

Ninotchka (1939)

Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947)

Contents (Overview-Synopsis-Characters-Character Analysis-Themes-Scenes)

OVERVIEW

Auteur: Ernst Lubitsch was a German-American film director, producer, writer, and actor. He is famous for urbane comedies of manners. With the growth of his prestige, his films came to be known as having *the Lubitsch touch*. Lubitsch was born in 1892 in Berlin, as the son of Simon Lubitsch, a tailor, and Anna (née) Lindenstaedt. His family was Ashkenazi Jewish. He did not enter his father's tailoring business, and by 1911, he was a member of Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater. Lubitsch was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director three times for *The Patriot* (1928), *The Love Parade* (1929), and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). In 1946, he received an Honorary Academy Award for his contributions to the art of motion pictures. His best-known works are *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), *Design for Living* (1933), *Ninotchka* (1939), *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940), *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). Lubitsch died of a heart attack on November 30, 1947, in Hollywood at the age of 55.

Film: *Ninotchka* is an American romantic comedy film directed by Ernst Lubitsch. The film stars Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, and Ina Claire. It was written by Billy Wilder, Charles Brackett, and Walter Reisch, based on a screen story by Melchior Lengyel. The cinematography is by William H. Daniels. The music is by Werner R. Heymann. The film was released in late 1939, shortly after the outbreak of World War II in Europe and it became a great success. However, it was banned in the Soviet Union and its satellites. *Ninotchka* is Greta Garbo's first comedy and her penultimate film. With *Ninotchka*, she received her third and final Academy Award nomination for Best Actress. *Ninotchka* received four Academy Award nominations: Best Picture, Best Actress in a Leading Role, Best Original Story, and Best Screenplay. The film was selected in 1990 for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being 'culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant'. In 2011, Time included *Ninotchka* on the magazine's list of *All-Time 100 Movies*.

Historical background: *Ninotchka* is based on a three-sentence story idea by Melchior Lengyel: 'Russian girl saturated with Bolshevik ideals goes to fearful, capitalistic, monopolistic Paris. She meets romance and has an uproarious good time. Capitalism not so bad, after all.' Melchior Lengyel (Hungarian: Lengyel Menyhért; 1880–1974) was a Hungarian writer, dramatist, and film screenwriter. Lengyel was born Menyhért Lebovics in Balmazújváros, Hungary. He started his career as a journalist. Later, he started writing plays many of which gained various awards. *Taifun (Typhoon)*, one of his plays, written in 1909, became a worldwide success and is still performed today. His story *The Miraculous Mandarin* came out in 1916. It was the story that inspired Béla Bartók, to create in 1924 the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*. He moved to Hollywood, California in 1937 and became a screenwriter. Several of his stories became the basis of screenplays for films by Ernst Lubitsch which became worldwide successes, such as *Ninotchka* (1939), *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), and *Angel* (1937).

SYNOPSIS

Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski; three agents from the Russian Board of Trade, arrive in Paris to sell jewelry that was confiscated from the aristocracy during the Russian Revolution (which was a period of political and social change in the Russian Empire, starting in 1917. This period sees Russia abolish its monarchy, and adopt a socialist form of government following two revolutions and a civil war). In the hotel where the three men are staying is a Russian nobleman Count Alexis Rakonin who is now reduced to employment as a waiter. Rakonin overhears the telephone conversation of the men and informs the former Russian Grand Duchess Swana that her jewelry will be sold. Swana's lover Count Léon d'Algout

intervenes to help her retrieve the jewelry before it is sold. As Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski negotiate with a Parisian jeweler called Mercier; Léon interrupts their meeting. He says that the jewelry was seized illegally by the Soviet government and that a petition has been filed preventing their sale. Mercier decides to halt the purchase of the jewelry until the lawsuit is settled. Meanwhile, Léon has a lavish lunch with the three Russian agents, he gets them drunk and becomes their friend. On behalf of them, he sends a telegram to the Russian Board of Trade in which he suggests a compromise. The authorities in Moscow are angered by the telegram and send a special envoy to deal with the lawsuit and investigate the three renegade men. Ninotchka, the special envoy, first rebukes Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski for failing to proceed with the mission. Later, Ninotchka and Léon first meet outside the hotel where Léon flirts with her. He follows her to the Eiffel Tower and shows her his house through a telescope. She gets interested in him as a subject of study and they go to his apartment. In the apartment, they become attracted to each other. However, they are interrupted by a telephone call from Buljanoff. Ninotchka and Léon realize they are contenders over the jewelry. Ninotchka leaves the apartment despite Léon's objections. Soon the two fall in love with each other and Ninotchka is captivated by what the West has to offer. The two go on a dinner date where Ninotchka consumes champagne for the first time and becomes intoxicated. The next afternoon, Swana with whom Ninotchka has been rivaling for the jewelry and Léon's affections, wakes the hungover Ninotchka up. It turns out that the waiter Rakonin has taken the jewelry during the night. Swana tells Ninotchka that she will stop the legal proceedings and return the jewelry if she gets on a plane to Moscow and leaves France (so that Swana can have Léon to herself). Ninotchka hesitates but reluctantly accepts the offer for the good of her country. After the sale of the jewelry to Mercier, Ninotchka and the three Russians fly back to Moscow. Afterward, Léon visits Swana and confesses his love for Ninotchka. Swana tells Léon that Ninotchka has already left France for Moscow. Léon wants to go to Russia to see her again but is denied a Russian visa because of his nobility. In Moscow, Ninotchka invites Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski to a dinner at her communal apartment where they reminisce about their golden days in Paris. After dinner, Ninotchka receives a letter that is from Léon but she is devastated to find out that the letter is censored. Sometime later, Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski are on another mission to sell fur in Constantinople. However, they seem to fail at their mission. Commissar Razinin sends Ninotchka to Constantinople to investigate the situation. In Constantinople, Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski inform her that they have opened a restaurant and won't be returning to Russia. It turns out it was Léon who was responsible for this restaurant idea. Léon explains that he came up with this plan because he wanted to be with Ninotchka but was barred from entering Russia. He asks her to stay with him who happily accepts this idea.

CHARACTERS

<i>Nina Ivanovna 'Ninotchka' Yakushova:</i>	A special Russian envoy who falls in love with Count Léon d'Algout
<i>Count Léon d'Algout:</i>	A nobleman, Swana's paramour who later falls in love with Ninotchka
<i>Grand Duchess Swana:</i>	Count Léon d'Algout's lover, the woman whose jewelry was confiscated
<i>Iranoff:</i>	One of the men sent to Paris to sell confiscated jewelry
<i>Buljanoff:</i>	One of the men sent to Paris to sell confiscated jewelry
<i>Kopalski:</i>	One of the men sent to Paris to sell confiscated jewelry
<i>Commissar Razinin:</i>	An official responsible for trade relations, assigns to people work and missions
<i>Count Alexis Rakonin:</i>	A former nobleman now reduced to employment as a waiter at Clarence Hotel
<i>Mercier:</i>	A prominent Parisian jeweler
<i>Gaston:</i>	The butler of Count Léon d'Algout
<i>Anna:</i>	Ninotchka's roommate in her communal apartment, a cello player
<i>Père Mathieu:</i>	The owner of a workmen's restaurant
<i>Hotel manager:</i>	Manager of Clarence Hotel
<i>Taxi driver:</i>	Taxi driver whom Ninotchka asks about nearby restaurants

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Nina Ivanovna 'Ninotchka' Yakushova

Ninotchka is the main character of the film. She is the special envoy sent by Commissar Razinin to Paris to win the lawsuit, sell the confiscated jewelry, and return with the renegade Iranoff, Buljanoff, and

Kopalski. She is methodical, rigid, serious, stern, and analytic. However, things take a different course when Ninotchka meets Count Léon d'Algout who eventually breaks down her resistance to him, and the two fall in love.

