

~~MAX. What about, uh. (He nods at TITO.)~~

~~SAUNDERS. No problem. Tomorrow morning, we break the news. He took the pills after the performance and passed away quietly during the night. This is it. (The costume. SAUNDERS rummages through the suitcase.) Costume. make up...hat.~~

~~(A knock at the sitting room/corridor door. They both freeze.)~~

~~Who's that?~~

~~MAX. How should I know?!~~

~~SAUNDERS. I'll take care of it. You just change, and make it quick.~~

~~(He hands MAX the suitcase and heads for the sitting room.)~~

~~MAX. Sir?~~

~~SAUNDERS. (stopping) Yes, Max?~~

~~MAX. Wish me luck.~~

~~SAUNDERS. We don't need luck, Max.~~

~~MAX. Thanks.~~

~~(MAX enters the bathroom. SAUNDERS leaves the bedroom and closes the door.)~~

~~SAUNDERS. We need a miracle. (he walks to the sitting room/corridor door) Who is it?~~

~~JULIA. (offstage) It's me, Henry. Open the door.~~

~~SAUNDERS. Julia! I told you not to come up!~~

~~JULIA. (offstage) Open the door, Henry!~~

~~(SAUNDERS opens the door. JULIA enters. She's about sixty and wears a silver dress covered in sequins. She strikes a pose.)~~

~~How do I look? The truth.~~

~~SAUNDERS. Like the Chrysler Building.~~

~~JULIA. I knew you'd like it. (She sweeps in and twirls around.) It's straight from Paris. Haute couture. I feel like one of those fancy French tarts.~~

SAUNDERS. Julia, for God's sake –

JULIA. Now, don't be cross, Henry. I couldn't bear waiting backstage anymore. Not with those shrimp. I could hardly breathe. Besides, I thought I might cheer him up. The woman's touch. Suddenly before he knows it he'll feel vital again. Totally alive.

SAUNDERS. No, I don't think so.

JULIA. You know what this reminds me of? That opera, the one with the snow falling, and the violins and everybody's hungry all the time.

SAUNDERS. Julia, please! Just listen!

JULIA. I'm listening, Henry.

SAUNDERS. I want you to go to the theatre. Now. All right? As a favor to me.

JULIA. Oh, Henry. You know how I feel about you.

SAUNDERS. *(moving towards the door)* Good. Off you go –

JULIA. But it's just so silly. I'm here already.

SAUNDERS. But you won't be soon. You'll be at the theatre.

JULIA. *(logically)* Not if I'm here. I can't be in two places.

SAUNDERS. You won't be in two places. You won't be here.

JULIA. Why not?

SAUNDERS. Because you'll be there.

JULIA. But why bother? I'm already here-

SAUNDERS. Julia, please – !

(a knock at the door)

Now what?!

JULIA. *(sitting)* I think it's the door.

(SAUNDERS stops halfway to the door, returns to just behind JULIA and raises his arm as though he's going to slug her over the head, backhanded. He controls himself and returns to the door.)

SAUNDERS. *(at the door)* Who is it?!

BELLHOP. *(offstage)* Room service. Coffee for two.

SAUNDERS. We didn't order any coffee.

BELLHOP. *(offstage)* You did so! Ask Max!

SAUNDERS. Well, it's cancelled!

JULIA. *(going to the door)* Oh stop it, Henry. You can't just let him stand there.

SAUNDERS. Don't – !

(She opens the door. The BELLHOP enters, holding a tray with a coffee service on it. He also has a camera hanging around his neck. He leaves the door open.)

BELLHOP. Thank you, madam.

JULIA. On the table, please.

SAUNDERS. And then get out.

JULIA. He's only doing his job, Henry.

SAUNDERS. Well, he can do it somewhere else.

BELLHOP. Shall I pour, madam?

JULIA. Thank you, that would be very nice.

SAUNDERS. Julia, I want you out of here!

BELLHOP. He's not very friendly, is he?

SAUNDERS. Julia, please! You promised!

JULIA. I wonder what's keeping Mr. Merelli?

BELLHOP. Is he getting dressed?

JULIA. Apparently.

BELLHOP. *(going to the connecting door)* Perhaps he needs some help with his buttons. You know these opera stars, they're helpless-

SAUNDERS. STOP!

(The BELLHOP stops, his hand on the doorknob.)

Take one step into that room and I will *kill* you.

BELLHOP. Fair enough. I'll wait out here.

SAUNDERS. You're not waiting anyplace, you're getting out!

BELLHOP. Fine....As soon as I meet him. *(He sits.)*

SAUNDERS. You're not meeting him.

BELLHOP. Max promised. That's why I brought the coffee.

I'm a bellhop, not a waiter.

SAUNDERS. Listen, you-!!

(In a burst of anger, SAUNDERS grabs the BELLHOP by his shirtfront and hoists him to his feet. Simultaneously MAGGIE appears at the sitting room/corridor door dressed for the evening. She carries a single red rose.)

~~JULIA. Henry!~~

~~BELLHOP. Help!~~

~~MAGGIE. *(rushing in)* Daddy!~~

~~BELLHOP. Help!~~

~~MAGGIE. What are you doing?~~

~~SAUNDERS. *(to the BELLHOP)* Are you getting out?~~

~~BELLHOP. I'm getting wrinkled.~~

~~MAGGIE. Daddy, stop it! What's the matter?~~

~~*(SAUNDERS drops the BELLHOP.)*~~

~~BELLHOP. *(smoothing himself out)* We had a slight misunderstanding. Then he went insane.~~

~~SAUNDERS. *(to MAGGIE)* What the hell are you doing here?~~

~~MAGGIE. I came to see Mr. Merelli. To — to wish him luck.~~

~~SAUNDERS. Well, you're not going to, so get out!~~

~~MAGGIE. Daddy, what's the matter with you? Has something happened?~~

~~SAUNDERS. *(after a slight pause)* No.~~

~~JULIA. He's been under a lot of strain lately. Haven't you, Henry?~~

~~SAUNDERS. No!~~

~~BELLHOP. Yes, you have, Henry. I can tell.~~

~~SAUNDERS. Get him out of here. I'm warning you.~~

~~MAGGIE. *(to the BELLHOP)* This isn't like him at all.~~

~~BELLHOP. Oh yes it is.~~

~~SAUNDERS. Get out!! Now!!~~

~~BELLHOP. All right!! *(with dignity)* I will be happy to leave—~~

~~JULIA. *(to SAUNDERS)* There.~~

~~BELLHOP. As soon as I get one picture.~~