

**Copyright Protection.** This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

**Reservation of Rights.** All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

**Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments.** Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website ([www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author’s agent, as applicable.

**Restriction of Alterations.** There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, the cutting of music, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

**Author Credit.** Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

**Publisher Attribution.** All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.  
([www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com))**

**Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying.** Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

**Statement of Non-affiliation.** This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

**Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works.** This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work *not included in the Play’s score*, or performance of a sound recording of such a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office ([www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)), ASCAP ([www.ascap.com](http://www.ascap.com)), BMI ([www.bmi.com](http://www.bmi.com)), and NMPA ([www.nmpa.org](http://www.nmpa.org)) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

## The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, cut any music, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author(s) and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

*For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.*

## Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that authors are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the author, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—whether or not you charge an admission fee. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

**Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law.** Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office ([www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)) for more information.

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

**Playscripts, Inc.**  
450 Seventh Ave, Suite 809  
New York, NY 10123

toll-free phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY  
email: [info@playscripts.com](mailto:info@playscripts.com)  
website: [www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)

*This play is for  
Julia Varanelli*

## Cast of Characters

BERNARD S. DUNLAP, General Manager of the Palm Beach Royale Hotel & Spa.

CLAUDIA MCFADDEN, America's Beloved Matron of Song.

ATHENA SINCLAIR, a Great Star of Stage and Screen.

MURPHY STEVENS, Athena's personal secretary.

MR. PIPPET, Claudia's personal secretary.

DORA DEL RIO, a Gossip Columnist.

MRS. EVERETT P. OSGOOD, a Society Matron & President of the Palm Beach Ladies for Unity.

FRANCIS, a bellhop.

OTIS, a bellhop.

## Setting

The Presidential Suite of the Palm Beach Royale Hotel in Palm Beach. May 1942.

## Acknowledgments

*Suite Surrender* had its World Premiere at Caldwell Theatre Company (Michael Hall, Artistic Director) in Boca Raton, Florida on January 13–February 17, 2008. It was directed by Joe Warik and featured the following cast:

OTIS . . . . .	David Perez-Ribada
FRANCIS . . . . .	Tom Wahl
BERNARD S. DUNLAP . . . . .	John Felix
MRS. EVERETT P. OSGOOD . . . . .	Kay Brady
DORA DEL RIO . . . . .	Pat Nesbit
CLAUDIA MCFADDEN . . . . .	Elizabeth Dimon
MR. PIPPET . . . . .	Michael McKeever
ATHENA SINCLAIR . . . . .	Suellen Estey
MURPHY . . . . .	Autumn Horne

# SUITE SURRENDER

by Michael McKeever

*(We are in the Presidential Suite of the Palm Beach Royale Hotel & Spa. This is one of those old, classic Mizneresque rooms that they just don't make anymore. High vaulted ceilings and hardwood floors. On the upstage wall are large double doors leading to the hall and the rest of the hotel. Just Stage Left of these doors is a small closet. Past the closet is another door leading to one of the suite's two bedrooms. Stage Right of the hall door is a set of French doors leading out to a balcony overlooking the pool and beaches ten stories below. Past the French doors is yet another door. This is the suite's second bedroom. A sofa, a bar and some occasional chairs and tables are placed tastefully about the room. Prominent in the room is a baby grand piano.)*

*(This is a room that exudes breeding and wealth. Not cheeky nouveau riche wealth...but old-world, formal wealth. Palm Beach wealth.)*

*(It is late afternoon, May, 1942.)*

*(After a moment we hear the rattle of a key in the hall door lock. It opens and two bellhops, FRANCIS and OTIS, enter the room. They wear the classic bellhop uniforms of the period. Between them, they carry four dozen long stem white roses.)*

**OTIS.** So where do we put all these?

**FRANCIS.** Dunlap didn't say. He just said to bring them up here.

**OTIS.** So where do we put 'em?

**FRANCIS.** Around, I guess.

*(They place the flowers around the room.)*

**OTIS.** I haven't seen this many flowers since my grandfather's wake.

**FRANCIS.** Dunlap says she insists on having white roses everywhere she stays.

**OTIS.** I guess when you're as big a star as she is, you can afford to do such things.

**FRANCIS.** I heard she once threw a bellhop off a fifth floor balcony of the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.

**OTIS.** No!

**FRANCIS.** Because he accidentally brought her red ones.

**OTIS.** Noo!

FRANCIS. Really.

OTIS. *Nooooo!*

FRANCIS. That's what I heard.

OTIS. Well, you're wrong.

FRANCIS. Okay.

OTIS. You are. You're wrong.

FRANCIS. I'm just telling you what I heard.

OTIS. She couldn't have. She's a very nice lady. I saw her at the Paramount with my cousin Lester. It was a triple bill with Bing Crosby and Frankie Lane. She wore a pink dress and waved right at me.

FRANCIS. And that makes her a nice lady?

OTIS. She sang God Bless America, and everybody cried.

FRANCIS. (*Ignoring him:*) Hey look, they fixed the piano.

(FRANCIS *moves to the baby grand.*)

OTIS. I've never actually seen a celebrity up close before. I mean, one time last December I saw the back of Douglas Fairbanks' head walking through the lobby, but I don't think that really counts. You know? And a few years back, I valet parked Tallulah Bankhead's Packard. But I think that counts even less.

(FRANCIS *sits and plays a few chords.*)

FRANCIS. No, it's a new one. I guess the old one was so smashed up, it was beyond repair.

(*He plays a bit of a song.*)

FRANCIS. It's a beaut. Listen to that.

OTIS. *Hey, that's right!* You used to be in the show business.

FRANCIS. (*Stops playing.*) Where did you get an idea like that?

OTIS. You told me.

FRANCIS. I what?

OTIS. You told me.

FRANCIS. No I didn't.

OTIS. Yes you did. That night we all went out to Marty's Pub. You drank all that scotch and told me how you used to play the piano for some girl.

FRANCIS. I did no such thing.

**OTIS.** In some cabaret in Los Angeles.

**FRANCIS.** Otis—

**OTIS.** She had this funny name.

**FRANCIS.** Otis—

**OTIS.** Mooshie. Or Meeshie.

**FRANCIS.** Otis—

**OTIS.** Something with an M.

**FRANCIS.** *Otis!* You're wrong. I was never in show business. There was no girl. There was no—

**OTIS.** *Myrtle!* I think you said her name was Myrtle. (*Beat.* FRANCIS glares at him.) Maybe it wasn't an M.

**FRANCIS.** I'm gonna have a smoke.

*(He moves to the French doors, opens them, steps out onto the balcony and lights a cigarette.)*

**OTIS.** (*To himself:*) Maybe it was a P name. Polly. Pamela. Petunia. (*Beat.*) No, I'm sure it was an M.

**FRANCIS.** (*Indicating the pool ten stories below:*) Speaking of girls, come check out the cutie in the blue swimsuit by the pool.

**OTIS.** (*Moving onto the balcony:*) We shouldn't be goofing around up here. They're going to be looking for us downstairs.

**FRANCIS.** You worry too much Otis.

**OTIS.** I do not.

*(FRANCIS shoots him a look.)*

**OTIS.** *I don't!*

*(Beat. He looks over the balcony.)*

**OTIS.** Did she really throw a bellhop off a fifth story balcony?

*(BERNARD S. DUNLAP enters the suite. A dapper man in his 50s, he is the General Manager of the Palm Beach Royale. He is beautifully dressed and has all the attitude of someone of his position. Yet, somewhere under the calm surface of his polished demeanor and perfectly pressed suit, is a hysteric screaming to come out.)*

*(Upon hearing DUNLAP enter, FRANCIS and OTIS immediately step back in from the balcony.)*

**OTIS.** Hi Mr. Dunlap.

**DUNLAP.** Good God, look at all these roses. Forty thousand dollars to renovate this *suit* and it looks like somebody's wake.

**OTIS.** But, you said—

**DUNLAP.** I know what I said. Put them in the bedroom.

**FRANCIS.** Which one?

**DUNLAP.** Either one. Just get them out of here.

(FRANCIS and OTIS move about the suite collecting the flowers.)

**DUNLAP.** And do it quickly. I've got Mrs. Osgood coming up here any moment.

**OTIS.** Will Miss McFadden be with her?

**DUNLAP.** No. She's not arriving 'til later.

**OTIS.** Mr. Dunlap?

**DUNLAP.** (To OTIS:) What is it Francis?

**OTIS.** I'm Otis.

**FRANCIS.** I'm Francis.

**DUNLAP.** Yes, of course. What is it *Otis*?

**OTIS.** Would it be alright if I asked Miss McFadden for her autograph?

**DUNLAP.** No.

**OTIS.** Even if it's for my mother?

**DUNLAP.** No.

**OTIS.** What if it's for my sick mother?

**DUNLAP.** (To OTIS:) Francis.

**OTIS.** Otis.

**DUNLAP.** Otis.

**OTIS.** Yes sir?

**DUNLAP.** Get out.

**FRANCIS.** Yes sir, we're leaving right now.

(He hands his roses to OTIS, who brings all four dozen into the Stage Left bedroom.)

**DUNLAP.** (To FRANCIS:) Oh, and...and... (He can't remember which one he is.)

**FRANCIS.** Francis, sir.

**DUNLAP.** Yes, yes, Francis. Tell Mr. Hedges at the front desk to send Miss McFadden up as soon as she arrives. We'll check her in and bring up her bags afterwards.

**FRANCIS.** Yes sir.

*(OTIS returns from the bedroom and the two bellhops move to the hall door.)*

*(They open it to find MRS. EVERETT P. OSGOOD standing there.)*

**FRANCIS.** Oh, Hi Mrs. Osgood.

**OTIS.** Hi Mrs. Osgood.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Hello boys.

*(FRANCIS and OTIS exit.)*

*(MRS. OSGOOD moves into the suite, taking off her gloves. She is President of the Palm Beach Ladies for Unity and a dozen organizations like it. She is matronly and stylish and always a bit daft. One of the First Ladies of Palm Beach Society, she looks at the War Effort as if it were one of her cotillions.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Now then Mr. Dunlap, how did we do?

**DUNLAP.** *(Indicating the suite:)* See for yourself. One hundred percent renovated. *And on schedule.* As promised.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Oh, it's lovely. Just perfect. Even better than before.

**DUNLAP.** It should be, for all the money it cost.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I certainly hope the United States Army won't be asked to contribute to the cost of this renovation.

**DUNLAP.** Of course not.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** You see, these boys are putting their lives on the line for all of us here in America. They deserve to let off a little steam.

**DUNLAP.** Even if it means demolishing a hotel suite or two.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Come now, don't be petty. The damage they caused couldn't have been that bad.

**DUNLAP.** Mrs. Osgood, I realize how important it is that you and your Palm Beach Ladies for Unity—

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *(Proudly:)* The PBLFU.

**DUNLAP.** *(Beat.)* Yes. As I was saying, I realize how important it is that you sponsor these little weekend leaves for our GI's.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Oh yes, indeed.

**DUNLAP.** But don't you think there are more...suitable venues?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Suitable?

**DUNLAP.** The Palm Beach Royale has been a staple of Palm Beach Society for close to fifty years. Presidents and royalty have stayed in this very suite.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Well if it's good enough for royalty, it's good enough for our boys on the battlefield.

**DUNLAP.** (*Indicating a wall:*) Mrs. Osgood, this last weekend we found a young GI stuck through the wall.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** As I said, they need to let off steam.

(*Beat.*)

**DUNLAP.** The *wall*, Mrs. Osgood. *The wall.*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I'm sure there was a perfectly good reason.

**DUNLAP.** He was wearing nothing but a lampshade, singing "Begin the Beguine."

**MRS. OSGOOD.** So what's your point?

**DUNLAP.** My point is—

**MRS. OSGOOD.** (*Cutting him off:*) Really of no interest to me. Mr. Dunlap, as long as this war is on, and as long as my husband is Chairman of the Board for this hotel, the Palm Beach Royale, and everyone on its staff—including yourself—will continue to give their all to support the War Effort. Whether that be by hosting USO functions, organizing fund drives... (*Beat.*) ...or pulling GI's out of its walls. Is that understood, Mr. Dunlap?

**DUNLAP.** (*Beat.*) Perfectly.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I'm so very fond of you. I would hate for you to have to start looking for employment at another "staple of Palm Beach Society."

**DUNLAP.** As would I.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** (*Delighted:*) Then we understand each other.

**DUNLAP.** Yes Madam. I assure you, we will continue to do our very best to accommodate your boys in uniform.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Excellent. Now then, let's discuss tonight. Is everything on schedule?

**DUNLAP.** Yes Madam. Everything, *and I do mean everything*, is set and ready to go. Every last detail has been attended to.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** The ballroom downstairs?

**DUNLAP.** The chandeliers are gleaming. The woodwork is polished. The orchestra has been rehearsing all day.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** This is a very important night Mr. Dunlap.

**DUNLAP.** Don't I know it.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** This is the largest War Benefit the Palm Beach Ladies for Unity has ever thrown. There are reporters here from all over the world. Just think, tonight's benefit will be broadcast live on radios from sea to shining sea.

**DUNLAP.** The technicians are setting up their equipment downstairs as we speak.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** The ears of the nation will be looking down *upon us*.

**DUNLAP.** And, I assure you, the Palm Beach Royale will sparkle like the diamond she is.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Of course she will. I have complete faith in you. (*Beat.*) What about the entertainment?

**DUNLAP.** What about it?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Has everyone arrived?

**DUNLAP.** Everyone, except for Claudia McFadden and Athena Sinclair.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Goodness, let's hope they don't arrive at the same time.

**DUNLAP.** Could you imagine?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** And Claudia McFadden will be staying here in the Presidential Suite?

**DUNLAP.** Yes.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** And Miss Sinclair?

**DUNLAP.** A suite on another floor, on the other side of the hotel.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Perfect. And the show?