Serious: From the first scene when Ninotchka makes her appearance in the film, her body language conveys a sense of seriousness, rigidity, and sternness. She has a robotic-sounding voice. She is not interested in anything but her work and work-related goals. As she remarks: 'We are here for work, all of us. Let's not waste any time.'

Hardworking: We soon understand why Commissar Razinin chose Ninotchka as the special envoy as her seriousness and hardworking attitude make her ideal for the job of winning the lawsuit. The moment she arrives at the hotel; she proceeds to work, assigns specific duties to Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski, starts to study the Civil Code on property, and decides to use her spare time to inspect public utilities in order to report her findings to the Board of Trade.

Nationalistic: Above all, Ninotchka is a nationalistic person. She believes in the ideals of the Bolshevik State and loves her country above all else. When she arrives at the royal suite, she gets angry about the high price of the suite which will cost thousands of Francs to Russia. Her utmost concern is that the next year's crop is in danger and there may not be enough bread to feed the Russian people. Therefore it is a necessity that they win the lawsuit and sell the jewelry. This is also the reason why she accepts Swana's deal and agrees to leave France before having a chance to say goodbye to Léon because the good of her country overrides all other concerns, including her love.

Loving: Behind Ninotchka's cold-hearted and unemotional appearance lies a friendly and life-loving person. However, it takes many efforts by Léon to break down her resistance. A turning point for Ninotchka's character development is when she goes to eat at a workingmen's restaurant and is followed by Léon. There, Léon tries several times to make her laugh with his jokes which unfortunately all fail until through an accident Léon falls to the ground and is met with peals of laughter by everybody in the restaurant including Ninotchka. Her sincere and lively laugh creates a change in her and allows the warm-hearted Ninotchka to come to life. From that point onward, she is a different character.

Count Léon d'Algout

Count Léon d'Algout or shortly Léon is one of the two main characters of the film. He is a nobleman, Grand Duchess Swana's charming paramour. He directly interferes on behalf of Swana to file a petition for an injunction to stop the sale of jewelry. However, he accidentally meets Ninotchka and very soon falls in love with her.

Charming: Léon is a self-confident, charming, and sophisticated man. His well-mannered behavior is related to his being a nobleman. Even Ninotchka admits his charming and attractive qualities when she says to him: 'Your general appearance is not distasteful.' When she asks him what he does for mankind, he replies: 'Yes, uh, not so much for mankind. But for womankind, my record isn't quite so bleak' which underlies the fact his charming and attractive qualities have made him successful in his relationships with women.

Cunning: Cunningness refers to craftiness or artfulness, that is, being clever at achieving one's aims by *indirect* or *deceitful* methods. We can see the cunning nature of Léon when he first makes an appearance at the royal suite of Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski to intervene in the process of purchase and stop the sale of the jewelry. He offers to have lunch with the three men, gets them drunk, and sends on behalf of them a telegram to Russian authorities, specifically to Commissar Razinin, whereby he suggests a fifty-fifty compromise. This event shows us that Léon is indeed a cunning man who is ready to use any means to achieve his aims.

Loving: Apart from being debonair and crafty, we witness another side of Léon in his relationship with Ninotchka. He becomes a caring, loving, and passionate individual who can do anything it takes to be with his lover. After Ninotchka leaves France, he tries several times to get a Russian visa which is denied

to him because of his nobility. Therefore, he comes up with a rather ingenious plan to get her out of Russia. He comes up with the idea of opening a restaurant and inspires Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski to stay permanently in Constantinople. He knows that the authorities will soon become bothered by the three men and send Ninotchka to inspect the situation. Thereby, he makes sure that he will see Ninotchka once again. It is his great love for her that fuels him and makes him create ingenious plans.

Grand Duchess Swana

Grand Duchess Swana or rather the former Grand Duchess Swana is the person whose jewelry is confiscated and about to be sold by the Soviet government. As soon as she is informed that her court jewels are to be sold by the three Russian men, she and Count Léon d'Algout take action to stop the sale. She is a rather arrogant woman yet also quite intelligent. Ninotchka is her rival not only for the jewelry but also for Léon's affections.

Arrogant: Possibly due to being born an aristocrat, Swana has a sense of superiority which becomes apparent in her interactions with other people, in particular with Ninotchka. Apart from believing that the jewels rightly belong to her as they were given to her by her mother, she also thinks that Léon belongs to her. When she finds out at Café de Lutèce that Léon is bringing the 'female Bolshevik' with him, she immediately starts telling mocking phrases about her to the other ladies near her: 'We must be discreet. If she sucks her soup...or drinks out of her finger bowl, don't laugh.' These belittling remarks show us her sense of superiority and how she thinks Ninotchka is lower in the social hierarchy.

Intelligent: Besides her arrogance, Swana is an intelligent lady. She has a very trustworthy and loyal ally, the waiter Alexis Rakonin who informs her about what is going on at Clarence Hotel. Thanks to him, she finds out about the whereabouts of the jewels and Rakonin takes the jewels without Ninotchka being aware and gives them to Swana. With the jewels in her possession, Swana has the upper hand and offers a deal to Ninotchka. Swana is ready to give the jewels back if Ninotchka agrees to get on a plane to Moscow without saying goodbye to Léon. Thereby, Swana guarantees that Léon will remain hers. This ingenious deal that does not leave much of a choice to Ninotchka shows us how intelligent and crafty Swana is.

Iranoff/Buljanoff/Kopalski

Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski are the three agents from the Russian Board of Trade who arrive in Paris to sell jewelry confiscated from the aristocracy. From their first appearance in the film, it is apparent that they offer comic relief, that is 'humorous content in a work that is intended to offset more serious episodes'. The three men do not seem to have distinct personalities as they have more or less the same characteristics and form a collective whole that represents the humorous part of the film. They are all self-indulgent characters who have friendly yet manipulable natures.

Self-indulgent: Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski are pleasure-loving characters who are prone to idleness. Their self-indulgent nature comes to the forefront from the moment they look around the Clarence Hotel with mesmerized eyes. Even though Buljanoff insists they should go to the hotel reserved for them by their superiors, he cannot resist his friends' (rather silly) arguments about how Lenin would prefer them to stay at the Clarence Hotel. Furthermore, they choose the royal suite to stay in which again shows us their self-indulgent and luxury-loving nature.

