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L I T E R A R Y S U P E R S T A R S

PILOT: "PROTECT YOUR AUTHOR!"

Written by

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LITERARY SUPERSTARS

EPISODE 1.01: "PILOT: PROTECT YOUR AUTHOR!"

FADE IN:

INT. EXPENSIVE NEW YORK HOTEL - BALLROOM - NIGHT

A swanky book launch is underway. Posters for a book titled "GIVING SOMETHING BACK" hang everywhere. WE GLIDE past THE SOCIETY CROWD, all sipping champagne.

JO (V.O.)

It was the most expensive book launch I'd ever thrown. From the caviar to the high-powered guest list, it was all my doing...

Still moving, we arrive at A SIDE ROOM, where we spy JO LOVEJOY -- 28, spunky, our heroine -- peering out fearfully around the doorframe. Her problem: she's naked. Totally buck naked. And clearly freaked out about it.

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So how the hell did I wind up naked in a back room at that launch with a 19-year-old waiter zipping up his pants behind me.

It's then that WE SEE a 19-year-old WAITER in the room behind Jo, pulling up his pants.

Someone tinkles a glass: the MC on the stage.

MC

Ladies and gentlemen! May I present to you, Ms Vanessa Moore, author of GIVING SOMETHING BACK.

VANESSA MOORE (50s, refined and elegant) sweeps up onto the stage to the applause of the crowd. Her dress seems a little too tight.

Jo glares at her from the doorway.

JO

The things I do for my job.

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Allow me to backtrack a little.

INT. EXPENSIVE NEW YORK HOTEL - BALLROOM - EARLIER THAT NIGHT

The swanky book launch again (same angle as before), only now gliding through the high society crowd holding a champagne flute and smiling to everyone is JO LOVEJOY, fully clothed, wearing a little black dress with nametag.

MAN

Hey Jo! Great party. You doing Tribeca in October?

JO

You bet I am. You seen Vanessa?

MAN

Think she went over there...

Jo passes some CELEBRITIES, thanks them for coming. But she's clearly distracted, her eyes searching for Vanessa.

Moving on, she arrives beside her two best friends, MONA (short, sweet, mousy, an editor) and SUZANNE KLUCK (early 40's, super-agent).

SUZANNE

Jo! Nice work on the party!

MONA

Glitzy parties, endless rivers of champagne. Why did I become an editor? I knew I shoulda become a publicist...

JO

You package the book, Mona, and I give it a glittering debut.

SUZANNE

Especially when the author is the boss's wife.

JO

I may have got a bigger budget than usual for this launch.

They all turn to assess a nearby POSTER for "GIVING SOMETHING BACK" by VANESSA MOORE.

SUZANNE

I don't care if she is the most powerful society hostess in New York, the book's a sanctimonious piece of crap.

CONTINUED:

JO

It's a heartwarming memoir told
with stately grace.

MONA

We gotta sell as many copies as
we can before word gets out and
it sinks like the Titanic.

JO

Yup.

MONA

Ooh, ladies, Jack Callaway alert.

They all turn as one to see JACK CALLAWAY talking with some
PEOPLE. Jack is a handsome, dashing guy. A real man. Jo
eyes him closely, perhaps longingly. Suzanne notices, and
whispers salaciously in Jo's ear:

SUZANNE

Man like that, you just want to
drip chocolate sauce all over his
naked body and lick it off --

JO

He doesn't even know I exist.

MONA

What's he doing here, anyway?
He's head of fiction at Tandem
House, the competition.

JO

(distracted, searching)
Vanessa's husband invited him.

Jo frowns. She can't find Vanessa.

SUZANNE

So what are your special
instructions tonight, Tinkerbell?

JO

How did you -- just one: Keep the
author away from alcohol. But I
don't know why -- she seems fine.
Have you seen her? Speeches are
up soon.

SUZANNE

Sorry, can't help you. Listen,
chickadee, we gotta split
straight after the speeches, hope
you don't mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO

That's okay. Hey, thanks for coming. I appreciate it.

Jo moves off, continuing her search.

She comes alongside PENELOPE POPE, a fellow publicist, early-30s, sexy, sly, 100% competitive. Also wearing a nametag, Penelope gives Jo a quick once-over as she speaks:

PENELOPE

Why, Josephine, you actually throw a hell of a party. Who'da thunk it?

JO

You seen my author anywhere, Penelope?

Penelope nods at a nearby side room.

