

LEADING LADIES

Why look at this. It's another telegram — and it just arrived. *(He kisses the telegram with a big smack. "Mwa!")* "Apologize for delay. Stop. General strike at fault. Stop. Will arrive at eight fifteen tonight. Stop. Maxine and Stephanie." Hal! Hal! Hal! Oh, Justice is sweet, sayeth the Lord, hallelujah!

(JACK now ENTERS from the bedroom at the top of the stairs, still in his party gown, looking as sexy as all get out. He sees DUNCAN, kicks the door shut and drapes himself along the doorframe.)

JACK... Hello, big boy.

DUNCAN. I beg your pardon.

JACK. Is that a chopstick in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?

DUNCAN. Are you speaking to me?

JACK. Oh, yes.

DUNCAN. Well don't bother.

JACK. Fine, fine. No words, just action, is that your game? Well go ahead, mister! I'm ready for you! *(He poses with his dress hiked up above his knee. When DUNCAN isn't looking, he gives a high sign to the screen, believing that LEO is behind it. DUNCAN turns and just stares at him.)* What's the matter?

DUNCAN. The matter? Nothing's the matter for me. No-o-o. But it is for you. I have a surprise.

JACK. Here it comes.

DUNCAN. A big surprise.

JACK. Now you're just bragging.

DUNCAN. In fact, I have two surprises.

JACK. You have two of them?

DUNCAN. That's right. And they have long flowing hair.

JACK. Have you thought about surgery?

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DUNCAN. Don't change the subject!

(JACK covers his eyes with his hand and keeps them covered throughout the following:)

JACK. All right. Go ahead.

DUNCAN. You want to see it, eh? *(DUNCAN goes through his pockets, looking for the telegram.)* Wait a second... I'll get it out... Oh, damn, now I can't find it ...

JACK. You can't find it?

DUNCAN. Just give me a second ...

JACK. And you call this a big surprise?

DUNCAN. Here it is. I found it. *(He pulls out the telegram and holds it up. But JACK is still hiding his eyes.)* There. Do you see it?

JACK. No.

DUNCAN. You're not looking.

JACK. I can't.

DUNCAN. At least look at the signature.

JACK. It's signed?

DUNCAN. Of course it's signed! How else would you know where it came from?!

(BING BONG! The front doorbell rings.)

DUNCAN. It's them. I know it is. Hal! Here! Keep it as a souvenir!

JACK. A souvenir ...?

(DUNCAN stuffs the telegram into JACK's hand and EXITS. JACK hurries over to the screen to talk to LEO — who isn't there, of course — when DOC ENTERS. JACK puts the telegram into his sleeve and forgets about it.)

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DOC. Hello, gorgeous.

JACK. Ah! Oh, Doctor, thank God it's you. I just had the most awful experience!

DOC. Oh, you poor thing. You poor baby. You're upset, I can tell. Now you just sit down. Just tell your doctor aaaaall about it.

(DOC starts making love to JACK, stroking his hair and cheek.)

JACK. ... What are you doing?

DOC. Am I doing something?

JACK. Yes, now stop it.

DOC. Stop it, she says. Stop it. Hal! Can I have a kiss?

JACK. No!

DOC. Ouch! Give me that hand! Oh, you have such interesting hands. For the record, I do electrolysis.

(DOC really goes after STEPHANIE, who wriggles away and starts crawling across the floor.)

JACK. Hey! Would you stop that! Stop it! Just-just-just- That's personal property!

DOC. Who said "Don't take no for an answer?"

JACK. I have no idea.

DOC. "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine."

JACK. I think you've had too much punch.

DOC. "I want to sit on your pulpit!"

JACK. You do?

DOC. You can't deny it. You feel just as I do! It was all there, in your letter.

JACK. My letter?

DOC. "Take me. Ravish me. Enter my house!"

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JACK. Leo! Come out already! It's time to come out! ... Oh, no. The screen! There's nobody behind the screen!

DOC. Good idea. We can do it back there.

(He drags JACK behind the screen.)

JACK. No!

DOC. Please! Darling, Stephanie. I'm on my knees. *(He realizes he's not, so he drops to his knees and takes JACK's hand.)* Marry me.

(At this moment, BUTCH and AUDREY burst into the room having a fight.)

BUTCH. I can't believe you want to break up!

AUDREY. Butch I'm really sorry!

BUTCH. It's that Jack guy, isn't it? Oh, I'm gonna punch him—

AUDREY. Leave him alone!

BUTCH. I could have other girls, you know. Father wants me to marry Stephanie. And look at her! She's beautiful! Maybe I should marry her!

JACK. No, I really don't think — *(BUTCH kisses JACK.)*

YAAAH!

DOC. Butch, listen to me. I know this may hurt you a little, but Stephanie and I are in love.

JACK. We are?

BUTCH. Father! You can't have her! She's mine now!

DOC. She wants me, Butch. Not you!

(And DOC kisses JACK.)

JACK. YAAAAH! ... Would you two stop it!