

In Sickness

By Herman Gomez

Play sample. Full play available upon request.

/ indicates to start the next line.

SCENE 1

A sketchy motel room. Late evening. The sound of a running shower can be heard from the back. JACKSON, late 20s and very attractive, enters and makes himself at home. Takes off his shoes, untucks his shirt, loosens his belt. He stirs about, fidgets, and looks around.

JACKSON: [*Where the hell is she?*]

After a moment, his patience evaporates.

JACKSON [*Cont'd*]: Angeline? Angeline... I need this to hurry. I've got a thing in an hour.

Still nothing. He paces in his spot.

JACKSON [*Cont'd*]: Jesus Christ... I shouldn't even be here. Angeline? ANGELINE!

ANGELINE [*Offstage*]: What?

JACKSON: C'mon out here.

ANGELINE, 30s, enters the space wearing a towel.

ANGELINE: Listen babe, don't rush me like we're a thing... this isn't personal... I wanted to look nice.

JACKSON [*A line reading*]: You always look nice.

ANGELINE: Just – I want to – let me touch up my makeup.

JACKSON: It's just that you're usually ready by the time I get here; and, a waste of time is a waste of money.

ANGELINE: Let me have nice things. Okay?

She goes offstage to change.

JACKSON: Fine. I'm sorry... [*Beat*] The usual price, then?

ANGELINE [*Offstage*]: What else would it be?

JACKSON: Only because I know you sometimes/

She returns, dressed in a nightgown.

ANGELINE: What kind of person do you think I am?

JACKSON: I don't know... I never ask things like that.

ANGELINE: Shut up and take your pants off.

JACKSON [*Acquiescing*]: Okay.

ANGELINE: Okay. [*Just before he's undressed.*] Wait... the money... can it be upfront this time?

JACKSON: You know... I told you I have somewhere I need to be. Maybe another time.

ANGELINE: Just... listen. It's more comfortable like that. It feels less dirty.

JACKSON: Fine. Go get it.

She's grabs a purse from the table, determined.

ANGELINE: [*Reaching into her purse and pulling out a decent handful of cash.*] Here.

JACKSON: What's all this for?

ANGELINE [*Almost painful*]: The whole evening. I don't want any of this one-hour bullshit. Tell the other client to piss off. Now, take your clothes off.

JACKSON [*Disappointed*]: Yes ma'am.

ANGELINE: Fuck you... don't call me ma'am.

They embrace each other, tangling themselves into a tight ball as they fall onto the bed. The lights fade out. After a short while, they fade in again. Morning. Jackson has left, having taken the money with him. Angeline is asleep in her room when...

SKYLER [*Offstage, knocking on the door*]: Angeline. Angeline wake up! I know you're in there.

ANGELINE [*Erupting awake*]: SHIT! Umm [*gathering her things, putting a shirt on, etc.*] Just a minute.

SKYLER [*Offstage*]: You need to let me in and start talking.

ANGELINE: WAIT!

She unlocks the door. SKYLER, 30s, dressed flamboyantly, walks in.

SKYLER [*Teasing her*]: Fuck me, honey, you never said your walk-of-shame look was so shameful!

ANGELINE [*Flustered*]: ASSHOLE, I thought you were Sam!

SKYLER: You thought I was Sam? That's crazy.

ANGELINE: What do you want?

SKYLER: Our mother wants you to call her later today.

ANGELINE: You came ALL THE WAY OVER HERE to tell me that? How'd you even know I was here?

SKYLER: Since when do we think any differently? I love this place; they don't ask any questions. I'd come here every time I'd sneak out with Tim... or with *somebody else*.

ANGELINE [*Reading the subtext, ashamed*]: Don't tell Sam.

SKYLER: Since when don't I take your side?

ANGELINE: I just wanted to make sure. We're a team, right?

SKYLER: Always.

ANGELINE: Thank you.

SKYLER: Was the sex good at least?

ANGELINE [*Painfully laughing*]: No... and yes. It was a product. He was... maybe he was store-bought... not naturally reaped.

SKYLER [*Taken aback.*]: Hooker? HE was a hooker? You minx... full of surprises.

ANGELINE: I'm making a mistake.

SKYLER: Yeah... you are. I'm not sugarcoating that.

ANGELINE: Don't tell Mom, either.

SKYLER: She probably already knows.

ANGELINE: Well, don't confirm it!

SKYLER: Calm down, I won't.

ANGELINE: Alright.

SKYLER: She's going to find out, you know.

ANGELINE: I know, I know. Mom knows everything. Don't give me the usual lecture!

SKYLER: *She's going to find out.*

ANGELINE: I know.

SKYLER: Tell her.

ANGELINE: No.

SKYLER: *Tell her.*

ANGELINE: Don't do this, Skyler. Please don't do this.

SKYLER: *You have to tell her.*

ANGELINE: No I don't. I'm not a child you can boss around.