**DUNLAP.** Everything's set. Everything's perfect. I've timed every act down to the second. Miss Sinclair will perform at precisely 8:40. She'll be done and offstage by 9:00. After that, we have Jimmy Durante. Miss McFadden doesn't take the stage 'til 9:30. By that time, Athena Sinclair will be back up in her suite. They'll never see each other.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** That's good. Miss McFadden was adamant that she at no time be on the same stage, or for that matter be in the same room, with Athena Sinclair. It's a shame really. The last National War Fund Benefit those two headlined raised over sixty thousand dollars. People went just to see if they'd kill each other.

**DUNLAP.** They won't get anywhere near each other. I guarantee it.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Good man. We don't want any unnecessary drama. Tonight's benefit is too important.

**DUNLAP.** As you know, Mrs. Osgood, I run a very tight ship. Nothing happens at the Palm Beach Royale, unless I allow it.

*(Suddenly the hall door bursts open and DORA DEL RIO enters the room. DORA is the quintessential gossip reporter. She is Hedda Hopper on speed.)*

**DORA.** Darling, I... *(Seeing it's DUNLAP:)* ...Oh crap, it's only you.

**DUNLAP.** Miss del Rio. What a nightmarish surprise.

**DORA.** I've come to chat with Claudia McFadden.

**DUNLAP.** Who?

**DORA.** Very funny. Is she here yet?

**DUNLAP.** I haven't the vaguest idea what you're talking about. *(To MRS. OSGOOD:)* Mrs. Osgood, I don't believe you've had the... what's the word I want?

**DORA.** Pleasure?

**DUNLAP.** Not so much. *(The word comes to him:)* "Occasion" to meet Miss Dora del Rio?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I'm afraid I haven't.

**DUNLAP.** Miss del Rio has the...*distinction...*of writing a column for *The Palm Beach Tattler*.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I'm afraid I'm not familiar with that publication.

**DUNLAP.** Lucky you. *(Back to DORA:)* Now then, Miss del Rio, allow me to show you the door. Or shall I call security.

**DORA.** I was told Miss McFadden would be staying in this suite.

**DUNLAP.** You were told wrong.

**DORA.** What if I told you Miss McFadden invited me here herself.

**DUNLAP.** I would say you were lying.

**DORA.** Rumor has it she's planning an all-out assault on Athena Sinclair. She's still fuming from the last benefit they did together.

**DUNLAP.** I have no idea what you're talking about. I do however know the extension for the security desk.

**DORA.** I'm a guest at this hotel. You wouldn't dare.

*(He moves to the phone and dials.)*

**DUNLAP.** *(Into the phone:)* Hello, security? This is Mr. Dunlap. We have a Code Red in the Presidential Suite. Thank you.

*(He hangs up.)*

**DUNLAP.** They're on their way.

**DORA.** I never liked you very much.

**DUNLAP.** I'm heartbroken.

**DORA.** Mrs. Osgood, it was pleasure meeting you, but I really must be going. Maybe one day we can sit down and have a chat.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Oh my dear, I don't think so.

*(DORA hands a business card to MRS. OSGOOD.)*

**DORA.** Just in case.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *(Looking at the card:)* Yes, well...

*(DORA exits.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** What a peculiar person.

*(DUNLAP takes the card out of MRS. OSGOOD's hand, tears it in two and places the pieces into his pocket.)*

**DUNLAP.** Trust me Mrs. Osgood, you want to avoid that woman at all costs. She's a snake. Her pen is poisoned. She lives for scandal.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** How festive.

**DUNLAP.** And, as you might imagine, she is but one of a thousand things that I need to deal with today. Therefore, if you'll be so kind as to—

**MRS. OSGOOD.** There is one last thing, Mr. Dunlap.

**DUNLAP.** Of course there is.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** This week's Palm Beach Ladies for Unity Weekend-Leave Program is sponsoring...*the Navy.*

**DUNLAP.** *(Beat.)* The Navy?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Yes.

**DUNLAP.** You're kidding.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** No. I've invited a few dozen to attend tonight's festivities.

**DUNLAP.** *You what?*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I've given them front row seats at tonight's Benefit and a block of rooms down on the fourth floor. I told them to look at the Palm Beach Royale as if it were their own home.

**DUNLAP.** You didn't.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I did!

**DUNLAP.** No, really. *You didn't.*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *(Delighted:) I assure you I did!*

*(She giggles with girlish glee.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *Isn't that just too wonderful?*

**DUNLAP.** *(Through clenched teeth:)* I can't begin to tell you.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I was hoping to get the Marines too, but that seems iffy. Well then, I'm off. I want to powder my nose before the festivities begin.

*(She exits.)*

**DUNLAP.** Oh dear God, the Navy.

*(He moves to the phone and dials.)*

**DUNLAP.** *(Into phone:)* Hello Hedges, this is Mr. Dunlap. Cancel the Code Red in the Presidential Suite. Also, I want you to ring me the second that—

*(Suddenly, the hall door bursts open and in sweeps CLAUDIA MCFADDEN.)*

*(She is an impressive woman. Larger than life. Every word, every gesture is an exclamation point. She moves into the room like an elegantly dressed tornado.)*

*(She is followed by MR. PIPPET, her private personal male secretary. Compared to his employer, PIPPET is a tiny man. He carries an attaché in one hand and a small, unhappy looking lap-dog in the other. This is MR. BOODLES.)*

*(Every time either one of them barks, PIPPET jumps.)*

**CLAUDIA.** God, how I love this hotel! How I love this suite! How I love—

*(She notices DUNLAP.)*

**CLAUDIA.** Who the hell are you?

DUNLAP. (*Putting down the phone:*) Bernard S. Dunlap, Miss McFadden. I am the General Manager of the Palm Beach Royale, at your ser—

CLAUDIA. PIPPET!

PIPPET. Yes, Miss McFadden.

CLAUDIA. Where the hell are my long-stem white roses?

(PIPPET *turns and looks at* DUNLAP.)

PIPPET. Mr. Dunlap, we were assured long stem white roses.

DUNLAP. They're in the bedroom, Miss McFadden. Four dozen roses. Just as you asked for.

CLAUDIA. Well, why are they all in there? (*She turns to her secretary.*) PIPPET.

PIPPET. Yes, Miss McFadden.

(*He sets the attaché down, hands the dog to DUNLAP and exits into the stage left bedroom. CLAUDIA turns to DUNLAP.*)

CLAUDIA. Rooms should *always* be filled with long stem white roses. They bring such joy, such *calm*. Don't you agree?

DUNLAP. Actually, I—

CLAUDIA. But *white*, not red. *White*. White roses are pure and clean. Red roses make me sad. They remind me of my ex-husband. May he rest in peace. (*Beat.*) Soon.

(PIPPET *reenters from the bedroom carrying all four dozen roses. He places them about the room.*)

CLAUDIA. Pippet, where is the *son of bitch* now?

PIPPET. Monte Carlo, last I heard.

CLAUDIA. Still too close.

DUNLAP. (*Beat.*) Yes, well...I'd just like to say, Miss McFadden, what a great pleasure it is to have you staying with us again.

CLAUDIA. Of course it is, darling.

DUNLAP. (*Placing a folder on one of the tables:*) If there's anything you need, please feel free to ask. I have here a schedule for this evening's performance. You're on at 9:30. If you'd like to rehearse—

CLAUDIA. (*Cutting him off:*) What I'd like darling, is a drink. Does this suite come with gin?

DUNLAP. (*Indicating the bar:*) Um...yes.

CLAUDIA. Vermouth?

DUNLAP. Yes.

CLAUDIA. Olives?

DUNLAP. Yes.

CLAUDIA. Splendid! PIPPET!

PIPPET. Yes, Miss McFadden.

*(He goes to the bar and begins to make a pitcher of martinis.)*

DUNLAP. Well then, unless there's anything else you need from *me*.

CLAUDIA. Actually, Mr...

DUNLAP. Dunlap.

CLAUDIA. Yes Mr. Dunlap. There is one thing. Athena Sinclair. *(The name is poison on her lips.)* Has she arrived yet?

DUNLAP. Not that I know of. *(Beat.)* Is there a problem?

CLAUDIA. No. And there won't be. As long as you keep the little witch as far away from me as possible.

DUNLAP. I can assure you, you'll never see the woman.

CLAUDIA. Because if I do...

DUNLAP. You have my word, you won't.

CLAUDIA. Lovely! Would you like to join me for a martini?

DUNLAP. *(Beat.)* Do you really mean that?

CLAUDIA. Of course not.

DUNLAP. In that case—no thank you. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think I'll go and check on your luggage.

*(DUNLAP exits.)*

CLAUDIA. Splendid! I do so very much love this hotel.

*(PIPPET brings CLAUDIA her martini.)*

*(A second later, there is a knock on the hall door. PIPPET moves to the hall door and opens it. DUNLAP is there, still holding MR. BOODLES.)*

DUNLAP. *(To CLAUDIA:)* Your dog.

*(PIPPET takes the dog and closes the door on DUNLAP's face.)*

CLAUDIA. Mr. Boodles! Let me see you, precious doggie.

*(She makes cooing baby sounds as PIPPET brings the dog to her.)*

**CLAUDIA.** Oh, I think Mr. Boodles needs a little lie down, don't we Mr. Boodles? *Yes we do!* (To PIPPET:) Bedroom.

**PIPPET.** Yes, Miss McFadden.

(PIPPET takes MR. BOODLES into the stage left bedroom.)

**CLAUDIA.** (Calling off:) Pippet, Mr. What's-his-name left a schedule. Who's listed as the headliner?

(PIPPET reenters, picks up the folder and pulls out the schedule.)

**PIPPET.** You are, Miss McFadden.

**CLAUDIA.** And where is Athena Sinclair?

**PIPPET.** Third on the bill. Under yourself and Jimmy Durante.

**CLAUDIA.** Good.

**PIPPET.** Would you like to—?

**CLAUDIA.** What *I'd like* is another olive in this martini.

**PIPPET.** Yes, Miss McFadden.

(PIPPET gets an olive from the bar and brings it to CLAUDIA on a toothpick.)

**CLAUDIA.** Martinis are like women of a certain age. They should never be under dressed.

**PIPPET.** Yes, Miss McFadden.

(He gingerly drops it into Claudia's glass.)

**CLAUDIA.** God, I'm exhausted. Long train trips always tire me so. And all those dreadful reporters and photographers down in the lobby. All those flashbulbs popping in my face. Tell me Pippet, how do I look?

**PIPPET.** Oh please, Miss McFadden.

**CLAUDIA.** Tell me.

**PIPPET.** But I told you on the train.

**CLAUDIA.** Tell me again.

**PIPPET.** You look very young.

**CLAUDIA.** And what else?

**PIPPET.** You look very thin.

**CLAUDIA.** And what else?

**PIPPET.** You look better than Athena Sinclair on her very best day.

**CLAUDIA.** How sweet. That's very kind of you. (*Indicating the piano:*) Now play me something beautiful and sad.

**PIPPET.** Oh Miss McFadden, I've got so much to do today.

**CLAUDIA.** Yes, and first on the list is to play me something beautiful and sad.

*(PIPPET sighs and moves to the piano. He sits behind it and plays a ballad. It is, in fact, beautiful and sad. After a moment CLAUDIA moves to the piano and sings. She has a gorgeous voice. We can see why she is a star.)*

*(Without warning, the hall door opens and MRS. OSGOOD bursts into the room. She begins to sing along with an understandably shocked CLAUDIA.)*

*(The two women continue to sing: CLAUDIA refusing to let this interloper stop her rehearsal. MRS. OSGOOD obliviously happy, living out a lifelong fantasy.)*

*(The song ends.)*

*(Beat. The two women stare at each other. CLAUDIA with quiet disdain. MRS. OSGOOD, in heaven.)*

**CLAUDIA.** (*Finally:*) Pippet?

**PIPPET.** Yes, Miss McFadden?

**CLAUDIA.** (*Indicating OSGOOD:*) What is that?

**PIPPET.** I couldn't tell you.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I'm Mrs. Everette P. Osgood.

*(No response.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** We spoke on the phone.

**CLAUDIA.** Did we?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I'm with the PBLFU.

**CLAUDIA.** The *what*?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** We're sponsoring tonight's benefit.

**CLAUDIA.** *Ah!* Of course. Now I know who you are.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I just came to say hello.

**CLAUDIA.** How darling. PIPPET!

**PIPPET.** (*Moving right in:*) Mrs. Osgood, Miss McFadden is delighted to meet you, but she does have a show to prepare for.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** What I can do to help?

PIPPET. Leaving would be a start.

*(Oblivious, she moves to CLAUDIA.)*

MRS. OSGOOD. I must say singing with you just now was quite the thrill.

CLAUDIA. I'm sure it was.

MRS. OSGOOD. Back in the day, when I was but a wee slip of a thing, I had aspirations of taking to the stage, I'm embarrassed now to say.

CLAUDIA. As well you should be.

MRS. OSGOOD. As a girl, I had a very short but rewarding career in the chorus. One director said I had a voice that could make an angel weep. Isn't that sweet?

*(Beat.)*

CLAUDIA. PIPPET!!

PIPPET. Mrs. Osgood, Miss McFadden *really* does need to prepare.

MRS. OSGOOD. Oh yes, of course. If there's anything I can do...

PIPPET. We'll send word.

MRS. OSGOOD. Maybe we can sing a few songs after the show.

CLAUDIA. And maybe not.

MRS. OSGOOD. *(Completely happy:)* Oh, I just love having famous people here at the Palm Beach Royale. They're so... *(Tries to think of the word.)*

*(Beat.)*

CLAUDIA. Famous?

MRS. OSGOOD. No, that's not it.

*(PIPPET opens the hall door for her.)*

PIPPET. Well, when you think of the word, you'll let us know.