PENELOPE

Yeah, I saw her over there a few minutes ago. Talking to the cute waiter I was planning on deflowering. Took the last glass of champagne right out of my ha --

JO

Champagne?! Oh, no...

Horror-struck, Jo hurries to the side room, yanks open the door --

INT. SIDE ROOM - HOTEL - EVENING

-- and enters, peering around a partition, to find the fully naked VANESSA MOORE lying on a table being, well, athletically fucked by an also naked (and standing) 19-YEAR-OLD WAITER. The delighted Vanessa sips from her champagne flute during the sex act.

VANESSA

Oh, you big-cocked stud! Give me your hard young dick! Give it to me!

Jo clears her throat.

The boy and Vanessa spin, startled.

JO

Vanessa. I'm sorry. But you're up in two minutes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, what neither Vanessa or her big-cocked stud knew was what had happened to their clothes while they'd been popping each other's corks.

INSERT: INT. THE SIDE ROOM - EARLIER STILL

The waiter and Vanessa throw off their clothes (revealing that Vanessa has no underwear on). Vanessa's dress lands on the base of a large PORTABLE COAT RACK near the partition... just as a HOTEL PORTER (who doesn't see it on his trolley) hurriedly wheels the rack away.

Back to scene:

VANESSA

Oh, God. Where's my dress?

Vanessa shoots a horrified look at Jo.

Of course, just then, THOMPSON MOORE, Vanessa's husband, pushes open the door. Vanessa and the waiter duck and hide. Jo spins.

THOMPSON MOORE

Ah, Josephine. Have you seen Vanessa? Speech time.

JO

I was just looking for her, sir. Maybe she went outside for a cigarette. Nerves.

THOMPSON MOORE

I'll go check the drive.

He leaves. Jo spins to Vanessa, looks her up and down, bites her lip...then she looks at her own dress.

JO (V.O.)

I recalled the words of my first boss and mentor, the great Felicity Spiegelman:

INSERT: FELICITY SPIEGELMAN, wearing a hot pink suit, leans over a desk and says straight to us:

FELICITY SPIEGELMAN

Your job, Jo, is to PROTECT YOUR AUTHOR!

Back to Jo, still thinking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO
Protect my author.

And so she whips off her dress (to also discreetly reveal she isn't wearing any underwear):

WAITER
Well hello Brazil!

JO
Shut up you. [to Vanessa] Here.
Put this on.

VANESSA
(re: Jo's no panties)
Didn't want the panty line, huh?

Vanessa slips on the dress.

JO
Slimline dress.

VANESSA
Balenciaga?

JO
Of course.

VANESSA
Can't even get away with a thong
in them, can you --

JO
Would you please go!

And Vanessa rushes out, leaving Jo standing there, buck-naked, with only her purse and the smirking nude waiter.

WAITER
You know...

JO
Down boy.

She peers out the doorway...and suddenly we're back at the beginning of the show. (Behind her, the waiter grabs his pants and starts putting them on.)

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Which was how I came to be naked
at my own party, twenty feet from
a hundred of the most influential
people in New York.

ANGLE: ON THE STAGE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

as Vanessa effortlessly begins her speech.

VANESSA

Thank you all sooo much for
coming tonight...

In her doorway, Jo relaxes, looks to the side -- we follow her gaze, to reveal JACK CALLAWAY standing near her doorway. He's ignoring the speech and looking sideways at her, a wry grin on his face.

JACK

Having a good time?

Jack spies the young waiter in the room behind Jo. Jo notices this.

JO

Oh, this is not what it --

JACK

Sure it isn't.

He rips a POSTER off the wall and hands it to her.

JACK (CONT'D)

Here. I'm giving something back.

Then he walks off. Jo takes the poster and bashfully covers herself with it.

INT. SIDE ROOM - HOTEL - LATER

A time delay. Jo now sits, covered with the poster, behind the doorframe -- bored. She peers out through the door.

HER POV: THE BALLROOM.

The party is over. The last handful of drunken PARTY-GOERS are leaving while HOTEL STAFF clean up.

JO (V.O.)

Of course, my horny young waiter friend split without offering to help me out. As for Vanessa, she went off and enjoyed the rest of the party in my dress. I waited, but she never came back.

Jo spies a GROUP OF THREE PARTY-GOERS leaving the ballroom. One of them is Jack Callaway. He glances sideways...and spots her. He nods farewell to his companions and strolls casually over to the side room's door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jack stands before Jo, hands in pockets, expensive overcoat draped over his forearm. This guy is cool.

