

# *Sack of Feathers*

*by*

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Cast of Characters

HENRIETTA:

50's

JACKIE:

20's

Place

Jackie's Office

Time

Afternoon

Setting: Jackie's office.

At Rise: The office of Jackie who runs a powerful creative company that focuses on art installations for corporate events and art galleries.

**HENRIETTA:** Mom, I need to speak with you.

**JACKIE:** Not now, I'm busy.

**HENRIETTA:** It's serious.

(beat)

**JACKIE:** Sit down.

*Henrietta sits.*

What is it? And do me a favor, don't go on one of your long-winded stories, please. I have shit to do.

**HENRIETTA:** I'm not well.

**JACKIE:** Define, "Not well."

**HENRIETTA:** I've been getting dizzy spells and there's blood in my stool. I need to see a doctor.

**JACKIE:** Why are you wasting time telling me? Go see a doctor.

**HENRIETTA:** It's getting in the way of my thinking.

**JACKIE:** What is?

**HENRIETTA:** What I'm feeling.

**JACKIE:** Don't waste my time, go, go see a doctor right now.

**HENRIETTA:** I'm just about nearing the final touches to the installation.

**JACKIE:** Right.

**HENRIETTA:** I'm not certain I can get through.

**JACKIE:** ...Cause you're soft.

**HENRIETTA:** What?

**JACKIE:** You heard me. You are soft. Been soft your entire life. When you were little if you got a paper cut you would run to your father and cry for hours.

**HENRIETTA:** I was just a child.

**JACKIE:** Don't I know it. Soft all the way through middle school, high school, college and now here while working for me.

**HENRIETTA:** I'm not soft.

**JACKIE:** You're as hard as a sack of feathers.

**HENRIETTA:** ...You will never change.

**JACKIE:** Change? Why should I change?

**HENRIETTA:** You will never...forget it.

**JACKIE:** Expect you're gonna take some time off?

**HENRIETTA:** Not sure.

**JACKIE:** One week, two weeks this time, maybe? A month?! Just in time for the installation launch.

**HENRIETTA:** I wasn't planning on getting ill.

**JACKIE:** Now you're ill. You sure about that?

**HENRIETTA:** Why would I tell you if I didn't feel right?

**JACKIE:** Let me tell you about feeling ill. Each morning I rise, I look over to the opposite side of the bed and see no one. Nothing there but a cold emptiness. That was your father. Cold as ice in life and cold as ice being gone.

I didn't ask to take over the business but here I am and I've always knew I could do it better than him. The company has grown these past twelve years, year over year substantially because like you your father was soft. You are his replica! As soon as I took the reins I knew what to do and I was responsible for cutting out the fat and getting everyone in line. I wasn't afraid. I was angry! And right now I am as angry as ever!

Looking at you from the waist up, all I see is intelligence wasted. You mope around the premises like there's a gun to your head. Fear, uncertainty, panic...no guts! And I'm supposed to entrust this company to you when I'm gone? I think not. If I were the next of kin I would bend this company over my knee and give it a good spanking. You have no belief in your abilities and I'm not going to lead you by the hand and point ferociousness out to you. It's either in you or it's not, kid. (beat) So, there we are. That's the truth of this story.

**HENRIETTA:** How can I possibly be what you expect when every idea I present to you, you abuse?

**JACKIE:** Did you say abuse?

**HENRIETTA:** I did.

**JACKIE:** That's a good word. Abuuuuse. Apparently, my abuse does you no damn good.

**HENRIETTA:** But why do you think that's the way forward?

**JACKIE:** Because it works...it works with every single person working in this company but you.

**HENRIETTA:** It's wrong.

**JACKIE:** Oh, is it?

**HENRIETTA:** You should learn about collaboration and communication.

**JACKIE:** Ohhhh, look at you telling me what I should learn.

**HENRIETTA:** When you create an environment, a culture where people come together, like-minded people and we all work together to innovate and build something great...that's when you get the very best out of someone but when you put down ideas, rage and despise your team, I'm sorry but no great progress ever gets made...maybe for the short term but not the long term.

**JACKIE:** When you are nice to people they take advantage.

**HENRIETTA:** When you are nice to people you build relationships.

**JACKIE:** When you are nice to people they backstab you.

**HENRIETTA:** When you are nice to people they work harder for you.

**JACKIE:** When you are nice to people they mock you.

**HENRIETTA:** When you are nice to people they care.

**JACKIE:** When you are nice to people it all falls apart.

**HENRIETTA:** When you are nice to people you strengthen the foundation of the company because it's built on integrity and openness and isn't run like some third rate leader who barks orders all day like some kind of dictator who has no imagination or creativity or vision!

**JACKIE:** How do you feel?

**HENRIETTA:** Better!

**JACKIE:** You should go to the doctor.

**HENRIETTA:** I'm not going to the damn doctor! I'm going to finish this installation with my team and I'm going to do it my way without you interfering.

**JACKIE:** Really?

**HENRIETTA:** YES, really! And when this installation is a huge hit, like all my other previous installations, I'm going to inject *my* way of doing things around here.

**JACKIE:** Shut up.

**HENRIETTA:** No, you shut up! You shut up! This is how it's going to be or else I will leave. I will start my own company and give you a lesson on how things should really be done.

**JACKIE:** You don't have the guts.

**HENRIETTA:** Try me. I have all the contacts, I have my team in place, it's a snap of my finger and it's done. You want to see a fierce bitch, well now you see one and I don't give a damn if you are my mother or not because I've just about had enough of your abuse, *disgusting* word and I'm not going to take it anymore. Don't fuck with me, Jackie.

(pause.)

*Jackie gets up and goes over to her liquor cabinet. She pours whiskey into two glasses. Jackie casually walks over to Henrietta and hands her a glass.*

*Jackie clicks Henrietta's glass with her own. Both women drink.*

**JACKIE:** Finish the installation...see it through. After the showing, we will regroup and discuss future proceedings for the company. I've waited all my life...for this burden to be taken away...all my life...been working straight out of the gate...these hands have grown thick and rough, I can punch through glass with these hands and never flinch...been a long time...

**HENRIETTA:** I'm sorry I cursed at you, Mom.

**JACKIE:** Don't ruin the moment by apologizing. That was the best line I ever heard, "Don't fuck with me, Jackie."

*Both women laugh.*

**JACKIE:** (cont'd) I absolutely loved it. Thank you for that.

*Jackie sits back down behind her desk.*

...Truth is, I'm not well.

**HENRIETTA:** You?

**JACKIE:** May have caught it in time.

**HENRIETTA:** What do you mean??

**JACKIE:** Shhh, don't worry. I'm not going anywhere just yet. There's time. Right now, focus on the installation. See it through.

**HENRIETTA:** But why haven't you said anything? What did the doctors---

**JACKIE:** Henrietta, I don't want to bog down the power of this moment for anything. (beat) Let me get back to it. I have much to do and so do you.

*Henrietta hugs her mother.*

**HENRIETTA:** The installation will be great.

**JACKIE:** It better be.

**END OF PLAY**