MRS. OSGOOD. *(Delighted.)* Oh, I shall.

*(MRS. OSGOOD exits. CLAUDIA looks at PIPPET.)*

PIPPET. I'll keep her as far away as possible.

CLAUDIA. Splendid. *(Beat.)* I think I'll sing that song for my finale tonight. *(Indicating the hall door:)* Minus the backup singer.

*(PIPPET moves to the schedule and looks at it.)*

PIPPET. Let me see what they have listed on the... *(Beat.)* ...Oops.

CLAUDIA. Oops *what?*

PIPPET. They've requested that you finish with...*that* song.

CLAUDIA. What song?

PIPPET. The song whose title you've told me never to speak.

CLAUDIA. Oh. *That* song.

PIPPET. They want you to finish your set with it.

CLAUDIA. Well, that's just not going to happen.

PIPPET. Yes, Miss McFadden.

CLAUDIA. You know I *never* sing that song. You know I haven't sung that song since...*You-know-who*.

PIPPET. Of course.

CLAUDIA. With her tweedy little voice.

PIPPET. Yes.

CLAUDIA. And her boney little hips.

PIPPET. Miss McFadden?

CLAUDIA. And that abnormally *long* neck of hers.

PIPPET. (*Looking to leave:*) Would you mind if I—

CLAUDIA. (*Ignoring him:*) She's the perfect example of what's wrong with Hollywood. Over-perfumed vamps with copious eye makeup and countless lovers. Too much sex and not enough talent.

PIPPET. I really should get your sheet music down to—

CLAUDIA. (*In a world of her own:*) All packaging and no substance. They tried to do that to me once. When I first came to Hollywood, they tried to make me fit into that mold. But I defied them. I broke the mold. Didn't I, Pippet?

PIPPET. *Oh, yes.*

CLAUDIA. They had me sing for Louis B. Mayer. And he said, "You got chops kid, but we're gonna have to fix that nose and put you on a diet."

PIPPET. Legend has it, you punched him in the face.

CLAUDIA. Right between the eyes. He went down like a little girl. (*Beat.*) But I proved him wrong. Over the years—with talent, integrity and a sharp left hook—I became the biggest star of them all.

PIPPET. Except for maybe—

CLAUDIA. Say her name and I'll throw you off the balcony.

PIPPET. Yes, Miss McFadden.

CLAUDIA. Well now, I think I'll join Mr. Boodles for a little lie down before the show. You, on the other hand, have things to do!

PIPPET. Yes Miss McFadden.

*(She takes her martini and moves to the stage left bedroom.)*

CLAUDIA. Make sure the martinis stay chilled.

PIPPET. Yes Miss McFadden.

CLAUDIA. And bring my sheet music down to the orchestra leader.

PIPPET. Yes, Miss McFadden.

CLAUDIA. And if I fall asleep wake me up in an hour.

PIPPET. Yes, Miss—

*(The bedroom door closes behind her.)*

PIPPET. I don't get paid enough for this.

*(He moves to the bar and puts the pitcher of martinis on ice. He takes the bottle of gin and takes a huge swig.)*

*(The instant he places the bottle back down on the bar, Claudia's bedroom door opens and CLAUDIA reappears.)*

CLAUDIA. And another thing!

*(PIPPET jumps, chokes.)*

CLAUDIA. Let the orchestra leader know that under no circumstance is Athena Sinclair to be permitted to sing *that song* either.

PIPPET. Of course.

CLAUDIA. Well, don't just stand there like a lump. *MOVE!*

PIPPET. Yes Miss McFadden.

*(PIPPET takes the selected sheet music from his briefcase.)*

PIPPET. Is there anything else you'd like?

CLAUDIA. Your absence.

PIPPET. Very good.

*(PIPPET exits out the hall door.)*

*(CLAUDIA moves to the martini shaker, pours herself a fresh martini and pops in two olives. On her way back to her bedroom, she takes a white rose from one of the bouquets and sniffs it.)*

CLAUDIA. Oh, but I do love this hotel.

*(She takes the rose and her martini, and exits into her bedroom.)*

*(THE INSTANT her bedroom door closes, the hall door opens and in walks ATHENA SINCLAIR. She is quite beautiful, elegant and every inch the diva Claudia McFadden is. A one-time screen siren, she moves into the room with all the confidence of the Hollywood Royalty she is. She carries a small piece of luggage which she places on a table. Two steps behind her is MURPHY STEVENS, her personal secretary. MURPHY is young, pretty and very efficient.)*

**MURPHY.** Miss Sinclair, are you sure this is alright? The gentleman at the front desk seemed rather confused. The person I spoke to yesterday said this room was already taken.

**ATHENA.** Nonsense, the person I spoke to yesterday said it was fine. I told them who I was and that I wanted the best suite in the hotel and they said yes. How much simpler could it be?

**MURPHY.** It's just—

**ATHENA.** Oh Murphy, don't be such a bore. We're here. We have the suite. The discussion is over.

**MURPHY.** Yes, Miss Sinclair.

*(ATHENA moves around the suite, admiring the details.)*

**ATHENA.** Such a lovely room. Such elegance. Such history. The parties this suite must have seen. The steamy intimacy. The *romance*. I think I honeymooned here once. Oddly enough, I can't seem to remember which one.

**MURPHY.** Really?

**ATHENA.** After a while, they all blend together.

**MURPHY.** The honeymoons?

**ATHENA.** The husbands. *(Beat.)* How many have I had now?

**MURPHY.** You're kidding.

**ATHENA.** Darling, I never kid when it comes to men. How many?

**MURPHY.** How can you not know?

**ATHENA.** I lost count at four.

**MURPHY.** Try six.

**ATHENA.** *Six?*

**MURPHY.** Six.

*(Beat.)*

ATHENA. Oddly enough, I thought I had more. (*Beat.*) I don't have one now, do I?

MURPHY. No.

ATHENA. Oh thank God. Let's try to make sure it stays that way.

MURPHY. I'll do my best.

ATHENA. Although there are all those handsome young servicemen down in the lobby.

MURPHY. Now, now...

ATHENA. With their white fitted uniforms.

MURPHY. Miss Sinclair...

ATHENA. Hugging their firm round bottoms.

MURPHY. *Miss Sinclair.*

ATHENA. What?

MURPHY. You promised.

ATHENA. I promised what dear?

MURPHY. That you'd be good.

ATHENA. But *I am* good darling. I'm always good. Sometimes, I'm *fabulous*. Just ask Errol Flynn.

MURPHY. *Miss Sinclair.*

ATHENA. *Alright, alright.* It's just being in this gorgeous suite. One can't help but feel a bit amorous...that burning tug of passion. Oh Murphy, can't you feel it?

MURPHY. (*Deadpan.*) No.

ATHENA. *Well, why not?* My darling girl, you need to learn *how to live!* You need to go out and grab life by the horns. You need to kiss strange men and dance in fountains. *Now*, while you're still young.

MURPHY. I'm not that young.

ATHENA. But *you are*. You have no idea.

(*Beat.* ATHENA smiles to herself, remembers.)

ATHENA. Oh to be young again. So fresh. So innocent. Those early days at Paramount. At MGM. The movies. The *excitement*. Billie Burke. Adolphe Menjou. Cecil B. DeMille bouncing me up and down on his lap. A little pink dress, my hair in curls. Him telling me what a heartbreaker I'd be. (*Beat.*) Of course I was thirty-two at the time. What a filthy old man he was.

(MURPHY sighs and shakes her head as she picks up the schedule that Dunlap left for Claudia.)

**ATHENA.** What's that you're looking at?

**MURPHY.** It's the schedule for tonight's benefit.

**ATHENA.** *Aha.* I told you we were in the right suite.

(*They look at it together.*)

**MURPHY.** (*Reading:*) "The Palm Beach Ladies for Unity Present a Night of a Thousand Stars." (*Beat.*) How many of these War Benefits have we done now?

**ATHENA.** Dozens, I would imagine. (*Beat.*) Oh, I see the buffalo got top billing. Well, that should shut her up for a while. Remember the last benefit I did with her... (*Beat.*) ...Where was that again?

**MURPHY.** San Francisco.

**ATHENA.** Oh yes, of course. I got top billing on that one. I thought she was going to tear the theatre down.

**MURPHY.** She did make quite a scene. Of course nothing was as bad as the night at the Roxy.

**ATHENA.** Oh yes. Wasn't that a festive night? Who knew Edith Head gowns were so easy to wrestle in.

**MURPHY.** It was the best-dressed brawl I'd ever seen.

**ATHENA.** Poor Red Skelton. How many stitches did he need?

**MURPHY.** Fifteen. I warned him not to get between the two of you, but he just wouldn't listen.

**ATHENA.** Who would have guessed such a tall man could be thrown off a stage so easily?

**MURPHY.** All those terrible pictures in the Post.

**ATHENA.** Oh, I don't know. I rather liked the one of me pulling her hair.

**MURPHY.** Hopefully, we won't see Miss McFadden at all this time around.

**ATHENA.** I wouldn't worry about it. I'm sure they're going to keep us as far away from each other as possible.

**MURPHY.** Why do you hate her so much?

**ATHENA.** Oh darling, there are so many reasons from which to choose.

**MURPHY.** I'll never forget that very first benefit you two did together. The two of you sang—

**ATHENA.** Oh, don't say it. I can't bear to even *hear the name* of that song.

**MURPHY.** It's a lovely song.

**ATHENA.** It's schmaltz.

**MURPHY.** The two of you sang it beautifully. You brought down the house.

**ATHENA.** Did we? How quaint.

**MURPHY.** And you haven't spoken since.

**ATHENA.** You make that sound like a bad thing.

**MURPHY.** (*Scolding:*) All I'm saying—

**ATHENA.** *Oh Murphy, enough!* Claudia McFadden is a vile, hateful woman, and I want nothing to do with her. That's really all there is to it. Now I refuse to waste another second discussing her, is that understood?

**MURPHY.** Yes, Miss Sinclair.

**ATHENA.** Lovely.

(*Beat. She notices the roses.*)

**ATHENA.** What's with all these white roses? It looks like a wake in here.

**MURPHY.** I guess they're from the hotel.

**ATHENA.** Be a sweetheart. Ring down and have someone come get them out of here. I'm going to lie down for a while before the show.

(*She moves to the Claudia's bedroom door and is just about to open it when...*)

**MURPHY.** Are you sure you want that one?

**ATHENA.** Why?

**MURPHY.** It faces east. You know how much you hate the morning sun.

**ATHENA.** You do look out for me.

**MURPHY.** I do my best.

**ATHENA.** Who needs husbands, when I have you?

(*She moves across the room to the Stage Right bedroom door.*)

**ATHENA.** Before I forget, I'd like to run the new songs once or twice with the orchestra before the show tonight.

**MURPHY.** I'll check on it.

**ATHENA.** You're a dear. Wake me up if anything exciting happens.

*(She exits into the Stage Right bedroom.)*

*(MURPHY picks up the phone and starts to dial, when there is a knock on the door. She puts the phone down and moves to the door.)*

**MURPHY.** *(Calling to the bedroom:)* The trunks are here.

*(She opens the door. A luggage cart filled with Claudia's trunks and assorted luggage is pushed into the suite by FRANCIS.)*

**FRANCIS.** Here's your luggage, Miss—

*(He looks up from the cart and sees MURPHY.)*

**FRANCIS.** Oh.

**MURPHY.** It's you.

*(And suddenly they are kissing. Deeply, passionately, like long lost lovers. In perfect 40s fashion, Murphy's leg slowly rises behind her. Finally, they separate.)*

**FRANCIS.** What are you doing here?

**MURPHY.** What are *you* doing here?

**FRANCIS.** I work here.

**MURPHY.** *(Beat.)* You work here?

**FRANCIS.** Um, yeah.

**MURPHY.** What do you mean *you* work here?

**FRANCIS.** Just that. I work here.

**MURPHY.** I thought you joined the army.

**FRANCIS.** Oh, that.

**MURPHY.** Of course, why wouldn't I think you joined the army—

**FRANCIS.** *(Overlapping:)* Murphy—

**MURPHY.** *(Overlapping:)* I mean, *that* is what you told me.

**FRANCIS.** *I did join the army. I mean, I tried to. I mean...*

*(Beat.)*

**MURPHY.** What?

**FRANCIS.** They wouldn't take me.

**MURPHY.** *Why?*

**FRANCIS.** The first week of Boot Camp, the guy next to me accidentally shot off the pinkie toe of my left foot.

**MURPHY.** Oh my.

**FRANCIS.** Oh, it's alright. I used to walk with a wicked limp, but it's much better now. Do you want to see it?

**MURPHY.** No thank you.

**FRANCIS.** Anyway, after that, they wouldn't take me. Apparently, Uncle Sam only wants you if you have ten toes.

**MURPHY.** I see.

**FRANCIS.** So, it's okay then? I mean, you understand?

**MURPHY.** I do.

*(Suddenly she punches him in the stomach. FRANCIS doubles over.)*

**MURPHY.** *ALL THESE MONTHS! No letters! No word!* For all I knew you could have been killed. And to think, all this time, you've been hiding here in Palm Beach.

**FRANCIS.** I wasn't hiding.

*(She punches him in the stomach again.)*

**FRANCIS.** *Murphy!*

**MURPHY.** Why didn't you call me? *Why didn't you write?*

**FRANCIS.** Because.

**MURPHY.** *Because why?*

**FRANCIS.** Because, you were going to be a big star.

**MURPHY.** *What?*

**FRANCIS.** You said it was okay that I was going. You said it was better this way. That you would have time to work on your solo act and become the big star you were meant to be. I didn't want to get in the way of that.

