

Monologue Two

JIM

I am thinking of a gunner I knew at the hospital. He was coming back from leave when he met a young girl on the train. They talked to each other all the way from Nice to Marseilles. As she stepped out onto the platform, she gave him her address. Then, for two years he wrote to her frenetically every day from the trenches, on bits of wrapping paper, by candle-light. He kept on writing even when the mortar bombs were raining down around him, and his letters became more and more intimate in tone. At first he began "Dear Mademoiselle," and ended "With all good wishes." In the third letter, he called her "My little sylph," and asked her for a photograph . . . Then it was "My adorable sylph," then "I kiss your hands," then "I kiss your forehead." Later on, he described the photograph she had sent him and talked about her bosom, which he thought he could see under her *peignoir*, and soon he dropped the formal mode of address and started to call her "tu": "Je t'aime terriblement." One day, he wrote to the girl's mother asking for her hand and became officially engaged to her, although he hardly knew her. The war went on and the letters became more and more intimate. "I take hold of you, my love, I take your adorable breasts . . . I press you against me quite naked . . ." When she replied rather coldly to one of his letters, he flew into a passion and begged her . . . not to flirt with him because he might die from one day to the next. And he was right.

(a pause)

You see, Jules, to understand this extraordinary deflowering by correspondence, one must have experienced all the violence of the war in the trenches, its particular kind of collective madness, with death constantly present. So there was a man who, at the same time as taking part in

the Great War, managed to conduct his own little parallel war, his individual struggle, and completely conquer the heart of a woman from a distance. When he arrived at the hospital, he was wounded in the head like you, but he wasn't as lucky as you. He died after being trepanned, just the day before the armistice. In his last letter to the fiancée he hardly knew, he wrote: "Your breasts are the only bombs I love." I'll show you a series of photographs I have of him . . . If one looks at them quickly, one has the illusion that he is moving.

The Hustler

Twentieth Century-Fox (Produced by Robert Rossen), 1961

Screenplay by Robert Rossen and Sidney Carroll

Based on the novel by Walter Tevis

Directed by Robert Rossen

Time: 1961

Place: Small Town, U.S.A., and City, U.S.A.

Eddie Felson is a pool shark. He makes his living by beating unsuspecting players around back-room pool tables in small towns and cities.

Eddie meets his match, however, in a game against the legendary master, Minnesota Fats. Overconfident and dizzy with his prowess, Eddie tires, gets sloppy, and loses the all-night marathon game.

He catches the eye, though, of a big time gambler/manager, Bert Gordon. Gordon tells Eddie that while he's a good player, he's a loser because he hasn't got enough character to win over Fats. Eddie drops his old manager and takes up with Gordon, who's got connections at big-time games.

INFO

Eddie has recently met and moved in with Sarah Packard, an ex-actress and part-time college student. She has a slight limp and a serious drinking problem. She and Eddie develop a stormy, passionate and, at times, caring relationship.

Monologue One. Eddie has had his thumbs broken by some sore losers. Sarah sobers up to take care of him as his hands heal. They go to a park by the river near Sarah's city apartment to have a picnic. Sarah asks Eddie if losing bothers him.

Monologue Two. Eddie becomes torn between life with Sarah and the life of a pool shark with Gordon. Gordon takes Eddie to Louisville to play against a rich gambling man, and Sarah goes along, disapproving. In his hotel room in Louisville, Gordon tells Sarah that Eddie wants her to go, and then Gordon tries to seduce her. At first she rejects his advances but then, on a blind, self-destructive impulse, she returns to Gordon's room and sleeps with him. Afterward Sarah goes into his bathroom, scrawls "perverted, twisted, crippled" on the mirror and kills herself. When Eddie discovers her body, he attacks Gordon.

Finally Eddie goes back to play Minnesota Fats and this time wins. After the match he encounters Gordon, who tries to explain that Sarah would have killed herself sooner or later—she was that kind of woman. Eddie responds.

Monologue One

EDDIE
(after a pause)

Yeah. It bothers me a lot. 'Cause you see, twice, Sarah—once at Ames with Minnesota Fats and then again at Arthur's—in that cheap, crummy poolroom . . . Now, why did I do it, Sarah? Why did I do it? I coulda beat that guy, I coulda beat him cold. He never woulda known. But I just

START

had to show 'em, I just had to show those creeps and those punks what the game is like when it's great, when it's really great. You know, like anything can be great. Anything can be great . . . I don't care . . . Bricklaying can be great. If a guy knows. If he knows what he's doing and why, and if he can make it come off. I mean, when I'm goin'—I mean when I'm really goin'—I feel like, like what a jockey must feel. He's sittin' on his horse, he's got all that speed and that power underneath him, he's comin' into the stretch and the pressure's on him—and he knows. Just feels, when to let go, and how much. So he's got everything working for him—timing, touch. It's a great feeling, boy, it's a really great feeling when you're right, and you know you're right. Like all of sudden I got oil in my arm. Pool cue is a part of me. You know, pool cue has got nerves in it. It's a piece of wood but it's got nerves in it. You can feel the roll of those balls. You don't have to look. You just know. You make shots that nobody's ever made before. And you play that game the way nobody ever played it before. You know, someday, Sarah, you're gonna settle down. You're gonna marry a college professor and you're gonna write a great book. Maybe about me, huh? Fast Eddie Felson, hustler.

Monologue Two

EDDIE
We really stuck the knife into her didn't we, Bert?

[BERT
(disgustedly)]

Aaaahhhh!

EDDIE

Boy, we really gave it to her good.

[BERT

If it didn't happen in Louisville, it'd happen someplace else. If it didn't happen now, it'd happen six months from now. That's the kinda dame she was.]

END