

Carlino 1

takes out a plate of meatloaf. He sniffs the meatloaf. He takes the gum out of his mouth and puts the wad of gum and its wrapper into an ashtray on the kitchen counter. Then he pulls off a chunk of meatloaf and stuffs it into his mouth.

Sound: The offstage street door opens and closes.

Carlino reacts, puts back the meatloaf, closes the icebox, and hurries to the bedroom, leaving the door open.

The hall door opens and we see —

Roat, standing there. He looks into the apartment before he steps over the threshold. He wears a black leather jacket and gloves. He comes down the steps to the living area. He sees something on the table. He picks it up and goes back up the steps and exits into the hall, leaving the door open.

Sound: Lightbulb screwing in.

Carlino enters from the bedroom, stealthily.

The offstage front hall light comes back on, allowing in enough light for Carlino to glimpse —

A butcher's knife on the kitchen table.

Roat reenters, carrying a rolled-up carpet. He closes the hall door, throwing the apartment back into its gloom. He comes down the steps and leans the carpet up against a table. He turns on the lamp on top of the table.

The light reveals Carlino behind him reaching for the knife. He is just picking it up when —

Start ROAT. I wouldn't touch that. *(Carlino puts down the knife, takes a badge out of his pocket, and flashes it at Roat.)*

CARLINO. Wanna tell me what you're doin' here? Passin' by, I saw that hall light out, thought I better check.

ROAT. Thank you for explaining yourself, officer. Why didn't you use your gun?

CARLINO. What's that?

ROAT. You went for the knife, why not just pull out your gun? Guns

are what policemen carry to go along with their badges, aren't they? If I were a policeman, I'd carry my gun all the time, especially when I break into people's apartments because the lights are out and some criminal type might still be inside. That bulb was hot, burned my fingers almost. Come on. Show me that badge again. You're dying to.

CARLINO. How about you tell me who *you* are.

ROAT. Me? I'm Harry Roat, Junior. From Scarsdale.

CARLINO. (*Eyes narrow.*) ... What *is* this?

ROAT. You got a phone message one hour ago at the Hotel Belle-claire, "Come to Forty-eight Bank Street. Nine p.m. Two hundred bucks. Lisa."

CARLINO. I don't see any Lisa here.

ROAT. She was standing right where you are now, used that phone to make the call. (*Takes out a wad of cash.*) Two hundred. (*Carlino moves to take the money. Roat moves it just out of reach.*) First, may we have weapons on the table?

CARLINO. I'm clean.

ROAT. I know you don't have a gun, but your brass knuckles are making a bulge in your right pocket, and I cannot negotiate in an atmosphere of mistrust.

CARLINO. (*Hesitates, then takes out a pair of brass knuckles and drops them onto the coffee table.*) What do you have to protect yourself?

ROAT. Geraldine. (*Roat takes out a thin ivory statue of a girl, about five inches long.*) Isn't she beautiful? (*He flicks his wrist and out of Geraldine flashes a switchblade.*)

CARLINO. May we have Geraldine on the table too?

ROAT. We may not.

CARLINO. How come?

ROAT. Because Geraldine gets itchy when she can't feel my fingers. (*Roat closes the blade and returns the knife to his pocket, along with the brass knuckles.*)

CARLINO. All right, so give me the money.

ROAT. Don't you want to know what it's for?

CARLINO. What it's for is it's what she owes me.

ROAT. She owes you more than two hundred.

CARLINO. Lisa tell you that?

ROAT. Among other things. (*As Roat talks, he lights a cigarette from a gold case and lets the ash grow long, and [later] takes from his coat an empty baby food jar with a screw top which he carefully uses*

Stop

as an ashtray.) I admire people who can work with other people.