



The Weekly Man

Episode 15: Sunday – Jackie

Jackie often wondered about the other tenants in the building. In the years that she'd been living there she'd never met any of them in the halls or outside the building on the steps and it seemed strange to her. She figured that, like her, they were hermits. But she wondered what they did, what they were like, what their flats were like and if, like her, they felt completely out of touch with themselves. Maybe in this building she was surrounded by soul mates, people who would understand the hellish prison she was to herself.

Or maybe they were invalids but then there would likely be special access features in the building, like a wheelchair ramp leading up to the front door. Or maybe they were just antisocial people who hunkered in their rooms and avoided all things human. Sometimes she liked to imagine they were asleep, hibernating for a hundred years. Or a thousand.

OK, Jackie, enough of the crazy thoughts. Get back to work. You have a play to write.

The Beautiful Ugly was something she'd thought of in one of her moments of angst and today was the day to start on it. She lay in bed in her bright blue writing pajamas with her computer in her lap. Steam curled from a coffee cup on the bedside table. She loved this part of writing a play, when everything was a mystery. All she had was a bare bones idea about the shape of the play. She didn't even have a plot. All she knew was that the play was going to be about her and she had one line from which the entire play would emerge: *The ugliness of her life flowed like sewage under the tissue of her beauty.*

She read the line several times.

Not bad. Pretty much sums up my life. Now, how to build a story around this? It's about you so, what about you? What about sex?

Her fingers started to fly across the keyboard as she jotted down notes about a sex scene from her own life.

She was fourteen when she met Darren. He was handsome and muscular and a few inches taller than her. She'd always thought of herself as beautiful but the

beauty turned to ugly when she looked at herself in a mirror. They'd felt an immediate attraction, something deep and primal and delicious. He seemed nervous, shy, almost looking guilty as he bent his head down and kissed her on the lips. He said, "You don't mind?" She said, "Of course not." He said, "You're OK with this?" She said, "Why would I not be?" He said, "Well, it's just that other people..." She reached up and put her arms around his neck and kissed him hard on the lips. She felt his hand go down the front of her jeans and that's when everything turned sour. She knew there was something wrong. There was something out of place. Something wasn't right. She stepped back from him, staring hopelessly in to his eyes and ran from the room.

That should make a good scene. How to get the mirror thing across on the stage though? That will have to be another scene. Maybe the opening scene.

She reached for her coffee mug and held it under her nose, reveling in the aroma of coffee before sipping it.

Oh my.

She was always surprised when the coffee tasted as good as it smelled. She put the cup back on the table and started writing.

SCENE 1

Opens with Kayla leaning both hands on bathroom counter in front of mirror, staring at herself, facial expressions of disgust, discomfort, anguish, breaks into tears

KAYLA: (still staring into mirror) Who the fuck are you? What are you?
(sobs) (screams) Go away! Just go away! Fuck off and go away!

And that's it for today.

This was the way she wrote her plays: some quick notes to set the stage, which almost always suggested the first scene, write the scene and then get away from it and let her subconscious work out the rest of the story. It worked and she knew that when she came back to it, the words would flow and the play would almost write itself. She believed that the stories for all her plays were already hidden deep in her subconscious mind. They just needed a little nudging to get them out where she could see them and turn them into another play with a limited but enthusiastic audience and just enough money to scrape by.

But she was happy with that part of her life. It was the rest that made life a confusion of being. The not knowing what it was, not knowing why she wanted to crawl out of her skin every day of her life. It was there in front of her every day, but just beyond her ability to see it. Or maybe her unwillingness to see it.

She put the laptop aside and rolled out of bed.

A stroll around the park. Yes, a stroll around the park would be relaxing and get the creative juices flowing nicely.

She walked to the wall and traced a pattern onto an invisible pad that opened the door to her closet. She walked into it and considered her choices. It was a Tomboy selection: jeans, t-shirts,

tank tops, sweaters, running shoes—and all of it except the shoes was black. She considered herself the ultimate Goth.

After changing into a pair of jeans, a black turtleneck sweater and orange running shoes she walked to the short hall leading to the door and sat down on a chair beside the entrance to the hall. She stared out the window, watching as the light faded into darkness and watched the darkness until it was time for bed.