

NO ESCAPE

by

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SYNOPSIS:

Helen is alone in a cabin in the middle of nowhere. A strange man, Jake, enters her cabin and refuses to leave. An announcement on the radio states that an escaped convict is on the loose. She tries to get rid of Jake who refuses to leave. She finally gets the upper hand on Jake and hides as the Sheriff comes to door, followed by Jake's wife, Elaine. It turns out Helen is the escaped convict. Jake almost leaves with Helen. But Jake decides to stay with his wife, a prisoner of love.

CHARACTERS: 2M 2F

HELEN F in her thirties, attractive. Tough at times and yet vulnerable at times.

JAKE M in his mid-forties and looks like he lived a hard life. He too is tough at times, yet sensitive at times.

SHERIFF M or F thirties to fifties, all business.

ELAINE F is a shrew, not nice at all, in her forties.

SETTING:

A living room of a cabin.

TIME:

Present.

RUN TIME:

35-45 minutes

AT RISE. A living room of a cabin.

The cabin is sparsely decorated with a couch, two chairs, a picture in a frame, a whiskey bottle, and a butcher knife. And pictures indicative of a lake home. It is dark outside and stormy. A radio is playing music, a dance tune. HELEN enters stage right adjusting her clothes as she does. She hears a song, a far away almost nostalgic look on her face. She dances over to the picture, admires it for a few seconds, and then holds it close to her breast and dances about the cabin with the picture as her partner. JAKE, a crude-looking man in his fifties, enters through a door stage left. HELEN comes face-to-face with JAKE. She lets out a SCREAM.

HELEN

Who are you? Get out!

JAKE walks over and turns down the radio.

JAKE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you.

HELEN

Get out, I said!

JAKE

Please. Just calm down.

HELEN

What do you want?

HELEN backs away as JAKE walks back toward her.

JAKE

Don't be afraid.

HELEN

Why shouldn't I be? Here I am. In the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the night. Alone. And a stranger breaks in. Who wouldn't be?

JAKE

I'm not going to hurt you.

HELEN

Sorry, but that doesn't make me feel better. Why should I believe you?

JAKE

You can believe whatever you want. Are you here alone?

HELEN

(hesitating) How did you get in here?

JAKE

I'm sorry. I knocked.

HELEN

I didn't hear.

JAKE

You probably couldn't hear me over the loud music.

HELEN

I like loud music. That's no excuse for just letting yourself in.

JAKE

Like I said. I figured you couldn't hear me.

HELEN

Maybe I just wanted to be left alone.

JAKE

Then you should lock your door.

HELEN

It was locked. It seems like a locked door didn't stop someone who really wanted to get in here. What is it you want?

JAKE

My car stopped running at the end of your driveway out there. I'm just unlucky, I guess.

HELEN

I think that makes me the unlucky one.

JAKE

Could I use your phone?

HELEN

I don't think so.

JAKE

I won't be but a minute.

HELEN

You've already been a minute. Look around. Do you see a phone?

JAKE

Then do you have a car or truck I could use?

HELEN

Look around. Do you see...

JAKE

(interrupting Helen)

I know. Don't tell me. You don't have one of those either.

HELEN

Cars and phones only cause problems. The world would be better off without them.

JAKE

Except when you need them.

HELEN

I don't need anyone.

JAKE

You never know when you might want something.

HELEN

I just want to be alone.

Jake looks at his watch.

JAKE

That means you're here all alone.

HELEN

I'm better off when I'm left alone. Which is what I'd wish you'd do right now.

JAKE

I would. That brings me back to my problem - with the car.

HELEN

Which means I have a problem. And I don't even have a car.

JAKE

It looks like I'm not getting anywhere here.

HELEN

Sorry I can't be of more help.

JAKE

No, you're not. Else you would have helped.

HELEN

Shouldn't you be leaving now?

JAKE looks at his watch, again.

JAKE

I would leave now but I'm not going to wander around in the dark trying to find someone who actually might be able to help me.

