

THE \$4 MILLION GIVEAWAY by Art Shulman

AT RISE: In the bedroom, JESSE is on the phone, in his underwear.

JESSE

I give up. What is the difference between a snowman and a snow woman?... Very clever... Your son told you this riddle?... I know he likes me... Tell him that if he wants, I'll have a catch with him when I get back. I used to play football.

(KIMBERLY enters from the bathroom in her slip, holding JESSE's shirt, and playfully tosses it at him. SHE points at her wrist, indicating HE needs to get going. SHE exits to the bathroom.)

Tim, does the judge know I'll actually lose money on this project? ... Well, would you tell him I'm in New York and we'll fly back tomorrow... Also, please ask the head of the Zoning Board to call me here at the Knickerbocker Arms... I'm feeling well enough. Thanks for asking. Goodbye.

(KIMBERLY re-enters and starts to dress. HE does as well.)

Tim says the Zoning Board has filed for an injunction to stop the project. A small group of rich bastards, afraid low income housing anywhere near them will destroy "the quality of life as they know it".

KIMBERLY

What do you have against rich folks?

JESSE

Nothing. I'm a rich folk myself, aren't I? And I didn't get rich by allowing investments to go down the toilet.

KIMBERLY

You are losing money on this project.

JESSE

Building decent housing for those who can't otherwise afford it is not throwing money down the drain, even if I lose money. I'm allowed to use my money for pro bono purposes once in a while.

KIMBERLY

If they stop the project in the next few days you stand a chance of losing most of your fortune. You're overleveraged at the moment.

JESSE

I wouldn't worry.

KIMBERLY

Why don't you forget about the project? It'll take years before it's completed.

JESSE

I should compromise my principles because my time's running out?

KIMBERLY

Are you spearheading this project out of principle, or out of spite because they voted you down for membership at their country club?

JESSE

Because of all the liberal causes I support. Who is the largest contributor to the Sierra Club in the county? Kimberly, do you know the difference between a snowman and a snowwoman?

KIMBERLY

Snowballs?

JESSE

How did you know?

KIMBERLY

I was a juvenile at one time.

JESSE

Now for your reward.... Bzzzz...

KIMBERLY

They'll be here any minute.

JESSE

It takes but a moment to play Buzzer-Buzzer.

KIMBERLY

Jesse, I am a grown woman and your lead attorney, not your plaything.

JESSE

Kimberly, you are my personal attorney and my dearest... girlfriend. Not to mention masseuse.

KIMBERLY

And your valet.

JESSE

A good friend will humor her good friend when he requires it. Especially when he won't be around that much longer. Today I feel like enjoying life. I've been looking forward to today.

KIMBERLY

You are acting very frisky.

JESSE.

You beat me at Buzzer-Buzzer last time. Now I'm gonna win.

KIMBERLY

You get more fun from Buzzer-Buzzer than from making love.

(KIMBERLY raises her arms straight up. JESSE makes a buzzing sound as he slowly moves a pointed finger to KIMBERLY. Finally, he tickles her..)

I win again. Didn't laugh before your buzzer touched me. I haven't lost in weeks. Shall we play a different game next time?

JESSE

A different game shall be played here shortly. Now, why don't you go out there so we can check the set up again.

(KIMBERLY goes to the living room and walks about as JESSE turns on the television with a remote controller.)

Okay, walk around. That's it.

KIMBERLY

Testing, testing. One.

(SHE crosses to an area where a microphone is hidden.)

Two.

(KIMBERLY looks into the camera hidden in the track lighting, and pulls up her blouse.)

Three!

JESSE

I can see everything.

(JESSE enters the living room, looking at his pocket watch. KIMBERLY notices.)

KIMBERLY

I haven't seen that watch before.

JESSE

I've had it a while. I just haven't worn it recently.

KIMBERLY

It makes you seem older.

(JESSE places the pocket watch in his pocket.)

JESSE

It makes me feel like I'm in control.

KIMBERLY

I don't consider your `game' very admirable.

JESSE

How can you not admire a man for seeking to win inner peace?

KIMBERLY

That sounds sanctimonious.

JESSE

I mean it, Kimberly. I've carried grudges too long. I've got to rid myself of the poisons.

KIMBERLY

And just what is "inner peace"?

