

Jack's Life

by Catherine Mason

In the Morning

Jack wakes up after the alarm clock has been going off for about two minutes, gets tangled in the bedsheets and falls toward the bathroom.

In the bathroom he is met by the sight of his face with its bloodshot eyes, unwashed hair, and two day old beard in the mirror. Climbing into the shower he stays under the water until it goes cold, then goes out, puts on some clothes and forgets to shave.

Breakfast

In the kitchen Jack burns some toast and takes a beer out of the refrigerator. He leaves the toast in the toaster and takes the beer back to the bedroom.

The House

Dirty dishes are piled up on the kitchen counter, in the sink, and on the table. There is a dishwasher but it does not work, neither do most of the other appliances except for the television.

Shirts, underwear, pizza boxes-one with a couple of pieces of pizza still in it, and beer cans cover the carpet of every room except the kitchen and bathroom. The house is only one story with no basement and five rooms, so the big mess is spread all over a small area which makes it look even bigger.

Jack

Jack is tall, thin, and now rather sickly looking although once he was healthy and very attractive. He lives alone and is a very important executive at a very large, very important business firm. He doesn't like to wash dishes or pick up clothes.

Jack's Brother

Douglas III is Jack's very successful older brother who was named after his father, Douglas II. He is now Vice-President of the family business where Jack also works. He has a wife, two kids, a big house in the suburbs complete with swimming pool, tennis court and three car garage, a summer home in Malibu, a Mercedes and a salary of nearly \$200,000 a year. Jack does not get along that well with Douglas.

The Job

Jack does not like his job all that much even though he is a very important executive. It starts too early, ends too late, and the lunch hour is not long enough. The business trips are a real pain too.

Business Trips

Planes are delayed, luggage is lost, hotel computers lose reservations or refuse to accept his credit card, rental cars don't run smoothly, hotel rooms are too hot or too cold, the bed is too hard and Jack had to get up early in the morning to talk to some other important business executive about something he could not care less about.

Lunch

There is a fancy restaurant on the same block as the building where Jack works which is good because its really hard to find parking places downtown.

Jack eats with business partners, people from other important business firms, or by himself. His business partners and people from other important business firms like to order martinis or imported beers, but Jack had beer for breakfast so he orders scotch. After ordering six drinks each they forget to order lunch and leave.

Life with the Parents

The family lived in a big house in the suburbs and had a lot of money. Dad worked as the most important executive in a very important business firm that he eventually took over. Mom stayed home and watched soap operas except on Thursdays when she had her hair done and on Fridays when she went shopping with other wives of important executives. On weekends they would throw big parties for their friends or leave town to go on a business trip. On weekends Jack took piano lessons or played tennis with his friends on the tennis court in the backyard.

High School

Jack went to a private school that his mother had gone to when she was in high school.

When Jack graduated from high school his father gave him a car and had one of the servants take pictures of the ceremony because he had to go to New York on a business trip. Jack's mother went with his father to New York but made sure Jack's best suit was clean before she left.

College

After high school Jack went to college like everyone else from private school. His father had gone to a very prestigious college so Jack went there too.

In college Jack studied business because that was what his father had studied and threw parties which his father had never done when he was in college. After college Jack's father gave Jack a job at the very important business firm he owned.

Bottles

Jack likes bottles, particularly bottles filled with liquids. He buys lots of them and when they are empty he stacks them side by side on the kitchen counter.

The Family

There's Shirley and Douglas II, Jack's mother and father; Jack's mother's brother who works at the very important business firm Jack's father owns and his wife; Anne and Steve, Jack's grandparents on his father's side who started the family business; Douglas III, Jack's very successful older brother who is the Vice-President of the family business firm; and the German shepard, Boo-boo. Once there was a wife and two kids in Jack's home but they moved out when Jack did not come home for dinner for a third week in a row.