HELEN

You didn't seem to have any trouble finding me.

JAKE

My trouble was finding you.

HELEN

Funny. That's when my trouble started, too.

JAKE

Can I use your bathroom? And don't tell me you don't have one of those either.

HELEN

Right in through there.

*JAKE exits stage right.
HELEN nervously paces the living room.
She turns up the radio. The dance music is still playing. The song is interrupted.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER

We interrupt this broadcast for an important announcement. Police are still on the lookout for a dangerous killer who has escaped from Glenwood State...

HELEN turns off the radio. She paces and looks out the window.

HELEN starts for the door when JAKE re-enters.

JAKE

Going somewhere?

HELEN

You know. I just remembered. There is a car in the garage.

JAKE

I thought you said you didn't have a car.

HELEN

I don't. It's my brother's car. I store it for him in the garage.

JAKE

In the garage, huh? Do you have the keys?

HELEN

No, I don't. He always leaves them in the car. No reason why not, out here.

JAKE

I guess not. Well, sorry to have troubled you, Ma'am.

*JAKE leaves. HELEN follows and quickly re-enters. She worriedly paces back and forth. Finally, she crosses and sits on the couch.
JAKE re-enters. HELEN looks up to see JAKE. Again.*

HELEN

How did you get in? I know I locked that door! Didn't that mean anything to you?

JAKE

Sure. The door needs a better lock.

HELEN

I thought you said you were leaving!

JAKE

And I thought you said there was a car out there.

HELEN

Please - why don't you just leave me alone?

JAKE

That's what I was trying to do.

HELEN

I'm sure the neighbors would be of more help to you.

JAKE

That wouldn't take much.

HELEN

I don't know what else I can do.

JAKE

You know, it's dark outside and I'm tired. I like it right here. Maybe I'll just spend the night here.

HELEN

You can't be serious.

JAKE

Just lock your bedroom door and you won't have anything to worry about.

HELEN

It seems like locked doors don't seem to stop you.

JAKE checks his watch again.

JAKE

You got anything to drink here?

JAKE gets up, searches, and finds the bottle of whiskey.

JAKE

Want a shot?

HELEN refuses. He takes a drink and sits on the couch.

JAKE

The name's Jake, by the way. And yours is?

HELEN

My name is my own business.

JAKE

I just like to know who I'm drinking with.

HELEN

Okay, it's Helen, if you must know.

SIRENS are heard (OS) JAKE and HELEN each look back toward the sound, anxious and worried. JAKE goes to the window and looks out.

JAKE

I don't get it.

HELEN

There's a lot of things you don't get.

JAKE

I mean. A woman like you. Out here all alone like this in the country. Why isn't there a man around?

HELEN

Men are more trouble than cars and phones.

JAKE

I might say the same about women.

HELEN

Plus, they do less for you.

JAKE

Maybe you just haven't found the right man.

HELEN

All the men I've ever met think they're the right man.

JAKE

A man might be good for you.

HELEN

I don't see where a man has ever done anything for me, much less anything good. And that's why I'd rather be alone.

JAKE

Maybe I'd be good for you.

HELEN

I doubt that. I once knew a man who promised me I'd never have to work again for the rest of my life. He said that he would shower me with diamonds and furs.

JAKE

That doesn't sound so bad to me.

HELEN

It turns out I had to work harder than I've ever had to in my whole life. And as far as showering me with diamonds and furs. I would have been happy if he had just showered.

JAKE

You look like you got it pretty good now.

HELEN

No thanks to him. Or any man for that matter.

JAKE

It just doesn't figure to me. It seems to me that all my life I've met women who take and take and take. Aren't there any givers?

HELEN

Yes. There's givers out there. But mostly what they give you is trouble.

JAKE

And I suppose I'm giving you trouble now.

HELEN

Yes. And I don't want any trouble right now.

JAKE

Maybe I'm the kinda guy who would give you whatever you want.

