

(He thinks for a frantic moment...Got it! He drags her to the closet door.)

DUNLAP. Suddenly, the Marines don't seem so bad.

(He opens the closet door and stands her up in it, next to the flowers. He closes the door.)

(THE INSTANT the closet door closes, the hall door opens. DUNLAP jumps.)

(MRS. OSGOOD enters the suite. She has changed outfits. She is now dressed for the benefit.)

MRS. OSGOOD. Oh Mr. Dunlap, here you are. They said you might be up here.

DUNLAP. Did they?

MRS. OSGOOD. Did you know there's a bellhop lying on the floor outside of this suite?

DUNLAP. As a matter of fact, I did.

MRS. OSGOOD. (Beat.) I see.

DUNLAP. Mrs. Osgood, how may I help you?

MRS. OSGOOD. Oh. Well, everybody's looking for you downstairs. Mr. Hedges at the front desk seemed a little—how should I put this—agitated. The night's festivities have already begun. Just between you and me, I think it's going very well.

DUNLAP. Is it?

MRS. OSGOOD. Yes. My boys from the Navy have added a special flair to the evening, I think.

DUNLAP. So I've been told.

MRS. OSGOOD. I've come to see how Miss McFadden is doing.

DUNLAP. Quite well, I must say. Certainly much better than myself.

MRS. OSGOOD. We sang the most precious little song earlier.

DUNLAP. You what?

MRS. OSGOOD. I was hoping we might sing another. Is there any chance of my saying a quick hello?

DUNLAP. To Miss McFadden?

MRS. OSGOOD. Yes.

DUNLAP. None whatsoever.

MRS. OSGOOD. Really?

DUNLAP. Really.

MRS. OSGOOD. Alright then. I guess I'll see her downstairs. Has Athena Sinclair arrived yet?

DUNLAP. Oh yes.

MRS. OSGOOD. You've seen her?

DUNLAP. Yes, and she has seen me.

*(Desperately casual, he moves her to the hall door.)*

DUNLAP. Now then Mrs. Osgood, I'm sure you're needed downstairs, and I have countless things that need tending to.

MRS. OSGOOD. In this room?

DUNLAP. You have no idea.

*(Just as they arrive at the hall door, it opens and PIPPET enters the room.)*

DUNLAP. Mr. Pippet, oh good, you're back.

PIPPET. There's a bellhop lying on the floor in front of this suite.

DUNLAP. So I've heard. May I introduce Mrs. Everett P. Osgood. Mrs. Osgood is sponsoring this evening's benefit through her organization the PBL—

PIPPET. FU, we've met. Hello Mrs. Osgood.

MRS. OSGOOD. Hello Mr. Pippet.

*(DUNLAP moves MRS. OSGOOD to the hall door. He speaks as he does so.)*

DUNLAP. Mrs. Osgood was just on her way out, weren't you dear lady? Now then, if you need anything else, please let me know.

*(He scoots her into the hall and closes the doors behind her. He turns to face PIPPET.)*

DUNLAP. Mr. Pippet, we have a problem.

PIPPET. Mr. Dunlap, I have enough problems of my own. I don't have time for yours.

DUNLAP. Well, you might want to make time.

PIPPET. Make time for you? I think not. Do you have any idea what it's like to get that damned little dog to swallow an aspirin? Plus I still have to get Miss McFadden fed, get her dressed, make sure she—*(Beat.)* —*Why are there still no white roses in this suite?*

DUNLAP. Ah. Good. You noticed.

PIPPET. If you're trying to be funny Mr. Dunlap, let me assure you, I have no sense of humor.

DUNLAP. Well, now would be a good time for you to get one.

PIPPET. What are all these photographs?

*(He moves to one of the photographs to get a better look.)*

*(Beat.)*

PIPPET. This is Athena Sinclair.

DUNLAP. Yes it is.

PIPPET. *(Looking at another photograph.)* So is this.

DUNLAP. *(Pointing at another.)* And this one here.

PIPPET. *(With growing concern.)* Why are there pictures of Athena Sinclair everywhere I look?

DUNLAP. Ah yes. Well, that would be the problem I mentioned.

PIPPET. You still haven't answered my question.

DUNLAP. I don't remember what it was.

PIPPET. *Why are there pictures of Athena Sinclair all over this room?*

DUNLAP. Oh. Because she's here.

*(Beat.)*

PIPPET. Here?

DUNLAP. Yes.

PIPPET. Where here?

DUNLAP. *Here* here.

PIPPET. Here in the hotel?

DUNLAP. Here in this suite.

PIPPET. Here in *this* suite?

DUNLAP. That would be correct.

PIPPET. *She's in this suite.*

DUNLAP. As we speak.

PIPPET. And where's Miss McFadden.

DUNLAP. She's here too.

PIPPET. *(Beat.)* I don't understand.

DUNLAP. Let me make this simple for you.

(DUNLAP moves to the Claudia's bedroom door.)

DUNLAP. Claudia McFadden is behind this door.

(DUNLAP moves to the Athena's bedroom door.)

DUNLAP. Athena Sinclair is behind this door.

PIPPET. (With rising horror, points to the closet:) And what's behind door number three, the press?

DUNLAP. (Beat.) Actually yes.

(Without a word PIPPET collapses in a dead faint.)

DUNLAP. No, no, no, there's no time for that.

(DUNLAP moves to PIPPET, revives him and helps him back onto his feet.)

PIPPET. I think I'm going to jump off the balcony. That's what I think I'm going to do.

(He moves to the balcony, opening the French doors.)

DUNLAP. Mr. Pippet, you're not going to jump off the balcony.

PIPPET. I'm not?

DUNLAP. No. This is what you're going to do...

(DUNLAP continues to talk as he moves around the room placing all the photographs of ATHENA face down.)

DUNLAP. You're going to go in there and make sure she doesn't come out. Under any circumstance.

PIPPET. *Are you insane?* If Claudia McFadden wants to leave a room, you don't try to stop her. You don't! You just get out of the way and hope you don't get crushed in the process.

(Suddenly, the door opens and CLAUDIA sweeps out with MR. BOODLES.)

CLAUDIA. PIPPET!

(PIPPET screams and jumps into DUNLAP's arms.)

CLAUDIA. What the hell is wrong with you?

PIPPET. I, I, I, I—

CLAUDIA. *You what?*

PIPPET. I saw a mouse.

(Indignant, DUNLAP drops him to the floor.)

DUNLAP. There are no mice in the Palm Beach Royale.