

DIANA

(packing a suitcase)

I think the time has come to reevaluate our relationship, Max.

MAX

So I see.

DIANA

I don't like the way this script of ours is turning out. It's turning into a seedy little drama. Middle aged man leaves wife and family for young, heartless woman, goes to pot – "Blue Angel" with Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings. I don't like it.

MAX

So you're going to cancel the show. Let me do that.

DIANA

The simple fact is, Max, that you're a family man. You like a home and kids and that's beautiful, but I'm incapable of any such commitment. All you'll get from me is another couple of months of intermittent sex and recriminate and ugly little scenes like the one we had last night. I'm sorry for all those things I said to you last night. You're not the worst fuck I've ever had. Believe me, I've had worse. You don't puff and snortle and make death like rattles. As a matter of fact, you're rather serene in the sack.

MAX

Why is it that a woman always thinks that the most savage thing she can say to a man, is to impugn his cocksmanhood?

DIANA

I'm sorry I impugned your cocksmanhood.

MAX

I gave up comparing genitals back in the schoolyard.

DIANA

You're being docile as hell about this.

MAX

Ah hell, Diana. I knew it was over with us weeks ago.

DIANA

Will you go back to your wife?

MAX

I'll give it a try, but I don't think she'll jump at it. But don't worry about me. I'll manage. I always have. I always will. I'm more concerned about you. You're not the boozier type so I figure a year, maybe two before you crack up or jump out of your fourteenth floor office window.

DIANA

Stop selling, Max. I don't need you. I don't want your pain. I don't want your menopausal decay and death. I don't need you, Max. Now get out.

MAX

You need me. You need me badly because I'm your last contact with human reality. I love you. And that painful, decaying love is the only thing between you and the shrieking nothingness you live the rest of the day.

DIANA

Then don't leave me.

MAX

It's too late, Diana. There's nothing left in you I can live with. You're one of Howard's humanoids and if I stay with you, I'll be destroyed. Like Howard Beale was destroyed. Like Laureene Hobbs was destroyed. Like everything you and television touch is destroyed. You're television incarnate, Diana; indifferent to suffering, insensitive to joy. All of life is reduced to the common rubble of banality. War, murder, death, all the same to you as bottles of beer. And the daily business of life is a corrupt comedy. You even shatter the sensations of time and space into split seconds and instant replays. You're madness, Diana. Virulent madness. And everything you touch dies with you. But not me. Not as long as I can feel pleasure and pain and love.

And it's a happy ending. Wayward husband comes to his senses. Returns to his wife with whom he has established a long and sustaining love. Heartless young woman left alone in her arctic desolation. Music up with a swell. Final commercial. And here are a few scenes from next week's show.

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