JESSE

It's the calmness that comes from attaining a sense of resolution with your life.

KIMBERLY

And exactly how are you going to win inner peace today?

JESSE

The winning is in the playing.

KIMBERLY

The playing?

JESSE

Just seeing them together... interacting... will satisfy me.

KIMBERLY

I'm not sure I like the part of you that thinks that's winning.

JESSE

You like that part of me as well as the rest of me. You admire my mystery.

KIMBERLY

No I don't! And I don't think you're all that sure about what you want from today.

JESSE

I am sure. You want a drink? I do.

KIMBERLY

You have no appetite for food.

JESSE

You should be glad I have the appetite for anything, given my condition.

KIMBERLY

Jesse, the doctors say you shouldn't have alcohol.

JESSE

If the doctors knew what they were talking about I wouldn't be in the condition I am. Alcohol is no more poisonous to my system than the chemicals they're already shooting through me.

KIMBERLY

Help yourself! Be right back! Gotta pee!

JESSE

What did you say?

KIMBERLY

"Gotta wee-wee."

JESSE

It's more...

JESSE AND KIMBERLY

...delicate sounding.

(SHE exits to the bathroom.)

JESSE

Where is it?

KIMBERLY (o.s.)

Where's what?

JESSE

The tequila. Where did you hide it?

KIMBERLY (o.s.)

(Teasing)

You can't find it?

JESSE

It's not easy to find something you hide, Kimberly.

KIMBERLY (o.s.)

I'd say you're the one good at hiding things. You haven't told me all you could about your guests today.

JESSE

I told you enough. You'll learn more about them soon.

KIMBERLY (o.s.)

You'd think after three years, you'd trust me more.

JESSE

If I didn't trust you, you wouldn't be here.

KIMBERLY

(Entering)

I may not be here as long as you think. The things you ask me to do and accept...

JESSE

What are you talking about?

KIMBERLY

The fact that if you can't trust me enough with your major secrets, then I may not be the right person for you.

JESSE

I've told you the most important things. And you are the right person for me.

KIMBERLY

Then you may not be the right person for me.

(JESSE nears where the tequila is hidden)

JESSE

This is all nonsense. Where's the tequila?

KIMBERLY

You're getting hot.

JESSE

I am not. We just made love.

KIMBERLY

I'm talking about how close you are to the tequila. Hot, cold.

JESSE

Would you please tell me where it is!

KIMBERLY

The desk.

(JESSE finds a deck of cards in the desk and leaves it out. HE finds the tequila, then notices the leftover sandwich.)

JESSE

What should we do with this sandwich?

KIMBERLY

Why don't you finish it?

JESSE

I don't eat other people's leftovers.

KIMBERLY

Why did you let the security guard eat here, anyway? You are not required to feed the security, especially from room service.

JESSE

He was hungry and I can afford it.

KIMBERLY

What if some of your guests don't show?

JESSE

They'll be here. Our invitation clearly said to be here promptly at 2 o'clock.

(A knock on the door. KIMBERLY takes the drink from JESSE before HE enters the bedroom, and sets it down. After JESSE exits, KIMBERLY opens the door to JENNIFER. Meanwhile, JESSE lies on the bed, and observes what happens through closed circuit television.)

KIMBERLY

Hello.

JENNIFER

I'm Jennifer Scott. Am I in the right place for the reading of Mr. Morgan's will? I left the "invitation" at home.

KIMBERLY

It's the right place. Come in please. I'll take your coat and umbrella.

(KIMBERLY hangs up JENNIFER's coat, and puts away her umbrella.)

JENNIFER

The rain's fierce out there. Why is there an armed guard stationed at the door?

KIMBERLY

There are some valuable items here. By the way, I'm Kimberly Farrell.

JENNIFER

My husband's personal secretary?

KIMBERLY

His attorney. And he's your ex-husband.

JENNIFER

My former ex-husband. I have a new ex-husband. Perfect record -- two marriages, two divorces. I'd die to have some of this furniture in my apartment. Sometimes I feel sorry for myself. Champagne taste and table wine budget. (*Beat*) You must be a good attorney. Jesse must have been rich enough to have hired someone top notch.

KIMBERLY

Top five percent of my class. Law Review.

JENNIFER

And you're so young, hardly older than my daughter.

