

JACK: THE FIRST RIP

By Elisa Simone Díaz

To be staged in traverse, in the rounds, or (if director is cautious with staging) in thrust.

JACK 1: Femme actor, early to mid-twenties. Timid and anxious, searching for a rush but scared of it regardless. Goes unnoticed by most everyone and hardly has control of her own life. This is her finding control.

JACK 2: Masc actor, mid-twenties to early thirties. Domineering, leering, unencumbered by guilt or conscious. Wants total control over everything and thrives on suffering with no sense of the cost. The more collateral damage the better

PROSTITUTE/POLLY: Female identifying actor, late teens to early twenties, Scottish prostitute who was disowned by her family because she got pregnant out of wedlock. Moved to London a month ago with her newborn. Not a bad bone in her body.

THE DEVIL: 30s-40s. Thinks he's the smartest in the room and is.

NOTE: I don't want this to become a mockery of identity or of dissociative identity disorder in any way. This is simply a merging of several theories about Jack the Ripper, focusing on the theories of Jack being a woman or having several changes of heart during the murder which is why there is such a variation in depth and intensity in the injuries inflicted on his victims. It is not due to neglect of research that the mutilation of women's genitalia that Jack the Ripper was known for is excluded. It is a conscious choice that this is left out.

Scene

Jazz Suite No.2: 6 Waltz II by Shostakovich is playing until dialogue begins.

JACK 1 is pacing back and forth in a dimly lit alley. There is one lamppost on stage; should not be bright but lit by a flame. There is a crouched figure near it, but the lighting should make it so that JACK 1 and the PROSTITUTE are in the foreground and focused; perhaps a softened spot or a strong aura on just JACK 1. She is clearly anxious, but thinks she's giving off a calm, calculated, and also terrifying demeanor. She is none of the above. The Prostitute JACK 1 just drugged is leaned against one of the alley walls facing the pacing JACK 1. The Prostitute is waking up and JACK 1 begins to "puff her feathers" so to speak. JACK 1 is fiddling with a blade in her hand

JACK 1 Well, good morning, dear. So nice of you to join us in the land of the living.

[PROSTITUTE goes to scream, gag prevents it]

JACK 1 Oh, come now surely you don't think someone as skilled as *I* would give you the opportunity to rat me out, now would I? I know better than anyone the precautionary steps to take when you're about to mur-- **JACK is gagging** mur-- umm... ki-- no, that's not uh, I .. **gag** excuse me a moment dear.

[JACK 1 rounds the corner and hurls up the last thing she ate at the pub. She keeps dry heaving for a couple of seconds, wipes her mouth, straightens up, adjusts her coat and hat, and returns to the alley.]

JACK 1 Bad fish, I'm sure you understand. Anyhow, I'm sure you're wondering all the things one typically wonders when they've been kidnapped. "Where am I? Who are you? What have you done to me? Do you know what your doing are you just a blithering idiot bumbling around for some sort of excitement because your a woman in London in the 1800s and the closest thing you can find to excitement is swapping your brother's expensive ale for that horse piss your cousin passes off as gin and watching the blood rush to his face when he realizes.... Or that's what I imagine you're thinking.

[PROSTITUTE stops crying. Powder, rouge and mascara are all caked to her face by dried tears and the only thing painted across her face is confusion.]

JACK 1 *ahem* so as I was saying, you're wondering what's happening. Well, madam, we met a couple of days ago actually. Likely you do not recall, for I was not dressed as keenly as I am now. I referred to myself as Elizabeth, clearly an alias, and told you I was interested in what the life of a... lady of the night, such as yourself, was like. We agreed to meet by the boarding school the next evening. Who did you encounter instead miss... Polly was it?

[JACK 1 moves to remove the gag but before doing so, raises a finger to her lips and then holds the blade up that she was toying with earlier. Her hand begins to shake. It clatters on the ground.]

JACK 1 **drat....** Stupid butterfly bl... *[mutters to herself nervously]*

[JACK 1 quickly moves the blade away and removes the gag from POLLY's mouth]

POLLY Please, mister..mistresss... ma'am...I-- just, please let me go. I dinna ken what you want from me. I'm jus a wee lass. Moved here from Scotland not too long ago, I've a wee bairn at home I need to feed. Please.

[JACK stiffens at the mention of a child]

JACK 1 Well, I'm sure your child loves being left alone to their devices while their mother is out fucking God knows who God knows where and doing it across the entire kingdom too... lovely. That is beside the point. We are not here to discuss your life, nor negotiate me letting go off you. Kil- **begins to gag again** murd-- **gag** OH FOR CHRIST'S SAKE!!! RIPPERS DON'T GAG WHEN THEY ARE IN THE ACT! **pause** I, erm, I am simply displaying how one would act if they were not a seasoned professional

as I... **quiet spell** Polly, do you know why you're here? **both their voices are wavering at this point**

POLLY no... I don't...