**MURPHY.** *I only said that because I didn't want you to feel bad about leaving me.*

*(Beat.)*

**FRANCIS.** Really?

*(She punches him in the stomach once more. He doubles over.)*

**FRANCIS.** *Stop doing that!*

**MURPHY.** When I think about all the nights I wasted crying myself to sleep, worrying about you.

**FRANCIS.** *(Beat.)* You cried?

**MURPHY.** *Of course I cried, you big dope.* I thought you were dead.

**FRANCIS.** I'm sorry about that.

**MURPHY.** You should be.

**FRANCIS.** So what happened with *your* plans? You didn't become a big star.

**MURPHY.** No. *(Beat.)* I became *the secretary* of a big star. Which isn't as nice.

**FRANCIS.** *(Beat.)* I'm sorry about that too.

**MURPHY.** It's alright. I never *really* wanted to be a big star anyway.

**FRANCIS.** No?

**MURPHY.** No. I've seen how those people live. Always being hounded by the press. Who wants to live like that? Not me. All I've ever *really* wanted was to be married to some nice fella who made an honest living and *didn't* die in the war.

**FRANCIS.** An honest living, huh?

**MURPHY.** An honest living.

**FRANCIS.** Not in show business?

**MURPHY.** As far from show business as possible.

**FRANCIS.** Really?

**MURPHY.** Really.

*(Beat.)*

**FRANCIS.** You look pretty.

**MURPHY.** Francis...

**FRANCIS.** Prettier than ever.

**MURPHY.** Oh *no, no, no, no, no.* Don't you dare. Don't *you dare* do that.

**FRANCIS.** Do what?

**MURPHY.** Be nice to me. I will not tolerate you being nice to me. I will not tolerate things like "You look pretty."

**FRANCIS.** But *you do* look pretty.

**MURPHY.** You have to go.

**FRANCIS.** Murphy—

**MURPHY.** (*Cutting him off, back to business:*) Look. I can't do this with you. I just can't. I have a very busy day today, and I don't have time for you telling me I look pretty. There are schedules to go over and sheet music to deliver, and, and...and these aren't our bags.

**FRANCIS.** I beg your pardon?

*(She moves to the luggage cart filled with Claudia's luggage.)*

**MURPHY.** These aren't our bags.

**FRANCIS.** They're not?

**MURPHY.** Nope.

**FRANCIS.** Are you sure? Mr. Dunlap was quite insistent that these go directly to the Presidential Suite.

**MURPHY.** Quite sure.

**FRANCIS.** (*Shrugs.*) Alright. I'll go back down and get the right ones.

**MURPHY.** (*All business:*) Fine.

**FRANCIS.** Fine.

**MURPHY.** Good.

**FRANCIS.** Good.

**MURPHY.** And could you please take all these roses with you?

**FRANCIS.** Excuse me?

**MURPHY.** The roses. Could you take them with you?

**FRANCIS.** I thought she wanted them.

**MURPHY.** No. Tell the management it's a sweet gesture, but no.

**FRANCIS.** (*Shrugs.*) Alright.

*(He collects all of the roses and places them on the luggage cart.)*

**FRANCIS.** Anything else?

**MURPHY.** No. *Yes!* Who do I talk to about running some songs with the orchestra?

**FRANCIS.** That would be Mr. Dunlap, the General Manager. I can ask him to come up.

**MURPHY.** Thank you.

**FRANCIS.** Alright then, I'll be going.

**MURPHY.** Very good.

**FRANCIS.** But before I do...

*(Once again, he takes her into his arms. He dips her and kisses her passionately. At first she resists, but eventually her struggles weaken, and soon she is passionately kissing him back.)*

*(After a moment, they break apart. MURPHY is breathless.)*

**MURPHY.** Golly.

**FRANCIS.** I'll be going down to the luggage now and getting your lobby.

*(Pushing the luggage cart filled with luggage and white roses, FRANCIS exits out the hall door.)*

*(Just as the hall door is closing, Athena's bedroom door opens and ATHENA enters the suite.)*

**ATHENA.** Oh Murphy darling... *(Beat.)* ...Who was that?

**MURPHY.** *(In a romantic haze.)* Just Francis.

**ATHENA.** *(Beat.)* Who?

**MURPHY.** The bellhop. He went down to the luggage to get our lobby.

**ATHENA.** He *what*?

**MURPHY.** *(Coming out of it:)* I'm sorry did you say something?

**ATHENA.** Have you found out whom we need to speak to about running the new songs?

**MURPHY.** That would be Mr. Dunlap, the General Manager of the hotel.

**ATHENA.** Fabulous! *(Looking around:)* Where is he?

**MURPHY.** I've just sent for him.

**ATHENA.** And yet he's not here.

**MURPHY.** Would you like me to go and get him?

**ATHENA.** You're a darling.

*(MURPHY exits out the hall door.)*

**ATHENA.** *(Looking around:)* Now then, where did I... *(Beat.)* ...Oh yes, there it is.

*(ATHENA moves to and picks up the small suitcase on the table. She turns and exits into her bedroom.)*

*(THE INSTANT Athena's door closes, Claudia's door opens and CLAUDIA comes out. She carries MR. BOODLES and moves directly to the pitcher of martinis. She pours herself a fresh glass and starts back to her room. Beat.)*

*(She stops and looks around.)*

**CLAUDIA.** Where are my roses?

*(Perplexed, she exits into her bedroom.)*

*(THE INSTANT Claudia's door closes, Athena's door opens. ATHENA comes out, still carrying the small suitcase which is now opened. From it, she removes several large framed photographs of herself from various films and stage productions. She places them about the room. Once she is satisfied with their placement, she turns and takes one of the photos into her room.)*

*(THE INSTANT Athena's door closes, the hall door opens and DORA DEL RIO enters the room. She moves into the center of the room.)*

**DORA.** *(Almost to herself.)* Claudia darling? Where are you hiding?

*(She notices one of the photos of ATHENA. She moves towards it and picks it up.)*

**DORA.** *(To herself.)* Athena Sinclair! Stop the presses!

*(From outside the hall door, we hear DUNLAP scream.)*

**DUNLAP.** SHE'S WHERE?

*(DORA runs to the hall door. Hearing DUNLAP coming down the hall, she opens the closet door and jumps in.)*

*(THE INSTANT the closet door closes, the hall door bursts open and DUNLAP and MURPHY run into the suite.)*

**DUNLAP.** *(Looking around:)* Oh good, no blood.

**MURPHY.** Mr. Dunlap, you're scaring me.

**DUNLAP.** Trust me, you should be scared. Right about now, "scared" is good.

**MURPHY.** What's wrong with you?

**DUNLAP.** Where is she?

**MURPHY.** Where is who?

**DUNLAP.** Athena Sinclair. Where is she?

*(MURPHY points to Athena's bedroom door.)*

**MURPHY.** In the bedroom, I guess. Why are you so upset? She said she spoke with someone yesterday who said this suite was—

*(DUNLAP notices the photographs of ATHENA.)*

**DUNLAP.** GOOD GOD, why are there pictures of her everywhere?

**MURPHY.** She likes doing that, it makes her feel at home. It makes her feel comfortable. What is wrong with—

**CLAUDIA.** *(From her bedroom:)* PIPPET?

*(Beat.)*

*(DUNLAP and MURPHY freeze. For a moment, neither says a word.)*

**MURPHY.** What was that?

**DUNLAP.** That was Claudia McFadden.

**MURPHY.** Claudia McFadden?

**DUNLAP.** Claudia McFadden.

**MURPHY.** *The* Claudia McFadden?

**DUNLAP.** The one and only.

**MURPHY.** She's in this suite?

**DUNLAP.** She's in this suite.

**MURPHY.** *Claudia McFadden is in this suite?*

**DUNLAP.** Oh good. You've grasped it.

**MURPHY.** Along with Athena Sinclair.

**DUNLAP.** Welcome to hell.

**CLAUDIA.** *(From her bedroom:)* PIPPET?

*(They both jump.)*

**MURPHY.** Oh my.

**DUNLAP.** That's not quite the phrase I had in mind.

**MURPHY.** What is she doing here?

**DUNLAP.** Why don't you go in there and ask her?

**MURPHY.** Mr. Dunlap, this is a very bad situation.

**DUNLAP.** *You think?*

**CLAUDIA.** *(From her bedroom:)* PIPPET?

**DUNLAP.** Oh good God. Alright, alright, don't panic.

**MURPHY.** I'm not panicking.

**DUNLAP.** *I wasn't talking to you!*

**MURPHY.** So what do we do?

**DUNLAP.** You need to go in there and make sure Athena Sinclair doesn't come out. Under any circumstance.

**MURPHY.** How am I supposed to do that?

*(DUNLAP begins to race about the room, collecting the photographs of Athena.)*

**DUNLAP.** I don't know! I don't care! Tie her to the bed if you have to. Only keep her in there. I'll see what I can do about the other one.

**MURPHY.** And what if I can't?

**DUNLAP.** Think of the alternative.

**MURPHY.** *(Beat.)* I'll tie her to the bed.

*(She hurries into Athena's bedroom.)*

*(THE INSTANT Athena's door closes, Claudia's door opens and CLAUDIA bursts into the room. DUNLAP immediately shoves the photos into his waistcoat and turns to face her.)*

**CLAUDIA.** *PIPPET, WHERE THE HELL...* Oh, what are you doing here?

**DUNLAP.** I...uh...I, I'm...here because, uh—

**CLAUDIA.** Where the hell are my roses?

**DUNLAP.** Yes! Yes! That's why I'm here. I noticed that your roses were a little wilted, so I've sent them down to the florist to be replaced with fresh ones.

*(There's a knock on the door.)*

**DUNLAP.** That's probably them right now.

*(DUNLAP opens the front door. OTIS enters, pushing a luggage cart full of Athena's luggage.)*

**OTIS.** Oh. Hi Mr. Dunlap.

**DUNLAP.** Hello Francis.

**OTIS.** Otis.

**DUNLAP.** Whatever.

*(OTIS sees CLAUDIA. He is star-struck.)*

**OTIS.** *(Thrilled:)* Hello Miss McFadden. I'm your biggest fan. I saw you sing "God Bless America" at the Paramount last year with my cousin Lester.

**CLAUDIA.** *(Beat.)* How nice for you and your cousin Lester.

*(He produces an autograph book and pen.)*

**OTIS.** Can I have your autograph?

**DUNLAP.** (*Warning:*) Francis...

**OTIS.** It's for my mother. (*A quick look at DUNLAP, then back to CLAUDIA:*) She's very sick.

**CLAUDIA.** (*Taking the book:*) Of course darling. What's her name?

**OTIS.** Otis.

**CLAUDIA.** (*Beat:*) I see. (*She writes.*) "Dear Otis. Get well soon. Sincerely, Claudia McFadden."

**OTIS.** Thanks Miss McFadden. You're the tops.

**CLAUDIA.** Of course I am.

**DUNLAP.** Now that *that's* done, why don't you take Miss McFadden's bags into the bedroom?

**CLAUDIA.** Oh, please don't.

**DUNLAP.** It's not a problem.

**CLAUDIA.** Oh, but it is. These aren't my bags.

**DUNLAP.** They're not?

**CLAUDIA.** No.

**OTIS.** But they just said downstairs that—

**CLAUDIA.** I don't care what they said downstairs. These aren't my bags.

**DUNLAP.** Oh. I'm so sorry. Miss McFadden. We'll bring up *your* bags right away. (*To OTIS:*) Won't we?

**OTIS.** Yes sir.

**DUNLAP.** And while you're down there, please bring up Miss McFadden's new roses.

**OTIS.** What new roses?

**DUNLAP.** The ones to replace the roses I had you take down to the florist.

**OTIS.** You didn't have me bring down any roses.

**DUNLAP.** Of course I did.

**OTIS.** No, you didn't. I would have remembered.

**DUNLAP.** Francis.

**OTIS.** Otis.

**DUNLAP.** Whatever.

**OTIS.** Yes sir?

**DUNLAP.** *JUST DO IT!*

**OTIS.** Yes, Mr. Dunlap. Oh, and by the way Mr. Hedges at the front desk is looking for you. There are a bunch of sailors diving from the fourth floor balconies into the pool.

**DUNLAP.** I beg your pardon?

**OTIS.** Some of Mrs. Osgood's Navy guys.

**DUNLAP.** Dear God, they're starting already.

**OTIS.** Mind you, I haven't really seen any of this. I just heard about it on the radio. They're broadcasting live from the lobby.

*(OTIS exits with the luggage cart.)*

*(DUNLAP turns to find CLAUDIA staring at him.)*

**DUNLAP.** Ah, yes. Once again Miss McFadden, I apologize for the misunderstanding regarding the luggage and your roses. Things here are just a tiny, *tiny* bit hectic today.