Manipulable: The three men are all manipulable. When Léon first arrives at the royal suite and stops the sale, they become very angry at him. However, Léon offers them a luxurious lunch and gets them easily drunk. Soon after, the three men cannot say anything against Léon when he shows them the telegram he has prepared to send to Commissar Razinin. This event underlies the fact that the three men are easily manipulable as they are prone to self-indulgence, and Léon makes use of their personal weaknesses.

Friendly: The three men are all sympathetic characters with amiable manners. In addition to being good friends with each other, in the process of the events, they become good friends with Ninotchka

which can be seen when they visit her in her communal apartment for a small dinner party. Their reunion in Moscow and reminiscence about their old days in Paris show us their camaraderie.

Commissar Razinin

Commissar Razinin is a high-rank official responsible for trade relations who assigns to people their work and missions. He is the one who sends Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski to Paris to sell jewelry confiscated from the aristocracy. He is also the one who sends the special envoy, that is, Ninotchka to deal with the lawsuit.

Disciplined: He is a disciplined man as can be seen in his diligence regarding the lawsuit in Paris. He sends the best special envoy to deal with the lawsuit and succeed in selling the jewelry. We also see that Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski fear Razinin. Regarding him they say (in their drunken state): 'He's a bad man. He sends people to Siberia. We don't like Razinin.' We also witness Razinin's determined nature when he talks to Ninotchka to send her to Constantinople to inspect what the three men have been up to. Even though Ninotchka implores him not to send her to Constantinople, he has already made up his mind. He says to her as his final words: 'Don't waste my time, comrade. Do your duty'. This reflects his matter-of-fact, determined, and diligent nature.

Count Alexis Rakonin

Count Alexis Rakonin is a Russian nobleman reduced to employment as a waiter in the Clarence Hotel. He plays a subtle yet significant role in the film as he is the one who informs Grand Duchess Swana that her jewels are in Paris and also in the later part of the film, takes the jewels from Ninotchka's room and gives them to the Duchess. He is someone who is devoted to Old Russia with its aristocracy and shows his loyalty to Swana in several scenes of the film.

Insidious: Rakonin is a sly and insidious character, that is, he proceeds in a gradual, subtle way, but his actions have wide-ranging consequences. When Rakonin overhears the details of the mission of the three men and that Swana's jewels are about to be sold, he immediately leaves the hotel and goes to inform the Grand Duchess. That is also why Léon can step in and stop the purchase. He is also the one who later on in the film, takes the jewels from Ninotchka while she is sleeping. He proceeds in subtle ways yet effects many changes and turning points in the film.

Mercier

Mercier is a prominent Parisian jeweler. He is ready to buy the jewels, however, stops the procedure as he learns from Léon that he filed a petition for an injunction to stop the sale of the jewels.

Alert: Mercier can be considered to be an alert individual, aware of what is happening in his environment and able to adapt himself to the present circumstances. In his first meeting with the three men, he makes clear that his counteroffer is the maximum. He is aware of the fact that Russians need money as he remarks: 'There's a Russian commission in New York trying to sell 15 Rembrandts. There's another mortgaging the oil fields in Baku. You need money quickly.' So, he is very much aware of the happenings and political events. When Léon intervenes in the situation and talks about his petition for an injunction, Mercier swiftly changes his position as his offer stands but he makes it clear that they cannot close the deal until they have the decision made by the courts.

THEMES

SOCIETY

Class One of the underlying themes of the film is that of class distinctions. A social class is defined as 'a grouping of people into sets of hierarchical social categories, the most common being the upper, middle and lower classes. Membership in a social class can be dependent on education, wealth, occupation, income, and belonging to a particular subculture or social network'. Ninotchka represents the

interests of the Soviet State and the wishes of the masses or the working class. Her trying to sell the jewelry confiscated from the aristocracy is based on her belief that the jewels belong to common Russian people as they paid for them 'with their blood and their lives' during their production of them. Swana, on the other hand, represents the nobility or aristocracy as she is a former Grand Duchess. She believes the jewels rightly belong to her as she remarks: 'They were given to me by my mother. They were given to her by her mother.' In the end, the solution to this problem becomes mingled with Ninotchka's relationship with Léon as it is on the condition that Ninotchka leaves France without saying goodbye to Léon that Swana is willing to hand over the jewelry. Ninotchka fulfills her duty as a member of the Soviet State, sells jewelry, and brings money to her land so the people of the nation won't be hungry. Ninotchka's unwavering idealism, hardworking attitude, and belief in the communist ideals of the Bolshevik State also make us the viewers adopt a sympathetic attitude toward her beliefs about the well-being of the masses and working people.

Culture 'Culture is an umbrella term that encompasses the social behavior, institutions, and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups. Culture is often originated from a specific region or location.' The clashing of the Western and the Eastern (Russian) cultures is an underlying theme in *Ninotchka*. We the viewers witness not only class distinctions but also cultural differences. One scene exemplifying this theme is when Ninotchka first arrives in Paris and sees a fashionable yet strange-looking hat on the display window of a store. She cannot believe how a civilization can survive that allows women to put (silly) things like that on their heads. Yet, in the course of events, Ninotchka starts to become influenced by Western values and aesthetics so that in the end she buys that hat for herself. Another scene where we see a clashing of different cultural ideals is when Ninotchka and Léon go to the top of the Eiffel Tower and look upon the city of Paris. Léon says to Ninotchka: 'You must admit that this doomed old civilization sparkles. Look at it. It glitters. What a city. There are the grand boulevards blasted out of the heart of the old city. The Arc de Triomphe, built to greet Napoleon's army. The Opera. Montparnasse. Montmartre.' Ninotchka's reply to him reflects her different cultural viewpoint: 'I do not deny its beauty, but it's a waste of electricity.' Thus we can see the clashing of different cultural values about aesthetics. For Léon, the waste of electricity is not even a matter of concern as the *beauty* of the glittering city is all that matters. Ninotchka, on the other hand, is more concerned about *economics* and *function* as her utmost concern is that people's basic needs are cared for.

POLITICS

Conflict 'A conflict is a struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even principles. Conflict will always be found in society; as the basis of conflict may vary to be personal, racial, *class*, *caste*, *political*, and *international*.' The conflict we find in *Ninotchka* is an international conflict of class and politics. On the one hand, there is the Russian Board of Trade of the Soviet State trying to sell the jewelry to turn it into money for the common people; on the other hand, the former Grand Duchess Swana claims the jewels as her rightful property. Thus we have a conflict between the Soviet State and former aristocracy, between what might be classified as Old Russia and New Russia, and also between common people and noble individuals. As explained before, the conflict gets solved in favor of the Soviet State with Ninotchka accepting Swana's offer and agreeing to fly away from France.

RELATIONSHIP

Friendship Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski are not only three Russian agents but also good friends with each other. They discuss matters together, take collective action, and explore Paris whilst also dealing with the sale of aristocratic jewelry. Later on in the film, they also become good friends with Ninotchka as they have common aims. Perhaps the best presentation of friendship in *Ninotchka* is the scene when Ninotchka prepares dinner in her communal apartment for Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski. When the four come together, they play the guitar, sing, dance, and reminisce about their golden days in Paris. The scene where they sit at a table and sing nostalgically is proof of their common history and camaraderie.

