

Excerpt from PARTIES INVOLVED, a play by Steve Ivings

The doorbell rings.

VIVIAN:

Oh, they're early. Go put your jacket on.

Stewart exits. Vivian goes to the front door and opens it. Cassandra enters

CASSANDRA:

Good evening.

VIVIAN:

Hello, come in. You're Madam Cassandra, the fortune teller?

CASSANDRA:

You must be psychic yourself.

VIVIAN:

That's amusing. Quite droll. I'm told you're very good.

CASSANDRA:

My gift comes from the world beyond. A knowledge of everything. I see everything. I hear everything. I know everything.

VIVIAN:

I expected you earlier.

CASSANDRA:

I went to the wrong house.

VIVIAN:

Well, the guests will be arriving soon. Just do what you do best.

CASSANDRA:

Yes, I will just talk to people and interpret their auras. I will guide them through the uncertain mists of the future; channel their thoughts into the spirit world where no question remains unanswered; a place far more satisfying than this mere existence.

VIVIAN:

Yes, whatever. Just pep up the party. These people coming over, my husband's friends, are not the most exciting people. However, while I may not care for this crowd I'll be damned if

they'll besmirch my reputation as a fine party giver. Would you care for a drink? And there are some hors d'oeuvres on the table.

CASSANDRA:

I believe I will have a little drink if I may.

VIVIAN:

Help yourself.

Cassandra crosses to the bar and pours herself a small brandy. Vivian exits into the bedroom. Cassandra drinks the brandy, pours another and downs that. Then she pours a third which she carries with her to the couch. She turns to the door through which Vivian has exited and toasts.

CASSANDRA:

Shalom.

Stewart enters and moves to the bar without seeing Cassandra.

CASSANDRA:

Hello.

Stewart jumps, startled

STEWART:

Oh goodness. You startled me...uh...?

CASSANDRA:

Madam Cassandra, fortune teller. I see all, I hear all, I know all. Who are you?

STEWART:

I am the master of the house.

Stewart looks pointedly towards the bedroom door.

STEWART:

Sometimes.

CASSANDRA:

Your wife hired me to tell people's fortunes.

STEWART:

What a little party planner she is. Well, you certainly look the part. That's quite a costume.

CASSANDRA

Coming from a man who would wear that tie, thanks a lot.

STEWART:

My mother-in-law gave me this tie.

CASSANDRA

I know. (Beat) Who else would? You doubt my abilities?

STEWART:

Well, I really don't go in for this sort of thing.

Cassandra waves her arms around and appears to go into a trance

CASSANDRA

You are Dr. Stewart Jameson, an eminent child psychologist. You have written three books...

Cassandra waves her arms and pauses to check the "notes" written on her palm.

CASSANDRA

...“What a Child Thinks”, “What a Child Feels” and “What to do When Your Child is Thinking and Feeling”. Two of them best sellers and the third one...just published...will soon reach one million sold.

Stewart leans in listening, becoming interested...and flattered

CASSANDRA

You have helped hundreds of children, one of which will one day become Head of the United Nations because of your dedicated and brilliant guidance.

STEWART:

You're very good.

The doorbell rings. Vivian calls from the bedroom

VIVIAN:

Answer the door Stewart.

STEWART (To Cassandra, indicating Vivian):

Can you make things disappear?