

CALLBACK #9  
Grady, Cioffi, Niki

CIOFFI

That's so very right. One person alone had both the perfect opportunity and a powerful motive—

(BOBBY comes onto the stage)

BOBBY

Cioffi! Somebody hit me—

*Start*  
(He collapses, revealing a bloody head wound. NIKI looks between BOBBY and the MASKED FIGURE on stage.)

NIKI

But if that's Bobby, who is this?

(THE COMPANY stares warily at the masked figure next to NIKI.)

CIOFFI

Your devoted admirer, Niki, ~~determined to bring down the curtain on Robbin' Hood~~ because if this show went to Broadway, you'd forever leave his sphere of influence ... a sphere represented by the circle next to your name in Bernstein's black book ... a sphere that was the clue Johnny gave us as he died ... a planet called "Earth" ... or, as Shakespeare put it, "the great globe itself," the Boston Globe, and its senior critic, Daryl Grady!

(GRADY takes off his mask and holds a knife to NIKI's face.)

GRADY

Careful, Cioffi, or no one will ever want to see her face again.

CIOFFI

Easy, Daryl.

GRADY

Easy for you, you're going to marry her. I heard you say so over the house P.A. She loves you. She never loved me.

NIKI

Frank, I swear I didn't know—

CIOFFI

But she does know you Daryl, doesn't she? You stunk publicity, your picture has never been published, yet she walked right up to you yesterday, tried to shake your hand to thank you for the compliments you paid her.

GRADY

I asked her not to tell anyone we knew each other, so that I could praise and proclaim her in my reviews—

NIKI

But he was only a friend, giving me advice, it was never more than that—

**GRADY**

It was more than that to me, Niki. I needed you to stay *here* where I could hail you and guide you. But this infernal *musical* was going to New York no matter what I wrote about it, that's what Sid Bernstein said—

**CIOFFI**

But ~~watching the show in previews, you saw how to guarantee that Jessica Cranshaw would never go to Broadway. As a critic on opening night, you could rush from your seat after the finale without any eyebrow being raised, retrieve a bouquet you'd hidden in the lobby, and come straight back down the aisle as the ultimate show stopper.~~

**FINISH**

**GRADY**

Yes, and I tried to shoot Carmen and sandbag you, the same way I posted closing notices for Jessica and Johnny ... an imperfect performance on my part but one learns from one's mistakes, right, Niki?

**CIOFFI**

Daryl! I see you're out of guns. How far from this theater do you think you can get without one?

**GRADY**

Good point. Set your own gun down for me.

**CIOFFI**

Wait—

**GRADY**

Now.

**CIOFFI**

Fine. Just don't hurt her.

*(CIOFFI opens his jacket, reveals his holstered gun, and places it on the stage.)*

**GRADY**

Get back!

*(GRADY picks it up, putting the knife away.)*

**CIOFFI**

Daryl, I'm going to take Niki away from you now.

**GRADY**

You already have.

**NIKI**

Frank, don't ...

**GRADY**

Take one step and you're dead.

*(CIOFFI takes another step.)*