

5-page excerpt from **JUDY AND THE GENERAL**, full-length musical

JUDITH...female, 20s. Beautiful, intelligent, strong-willed.

HOLOFERNES...20s-30s. Assyrian general, a big guy, the alpha male.

HOLOFERNES

Do you not fear me, woman?

JUDY

A righteous woman fears only the Lord.

HOLOFERNES

I have heard it said that the righteous are bold as a lion. Or a she-lion. So, tonight, are you ready to---

JUDY

Oh, I am ready, general. Absolutely ready. And I promise it will be my ever-loving joy 'till the day I die. I am about to do for you what no woman on earth has ever done.

HOLOFERNES

That's saying a lot, babe.

JUDY

But it's true. Every word. All you have to do is close your eyes.

HOLOFERNES

That's the one thing I never do. Unless I'm alone. How do you think I've managed to stay alive so long?

JUDY

But surely you don't imagine you're in danger. How could I, a defenseless woman...

JUDY (cont'd.)

bring harm to you? Do you see any weapons about me?

HOLOFERNES

Come closer so I can be sure. Yes, you are looking extra beautiful tonight. You're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

JUDY

I hoped my appearance would delight you.

HOLOFERNES

It does. So what game do we play, my beauty?

JUDY

Oh, it's no game, I assure you. Tonight, I promise to bring you fame, fame that will never die.

HOLOFERNES

I'm already famous. You heard my men. I've conquered every town across Mesopotamia.

JUDY

But I promise you more. And all you have to do is close your eyes.

HOLOFERNES

Tell me why?

JUDY

So I can take you to a special place. A place where you have never been. The great and mighty Holofernes, the man who is said to swallow his enemies in a mouthful...he is not...afraid, is he?

HOLOFERNES

You dare speak of fear to my face? I've had men skinned alive for less.

JUDY

But that's not what you want of me. Is it, general?

He pulls her close.

HOLOFERNES

Have you been with other men? Tell me the truth.

JUDY

I have been with only one man. My husband. But he died.

HOLOFERNES

And was he brave? Was he fearless?

JUDY

He was noble, compassionate, generous. He owned much land and he gave of his crops to the poor.

HOLOFERNES

So he was soft. Like a woman.

JUDY

No, not soft. Admirable. And fine. Very fine.

HOLOFERNES

And did you love this giver of alms, this...farmer? The truth, now. Did you love him?

JUDY

Yes. I loved him.

HOLOFERNES

So tell me again why you came here?

JUDY

As I said. To tell you when the people of Bethulia have broken their covenant with the Lord. When they do, I will lead you there so you can conquer them and---

HOLOFERNES

Is that the truth?

JUDY

Why do you think I lie?

HOLOFERNES

I have been with many women. And this I know. A woman's voice is sweetest when she lies. Only in her eyes does a man see the truth.

JUDY

Then look deep into mine. Tell me what you see.

HOLOFERNES

I see beauty. Beauty the likes of which I've never seen before. It would be easier to believe you, were you not so fair.

JUDY

Then...then here.

She looks about for his dagger and grabs it.

Take this. Use it. Scar my face. If that will make you believe me.

He throws the knife aside and pulls her close.

HOLOFERNES

Come here, she-lion.

JUDY

This I swear to you...by the god in heaven above, the name of Holofernes will live forever. People in lands far away, people not yet born in ages yet to come will know your name because of what happens between us here this night. All I ask is one thing. Just close your eyes.

HOLOFERNES

Before I do, will you look at me the way you looked at him? That noble farmer you loved so much...

She kisses him.

JUDY

Do you believe me now? I promise, I promise to take you to a place of glory, the likes of which you've never seen.

HOLOFERNES

Glory, is it?

JUDY

Close your eyes. And then you will see. Very soon you will see.

He leans back and closes his eyes.

HOLOFERNES

Oh, Judy, Judy, Judy.

She picks up his scimitar and raises it high above his head.

JUDY

I am about to take you...out of this world.

And as she brings down the scimitar...Blackout.