**CLAUDIA.** Speaking of tiny, have you seen my secretary?

**DUNLAP.** Yes, he was downstairs going over your music with the orchestra leader.

**CLAUDIA.** Ah, well if you should see him again, ask him to come see me immediately.

**DUNLAP.** I'd be delighted to.

*(He doesn't move.)*

**CLAUDIA.** *(Beat.)* Is there something else you need?

**DUNLAP.** Not that I can think of.

**CLAUDIA.** Splendid. Get out.

*(She turns and moves towards her bedroom. DUNLAP pulls out the photos and quickly hides them behind the cushions of the sofa. He looks nervously towards Athena's room.)*

**DUNLAP.** Um...

**CLAUDIA.** Um what?

**DUNLAP.** Would you...I mean, could I...I mean...

**CLAUDIA.** Mr. Whatever-the-hell-your-name-is, I have to be on stage in a few hours, spit it out.

**DUNLAP.** Could I stay here for a moment or two.

**CLAUDIA.** In this suite?

**DUNLAP.** Yes.

**CLAUDIA.** No.

**DUNLAP.** Not even for just a minute?

**CLAUDIA.** Not even for just a second.

**DUNLAP.** Very good then. I'll be on my way.

**CLAUDIA.** Splendid.

*(DUNLAP exits through the hall door.)*

**CLAUDIA.** What an odd, odd man.

*(CLAUDIA shakes her head and exits into her bedroom.)*

*(THE INSTANT Claudia's door closes, the closet door opens and DORA steps into the suite. She looks around to make sure the room is empty.)*

**DORA.** *(To herself:)* What is going on in this suite?

*(She is halfway across the room to Athena's bedroom, when there is a knock on the hall door.)*

**DORA.** *Crap!*

*(DORA runs back into the closet and closes the door.)*

*(THE INSTANT the closet door closes, the hall door opens and FRANCIS enters. He carries a small bouquet of red roses.)*

**FRANCIS.** *(Half whisper:)* Murphy?

*(He moves up to Athena's bedroom door and presses his ear against it, when CLAUDIA enters from her bedroom. She stops in her tracks when she sees FRANCIS.)*

**CLAUDIA.** What the hell are you doing?

*(FRANCIS jumps.)*

**FRANCIS.** *Oh!* Miss McFadden. You frightened me!

**CLAUDIA.** I get that a lot.

**FRANCIS.** I'm really sorry. I don't want to disturb you. I'm just here to drop these off.

*(He holds out the red roses. She glares at them.)*

**CLAUDIA.** *(Ice cold:)* Those are...

**FRANCIS.** Red Roses.

CLAUDIA. So I see. *(Beat.)* Are you familiar with the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco?

*(Suddenly, FRANCIS realizes that he is holding red roses in front of CLAUDIA MCFADDEN.)*

FRANCIS. *Oh no, no!* These aren't for you. I swear!

CLAUDIA. They aren't?

FRANCIS. Of course not.

CLAUDIA. Then who are they for?

FRANCIS. Your secretary.

*(Beat.)*

CLAUDIA. I beg your pardon?

FRANCIS. They're for your secretary.

CLAUDIA. That's what I thought you said.

FRANCIS. This is kinda awkward.

CLAUDIA. You're telling me.

FRANCIS. A little embarrassing.

CLAUDIA. Yes.

FRANCIS. But then, I guess you can just look at me and you *know*.

CLAUDIA. Not so much in the uniform.

FRANCIS. I mean, you can just tell that I'm in love.

CLAUDIA. *(Beat.)* You're in love?

FRANCIS. Crazy nuts. Head over heels.

CLAUDIA. With—?

FRANCIS. Your secretary. I have been for years.

CLAUDIA. *(Beat.)* Aha. Well, as you can see, my secretary isn't here right now, and I feel a great need to have another martini.

FRANCIS. Miss McFadden—

CLAUDIA. So why don't you just go away.

FRANCIS. If it's not too much an imposition, could you please, please, *please* see that your secretary gets these.

CLAUDIA. Do I have a choice?

FRANCIS. As a token of my affection.

*(He holds out the red roses. Beat. She takes them.)*

**CLAUDIA.** (*Flatly*;) Anything else?

**FRANCIS.** Wow. For a big star, you're really very nice. I mean, Mr. Hedges at the front desk said that you were— (*He stops himself*)

(*Beat.*)

**CLAUDIA.** (*Ice cold*;) Yes?

**FRANCIS.** I'm going to leave now.

**CLAUDIA.** Excellent choice.

(*FRANCIS turns to leave.*)

**CLAUDIA.** And if you happen to see my secretary...

**FRANCIS.** Yes?

**CLAUDIA.** Never mind. Get out.

(*FRANCIS exits.*)

**CLAUDIA.** The world is changing much too quickly.

(*She sets down the red roses and moves to the bar. She pours herself a fresh martini. She is just plopping in the olives as the hall door opens and PIPPET enters.*)

**PIPPET.** Oh good, you're awake. I just spoke with the orchestra leader downstairs, everything is... (*Beat.*) ...where are all the long stem white roses?

**CLAUDIA.** Good question.

(*He sees the red roses. He is horrified.*)

**PIPPET.** And why are there red ones?

**CLAUDIA.** Even better.

**PIPPET.** You loath red roses.

**CLAUDIA.** Indeed I do.

**PIPPET.** Then why do you have them?

**CLAUDIA.** They were just delivered.

**PIPPET.** Someone sent you red roses?

**CLAUDIA.** Well now, that's the interesting part. They're not for me.

**PIPPET.** They're not?

**CLAUDIA.** No.

**PIPPET.** Then who?

**CLAUDIA.** You.

PIPPET. Me?

CLAUDIA. Yes.

*(Beat. He is completely lost.)*

PIPPET. Someone sent me red roses?

CLAUDIA. Hand delivered, no less.

PIPPET. *Who?*

CLAUDIA. Your bellhop.

PIPPET. My *what?*

CLAUDIA. Your bellhop.

PIPPET. I have a bellhop?

CLAUDIA. So it would seem.

PIPPET. I'm confused.

CLAUDIA. Apparently.

PIPPET. Miss McFadden—

CLAUDIA. *ENOUGH.* I don't want to hear another word.

*(She picks up the red roses and shoves them into his hand.)*

CLAUDIA. I don't need to know the sordid details of your personal life. What I do need, however, are some aspirins. You need to go down to that little drugstore in the lobby and pick me up a bottle.

PIPPET. You have a headache?

CLAUDIA. No. Mr. Boodles does.

*(With a flourish she turns and moves towards her bedroom.)*

CLAUDIA. And find out *what the hell* happened to my long stem white roses.

*(She exits into her bedroom.)*

*(Beat. PIPPET looks at her door, then looks at the red roses in his hand.)*

PIPPET. *(Still completely lost:)* I have a bellhop?

*(There is a knock on the hall door.)*

*(PIPPET moves towards them. Before he can open them, they fling open and DUNLAP enters the suite.)*

DUNLAP. Mr. Pippet! Thank God! Just the man I was looking for.

PIPPET. I'm very busy Mr. Dunlap. I don't have time.

*(He places the red roses into a nearby vase.)*

**DUNLAP.** You're going to want to make time.

**PIPPET.** What I'm going to want, Mr. Dunlap, is this suite to be filled with long stem *white* roses when I get back. Now then, if you'll excuse me, good day.

*(He exits through the hall door.)*

*(THE INSTANT the hall door closes, Athena's door opens.  
DUNLAP jumps.)*

*(From inside, we hear MURPHY desperately trying to keep  
ATHENA from leaving the bedroom.)*

**MURPHY.** *(From the bedroom:)* Please Miss Sinclair, I really think we should go over the schedule one more time.

**ATHENA.** *(From the bedroom:)* And what is there to go over? What's wrong with you?

**MURPHY.** Nothing. Nothing's wrong. I just think these sort of things need to be checked and double checked and triple checked and—

*(DUNLAP immediately scrambles to get the photographs of  
ATHENA from behind the sofa cushion. He snatches them up and  
races about the room putting them back in their original position.  
He still has the last of the photographs in his hand as ATHENA  
enters from the bedroom.)*

*(Beat.)*

*(She freezes when she sees him.)*

**DUNLAP.** *(Desperately casual:)* What a lovely photograph this is. It's so...*you.*

**ATHENA.** Who the hell are you?

**MURPHY.** Oh, Miss Sinclair, this is—

**DUNLAP.** Bernard S. Dunlap. I am the General Manger of the Palm Beach Royale...

*(He sets down the photo, grabs the red roses from the vase and  
hands them to her.)*

**DUNLAP.** At your service.

**ATHENA.** Again with the roses. *(She hands them to MURPHY.)* Could you be a dear and do something with these?

**MURPHY.** Of course.

**ATHENA.** *(Turning back to DUNLAP:)* Now then Mr. Dunwood...

**DUNLAP.** Dunlap.

**ATHENA.** You're just the man I wanted to see. To whom do I speak about running a few songs before the show tonight?

**DUNLAP.** Oh, I'd be happy to set that up for you.

**ATHENA.** Lovely. When would be—?

**DUNLAP.** (*Rushing her towards the door.*) Why don't we go now?

**ATHENA.** What?

**DUNLAP.** The orchestra is just downstairs.

**MURPHY.** Yes! That's a terrific idea!

**DUNLAP.** We'll just pop downstairs and run those songs!

**ATHENA.** Whoa! What's the rush?

**DUNLAP.** Rush? What rush? There's no rush. I just thought—

**ATHENA.** I just got here. I want to unwind. I want to relax. I'm not about to go running downstairs and run my songs at this particular moment.

**DUNLAP.** Yes Madam, of course, it's just—

*(There is a knock on the hall door.)*

*(Nobody moves.)*

*(Another knock.)*

**ATHENA.** Is anyone planning on answering the door?

**DUNLAP.** Yes...um...of course.

*(He hesitantly opens the front door.)*

*(OTIS enters carrying the roses. As he speaks, he places them around the room.)*

**OTIS.** Here are your roses Mr. Dunlap. Good as new. Although I must say the lady at the florist shop isn't very happy with you right now.

**ATHENA.** (*To DUNLAP:*) Why are these back?

**DUNLAP.** (*To OTIS:*) Why are these back?

**OTIS.** (*Completely confused:*) What?

**DUNLAP.** You heard me, man. Why are these bloody flowers back?

**OTIS.** Because you told me—

**DUNLAP.** To get rid of those roses once and for all. *And I meant it!* We don't want to be bothering Miss Sinclair with them again.

**OTIS.** (*Noticing ATHENA:*) *Hey!* You're Athena Sinclair.

**ATHENA.** Why, yes I am.

**OTIS.** I'm your biggest fan. I've seen all your movies.

**ATHENA.** How sweet.

*(He produces the autograph book and pen.)*

**OTIS.** Can I have your autograph?

*(He glances over at DUNLAP.)*

**OTIS.** *(Before DUNLAP can speak:)* It's for my mother. She's really sick. Her name is Otis.

**ATHENA.** *(Beat.)* I see. *(She takes the book.)* Is Otis with one "T" or two?

**OTIS.** One.

*(She signs and hands it back to him.)*

**ATHENA.** And there you go.

**OTIS.** Thanks Miss Sinclair, you're the tops. By the way, what are you doing here?

**ATHENA.** Well dear, I'm performing at the benefit tonight.

**OTIS.** No, I know that. I mean *here*, in Miss—

**DUNLAP.** *(Cutting him off:)* Thank you Francis, that'll be all.

*(DUNLAP literally picks him up and throws him through the open hall door. OTIS hits the opposite wall and collapses. DUNLAP closes the doors behind him.)*

**DUNLAP.** *(To ATHENA:)* Why don't you go into your bedroom and relax and I'll get rid of these pesky flowers for you.

*(ATHENA looks at DUNLAP like he's out of his mind. She turns and moves towards her bedroom.)*

**ATHENA.** *(To MURPHY:)* Darling, why don't you come with me. I don't think I want to leave you alone with this man.

*(ATHENA takes MURPHY by the arm and moves towards the bedroom. MURPHY weakly smiles and hands the bouquet of red roses back to DUNLAP, as the two women exit into bedroom.)*

**DUNLAP.** Alright.

*(He sets the bouquet of red roses back into the empty vase and surveys the room.)*

**DUNLAP.** Don't panic. Don't panic.

*(He moves around the room, collecting all of the white roses, and moves to the closet door.)*

(He opens the closet door, DORA is standing there. He hands her the roses, closes the door and moves back into the room.)

(Beat.)

(He runs back to the closet and flings open the door.)

**DUNLAP.** What are you doing in there?

**DORA.** Hiding from you.

(She moves past him, handing him the roses.)

(DUNLAP puts the roses back into the closet and follows DORA into the suite.)

**DORA.** Alright, where is she? Don't lie to me, I know she's in here.

**DUNLAP.** Miss del Rio, please—

**DORA.** And why does she have pictures of Athena Sinclair all over the room? Target practice?

**DUNLAP.** This can't be happening.

**DORA.** Is she in there?

(She moves to Athena's door.)

**DORA.** Claudia, are you—

(DUNLAP jumps in front of her.)

**DUNLAP.** NO! WAIT! I swear on my life, she's not in there!

**DORA.** (Beat.) What's going on?

**DUNLAP.** I beg your pardon?

**DORA.** Look at you, you're sweating.

**DUNLAP.** Am I?

**DORA.** Why are you so frantic?

**DUNLAP.** (Desperately casual:) Frantic? Who's frantic?

**DORA.** There's a story in this suite. I can smell it.

**DUNLAP.** That's not a story you smell. It's me.

**DORA.** There's an energy here. A sense of dread. Something horrible. Something disastrous. It's fabulous!

**DUNLAP.** Oh good God.

**DORA.** What has she done now? Has she thrown another bellhop off a balcony?

**DUNLAP.** Miss del Rio—

**DORA.** Of course with all of the sailors jumping off of balconies, it would be hard to notice one more.

**DUNLAP.** (*Moves to the phone.*) I'm calling security.

(*Once again, DORA moves towards Athena's door.*)

**DORA.** Go ahead. Call. All I need is a few minutes to say hello.

(*She goes to open the door.*)

**DUNLAP.** *If you open that door, something terrible will happen!*

**DORA.** Like what?

(*Athena's door opens—upstage—smack into DORA's face. We hear the "thunk" of it making contact. ATHENA, oblivious to the fact that DORA is behind the door, is horrified to find DUNLAP is still in her suite.*)

**ATHENA.** God help me, you're still here.

**DUNLAP.** (*Beat.*) Yes. I, um, I just got rid of those flowers.

**ATHENA.** Good. Now if you could do the same thing with yourself.

**DUNLAP.** Gladly. I'm just leaving.

**ATHENA.** Fabulous.

(*Beat.*)

(*DUNLAP stands there.*)

**ATHENA.** And yet, you're not moving.

**DUNLAP.** Yes, of course. It's just...I...I...I—

(*From the bedroom, we hear MURPHY.*)

**MURPHY.** (*Offstage:*) Miss Sinclair?

**ATHENA.** (*Still staring at DUNLAP:*) Yes my dear?

**MURPHY.** I've got another question about this schedule. I'm afraid I'm confused.

**ATHENA.** (*Glaring at DUNLAP:*) Not as confused as I am.

(*Still glaring at DUNLAP, she moves back into the bedroom, closing the door behind her to reveal DORA standing there. If she were a cartoon, little birds would be floating around her head. She swoons a little and then begins to collapse. DUNLAP catches her before she hits the floor.*)

**DUNLAP.** Perfect, just perfect.

*(He thinks for a frantic moment...Got it! He drags her to the closet door.)*

**DUNLAP.** Suddenly, the Marines don't seem so bad.

*(He opens the closet door and stands her up in it, next to the flowers. He closes the door.)*

*(THE INSTANT the closet door closes, the hall door opens. DUNLAP jumps.)*

*(MRS. OSGOOD enters the suite. She has changed outfits. She is now dressed for the benefit.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Oh Mr. Dunlap, here you are. They said you might be up here.

