

*the producer! I was the Mayor of Cleveland! Now get the hell up here!*

*(He slams the phone down and starts to clean up the room, talking to himself as he goes.)*

The biggest concert in the history of opera, and I'm taking the cellophane off the cold cuts. What's this?

*(He picks up something from the buffet table and it turns out to be a whole tongue; he juggles it with disgust.)*

*Ahhhh! It's a tongue! Uchh! Oh my God. What's the matter with these French? They'd eat the wax off the linoleum if it had vinaigrette on it.*

*(As he puts the tongue back on the table, there is a knock on the front door. Knock, knock, knock!)*

Come in!

*(He pulls the door open and MAX enters, out of breath. MAX is in his mid-30s.)*

Max!

MAX. Mr. Saunders.

SAUNDERS. What took you so long?

MAX. No Tito yet?

SAUNDERS. Tito Merelli? Has he ever been on time in his life?

MAX. Sir, he is the most famous opera singer in the world.

SAUNDERS. And does that mean he gets to keep me waiting?

MAX. Well, sort of. Maybe his plane is late.

SAUNDERS. Well that would be a novel excuse. The last time he didn't show up was because of his drinking and womanizing.

MAX. Sir, I'm in rehearsal. You're paying an orchestra and it's downstairs waiting for me.

SAUNDERS. Max, I need some help up here! You were my assistant for *ten years*. Have you forgotten ten years of your life? Do you have amnesia or something?



MAX. No, sir. But now I'm an opera singer.

SAUNDERS. You're a what?

MAX. Oh no.

SAUNDERS. What are you again, Max? I must have missed it.

MAX. I'm a singer and you gave me a chance and-and now I have a career but we have a concert tonight in less than three hours and now I have to go back to rehearsal!

SAUNDERS. And I *want* you to go back to rehearsal, Max, as soon as you check all the *toilets* to make sure they aren't *filthy*, and make sure there's no more *underwear* lying on the floor, and *then find that jackass Tito Merelli!*

MAX. (*Picking up phone and clicking the clicker.*) I'm giving you three minutes, but that's *Ah, bonjour. Parlez-vous angl* – Oh, good. We're expecting Tito Merelli and his wife and they're arriving on –

SAUNDERS. Trans-America Flight 102 from Rome –

MAX. Trans-America Flight 102 from Rome, and we'd like to know if the plane is late. *Merci.*

(*He hands SAUNDERS the phone.*)

Hold this. I'll check the rooms.

(*He runs into one of the bedrooms.*)

SAUNDERS. (*calling to MAX*) Tito in Paris. Can you imagine? I'll bet he's out at the Folies Bergère, drinking champagne out of some filthy slipper.