HELEN

I knew another guy who would have given me the shirt off his back. The thing is, he didn't have one. It seems that the most generous men are the ones who don't have anything to give.

JAKE

Maybe that's why. They've given it all away.

HELEN

It's more likely they wasted it on themselves.

JAKE

Or they never had anything to begin with.

HELEN

What about you? Are you a taker or a giver?

JAKE

I've done my share of both in my life.

HELEN

Come on. Answer the question. Are you a taker or a giver?

JAKE

To be honest with you, I'd just as soon take. Like everyone else, I guess.

HELEN

God, I hate it when people say that.

JAKE

What?

HELEN

To be honest with you. Am I supposed to assume now that anything you say that doesn't start with 'to be honest with you' is a lie?

JAKE

It's just a saying. You should figure people are telling the truth.

HELEN

I'd rather believe that everyone's lying. Then when I find out it's not the truth, I'm not disappointed.

JAKE moves closer to HELEN.

JAKE

Men may lie a little. But you have to admit we're useful to have around.

HELEN gets up and separates herself from JAKE with the chair.

HELEN

There's nothing useful about a man being around.

JAKE

Not even for sex?

HELEN

Especially sex - unless you're talking about something useful to him.

JAKE

You can't judge all men by the few that you've known.

HELEN

You mean I should just assume that the next guy that comes along will finally be what I'm looking for?

JAKE

That's your problem, right there.

HELEN

You're right. It is my problem. There is no right man.

JAKE

That's true. There is no right man. It could be you've built this perfect picture of this perfect man in your mind. And when a man can't match this picture, you're disappointed. That's just unrealistic.

HELEN

You see. We can finally agree on something. There is no such man.

JAKE

All men are different. Just like all women are different. Like I said. You're just setting yourself up for disappointment.

HELEN

Men don't disappoint me anymore. Women either for that matter. I just depend on myself. That way I know what I'm dealing with.

SIRENS again are heard, this time louder. Again, worried looks. JAKE looks at his watch. Then notices the bottle is empty.

JAKE

Do you have any more to drink here?

JAKE gets up and finds another bottle.

HELEN

Just how am I supposed to judge men? By what other people say?

JAKE

Sue. Why not?

HELEN

I can't do that. No two people look at things the same way. And even when two people agree, you can't be sure you're agreeing on the same thing.

JAKE

If the sky's blue, the sky is blue, lady.

HELEN

That's just it. We may both say the sky is blue, but your blue might be my red, and vice versa.

JAKE

What? That's just crazy talk, Lady. Blue is blue. And red is red.

HELEN

Not to someone who is color blind.

JAKE

Exceptions to the rule - just like the men you've known. Most men aren't like that.

HELEN

Most men aren't like they are. They're not like when you first meet them. When you first meet a man, he acts real nice. Until he gets what he wants. And that's when he changes. He turns into his real self. If you don't believe me, just look at all the happy weddings that turn into unhappy divorces.

JAKE

Maybe it's the woman who changes. Did you ever think of that?

HELEN

All the more reason to be without a man. If I change, what difference does it make?

HELEN edges her way to the door.

JAKE notices and cuts her off.

JAKE

Where do you think you're going?

HELEN

If you're not leaving, then I am.

JAKE

I can't let you leave. It's not safe for a woman out there.

HELEN

It's not safe for a woman in here!

JAKE

I thought maybe we could get to know each other better.

HELEN

Get to know each other better. I know what that means.

JAKE

What would be so bad about that?

HELEN

What would be good about it? Besides, isn't there a Mrs. Jake waiting for you?

JAKE

What makes you think that I have a missus? Maybe I'm too smart for that.

HELEN

Maybe you know a lot of smart women.

JAKE

Smart women. Isn't that an oxymoron?

HELEN

Yes. Like alone together.

JAKE

That could describe a lot of married couples.

HELEN

Maybe you like being alone, too.

JAKE

Just because a guy isn't married doesn't mean he likes to be alone. But I like to have someone around, so I don't get lonely. Don't you ever get lonely?

