS

Thank you, Juan. I appreciate your willingness to help.

POSADA

Of course, my friend. You are a guest of the Republic.

POSADA smiles and exits through the front door. A LOUD EXPLOSION sounds and causes the hotel to shake. DOS PASSOS pauses a moment and looks at the room around HIM with a melancholy air. MAYAGUEZ considers DOS PASSOS with a

strange look. DOS PASSOS notices this -
and as if to explain:

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 a dead one. He sent me to study in Spain instead and I poured out all my youthful energies into her fields and mountains and cities and slums... and people. I received back more than I could have ever hoped or dreamed. Spain to me is youth and hope and promise - and now? Now it is that and more besides. 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.

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 the hotel. 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

Probably Franco's army.

DOS PASSOS

I don't think even Ernest's 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:

JOSIE

Señor Mayaguez!

MAYAGUEZ

(Cringing a bit.)
Good day, 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 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 farther from Hem.

DOS PASSOS

How long have you been here?

JOSIE

I arrived four weeks ago. It seems like four 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 was afraid of.

HEMINGWAY'S VOICE

I'll eat you assholes for breakfast!

JOSIE glances off towards the front door.

DOS PASSOS

I gather 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 four weeks?

JOSIE

Four long weeks.

DOS PASSOS

Have you heard anything about José?

JOSIE

José?

DOS PASSOS

José Robles.

JOSIE

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

DOS PASSOS

It's been months since I've heard from him. The last letter I received was almost four months ago. I've been asking about him, but no one seems to know anything.

JOSIE

That's odd.

DOS PASSOS

I thought perhaps you may have heard something. You always manage to have good 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.

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. SHE smiles a "goodbye" at DOS PASSOS and walks up the staircase. DOS PASSOS looks after HER for a moment in quiet thought. MAYAGUEZ coughs loudly and extends the room keys again in HIS direction.

MAYAGUEZ

Room three-hundred and eight, Señor.

DOS PASSOS smiles and takes the keys. HE then 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. HE turns and finds that GELLHORN has entered through the front door. SHE nods after DOS PASSOS.

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

Only God knows everything.

GELLHORN

That's because He talks to me.

MAYAGUEZ

Señor Dos Passos could be useful.

GELLHORN

Useful - to which side?

The front door of the hotel is suddenly thrown open. A young man - about 20-30 - good-looking, but ruffled - has entered. HIS name is LISTON OAKS and it appears HE is rather nervous about something. GELLHORN and MAYAGUEZ stare at HIM quizzically for a moment. LISTON gulps and walks towards THEM with renewed, if put-on, composure. HE reaches the reception desk and speaks to MAYAGUEZ - a slight tremor in HIS voice:

LISTON

Good afternoon, Señor.

MAYAGUEZ

Good afternoon to you, too.

LISTON

I would like to speak to one of your guests. I believe a gentleman, John Dos Passos, is staying with you.

MAYAGUEZ just stares at LISTON.

LISTON

He is an acquaintance of mine - a friend.

MAYAGUEZ continues to stare.

LISTON

I take it that you don't recognize the name.

MAYAGUEZ

I do not recognize any name. I am not at liberty to disclose the identity of our guests. I trust you understand the security situation.

MAYAGUEZ slowly removes a pistol from underneath the reception desk and puts it on the desk.

MAYAGUEZ

It could mean life or death.

LISTON looks at the gun nervously and audibly gulps.

LISTON

Yes. Yes, it could.

LISTON pauses again as HE plans what to do next. The uncomfortable silence helps HIS mind reach a conclusion. LISTON turns and slowly starts to walk out. GELLHORN's eyes follow HIM like those of a panther. LISTON then suddenly stops and turns:

LISTON

Presuming, Señor, that Señor Dos Passos is staying with you, I'd appreciate your letting him know I called. My name is Liston - Liston Oaks. He should remember me. I will try calling for him at... at another time.

LISTON waits for a reaction - but nothing - so HE turns around and exits. MAYAGUEZ and GELLHORN exchange an uncertain glance. GELLHORN laughs to HERSELF and heads for the stairs.

GELLHORN

He won't last long.

GELLHORN is now at the bottom of the stairs. DOS PASSOS has appeared at the top of the stairway.

DOS PASSOS

Hello.

GELLHORN

Hello.

An awkward pause hangs pendulously in the air.

DOS PASSOS

You said I shouldn't call you "Miss Gellhorn."

GELLHORN

So?

DOS PASSOS

So I'm afraid I still don't know what to call you.

GELLHORN

Don't.

GELLHORN gives DOS PASSOS an odd smirk and walks up the stairs. DOS PASSOS descends and steps into the lobby. HE grabs his coat and puts it on.

DOS PASSOS

(To MAYAGUEZ.)

I thought I would go for a walk. Would you recommend anyplace in town for a bite to eat?

MAYAGUEZ

Yes, Señor - a place that is still standing.

DOS PASSOS smiles tightly.

DOS PASSOS

Ms. Herbst needs help with her window.

MAYAGUEZ

(Sourly.)

The view is clearer without the glass.

MAYAGUEZ exits up the stairs. DOS PASSOS can't help but smile to HIMSELF. The LIGHTS dim intimately until only a SPOTLIGHT remains on DOS PASSOS. HE looks longingly around the stage and then turns to face front.

DOS PASSOS

I'm waiting, José - waiting to see you again and hoping you will not be disappointed in me. I've become cautious over time and too wary of progress. If I move, I do so like an old man - step-by-step - tapping the ground with his cane - fearful that the earth may cave in at any moment or that I may step on some unsuspecting insect. All I can do is sit back and watch while other men stride proudly ahead of me. I only wish I could embrace the journey with such abandon.