JO (CONT'D)

I like your overcoat. Looks warm.

Jack looks down idly at his overcoat. He's enjoying this. After a moment:

JACK

Dinner.

JO

Excuse me?

JACK

We're negotiating. You get my coat. I get dinner with you wearing my coat.

JO

What? Now?

EXT. LATE-NIGHT DINER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Through the windows, we see Jo sitting opposite Jack Callaway, wearing his overcoat as they chat.

JO

Favorite book of all time?

INT. LATE-NIGHT DINER - SAME TIME

JACK

...THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA.

JO

I'd have to say PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Favorite movie based on a book?

JACK

SCHINDLER'S LIST.

JO

Again, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

Jack leans back, groaning. Jo smiles a thousand-watt smile.

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was having the date of my life. We talked so much, I completely forgot I had to go on tour early the next morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO (CONT'D)

A book that should be burned?

JACK

(pointedly)

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

JO

GIVING SOMETHING BACK by Vanessa
Moore.

They laugh. Jo's eyes sparkle. She's loving this.

JACK

So. Josephine J. Lovejoy. Gun
publicist and hopeless Jane
Austen fan. Willing to shed the
clothes on her back for her
authors. 25 words or less: how'd
you get this way?

JO

I blame high school.

JACK

Let me guess: the dreamy English
lit teacher who wore a suede
jacket and brown scarf?

JO

More like Young Jo with her
braces and her glasses, and --
damn you, God -- her way-too-late
bloom in the breast department.
Since boys didn't notice me, I
spent most of high school hiding
in the library.Jack gazes at her incongruously, pondering her. Jo,
however, sees a clock. It's 3.45 a.m.

JO (CONT'D)

Oh God, I have a 6 o'clock flight
and I haven't even packed! I'm so
sorry, but I have to go!

EXT. LATE-NIGHT DINER - STREET - NIGHT

Jo and Jack stand outside the diner, their late date over,
waiting for a cab. Jo is both anxious to get home and
kicking herself for missing this opportunity with Jack.

JACK

I'd love to see you again. May I
call you when you get back?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO
You certainly may.

She pulls a BUSINESS CARD from her purse, writes a number on the back.

JO (CONT'D)
This my home number.

She hands it to him, but as he takes the card, he steps in close, presses his body against hers...

JACK
Excuse my forwardness, but I just have to do this...

...and he kisses her long and gently on the lips. A great kiss.

ANGLE ON: JACK'S HANDS gently parting Jo's overcoat, revealing a glimpse of her naked skin beneath. Although no-one else can see it, her wholly naked front is pressed against his body. It's a sizzling kiss. Jo's in dreamland --

HONK! The lights of a cab break the moment.

They part. Jo quickly pulls her coat closed. Regathering himself too, Jack opens the cab door for her and Jo slides in, beaming. He gives the CABBIE some money, closes the door from the outside and the cab zooms off.

INT. CAB (MOVING) - NIGHT

Alone in the cab, Jo stares dreamily into space.

JO (V.O.)
I'd remember that night for a long time. A successful launch, back-room sex and an awkward naked moment that got me an awesome naked date. And so I went home, wearing Jack Callaway's coat, thinking Jack Callaway thoughts and contemplating more Jack Callaway nights. The only problem:
(beat)
Jack Callaway never called.

And off Jo's hopeful, smiling face, we --

SMASH TO BLACK

OPENING TITLES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT 1

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - MORNING

Jo enters the lobby, walking breezily. PEOPLE scurry past her like busy ants. She crosses to the elevators.

JO (V.O.)

It had been several months since the GIVING SOMETHING BACK launch, I was over Jack Callaway's mysterious brush-off and life was actually pretty good --

INT. RECEPTION AREA (STRAUSS OFFICES) - MORNING

Bing! The elevators open and Jo exits brightly.

JO (V.O.)

-- I'd just been promoted to senior publicist at Strauss-Holloway, I had a nice list of authors, a great new bag, no whiny man weighing me down and a spring in my stride...

Jo walks down a corridor, smiling happily at CO-WORKERS who, strangely, do not smile back. She notices this.

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...so how was I to know that --

She is stopped suddenly by Mona, who speaks in an anxious dramatic whisper:

MONA

-- We've been taken over by Tandem House. Their vast multi-national parent bought our vast multi-national parent this morning and heads are rolling.

