



The Weekly Man

Episode 2: Monday - Jack

There was something wrong with that janitor. Jack knew this for a certainty: he was too amiable...not friendly...amiable. There had to be something wrong with that. *Who's amiable these days?* And he made too much noise when he worked, pounding and clanking and buzzing. Jack was sure the noise was intentional, a means to distract him from his work and lower his guard. They were waiting just around the corner from the noise, ready to pounce.

And what was this about the drip from the kitchen tap? How did he know about it? Jack had just noticed it for the first time and he was sure he hadn't told this man about it. How did he know? Who was he really working for? *What's he doing in my kitchen?* Jack was a mess.

But he was sure this was going to be the day. Yes, today...he wasn't going to lose his nerve this evening, not tonight. He was ready. He'd been ready for as long as he'd known her and tonight he would prove it, he would prove it to her and to himself.

Why does fixing a simple tap drip create so much noise? The banging. The Hammering. The squawks and crunches of metal on metal.

Tonight was going to be different.

It was dark. *Good.* He liked dark. Dark is a hiding place, a place of both safety and danger as opposed to the constant danger of light. Enemies can hide in the dark, waiting for him, their breath held as he approaches, waiting. They're always waiting for him. He knows this. He lives with it. Sooner or later they'll get him. That's inevitable. But they're not the only ones who can blend in with the dark: Jack was an expert at using its cover against them. Crosby would be proud of him.

Was she there already? Waiting for him? Waiting in the dark? He hoped not. He wanted to be early, see her arrive and watch her wait for him. You can learn a lot watching someone waiting. Like...who they might be working for.

He passed a convenience store wrapped so thick in ads for lotteries and junk food that he couldn't see inside. Was one of them in there right now? Peeking between the posters, following him with malevolent eyes? Radioing to the next watcher. "He's heading north on Queen."

In front of him. A man. Tall, lean, dressed in a long dark rain coat. Looking at him. Staring right into his eyes. Jack's stomach clenches. His heart races. It's one of them. He knows it. Coming for him now. The tall man smiles. Insidious smile. A smile that says got you now. He has to find an escape route.

There's an alley between the tall man and himself. The tall man is about twenty feet away; the alley, ten feet. He quickens his pace. When he reaches the entrance to the alley, he jumps into the darkness, the safety of dark, and runs. He can't look back. He doesn't know if he's being pursued or not, doesn't need to know. They're after him, if not here then somewhere else—the street, his home, on his way to meet her. They're everywhere. Watching him. Waiting.

Metal fire escapes loom over him, their silhouettes spidering up the sides of buildings, offering still more hiding places for them. Garbage bins reek of rotted food. Could they be hiding in those, immersed in yesterday's meals, peering out from yesterday's food packaging? He quickens his pace, not even thinking to look behind or around, eyes focussed on the light at the end of the alley. Just a few more feet and he'll be out. Into light surrounded by darkness.

He slinks into the light of a sparsely peopled street. No traffic.

Why did she want to meet here? Why not the hustle and bustle of downtown?

The safety of many eyes. But he needs to see her. He's put this off too long. He has to know. Is she real? Just another block and he'll know. She'll be real and he'll be with her, with all the promise she gave him in her communications. Oh, the things they would accomplish together. The changes they would make. The world they would create. The empires they would tumble with a flick of their minds.

He sees the coffee shop. The Spinning Cup. Small, dark inside, a conspiratorial place.

She picked well. Just the place to plan and scheme and start the movement that would begin the change.

He melts into the shadows between shards of light. A cab approaches slowly, the driver's eyes boring straight into his. He backs deep into the darkness of a doorway. The cab drives by. The driver doesn't look back. Maybe the driver thought he was looking for a taxi. He looks back at the coffee shop.

He sees her, tall, long blonde hair flowing over a full length tan rain coat. She's lean and beautiful, with a long hawk-like nose. He can't see her full face in the darkness but he knows she's beautiful. How could she not be? Her words, her opinions, her insight, her obvious admiration for his mind. He stands for several minutes watching her as she reaches into a small black purse and pulls out a package of cigarettes. She smokes. He would have to do something about that. She'll need to be in good health for the struggle ahead. She lights the cigarette with a Bic lighter, inhales deeply and blows out a spiraling cloud of smoke as she puts the lighter back in her purse.

A man in a short black leather jacket and jeans, wearing a baseball hat backwards walks towards her. She doesn't look at him. She takes another drag off her cigarette and holds it in until the exact moment the man in the leather coat passes her.

At that exact moment?

Why that exact moment? Why did she hold it in so long and pick that exact moment to exhale so that the man in and baseball hat would see it? So that he would know that she was exhaling?

But he knows the answer to that. He knows the truth behind the exhalation.

It was a signal. She's one of them. She's been one of them all along. The whole thing was a sham. She was working for them, building his trust, luring him in. She's not in love with him after all. He'd been duped. He feels foolish, hurt, angry.

She's one of them.

He shuffles slowly to the entrance of an alley.

And runs.

He runs with the sound of Crosby's cheering splitting him in two.

Three Hours Earlier – Valerie Vine

Valerie Vine didn't expect him to show up. He never did. She didn't doubt that he tried, time after time, but he never made it close enough to the meeting place for them to actually meet, and she knew there would be a message sent later, a message of apology with another lame excuse. He'd sent so many and none of them the same. *Sorry, but I had a sudden attack of stomach cramps. Sorry, but there was a sudden death in the family. Sorry, but I suddenly realized...*

She wouldn't say she was in love with him; it was more like an intense interest, an obsessive need to get into his head and figure out what made him tick. But then, it wasn't just that—the curiosity. She felt something else for him, a caring, a concern, a sense of responsibility that she couldn't understand because she'd never actually met Jack Morrison; at least not face to face. They'd never spoken to each other and all she really knew about him was from their emails and his record at the Agency, and if anyone at the Agency found out about what she was doing she'd be answering a lot of tough questions from people who would be looking to fry her ass. You don't fraternize with people on the List.

“What the hell are you doing?” She asked herself as she got ready to go to the Spinning Cup Coffee Shop.