

Scene 6

Evan's apartment.

In the West Fifties, a four story walk-up tenement. A mess. Wyler walks in. The closet is open. Hanging inside, his suit. On the inside of the door, a mirror. Wyler taps on the answering machine. As the messages play back, an electronic beep. He takes the jacket out and tries it on.

KADEN. *(Voice on the machine.)* All right Wyler Evan Wyler. We'll be seeing you in one hour. Can't believe we're going through with this. Just about everyone will be there — *(Wyler looks in the mirror. He smiles. Another electronic beep.)*

ILLYA. *(Voice on the machine.)* Mr. Wyler, I find your sense of revenge openly delicious. Of course we'll be there. I'm so excited I could — what am I saying — I should be heading uptown. It's in forty minutes. *(Wyler looks at himself in profile.)*

GINNY. *(Voice on the machine.)* Hello, Mr. Wyler. This is Ginny. Ginny Cameron and — oh God — I thinking I just messed things up. *(Wyler is suddenly attentive. He stands straight in front of the mirror.)* See, uhm, Alexa called right? And just — what you said made me so mad and — Well she just wanted to confirm things and I guess she could sense something in my voice, 'cause — well she pushed me and — *(Wyler is panicking. He looks at the machine. With that the closet door slowly closes. Alexa is standing behind it. The reflection of Wyler becomes the actual Alexa.)* OK, I kind of blurted out what you were planning and — I hope this doesn't ruin things for you. *(The machine ends.)*

ALEXA. One of the all time great entrances and for the life of me, I don't have a line to top it.

WYLER. Alexa, how did you —

ALEXA. Please, twenty dollars and a super and I could get into heaven. But no. Nothing. No sentence I could hope to assemble.... No configuration of words could possibly surpass the fact that I am here and you are there!

WYLER. You bitch, give me my money back.

ALEXA. Long gone. Don't have it to give. But then you knew that. So, why then have you pursued me?

WYLER. Revenge.

ALEXA. Please. No really, why? Because you're in love with me?

WYLER. Maybe I was.

ALEXA. You're a poofta, guess again.

WYLER. I know who you are and how you work and —

ALEXA. And now that you do have me again what will you do?

WYLER. I — I — I don't know.

ALEXA. *(She casually sits and lights a cigarette.)* As I had suspected. Planned confrontations are always anti-climactic. I'll smoke and talk to you. You'll learn things, it will be lovely. I shall hazard a guess. The reason you have pursued me so doggedly is because you are the first to know —

WYLER. Know?

ALEXA. My lamb. My dearest lamb. My only lamb. You know. You know that I am not a mirage, I am an oasis. You are the only, the first. To chase. Most feel the sting and snap their hand from the bee. You — you actually are stung and ... appear to be homesick for the hypnotic hum of the hive.

WYLER. You've got it wrong.

ALEXA. I have it unspeakably right. The reason no one has ever chased me, is because they've always had their blessed little artistic endeavors to keep them busy. Writing, dancing, painting, even I would speculate, the fiddle. No one would think of putting this much energy and effort into finding me let alone exacting recompense. This is the defining act of someone who — gets it.

WYLER. I don't get any of —

ALEXA. Oh no. You get it. You get it good. You know that this. The hum, the buzz, the hype, the flash, the fame. This is the only thing that matters. And you miss it. Who wouldn't? There is something unmistakably glorious about having a velvet cord pulled back. And you know it. And that's why I come with an offer.

WYLER. I don't want your fucking —

ALEXA. I know, an offer it seems too generous.

WYLER. What? Money to go away?

ALEXA. Better.

WYLER. Better?

ALEXA. Join me.

WYLER. You're fucked up.

ALEXA. Beloved Lamb, you have the instincts, why deny them? You know that if you live your life as a writer you will be popular for a decidedly finite time. Fast-paced American culture won't stand for it. If you write novels, sixteen years. Plays, six years. Screenplays ... six months. And then suddenly you're ... out of favor. Stay with me and always be popular. Fame without achievement, it is the safest bet I know.

WYLER. I'm a writer.

ALEXA. Funny, you're not writing now. And you'll probably never write again. Because you know, as I knew, that there are only two interesting times to be a writer. The moment you start a project, and the moment you end it. All the rest is just drudgery. Me, here, this way, I start a project every week. And it ends that same week. What could be more thrilling?

WYLER. Right. And what if I have the desire to express myself artistically?

ALEXA. Suppress it. It is every time you create that you run the risk of proving or chiseling at your reputation. ~~Come with me, live with me, and always live this life. Never ever be hungry, or thirsty, or doubt yourself. Or wait in line. Or talk to bores. Or —~~

WYLER. Why?

ALEXA. Because, I need you. When we were together, we were a team. A machine, if you will. The two of us, we could hit higher grounds. Hollywood but beckons. I mean morality is REALLY on a bell curve there. We could make our fortune. Maybe stop living so hand to mouth. Or start living larger hand to larger mouth. Come. Come with me. We're a perfect match. And.

WYLER. And?

ALEXA. And I love you. I want you. I have from the moment I saw your shirtless picture in that magazine. And I saw a very Welsh name attached to a very Semitic face. I wanted you, and I knew that you — you would want me also. *(They kiss.)*

WYLER. Alexa — *(They kiss again.)*

ALEXA. My Lamb. *(They kiss a third time, more passionately.)*

WYLER. I've missed you — *(He kisses her neck, she unbuttons his shirt.)*

ALEXA. And I — my love, I have missed you so. Not since — since — I haven't felt this horribly alone since my husband Michael died, the — *(Wyler freezes. Then pulls away.)* He — *(Wyler steps back and looks away.)* Christ, you are thorough.

WYLER. Mike is still alive, you didn't kill him.

ALEXA. Alive, you call that living? I haven't heard of him in years, and I read everything.

WYLER. I think you should just ... leave. Now.

ALEXA. A minor glitch. A single *faux pas*. Don't let that stand in the way of our —

WYLER. Get out. Now.

ALEXA. Back to revenge? Well you can't have it. You have no power. You're a commodity, bought and sold. You're a —

WYLER. Get!

ALEXA. Suit!

WYLER. Out!

ALEXA. A suit. Bought this year and then out of fashion.

WYLER. Leave me!

ALEXA. Fine. I'll leave. Simpleton. But in eleven days. In a week. After staring at blank page after blank page, you'll be — what? Wishing. Hoping. Desperately beseeching to be with me. *(She goes to walk out. We hear offstage.)*

KADEN. Such a party!

WYLER. Never!

ALEXA. You're not a writer.

ILLYA. The event of a lifetime!

ALEXA. You're not particularly good at listening to people and figuring out what's going in their minds.

KADEN. In your whole life.

ALEXA. Or summing up with a grand sweeping statement.

KADEN. Could you again see such a group.

ALEXA. And what good is a semicolon? *(We see Ilya and Kaden.)*

ILLYA. Everyone was there!

ALEXA. Please. Call me. You'll know where to find me. How to reach me. The beginning of every month. In the magazines.