JACK 1 *[pause. Shuttering inhale]* Because you are the most stunning woman I have ever seen. *[pause]* You are a glowing goddess of beauty and radiance. Your hair is the most brilliant gold I've ever seen. *[getting lost in her thoughts]* Your skin...smoother than the porcelain in my mother's dining room. Your body... more perfectly molded than any statue of aphrodite to grace this earth..... I mean men literally *pay* to have one night with you and I--... I could never have you.

JACK 1 drops down slowly to a crouch against the wall as aura fades on him and another aura illuminates Crouched Figure/JACK 2, now a man identifying actor. He becomes serious with his tone. His posture is as straight as an arrow and nothing about him waivers. He turns to POLLY and looms over her. POLLY is visibly frightened. JACK 2 replaces her gag.

JACK 2 I hope you like my suit. Hand tailored by the best in town. Of course, he thinks it's for my brother-- couldn't have it tied to me lest someone sees it. And my top hat... now that's handmade by yours truly... d'you like it, sweet Polly?

POLLY doesn't look up. JACK 2 lifts her chin with the edge of his knife and with the knife, removes the gag again. POLLY's eyes are shut tightly, tears have begun streaming down her face again.

POLLY *[softly]* please... I beg of you...

JACK 2 *[stabs POLLY once in the abdomen]* open your eyes, dear. Look at the hat.... *[POLLY shakes her head. JACK 2 stabs her in the abdomen once more and twists]* I said OPEN. YOUR. EYES!

JACK 2 slices open her abdomen entirely. POLLY begins to bleed profusely and weakly sobs, barely loud enough for even JACK to hear. JACK 2 is next to the wall across POLLY smiling proudly and beginning to crouch down as his aura fades and JACK 1 returns in her aura fully lit. She is shaking profusely and begins to get choked up.

JACK 1 Oh dear God... I... I just wanted... what is happening I-- what did you do???? What did I do? Polly I... this was supposed to be quick; less... blood... I'm so....*Sorry. [gags]*

POLLY is struggling to breathe but is still conscious.

JACK1 Polly, I have to finish this.... I'll make it quick I swear I'll just...

[JACK 1 tries hesitantly to slice POLLY's throat but after one swift and barely flesh deep slice, she gags and begins to sob. JACK 1 is curled up in a ball and then suddenly JACK 2 he begins to straighten up. Both JACKs are still lit by their auras, JACK 1s is a bit dimmer]

JACK 2 Oh sweet, Jack... nice try my dear. But it's got to be deeper to put this one out of her misery... *[swiftly slices POLLY's throat down to the bone. She stops moving, her eyes lay open. JACK 2 smiles. JACK 1 then gets a ghastly look on her face. She begins to shake and paces in the ally then stares at POLLY.]*

JACK 1 I... I did it. Well, you did it. But then you're me and I'm you and *(beat)* we'll be caught. They'll know. Someone will find out I did this... Polly... she trusted me. She had a child... a baby. It's alone and it's my fault I-- I can't do this. I'm done. This is it. *[speaks directly to JACK 2 for the first time]* You won't take over... I won't let you. I can do this. I'm fine... we're fine...we'll be fine... *[JACK 1s voice trails off. She falls backs into the wall, curls into a ball against it, and starts to quietly sob.]*

POLLY's lifeless body stares at JACK through her dead eyes and then suddenly gets up, turns away from JACK downstage and bows. She walks away. JACK is startled and confused and bounces up.

JACKs but she was dead... we'd done it. We'd killed her I... WHAT'S HAPPENING?

JACKs look towards the direction where POLLY bowed. It's pitch black then suddenly house lights come up on an audience of demonic looking beings. THE DEVIL is seated front and center. He looks up at JACKs, and smirks. He chuckles a bit, waves his hand, and suddenly JACKs are shackled to a dingy, dirty stage. Lamppost and alley walls are removed.

JACKs begin to scream and cry and lash out as the patrons leave the theatre. JACKs finally collapse panting and strewn across the stage floor. THE DEVIL turns before exiting the theatre and glares at JACKs.

THE DEVIL Lovely performance, Jack.

[turns and begins to walk away then stops and turns back.]

Oh, and... welcome to hell. *[exit]*

Jazz Suite No.2: 6 Waltz II by Shostakovich starts up again as JACKs stare at the door THE DEVIL walked out of. Confusion lingers for a bit. Lights go out.

~Fin~