They stand aside, allowing AN EXECUTIVE EDITOR to pass, carrying a box of belongings. Mona pulls Jo along the corridor.

MONA (CONT'D)

Editorial's been decimated. Associates like me are okay, but we're all going to have new bosses. Oh God, I just put a deposit down on a condo in Jersey --

JO

What about Publicity?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONA

-- Two bedrooms. Nice views of the city. Sure, it's not in the city, but the mortgage was much more sensible for someone on my sala --

JO

Mona. Do I still have a job?

MONA

Sorry. Yes. Only two publicists survived and you're one of them because you weren't hired directly by Janine or didn't come with her from Simon & Schuster.

JO

Who was the other one to stay?

MONA

Need you ask? I can only assume she slept with somebody. Good luck, see you tonight.

Mona dives away into her office, as Jo continues into --

INT. PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT - MORNING

-- an open-plan area, filled with cubicles and many book posters. She comes to her cubicle...

...only to find two people already there. MERILEE MEREWEATHER (40, hawk-eyed) sits in Jo's swivel chair like she owns it, which she kind of does now. Standing beside Merilee like a loyal attack dog is PENELOPE POPE (the rival publicist from the book launch), holding a file.

PENELOPE

Josephine. This is Merilee Mereweather, our new head of publicity --

MERILEE

Read.

PENELOPE

(reading from a file)
Right. Josephine J. Lovejoy. Recently appointed senior publicist. Looks after Barbara Steeler, Tom Harkin, Jessica Jones, and Kevin Mieville. Last performance evaluation, huh -- go figure: above average.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO
 (to Penelope)
 I'm so glad to see you survived
 the merger.

MERILEE
 Thank you for that, Polly --

PENELOPE
Penelope...

MERILEE
 Funny how that evaluation fails
 to mention that Miss Lovejoy was
 also the one who got Kevin
 Mieville onto Rush Limbaugh. Not
 everyone can get a 28-year-old
 sci-fi author onto Rush.

JO
 I read once that Rush had liked
 "Dune", and Kevin's book was a
 homage to Frank Herbert. It was
 worth a phone call.

MERILEE
 You also got Janet Maslin to
 review Barbara Steeler. So. Did
 Steeler really name Lorna Lovejoy
 after you?

INSERT: JO IN FRONT OF A MAGIC CG BLACKBOARD, talking to
 camera like a schoolteacher. (This is something we'll see
 regularly on this show.) The COVERS of several racy ROMANCE
 NOVELS by BARBARA STEELER pop up on the blackboard: "LORNA
 LOVEJOY AND THE BREATHLESS SUMMER", "THE LONGING IN LORNA'S
 HEART" etc.

JO (TO CAMERA)
 A moment to explain. Lorna
 Lovejoy was the galactically
 oversexed heroine of a series of
 outrageously popular romance
 novels by Barbara Steeler. The
 answer to Merilee's question, did
 Steeler name her heroine after
 me, unfortunately was --

Back to scene: Jo sighs. Not again.

JO (CONT'D)
 Yes...

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 After which most people usually
 ask:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MERILEE

So is Lorna's love life based on yours?

INSERT: JO at the blackboard reading from "THE LONGING IN LORNA'S HEART":

JO

"And then he thrust his engorged manhood into her and she arched her back, gasping in shock, the burning fire of glorious orgasm flooding through her body -- "

Back to scene:

JO (CONT'D)

Oh no.

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What I'd give for the burning fire of a glorious orgasm.

MERILEE

You're clearly good, Lovejoy, but you know what, I don't care. I don't want you here. Luckily for you, however, for one week my hands are tied. Consider yourself on probation.

(stands, gives Jo a sheet)

Here. It's your new list of authors.

JO

What about my old ones?

MERILEE

With the exception of Barbara Steeler -- whom I will manage from now on -- they're all being let go.

Merilee casually makes to leave.

JO

What!

MERILEE

Tandem House doesn't like keeping other houses' mid-level authors -- just as I don't like keeping other people's people, but apparently you won a fan at some "do" you threw recently and that's the only thing keeping you employed now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO
A fan? Who?

JACK (O.S.)
Me.

They all spin, to see the dashing JACK CALLAWAY enter the publicity department. Penelope gapes, quickly pushes up her breasts. Merilee bats her eyelids, too.

MERILEE
Why, Jack...