HELEN

When I'm alone it doesn't mean I'm lonely. And just because I'm with someone doesn't mean I'm not lonely.

JAKE

There you go again.

HELEN

My folks were alone together. They spent most of their marriage alone together in the same house. Both of them lonely. They never could talk to each other. And when they did, it's like they couldn't even understand each other.

JAKE

If your mother was anything like you, I could see how that would happen.

*JAKE walks over to the picture
Helen danced with.
JAKE looks at it, picking it up.*

JAKE

Nice looking guy. Could it be there was a man that wasn't all that bad after all? Nice enough guy to dance with his picture?

HELEN

Dancing with a man's picture will get you in a lot less trouble than dancing with a man.

JAKE

And a lot less enjoyment I would think. Who is this guy? Certainly not your brother. When I saw you dancing, it wasn't a brother/sister kind of dance.

HELEN

Who he is - isn't important.

JAKE

You're still in love with him, aren't you? What happened? Did he leave you? And that's why you hate all men. This guy you loved, left you. Now - all men are jerks.

HELEN

You got the last part right anyway.

JAKE moves closer to HELEN.

JAKE

Hell, I can make you forget this guy.

With that, JAKE grabs HELEN and forces himself on her, trying to kiss her. She struggles free, slapping him. She runs and puts the chair between them. JAKE laughs maniacally.

HELEN

What do you think you're doing?

JAKE

Just trying to have a little fun is all.

HELEN

Aren't you listening? I'm not interested.

JAKE

Sure, I heard you. But I don't believe you. I think I know you better than you do.

HELEN

You don't know a thing about me.

JAKE

I know what you want.

HELEN

You know what YOU want. You must be pretty hard up to have to force yourself on a woman.

JAKE

Who's forcing? If I was forcing, we wouldn't even be talking now. No, I just want us to have some fun.

HELEN

Why don't you just leave?

JAKE

Why would I do that?

JAKE jumps over the couch. There is nowhere for HELEN to go. He hugs her and kisses her. HELEN lets out a cry. They separate. She is actually laughing.

JAKE

What's so funny?

HELEN

Nothing.

JAKE moves in for another kiss. HELEN laughs even louder.

JAKE

This isn't funny!

HELEN

I know!

JAKE

Then why are you laughing? Stop or I'll make you stop.

HELEN

I can't.

JAKE threatens to slap her but when HELEN sees the upraised arm, she laughs even harder. He stops.

JAKE

Ah hell, lady. You're crazy.

They take a few seconds to compose themselves. HELEN wipes tears from her eyes.

JAKE

I asked you. What's so funny?

HELEN

You. Me. This whole situation. I was scared. I always laugh when I'm scared.

JAKE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. I don't know if it was the booze or what. I'm not usually like this.

HELEN

Not usually?!

JAKE

Why do you take me so literally? I mean I'm not like this. And we're stranded here together. I thought we could just make the best of it.

HELEN

You just don't get it, do you?

JAKE checks his watch again.

HELEN (cont.)

Okay. Why are you checking your watch all the time? Do you have to be somewhere?

JAKE

Just a habit. Time is funny, you know. Sometimes it goes slow. But when you're having fun, it just flies by. Like now.

HELEN

Well, at least one of us is having fun.

Again, sirens are heard. They each look toward the window.

JAKE

Sounds like they're getting closer.

JAKE is looking the other way as HELEN dashes and grabs the knife. JAKE sees her and tries to stop her. JAKE is too late. He ends up about a foot away from HELEN who is holding the knife on him.

HELEN

Now! You! Get out!

JAKE

Ah, you won't use that, lady.

JAKE makes a move forward. HELEN takes a swipe at the air in front of him, just missing as he moves in time.

JAKE

Put that thing down before you hurt someone.

HELEN

I said. Get out!

JAKE

Okay! Okay Lady!