**DUNLAP.** Did they?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Did you know there's a bellhop lying on the floor outside of this suite?

**DUNLAP.** As a matter of fact, I did.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *(Beat.)* I see.

**DUNLAP.** Mrs. Osgood, how may I help you?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Oh. Well, everybody's looking for you downstairs. Mr. Hedges at the front desk seemed a little—how should I put this—agitated. The night's festivities have already begun. Just between you and me, I think it's going very well.

**DUNLAP.** Is it?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Yes. My boys from the Navy have added a special flair to the evening, I think.

**DUNLAP.** So I've been told.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I've come to see how Miss McFadden is doing.

**DUNLAP.** Quite well, I must say. Certainly much better than myself.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** We sang the most precious little song earlier.

**DUNLAP.** *You what?*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I was hoping we might sing another. Is there any chance of my saying a quick hello?

**DUNLAP.** To Miss McFadden?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Yes.

**DUNLAP.** None whatsoever.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Really?

**DUNLAP.** Really.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Alright then. I guess I'll see her downstairs. Has Athena Sinclair arrived yet?

**DUNLAP.** Oh yes.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** You've seen her?

**DUNLAP.** Yes, and she has seen me.

*(Desperately casual, he moves her to the hall door.)*

**DUNLAP.** Now then Mrs. Osgood, I'm sure you're needed downstairs, and I have countless things that need tending to.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** In this room?

**DUNLAP.** You have no idea.

*(Just as they arrive at the hall door, it opens and PIPPET enters the room.)*

**DUNLAP.** Mr. Pippet, oh good, you're back.

**PIPPET.** There's a bellhop lying on the floor in front of this suite.

**DUNLAP.** So I've heard. May I introduce Mrs. Everett P. Osgood. Mrs. Osgood is sponsoring this evening's benefit through her organization the PBL—

**PIPPET.** FU, we've met. Hello Mrs. Osgood.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Hello Mr. Pippet.

*(DUNLAP moves MRS. OSGOOD to the hall door. He speaks as he does so.)*

**DUNLAP.** Mrs. Osgood was just on her way out, weren't you dear lady? Now then, if you need anything else, please let me know.

*(He scoots her into the hall and closes the doors behind her. He turns to face PIPPET.)*

**DUNLAP.** Mr. Pippet, we have a problem.

**PIPPET.** Mr. Dunlap, I have enough problems of my own. I don't have time for yours.

**DUNLAP.** Well, you might want to make time.

**PIPPET.** Make time for you? I think not. Do you have any idea what it's like to get that damned little dog to swallow an aspirin? Plus I still have to get Miss McFadden fed, get her dressed, make sure she—*(Beat.)* —*Why are there still no white roses in this suite?*

**DUNLAP.** Ah. Good. You noticed.

PIPPET. If you're trying to be funny Mr. Dunlap, let me assure you, I have no sense of humor.

DUNLAP. Well, now would be a good time for you to get one.

PIPPET. What are all these photographs?

*(He moves to one of the photographs to get a better look.)*

*(Beat.)*

PIPPET. This is Athena Sinclair.

DUNLAP. Yes it is.

PIPPET. *(Looking at another photograph:)* So is this.

DUNLAP. *(Pointing at another:)* And this one here.

PIPPET. *(With growing concern:)* Why are there pictures of Athena Sinclair everywhere I look?

DUNLAP. Ah yes. Well, that would be the problem I mentioned.

PIPPET. You still haven't answered my question.

DUNLAP. I don't remember what it was.

PIPPET. *Why are there pictures of Athena Sinclair all over this room?*

DUNLAP. Oh. Because she's here.

*(Beat.)*

PIPPET. Here?

DUNLAP. Yes.

PIPPET. Where here?

DUNLAP. *Here* here.

PIPPET. Here in the hotel?

DUNLAP. Here in this suite.

PIPPET. Here in *this* suite?

DUNLAP. That would be correct.

PIPPET. *She's in this suite.*

DUNLAP. As we speak.

PIPPET. And where's Miss McFadden.

DUNLAP. She's here too.

PIPPET. *(Beat.)* I don't understand.

DUNLAP. Let me make this simple for you.

(DUNLAP moves to the Claudia's bedroom door.)

**DUNLAP.** Claudia McFadden is behind this door.

(DUNLAP moves to the Athena's bedroom door.)

**DUNLAP.** Athena Sinclair is behind this door.

**PIPPET.** (*With rising horror, points to the closet:*) And what's behind door number three, *the press?*

**DUNLAP.** (*Beat.*) Actually yes.

(*Without a word PIPPET collapses in a dead faint.*)

**DUNLAP.** No, no, no, there's no time for that.

(DUNLAP moves to PIPPET, revives him and helps him back onto his feet.)

**PIPPET.** I think I'm going to jump off the balcony. That's what I think I'm going to do.

(*He moves to the balcony, opening the French doors.*)

**DUNLAP.** Mr. Pippet, you're not going to jump off the balcony.

**PIPPET.** I'm not?

**DUNLAP.** No. This is what you're going to do...

(DUNLAP continues to talk as he moves around the room placing all the photographs of ATHENA face down.)

**DUNLAP.** You're going to go in there and make sure she doesn't come out. Under any circumstance.

**PIPPET.** *Are you insane?* If Claudia McFadden wants to leave a room, you don't try to stop her. You don't! You just get out of the way and hope you don't get crushed in the process.

(*Suddenly, the door opens and CLAUDIA sweeps out with MR. BOODLES.*)

**CLAUDIA.** PIPPET!

(PIPPET screams and jumps into DUNLAP's arms.)

**CLAUDIA.** What the hell is wrong with you?

**PIPPET.** I, I, I, I—

**CLAUDIA.** *You what?*

**PIPPET.** I saw a mouse.

(*Indignant, DUNLAP drops him to the floor.*)

**DUNLAP.** There are no mice in the Palm Beach Royale.

**CLAUDIA.** Of course there aren't. Now then, where was I?

**PIPPET.** I've got Mr. Boodles' aspirins right here.

**CLAUDIA.** He doesn't need them anymore.

**PIPPET.** He doesn't?

**CLAUDIA.** I gave him gin instead.

**PIPPET.** Ah.

**CLAUDIA.** Now he needs walkies.

*(She hands MR. BOODLES to PIPPET.)*

**PIPPET.** Of course he does.

**CLAUDIA.** And I'm going to need another pitcher of martinis.

**PIPPET.** Yes Miss McFadden.

*(She starts back to the bedroom, when suddenly she stops and spins around to face them.)*

**CLAUDIA.** WAIT A MINUTE!

*(PIPPET gasps.)*

**CLAUDIA.** What's going on here?

**DUNLAP.** What do you mean?

**CLAUDIA.** *Where the hell are my white roses?*

**DUNLAP.** Oh Yes! That! Of course.

*(He moves to the closet door and opens it.)*

**DUNLAP.** They're right here in the—

*(He slams the closet door shut.)*

**CLAUDIA.** They're in the closet?

**DUNLAP.** Of course not. Don't be silly. Why would they be in the closet?

**CLAUDIA.** Where are they?

**DUNLAP.** They're out by the pool.

**CLAUDIA.** *What?*

**DUNLAP.** I thought that they looked like they needed some fresh air. Isn't that right Mr. Pippet?

**PIPPET.** *(Completely lost.)* What?

**DUNLAP.** Not to worry. I'll have them brought back right now.

*(He picks up the phone to call the front desk.)*

*(CLAUDIA looks at him with disdain.)*

**CLAUDIA.** And then you'll go away?

**DUNLAP.** If that's what you'd like.

**CLAUDIA.** That's what I'd like.

**DUNLAP.** Then, consider me gone.

**CLAUDIA.** PIPPET!

**PIPPET.** Yes, Miss McFadden?

**CLAUDIA.** *(Pointing to the dog:)* Walkies.

*(She turns and exits back into her bedroom.)*

**PIPPET.** Yes, Miss Mc—

*(The bedroom door shuts.)*

**PIPPET.** I can't do this, I'm going to have a heart attack.

**DUNLAP.** Yes, fine, whatever.

*(He opens the closet door to reveal the unconscious DORA.)*

**DUNLAP.** But before you do, help me with these bloody roses.

*(He reaches around DORA, takes out the four dozen white roses and shuts the closet door. As he speaks, he places the white roses around the suite.)*

**DUNLAP.** Now then, this is what we're going to do—

**PIPPET.** Mr. Dunlap.

**DUNLAP.** What is it?

**PIPPET.** Why is there an unconscious woman in the closet?

**DUNLAP.** Mr. Pippet, we don't have the time *to begin* to answer that question. Now then, this is what we are going to do—

**DORA.** *(From inside the closet:)* Where am I?

*(They both freeze.)*

**DUNLAP.** Oh good God.

**DORA.** *(From inside the closet:)* What is this?

**DUNLAP.** Will this day never end?

*(Suddenly, the closet door bursts open and a disoriented DORA steps out.)*

**DORA.** How the hell did I end up back in the closet?

DUNLAP. Miss del Rio, how nice to see you.

DORA. My head is throbbing. What did you do, club me with a bottle?

DUNLAP. Don't be ridiculous.

(DUNLAP looks around the room.)

PIPPET. What are you doing?

DUNLAP. (*Quietly:*) Looking for a bottle.

DORA. (*Moving into the suite:*) Well, while you're doing that, I'll just have a chat with Claudia McFadden.

DUNLAP. *She's not here.*

DORA. So you've said.

DUNLAP. Miss del Rio *I swear to you*, Claudia McFadden is not in this suite.

CLAUDIA. (*Offstage:*) PIPPET!

(*Beat. They all look towards Claudia's bedroom door.*)

DORA. Aha!

(DORA moves to Claudia's door.)

DUNLAP. Miss del Rio, *you can't go in that room!*

DORA. Who's going to stop me?

(*As if on cue, Claudia's door opens – upstage – smack into DORA's face. Once again, we hear the "thunk" of it making contact. PIPPET yelps. CLAUDIA, oblivious to the fact that DORA is behind the door, stands in the doorway.*)

CLAUDIA. (*To PIPPET:*) Oh good, you're still here. Why didn't you answer me?

PIPPET. I, I, I, I...

CLAUDIA. You *really* do need to see to that stutter.

PIPPET. Yes, Miss McFadden.

CLAUDIA. (*To DUNLAP, sarcastic:*) And *you're* still here. What a surprise.

DUNLAP. (*Indicating the roses:*) Your long stem white roses.

CLAUDIA. Splendid. Get out.

PIPPET. Miss McFadden, you needed something?

**CLAUDIA.** Yes. When Mr. Boodles goes out for walkies, make sure you don't watch him while he's doing his business, you know how sensitive he is.

**PIPPET.** *(Beat.)* Yes, Miss McFadden.

**CLAUDIA.** And I'm still waiting for that new pitcher of martinis.

**PIPPET.** Of course, I'll bring one right in.

**CLAUDIA.** Splendid. *(To DUNLAP:)* And as for you...

**DUNLAP.** I'm out the door.

**CLAUDIA.** If only.

*(She moves back into the bedroom, closing the door behind her to reveal DORA standing there. Once again, little birds are floating around her head. She stands there, completely dazed.)*

*(DUNLAP and PIPPET stare at her.)*

*(She spits out a tooth.)*

*(Beat.)*

**PIPPET.** Closet?

**DUNLAP.** Closet.

*(They get to her just as she collapses into their arms. They carry her to the closet, and stand her inside.)*

**DUNLAP.** You see Mr. Pippet, the trick is to not panic. Not panicking is the key. As long as one doesn't panic, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—that can't be handled.

*(The hall door suddenly opens and MRS. OSGOOD pops into the suite.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I'm back!

*(DUNLAP jumps out of his skin.)*

**PIPPET.** *The FU lady!*

*(DUNLAP shoves PIPPET into the closet and slams the door shut. He turns to MRS. OSGOOD, desperately casual.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** You said to let you know if I needed anything.

**DUNLAP.** And you thought I was serious.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *(Still oblivious:)* Actually, it's not so much me as it is the Navy.

**DUNLAP.** What about them?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Well, some of the boys are looking to try some... Oh, now what did they call it?

**DUNLAP.** Mrs. Osgood...

**MRS. OSGOOD.** (*Trying to remember:*) Oh, give me a second. It'll come to me.

**DUNLAP.** This really isn't the time—

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *Military maneuvers!*

(*Beat.*)

**DUNLAP.** I'm sorry?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** *Military maneuvers!* That was the term they used. They said they'd like to try some "military maneuvers." In the lobby.

(*Beat.*)

**DUNLAP.** *What does that mean?*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I have no idea, but it certainly sounds exciting, doesn't it?

**DUNLAP.** Mrs. Osgood—

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I tried to speak to Mr. Hedges about it, but he's sort of rolled himself into a fetal position and isn't really speaking to anyone.

