

The Weekly Man

Episode 40: Friday - Jacques

There was no mistaking it. Perfume. The smell of perfume on his bed.

I don't wear perfume. Clothing, but no perfume. Where did this come from?

He buried his head in the blankets and pillows. Perfume. Another one of those things that he would likely never be able to explain.

How do these things happen? Why do they happen?

Best to just shrug it off, thinking about it will just drive you crazy. Don't think about it.

He took his time getting dressed, feeling a little more groovy than usual. Maybe it was the perfume but today he knew, for some reason, was going to be a good day. He touched the top of his head. The bump was almost gone and the cut was healed. Another mystery. Another thing to not think about. In his red dress, lingerie and erection, he went to the refrigerator to check on things and, sure enough, there was his six pack of beer.

Life is good.

He didn't try to think about what had happened the last time, when there was no beer. It could have been some kind of delivery glitch, though he was never sure how it was delivered. It was delivered. No thought required.

Time to check my mail. And time to make the announcement.

The first email was from Judy.

"So, Judy," he said to his laptop screen, "what makes you think you can email me when you're not buying my books anymore?" He read.

Jasmine

I'm really not sure if I believe your story about being hacked and sending out nasty emails to myself and some of your other fans.

Fans? What's this?

The thing is, I really do love your novels. The people in them are so real and I love that the main scene is in a laundromat. It says so much to so many women. Here, let me quote it for you so that you remember what you wrote:

But Sally has something special, a piece of clothing, an expensive white and navy blue striped, drop-shouldered, short-sleeve t-shirt with padded shoulders and side slits. It's not a silk blouse – It's polyester cotton – but her parents sent it to her for Christmas, and they sent the receipt in case she had to exchange it. It was \$45, Sally's cable bill for a month, and it took an enormous act of courage, fighting against guilt and a grocery list that already had three things put off till next payday for her to keep the t-shirt and not return it for the money.

Sally loves that t-shirt. She doesn't handle it; she fondles it. She treats it with a little bit of wonder, wonder that a piece of gear like this really belongs to her. She fondles it slowly into the washer, and then quickly into the dryer, and takes it out gently before it's completely dry. She folds it carefully. I've been in her mind while she's doing this, and her thoughts are like a musical interlude, with a beautiful new house, a shiny new mini-van, an adoring husband, and three wonderful kids with good grades who can't repeat enough: "We love you, Mom." Wind sweeps through her hair the moment she touches that t-shirt.

That one scene had me in tears. I have a piece of clothing like that and I take just as much care washing it as Sally does.

I've heard that writers can be sometimes abrasive with their readers and fans. It comes from their keen sensitivity and the demons that torment them. You have demons, don't you, Jasmine? And it was those demons that forced you to write those terrible things to me. You must have been in such pain when you wrote those words.

So, I'm going to keep reading your novels because they mean so much to me. And I'm going to forgive you for the email you sent to me and to the others. And I wish you all the best with your next novel and am looking forward to reading it.

Take care, Jasmine, and I hope you can keep the demons at bay.

Your fan always,

Judy

Judy, Judy, Judy, the only demon in my life is myself. And it's not so much torment as it is confusion. So many unanswered questions. So many things that I don't dare think about. Today I finish my last novel as Jasmine Jackson.

It had been a good day for Jacques. He'd finished his last laundromance quickly and sent it off to his publisher, which was actually a service that converted his manuscript to ebook and print formats, created cover art and distributed the book to all the biggest online book stores. They even took care of the marketing. It was pricey, but worth it. He did the writing, they did everything else.

He hadn't made his announcement yet. He wasn't sure how to word it and he wasn't sure exactly what kind of image he wanted and what exactly he was going to write about. What he

had was an initial feeling about something and he wasn't sure what it was precisely but he knew it had something to do with change, that it was time for change and change would come whether he liked it or not. He didn't know how he knew this and he didn't care. His last laundromance was finished and there was beer in the refrigerator. And he was checking out online lingerie sites and seeing some steamy combos. But nothing so far had carried that "this is it, this is where I'm going, this is who and what it's all about" punch.

Nothing excited him. He scrolled for the entire afternoon and most of the evening. He didn't mind. It was a break from the writing. What he was doing now was creating a new identity, like he was setting the stage to be born again as a whole new person. He visited several dozen sites before he came to The Naughty Bitch. Almost as soon as the monitor resolved the home page, he knew he was in the right place.

There was something about the site...

Fire in the loins. That's what this is. Fire in the loins. I'll find it here.

The homepage was simple. It was black and white with lots of bare space, and on the right side a dark haired woman with a lithe body wearing a black see-through bodice stretched her long legs over the edge of a couch. She wore black nylons. Jacques had seen pictures like this before but had never been this excited and he wasn't sure exactly what it was that was exciting him until he looked closer at the couch and realized that it was made of men compressed into each other in the shape of the couch. Their bodies were contorted in shapes that no human body could sustain with arms and legs jutting into the bodies around them and everything compacted and smoothed over to form the couch.

The faces of the men all showed the same thing: ecstasy. Their eyes rolled with pleasure and Jacques noticed several erect penises in the texture of the couch. This was so different from what he'd been doing for years now. He'd tried writing with compassion and concern for people but he wasn't sure he wanted to do that anymore. He felt like he was in the same room for years without going through doors into other rooms where things would be different. He felt like he was one of the men in the couch, crunched in with the others, trapped but unlike them, he was feeling no ecstasy. He was feeling a need to be free of his life as it was and try something new, open a few doors, enter new rooms and bathe in the heat of a new passion.

He sipped some more beer and thought about how his entire life was like one day over and over. He smiled as he decided from this moment on he would be the Insufferable Bitch.

He ordered the bodice and the nylons.

And a few other things. *Like maybe a better grade of cigar to chew on.*