Love Love is one of the most prominent themes of the film. Ninotchka and Léon fall in love soon after

they meet. It is first Léon who falls in love as he flirts with her from the moment they meet in the middle of the road. When she comes into his apartment, he confesses his feelings for her right away: 'You are the most incredible creature I've ever met.' He even gives her a lecture about the divine passion or love in nature: 'Love isn't so simple, Ninotchka. Ninotchka, why do doves bill and coo? Why do snails, the coldest of all creatures circle interminably around each other? Why do moths fly hundreds of miles to find their mates? Why do flowers slowly open their petals? Oh, Ninotchka, surely you feel some slight symptom of the divine passion?' These are all his attempts to encourage the same feelings in Ninotchka that he has in himself. Moreover, in the restaurant scene, we see Léon attempting to make Ninotchka laugh by telling her various jokes. These are once again attempts by him to bring out into the open the inner-dwelling, loving spirit of hers. Léon never gives up on Ninotchka because he loves her very deeply. That is also the reason for his various attempts to get a Russian visa and the source of his ingenious plan to bring Ninotchka to Constantinople.

PAST

Nostalgia Nostalgia is a yearning or longing for the past. We see nostalgia when Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski come into Ninotchka's communal apartment in Moscow. They remark: 'If you close your eyes and listen to our voices, we might be in Paris.' This shows us their longing for Paris. Later, they sit around at a table, start singing songs about Paris, dance, and reminisce about their olden and golden days. 'The song they sing is as follows: *'Paris...I still adore you...Paris...I'm longing for you. For you, for you, Paris...I left my heart with you.'* Their common history and background strengthen their friendship and emotional bonds. Their common memories make their nostalgia for Paris powerful and vivid.

PSYCHOLOGY

Sadness Sadness is seen in various scenes of the film. One of these is when Swana comes to sit at the table of Ninotchka and Léon on their dinner date. She reminds them that the legal dispute will be settled in a few days and Ninotchka will have to leave France to go back to Moscow. There is a sad atmosphere after she leaves their table as Ninotchka becomes flooded with many emotions and feelings regarding the fact that she will have to be separated from Léon. This is the reason why she insists Léon to tell her one of his funny stories. Léon is too down-spirited to tell a funny story but he finally says: 'No, I'll tell you another story. A much better one. The only thing over on Thursday will be the lawsuit. There will be no Thursday for us. Next week or any other week. I won't let it happen. I'll tear it out of the calendar.' Another sad scene is when Swana comes to inform Ninotchka the day after that she has gotten the jewels and she will only give them back if Ninotchka decides to go back to Russia as soon as possible. Ninotchka is left with a very difficult choice to make. When Léon later calls her on the telephone, we can observe her sadness for possibly speaking to him for the last time. A third scene of sadness is when Ninotchka receives a letter from Léon but the letter turns out to be largely censored. There is an expression of despair on her face and Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski decide to leave her alone after seeing her sad state.

Anger We witness anger when Léon d'Algout goes to the Russian visa office. Léon is not permitted to get a visa because of his nobility. The officer has a lot of suspicions about his intentions: 'How do I know you don't want to blow up a factory?' Because of not being allowed to go to Russia to meet Ninotchka, Léon gets angry. Out of his desperation, he says he will boycott Russia and he even punches the officer in the face. It must be mentioned that this scene also has a comical quality where we do not see pure anger but the situation is a mixed case of anger and comic relief offered by the visa officer and Léon's reactions to the officer.

Jealousy Ninotchka is jealous when she asks Léon about a photograph of a woman that she had noticed on the desk in a wide silver frame during her previous visit to his apartment. The photograph is of the former Grand Duchess Swana. Regarding Swana Ninotchka says: 'She's very attractive. She has great elegance. She's what you call a woman of the world, isn't she? I suppose she's very entertaining. It must be lots of fun to be with a woman like that, so witty [...]' These sentences reflect her jealousy regarding the relationship between Swana and Léon. Léon very quickly realizes her jealousy, hugs her, and says to her that he loves her to raise her spirits. Other than this scene, we might also observe Swana being jealous of Ninotchka. In particular, Swana's facial expression takes on a sour tone when she sees

Ninotchka beautifully and elegantly dressed for her dinner date at Café de Lutèce. The reason why she goes to their table and talks about how Ninotchka has only a few days left in Paris until the court is over is also related to her jealousy about the fact that Léon has chosen Ninotchka over her.

Otherness Ninotchka is a distinct character that is so different from the other females in Paris. She is methodical, hardworking, rigid, stern, statistical, and determined to successfully win the lawsuit. When she first comes to Paris, even her body language and tone of voice are very rigid, robotic, exact, and inflexible. She sees everything in mathematical terms as she works in the area of trade and tries to make sure Russian people are secure and safe and their necessities are provided. She is devoted to her communist ideals and is ready to do anything for the good of her state. These qualities make her stand out from the crowds, in particular the aristocratic class that does not even attempt to work. When Ninotchka asks Léon what he does as a profession, he replies: 'Keeping my body fit, keeping my mind alert...and keeping the landlord appeased, that's a full-time job.' This shows us the wide gap between someone as hardworking as Ninotchka and an idle nobleman that is presumably typical of the Parisian elite. Ninotchka is also much more hardworking and serious about her work than Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski; three men who were likewise raised on Bolshevik soil but who have not internalized the ideals of the state.

Loss Ninotchka loses her lover Léon when she has to leave France by accepting Swana's deal. Léon, likewise, loses his Ninotchka. Their loss is possibly best represented by the censored letter that Ninotchka receives which shows us their way of communication is limited by authorities higher and more powerful than themselves. Yet, this loss is not to last forever as Léon comes up with an ingenious plan to meet Ninotchka again. Thus, individual emotions and aspirations win against international restrictions. The interval when they couldn't see each other becomes a thing of the past as in the end, they get back together in Constantinople, and this time for an unlimited period.

QUEST

Explore A quest is a journey or effort in pursuit of a goal, often lengthy, ambitious, or fervent; a mission. Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski find themselves in Paris and explore what the city has to offer even if it means that they go against what Commissar Razinin instructed them to do, namely to solely deal with the lawsuit. They stay at one of the best hotels in the area, Hotel Clarence; have luxurious meals, dance with French maids, get drunk, and become friends with Léon. Their exploration of Paris turns into a fun adventure for them where they can get to be idle. Ninotchka, on the other hand, has very different aims when she arrives in Paris. She is dedicated to exploring the city but from a technical and economic standpoint. For instance; she is interested in the mathematical description of the Eiffel Tower rather than the beauty of the glittering city view it offers. She even becomes interested in Léon first of all as a subject of study which she can investigate to enquire more about the typical local morale and the 'arrogant male' who comes into being due to his 'superior earning power'. Later on, however, Ninotchka's aims transform, and she also becomes influenced and impressed by what Paris has to offer. Léon breaks down her resistance and brings into the open another Ninotchka, a warm-hearted and friendly person who is capable of fully appreciating the beauties around her. Thus, the quest of winning the lawsuit becomes mingled for all Russian agents (Iranoff, Buljanoff, Kopalski, and Ninotchka) with a pursuit of what Paris has to offer and an experience of Western society and culture.

