

THE MASTER ACTOR

SEPTEMBER

WEEK 4

PALE: I'm here. Don't be scared.

ANNA: Oh, God!

PALE: Don't be scared. I'm stone-cold sober.

ANNA: I'm half drunk. How the hell'd you get in?

PALE: Your friend gave me a key.

ANNA: Larry? Why?

PALE: He come by the bar, he left me a note and the key and shit. The ticket.

ANNA: What ticket?

PALE: I saw your dance tonight. (Pause) I looked for you, I didn't see you.

ANNA: I was hiding in the light booth.

PALE: You shoulda had Robbie for it. That guy didn't look right. He moves okay, he dances good, but he didn't look right.

ANNA: ... I did it for Robbie, actually. In my mind Robbie did it.

PALE: I could tell. (Pause) It wasn't what I thought it'd be.

ANNA: ... Me either.

PALE: The other stuff - those first two things was shit. That's why I never went to no modern dance. I knew that's what it was gonna be. I didn't stay for that piece after yours.

ANNA: You would have hated it.

PALE: Your thing was good.

ANNA: Thank you.

PALE: (Pause) It was real good. Everybody stood up and yelled.

ANNA: Eight or ten people stood up.

PALE: How'd that feel when they did that?

ANNA: I was very surprised. I was afraid everyone would hate it. It was a relief.

PALE: Made me feel good, too. (Pause) That was me and you up there. Only we ain't never danced. I could sue you for that.

ANNA: Probably.

PALE: It was kind – It's kinda embarrassing.. to see somebody being you up there.

ANNA: Yes, it is.

PALE: He did okay. He moves good. She was good. She ain't as pretty as you.

ANNA: What are you doing going to a dance in the middle of the – Did you take off work?

PALE: Shit. Yeah, I quit. Bust my nuts twenty years, that guy. I'm tending bar at Danny's. You know... Ray? (Pause) You didn't go to the party? I thought there was a party for you.

ANNA: ... I went, it was too noisy. Larry said he'd be here. I came home.

PALE: You been set up. Me too. He said he'd be here. (A long pause.)

ANNA: Pale... I don't want this. (She begins to cry softly.)

PALE: I know. I don't want it, too.

ANNA: What'd he say? The bastard. In the note?

PALE: I read it ten times already. I wasn't gonna come. I almost know it by heart. (Fishes it out of his pocket, hands it to her.)

ANNA: (Trying to read it, gives up.) That's okay. I can't...

PALE: ... What?

ANNA: I can't read it.

PALE: ... You cryin'? Somebody's always cryin' at your house.

ANNA: I know. I'm sorry. (Hands it back to him) I can't read it.

PALE: It says: "Pale, doll. Here's a ticket for the program tonight and my keys. We're going to the cast party and won't be home until three. I don't know how you're doing, but Anna is in pretty bad shape. This isn't opera, this is life, why should love always be tragic? Burn this." (He hands it to her. She folds it into a tent, puts it in the ashtray.) I been in pretty bad shape here, too. I never felt nothin' like this.

ANNA: ... I ... uh... I haven't either.

PALE: I don't know what to do with myself here.

ANNA: I know. (She lights a match, puts it under Larry's note, they watch it burn.)