

ANGELS IN AMERICA: SCENE EIGHT

Harper: Where were you?

Joe: Out.

Harper: Where?

Joe: Just out. Thinking.

Harper: It's late.

Joe: I had a lot to think about.

Harper: I burned dinner.

Joe: Sorry.

Harper: Not my dinner. My dinner was fine. Your dinner. I put it back in the oven and turned everything up as high as it could go and I watched till it burned black. It's still hot. Very hot. Want it?

Joe: You didn't have to do that.

Harper: I know. It just seemed like the kind of thing a mentally deranged sex-starved pill-popping housewife would do.

Joe: Uh huh

Harper: So I did it. Who knows anymore what I have to do?

Joe: How many pills?

Harper: A bunch. Don't change the subject.

Joe: I won't talk to you when you...

Harper: No. No. Don't do that! I'm...I'm fine, pills are not the problem, not our problem, I WANT TO KNOW WHERE YOU'VE BEEN! I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON!

Joe: Going on with what? The job?

Harper: Not the job.

Joe: I said I need more time.

Harper: Not the job!

Joe: Mr. Cohn, I talked to him on the phone, he said I had to hurry...

Harper: Not the...

Joe: But I can't get you to talk sensibly about anything so

Harper: SHUT UP!

Joe: Then what?

Harper: Stick to the subject.

Joe: I don't know what that is. You have something you want to ask me? Ask me. Go.

Harper: I...can't. I'm scared of you.

Joe: I'm tired. I'm going to bed.

Harper: Tell me without making me ask. Please.

Joe: This is crazy, I'm not...

Harper: When you come through the door at night your face is never exactly the way I remembered it. I get surprised by something... mean and hard about the way you look. Even the weight of you in the bed at night, the way you breathe in your sleep seems unfamiliar. (Beat) You terrify me.

Joe: I know who you are.

Harper: Yes. I'm the enemy. That's easy. That doesn't change. You think you're the only one who hates sex; I do; I hate it with you; I do. I dream that you batter away at me till all my joints come apart, like wax, and I fall into pieces. It's like a punishment. It was wrong of me to marry you. I knew you...*(She stops herself)* It's a sin, and it's killing us both.

Joe: I can always tell when you've taken pills because it makes you red-faced and sweaty and frankly that's very often why I don't want to...

Harper: Because...

Joe: Well, you aren't pretty. Not like this.

Harper: I have something to ask you.

Joe: Then ASK! ASK! What in the hell are you...

Harper: Are you a homo? (Beat) Are you? If you try to walk out right now I'll put your dinner back in the oven and turn it up so high the whole building will fill with smoke and everyone in it will asphyxiate. So help me God I will. Now answer the question.

Joe: What if I...

(Beat)

Harper: Then tell me, please. And we'll see.

Joe: No. I'm not. I don't see what difference it makes.

(Beat)

Joe: I think we out to pray. Ask God for help. Ask him together...

Harper: God won't talk to me. I have to make up people to talk to me.

Joe: You have to keep asking.

Harper: I forgot the question. Oh yeah. God, is my husband a...

Joe: Stop it. Stop it. I'm warning you. Does that make any difference? That I might be one thing deep within, no matter how wrong or ugly that thing is, so long as I have fought, with everything I have, to kill it. What do you want from me? What do you want from me, Harper? More than that? For God's sake, there's nothing left, I'm a shell. There's nothing left to kill. (Beat) As long as my behavior is what I know it has to be. Decent. Correct. That alone in the eyes of God.

Harper: No, no, not that, that's Utah talk, Mormon talk, I hate it Joe, tell me, say it...

Joe: All I will say is that I am a very good man who has worked very hard to become good and you want to destroy that. You want to destroy me, but I am not going to let you do that.

(Beat)

Harper: I'm going to have a baby.

Joe: Liar.

Harper: You liar. A baby born addicted to pills. A baby who does not dream but who hallucinates, who stares up at us with big mirror eyes and who does not know who we are.

(Beat)

Joe: Are you really...

Harper: No. Yes. No. Yes. Get away from me. Now we both have a secret.