SCENES

Beautiful Paris The film begins with an elegant view of the lively Paris: This picture takes place in Paris in those wonderful days when a siren was a brunette and not an alarm...and if a Frenchman turned out the light it was not on account of an air raid!



Three men look around a hotel Next, we see a hotel and a man who steps in and curiously looks around. The hotel manager asks if there is something he could do for him but the man says; 'No' and quickly goes out. A second man arrives who likewise curiously looks around and quickly goes out. A third man takes a glance at the hotel as he is in the revolving door.



The three men dispute over whether they should stay in the prestigious hotel The three men are outside. They talk about how wonderful the hotel is and how they don't have anything like it in Russia. One of them called Buljanoff says they should go back to the Hotel Terminus: 'Moscow made our reservations there. We are on an official mission...and we have no right to change the orders of our superiors.' The other men ask where his courage is and whether he is 'afraid to take a room with a bath'. Buljanoff says he does not want to go to Siberia and gets in a taxi. The other men try to persuade him to enter the prestigious hotel: 'Look, Buljanoff, if Lenin were alive, he would say: "Buljanoff, comrade, for once in your life, you're in Paris. Don't be a fool. Go in there and ring three times" (referring to the presumed fact that ringing three times would mean a French maid comes into the room)'. Buljanoff still thinks their place is with the common people but he wouldn't want to 'contradict Lenin', so they go in.



Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski talk to the manager In the hotel, they meet the hotel manager and introduce themselves as Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski. It turns out they are all members of the Russian Board of Trade. They ask the hotel manager how much their rooms are. They further ask him whether they have a big enough safe to hold the luggage they're carrying. The hotel manager says there's a suite with a private safe but it comes with a caveat: 'The apartment may suit your convenience...but I doubt whether it will fit your convictions. It's the *royal* suite.'



Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski decide to stay in the royal suite The three men withdraw to talk in private. Buljanoff is the cautious one. He says that they'd get into big trouble if it gets out in Moscow that they stay in the royal suite. Iranoff comes up with the perfect excuse: 'We just tell them we had to do it on account of the safe. There was no other safe big enough.' Buljanoff comes up with another idea that they could take out the pieces and distribute them into three or four boxes and thus take a smaller room. Iranoff agrees that is an idea but ingeniously adds: 'But who said we have to have an idea?' Finally, they agree to stay in the royal suite.



Iranoff talks to Mercier, the jeweler while a waiter overhears him In the royal suite, they carefully put the luggage into the safe. Iranoff is on the telephone and wants to be connected to Mercier, the jeweler. Meanwhile, a waiter observes all they are doing and talking about. Iranoff says they have the necklace and all the fourteen pieces as the court jewels of the Grand Duchess Swana consist of fourteen pieces.



Rakonin goes to Grand Duchess Swana The Russian waiter called Rakonin tells another employee that he will be back in ten minutes. He goes to 8 rue de Chalon which is where the Grand Duchess Swana lives.



Léon tries to find ways to make more money Léon enters Swana's house and greets her. Swana complains about her face: 'I'm so bored with this face. I wish I had someone else's face. Whose face would you have if you had your choice?' Léon replies that however many questions Swana asks, she never expects an answer. Swana thinks that that is something restful. They kiss each other. Léon says he dined with newspaper people, the Guizots, last night: 'I sold Monsieur Guizot the idea of publishing your memoirs in the Gazette Parisienne'. He adds that they wouldn't have to worry about their future if they were willing to raffle off her past.



Rakonin informs Swana that her jewels will be sold A servant informs Duchess Swana that Count Rakonin has arrived. She goes to see him right away. He tells her that her jewels are in Paris. He explains he overheard the three Soviet agents talking with Mercier, the jeweler, and that they're planning to sell them.



Swana talks to her lawyer Swana proceeds to call her lawyer Monsieur Cornillon. She explains the situation to her lawyer and tells him to call the police and have the three Soviet agents arrested. However, the telephone conversation is not as hopeful as she expects: 'The French government has recognized Soviet Russia and he (lawyer) doubts they will risk a war for my poor sake. He might be able to make up some kind of a case, but it would cost money.' Léon tells her that she does not need a lawyer as he is there for her.



Mercier inspects the jewels and offers a deal We see Mercier the jeweler inspecting the jewels. He says his counteroffer is the maximum and they are undertaking this deal only because of the prestige involved. At that moment, the phone rings which Buljanoff picks up, and he is informed of the arrival of Count d'Algout. But he says that they can't be disturbed. Meanwhile, Mercier is insistent on the fairness of the figure he is proposing. He thinks the three men give the impression of people who are pressed for money: 'Right now, there's a Russian commission in New York trying to sell 15 Rembrandts. There's another mortgaging the oil fields in Baku.' This means that Russia needs quick money.



Count Léon d'Algout enters and stops the purchase Soon after, Count Léon d'Algout enters the room. He quickly introduces himself to Mercier. He explains that the jewels are property of the Grand Duchess Swana and were seized illegally by the Soviet government. Kopalski intervenes: 'These may have been the jewels of the Grand Duchess Swana but like all private property, they were confiscated by the State.' Léon says the problem of ownership will be left to the French courts. He adds he has filed a petition for an injunction to prohibit the three men from either selling or removing the jewels. Mercier says his offer still stands but until the three men can produce a clear title approved by the courts they will not be closing the deal.



Léon wants to have lunch with the three men Léon offers to have lunch with the three men who are all very angry at him. Kopalski says: 'We haven't anything to discuss with you. We'll talk to a lawyer. Soviet Russia will put all its might behind this case.' Iranoff adds that Léon can't intimidate them. Léon, on the other hand, seems very self-confident and comfortable with the whole case. He talks about what a charming, exquisite woman the Grand Duchess Swana is. He says that in the court, everybody including the judge and jury will be French and that Swana will beguile everyone with her looks. Buljanoff asks Léon about what is on his mind and he repeats that he just wants to have lunch.



During lunch, Léon writes a telegram to Russia We see waiters bring luxurious meals to the royal suite and hear the three men shouting in surprise. Next, a French maid comes to attend to them. Later, she brings with her two more maids and they enter the suite. Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski soon become drunk. We see them dancing with the French maids. Meanwhile, Léon is working. He says to them that he's written a telegram to Russia on behalf of the three men. The three men are drunk and Léon seems to have gained their friendship as they repeatedly say to him: 'Why are you so good to us?' and kiss Léon. The telegram that Léon has prepared is as follows: 'Commissar Razinin, Board of Trade, Moscow. Unexpected situation here. Grand Duchess Swana in Paris, claims jewels and has already brought injunction against sale or removal. After long and serious study we suggest, in the interest of our beloved country a fifty-fifty settlement as best solution.' Kopalski says that they'd be sent to Siberia if they said such a thing.



Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski are severely drunk Next, the Russian waiter Rakonin brings more champagne. The drunk men go and hug him. Léon asks Rakonin to take the telegram to the telegraph office at once.



Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski change their style We see that the Russian hats Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski wear get changed and they start wearing French or western hats.



Commissar Razinin sends an envoy to inspect the three men Léon calls the three men. Iranoff says that he must give Moscow some time to get an answer. After the conversation is over, Buljanoff and Kopalski show a telegram to Iranoff in which it says: 'Halt negotiations immediately. Envoy Extraordinary arrives Thursday, 5:20 p.m. with full power. Your authority canceled herewith. Razinin.' It is already 5 o'clock, so the three men quickly go to welcome the special envoy. However, before they leave the room, Iranoff calls the hotel desk and tells them to move their things to the smallest room they've got and that the special envoy will occupy the royal suite.



Ninotchka arrives in Paris They go to the train station. However, they think they must have missed the envoy. Soon, they recognize a woman with two luggages. The woman approaches them and says in a rather robotic voice that she is looking for Michael Simonovitch Iranoff. She introduces herself as Nina Ivanovna Yakushova (Ninotchka). Iranoff says it is a charming idea for Moscow to surprise them with a lady comrade. Kopalski adds that if they had known, they would have greeted her with flowers. However, she is not interested in such things: 'We are here for work, all of us. Let's not waste any time.' A porter approaches her and asks to carry her luggage. However, she is surprised that a man should carry her luggage: 'That's no business. That's social injustice.'



inotchka cannot believe how silly Western civilization is As they walk to the hotel, they see a woman's hat. Ninotchka asks what that is. She cannot believe how a civilization can survive that allows women to put things like that on their heads.



Ninotchka immediately proceeds to work They arrive at the hotel. Ninotchka enquires about the price of the royal suite and is angry about the high price. Buljanoff explains that they had to take it on account of the safe. Ninotchka immediately proceeds to work and says she will have no dealings with the Grand Duchess nor her representative. According to her, the three men have been careless in their duty to the State. The next year's crop is in danger and there may not be enough bread to feed the Russian people. So, it is a grave mistake to give fifty percent to a so-called Grand Duchess. Ninotchka assigns duties to each of the three men. She asks Buljanoff to get her a map of the city so she can inspect the public utilities in her spare time.



Ninotchka coincidentally meets Léon who flirts with her Ninotchka goes out to explore Paris. She has to wait in the middle of the road for the traffic to pass. Coincidentally, Léon is also waiting in the same place. She asks him how long they will have to wait. When Léon responds that they will have to wait until the policeman blows his whistle again, Ninotchka asks at what intervals the policeman whistles. Léon is surprised because he has never thought of that before even though he has been in similar situations. Then he helps her locate the Eiffel Tower on her map. The way he behaves toward her is very flirtatious which she tells him to suppress. She also says that it is having a superior earning power that creates men like Léon, the arrogant males in a capitalistic society.



Léon follows Ninotchka to the Eiffel Tower Ninotchka arrives at the Eiffel Tower. She asks an officer about the width of the structure. At that moment, Léon appears: 'The foundation is 141 yards square.' It turns out Léon has followed her into the building: '...Ascending to the first platform is a staircase consisting of...829 steps. And an additional 254 steps to the very top.' Léon is astonished to read that and see that Ninotchka is taking the stairway.



Léon shows Ninotchka his house through the telescope At the top of the Eiffel Tower, she thanks him for having given her valuable information. Looking at the city from the heights, Léon talks about how a glittering and sparkling beauty it is. Ninotchka, on the other hand, believes it is a waste of electricity. Later, Léon shows Ninotchka his house through the telescope. She suggests that they go there as he 'might be an interesting subject of study'.



Ninotchka goes to Léon's apartment At Léon's apartment, the butler Gaston greets them. Ninotchka remarks that the man is very old and he shouldn't work. She says to Gaston: 'The day will come when you will be free.' Then she asks Gaston to go to bed as they want to be alone.



Ninotchka and Léon converse about life and love Ninotchka and Léon are alone. Léon puts on some music. He says to her that if she'd like to study, he's got nothing to conceal. Ninotchka says that she will start with him, so Léon gives a physical description of himself. When asked about his profession, he says: 'Keeping my body fit, keeping my mind alert...and keeping the landlord appeased, that's a full-time job.' Ninotchka asks him what he does for mankind. Léon again starts flirting with her, replying that he does not do much for mankind: 'But for womankind, my record isn't quite so bleak.' Later into the conversation, he asks her if she likes him just a little bit which is replied by Ninotchka with a robotic sounding: 'Your general appearance is not distasteful.' He further asks her whether he might be falling in love with her. She remarks that: 'love is a romantic designation for a most ordinary biological...or [...]chemical process', but she also adds that they are chemically already quite sympathetic. Later, she recounts her previous experiences as a sergeant in the Third Cavalry Brigade. She even has a wound from those days. She further adds that she is just: 'a tiny cog in the great wheel of evolution'. Léon keeps on flirting with her: 'You're the most adorable cog I've ever seen.' The clock strikes midnight. He talks metaphorically that one hand has met the other and they kiss. However, she thinks all this is false sentimentality. Léon says she analyzes everything out of existence but he won't let her analyze him out of existence. He talks about a divine sort of passion in nature and finally kisses her.



Léon and Ninotchka learn they are each others' adversaries While they are kissing, the telephone rings. It is Buljanoff. Léon learns that Ninotchka is the special envoy Yakushova. Knowing that they are each others' adversaries, Ninotchka prepares to leave. Léon protests but she thinks they should forget they ever met: 'I was sent here by my country to fight you.' He says he thought he'd made an impression on her but she is determined and leaves the apartment.



Swana is displeased by the special envoy's arrival Grand Duchess Swana is talking on the phone to a woman named Marianne about how her litigation was going perfectly until 'some horrid female envoy arrived from Moscow'.



Ninotchka and the lawyers study the Civil Code Ninotchka is working with the legal advisers. They are studying some provisions of the Civil Code dealing with the property of foreigners residing in France. Ninotchka says she will go to have lunch.



Ninotchka tries to find a place to eat Outside the hotel, she asks a taxi driver to recommend her a restaurant. She asks him where he eats which is Père Mathieu. It is a place for workmen, so she goes there. Meanwhile, Léon is following her.



Léon follows Ninotchka to the restaurant Ninotchka sits at a table by the window. Soon after, Léon arrives: 'Well, for goodness sake, hello. It certainly is a small world, isn't it?' Ninotchka has an expressionless face and does not seem to be happy to see him. As the owner of the restaurant comes to take the orders, she makes it clear that she does not care about food and thinks only about 'the future of the common people'. The owner replies that that's also a question of food. After the owner goes away, Léon tells her that she insulted him and that the good old man believes in food just as she believes in Karl Marx.



