

HACKETT (Contd)
reports. I may need them for
Jensen. Is ten o'clock convenient
for everyone?

Apparently it is.

162. INT: LANDING OUTSIDE DIANA'S APARTMENT - 162.
8:00 P.M.

DIANA letting herself into her apartment.

163. INT: DIANA'S APARTMENT - FOYER 163.

Dark, shadowed. She moves down to --

164. INT: LIVING ROOM 164.

MAX has fallen asleep in one of the soft chairs. The newspaper he was reading has fallen to his lap. His mouth is a bit agape and he wheezes a little. In the stark lighting of the lamp behind the chair, he seems suddenly an old man. DIANA stands and regards him with perceptible distaste. She slips out of her jacket, crosses to the bedroom.

165. INT: BEDROOM 165.

All the lights are on. DIANA, freshly scrubbed and in a shower robe, is packing MAX's things. A large valise lies opened on the bed, and DIANA is fetching MAX's suits from the closet, folding them and packing them away. MAX appears rumpled and in his shirt-sleeves in the doorway behind her. She senses him there, glances at him, continues with her packing.

DIANA

I think the time has come, Max,
to re-evaluate our relationship.

MAX

So I see.

DIANA

I don't like the way this script
of ours is turning out. This whole
thing started out as a comedy,
remember? Now, it's turning into
a seedy little drama. Middle-aged
man leaves wife and family for young
heartless woman, goes to pot. The
Blue Angel with Marlene Dietrich
and Emil Jannings. I don't like it.

MAX

So you've decided to cancel the show.

DIANA

Right.

MAX

Listen, I'll do that.

He moves to the bed to take over the packing. She sits in one of the bedroom chairs.

DIANA

The simple fact is you're a family man, Max. You like a home and kids, and that's beautiful. But I'm incapable of any such commitment. All you'll get from me is another couple of months of intermittent sex and recriminate and ugly little scenes like the one we had last night. I'm sorry for all those vicious things I said to you last night. You're not the worst fuck I've ever had. Believe me, I've had worse. And you don't puff and snorkle and make death-like rattles. As a matter of fact, you're rather serene in the sack.

MAX, who had gone into the bathroom for his toilet articles, comes out with them, stands, regards DIANA.

MAX

Why do women always think the most savage thing they can say to a man is to impugn his cocks-manship?

DIANA

I'm sorry I impugned your cocks-manship.

MAX

I stopped comparing genitals back in the schoolyard.

DIANA

You're being docile as hell about this.

MAX

Hell, Diana, I knew it was over between us weeks ago.

DIANA

Will you go back to your wife?

MAX

I'll try, but I don't think she'll jump at it. But don't worry about me. I'll manage. I always have, always will. I'm more concerned about you. Once I go, you'll be back in the eye of your own desolate terrors. Fifty dollar studs and the nightly sleepless contemplation of suicide. You're not the boozier type, so I figure a year, maybe two before you crack up or jump out your fourteenth floor office window.

DIANA

(stands)

Stop selling, Max. I don't need you.

She exits out into --

166. INT: THE LIVING ROOM

166.

-- and across that to the --

167. INT: THE KITCHEN

167.

-- where a kettle is steaming. She fetches a cup and saucer from the cupboard and would make some instant coffee but she is overtaken by a curious little spasm. Her hand holding the cup and saucer is shaking so much she has to put them down. With visible effort, she pulls herself together. She moves out of the kitchen to the --

168. INT: THE LIVING ROOM

168.

-- where she stands in the middle of the room and shouts at MAX through the opened bedroom doorway.

DIANA

(cries out)

I don't want your pain! I don't want your menopausal decay and death! I don't need you, Max.

MAX

You need me badly! I'm your last contact with human reality!

(MORE)

You need me badly. I'm your last
contact with human reality.

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MAX (Contd)

I love you, and that painful,
decaying menopausal love is the
only thing between you and the
shrieking nothingness you live
the rest of the day!

He slams the valise shut.

DIANA

Then don't leave me!

MAX

It's too late, Diana! There's
nothing left in you that I can
live with! You're one of Howard's
humanoids, and, if I stay with
you, I'll be destroyed. Like
Howard Beale was destroyed! Like
Laureen Hobbs was destroyed! Like
everything you and the ~~institution~~
institution of television touch is
~~destroyed~~ destroyed! You are tele-
vision incarnate, Diana, indifferent
to suffering, insensitive to joy.
All of life is reduced to the
common rubble of banality. War,
murder, death are all the same
to you as bottles of beer. The
daily business of life is a corrupt
comedy. You even shatter the
sensations of time and space into
~~split-seconds and instant replays.~~ split-
seconds and instant replays. You
are madness, Diana, virulent madness,
and ~~when you touch~~ you touch dies with you.
Well, not me! Not while I can still
feel pleasure and pain and love!

and everything

He turns back to his valise and buckles it. DIANA
finds a chair, sits in it. A moment later, MAX comes
out of the bedroom, lugging a raincoat as well as the
valise. He lugs his way across the living room, then
pauses for a moment, reflects --

MAX (Contd)

It's a happy ending, Diana.
Wayward husband comes to his senses,
returns to his wife with whom he
has built a long and sustaining love.

(MORE)

MAX (Contd)

Heartless young woman left alone
in her arctic desolation. Music
up with a swell. Final commercial.
And here are a few scenes from
next week's show.

He disappears down the foyer. We can hear the CLICK
of the front door being opened and the CLACK of the
door closing. DIANA sits in her chair, pulling the
shower robe around her, alone in her arctic desolation.

169. INT: 20TH FLOOR - UBS BUILDING - LOBBY, 169.
LOUNGE, CORRIDOR - 10:15 P.M.

A solemn FRANK HACKETT in blue suit walks down the long,
empty, hushed corridor to the large double doors of his
office (which had originally been EDWARD RUDDY's office).
At the doors, NELSON CHANEY is waiting for him.

CHANEY

How'd it go?

HACKETT sighs, enters --

170. INT: SECRETARY'S OFFICE 170.

-- where HERB THACKERAY and JOE DONNELLY are lounging.
Everybody follows HACKETT into --

171. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE (ONCE RUDDY'S OFFICE) 171.

Nighttime outside, the crepuscular grandeur of
Manhattan glittering below us. Waiting in the office,
seated here and there, are WALTER AMUNDSEN and DIANA.
HACKETT sits behind his desk. The others all find
places around the room.

HACKETT

Mr. Jensen was unhappy at the
idea of taking Howard Beale off
the air. Mr. Jensen thinks Howard
Beale is bringing a very important
message to the American people, so
he wants Howard Beale on the
air. And he wants him kept on.

Nobody has anything to say to this.

HACKETT (Contd)

Mr. Jensen feels we are being too
catastrophic in our thinking. I
argued that television was a vola-
tile industry in which success and
failure were determined week by

(MORE)