

ACT TWO

"Art"

Scene 1

A glamorous dinery, to be sure.

Another trendy restaurant. Alexa is talking with Denise.

ALEXA. Art. Art. Art art art. *Je suis* knocked out by art. The homes of Hollywood are all about art, I cannot wait to show you. All modern and post modern works have found themselves in Los Angeles County. San Andreas goes? The last six pages of Janson's, gone. Ross Bleckner is in every living room in Bel Air. And some of his paintings. Of course you ask any of these movie people why they have this art in their life and never ever in their work and oh the blank stares. In their minds it is all a sort of aesthetic penance. You shall see when we're there!

Scene 2

Morris Kaden's office/various.

Morris Kaden is going over some papers with his Secretary. Wyler stumbles in. The Secretary sees him first.

SECRETARY. Oh Christ, I'm calling security. *(She runs to a phone.)*

WYLER. What the fuck is going on?

KADEN. Who is this putz? Do I know this putz? Putz, who are you?

SECRETARY. *(At the phone now.)* We do not know this putz. I'm calling security.

WYLER. Something fucked up is going on with one of your producers.

SECRETARY. This putz is unknown to us.

KADEN. Which producer?

WYLER. Alexa Vere de Vere.

SECRETARY. She doesn't work here.

KADEN. She doesn't work here.

SECRETARY. We've never even heard of her.

KADEN. I've heard of her.

SECRETARY. You have?

KADEN. You — putz — what's his name?

SECRETARY. I don't know.

WYLER. Wyler. Evan Wyler.

KADEN. Wyler Evan Wyler, sit down. *(To his Secretary.)* Don't call security. Get this putz some damp paper towels and some Band-Aids. Hold all calls.

SECRETARY. *(As she exits.)* I don't know this putz, I don't know this producer and I know everyone.

KADEN. *(Offers Wyler a glass of water.)* Here putz. Water. Drink. So. Alexa Vere de Vere, huh? God. Haven't heard that name for a while. How much did she take you for?

WYLER. Take? What do you — I don't get it.

KADEN. She took you. Which word eludes you? She, the subject. Took, the verb, vernacular for took advantage of. You. The direct object. *(The secretary reenters. Hands the paper towels and bandages to Wyler.)*

WYLER. Oh no. Oh God.

KADEN. And from the looks this is very direct. Wyler Evan Wyler, God. Why don't you hand your credit card to my secretary so that she can see how much has been run up? *(Wyler does so.)*

WYLER. I think there's been a mistake. *(As the Secretary exits, he stands up.)*

KADEN. *(To his Secretary.)* Come in as soon as you know the

amount. *(She is gone, he turns to Wylar.)* If you don't sit down now, I'm either going to laugh at you or cry for you. *(Wylar sits.)* OK. Alexa Vere de Vere. Let's start at the beginning. What magazine were you in?

WYLER. Magazine, how did you know. — why?

KADEN. And was the unbearable adjective "Hot" used at any time and not in reference to temperature?

WYLER. Hot writer.

KADEN. How literary. That is how you were you found. Alexa, she — *(Lights come up on a stack of trendy magazines. Alexa is rifling through a magazine.)* pours through those magazines as if, well, as if they really mean anything, until she finds someone who is in some editor's estimation — *(Alexa rips out the page with Wylar's picture in it.)* Hot. *(The lights go out on Alexa.)* She contacts them with some harebrained scheme about working together. Some album, or television show, or Broadway musical or whatever that particular artist would consider doing to get some quick vast cash. Take the money and run type of scenario. Some — *(He stops to think of a word. The lights come up on Alexa. She is at the Hotel Paramount. We are back at their first meeting.)*

ALEXA. ... this most mouthwatering —

KADEN and ALEXA. Movie idea —

ALEXA. I have up my Gucci sleeve.

KADEN. Whatever. Just enough to blow some sunshine up your ass. And the names get dropped.

ALEXA. David Bowie, Iman, Morris Kaden, the Duke of Chichester etc. etc. etc.

KADEN. And the places.

ALEXA. London, India, Hollywood, South of France, an investor in Milan, Oz.

KADEN. And the disregard for money and prices and — basically the world everybody wants to live in. *(The Secretary re-enters.)* Oh and the support team.

ALEXA. My lawyer, my international tax attorney, My Shemp-loving accountant. And agents, though I don't believe in agents, do you?

SECRETARY. Mr. Kaden.

KADEN. Yes?

SECRETARY. Just shy of fifteen grand.

WYLER. Oh my God.

KADEN. You got off easily.

SECRETARY. *(Handing the card back to Wylar.)* They said I should destroy the card in front of you with scissors. You look like you've already been through enough today. *(She exits.)*

KADEN. That's how she lives. Almost famous person to almost famous person. She knows you're champing at the bit to lose the almost and just be famous. See, first you're blinded by the appearance and the jewelry, then it's the cash. The cold green cash. The bait.

ALEXA. I read your book and now here I am at the Hotel Paramount over *petite déjeuner* and great lashings of butter and I'm offering you one thousand dollars a week to write the story of my life and —

WYLER. *(In a trance in Kaden's office.)* Really?

ALEXA. Oh God. Haven't I told you? I have absolutely no mind for money whatsoever.

KADEN. And she puts a thousand dollars in cash into your hand. With — wait, what does she say —

KADEN and ALEXA. I believe in cash, I think in this flighty world, it's the only thing left with any impact. *(Alexa holds up the cash.)*

~~KADEN. A nice appearance. A little glamour, cash in your hand. Let the games begin. And they do. With the first bill, she sets a precedent.~~

~~ALEXA. Now darling, what shall I do? My accountant wants a record of all these business lunches, but won't let me have credit cards because I just see homeless people and I want to buy them socks.~~

~~KADEN. And she's so helpless.~~

~~ALEXA. I'll need a receipt of some kind.~~

~~KADEN. And you're helpful.~~

~~WYLER. I could put this on my credit card and you can give me cash.~~

~~KADEN. So helpful.~~

~~WYLER. If that could help. *(A Waiter breezes in and takes Wylar's credit card.)*~~