JACK
Hey Merilee, Randolph wants all the department heads in the boardroom, asap.
(shaking Penelope's hand)
Hi. Jack Callaway. Head of Fiction. Tandem Hardcover.

PENELOPE
Penelope Pope. I like hard things.

MERILEE
Jack, this is Josephi --

JO
(coolly)
We've met before.

JACK
At the Moore launch. Great party, great coverage. I also witnessed first-hand what Ms Lovejoy will do for her authors.

Jo gazes evenly at Jack, not breaking eye contact.

MERILEE
Jack's been on leave for the last couple months. Where've you been again, Jack?

JACK
Europe. Got back yesterday to find out about all this. [to Jo] And also to realize I left a few things hanging when I went.

JO
(giving away nothing)
Is that so?

Jack blinks, thrown, revealing a chink in his cool facade.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

If you'll...excuse me, I have to be...going. Welcome to Tandem House, ladies. I look forward to working with you both.

With a nod, Jack leaves.

PENELOPE

I need a cold shower.

Leaving as well, Merilee stops.

MERILEE

Oh, and Lovejoy, one more thing. Those authors of yours who are getting dumped, I'd like you to be the one to tell them.

JO

But that's usually an editor's job, not a --

MERILEE

I know, but their editors were all fired this morning and I don't want any Tandem people looking mean and nasty. I'd much prefer to make you the bad guy.

And with a final smile, Merilee breezes out, quickly followed by Penelope, leaving Jo standing there, stunned. And off her look, we --

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT 1.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT 2

INT. MONA'S OFFICE - TANDEM HOUSE - DAY

Mona reads a manuscript at her desk, when suddenly the bedraggled figure of Jo lunges into her doorway. Jo looks awful: her hair is everywhere, her make-up askew. Mona leaps from her desk to usher Jo to a chair.

MONA

Oh my goodness, what happened to you!

JO

Jessica Jones didn't appreciate getting dumped.

INSERT: The outdoor section of a cafe. JESSICA JONES throws her iced tea into Jo's face and storms off. Jo is left sitting there, dripping.

Back to: Mona's office. Jo slumps in the chair.

JO (CONT'D)

Neither did Tom Harkin. And I boned him over the phone.

INSERT: Jo at her desk, holding her phone away from her ear, so great is the abuse coming from the other end.

Jo hangs up, a little shocked, just as her COMPUTER starts pinging repeatedly. A loooooong list of emails lands in her Inbox, all of them from "HARKIN, TOM" and all with the subject line: **YOU BITCH!**... so that the constantly repeated words "**YOU BITCH!**" fill her screen.

Back to: Mona's office.

MONA

Oh, you poor thing. Welcome to my world: they love you when you sign 'em, but Hell hath no fury like an author dumped.

JO

But I can't hide behind the phone for the last one. I have to do it in person.

MONA

Why? Who is it?

INSERT: KEVIN MIEVILLE, a sweet sci-fi geek, writing at his computer in a yellow Captain Kirk skivvy. Spaceship toys cover his desk; sci-fi movie posters surround him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO (V.O.)

His name was Kevin Mieville and he was a sweet kid from Jersey who wrote science-fiction novels in a Captain Kirk skivvy.

INSERT: KEVIN talking to A RADIO ANNOUNCER in a studio -- the COVERS of his BOOKS: "EMPEROR OF JUPITER", "QUEEN OF VENUS" and "LORD OF MARS".

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'd done three books with Kevin, and his sales had risen with each one. In short, he had buzz with booksellers, many said he was a future literary superstar -- but unfortunately the raw data that Tandem's bean-counters used didn't calculate buzz.

EXT. KEVIN'S BASEMENT APARTMENT - NEW JERSEY - AFTERNOON

Jo walks down some steps to a dirty basement apartment. She carries TWO PASTRY BOXES. Knocks on the door.

INT. KEVIN'S BASEMENT APARTMENT - NEW JERSEY - AFTERNOON

KEVIN MIEVILLE opens the door. He's 28ish, fresh-faced, with glasses, and yep, he's wearing a Captain Kirk skivvy.

KEVIN

Jo! To what do I owe this pleasure? Come in! Come in!

Jo enters, scanning the apartment. It's tiny, and definitely the realm of an impoverished bachelor (unwashed dishes, pizza boxes, lava lamp). A life-sized cardboard cut-out of MR SPOCK stands beside one of BOBA FETT.

JO

(handing him the first box)
Brought you some cheesecake.