Léon tries to make Ninotchka laugh and finally succeeds She says that she doesn't like him following her around to which Léon replies that he always comes here as this is his natural element. He greets some of the working men sitting at the next table. Later, Ninotchka says that his tactics are useless and she knows now that he is a man who employs business methods which in Russia would be punished by death. Léon, on the other hand, does not want to talk about glum things and tells her not to take everything so seriously. He asks her to smile 'at the whole ridiculous spectacle of life'. He tells her several jokes to make her laugh but nothing seems to work. He finally gives up: 'Not a grain of humor in you. There's not a laugh in you.' After saying this, he accidentally falls off his chair to the ground. Everybody starts laughing at Léon, including Ninotchka. It is the first time she laughs. This presents a major turning point in the film concerning Ninotchka's character.



Ninotchka laughs again Ninotchka is back at the hotel. The legal advisers present their arguments. However, all of a sudden, Ninotchka begins to laugh. She excuses herself. It turns out they have two weeks in Paris until their case is heard in court.



Ninotchka is changed Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski talk to Ninotchka about the technicalities and various constructions. Yet, she seems to have lost all her technical interest. She opens the windows and talks about birds and the beautiful weather outside. Then she wishes Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski to leave.



Ninotchka tries the strange hat on After they leave, we see her opening a box out of which she takes out the strange-looking hat that she had seen the first day she arrived in Paris. It seems that she bought the hat. She tries it on.



Gaston the butler notices a change in Léon Gaston the butler tells Léon that he noticed a distinct change in him after he met the Bolshevik lady. It turns out that Léon had made his bed and has a copy of Karl Marx's *Capital* on his night table. Gaston says he views with alarm the influence over him of the Bolshevik lady. However, Léon does not understand that Gaston does not want to be on an equal footing with him. Soon, the doorbell rings. It is Ninotchka.



Ninotchka sees her old self as someone else Ninotchka has her strange hat on. Léon asks her if she remembers the room. However, she says she's never been there before. She sees her old self as someone else: 'Oh, I know. The girl with the map... always figuring out each step and worrying about north and south. Heh.' She later asks to have some music. She tells Léon that she wakes up in the middle of the night and laughs at the jokes he told a few days ago. She further tells him about Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski and that she should hate them as they are scoundrels but then she realizes who made them that way (Léon) and she postpones sending her report to Moscow.



Ninotchka asks Léon about the photograph of Swana Later, she asks him about a photograph of a woman that she had noticed on the desk in a wide silver frame. Léon takes out the photo of the woman from a drawer. She is the Grand Duchess Swana. Ninotchka says it must be lots of fun to be with a woman like that. Léon very quickly realizes that she is jealous. He hugs her.



Swana makes fun of Ninotchka After the opera, Léon and Ninotchka go to Café de Lutèce. Grand Duchess Swana also comes to the same place to dine. She is surprised to find out that Léon is bringing the 'female Bolshevik' with him. She tells mocking phrases about her to the other ladies: 'We must be discreet. If she sucks her soup...or drinks out of her finger bowl, don't laugh.' However, her face darkens when she sees Ninotchka dressed in an elegant gown.



Swana ruins the night of Ninotchka and Léon Ninotchka tries champagne for the first time. Meanwhile, Grand Duchess Swana comes near the couple. Swana soon sits at their table and starts talking about her dog PUNCHY which Léon gave to her. Swana behaves as if Ninotchka does not understand what she's been telling about: 'Poor Madame Yakushova. Here we are talking in mysteries. I'm sure you wonder what it's about.' However, Ninotchka makes clear that she understood everything. Swana later says that the only thing she and Ninotchka have in common is their lawsuit which will be settled in a week: 'It's too bad you have so few more days here in Paris.'



Ninotchka becomes drunk After Swana leaves, Ninotchka drinks more champagne. Léon tells her that the only thing over on Thursday will be the lawsuit and that there will be no Thursday for them, next week or any other week. They drink more champagne and soon Ninotchka becomes drunk. They dance. Ninotchka is very drunk and says she wants to make a speech to her comrades. Léon takes her to the powder room. Soon, the restaurant manager comes to tell him that Ninotchka is spreading communistic propaganda in the powder room. It turns out she has been inciting the attendants of the powder room to go on strike.



Rakonin sees Ninotchka with Léon After their night out, they come back to the Clarence Hotel where Ninotchka stays. Rakonin sees them together. Léon tells Rakonin to tell about them to the Grand Duchess and everybody: 'They know it anyway. It doesn't make any difference. Go on, get out, get out.'



Ninotchka thinks she betrayed Russian ideals Later, Ninotchka says she is so happy but she deserves to be punished: 'I am a traitor. When I kissed you, I betrayed a Russian ideal. I should be stood up against the wall.' Léon brings her near a wall and closes her eyes with a piece of cloth. Then, he opens a champagne bottle the sound of which resembles that of a gun. Ninotchka falls to the ground. Symbolically, she has paid the penalty.



Léon puts the jewel crown on Ninotchka's head Léon suggests they turn on the radio. Ninotchka says there must be a radio somewhere in the room. However, she goes to the safe. She tells him the code and they open the safe. They see the jewels. Léon wants to put the crown on Ninotchka's head. She resists: 'They belong to the people.' Léon says that he gives them back to the people: 'I make you Ninotchka the Great...Duchess of the People...Grand Duchess of the People.' Soon, Ninotchka cannot stay awake anymore and Léon carries her to the bed to sleep.



Swana asks Ninotchka to leave France and offers a deal The next morning, Grand Duchess Swana comes to Clarence Hotel, to Ninotchka's room and wakes her up. Ninotchka asks her to leave and Swana says this is exactly what she came for, that is, to ask Ninotchka to leave: 'I don't mean this hotel, and I don't mean Paris. I mean France. There's a plane for Moscow at 5:40.' Ninotchka asks her if she still thinks she is issuing orders from her palace. Swana soon brings the subject to her regalia and jewels. At that point, Ninotchka realizes that the jewels are all gone. It turns out that last night Rakonin took the jewels while she was sleeping and gave them to the Grand Duchess. Swana insists that they belong to her as they were given to her by her mother. However, Ninotchka says that the jewels belong to the Russian people as they paid for them with their blood and their lives. As Swana is not influenced by emotional facts, Ninotchka tells her about the law, that under Soviet law, the jewels belong to the State and France is going to uphold that ownership. Swana already is aware of this fact, she says she will drag her through every court and that it is at least going to take two years. However, she wants to make a deal with Ninotchka: 'I am willing to hand over the jewels and sign any necessary papers...if you will take that 5:40 plane to Moscow.' Ninotchka is left with a very troublesome choice but she accepts the offer for the good of her people.



Léon confesses his love for Ninotchka Grand Duchess Swana arrives home. Count Léon d'Algout has been waiting for her. It turns out he has got a confession to make. He tells Swana that he's in love with Ninotchka. However, Swana explains to him that he is too late for confessing that and that the plane for Moscow has already taken off.



Léon is denied a Russian visa Count Léon d'Algout goes to the Russian visa office. The officer sees Léon's passport and becomes suspicious of the fact that he is a nobleman. When Léon finally confesses that he wants to go to Russia because of love, he is still not permitted. The officer has a lot of suspicions about his intentions: 'How do I know you don't want to blow up a factory?' Léon gets angry and says he will boycott Russia: 'No more vodka, no more caviar, no more Tchaikovsky, no more borscht!' Then he punches the officer in the face and goes away.