JAKE backs toward the front door, slowly. Carefully HELEN moves after him, threatening. They reach the front door. There is a loud KNOCK. JAKE and HELEN are startled.

HELEN looks to the door and JAKE grabs the knife from her and puts his hand over her mouth. There is a KNOCK again.

ELAINE (OS)

Why's the door locked? Let me in.

ELAINE jiggles the door handle.

ELAINE (OS)

I said let me in! Is there someone in there with you?

ELAINE knocks again.

ELAINE (OS)

I'm going to get the police!

After JAKE is sure ELAINE has gone, he removes his hand from HELEN'S mouth.

JAKE

What's she doing here?

HELEN

If you're smart, you'll leave now.

JAKE

I'm not going anywhere.

HELEN

You're not too smart. You heard the sirens. You heard her. She said she was going to get the cops. They'll be here any minute now.

HELEN nervously paces back and forth. JAKE looks out the window.

JAKE

Why did she have to show up?

HELEN

You've got to let me go.

JAKE

You'll go running to the police.

HELEN

Trust me. I won't go to the police.

JAKE

I'll just leave, and it'll be like none of this ever happened. Okay?

HELEN

But all of this did happen.

A SIREN is heard, closer. JAKE goes to the window. When his back is turned, HELEN sneaks out the back of the cabin STAGE RIGHT. JAKE looks after her but doesn't chase her. JAKE walks over to the radio and turns up the sound. It is another dance tune. JAKE picks up the picture and looks at it. Tosses it to the floor. He turns down the sound. There is a KNOCK on the door.

SHERIFF (OS)

This is the Sheriff.

JAKE slowly moves toward the couch and pours himself a drink. He sits. Again there is a KNOCK.

SHERIFF (OS)

Open the door. We know you're in there. We saw you in the window.

JAKE gets up and opens the door. The SHERIFF enters.

SHERIFF

Jake, your wife said she waited and waited but you didn't come home. She was driving to town to find you when saw your car outside Thompson's cabin here. She couldn't get in. We're looking for a convict. She escaped this morning.

JAKE

She? You mean a woman? An escaped convict? But?

SHERIFF

Have you seen her?

JAKE

What? Seen her? *(pause)* No. I haven't seen anyone.

ELAINE, a mean-looking woman enters and stomps around the house.

ELAINE

What are you doing here? Why did you leave me sitting alone at home all this time? You were supposed to get milk. How long does it take to get milk?

JAKE

My car stopped running outside. I came in looking for help.

SHERIFF

I'll go out and check on it.

SHERIFF exits.

ELAINE

Why didn't you let me in?

JAKE again sits down.

ELAINE (cont.)

Answer me. What have you been doing here all this time?

ELAINE picks up the bottle.

ELAINE (cont.)

You've been drinking. What have I told you about that? And another thing. You were supposed to fix that leaky faucet. That thing has been driving me crazy all day. I can't even hear myself think.

JAKE

I know what you mean. I haven't heard myself think for years.

ELAINE

(obviously not getting it)

What are you talking about? The faucet just started leaking a few days ago.

SHERIFF re-enters.

SHERIFF

Your keys were in your car. It turns out your car is just out of gas. I got Gus from the station coming out here with some gas.

JAKE

Is it okay if I just wait in here until he gets here?

SHERIFF

You might as well. This is Thompson's cabin, but it should be okay. It won't be too long.

SHERIFF exits.

ELAINE

Out of gas! Can't you even tell when you're out of gas? You should do like I do in my car and keep the tank full all the time. Every time I pass a gas station, I fill up. It's not that difficult. I don't know why I'm saying anything. It's like you don't even hear what I say.

ELAINE heads out the door, her voice fading into the distance as she does.

ELAINE (OS)

My mother told me not to marry you. "Marry Ed," she said. "Now Ed was..."

JAKE gets up and looks out the window.

JAKE

(knowing Elaine can't hear her)

I wish you *had* listened to your mother.

HELEN enters from stage right.

JAKE

Why didn't you get away?