KEVIN

Hey-hey! Thanks! That'll be lunch for today.

Jo lifts the second BOX.

JO

Brought that, too. I've toured with you, so I know how badly you eat. It's a salad, you know, with vegetables, those green things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEVIN

Oh you...! Here, sit, sit. Let me
get you a coffee.

He hurries into his kitchenette and hits a button on A
MASSIVE PROFESSIONAL-SIZED ESPRESSO MACHINE.

JO

(Re: the espresso machine)

Hey, you bought it!

KEVIN

My journey to the Dark Side is
complete: I'm now jacked up 24
hours a day. Great for writing,
not for sleeping.

He gives her a coffee and sits opposite her, wide-eyed and
innocently eager. It's impossible not to like this guy.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

So, my ever-clever publicist.
What's up?

And we linger on Jo's face as she summons up the words to
dump this sweet young guy.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOOKWORM BOOKSTORE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

A funky basement bookstore in SoHo.

INT. BOOKWORM BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Jo sits with Mona and Suzanne on some couches. Behind the
counter, a stern-looking older WOMAN makes coffees and
sells books while reading a paperback novel.

JO

I couldn't do it.

MONA

Aw, Jo...!

SUZANNE

God, Tinkerbell, I hope you never
have kids.

JO

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Cause you'd kill 'em all by
mothering 'em to death! You're
 way too kind to your authors.

JO

Oh, and you're not?

INSERT: SUZANNE in her huge corner office at the William Morris Agency, talking into a headset while signing some contracts that her TWO ASSISTANTS bring in.

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Suzanne was a senior literary agent at the William Morris Agency and thus one of the three most powerful people in New York publishing.

SUZANNE

(soothingly into her headset)
 Jackie, darling, calm down. It'll be okay; you just keep writing and leave the negotiating to me -- Oh, look, there's David on Line 2 right now, just hold on --

(switches lines and then
barks into her headset:)
 DAVID! Listen up! This is how it's gonna happen all right! Jackie gets 3.5 million, today, or we walk. Oh, and I want a new editor for her, this last one made her cry. You have till close of business today.

(switches back to Line 1
 and to her soothing tone:)
 You there, Jackie? Got it all taken care of. I'll call you back later. Love to John and the kids.

Back to scene:

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

My mothering is healthy. It makes my authors money. Yours just soothes them on some airy-fairy, emotional level.

MONA

I think Jo has great maternal instincts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Listen, ladies. If women are going to rise up in the business world, we can't afford to go soft on every sweet sci-fi author-geek who doesn't deserve to get boned. Shit happens. Nice people get boned. And unless we women stop mothering and start boning, we'll never get a seat at the boardroom table.

JO

You know, somewhere in there, I think you've actually got a point.

As they continue talking, something catches Jo's eye: THREE KEVIN MIEVILLE BOOKS on a nearby bookshelf. She snuffs a laugh.

SUZANNE

I always have a point! Want another one? You're better off with Tandem House. Having a big publishing house behind you is like having a man with a great big dick --

MONA

Behind you?

SUZANNE

Behind, in front, on the side, 69, doesn't matter. What matters, and we all know it ladies, is size.

JO

You've lost me.

SUZANNE

When the most junior journalist tells someone he's calling from The New York Times, he still gets their full attention because it's a big paper. Ditto a guy with a long shlong: just as he makes a woman's job easier in the boudoir, working for Tandem House will make your job easier in publicity. For one thing, media'll be much easier to get, because the Tandem Group owns press and TV networks, so there'll be some quid-pro-quo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suzanne's voice trails away as -- Jo now sees A BROWSING CUSTOMER pick up one of the Kevin Mieville books and read the jacket. She watches intently.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Hello! Jo? I said, have you run into Jack Callaway at the office yet?

JO

What -- oh, yeah. I treated him with cool disdain.

SUZANNE

Tinks, give the guy a break. The man is sex on legs.

MONA

So if Jo were to get him between her legs, does that mean it'd be sex with sex itself. Gosh, it's like John Malkovich walking into his own head...

JO

Not gonna happen. He had his chance and he didn't take it.

The customer is now reading the Mieville book while he stands at the bookshelf.

SUZANNE

It was one phone call! If you still have half a chance, you should be throwing yourself naked at Jack Callaway.

MONA

I believe Jo already did that.

JO

Oh, touche.

MONA

I also heard someone say he was back with his ex, that British lingerie model --

JO

Lingerie model?