The LIGHTS rise on ROBLES at the table in the back. HE is writing another letter to Dos Passos. HE looks up from his writing and smiles weakly.

ROBLES

You lack confidence, Dos.

DOS PASSOS

I lack vision, Jose.

ROBLES

Vision?

DOS PASSOS

Yes, José - that farsighted view of yours that pierces through the present and lets you focus only on the future. I look out at the world and all I can see are the people in front of me. I have difficulty seeing a grander cause, although I feel in my bones it exists. I try, José - I try and I squint and I step back and I look up... but nothing. I admire your vision and I would borrow your eyes if I could. It seems I am unable to see the forest for the trees, as they say.

ROBLES

There is nothing wrong with that, Dos. You cannot have the forest without them.

DOS PASSOS smiles to HIMSELF and shakes HIS head.

DOS PASSOS

I suppose I have become a reactionary.

ROBLES

No, my friend - you are just a gentle man.

DOS PASSOS

Unfortunately, I don't think the world has need of us anymore. Your feet are planted firmly on the battlefield. You ride the waves of history like a Neptune riding the ocean. I pray someday I will be up there with you.

ROBLES

You are, Dos - you are up there with me, riding the waves, keeping me from drowning. Every day, I turn my head and I see a man sitting on my shoulder, whispering into my ear. He reminds me of my humility, my humanity, my soul. He reminds me of kindness and friendship and, above all, he reminds me that kindness and friendship still exist in this world. I owe my continuing humanity to you, Dos. I cannot tell you how precious and special a gift it is to me. I have watched so many other men let go of their lifeline to humankind. I can understand why they do - but I will never understand why so many of them have no interest in ever grasping it again.

DOS PASSOS

I still wish I could do more.

ROBLES

Just keep whispering into my ear, Dos - keep whispering.

DOS PASSOS, touched, smiles.

DOS PASSOS

I cannot wait to see you again.

ROBLES

I am still counting the days.

DOS PASSOS

You must write me your new address.

ROBLES

I will, yes - in my next letter.

The LIGHT on ROBLES falls.

DOS PASSOS

Your next letter never came.

DOS PASSOS reaches into HIS coat and takes out a crinkled bit of paper.

DOS PASSOS

Fortunately, you are not my only friend.

The LIGHTS rise eerily on the courtyard in the hotel. The light is blue and grayish as if it represents some dark inner recess of the human mind. DOS PASSOS crosses back behind the stage until HE is an eerie silhouette on the opposite side of the courtyard door. HE raises HIS hand and knocks on the door. A woman swiftly enters from some dark recess of the hotel - MARGARA ROBLES. We have been transported to the apartment of José and Margara Robles.

MARGARA herself is a woman - about 40 - who strikes us initially as worried, scared, even terrified. There is more, however, to the woman than that. One can't help but sense a marvelous, tortured dignity about HER that could only be encapsulated in some great Greek sculpture. SHE is a woman who has seen many things - some good, some bad - but who, like a stalwart rock on a terrifying shore, is all the stronger for the lashes SHE has received.

After entering, MARGARA freezes upon seeing the silhouette of the man behind the courtyard door. We hear an audible

gasp escape from HER. DOS PASSOS raises HIS hand and knocks again. MARGARA waits a moment and thinks weightily about her next move. SHE sighs greatly and approaches the door as if approaching the edge of a great abyss. SHE slowly opens the door.

MARGARA

(With slight fear, in Spanish.)
Hello, Señor. May I help you?

DOS PASSOS

(In Spanish.)
Hello, Margara. Whenever could you not?

MARGARA recognizes the voice and immediately bursts into a smile. SHE flings HER arms around DOS PASSOS.

MARGARA

Oh! Dos! I cannot believe it.

DOS PASSOS

I can barely believe it myself.

MARGARA

Belief is the one thing we must have faith in. I had seen in the newspapers that you had arrived in Valencia.

DOS PASSOS

I'm working on a new film project about the war. We are hoping it will make an impact in the States.

MARGARA

It has been... many years.

DOS PASSOS

All of six, as I recall.

MARGARA

My nerves will debate you. They will tell you it has been many more years than that.

DOS PASSOS

Oh, Margara, I am so glad I managed to find you. Spain seems like a foreign country to me without you and José in it. I might as well be in Fiji at times.

MARGARA

At times, yes, I would recommend it.

DOS PASSOS

I cannot imagine the horror of the war.

MARGARA

No, Dos - it isn't that. For José and me, there has always been a war to fight. José was at war with the old government long before we went to war with the old military. I have been fighting alongside him for years - twenty years, God help me - and still I smile... or try to.

(A sudden thought.)

How did you find the apartment?

DOS PASSOS

A dear friend of mine - Josephine Herbst - a wonderful journalist from the States. I woke up this morning to find Josie gone for the day and a crinkled piece of paper in my coat pocket with your address on it. I can't tell you how many routes I've traveled to find you since I arrived in Spain. I even asked the Minister of Information and he...

MARGARA

(Suddenly, desperately.)

You asked the Minister of Information?

DOS PASSOS

Yes, but he didn't live up to his title.

MARGARA

(Disappointed.)

He said nothing about José?

DOS PASSO

Well, he mentioned that...

DOS PASSOS pauses and peers at MARGARA with a mixture of confusion and dread.

DOS PASSOS

I don't understand.

MARGARA lowers HER head in dejection.

DOS PASSOS

Is José in some kind of trouble?

MARGARA nods solemnly.

DOS PASSOS

Does the Minister know about this?

MARGARA

I don't know, Dos. Everyone seems to know everything and nothing - all at the same time.

(A beat.)

Welcome to Spain.