

JULIA

JULIA. (*Shaking her head at it all.*) Irving Berlin said it best: "There's no business like the one we're in."

JAMES. You got that almost right.

JULIA. I'm not budging from this house again tonight. The hospital was a nightmare the first time and then Torch bites Kelly Ripa and it's off to Mount Sinai with *her*. I told her, "Relax, Miss Ripa, he just wants to sniff you." (*Going into the bathroom.*) Hello, darling. Mummy's home. We were a bad boy tonight. James, would you bring me Torch's Yummies? They're in the silver dish. (*Julia goes into the bathroom. A strong reaction from James, who had been happily munching Torch's Yummies throughout his telephone conversation with the Coast. James brings Julia the Yummies, then sees Gus returning with his bottle of bourbon and a handful of 18th-century-looking coats.*)

GUS. The cast of *Hamilton* just got here.

JAMES. Thank you, Gus.

GUS. No problem, sweetheart. (*He goes as Julia comes out of the bathroom.*)

START

JAMES. The young man taking the coats said you wanted to speak to me about something.

JULIA. I'm very worried about Peter. He didn't take a bow and now he's not at his own party...! (*Julia produces a sealed envelope.*) Just before the curtain, I was backstage with the actors giving them their opening night gifts, when the stage manager handed me this note from him.

JAMES. What does it say?

JULIA. I had to promise not to open it until after the reviews were in.

JAMES. I didn't. (*He takes the envelope from her and opens it.*)

JULIA. I'll never forgive myself if anything happens to him.

JAMES. "Dear Julia, Thank you for producing my play. I know it cost you a lot of money, none of which you may ever see again."

JULIA. The money! As if I cared about that.

JAMES. "And thank you for your beautiful opening night gift. I have always wanted a pot holder with the name of one of my plays on it."

JULIA. They're really quite lovely. (*She holds one up.*)

JAMES. "I wish you the best. I even wish Frank breaks a leg"?

JULIA. (*Always helpful.*) That's a theatrical expression. It means good luck.

JAMES. What does he mean, "even"?

JULIA. You should've heard some of the names Sir Frank called Peter: Failure. Has-been. Hack.

JAMES. No!

JULIA. Loser. Fake. Phony. Written out.

JAMES. I get the picture, Julia.

JULIA. I was just an amateur, dilettante, rich bitch.

JAMES. Why did you stand for it?

JULIA. I didn't. Elliot said, "You can't speak to my wife like that," and he punched him right in the mouth.

JAMES. Good for Elliot.

JULIA. No, Sir Frank punched Elliot. He knocked him out and then barred him from rehearsals.

JAMES. As producer, you should have done something.

JULIA. I'd already been barred.

JAMES. This play sounds like a total nightmare.

JULIA. It's been bliss. Sheer creative bliss. (*Gus returns.*) What is it, Gus?

END

GUS. The cast of *Hamilton* is leaving. They got a better offer. They're going to the White House. (*He gathers their coats and leaves as James continues with Peter Austin's note.*)

JAMES. "As for me, my dearest Julia (and I love you like a mother) —"

JULIA. And I love him like a son.

JAMES. "If the reviews aren't good, I don't think I can face anyone, certainly not you. If anything happens to me, you are in no way to blame. Goodbye. Remember me a little bit. And good luck with the Caryl Churchill."

JULIA. A new play I've optioned.

JAMES. "P.S. I still wish you'd given me that turntable in the second act." (*He looks up.*) For this we're missing the party of the year?

JULIA. Where is he then?

JAMES. Darling, Peter is a genius at theatrics. You've heard of a late entrance? It's an old stunt. Believe me, I do it all the time. Shall we? (*Gus enters with a pile of colorful/exotic coats.*)

JULIA. Who do all those coats belong to?

GUS. *The Lion King.*

JULIA. I don't remember inviting *The Lion King.*

GUS. They're all saying you've got a big hit on your hands, Mrs. Budder, honey.

JULIA. From your lips to God's ears. The chat rooms have been brutal to us.

JAMES. Julia, you go into the chat rooms?

JULIA. Everyone's in the chat rooms. I'm the only one who admits it.