

Helen X
Jack

scene four

Two weeks and one day later. . .

(Lights fade up on Jack as he paces about trying to tie his neck tie. He looks more frazzled than before and his frustration mounts. He pulls viciously at the tie, and after several failed attempts pulls it off and beats it harshly against the wall, the sofa and anything else he can find before finally throwing it up in the air and huffing away from it. Helen enters from the kitchen in time to see this last display.)

HELEN: Having difficulties? You often do over the simplest tasks.

JACK: I can't believe I'm doing this. Now, this is crazy. I'm crazy for agreeing to this.

HELEN: *(Picking up the tie)* You look wonderful.

JACK: I feel like shit.

HELEN: Well, looks can be deceiving. *(Goes to him with the tie.)*

JACK: *(As she begins to put it on him)* And you -- I can't believe you're going along with this.

HELEN: Hold still.

JACK: This, this little freak show. That's what it is. This whole thing is just to torture me some more. And you're going along with it. Along with it? Hell. You're like a sadistic ring master. And you're loving every second of my pain and suffering, aren't you?

HELEN: It's better than TV. Yes.

JACK: Your own flesh and blood.

HELEN: Oh. I forgot to tell you -- I had some tests. You're not mine. You were adopted. *(She finishes tying his tie.)*

JACK: *(Thinking)* Funny, that sort of comes as a relief to me.

HELEN: *(Looking at her watch)* It's almost time. Where's Andrew?

JACK: He'll be here. Holly told him that it was OK to bring a date, so he had to stop and pick her up. So now a total stranger gets to sit here and watch me squirm.

HELEN: Andrew has a date?

JACK: Scary huh? Must be leap year or something.

HELEN: Be nice.

JACK: Why? No one else is.

HELEN: But you deserve it.

(Holly enters with a tray of snacks.)

HOLLY: Here we go. Something to munch on while we're waiting.

JACK: *(Taking one)* Mmm. Smells good. Strychnine? Or arsenic?

HOLLY: You wouldn't be so lucky.

JACK: Damn. *(Takes another)* So where's supercop?

HOLLY: He'll be here.

JACK: Great. I'm so anxious to see that wonderfully shallow, loopy, effervescent fixodent smile of his.

HOLLY: Don't be snotty.

JACK: Snotty? Me? Heavens no. I like shallow. *(There is a knock at the door)* I'll get it. If its him I may even kiss him right on the mouth. *(Opens the door)* What the hell?

ANDY: *(Entering with Amber on his arm)* Hi. Sorry we're late.

HOLLY: *(Seeing Amber)* What the hell?

ANDY: Everyone, this is Amber.

HOLLY and JACK: We've met.

HELEN: Well, I haven't. *(Goes to her extending a hand.)* I'm Helen. Jack's mother. Delighted to meet you.

AMBER: Nice to meet you. *(To Jack)* How are you.

JACK: Speechless. *(A beat)* You?

AMBER: I'm great. Andy's really a great guy. So sweet and sincere. And isn't he just adorable. You want to just hug the stuffings out of him.

JACK: Hug. Beat. Yeah.

ANDY: (*Sheepishly*) I was going to tell you, but --

JACK: You figured giving me a heart attack would be better. Sure, sure. I can see that. Thanks buddy.

ANDY: It just kind of happened.

AMBER: It was so cool. And cute. The very day after we met. Here. We ran into each other at the Post Office. And would you believe -- we have boxes right next to each other. Isn't that so cool? (*Holly and Helen let out "oh, isn't that cute" sighs, joined by Amber. Andy has an "awe shucks" expression. Jack is repulsed by all.*)

JACK: Yeah. That's -- cute. (*Holds up the tray of snacks.*) Strychnine sausage ball? (*There's another knock*) Oh, who could that be? (*Opens the door Trevor enters all smiles*) Oh. How about that? Come in, come in. Two of the other horsemen of the apocalypse arrived just before you. The fourth should be along any minute now. Then we can complete our descent into hell.

TREVOR: (*A bit surprised by Jack's odd and facetious greeting.*) Yeah. Jack. Nice to see you again too. (*To Helen*) I just don't get him sometimes.

HELEN: Never mind him. He's just acting normal.

JACK: (*Holding tray out to Trevor*) Strychnine sausage ball?

TREVOR: No thanks. I don't eat meat.

JACK: (*Unfazed*) Naturally. (*Dumps contents of tray into the trash can near the door.*) What ever was I thinking?

HOLLY: (*To Trevor*) You don't?

TREVOR: No.

HOLLY: I thought you did?

TREVOR: Occasionally chicken or seafood. Too much red meat is bad for you.

JACK: I can't imagine thirty or forty pounds of fish or chicken would be that good for you.