Now she sees the customer shrug and take the KEVIN MIEVILLE BOOK to the counter to buy it. The others keep talking as Jo stares at the customer handing over his MONEY for the book, and at KEVIN'S NAME on the spine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And something inside her clicks.

Then she's up, standing resolutely. Mona and Suzanne both turn in surprise.

JO (CONT'D)

Ladies. I'm off. I just realized
I've got a big day tomorrow.

MONA

How is that?

JO

I can't believe I'm going to say
this, but I'm going to risk my
job for an author I believe in.
[to Suzanne] And before you say
anything, this is not me being
mothering. It's me going in to
fight for someone I believe in.

Before Suzanne can answer, Jo strides out. Suzanne smiles
after her, and when Jo is gone, she turns to Mona:

SUZANNE

That's the best thing she's said
all night. Told you my mothering
was healthy.

And with that, we --

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT 2.

ACT 3

INT. TANDEM HOUSE BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

Jo arrives at work.

JO (V.O.)

You know the old saying,
"Everyone has a book in them"?
It's bullshit. The problem is
everyone thinks they do. There's
a famous story about Margaret
Atwood --

INT. COCKTAIL PARTY - NIGHT

MARGARET ATWOOD sips champagne with a BRAIN SURGEON. Over
this: **"DRAMATIZATION. NOT REALLY MARGARET ATWOOD."**

JO (V.O.)

-- she was at a cocktail party,
where she met a brain surgeon,
who on discovering she was a
famous novelist said:

BRAIN SURGEON

A novelist, you say! You know,
I've been thinking of writing a
novel, if only I could find the
time.

JO (V.O.)

To which Atwood replied:

MARGARET ATWOOD

Funny, I was thinking the other
day that I'd like to do some
brain surgery, if only I could
find the time.

Back to LOBBY, as Jo enters the elevator.

JO (V.O.)

Writing a novel is hard. Really
hard. Few people can do it once.
Fewer still can do it twice.
Which was why I was putting my
job on the line and going into
bat for Kevin Mieville.

The elevator doors close over her determined face.

INT. TANDEM HOUSE OFFICES - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Elevator doors open, and Jo walks out...to find Mona waiting for her.

MONA

You sure this is a good idea?

JO

(keeps walking)
There's an editorial meeting
scheduled for this morning.
Tandem's four most senior editors
are going to be there.

MONA

And what are you gonna do?

INT. TANDEM HOUSE OFFICES - PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Chased by Mona, Jo enters her cubicles, dumps her handbag, scoops up a KEVIN MIEVILLE NOVEL from her desk, and strides out again.

JO

I'm going to crash it.

INT. TANDEM HOUSE OFFICES - BOARDROOM - DAY

The boardroom doors are flung open, and Jo stands boldly in the doorway, fierce, determined...

JO

Hold on just one minute! I have
something to say!

...when her face falls.

REVERSE ANGLE: TWENTY EXECUTIVES sit around the huge boardroom table, including a very senior-looking GREY-HAIRED CHAIRMAN, MERILEE and JACK CALLAWAY. They all turn to face her. Uncomfortable silence.

MERILEE

Josephine? Perhaps we can discuss
this later.

JO

Yes, yes...good id --

CHAIRMAN

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO (V.O.)

He was Randolph Furst, chairman of the Tandem Group of companies. Turned out, this was a strategy meeting not an editorial one. That was tomorrow. I'd crashed the wrong meeting.

CHAIRMAN

You're a holdover from Strauss Holloway?

JO

Yes, sir. I am.

CHAIRMAN

And you have an issue with the way we do business?

Jo swallows.

JO

Ye--yes. I...I do. Sir.

The Chairman looks at her closely. The room is still. Merilee glances from the Chairman to Jo. Jack Callaway is inscrutable, almost amused.

CHAIRMAN

So what is it you have to say?

JO

It's about an author you're going to cut. Kevin Mieville. Sci-fi. Fast-paced. EMPEROR OF JUPITER. He may not be topping the charts just yet, but he's starting to ping on the sci-fi crowd's radar. Joss Whedon liked EMPEROR, he said so at StarCon last year.

MERILEE

Who is Joss Whedon?

EXECUTIVE 1

Ping on the sci-fi crowd's what?

EXECUTIVE 2

And what is StarCon?

Jo gulps, she's losing her nerve...

