

CALL BACK #2  
Carmen, Georgia, Aaron, Oscar  
Johnny

SCENE 3

(THE EMPTY STAGE OF THE COLONIAL THEATER. Just  
AFTER MIDNIGHT that same night. AARON FOX, GEORGIA  
HENDRICKS, and CARMEN BERNSTEIN, each hidden behind  
an opened newspaper. They will be joined by OSCAR  
SHAPIRO.)

#2E Vamps

GEORGIA

Oh my god.

AARON

Holy Mother in heaven.

CARMEN

Holy crap.

OSCAR

What? The reviews aren't good? What don't they like?

GEORGIA

That we put on a show.

AARON

The Boston Globe says: "If you loved *Oklahoma*, stay there as long as *Robbin' Hood* is running in Boston."

CARMEN

How about: "Calls to mind Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* ... because its star is wooden, oughtta be hung by piano wire, and swallowed by the first whale that enters Boston Harbor."

OSCAR

Who said that?

CARMEN

The Christian Science Monitor.

OSCAR

You're the producer, Carmen. I've sunk last year's profits from my 1958 lingerie line into this show. There's got to be something in the papers we can use.

CARMEN

Let me consult with the writing team. Georgia, Aaron: does "debacle" have two meanings?

GEORGIA & AARON

No.

SLIP to Page 9

*Maybe*

CARMEN

~~No, no~~; you two are just oversensitive because you wrote the show. This is only Round One. The first musical my husband and I produced was savaged out of town. But we rolled up our sleeves, did a major rewrite, and brought it to Broadway. And that musical, my friends, was "Kiss ... Me ... I'm Irish."

*(beat)*

Closed before the audience opened their playbills, but the point is: this is a Sidney and Carmen Bernstein production. *We* decide if it goes to New York ... not Daryl Grady of the Boston Globe.

OSCAR

So we're still shooting for Broadway?

CARMEN

Aaron and Georgia, you keep writing tunes that bounce, Oscar, you keep writing checks that don't.

AARON

Very nice, but until our leading lady gets out of the hospital, who knows what happens next?

GEORGIA

They just have her under observation, I'm sure she'll be out by the morning --

BELLING

*(bellowing from a distance)*

*Is there no limit?!*

GEORGIA

Sounds like our director.

BELLING

*Is there no limit?!*

GEORGIA

He got such horrendous reviews.

*(CHRISTOPHER BELLING Enters)*

BELLING

Is there no limit, I ask you, to my unbridled brilliance?

OSCAR

Chris, where the hell were you tonight? I've put a lot of money into this show. As our director, you owed all of us --

BELLING

Oh, be still your foolish mouth/ Nothing to be gleaned by watching one's show with the fraudulent audience of an opening night. Went for a walk. Passed the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. Went in. Wildly spiritual -- I tell you those Catholics really know how to put on a show. And right there in the middle of the Eucharist ... I had an Epiphany. At this stage in the life of

**BELLING (CONT'D)**

any musical, one should refrain from inventing anything brilliant, but simply ~~eliminate~~ all that's god-awful. What, I ask without fear of contradiction, was the most god-awful thing in our show?

**AARON, GEORGIA, CARMEN**

Jessica.

**BELLING**

*(with them)*

Jessica, of course. Carmen, I came back here to convince you to get rid of our star ~~only~~ to have ~~the cast inform me she's in the hospital. I see the hand of the Lord in this!~~

*(JOHNNY HARMON has Entered.)*

**JOHNNY**

Mrs. Bernstein? There's a phone call for you in your office.

**CARMEN**

Thanks Johnny. That's probably my husband calling.

**GEORGIA**

And where *was* Sidney tonight, Carmen?

**CARMEN**

Sidney's in New York nailing a theater for us and, knowing my husband, also nailing a soprano who doesn't dance but knows how to move.

**\*CARMEN**

Sidney's in New York booking a theater for us and, knowing my husband, also booking a soprano who doesn't dance but knows how to move.

*(SHE EXITS.)*

**AARON**

At least she can joke about it.

**GEORGIA**

It's easy to joke about marriage when men like Sidney and you don't take it seriously.

**AARON**

There's no comparison. I never did more than flirt with any woman in any cast once you and I got married.

**GEORGIA**

Barbara O'Brien.

**AARON**

She was an usher. And that was only after you moved out.

GEORGIA

Oh so you finally looked up from your music and noticed I was gone?

OSCAR

Johnny, you're the stage manager, how's the cast taking the reviews?

JOHNNY

They decided to dress to the nines and throw a combination opening and closing night party.

BELLING

~~Defeatis~~ the lot of you. ~~You've yet to hear my plan of action but hear it ye shall.~~ Johnny: come help me watch you move the piano.

(*BELLING and JOHNNY exit...*)

*Chris*

OSCAR

~~What plan?~~ You think ~~he~~ wants us to go to Broadway using an understudy?

GEORGIA

Well at least we'd still have Bobby in the title role.

AARON

And that's what matters, right? I mean, the whole reason you teamed up with me again was so you could rekindle a romance with our leading man -

GEORGIA

Aaron, when I signed up, I had no idea Bobby was in this show.

AARON

Really? Then why at our very first rehearsal did you walk right up to him and say,

GEORGIA

Hi Bobby.

*Chris*

(*THEY see that BOBBY is there.*)

BOBBY

Hi, sweetie. Well, looks like we're all gonna be heading back to New York a little sooner than we thought ... but if you and I are going back together, this is one flop that's a big hit with me.

(*BELLING re-enters, JOHNNY pushing piano*)

BELLING

*Eh bien mes enfants*, a brief demonstration of what's been wrong with this show right from its very first love song.

AARON

You mean "Thinking of Him?" That's one of my best songs in the show.

GEORGIA

One of *our* best songs.