

it, she's swallowed it. *(Suddenly serious, the real purpose of this call)*
Listen, what were our ratings like? ... I told the network not to put us in that time slot. I can't compete with a reality show; I'm a human being. They can't cancel us. I'm having the swimming pool moved. Don't they know what that costs? ... I'll kill myself. Tell ABC I'll kill myself ... Please, Suzi, I don't need the stress. I'm here to celebrate the opening of my best friend's play. I'll be back late tomorrow. We'll strategize. Yes, Mother. Yes, yes, yes. Big kisses. Ciao. *(He hangs up. Gus enters, struggling with a fur coat of exaggerated length.)* Don't tell me, let me guess: Tommy Tune.

GUS. I'm sorry, sir?

JAMES. Gus, if you want to be in the theatre, you've got to know something about it. One, Tommy Tune is a very tall, legendary director of musical theatre who hasn't had a show in forty-five years but no matter. Two, you've got to stop calling everyone "sir." Unless we're British, we don't like it.

GUS. Yes, sir.

JAMES. I wanted to be in the theatre so no one would ever call me "sir." We like "darling" or "honey" or "angel" or "pussycat" or "cupcake" or "love" or "lamb" or "petal." Well, you catch my drift.

GUS. Yes, sir. I forgot your bourbon, li'l nipper.

JAMES. *(I think I've made a terrible mistake!)* That's all right, Gus, I'll go myself.

GUS. Mrs. Budder asked you to wait for her up here. She just got back from the hospital and wants to speak to you about something in confidence.

JAMES. But I'm missing the party. *(Virginia comes out of the bathroom.)*

VIRGINIA. Good boy.

GUS. You let someone go in there? *(Virginia closes the bathroom door.)*

VIRGINIA. Dogs love Valium. I took my Irish Wolfhound to New Zealand and he didn't wake up till we were three weeks into the shoot.

JAMES. I think we've heard the last of Torch.

CONT'D

VIRGINIA. You through with this? I need a land-line. *(She picks up a cordless telephone receiver.)* If I call from a cell phone, they can't trace where I'm calling from.

JAMES. Who are you trying to call?

VIRGINIA. My parole officer. *(Into phone.)* Hello! This is Virginia Noyes. I'm at my opening night party. I'm being a good girl ... I'm calling you from 212 ... *(She turns away as she continues the conversation.)*

GUS. Is that who I think it is? She's my favorite actress after Sissy Spacek.

JAMES. That's the first interesting thing you've said all evening.

GUS. She was amazing in that movie.

JAMES. She was good.

GUS. That scene with the frogs! She thanked them in her Oscar speech.

CONT'D VIRGINIA. (*Hanging up.*) I don't have to call in again for another couple of hours. For a while they had me checking in every 15 minutes. What did they think I was going to do? Kill somebody else? It was an accident. It wasn't like they were *both* my parents. (*She empties her purse and starts sorting things out.*) Let's see, what have we got? Weed, Xanax, Valium, Vicodin, uppers, downers, horse sedative (this stuff'll kill you), Ecstasy, Vitamin E, Revlon lip gloss, Tic Tacs, coke. Come to mama. (*James and Gus watch her prepare a line of coke.*) I've been walking the straight and narrow since rehearsals started. I promised myself a mini-bump tonight for good behavior. I told the judge: I don't have a drug problem. It's a choice I make. No one believes in free will anymore. (*James and Gus watch her do a line of coke.*) Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and throw in John the Baptist while you're at it, it was worth the wait. (*To* END *James.*) I'm sorry, you want a hit?

JAMES. No, thank you, I had some at home.

VIRGINIA. You, sweetheart?

GUS. I gotta stay on the ball tonight.

VIRGINIA. Take this before I want more. (*She hands James the cocaine.*)

GUS. I love your work, Miss Noyes.

VIRGINIA. Thanks. I'm sure I'll love yours.

JAMES. Don't get him started.

GUS. The scene with the frogs.

VIRGINIA. Those goddamn frogs. That's all anybody talks about! Bring me a vodka stinger and I'll tell you all about those frogs.

GUS. Coming right up, sweetheart. (*Gus goes.*)

VIRGINIA. He's cute — too familiar but cute.

JAMES. He didn't have a clue who I was.

VIRGINIA. Who are you?

JAMES. I'm James Wicker.

VIRGINIA. James Wicker.

JAMES. We did a film together.