

You Don't Know Jack.

by David James

Susan said since her divorce three years ago there have been too many Jacks in her life. Seven, if she counted that older guy. She knew that now. Too many. It was the name and little else that drew her to men. She told me the name alone was like Pavlov's bell. It seems the Jacks could spot her, too, sense her goodness and know that beneath her gentle nature there would be a passionate, feral woman when the lights were out. She said she could meet a Jack, probably any Jack, on a plane, at the track, or, hell, there was even that police guy who pulled her over for rolling a stop sign and almost immediately she'd be hooked. The last Jack was the new choir director at her church. She would meet a Jack, chat about five minutes, swap numbers and within a week she would accept his entreaty to move in during a suggestive phone call.

She told me the relationships were not long lasting, but there was a rhythm to them. She said the routine was that they would come home after work, start the evening with a meal and mint tea in the kitchen, end up in her tub, frothing with bubbles, then singing a duet to a silly, popular song while toweling each other off and then end up making love, often in the hall, unable to contain their passion.

As we were sitting there talking, Susan had just finished telling me she has turned the tide that she's done with this stupid name infatuation when she got a call on her cell. She placed her hand over it and said, "It's my ex and I have to take it." I was silent and she said, "Yes, I mulched the goddamned pansies, Jack".