

be down there. Face it darling, if I never see that lounge-singing sow again, it'll be too soon.

*(As if on cue, she turns around to see CLAUDIA, standing in the doorway of her bedroom.)*

*(Everything stops.)*

*(Everyone in the room stops breathing.)*

*(Then finally...)*

ATHENA. DARLING!

CLAUDIA. SWEETIE!

ATHENA. ANGEL!

CLAUDIA. What a surprise!

ATHENA. Isn't it though!

CLAUDIA. Just too!

ATHENA. How so!

CLAUDIA. It's been a while.

ATHENA. Indeed it has.

CLAUDIA. Much too long.

ATHENA. Indeed.

CLAUDIA. When was the last time?

ATHENA. San Fran, I believe.

CLAUDIA. No! Was it?

ATHENA. I still have the bruises.

CLAUDIA. Do you? How sweet.

ATHENA. Indeed.

CLAUDIA. Time flies.

ATHENA. So quickly.

CLAUDIA. Indeed.

ATHENA. Indeed.

*(Both sigh.)*

*(The smiles never leave their faces.)*

CLAUDIA. So.

ATHENA. So.

CLAUDIA. What *on earth* are you doing here?

ATHENA. Why I'm performing tonight darling.

CLAUDIA. I'm sure you are.

ATHENA. At the benefit.

CLAUDIA. Really?

ATHENA. Haven't you read your program?

CLAUDIA. I never read *below* my name.

ATHENA. How "*you.*" (*Still sweet.*) You see, that's just *one* of the many things I *don't* miss about sharing a stage with you.

CLAUDIA. What's that? My power? My presence?

ATHENA. Your breath.

CLAUDIA. So what are you "performing"? Some exotic dance from the 1890s?

ATHENA. No darling. Like you, I'm singing.

CLAUDIA. How quaint. I had no idea you could sing.

ATHENA. You've heard me.

CLAUDIA. Yes, I have.

ATHENA. Well, not all of us have your lungs, dear. Your epic, canyon-size lungs.

CLAUDIA. Are you insinuating something sweetie. I can never tell, you're too opaque.

ATHENA. Why, of course not darling. If I was going to call you a *Golem*, I'd say it to your face.

CLAUDIA. Are you calling me—?

ATHENA. YES.

*(All pretense of civility is now gone.)*

CLAUDIA. I should have snapped you in half in San Francisco, when I had the chance.

ATHENA. I should have had you arrested for assault.

CLAUDIA. I should have had you arrested FOR SINGING.

*(Suddenly, the hall door opens and DORA DEL RIO bursts into the room. She is still wet from being thrown into the pool.)*

DORA. Aha!

DUNLAP. Oh dear God.