

SARAH RUHL

DIRECTOR

Places!

They leap apart.
The butler enters with Millicent.

KEVIN AS BUTLER

Millicent Sternhaven.

SHE AS ADA

Hello, Millicent, my darling.

MILLICENT

Ada, dear, how *are you?* *How are you?*

SHE AS ADA

For God's sake Millicent, don't talk in italics, I'm perfectly fine. News travels fast, doesn't it, bad news faster than good . . .

MILLICENT

Can I get you anything, my dear?

SHE AS ADA

Just get me out of here, if one more person is solicitous, I'll scream. You, of all people, Millicent, can be mean. Be mean to me, that's what I crave more than hot compresses. I command you to be mean.

MILLICENT

I'm not sure I can do it on command, dear. It's part of my charm—I'm mean on impulse.

Enter Johnny Lowell.

SHE AS ADA

This is my old friend Johnny Lowell, just in from Sweden.

START

STAGE KISS

MILLICENT

Pleased to meet you. Whatever were you doing in Sweden?

HE AS JOHNNY

I like to make sculptures. Very large sculptures. With my hands, you know.

MILLICENT

Ah!

Millicent looks at his hands.

HE AS JOHNNY

But then Ada cabled me to come at once as she was dying and of course I came straight away.

SHE AS ADA

Don't believe a word he says—

(As herself) Wait—is this the long cross in the blocking you changed last night?

END

DIRECTOR

Yes. You have to cross stage left because of sightlines.

SHE

Right. So—

(As Ada, to Millicent, over her shoulder as she crosses) Don't believe a word he says—I'm not dying—no one here is dying—at least not today—

Ada crosses the room grandly and trips and falls.

SHE

Uum?

He rushes to help her, trips over a lamp cord or a potted palm, and falls down.

SARAH RUHL

SHE

Are you okay?

HE

Ah! My ankle.

SHE

Oh!