

Frank (Julia)
James

PETER. You asked me.

VIRGINIA. Please, I insist.

PETER. Maybe I should.

VIRGINIA. Playwrights!

PETER. Actors!

JULIA. The theatre!

PETER. Is word perfect asking so much, Lord?

JAMES. Is a little nourishment?

VIRGINIA. I'm sorry Peter, you're right. It's your play. I owe you that much. *(Peter and Virginia hug.)* Tell me it doesn't get any better than this!

PETER. I hope not! I couldn't stand it.

VIRGINIA. Hey, quit shaking!

PETER. An evening like this is every playwright's rite of passage. Look to your laurels, Mr. Miller, here comes the next generation.

JULIA. Bravo! Bravo! *(Peter and Virginia exit the bedroom.)*

JAMES. Who do you have to fuck to get something to eat around here?

JULIA. Me, darling! *(Julia and James make ready to leave the bedroom as Frank comes into the room.)*

FRANK. I should have played poker in Tribeca with Robert Wilson and Piña Bausch. If one more person tells me I'm a genius I am going to freak out.

JULIA. But you *are* a genius, darling.

FRANK. I'm not a genius.

JULIA. I'm sorry but you are. That's why we hired you.

FRANK. You only hired me because I always get good reviews.

JAMES. That's a pretty good reason.

JULIA. And you're from Chicago, darling. Let's not forget that.

FRANK. I was born in New Jersey.

JULIA. We don't talk about that. You came to us from Chicago.

FRANK. I don't know what I'm doing.

JULIA. You don't?

FRANK. You wait and see: I'll win a Tony for this.

JULIA. Well I certainly hope so.
JAMES. Can we go down now, Julia?
FRANK. I am in despair, people.
JULIA. What kind of despair, Frank?
JAMES. (*A whimper.*) Oh my God!
FRANK. Deep despair. Life despair. Everything despair.
JULIA. This should be the biggest night of your life. A debut on Broadway at your age. How old are you?
JAMES. Julia, please.
FRANK. The Emperor isn't wearing any clothes!
JAMES. (*Anticipating/mimicking Julia.*) What emperor, darling?
JULIA. What emperor, darling?
FRANK. This emperor. I'm a fake. My work's a fake. I can't go on like this — the critics' darling — knowing that it's all a fake.
JULIA. Try to hold on just one more time.
FRANK. I've had fourteen hits in a row Off-Broadway and thirty-seven Obies. I want a flop. I need a flop. Somebody, tell me, please: when is it my turn? I'm no good. You've got to believe me. I'm no good.
JAMES. We believe you. Julia, can we go down — ?
JULIA. James —
FRANK. Hold me.
JULIA. We can't leave him like this.
FRANK. Do you know the only flops I've ever had? At drama school. Nobody liked my production of anything. My Art Deco *Three Sisters*. My spoken *Aida*. My gay *Godot*. But what got me expelled was my *Titus Andronicus*. I did the whole thing in mime. No dialogue. No poetry. No Shakespeare.
JULIA. What did it have?
FRANK. Blood bags. Every time somebody walked on stage: splat! They got hit with a big blood bag. God it was gross.
JULIA. It sounds interesting.
FRANK. It was terrible. But at least everyone said it was terrible. I'm pulling the same stunts in New York and everybody says it's brilliant.
JULIA. It is brilliant.
FRANK. I hate it! God I miss Yale.

end