HELEN

I tried. But there's nowhere else to go.

JAKE

You and me both.

HELEN

I thought for sure you'd turn me in.

JAKE

I should have.

HELEN

Why didn't you?

JAKE

I'm wondering that myself.

HELEN

Is that woman your wife?

JAKE

I'm afraid so.

HELEN

She is REALLY a... I shouldn't say it.

JAKE

I know. You don't have to say it.

HELEN

Yes. That voice. It's like fingernails scratching on a blackboard. How can you still be married to her?

JAKE

Sometimes it's easier to just. I don't know. It's just easier.

HELEN

I'm surprised you haven't done your wife in by now.

JAKE

Oh, I've thought about it. Oh yes. I've thought about it a lot. *(pause)* I guess you're the escaped convict, huh?

HELEN

That would be me.

JAKE

And a killer?

HELEN

Yes.

JAKE moves away from HELEN.

HELEN

Don't worry. I'm not going to kill you.

JAKE

But you *did* murder someone.

HELEN

Yes. I killed my husband.

JAKE

Your husband! What? How?

HELEN

He deserved it. I was just defending myself.

JAKE

If it was self-defense, I don't understand.

HELEN

Unfortunately, the cops and the jury didn't see it that way. I was innocent.

JAKE

Like everyone in prison.

HELEN

You don't believe me.

JAKE

You haven't even told me what not to believe.

HELEN

See. You're already predisposed against me.

JAKE

I am *not* predisposed. You were found guilty.

HELEN

What's the use? I'm out of here. I should have left when I had a chance. Just give me a ten-minute head start, okay?

HELEN starts for the door.

JAKE

No. Wait. Wait. Stay. Just tell me what happened.

HELEN

Okay. But I think I'll have that drink now.

HELEN sits on the couch. JAKE finds a glass and pours her a drink.

HELEN (cont.)

Where was I? Oh yeah, I probably shouldn't have had this drink. That's how it all started. He said I drank too much.

JAKE

That's what Elaine says about me.

HELEN

But when I think about it. It wasn't me as much as him. He'd start on a bottle, finish it, and pass out. The next day when he woke up, he wouldn't remember a thing. He blamed me, saying I must have drunk the whole thing.

JAKE

How did it happen? When you, ah?

HELEN

When I killed him?

JAKE

Yes.

HELEN

I was half asleep. He came home drunk and woke me up. He was abusive. Like always. This time it was different. He'd always slap me. This time the slaps were more like punches. It was almost like I was in a dream.

JAKE

Or a nightmare.

HELEN

Yes, a nightmare. I remembered his gun in his nightstand. I just wanted it to stop.

JAKE

And you stopped it...

HELEN

Yes. I stopped it... And I was free. For a while.

JAKE

I know what it's like. I've lived my whole life as a prisoner. Every day is the same as the one before. I just wanted a change today. That's all. Is that so bad? I just felt trapped. Nothing to look forward to. That's why I tried to kiss you. I never meant to hurt you.

HELEN

I know that. Sometimes things happen you have no control over.

JAKE

Right. It's like you're just watching and someone else is doing all this stuff.

HELEN

It's more as if you're one of those balls in a pinball machine.

JAKE

And you're hitting the flappers, so you don't lose?

HELEN

No, it's more like someone else is hitting the flappers, making you go places and do things you don't want to do. And you can only hope they don't tilt the machine.

JAKE

I think it's more like you want to be hit by the flappers. You get to play the game some more. It's when they don't, that your life is over.

HELEN

And you don't get to experience anything new and different.

JAKE

That's right. Something new and different. Like today. I mean, I get here and here you are. I walked in and you looked SO beautiful. And it's like you were here just for me. Like God said, 'Jake. Here you go. From Me to you. For all the hell I put you through for your entire life. Here's my gift to you.'

HELEN

That's what you thought? That I was beautiful?

JAKE

Of course. I've dreamt of meeting a woman like you all my life.

HELEN

No one ever told me that I was beautiful before.