KIMBERLY

(Suppressing surprise)
You have a daughter my age?

JENNIFER

Jesse didn't tell you?

(JESSE, watching the TV, reacts.)

KIMBERLY

No... (*Changing subject*) Care for something to drink? Coffee? Soft drink? Tequila?

JENNIFER

(With the impulse to accept, then thinking better of it)
Uh... no, thanks. Not just yet. I was surprised to learn of Jesse's passing, though to me it's as if he's been dead since he left me. Where is my... ex-husband? His body, where is it buried?

KIMBERLY

Your ex-husband's body is in the bedroom. You'll see his... body in a while.

JENNIFER

His ashes are in the bedroom?

KIMBERLY

Mr. Morgan hasn't been cremated. (*Looking into the hidden camera*) Yet!

JENNIFER

Why is his body in the bedroom?

KIMBERLY

That will become clear in a while.

JENNIFER

For eighteen years I had no idea where he was, if he was even alive... I was wondering why we're not reading the will at your office.

KIMBERLY

Mr. Morgan's wishes. Besides, my office is in California. Please have patience.

JENNIFER

I have patience. I also have a hell of a lot of anger toward him. He did desert us. I'm here only because of that ten thousand dollars, with a letter advising there was a lot more money to come. Why did it insist that I come alone, warning disinheritance if I brought someone along? Not that I had anyone to bring along.

KIMBERLY

Your daughter?

JENNIFER

She wouldn't have been interested in a reading of his will. I haven't even told the poor thing her father's actually dead. Is he laid out on the bed? Or is he in a coffin?

KIMBERLY

Right now I expect he's on the bed.

(JESSE laughs to himself.)

JENNIFER

Fine place to see my ex-husband for the first time in all these years -- a corpse in a hotel room.

KIMBERLY

A suite at the Knickerbocker Arms.

JENNIFER

We never stayed in places like the Knickerbocker Arms when we were married.

KIMBERLY

Jesse... Mr. Morgan didn't have money then?

JENNIFER

No. He must have lived in a mansion.

KIMBERLY

Depends on your definition of mansion.

JENNIFER

Any house with more than two bedrooms seemed like a mansion when we were married. Things have changed and my standards have modified. Gone down, actually. Now any apartment with more than one bedroom's a mansion to me (*without pause*) how rich was he?

KIMBERLY

You'll find out more once everyone's arrived.

JENNIFER

Who else...

(A knock on the door. KIMBERLY opens the door to MR. BENSON)

KIMBERLY

Hello. You must be Mr. Benson.

(JENNIFER crosses to the tequila.)

My name is Kimberly Farrell. I'm Mr. Morgan's attorney.

BENSON

Counselor. Why is there an armed guard?

KIMBERLY

Matter of security. Come in, please. May I take your raincoat and hat?

(After BENSON enters, KIMBERLY hangs up his raincoat and hat.)

BENSON

I'm here for the reading of Mr. Morgan's will, God rest his soul.

JENNIFER

Mr. Benson.

BENSON

Jennifer.

KIMBERLY

You know each other, of course.

JENNIFER

Of course. The last time we saw each other we were on opposite sides of a courtroom.

BENSON

How are you, Jennifer? And how is your daughter?

JENNIFER

We're surviving just fine, Mr. Benson.

BENSON

I'm very glad to know that. God takes care of his own.

JENNIFER

There was a time when you didn't think of me as one of God's own.

BENSON

Christians learn to forgive. I've become a good Christian.

JENNIFER

A friend showed me your picture in the newspaper last month, with the Bishop.

BENSON

I just help out once in a while on some of his projects.

JENNIFER

He gave you an award for working with his fund for the indigent. Nice of you to be concerned with the poor.

KIMBERLY

Care for some refreshment, Mr. Benson? Any sort of drink?

BENSON

No thank you, Kimberly.

JENNIFER

I'll have something, now.

KIMBERLY

Your preference? Soft drink? Coffee? Tequila?

JENNIFER

The tequila'll do. Get yourself a \$10,000 check from good old Jesse, Benson? Do you need the money? (*Beat*) Same as me. Surprising, that you need the money.

BENSON

I don't need any money. It was curiosity...

(A knock on the door. KIMBERLY crosses to the door and opens it to KEN as JENNIFER pours herself a drink.)