

PAUL. (*Into the phone.*) Two tickets to *Private Lives*.

ROZ. With dinner afterwards.

PAUL. (*Into the phone.*) With dinner afterwards... (*Beat; to the others.*) He wants free parking.

ROZ. (*Grabbing the phone; a killer.*) Listen to me, you pinhead! You want a reward?! Well you keep him there for the next ten minutes I *won't* tear your heart out!! ...*Fine!*

(*ROZ slams down the phone.*)

CHARLOTTE. (*Shaking ROZ's hand*) Atta girl.

PAUL. I'll go.

CHARLOTTE. No, I know where Delaney is. I'll be right back.

(*CHARLOTTE exits to the street.*)

ROZ. ...Do you see what I mean?! About the theater?! I'm back here for three hours and I'm acting like a lunatic. I'll be in analysis till I'm a hundred.

PAUL. It won't help.

ROZ. Oh shut up.

(*Pause.*)

PAUL. So why did you come back?

ROZ. I came back—! ...to see my parents. Is that a crime? And I didn't know you were here or I wouldn't have come.

PAUL. Well I'm sorry. Next time I'll put up a sign on the Thruway. "Paul in Buffalo. Turn Back. Save Yourself."

ROZ. Okay. Just forget about it.

PAUL. Fine. That's fine with me.

ROZ. Well fine!

PAUL. ...Let's run your lines and get it over with.

(*PAUL tosses ROZ a script.*)

ROZ. Don't bother. I've done *Private Lives* a hundred times. I know it backwards. And I don't see why I have to play Sibyl.

PAUL. Because Eileen took the day off. We don't know where she is. Why don't you blame me for that too?

ROZ. I'm not blaming you.

PAUL. I suppose *I* got her pregnant.

ROZ. I wouldn't be at all surprised.

PAUL. Fine.

ROZ. Well fine!

PAUL. (*Opening the script.*) Two adjoining balconies. Posh hotel. South of France.

ROZ. I know the play!

PAUL. The lights come up.

ROZ. For the record, I hate this. I swore I'd never set foot on a stage again. I'm breaking a vow here.

PAUL. The lights come up.

(*ROZ glances at the script, then delivers her lines totally deadpan, straight out front, with an English accent:*)

ROZ. "Elli Elli dear do come out it's so lovely."

PAUL. "Just a minute." Elyot comes out. Your father plays Elyot.

ROZ. No kidding. He always plays Elyot. He's been playing Elyot since I was five years old.

PAUL. He looks at the view. "Not so bad."

ROZ. (*Deadpan.*) "It's heavenly look at the lights of that yacht reflected in the water oh dear I'm so happy."

PAUL. "Are you?"

ROZ. "Aren't you?"

PAUL. "Of course I am. Tremendously happy."

ROZ. "Just to think here we are you and I married."

PAUL. "Yes, things have come to a pretty pass."

(*PAUL laughs as Elyot.*)

ROZ. "Don't laugh at me, you mustn't be blasé about honeymoons just because this is your second."

PAUL. "That's silly."

ROZ. "Have I annoyed you by saying that?"

PAUL. "Just a little."

ROZ. "Oh darling I'm so sorry kiss me."

*(Beat. PAUL looks at the script—a sort of double-take—to make sure the kiss is really in there. It is. He kisses her—a peck, to get it over with.)*

PAUL. "There."

ROZ. "Ummm, not so very enthusiastic. Again."

*(Beat PAUL kisses her again.)*

PAUL. "That better?"

ROZ. "Three times, please, I'm superstitious."

*(Pause. PAUL leans into ROZ and they kiss with conviction. Then with passion. They really get involved. In fact, they're both getting hotter by the second. He starts kissing her neck and her ears. She's panting for breath.)*

*(Hardly able to talk.)* This isn't in the script...

PAUL. I know. I'm ad-libbing.

*(PAUL and ROZ go at it again. The following lines come in gasps, between kisses.)*

ROZ. OH, Paul... We have to rehearse... It's so important... to Mother and Dad...

PAUL. You're right. ...I agree. ...Take your clothes off.

*(PAUL starts to undress ROZ.)*

ROZ. Wait! Paul, there's something important I have to tell you.

PAUL. Tell me later, when you're naked.

ROZ. Okay.

*(PAUL and ROZ drop their scripts and hit the floor—when the phone rings.)*

Oh, hell.

*(It rings again. PAUL answers it.)*

PAUL. Hello? ...Yes it is. ...Oh my God!

ROZ. What?

PAUL. Shhh! ...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, climbed onto a buffet table and started reciting *King Lear*.

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. (Declaiming.) "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