**DUNLAP.** I understand how he feels.

(*Behind their backs, and still holding MR. BOODLES, PIPPET quietly opens the closet door, and begins to sneak towards the hall door.*)

**MRS. OSGOOD.** So anyway, I sent them back into the lobby bar, while I came up here to speak to you.

**DUNLAP.** I'm so pleased.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** (*Discovering PIPPET:*) Oh Mr. Pippet, I didn't see you there. How are you?

**PIPPET.** Oh, I'm in hell Mrs. Osgood, how are you?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** (*Still oblivious:*) *Wonderful.* Thank you for asking.

(*DUNLAP gently takes MRS. OSGOOD by the arm and leads her to the hall door.*)

**DUNLAP.** Now then, why don't you go back down to the lobby and ask "the boys" if they'd be kind enough to refrain from any sort of maneuvers—military or otherwise— until I get down there.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** If you think that's best.

**DUNLAP.** Indeed I do.

*(He opens the hall door and scoots her out into the hall.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** And just so you know, the bellhop is still out here on the floor.

**DUNLAP.** Yes, we're going to have him bronzed and used as a door-stop. Now then, if you'll excuse me...

*(He closes the hall door in her face.)*

*(THE INSTANT the hall door closes, the closet door bursts open, and DORA staggers into the room.)*

**DORA.** *What the hell happened?*

**PIPPET.** Oh sweet heaven.

**DORA.** *How do I keep ending up in this closet?*

**DUNLAP.** You got hit in the face with a door.

**DORA.** I what?

**DUNLAP.** You got hit in the face with a door.

**DORA.** *I got hit in the face with a door?*

**DUNLAP.** Twice.

**DORA.** *Really?*

**DUNLAP.** I'm afraid so.

*(Beat.)*

**DORA.** Was it Claudia? Is she on one of her rampages?

**DUNLAP.** Yes.

**PIPPET.** No.

*(Beat. They look at each other.)*

**DUNLAP.** I mean no.

**PIPPET.** I mean yes.

**DUNLAP.** I mean yes.

**PIPPET.** I mean no.

**DORA.** *Well is she or isn't she?*

**PIPPET.** *She is! She is! She's out of control. She just ran out of the suite.*

**DUNLAP.** *(Quietly, to PIPPET:) She did?*

**PIPPET.** *She did!*

**DORA.** *(To DUNLAP:) Where did she go?*

**DUNLAP.** *(To PIPPET:) Where did she go?*

**PIPPET.** Down to the lobby.

DUNLAP. (To DORA:) Down to the lobby.

DORA. What's in the lobby?

DUNLAP. (To PIPPET:) What's in the lobby?

PIPPET. (Beat.) Athena Sinclair.

DUNLAP. Athena Sinclair.

DORA. *Athena Sinclair!*

PIPPET. Miss Sinclair was saying the most scandalous things about her.

DORA. (Drooling:) What did she say?

PIPPET. I couldn't possibly tell you. (Whispers:) Apparently Miss Sinclair has been drinking.

DORA. (Thrilled:) *She's been drinking?*

PIPPET. So Miss McFadden went down there to straighten things out once and for all. They're probably down there "discussing the situation" as we spea—

(DORA flies out the hall door.)

(Beat.)

DUNLAP. That was very good.

PIPPET. It comes from years of experience.

DUNLAP. Yes, well. Give me the dog, I'll make sure it gets walked. You see to her and her martinis.

PIPPET. But—

DUNLAP. *No Buts!* There's no time for butts! *Just keep her from leaving that bedroom.*

(PIPPET hands MR. BOODLES to DUNLAP as he walks to the bar. He picks up the shaker and olives and moves towards Claudia's bedroom.)

PIPPET. Mr. Dunlap, eventually she is going to have to come out of there. I mean, she *does* have a benefit to perform in—

(He looks at his watch.)

DUNLAP. *I KNOW. I KNOW.* Let me worry about that. You just keep her in there.

PIPPET. Why didn't I enlist? I could be in Europe right now. Where it's safe.

(He exits into the bedroom.)

(DUNLAP moves to the hall door. He opens them to find FRANCIS and OTIS standing there with luggage cart now full of both Claudia's and Athena's luggage. They pull the cart into the suite. OTIS is rubbing his head.)

**FRANCIS.** Mr. Dunlap we've got a whole bunch of luggage here that's supposed to go to this suite. But we don't know what to do with it, because everybody keeps telling us to bring it back downstairs. Also Mr. Hedges wanted me to tell you that the orchestra leader went on a bathroom break and never came back. Oh, and there's a fire in the lobby.

**DUNLAP.** *A what?*

**FRANCIS.** Apparently some of Mrs. Osgood's Navy men have set the lobby on fire.

**DUNLAP.** Oh good God.

**FRANCIS.** Don't worry. It's just a small fire. Not like out by the pool.

**DUNLAP.** There's a fire out by the pool?

**FRANCIS.** Several.

**DUNLAP.** Oh for—

**FRANCIS.** The man on the radio said it was like the fall of Rome.

**DUNLAP.** And yet, somehow, none of that compares to the disaster looming in this room.

**FRANCIS.** What do you mean?

**DUNLAP.** Listen to me very carefully. This is what we're going to do—

**OTIS.** Mr. Dunlap.

**DUNLAP.** What is it?

**OTIS.** You threw me into a wall.

**DUNLAP.** Yes Francis, you're right. And for that, I am sincerely sorry. But please understand, we have an emergency situation here. Both Claudia McFadden and Athena Sinclair think they have this suite.

**OTIS.** And this is a bad thing?

**DUNLAP.** No, no, no. *World War II* is a bad thing. *THIS IS MUCH WORSE.* Now listen to me! First things first. I want this room devoid of all luggage. Once we figure out who gets the suite, we'll have their luggage brought in. I also want anything that might *look* like a white rose taken out of here. The same goes for any and all pictures of Athena Sinclair. Do this quickly and quietly, and whatever you do, stay away from the bedrooms. (*Noticing he still holds MR. BOODLES.*) And one of you please take this damn dog out for walkies. I'm going downstairs to

deal with fires and navy men and any other fresh hell that might have come up. When I come back, I want all of this done. Is that understood?

**FRANCIS & OTIS.** Yes sir.

**DUNLAP.** (*Handing the dog to FRANCIS:*) Remember. Quickly and quietly.

**FRANCIS.** Mr. Dunlap?

**DUNLAP.** *Now what is it?*

**FRANCIS.** Have you seen Murphy by any chance?

**DUNLAP.** *Who?*

**FRANCIS.** Miss McFadden's secretary.

**DUNLAP.** I thought the name was Pippet.

**FRANCIS.** No. It's Murphy.

**DUNLAP.** It's Pippet.

**FRANCIS.** Murphy.

**DUNLAP.** Pippet.

**FRANCIS.** Murph—

**DUNLAP.** *I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!*

**FRANCIS.** Yes sir.

**DUNLAP.** Now you understand what needs to be done?

**OTIS.** You can count on us.

**DUNLAP.** Oh good God.

*(He exits.)*

**FRANCIS.** Alright Otis, you do the luggage and the dog and I'll do the photographs and the roses.

*(He hands MR. BOODLES to OTIS.)*

**OTIS.** I'll be right back.

*(OTIS exits with the luggage cart and MR. BOODLES.)*

*(FRANCIS begins to collect the photographs when Athena's door opens. ATHENA enters.)*

**ATHENA.** (*Calling back:*) Honestly Murphy, what's wrong with you today? You'd think, you had Claudia McFadden hidden in the next—

*(She sees FRANCIS. Beat. She is smitten.)*

*Why, hello there.*

*(She suddenly becomes a tigress stalking her prey.)*

**ATHENA.** You are *just* what the doctor ordered. And in uniform, no less.

*(She seductively moves towards him. FRANCIS instinctively takes a step back.)*

**FRANCIS.** Oh. Hi. I'm...uh...

**ATHENA.** Looking at my photos, I see.

**FRANCIS.** Yes, I was just—

**ATHENA.** Admiring them?

**FRANCIS.** Yeah. I guess.

*(She is practically on top of him. FRANCIS is justifiably terrified.)*

**ATHENA.** Well if you like those, I have some other pictures that I think you'll just *love*.

**MURPHY.** *OH MY!*

*(They turn to find MURPHY standing in the bedroom doorway.)*

**ATHENA.** Oh Murphy darling! *(Indicating FRANCIS:)* Look what I found.

**FRANCIS.** *(Quietly:)* Help.

**MURPHY.** Francis, what are you doing here?

**ATHENA.** *(Surprised:)* You know this person?

**MURPHY.** Yes. He's the bellhop who brought up the luggage.

**FRANCIS.** *Wait a minute.* You work for... *(He points at ATHENA.)* ...I thought...

**MURPHY.** What?

**FRANCIS.** Never mind.

*(He turns and awkwardly puts out his hand to ATHENA.)*

**FRANCIS.** It's...a pleasure.

*(She takes his hand and pulls him close.)*

**ATHENA.** *(Seductively:)* You have no idea.

**MURPHY.** Miss Sinclair, don't you think we should get downstairs and run those songs before it gets any later?

**ATHENA.** Oh yes, that. I supposed we should. *(Beat.)* Oh dear Lord, those dreadful roses are back.

*(FRANCIS breaks away from her and starts to collect the white roses.)*

FRANCIS. Not to worry. That's why I'm here. I'm taking them away.

ATHENA. Yes well, we've tried that once before. It doesn't seem to work.

MURPHY. (*Looking at her watch:*) My, my, my, look at the time.

ATHENA. Oh very well. Let's go. (*To FRANCIS:*) When I get back, this room will be emptied of all white roses, yes?

FRANCIS. Yes Ma'am.

ATHENA. (*Aside to FRANCIS:*) And if you'd like to see those other pictures, you know where to find me.

FRANCIS. (*Beat.*) Yes Ma'am.

ATHENA. Fabulous.

(ATHENA and MURPHY start to exit through the hall door. Suddenly, MURPHY stops.)

MURPHY. *Oh!* Wait a second. I forgot the song list and schedule. Why don't you go on ahead and I'll catch up.

ATHENA. I'll wait for you at the elevator.

MURPHY. I won't be two seconds.

(ATHENA exits. MURPHY immediately turns to FRANCIS.)

MURPHY. *What was that about?*

FRANCIS. I thought you worked for Claudia McFadden.

MURPHY. (*Horried:*) *What? Why?*

FRANCIS. Because earlier, when I brought up your flowers—

MURPHY. (*Touched, cutting him off:*) You brought me flowers?

(*He points to the red roses in the vase.*)

FRANCIS. Red roses.

MURPHY. Those are from you?

FRANCIS. Yes.

MURPHY. *For me?*

FRANCIS. Of course.

(MURPHY moves to the vase and picks up the bouquet. She smells the roses.)

MURPHY. They're beautiful.

FRANCIS. I remember how much you used to like them.

**MURPHY.** You used to give me one before every show.

**FRANCIS.** And you would wear it in your hair.

**MURPHY.** I remember.

**FRANCIS.** You looked like an angel.

**MURPHY.** Francis...

**FRANCIS.** You still do.

**MURPHY.** *Francis...*

*(And once again, they are kissing. In perfect 40s fashion, his leg now rises behind him.)*

*(Beat.)*

*(ATHENA appears at the hall door. She reacts.)*

**ATHENA.** *(Dripping sarcasm:)* Murphy darling.

*(They jump.)*

**ATHENA.** When I said you should go out and kiss strange men, I didn't necessarily mean this afternoon.

*(MURPHY immediately pulls away from FRANCIS, tossing him the bouquet of red roses as she moves across the room.)*

**MURPHY.** *Oh!* I am so sorry, Miss Sinclair. I don't know what came over me. It's just, he does this thing—he tells me I look pretty and then he smiles at me with that smile of his. And I start to perspire and my knees go numb. And before I know it, there's that burning tug of... *(Beat. She stops herself.)*

**ATHENA.** Oh darling, don't stop now.

**MURPHY.** Will you excuse me?

*(Completely embarrassed, she gets the song list and schedule and hurries past ATHENA out the hall door.)*

**ATHENA.** *(With a raised eyebrow:)* And as for you young man...

**FRANCIS.** Yes Ma'am?

**ATHENA.** Any further kissing in this suite had best involve me.

**FRANCIS.** Yes Ma'am.

*(She turns and exits out the hall door.)*

*(THE INSTANT the hall door closes, Claudia's door opens up.*

*PIPPET enters.)*

**PIPPET.** Where's Mr. Boodles. She wants Mr. Boodles.

**FRANCIS.** Who's Mr. Boodles?

**PIPPET.** *The dog. The dog.*

**FRANCIS.** He's out being walked. Who are you?

**PIPPET.** Where did you get those roses?

**FRANCIS.** What?

**PIPPET.** Those roses in your hand. Where did you get them?

**FRANCIS.** What's it to you?

**PIPPET.** *(Beat.)* Wait a second. Are you my bellhop?

**FRANCIS.** *What?*

**PIPPET.** I didn't think so. Give me that bouquet.

*(PIPPET tries to take the bouquet out of FRANCIS' hand.)*

**FRANCIS.** Get away from me!

**PIPPET.** That bouquet is mine. I want it back.

**FRANCIS.** It's not yours.

**PIPPET.** *Yes, it is. Give it to me.*

**FRANCIS.** *Are you nuts?*

*(The two men wrestle to get the bouquet. PIPPET maneuvers himself in front of FRANCIS, who reaches around him. The two continue to struggle, FRANCIS with his arms around PIPPET, both of their hands clutching the bouquet of red roses. They find themselves in the most compromising of positions.)*

*(Claudia's bedroom door opens and CLAUDIA enters just in time to hear PIPPET shout...)*

**PIPPET.** *Give it to me! Give it to me!*

*(CLAUDIA reacts.)*

*(Both men turn to see CLAUDIA. They freeze.)*

*(Beat.)*

*(Without saying a word, CLAUDIA slowly backs into her bedroom, closing the door behind her.)*

**PIPPET.** *(Horrified:)* Oh, that's not good.

*(PIPPET breaks away from FRANCIS, who still holds the bouquet. He hurries to Claudia's bedroom door.)*

**PIPPET.** *Miss McFadden, that was not what you think it was!*

*(He exits into Claudia's bedroom, closing the door behind him.)*

*(THE INSTANT Claudia's bedroom door closes, the hall door opens, and OTIS enters, carrying MR. BOODLES.)*

**OTIS.** Okay, the luggage is back down at the front desk. The dog tinkled in the elevator. You should see it down there. Fires, drunken sailors, someone threw one of the reporters in the pool. How's it going up here?

