

RED SCARE ON SUNSET

Frank, Marta (1 man, 1 woman)

1950's Hollywood. Brooding film star, Frank Taggart, is beginning an affair with suspected communist actress, Marta Towers. The married Frank meets Marta late at night at a pier by the beach.

Act I Scene 2

That evening. The pier at Playa del Rey. Frank is seen waiting for someone on the lonely pier. He lights a cigarette. A woman appears in a trench coat and approaches him. It's Marta Towers.

FRANK

I was afraid you wouldn't come. I had a helluva time getting out of the house. Mary thinks I'm with my agent. Marta, you looked very mysterious coming out of the fog. Mysterious and beautiful.

MARTA

Not by Hollywood standards. I've been told that the camera brings out odd things in my face.

FRANK

What does a cold metal thing like a camera know about a beautiful woman?

MARA

Frank, we're not shooting a scene. You don't have to seduce me. I came to this dreary pier in God forsaken Playa del Rey because I wanted to. Now I want you to kiss me.

FRANK

Request granted.

They kiss.

MARTA

Have you thought about my proposition?

FRANK

Yeah, I have. I can't get it out of my mind.

MARTA

And?

FRANK

I...I don't know. It's what I'm starving for. I suppose deep down I'm just chicken.

MARTA

Take the leap, Frank. We both know it's what you crave.

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FRANK

It's my every fantasy but do I have it in me? Can I really go that far?

MARTA

Frank, dive in, get wet, get yourself dirty and do as I say, take a method acting class.

FRANK

You've got to understand, Marta. I was trained in light Broadway comedies. It was drummed into my head over and over, technique and timing equals talent.

MARTA

A cheap bourgeois simplification. There is no art without the soul, without the gut. Study Tolstoy and Turgenev and they will tell you the same.

FRANK

I've never been with a woman like you before.

MARTA

You mean with half a brain.

FRANK

You mustn't talk about Mary that way.

MARTA

Loyalty is admirable when it's directed at the right people and the right ideas. Misguided when it's wasted on idiots and tired clichés.

FRANK

Mary is a wonderful girl, the perfect wife.

MARTA

I'm sure she is but you've outgrown her, Frank. I'll admit she's not malicious but in her innocent way, she's dangerous. She's holding you back from becoming the artist we know you can be.

FRANK

Can an actor really be an artist?

MARTA

Oh yes, Frank. But you can't be content with superficialities. You must dig and search within yourself. I see in you such possibilities. I hope you won't think I'm being too pushy but I see us as a great acting team.

FRANK

You do?

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MARTA

Oh yes, Frank. I see us returning to the theatre, away from all this silliness and act great roles in great plays. Think of how much fun we'd have doing "The Lower Depths," "The Weavers," Saint Joan of the Stockyards."

FRANK

(Getting excited)

"The Weavers," yes. (*She tries to kiss him, he breaks away.*) No. I can't do this. I can't betray Mary.

MARTA

(Wrapping her arms around him)

"The Wild Duck," "Baal," "When We Dead Awaken," "Blood Wedding," "The Ghost Sonata," "No Exit."

FRANK

I'll do it. Where do I go?

MARTA

The Yetta Felson Studio. Sunset at La Brea. Tomorrow at eight. Frank, trust me, you'll never be the same.

BLACKOUT