

nd turning on her.  
hed this evening with an

ged us. (*Inside, Amy and  
with encouragement from  
Amy is out of control and  
creeches across the record as  
others shriek with laughter.  
s, and suddenly, desperately,  
and kisses her on the lips.  
punch right to Amy's face.  
unning ...* )

s, my God.  
ill right?

ny is bleeding from her nose

lead back.

o hit him. It was reflex.  
othing. Amy!  
ulance.

ulance.

in the car. I'll get my keys.  
s.)

down in the car. (*She and  
d her offstage ...* )  
e what happened?

RITA. Can I get someone to tell me what happened?

BESSIE. There was an accident.

CHARLOTTE. An accident?

VALENTINA. It was nothing. Miranda and Amy were dancing  
and one of them slipped and fell.

RITA. And ...

VALENTINA. And nothing.

CHARLOTTE. She kissed Miranda.

RITA. What?

MIRANDA. He grabbed me and ...

VALENTINA. I'm sure it was a mistake. Amy had too much to drink, tempers were high, and the barn was hot, and I'm sure when Amy saw Miranda ... She's a stranger. In the heat of the moment, in the dark, she may have thought her just a very pretty girl ...

CHARLOTTE. There's a tall tale for you.

MIRANDA. I didn't mean to hit him.

VALENTINA. Who knows what it was? It happened. It's over. Let's forget it.

RITA. That makes no sense.

CHARLOTTE. It makes no sense unless it makes perfect sense. She kissed the boy.

VALENTINA. So she kissed him. So what?

CHARLOTTE. Amy kissed the boy.

VALENTINA. Charlotte, why don't you go make yourself another cocktail.

CHARLOTTE. Why don't I what?

RITA. I don't understand.

CHARLOTTE. If you want to turn a blind eye, that's your business. But isn't this exactly what I predicted? You let them stand among you and ...

RITA. Is she saying the Judge...?

VALENTINA. *(To Rita.)* Take Miranda inside.

CHARLOTTE. That's right, Val. Put a bandage on the boy and a record on the machine and we'll all dance around making believe nothing happened. No wonder you find yourself in the trouble you do.

VALENTINA. *(To Charlotte.)* I know Amy.

CHARLOTTE. Oh. Then you already knew she likes kissing boys.

VALENTINA. It was an accident.

CHARLOTTE. Open your eyes, Val. Who do you think those photos were for?

VALENTINA. What do you know about that?

CHARLOTTE. You'd be surprised the things I know. The Sorority is my life. I don't take chances with my life. I know who sent those disgusting photographs and I know exactly who they were meant for.

VALENTINA. They told me ...

CHARLOTTE. What they wanted you to know. My parole requires my consulting with the authorities. I've seen the proof — the envelope, the letter, and all. That filth was meant for the Judge. Still think I'm wrong wresting that element from our midst? No good can come from the best of them.

RITA. What is she saying?

VALENTINA. Rita, stop ...

RITA. (*Grabbing George.*) Is that why they called you in, George?

CHARLOTTE. (*Correcting her.*) Valentina.

RITA. You knew there were photographs?

VALENTINA. Not now.

RITA. You told me you didn't know.

CHARLOTTE. (*Attacking Rita.*) Don't badger her! (*Strongly to Val.*) Take it from someone who barely survived this scenario last year, the postal inspector is standing on your front porch. He is not going away without someone to indict. So, who will it be? You or the Judge? Your choice.

BESSIE. (*Pleading for intervention.*) Talk to him. Talk to him before you decide anything. The Judge is a powerful man. He knows people.

VALENTINA. How can he protect me if he's the reason I'm in trouble?

CHARLOTTE. Exactly. Somehow I've been painted the villain. But I am an honorable villain. I'm not the queer who slithered, disguised, into your garden.

BESSIE. Hey! Amy's not the snake here. (*To Val.*) Look, I don't understand what the Judge is ... What do I know about homos? But what's a homo got on me? I mean, really, look at me. I'm ridiculous. It's true. Ridiculous. Ridiculous and disgusting and naughty and sexy and daring and shameful and, Rita excuse me, I get hard as a rock just talking about it. And this craziness makes me happy. But unlike Charlotte, I don't kid myself that the world is suddenly going to understand me. How could they? I don't understand me. And then I found this place. Here I breathe. Here I am me and I breathe. If you destroy that trust I'm ... we're alone.

VALENTINA. And what are you if I go to prison?

CHARLOTTE. Precisely the point I keep trying to make.

RITA. The Judge is one of us.

CHARLOTTE. But you're not! (*Bessie makes a move on Charlotte, but Rita holds her back, before ...*)

RITA. George, my darling, George. I abandoned every notion of what my life would be to marry you. You told me about yourself and others like you — people — gentle people — misunderstood people — and asked if I'd help make a place where they'd be safe. I believed you. I believed in you. And you did it. What Bessie said is true: You did it. Isn't that worth fighting for?

VALENTINA. What do you think I'm doing?

CHARLOTTE. You're protecting yourself. Anyone who doesn't is a fool.

RITA. No. There's something else. I am trying so hard to understand ... What is it you want, George?

CHARLOTTE. Valentina.

RITA. (*Snapping at Charlotte.*) I'm talking to my husband. (*Charlotte backs off.*) What do you want? If you could have anything, what would it be? I listen to Charlotte and there's no question. She wants to rule the world. But you've never cared about that kind of thing.

VALENTINA. What do you want me to say?

RITA. I'm lost, George. Help me understand. You're letting things happen, or maybe even making them happen, because there's something you want different. What is it? Please, George, what is it you want that's worth losing everything we have? For God's sake, what do you want?

VALENTINA. I want to be normal. (*Stunned silence all around.*) I want to be normal. (*Considered silence. Rita withdraws from Val.*)