**FRANCIS.** You don't want to know.

*(FRANCIS puts the red roses back into the empty vase and starts to collect the white roses.)*

**FRANCIS.** Listen. I'm gonna take the white roses downstairs. You collect all the Athena Sinclair photos and stick them in the closet. If any bedroom door opens, you're not here. You got that?

**OTIS.** Uh huh.

**FRANCIS.** I'll be right back.

**OTIS.** Okay.

*(FRANCIS exits with the roses through the hall door.)*

*(Still holding MR. BOODLES, OTIS collects all of the photographs and quickly puts them in the closet.)*

**OTIS.** *(To MR. BOODLES:)* Now, what do I do with you? *(Beat.)* I know, I'll—

*(From Claudia's bedroom we hear CLAUDIA's booming voice.)*

**CLAUDIA.** *(Offstage:)* WELL FIND HIM!!

*(Panicked, OTIS runs towards the balcony. He trips on the sill of the French doors, MR. BOODLES flies out of his hands and over the balcony.)*

*(Claudia's bedroom door opens and PIPPET enters to find the suite empty, save for OTIS, standing at the balcony, in shock.)*

**PIPPET.** Who are you?

**OTIS.** *(Beat.)* I'm not here.

**PIPPET.** I beg your pardon?

**OTIS.** I'm not here.

**PIPPET.** And yet I can see you.

**OTIS.** I'm still not here.

**PIPPET.** Uh huh. Have you seen Mr. Boodles?

**OTIS.** *(Beat.)* Who?

*(The hall door opens and DUNLAP and MRS. OSGOOD enter the suite. DUNLAP is close to a nervous breakdown.)*

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I don't understand what you're so upset about, Mr. Dunlap. It was just a small fire.

**DUNLAP.** The problem is not the just fire in the lobby, Mrs. Osgood. It's the fires by the pool, and the drunken sailors jumping off of balconies. It's Mr. Hedges quitting and the orchestra leader nowhere to be found. The problem is white roses and photographs and celebrities and this suite. The problem, Mrs. Osgood, is your sailors throwing Miss del Rio into the pool.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Ah, the rambunctious joys of youth.

*(DUNLAP turns to find PIPPET now standing at his side.)*

**DUNLAP.** What now?

**PIPPET.** She wants Mr. Boodles. Where is Mr. Boodles?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** Who's Mr. Boodles?

**DUNLAP.** Mrs. Osgood, why don't you go downstairs and see if the Marines have arrived?

**MRS. OSGOOD.** What a lovely idea. I think I shall.

*(She moves towards the hall door.)*

**DUNLAP.** Watch out for the fires and falling sailors.

**MRS. OSGOOD.** I always do.

*(She exits.)*

**PIPPET.** Where is he?

**DUNLAP.** Where is who?

**PIPPET.** Mr. Boodles.

**DUNLAP.** I don't have him.

**PIPPET.** *You don't have him!?* I gave him to you!

**DUNLAP.** I only had him a moment before I gave him to—

*(Suddenly FRANCIS runs in. He closes the hall door behind him and leans against it.)*

**FRANCIS.** Miss Sinclair is on her way up. She couldn't find the orchestra leader.

**DUNLAP.** Of course she couldn't. *No one can find him.*

**FRANCIS.** She stopped in the lobby. There's some commotion going on down there. I couldn't tell what it was.

**DUNLAP.** Please don't tell me we had another fire.

**FRANCIS.** I don't think so.

**PIPPET.** *What about Mr. Boodles?*

**DUNLAP.** *(To FRANCIS:)* Otis...

**FRANCIS.** Francis.

**DUNLAP.** *Francis, Otis, whoever the hell you are!* Quickly man, what did you do with Mr. Boodles?

**FRANCIS.** You mean the dog?

**DUNLAP & PIPPET.** *YES!*

**FRANCIS.** I gave him to Otis.

*(Everyone turns and looks at OTIS.)*

*(Beat.)*

**OTIS.** I'm not here.

**DUNLAP.** I beg your pardon.

**OTIS.** I'm not here.

**DUNLAP.** Francis...

**FRANCIS.** Otis.

**DUNLAP.** *WHOEVER!*

**OTIS.** Yes, Mr. Dunlap?

**DUNLAP.** Where's Mr. Boodles?

**OTIS.** *(Beat.)* I don't think I want to tell you.

**DUNLAP.** Why not?

**OTIS.** Because I think you're going to get very, very, *very* angry.

**PIPPET.** *FOR GODSAKES, WHAT DID YOU DO WITH MR. BOODLES!?!?*

**OTIS.** I kinda sorta threw him off the balcony.

*(Beat.)*

**DUNLAP.** You *kinda sorta* threw him off the balcony?

**OTIS.** Well, I took him and he tinkled in the elevator and I brought him back here and I was going to put him out on the balcony but then I heard Miss McFadden and I got scared because of what happened at the Fairmont in San Francisco and I tripped and I'm not here.

*(Beat.)*

(PIPPET begins to giggle. It starts as a small, almost delicate sound but builds until it becomes something close to hysterics. Still laughing, PIPPET moves to DUNLAP and begins to play with his tie.)

**PIPPET.** (Still laughing:) He threw Mr. Boodles off the balcony. Could you imagine? He threw Mr. Boodles off the balcony.

(At this point, he's practically strangling DUNLAP.)

**PIPPET.** (Near hysterics:) Isn't that funny? Isn't that a hoot? You know what's even funnier? She's going to kill me! She's going to kill all of us! We're all going to die, BECAUSE YOUR BELLHOP THREW MR. BOODLES OFF THE—

(The hall door opens and ATHENA enters, followed by MURPHY.)

(The room freezes.)

**ATHENA.** My God, every time I walk into this suite, there's more people in it.

**DUNLAP.** (Panicked:) Miss Sinclair, what a lovely surprise.

**ATHENA.** For me to be in my own suite?

**DUNLAP.** No. Of course not. What I mean is... (Beat.) ...What's that in your arms?

(Everyone turns their attention to small towel, tucked in the crook of ATHENA's arm. She opens it to reveal MR. BOODLES.)

(PIPPET screams.)

**DUNLAP.** (Indicating the dog:) You, you, you...

**ATHENA.** Isn't he just precious? Can you believe some animal threw him off one of the balconies into the pool. They had just fished him out and taken him into the lobby as I was leaving the ballroom. I decided I must have him. Look at the poor darling, he's still shivering. Murphy could you be a dear and take him into the bedroom and wrap him up in one of those lovely wool blankets?

**MURPHY.** Of course.

(She takes the dog and exits into Athena's bedroom.)

**ATHENA.** I couldn't find your orchestra leader.

**DUNLAP.** (Leading her to the door:) Well let's go right back down and see if we can't find him for you.

**ATHENA.** Oh that's alright. I'm afraid if I go down now, I might bump into Claudia McFadden. That's the last thing I want to do. I'll wait for my allotted time on stage, when I know for certain she won't

be down there. Face it darling, if I never see that lounge-singing sow again, it'll be too soon.

*(As if on cue, she turns around to see CLAUDIA, standing in the doorway of her bedroom.)*

*(Everything stops.)*

*(Everyone in the room stops breathing.)*

*(Then finally...)*

**ATHENA.** DARLING!

**CLAUDIA.** SWEETIE!

**ATHENA.** ANGEL!

**CLAUDIA.** What a surprise!

**ATHENA.** Isn't it though!

**CLAUDIA.** Just too!

**ATHENA.** How so!

**CLAUDIA.** It's been a while.

**ATHENA.** Indeed it has.

**CLAUDIA.** Much too long.

**ATHENA.** Indeed.

**CLAUDIA.** When was the last time?

**ATHENA.** San Fran, I believe.

**CLAUDIA.** No! Was it?

**ATHENA.** I still have the bruises.

**CLAUDIA.** Do you? How sweet.

**ATHENA.** Indeed.

**CLAUDIA.** Time flies.

**ATHENA.** So quickly.

**CLAUDIA.** Indeed.

**ATHENA.** Indeed.

*(Both sigh.)*

*(The smiles never leave their faces.)*

**CLAUDIA.** So.

**ATHENA.** So.

CLAUDIA. What *on earth* are you doing here?

ATHENA. Why I'm performing tonight darling.

CLAUDIA. I'm sure you are.

ATHENA. At the benefit.

CLAUDIA. Really?

ATHENA. Haven't you read your program?

CLAUDIA. I never read *below* my name.

ATHENA. How "*you.*" (*Still sweet:*) You see, that's just *one* of the many things I *don't* miss about sharing a stage with you.

CLAUDIA. What's that? My power? My presence?

ATHENA. Your breath.

CLAUDIA. So what are you "performing"? Some exotic dance from the 1890s?

ATHENA. No darling. Like you, I'm singing.

CLAUDIA. How quaint. I had no idea you could sing.

ATHENA. You've heard me.

CLAUDIA. Yes, I have.

ATHENA. Well, not all of us have your lungs, dear. Your epic, canyon-size lungs.

CLAUDIA. Are you insinuating something sweetie. I can never tell, you're too opaque.

ATHENA. Why, of course not darling. If I was going to call you a *Golem*, I'd say it to your face.

CLAUDIA. Are you calling me—?

ATHENA. YES.

*(All pretense of civility is now gone.)*

CLAUDIA. I should have snapped you in half in San Francisco, when I had the chance.

ATHENA. I should have had you arrested for assault.

CLAUDIA. I should have had you arrested *FOR SINGING*.

*(Suddenly, the hall door opens and DORA DEL RIO bursts into the room. She is still wet from being thrown into the pool.)*

DORA. *Aha!*

DUNLAP. Oh dear God.

*(Despite her disheveled appearance, DORA moves between the two divas with her slickest reporter demeanor. She carries a note pad and pencil, on which she frantically takes notes over the next few lines.)*

**DORA.** Miss McFadden! Miss Sinclair! I write for the Palm Bea—

**CLAUDIA.** *(Ignoring DORA, to ATHENA:)* The press? You brought the press?

**ATHENA.** I did no such thing!

**CLAUDIA.** This is so like you to come barging into my suite *with the press* and start flinging insults.

**ATHENA.** *Your suite?* What do you mean *your suite?*

**CLAUDIA.** What part didn't you get?

**ATHENA.** This is *my suite!*

**CLAUDIA.** What, are you senile? It's mine!

**ATHENA.** It's mine!

**CLAUDIA.** MINE!

**ATHENA.** MINE!

**DUNLAP.** Ladies may I suggest—

*(MURPHY reenters from Athena's room with MR. BOODLES.)*

**CLAUDIA.** Mr. Boodles!

**ATHENA.** Mr. What?

**CLAUDIA.** What are you doing with my dog?

**ATHENA.** What do you mean *your dog?*

**CLAUDIA.** *Don't you dare.* That dog is mine.

**ATHENA.** Not anymore, he's not!

**CLAUDIA.** *Dog thief!*

*(CLAUDIA picks up a large pillow from the couch and swings it at ATHENA. She misses and hits DORA.)*

**ATHENA.** *Cow!*

*(ATHENA picks up another pillow and swings it at ATHENA. She too hits DORA. They continue to swing at each other, hitting DORA instead.)*

**CLAUDIA.** *Trollop!*

**ATHENA.** *Lush!*

**CLAUDIA.** *Whore!*

**ATHENA.** *Souse!*

**CLAUDIA.** *Harlot!*

*(They continue to beat DORA with the pillows, until they finally knock her onto the couch.)*

**CLAUDIA.** Alright, I've had it! Enough is enough. *Everybody out!*

**DUNLAP.** What?

**CLAUDIA.** Everybody out. We are going to settle this! *Once and for all!*

**ATHENA.** Yes. Let's. *Once and for all!*

**DUNLAP.** I don't—

**CLAUDIA.** *EVERYBODY OUT!*

**ATHENA.** *EVERYBODY!*

*(CLAUDIA and ATHENA begin to swing their pillows at the others in the room. They literally beat DUNLAP, PIPPET, MURPHY, FRANCIS, OTIS, and DORA out through the hall door.)*

**DUNLAP.** Miss McFadden, Miss Sinclair, *please!* I really must object to this. I am the General Manger of this hotel. *We just had this room refurbished!*

*(CLAUDIA slams the door. She locks the door and turns to face ATHENA, who stands to face her. The two are now alone.)*

*(Beat.)*

*(They begin to giggle like school girls. They run to each other and embrace.)*

**CLAUDIA.** Oh Pet, this was your best yet.

**ATHENA.** Oh no, please! It was all you. You were brilliant!

**CLAUDIA.** Nonsense, you were superb! Your technical polish, your subtle choices. My dear 'Thena, you were perfection!

**ATHENA.** Oh no darling, you were perfection.

**CLAUDIA.** *We were both perfection!*

**ATHENA.** I adore you madly! We haven't had this much fun since San Francisco.

**CLAUDIA.** Sweetie, I don't think we've had this much fun since the Roxy!

*(Once again they giggle and embrace.)*

**CLAUDIA.** How on earth did you manage to get into the suite?

**THIS PLAY IS  
NOT OVER!**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

*[www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)*