

THE THIRD STORY

Constance, Steve (1 woman, 1 man)

Act I Scene 12

1940's. A scientific lab. The frosty scientist, Dr. Constance Hudson, has broken her contract with mob queen, Queenie Bartlett. Queenie's devoted gangster son, Steve, has seemingly come to make amends.

CONSTANCE

Mr. Bartlett, what can I do for you?

STEVE

You left something behind in your mad haste to escape our dastardly clutches. *(She reaches for the package.)* I'd rather you opened it when we were alone.

CONSTANCE

You are impertinent.

STEVE

Been burning the late night oil?

CONSTANCE

And if I have?

STEVE

It becomes you. Your hair isn't quite so -- tight.

CONSTANCE

Now may I see what's inside that package?

STEVE

My pleasure.

(Steve hands her the package. She unwraps it. It's a pair of bedroom slippers.)

STEVE

They were found in a closet in the old lab. You didn't miss 'em? They look awfully comfy.

CONSTANCE

It was thoughtful of you to return them. Why? I should think I would be persona non grata in the world of Queenie Bartlett and company.

STEVE

You're not on her list of favorites. That was not a nice letter you wrote her. Hurt her feelings. Hurt 'em bad.

THE THIRD STORY

CONSTANCE

It was an unfortunate situation I prefer not to discuss. How is your mother?

STEVE

Something's up with her. I don't think she's well. Of course, she denies it. I told her she should see a doctor. Maybe she's anemic.

CONSTANCE

Is that why you're here? You think I know something?

STEVE

Do you? My mother's everything in the world to me.

CONSTANCE

There's really nothing I can tell you.

STEVE

You seem different today.

CONSTANCE

We've had some exciting developments.

STEVE

That's good. *(Pause)* When things go well, gets you charged up. What's that chemical inside that makes your heart race?

CONSTANCE

Adrenaline.

STEVE

Yeah. Adrenaline.

CONSTANCE

I really must get back to work.

STEVE

That great brain of yours is always charged.

CONSTANCE

Sometimes I don't know what to think.

(He takes her in his arms and kisses her.)

CONSTANCE

Oh, Stephen, please. I'm not the sort of woman who --- *(She yields to his kisses.)*

THE THIRD STORY

STEVE

You're not thinking now.

(He kisses her again passionately. She pulls away.)

CONSTANCE

Stephen, I can't help but wonder if I'm not merely a feminine symbol that you're compelled to penetrate for social rather than sexual gratification.

STEVE

Nope. I've got the plain, old-fashioned hots for you.

(He grabs her close to him and kisses her again. Once more, Constance pulls away.)

CONSTANCE

This is wrong, Stephen. You have a wife.

STEVE

Let's have this moment to remember.

CONSTANCE

Would that be enough for you? Wouldn't you want more?

STEVE

You're very confident. I like that in a woman.

CONSTANCE

What you mistake for confidence is merely an old maid's trepidation of the phallus.

STEVE

Connie, I wouldn't do anything to hurt you.

CONSTANCE

I'm afraid my studies of the male of the species have left me singularly unimpressed.

STEVE

Angel, there's an old saying I once read in a book, and truer words were never written. *(He caresses her cheek.)* "Don't, by all means don't, believe everything you read in books."

(Steve tips his hat and exits, leaving Connie breathless.)