SKYLER: Tell her.

ANGELINE: NO!

Skyler gets up, calm, but ready to draw blood.

SKYLER: It's all going to come crashing down. It always does. She'll find out. And you'll deal with it. I'll deal with it. We'll all deal with it. Just don't keep things hidden until they claw their way out of the darkness. I won't be able to fix this one.

ANGELINE: Stop lecturing me.

SKYLER: Okay. I will.

He sits back down, hugs her.

ANGELINE: I know I've made a mistake. Just hug me and let me feel bad about it a little before you start crusading again. Just this once.

SKYLER: I know. I'll stop.

ANGELINE: Just let me have this. Just for now.

SKYLER: Okay.

The hug still lingers.

SKYLER: For now.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2

One year later. A conference room. JASMINE sits at the table, waiting impatiently. Angeline enters the room, wrapped in a blanket, looking undone.

ANGELINE: Jesus, why are you always so punctual?

JASMINE: I'm always on time - hi darling - and you're always late. Some things never change.

ANGELINE: They're all late...

JASMINE: I brought you some coffee and a donut. If you need anything else, well you know me... I'm always packing. I've got Xanax, Vicodin the whole works/ I have a flask of Belvedere if you need something stronger than water to toss it all down. I also...

ANGELINE: Thanks, mom... I don't think I need anything/ *[She sips her coffee, gasps]* What the fuck is that?

JASMINE: ... put a few shots of Bailey's in the coffee.

ANGELINE: Mom, you know I'm – how many is a few?

JASMINE: One or two... or maybe four. I don't know. Just enough to get the job done.

ANGELINE: It's okay, Mom. I'm fine. Take this back... I don't need it.

JASMINE: I know! Why wouldn't I know that?

ANGELINE: Because you put three fucking shots/ of Bailey's in my coffee

JASMINE: Four. No, I'm sure/ it was four.

ANGELINE. Four. Jesus. Fuck.

JASMINE: Stop making a scene.

ANGELINE: Then stop offering me things.

JASMINE [*with some cheerful spite*]: If you insist.

She takes a long, deep sip – a lesson.

ANGELINE: Goddamn it, Christ. Mom, you look worse off than I do.

JASMINE: I look wonderful; I'm put together, hair up, with cleavage for days. My behavior looks worse than you do. That's because divorce is painful. It's like losing virginity: awkward, freeing, *no foreplay to brace the landing*. It sucks. It really sucks. I mean, you saw what I went through with Bill/

ANGELINE [*Correcting*]: Dad/

JASMINE: Not biologically/ He was not your biological...

ANGELINE: Neither are you.

JASMINE: Listen... I know what divorce takes. It's a process – one that leaves you scared, scarred... *and drunk at noon*.

ANGELINE: It's only nine o'clock in the morning.

JASMINE [*Sadly serious*]: It's only Bailey's.

ANGELINE: But the principle/

JASMINE: Fuck principle. Drink. You need to medicate early if you're going to stomach this.

ANGELINE: Listen, mom. I can't be drunk here. I've done enough. I've made too many mistakes. I can't risk the chance that Sam will take this to THE harsher level.

JASMINE: We're meeting to discuss divorce proceedings; what is THE harsher level exactly?

ANGELINE: We're just meeting with the arbitrator. I didn't even call a lawyer. Besides... Sam doesn't want it to be rough and messy.

JASMINE: I couldn't give two shits about what Sam wants... your comfort is what matters and if the arbitrator cares that your drunk, he – or she – can suck my metaphorical cock. You're the victim here. You're the one who walked in on Sam with that girl – I mean, seriously, how old was she? Nineteen?

ANGELINE: We both had affairs, Mom.

JASMINE: No need to remind me. I know. It served you right to walk in on your spouse... but not divorce. That's just hypocritical... Sam could have – would have – pointed fingers had they not been [*Finding amusement.*] clitoris deep.

ANGELINE [*A repetitive argument*]: It was the right choice.

JASMINE: You have three children!

ANGELINE: MOM! Enough. Sam will be here soon and I don't want to fight anymore.

JASMINE: Fine; but Sam better behave today. I've had just about enough of that little shit.

ANGELINE: We're done. We've finished arguing. This isn't about fighting. It's about closure.

Suddenly, the door swings open. In walks a sturdy, well-dressed man in his 40s accompanied by a younger, almost enchanting woman.

ANGELINE [*standing up*]: Hi/

JASMINE: Finally. I see you brought your guns with you. I was told this was a family-only meeting.

ANGELINE: MOTHER!

JASMINE [*sidebar to Angeline*]: Oh, this is bullshit and you know it. [*back at them*] You have no right to be here.

ANGELINE: How many times do I have to tell you not to pull drama from thin air! [*kissing the woman on the cheek*] Hi Sam.

The two women look at each other with heartache and shame.

BLACKOUT.