

An excerpt from

GETTING LUCKY (from **ADVANCED CHEMISTRY**)

a play in one act

by Rich Orloff

Place: The living room of a small, urban apartment.

Time: The present.

Characters: RUTH, a woman in her older years
KAREN, early 30's, Ruth's granddaughter
JACK, a man in his older years

During the first scene of the play, KAREN has helped RUTH prepare for an afternoon date. Ruth confides that she has been both nervous and excited about the possibility that she and Jack, who have only kissed so far, will have sex. When JACK arrives, the two of them agree to an afternoon in bed.

In this excerpt, it's the top of Scene Two, a couple of hours later. Ruth enters from the bedroom. She wears a robe and a very happy expression. She sits on the couch, beaming. For a moment, she doesn't have to do anything; it's enough just to exist.

Jack enters from the bedroom. He isn't fully dressed.

JACK

So there you are.

RUTH

Did you have a nice nap?

JACK

I must have nodded off for a minute.

RUTH

Half an hour.

JACK

Half an hour?

RUTH

That's okay. I enjoyed watching you sleep.

JACK

You had nothing better to do?

RUTH

No.

JACK

Some night I'll invite you over.
You can watch me sleep for hours.

RUTH

I'd like that.

JACK

Me, too... I had the strangest dream.

RUTH

What?

JACK

Promise not to laugh.

RUTH

I promise.

JACK

I'm standing along a highway. In Alaska. It's cold.
I'm freezing. Suddenly, I'm holding this glass of tea
in my gloves. Where it comes from, I don't know.
It warms my hands. I want to drink it, to warm my
inside, but then I know it won't warm my hands anymore.

RUTH

So what did you do?

JACK

I just stood there like a fool. Then I began
to sip, just one sip at a time, never more,
nervous, like someone might catch me.

RUTH

That's quite a dream.

JACK

What do you think it means?

RUTH

Would you like some tea?

JACK

No, thanks.

RUTH

Then I have no idea.

JACK

Some water would be nice.

RUTH

Coming right up.

Ruth exits into the kitchen. Jack smiles, both at the afternoon and at himself.

RUTH (cont'd) (o.s.)

Ice cubes?

JACK

No, thanks.

Jack walks to the television set. He turns it on and checks what's on several of the channels. He turns it off as Ruth enters with a glass of water.

RUTH

(handing Jack the glass:)

Here.

JACK

There's nothing like sex to remind
you how boring TV is.

Ruth watches Jack drink. Jack notices her. Ruth turns away, shyly.

JACK (cont'd)

What?

RUTH

Nothing.

JACK

What?

RUTH

It's nothing. It's silly.

JACK

You'll let me touch your body,
but not your mind, huh?

RUTH

It's very silly. I just thought, "If only Nathan were here, I think he'd be very happy for me." I don't know why I thought that. I really think he'd be jealous.

JACK

I'd hope so.

RUTH

He always felt so good when I was happy.

JACK

He sounds like a good person.

RUTH

He always took so much – Oh, here I am blabbering about my husband after spending the afternoon with you.

JACK

That's okay.

RUTH

The jelly really didn't bother you?

JACK

It was fine.

RUTH

I appreciate the way you applied it.

JACK

Beginner's luck.

RUTH

Were you nervous?

JACK

A little. It's been awhile.

RUTH

You could've fooled me.

JACK

I guess it's like bicycling.

RUTH

I never liked bicycling.

JACK

My son liked bicycling... He would've been 46 this year.

RUTH

Oh, Jack...

JACK

I didn't seem nervous?

RUTH

No.

JACK

Hmm... You know, every time I acted nervous as a boy, my father hit me. So I stopped being nervous.

RUTH

It worked.

JACK

On me, it worked. It didn't work when I tried it on Lawrence.

RUTH

Why do you say that?

JACK

All his life, I never heard Lawrence raise his voice. Not once.

RUTH

Some people are like that.

JACK

I think that's why he got his bleeding ulcer.

RUTH

You can never know about these things.

JACK

I didn't hit him often.

RUTH

We didn't know then.

JACK

Still...

RUTH

I'm sure you were a good father.

JACK

I was a good provider, but...
It's not good to bury a child.

Ruth snuggles up to Jack.

RUTH

My granddaughter Karen told me that whenever she made love with a man for the first time, it was as if she was having sex with two men: the man she went to bed with, and the man she found herself with after they made love.

JACK

Hmm...

RUTH

She said she always liked the second man better.

JACK

And you?

RUTH

(teasing)

To me, men are like streetcars. There's one every fifteen minutes... More water?

JACK

No, thanks.

RUTH

Can I get you anything?

JACK

Ruth?

RUTH

Jack?

JACK

Will you marry me?

RUTH

I was that good?

JACK

It's not just sex.

RUTH

You don't have to buy the cow.
I'll give you the milk.

JACK

I've been thinking about this for awhile.

RUTH

This is a silly conversation.

JACK

I'm serious.

RUTH

You're senile.

JACK

I love you.

RUTH

Please.

JACK

I mean it.

RUTH

You hardly know me.

JACK

I've known you almost four months already.

RUTH

The first month we hardly spoke.

JACK

I want to marry you.

RUTH

This is a foolish conversation.

JACK

What is it? Afraid to take me home
to your parents?