

# DANCIN'

## By Pat Morgan

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**CAST: JACK and BARBARA**

JACK: Hi there, Sugar. Would you like to dance?

BARBARA: (*pulling back*) Oh my gosh! (*BARBARA looks up, stunned at who is standing before her. JACK looks BARBARA over and waits for her to acknowledge his greeting. SHE doesn't.*)

JACK: How you doin', Sugar?

BARBARA: (*icy*) Right now I'm doing happy hour.

JACK: Diet cola?

BARBARA: Always. What are you doing here?

JACK: (*confidently, HE pulls out the other chair and sits down*) Think I'll have a diet myself.

BARBARA: Oh, please feel free to sit down, Jack. Don't even bother asking. You never asked before. Why should anything have changed?

JACK: I wish we could wait a couple of minutes before we fight. (*beat*) You're really looking great, kiddo. I mean it. You don't even look like a wife anymore. How long's it been? It must be five years.

BARBARA: Not quite. I saw you and your new wife, ahhhhh, Valentine, I think it is?

JACK: Val.

BARBARA: (*shrugs*) Whatever. Anyway, I saw you both at the Nationals in Chicago. Two years ago, I guess.

JACK: Well, you shoulda' come on over. Maybe we coulda' talked or something.

BARBARA: Jack, Chicago had enough trouble without you and I shooting it out in the streets.

JACK: Come on, it was a simple divorce. One of my finest, I must admit. (*Beat*) I suppose you heard Val and I split?

BARBARA: The kids told me.

JACK: Of course they told you. I specifically asked them not to. Look, let me buy you a drink, any diet drink you like. Not that you ever needed to go on a diet.

BARBARA: I suppose I can put up with you for a few minutes.

JACK: (*motions to the imaginary waitress*) Another for the lady, sweetheart...and one for me. (*Beat*)

BARBARA: So, what happened to little, ahhhh, Valentine? Run out of Fruit Loops?

JACK: Will you give me a break here? Listen, Val was—okay—now—granted—she was somewhat—limited.

BARBARA: Limited! Jack, Swiss on rye is limited. We're talking brain death here. The kids' gerbils were smarter than she was. (*pause*) So, okay, what happened?

JACK: Whaddaymean' what happened? What happened to Charlie and Ann after 20 years? What happened to us? How do I know what happened.

BARBARA: (*sips her drink as they both sway to the music, either real or imaginary. BARBARA softly hums along.*)

JACK: You come here much?

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BARBARA: An acquired taste.

JACK: Like that place we used to visit, Pete's Garage?

BARBARA: Yeah, like Pete's Garage. **(Beat)**

JACK: She went to Vegas.

BARBARA: I beg your pardon?

JACK: Val. Two years ago.

BARBARA: **(mimes eating from a bowl of peanuts)** Vegas?

JACK: Yes, Vegas, you know, in Nevada. You haven't changed a bit. Still the goddess of control. **(Beat)** She went to Vegas to go to dealer's school.

BARBARA: Dealer's school?

JACK: Will you stop repeating what I say. You on ludes or something? Besides, Val had real promise in that area.

BARBARA: Undoubtedly. **(They both sip their drinks. After a moment, JACK begins to chuckle, then to laugh. BARBARA smiles in spite of herself. Suddenly, they're laughing.)** You mean she can actually count to twenty-one?

JACK: I know it's like a miracle. Someone should take notes. **(Beat)** Listen, you're the only living soul I could tell this to. When Val and I needed attorneys, I called Roger Booder. Remember Boody?

BARBARA: Sure. You used him to go against me.

JACK: Well, don't feel rained on. Valentine knew him too, and she got to him first. But ole' Boody was nice...told her it sounded like a simple no fault to him. Know what she tells this dude?

BARBARA: **(shrugs)** I haven't a clue.

JACK: No fault, my butt! She told him to fix me where the only thing I could draw at the bank was breath.

BARBARA: All of a sudden, I'm starting to like ole' Boody.

JACK: Well, I don't anymore. He told me if I was stupid enough to get married to a gal who thinks the Mexican border oughta' pay rent, I deserved to be cleaned out.

BARBARA: I agree.

JACK: Thanks for the kind shoulder to lean on.

BARBARA: Any time. So, what are you doing in town besides hunting down ex-wives?

JACK: I live here. What do you care, anyway? **(pause)** You still in the house?

BARBARA: They'll carry me out of that house in a pine box. Oh, after Howard died, I considered selling, but – it suits me, you know? Lot's of memories. How come you didn't stick it out in Tucson?

JACK: That was one super mistake for me. I sorta' skipped around until I got a job offer here.

BARBARA: Doin' what?

JACK: Whaddayamean' doin' what? I'm in sales. You know I could sell a double bed to the Pope.

BARBARA: Well, you sure sold me a bill of goods.

JACK: Oh, boy, here we go. Just like old times. Look, baby, I went into our marriage wide open. I loved you and I really tried to make it work. But you just couldn't hang up your pride when you came home at night. Then there was that blood suckin' brother of yours...

BARBARA: You leave my brother out of this. *(both stand and freeze for two seconds, before going into a flashback.)*

JACK: Don't give me that. I remember how it was. *(as BARBARA and JACK both are speaking from seven years in the past)*

BARBARA: *(JACK, in frustration, has his head in his hands)* Jack, you have to do something!

JACK: What do you expect from me, woman!

BARBARA: A little compassion, perhaps?

JACK: If you need compassion, have some for me. Try taking up for your husband, or hasn't that crossed your mind? It's my business that's in jeopardy. How could your brother pull such a stupid and selfish stunt?

BARBARA: He didn't mean to, Jack!

JACK: Barbara, accidents happen, but when someone purposefully does something illegal and brings the law down on innocent people, it is not an accident!

BARBARA: He's young.

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