The Car

When Jack got married he bought a brand new white cadillac with grey interior, electric windows, stereo cassette player, leather covered steering wheel, air conditioning, and cruise control. Now Jack owns an old dirty Cadillac with stained interior, cracked windows, an empty space where the cassette player used to be before it was stolen, rubber covered steering wheel, broken air conditioning and cruise control.

Accidents

Jack has been in three car accidents in the last two months, all of them occurring after he left one of his favorite hangouts. He has no insurance and a big dent that covers the entire left side of his car.

Favorite Hangouts

The Alley Cat Bar, Steve's Bar and Grill, The Grass Slipper, and The Cathouse. None of them open before five at night nor close before two in the morning. All of them serve booze.

His Ex-Wife

Sylvia lives with her two children in a city far away from Jack. She does not like bottles or nightclubs and likes to have the dishes washed and the clothes picked up. She doesn't call Jack very often except to tell him he is behind on the child support.

Dinner

After work Jack goes to one of his favorite hang-outs and to sit at the bar and order scotch. On the weekend he stays at home and sits in front of the television eating pizza and drinking beer.

Conventions

Conventions are like business trips except at conventions a large number of very important business executives from a large number of very large businesses get together for several days to listen to lectures on subjects they could not care less about.

There is a business convention being held in Las Vegas during one of the busiest months for the business firm Jack works for. The business cannot afford to send anyone they need so they send Jack.

Las Vegas

Fancy Hotels, expensive dinners, bright lights, Black Jack, Wayne Newton, slot machines, show girls, wet bars in the hotel rooms and the company is paying for everything. Jack likes Las Vegas.

In the morning in Las Vegas

The alarm goes off waking Jack up in time for his seven o'clock wake up call. Jack hangs up the phone, gets caught in the bed sheets and falls towards the bathroom.

In the bathroom Jack's eyes are too blurry to see his face in the mirror as he climbs into the shower. When the water goes cold he gets out, puts on some clothes and remembers to shave.

Breakfast in Las Vegas

In the hotel room Jack peels a bruised banana and grabs a bottle out of the wet bar. He takes one bite of the banana and takes the bottle with him to the lecture.

Lectures

Saturday 8:00 a.m. Long Range Planning: How to read the crystal ball of business.

10:00 a.m. Computers in the Business: Man and Machine together for profit.

12:30 p.m. Lunch: How to make your business seem more productive than others in forty five minutes or less.

1:30 p.m. Employer-Employee relations: Better communications in the work place.

7:00 p.m. Financial Management: How to do the most within your company's budget.

Lectures Jack Went to

Saturday 8:00-8:15 a.m. Long Range Planning: How to read the crystal ball of business.

Cheryl

Cheryl is a show girl at one of the fancy hotels Jack visits. She likes dancing, laughing, talking and businessmen that come to Las Vegas for conventions.

Jack likes Cheryl and takes her back to his hotel. The next morning Cheryl is gone. So is Jack's watch, cash, credit cards, and the solid gold cuff links that his father gave him when he joined the company.

Getting Home

Jack gets up late, can't find a taxi, gets a taxi to the airport in time to find his flight has been delayed. When he gets home he waits thirty-five minutes for his luggage then takes a taxi directly to the office where the bill for his expenses while in Las Vegas has arrived two hours before him.

Jack's Expenses

\$10,209 including the \$8,011 Jack lost playing Black Jack and the \$305 he spent on imported caviar and champagne. All items include fifteen percent gratuity.

At the Office

Jack's father, who runs the business firm Jack works for, is very disappointed with Jack and says it would be a good idea if Jack took an indefinite leave from the company. Jack's name is removed from the office door, the company's employee list, the American Express gold card membership and the guest list for the upcoming family reunion.

Unemployment

Jack sells his house and moves into a one room apartment downtown close to the unemployment office where he stands in line for several hours every day.

During the Night

Jack likes the nightclubs more than his apartment so he stays in them sometimes until they close early in the morning. When they close he walks home through the streets alone.