

SCHADENFRIDAY

**a 5-minute play
by Tom Baum**

©Tom Baum 2017

.

HAMPTON, an actor, age 40-something.

INGO, an actor. Younger than Hampton.

Table and chairs. The time is the present.

(INGO is seated at a table, engrossed in the Arts Section of the Friday N.Y. Times.)

HAMPTON: Well? Have you seen the review for *Soulmates*?

INGO: Unbelievable. He's never gotten notices like this.

HAMPTON: Charmed life. Until now.

INGO: I mean this is savage. He'll be devastated.

HAMPTON: He deserves every poisonous word. That Albee play I was in for eight weeks? He never came to see it.

INGO: He came to see me in *Sleep Disorders*.

HAMPTON: Did he come backstage?

INGO: He said he had a sudden emergency.

HAMPTON: What a narcissistic asshole.

INGO: If he knew we were talking like this...

HAMPTON: Oh don't worry, he knows.

INGO: He doesn't care.

HAMPTON: Of course he cares. Don't you remember when he did *I'm Not Contagious*? You told him "Fantastic" and I said "Hilarious," and that night we both got a phone call. It was like three in the morning, and I picked up the phone, "Hello," and it was you on the other end.

INGO: Oh right. But I hadn't called you.

HAMPTON: And I hadn't called you. It was him. He conferenced us both.

INGO: How crazy was that.

HAMPTON: It was totally crazy. He was trying to eavesdrop on us. He wanted to know what we really thought about his performance.

INGO: Why would he assume we'd talk about him?

HAMPTON: Because he's the most egotistical actor in the history of show business!

INGO: Did we talk about his performance?

HAMPTON: No! We realized he was listening, and we pussied out. Let me see the paper, I want to read that horrible review again.

INGO: Hey. Enough gloating.

HAMPTON: Why shouldn't I gloat. "It's not enough to succeed, one's friends must also fail." It's a universal human trait.

INGO: What about when good things happen?

HAMPTON: To me? I'm thrilled. To other people? I gnash my teeth.

INGO: What a miserable way to feel. Are you happy when people die?

HAMPTON: I'm still here and they're not. Don't have to worry about them anymore. They're gone.

INGO: I'm so glad I don't feel that way.

HAMPTON: That means you're in total denial. Oh and by the way, I booked that series I went up for.

INGO: You did?

HAMPTON: Just heard this morning. His bad review, my success, it's a red-letter Friday for me.

INGO: And you were afraid to tell me. You were afraid I'd be envious. OK, this will make your red-letter day even redder. I've been diagnosed with an epidermoid cyst. It's a kind of brain tumor.

HAMPTON: Since when?

INGO: Since I started feeling dizzy. And salivating too much. My right corneal reflex is diminished. They did an MRI.

HAMPTON: Well, I predict you're going to feel much better. Because I didn't get book that series. I read for it, but I didn't get it.

INGO: Oh.

HAMPTON: "Oh." You're relieved, aren't you. Your heart sank when you heard me say I'd booked it, and now you're breathing easier. Admit it.

INGO: Yes, all right, I admit it.

HAMPTON: And that's why you said you had a brain tumor. You don't have a brain tumor. My success made you blurt out something horrible. Epidermoid cyst, though, that was good. Very specific.

INGO: Well, thank you.

HAMPTON: Friends again?

INGO: Unfortunately, yes. (*re review*) So are we going to this turkey he's in?

HAMPTON: Wouldn't miss it for the world.

INGO: What are we going to say to him afterwards?

HAMPTON: "Fantastic."

INGO: "Wonderful."

HAMPTON: "I laughed till I cried."

INGO: "You've done it again."

HAMPTON: What cowards we are.

(HAMPTON's *cell rings*.)

HAMPTON: Hello? Hello?

(INGO's *cell rings.*)

INGO: Hello? Hello?

(*Pause. INGO and HAMPTON look at each other, brighten. They cup their phones.*)

HAMPTON: It's him. That egotistical sonofabitch He knows we're talking about him.

INGO: What do we do now?

(*Pause.*)

HAMPTON: We show some balls for a change. You ready for this? From the top.

(HAMPTON *and* INGO *uncup their phones.*)

HAMPTON: Well? Have you seen the review for *Soulmates*?

INGO: Unbelievable. He's never gotten reviews like this.

HAMPTON: Charmed life. Until now.

INGO: I mean this is savage. He'll be devastated.

HAMPTON: He deserves every poisonous word. That Albee play I was in for eight weeks? He never came to see it.

(*The lights start to fade.*)

INGO: He came to see me in *SleepDisorders*.

HAMPTON: No he didn't. Did he come backstage?

INGO: He said he had a sudden emergency.

HAMPTON: What a narcissistic asshole.

INGO: If he knew we were talking like this...

HAMPTON: Oh don't worry...he knows.

(The voices and lights have faded. END OF PLAY.)