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ROZ. What?

PAUL. Oh! ...Right. I'll be right there. ...Yes, of course we'll pay for the damage!

(PAUL hangs up.)

ROZ. What happened?

PAUL. That was the manager of the hotel. Somebody walked into the dining room, fell onto a buffet table and started reading Hamlet.

ROZ. It's him.

PAUL. Let's go. We can get there faster if we go through the house.

(PAUL and ROZ exit hurriedly through the door to the backstage area. The stage is empty. Then the street door flies open and GEORGE staggers in, disheveled, holding a bottle of whiskey. He's so drunk he can hardly stand up.)

GEORGE. (Declaring.) "They seek him here,
They seek him there,
Those Frenchies seek him
Everywhere.
Is he in heaven?
Or is he in hell?
Ronald Colman
Tripped and fell! (Then:)

I could have had that part. It was mine for the taking. Now they'll give it to some no-talent has-been like... John Gielgud. ...I could play it better than both of them with my legs tied behind my back. Legs, legs...? Legs! Of course! I almost forgot! I should write Ronald Colman a get-well card! Must do it. (He finds a pen and a piece of paper and starts writing.) Dear Ronnie. How are the old pins? Heh? (He laughs; then:) "What? Is Brutus sick? And will he steal out of his wholesome bed to dare the vile contagion of the night?" Ah, Shakespeare! Dear Ronnie. Did you ever play Hamlet, huh? Or Henry Five? Or Falstaff?! "If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the

wicked. If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host I know is damned." That is writing, Ronnie. That is glory on the tongue, gold on the canvas. It is not the movies, it is not television, it is the theatre! The theatre! *(His histrionics have brought him to the call board where he sees the performance schedule.)* "Schedule of Performances. ...Matinee—Private Lives." Wrong! *(He crosses it out and writes in:)* "Cyrano." ...Puh. She got it wrong again. Charlotte. Dear, sweet Charlotte. She has the brain of a chicken. And yet, I'll miss her. The pitter patter of her size twelves. The dainty whine of her voice, nagging at me like an open cold sore. O, to return to the midnight hour when you gave birth to our only child. I can still see you, flopping around on the table like a tuna on a hook. I can still hear your dulcet voice, cutting through the night like an air raid siren. *(Faintly, as if in the distance:)* "Please," she cried, "please, give me the Demerol!" I can't even tell you now that I love you. Too late. She's gone. Gone with the wind. *(Bitter.)* I would have been excellent in that film. Ah, well. Good-bye, Charlotte. Take care of yourself. And it shall be written on his tombstone: *(Almost crying.)* "One mistake. He made one lousy, innocent mistake, and they kicked the shit out of him."

(GEORGE sinks behind an ironing board at the back of the set. The ironing board has costumes over it and therefore he is hidden from view. After a beat, CHARLOTTE stalks in from the street and slams the door. She does not see GEORGE.)

~~CHARLOTTE. *(To herself; she wants to strangle him:)* George... George... You never had good timing, George, but this is incredible. Well. It's over now. Gone. Gone. Gone with the wind. *(Bitter.)* God, I would have been great in that film!~~

~~*(ROZ and PAUL hurry out of the theater.)*~~

~~ROZ. No luck at the bank.~~

~~CHARLOTTE. It was a mistake. It didn't even look like him!~~