

*(Transition music. The cast follows WADSWORTH from the Lounge to the Dining Room. Behind them, as the Lounge module closes, the Dining Room wall flies in, and YVETTE and COOK each push on one side of a dining room table [with chairs] that meets in the middle.)*

## Scene 2

*(The Dining Room.)*

*(The GUESTS arrive to find a beautifully set table with seven places.)*

WADSWORTH. You'll find your names beside your places. Please be seated.

ALL. *(Ad-libbing:)* Do you see my tag? / Is that me? / Is that you? / Oh, here you are, Mr. Green. / This looks lovely. *(Etc.)*

*(They take their places, MUSTARD next to SCARLET next to GREEN next to PEACOCK next to WHITE next to PLUM.)*

MUSTARD. *(Not yet seated:)* This place—at the head of the table—is that for you?

WADSWORTH. Indeed no, sir. I don't sit. I am merely a humble butler.

MUSTARD. What exactly do you do?

WADSWORTH. I buttle, sir.

COOK. *(Presenting the meal grandly:)* Dinner is served.

WADSWORTH. Thank you, Cook.

*(As the GUESTS settle in their seats, YVETTE and COOK serve them soup [off of trays].)*

*(PEACOCK taps her knife against her glass to get the GUESTS' attention. [The waving of her knife is a bit threatening to GREEN beside her.]*

PEACOCK. *(Tucking a napkin in at her neck a la a bib:)* All right then, what's all this about, butler; this dinner party?

WADSWORTH. "Ours not to reason why,  
Ours but to do and die . . ."

GREEN. *(Anxiously:)* Die?

WADSWORTH. Merely quoting, sir, from Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

SCARLET. I prefer Kipling myself.

*(Offering a basket of dinner rolls to MUSTARD:)*

Do you like Kipling, Colonel?

MUSTARD. *(Helping himself:)* Sure, I'll eat anything.

*(Then:)*

So, who is our host? Is this where he sits?

WADSWORTH. *(Pouring wine:)* All in good time, sir.

*(As YVETTE serves soup to PEACOCK—)*

PEACOCK. What is that smell? It's something . . . familiar.

YVETTE. Shark's fin soup.

PEACOCK. *(Gleefully:)* My favorite!

COOK. *(Deliberately:)* I know.

[MUSIC CUE #11]

*(With the music sting, COOK/PEACOCK exchange a sinister glance.)*

YVETTE. Bon appetit!

*(YVETTE and COOK exit. The GUESTS sip their soup. PEACOCK slurps.)*

PEACOCK. *(Slurping slightly—muttering:)* This is delicious.

*(Slurping louder now—under her breath:)*

Oooh, this is yum yum yummy yum yum yum.

*(Finally, she slurps so intensely it causes her to choke a bit as the GUESTS stare.)*

PEACOCK. *(Recovering—then, all in nearly one breath, as WADSWORTH pours wine:)* Well, I guess I'll break the ice, I mean, I'll be the one to get the ball rolling, I mean, I'm used to being a hostess; it's an integral part of my life as the wife of a . . .

*(Declining wine with a gesture, carrying on talking without pause:)*

Oh, I forgot we're not supposed to say who we really are. But, oh well, I mean, I have no idea what we're doing here, but I'm very intrigued and oh, my, this soup is delicious isn't it?

*(The GUESTS stare at her, bewildered.)*

GREEN. I know who you are.

PEACOCK. You do?

**GREEN.** I work in Washington.

**PLUM.** Washington?

*(To PEACOCK:)*

So you must be a politician's wife, Mrs. Peacock?

**PEACOCK.** *(With renewed confidence:)* Yes, I am.

**SCARLET.** *(Cheekily:)* Who's your husband? Maybe I know him.

**PEACOCK.** I . . . well, he's . . .

*(Deflecting:)*

Mrs. White, you've been awfully quiet. What does your husband do?

**WHITE.** Nothing.

**PLUM.** Nothing?

**WHITE.** Well, he . . . just lies around on his back all day.

**PEACOCK.** How lazy!

**SCARLET.** *(With snark:)* Not necessarily.

*(Thunder/lightning. GREEN spills his drink all over SCARLET's chest.)*

**GREEN.** *(Mopping up SCARLET's chest with his napkin:)* Sorry, sorry—I'm afraid I'm a little accident-prone.

**SCARLET.** *(Relishing his discomfort:)* That'll be five dollars, Mister.

**GREEN.** *(Awkwardly mortified:)* Sorry?!

**PEACOCK.** *(Tapping him on the shoulder:)* Mr. Green—what do you do in Washington?

**GREEN.** Oh, I'd better not say. I like to follow the rules.

**PEACOCK.** *(Frustrated:)* Well, if I wasn't trying to keep the conversation going, then we would just be sitting here in an embarrassed silence.

**PLUM.** Are you afraid of silence, Mrs. Peacock?

**PEACOCK.** *(Anxiously:)* Yes. No. Why?

**PLUM.** In my professional opinion, it seems you suffer from what we call "pressure of speech."

**MUSTARD.** Is that an official diagnosis?

**WHITE.** Are you a doctor, Professor?

**PLUM.** In psychological medicine.

WHITE. Do you practice?

PLUM. (*Laced with shame:*) Not anymore.

(*Then:*)

I currently work for the government.

WHITE. Ah, another politician.

PLUM. Not exactly. I do research for U-NO WHO.

WHITE. (*Genuine:*) Who?

PLUM. (*Explaining:*) A branch of the United Nations Organization: the World Health Organization.

WHITE. (*Putting it together:*) Ahh. "U-NO WHO." (*Explaining to the table:*) It's an acronym.

MUSTARD. (*From the other side of the table—densely:*) I have a sister who was a gymnast.

PLUM. (*Flummoxed by MUSTARD:*) You are a *real* colonel, aren't you?

MUSTARD. (*Officiously:*) I am, sir.

SCARLET. Aren't you gonna mention the coincidence that you also live in Washington, D.C., Colonel?

MUSTARD. How did you know that?

SCARLET. (*With a twinkle:*) Oh, I've seen you before.

GREEN. So, Miss Scarlet, does this mean that you live in Washington, too?

SCARLET. (*With a sly smile:*) Sure do.

PEACOCK. Does anyone here not live in Washington?

(*They ALL look at each other, putting together the coincidence.*)

PLUM. (*Fearfully:*) Oh. Then, is this about the Red Scare?

GREEN. I'm not a Communist! I'm a Republican.

(*Thunder.*)

(*MUSTARD stands, fed up.*)

MUSTARD. Wadsworth, we've had about enough of this! Where's our host, and why have we been brought here?!

(*The doorbell rings. They look out.*)

WADSWORTH. Ah, speak of the devil. Pardon me, please.

(*WADSWORTH exits through the door.*)