May march It is the first day of May and Russian people march in Moscow. Ninotchka is among the people marching.



Ninotchka's silk stockings create a commotion among women Ninotchka comes back to her communal apartment. She prepares the table for a small dinner party. Anna, one of her roommates, tells her that it makes people feel odd that she never talks about Paris and that she should be more careful. She recounts that when she passed through the laundry yard in the morning, she saw all the women huddled around a pair of silk stockings and it has a Paris label. She says that it created a commotion among the women. Ninotchka says: 'I should hate to see our country endangered by my underwear.' Anna asks her about other things she wore and Ninotchka tells her about the silly hat she had and the evening gown.



Paris reunion in Moscow Soon, Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski come to Ninotchka's apartment. They all warmly hug each other. They talk about how they owe their lives to Ninotchka as she gave Commissar Razinin a wonderful report about them. They are in a collectivist spirit as they say: 'Let's forget everything, except we're together [...]It's a real Paris reunion.'



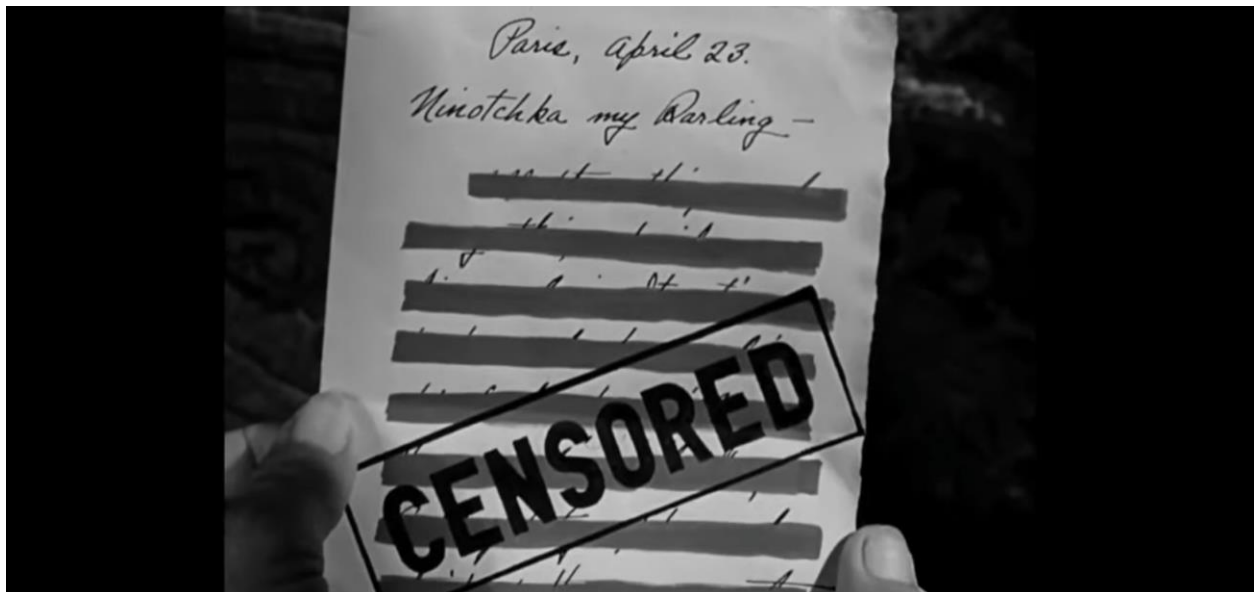
Iranoff, Buljanoff, Kopalski, and Ninotchka reminisce about Paris

Later, we see them playing the guitar and singing about Paris: *'Paris...I still adore you...Paris...I'm longing for you. For you, for you, Paris...I left my heart with you.'*



Censored letter

Soon, a man arrives to give a letter to Ninotchka. It is from Léon. However, the letter is all censored except for the beginning and the end. Seeing the despair on Ninotchka's face, the three men decide to leave. Before leaving, Buljanoff says to her: *'They can't censor our memories, can they?'*



Commissar Razinin asks Ninotchka to go to Constantinople It is wintertime in Moscow. Ninotchka goes to Commissar Razinin's office. She presents her report on materials available for trading in the next four months. Razinin congratulates her on her hard work. However, he tells her that she must go to Constantinople to investigate what Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski have been doing there. Razinin further explains that it was on the strength of Ninotchka's Paris report that they were sent to Constantinople on a mission of fur deal. It turns out that the three men haven't sold a piece of fur for six weeks and they have been dragging the good name of Russia through every café, and nightclub and getting drunk. Ninotchka implores Razinin not to send her to Constantinople but Razinin's decision is final.



Ninotchka arrives in Constantinople We see Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski waiting for Ninotchka at the airport, with flowers in Kowalski's hands.



Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski seem oblivious to Ninotchka's criticism

They take Ninotchka to a suite. Ninotchka starts criticizing them: 'You've done it again, and I'm responsible. How can you forget yourselves this way? You were sent here to make money, not to spend it [...] Don't forget the day will come when you will have to face Razinin.' When Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski hear the name of Razinin they start laughing out loud. They seem not to care about Commissar Razinin at all. Buljanoff says: 'Imagine, we don't have to whisper anymore.' Iranoff adds: 'No. We can say whatever we want. We can shout, we can complain. Look.' He opens the door of the suite and shouts into the space: 'The service in this hotel is terrible! [...] See? Nobody comes, nobody pays any attention. That's freedom.' Ninotchka thinks they are sticking their heads in the sand and tries to bring them back to reality: 'I must have a complete report of your negotiations and a detailed expense account [...] I don't know how I can get you out of it this time. How will it end?'



Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski's restaurant

Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski finally give her the news that they have opened a restaurant in Constantinople. They say their little restaurant is their Russia and they are serving their country.



Léon is the one behind it all When Ninotchka asks who gave them this idea, they point out to the balcony where Léon is standing smilingly. Léon says to her: 'They wouldn't let me in, so I had to get you out.' Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski leave the room. Léon talks about how he wrote to her many times but all his letters came back to him. Ninotchka says: 'And the one I got, they wouldn't let me read. It began, *Ninotchka, my darling...* and it ended *Yours, Léon.*' Léon says to her that he won't tell her what came between: 'I'll show you, I'll prove it. But it'll take a long time, Ninotchka. At least a lifetime.' He asks her to stay with him. Otherwise, he says he would travel wherever there are Russian commissions and he'd turn them all into Iranoffs, Buljanoffs, and Kopalskis: 'The world will be crowded with Russian restaurants. I'll depopulate Russia. Comrade, once you saved your country by going back. This time you can only save it by staying here.' Ninotchka finally agrees to stay with him as she is sure 'no one will say that Ninotchka was a bad Russian'.



Kopalski's protest

We see the restaurant of Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski. However, Kopalski's name is not electrically illuminated. Kopalski is in front of the restaurant carrying a protest sign: 'Buljanoff and Iranoff unfair to Kopalski.'