JO

Well, Whedon is...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Joss Whedon is the creator of Buffy, Angel and Firefly, many comic books and movies like Alien Resurrection. He's a living god in the sci-fi community.

CHAIRMAN

And StarCon is a science fiction convention...

MERILEE

What? Where losers go dressed up as Mr Spock and Darth Vader --

CHAIRMAN

...that my 16-year-old grandson went to last year, dressed as Data.

That shuts Merilee up.

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)

I'm an old man. I don't pretend to know what young people think. This is why I love spending time with my grandson.

(to Jo)

Clearly you know this stuff, too.

JO

It's my job to know.

CHAIRMAN

So it is. Just as it's my job to surround myself with people who know things I don't. What's this author's name again?

JO

Kevin Mieville, sir.

CHAIRMAN

Okay. Mr Mieville stays, for at least one more book. And he stays with you, Ms Lovejoy.

At the mention of her name, Jo's head jerks up, her eyes widening at a realization. She stares at Randolph Furst:

JO (V.O.)

And suddenly it hit me: since I'd arrived at that meeting, I hadn't actually mentioned my name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO (CONT'D)
(a whisper).
You know my --

CHAIRMAN
Never underestimate what I know,
Ms Lovejoy. You're on probation,
aren't you?

JO
Yes, sir, I am.

CHAIRMAN
Not anymore. In this whole
takeover, you're the only person
from Strauss Holloway who's stood
up for someone other than
themselves. Loyalty like that
should be rewarded. Consider your
probation period over.

Jo smiles. (Merilee scowls.)

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)
Now, if you don't mind. We have a
meeting to get on with.

JO
Oh, yes, right...

She backs out the door --

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BOARDROOM - DAY

-- and presses herself against the wall of the hallway,
breathless and stunned.

JO
I need some air.

She hurries toward the elevators.

EXT. ROOF - TANDEM HOUSE BUILDING - MORNING

Jo stands at the railing, looking dreamily out over
Manhattan. We move slowly around her, tight on her face,
until finally we see that someone is standing a short
distance behind her: Jack Callaway.

JACK
I stood over the phone a hundred
times with your number in my
hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO
 (still looking away)
 Is that so?

JACK
 That night we met, I saw what
 kind of person you are. It was
 why I had to kiss you.

Jo cocks her head sideways. Jack steps forward:

JACK (CONT'D)
 You're honest and you inspire
 honesty. You're decent and you
 inspire decency. You're loyal and
 you inspire loyalty.

JO
 All good reasons to have called
me --

JACK
 But what if I'm not those things?
 What if I felt you deserved
 better?

That catches Jo short. And suddenly she realizes he's
 standing very close now.

JO
 A man with secrets? The talented
 wunderkind who lost his way...

JACK
 I've made some mistakes...

He moves closer.

JO
 The charmer who got charmed...

JACK
 It seems so...

They're almost touching now, their lips about to meet...

JO
 You're not my Darcy, you're my
 Wickham...

JACK
 Maybe...

At the very last moment, she turns her cheek to accept his
 kiss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO

Not today.

Ba-bong. Game over. Insert another quarter, Jack. Jack pulls away from Jo -- to reveal her smiling face.

JO (CONT'D)

Y'know, working for the same company, there's a good chance we'll bump into each other again, and you could just earn yourself another chance to give me a call...

(a big smile)

...and no girl can resist a man who makes an effort.

Jack returns her smile. This girl is good. And as an outcome, this isn't bad either.

JACK

I can live with that.

JO

Good.

And with that he goes, leaving Jo alone on the roof.

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Life is always changing --

INT. BOOKWORM BOOKSTORE - CAFE - NIGHT

Jo arrives to find Suzanne and Mona already on their favorite couch. Smiles and greetings. Friends being friends.

JO (V.O.)

-- and sometimes you can control that change, other times you can't. My work life had changed, but my own life hadn't. I still had my friends --

INT. JO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We glide through Jo's apartment, past many BOOKS on shelves, before we come to the doorway to Jo's study, where we see her seated at a LAPTOP COMPUTER, tapping away.

JO (V.O.)

-- and I still had my books. Oh, and maybe I had one other thing, a secret thing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We push in on Jo in her study, and see THE SCREEN of her computer. While we don't see the TITLE itself, we see the line below it: "A novel by Josephine Lovejoy".

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You know how I said that not
everyone has a book in them.
Maybe I lied about that.

And as she types away late into the night, we --

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE.