

30

INT. CLUB 11. NIGHT.

The joint is rocking. On a small stage, a five piece jazz band, all black musicians, including JONNY, a tall beautiful American trumpet player who is giving it all he has. Towards the back, among the cluttered, smokey tables, sit Peter and Serge, the only people wearing suits and ties, standing out a mile in their sobriety. Peter looks around at the chatting, smoking, drinking kids - all the men seem to wear their sunglasses.

SERGE

Peter, I don't think this place is for us.

RACHMAN

Nonsense, Serge, you have to get hip, that's all.

Rachman takes out his tinted sunglasses, puts them on, starts clicking his fingers to the beat.

SERGE

The doctor said you must protect your eyes.

Flash cut - Rachman's eye, forced open, as drops from a syringe fall into it.

RACHMAN

What does a doctor know about anything.

[Note, after this point, Rachman nearly always wears the tinted glasses, day or night, outdoors or in, whatever the weather.] A Waitress with a tray comes over.

WAITRESS

What would you gents like?

SERGE

Beer please miss.

RACHMAN

A glass of milk.

WAITRESS

Milk.

She looks him over, then goes to the bar. Serge is smiling.

SERGE

Get hip.

Gloria comes down the steps to the basement, kissing both girls and boys hello. Rachman pats down his tie, stands and holds a chair back from the table for her.

RACHMAN

Gloria, may I introduce my dear friend, Serge Paplinski.

Serge stands formally, offers a handshake, she confuses him by kissing him on the cheek.

GLORIA

Are there any Poles left in Poland?
Hello sweetie, any friend of Peter's alright by me.

She sits, pulls off gloves, takes out a cigarette which Peter immediately lights. She winks over at Jonny on the stage, who nods her in the middle of a solo. The Waitress comes over with drinks.

RACHMAN

May I offer you a drink?

GLORIA

(Direct to Waitress.) Gin and it.

WAITRESS

Eight and six the gin, five and six the beer and three shillings for a glass of milk-

RACHMAN

Seventeen shillings! For three drinks?

GLORIA

Call that a quid Peter, you have to tip.

Rachman opens up a wallet which has exactly one pound in it, gives it to the Waitress sickly.

RACHMAN

Keep the change.

WAITRESS

Why thank you.

Rachman puts his wallet away, looking at Serge. The music finishes, Gloria clapping madly.

RACHMAN

You see that? A pound for three drinks which cost a shilling to provide. This is the game to be in.

Rachman waves him away. Jonny comes over to Gloria; they kiss passionately. Serge is gobsmacked.

SERGE

She kisses a czarny.

RACHMAN

Why not? A schwartz is a man too. I told you get hip.

Though Rachman is just as uncomfortable. He tries to look cool as he lifts the glass of milk to his lips, but then he has to take out his hanky and wipe the rim of the glass before drinking. Jonny starts rolling a reefer; Serge watches with incomprehension.

GLORIA

Peter's going to help me get a flat, aren't you honeybunch?

JONNY

That's cool, man, very cool. Honest working girl needs a little help in life.

PETER

Any way I may be of assistance.

GLORIA

I walk into a landlord's office, they don't let me through the door, but Peter here, well who wouldn't let a flat to Peter.

JONNY

(Laughing.) You look straighter than a doorpost, man, you could be my bank manager. If I had a bank.

GLORIA

Don't you worry Jonny, Peter could give you a run for your money in the weirdness stakes.

Jonny laughs again, but looks at Peter harder this time, right through the dark lenses that both of them wear.

JONNY

Sure. I see that. I reckon you is hip alright.

Rachman shoots a proud look at Serge.

JONNY

And once you've found Gloria digs, you could help a few of my brothers out. You think it's hard for a single woman to set herself up, you ain't tried being a black man in this town.

SERGE

You have many brothers?

JONNY
 About thirty million at last count.
 And rising.

Jonny laughs, and smokes, and looks around.

31 **INT. BAYSWATER FLAT. DAY.**

MR FOX, an oily rental agent in his 30s, shows Rachman around the basement flat.

Light snaps on a cord, revealing a basic but clean windowless bathroom. Rachman looks in. Light snaps off. Cut to/

Fox walks him through the lounge.

RACHMAN
 Yes very nice.

Fox is out the door. Cut to/

Fox standing in a small cramped hallway, pressed up against Rachman. Rachman wipes his finger along the top of a mirror, checking for dust. Cut to/

Light snaps onto a windowless kitchenette no bigger than a cupboard. Light snaps out. Cut to/

The bedroom. Gloria sitting provocatively on the bed, giving the mattress a little bounce.

RACHMAN
 We'll take it.

FOX
 That will be one pound ten shillings for the first week's rent, and the same again for deposit.

Rachman signs and hands over three pound notes.

FOX
 Two sets of keys. Pleasure doing business.

The keys sparkle, as do Gloria's eyes, as he hands them over. Cut to/

In the bedroom doorway, Gloria stands in her underwear, with two fivers in her hand. She folds them and slides them into Rachman's jacket pocket.

GLORIA
 Ten pounds for the first week's rent.