JAKE

You never met the right man at the right time.

HELEN

Or had time for the right man.

JAKE

Maybe I could have been the right man.

HELEN

You know, maybe you could have been.

*This time HELEN and JAKE kiss like they mean it.
A horn SOUNDS outside. JAKE looks out the window and waves.*

JAKE

That was Gus. My car is ready to go.

HELEN

That must mean you're ready to go. I've got this crazy idea.

JAKE

Nothing would seem crazy to me anymore.

HELEN

Let's leave. Together.

JAKE

You and me?

HELEN

Yes, you and me. They're looking for me. They think I'm alone. But if I'm with you, they might just think I'm Elaine.

JAKE

Do you think you can make yourself up to look like her?

HELEN

That would take some doing. But I could try. What about your wife? Do you think you could just leave her like this?

JAKE

I've thought of leaving her many times.

HELEN

There's no time like right now.

JAKE

But where would we go?

HELEN

My friend, Jill, has a place. An apartment in Duluth.

JAKE

Minnesota?

HELEN

Yes, Minnesota. It's not bad. Jill's in Europe. She said I could stay there anytime. No one knows Jill or about the apartment. What do you say?

JAKE

You know I...we can get in a lot of trouble for this.

HELEN

I couldn't be in any more trouble.

JAKE

I've never been in trouble. Or in Duluth. I've never done anything - different.

HELEN

This might be a good time to start.

JAKE

Never is a good time to start.

HELEN

Even when you're feeling miserable?

JAKE

I know. What I mean is, I've always followed the rules. Her arbitrary rules were probably passed down from her mother. But they were Elaine's rules.

HELEN

Imagine not having to follow Elaine's rules.

JAKE

Do you know I've never even sat on my own couch? That's for company. And even then, it's covered by plastic. I know it sounds petty and silly. But it's just the tip of the iceberg of the petty and silly rules.

HELEN

Why do you put up with it all this time?

JAKE

To keep the peace. But the funny thing is, there was never any peace. Not from Elaine.

HELEN

Are you sure you want to do this?

JAKE

I'm not sure of anything. The last time I was sure was when I proposed to Elaine. And look how that turned out.

HELEN

Then let's go.

SIREN is heard. HELEN looks out the window.

HELEN

(Sounding a lot like Elaine)

What are you waiting for? We've got to go. Now!

JAKE just stares at HELEN.

JAKE

No. Wait. I can't.

HELEN

Why not? You just told me how miserable you are.

JAKE

I am. But just now, you sounded like her. Just like Elaine.

HELEN

So what?

JAKE

I'd probably be just as miserable with you.

HELEN

Miserable with her or miserable with me. What's the difference?

JAKE

The difference is - I love her.

HELEN

You do?

JAKE

Yes, I guess still do.

HELEN

You can't be serious.

JAKE

Plus, I think that as soon as you are free of here, you'd be free of me.

HELEN

Maybe. But then we'd both be free.

JAKE

I'm not so sure of that.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

ELAINE (OS)

Jake, are you still in there?

There is another KNOCK, louder.

JAKE

Because I know Elaine. She wouldn't give up until she tracked me down. (pause) Take my car. It's dark out there. The Sheriff will think it's me driving.

HELEN

Are you sure?

JAKE

Yes. This way at least one of us might be free.

ELAINE (OS)

Jake, if you're in there, open this door.

HELEN

(Desperate and frantic)

The keys. I need the keys.

JAKE

They're in the car. Just leave it somewhere when you're safe.

HELEN runs out the back door.

ELAINE (OS)

Jake, you should have been home by now. You better not be drinking in there.

JAKE pours himself another drink.

ELAINE (OS)

Jake, where are you going? I can see you driving off. You better be headed home. You better be there when I get there. That's all I've got to say.

JAKE slowly walks over and turns up the music. He smiles. Then he dances back and sits on the couch. He leans back, stretches his legs, and enjoys the quiet and the drink.

CURTAIN