

THE THIRD STORY

Queenie, Constance (2 women)

Act I
Scene 6

A scientific lab. The elegant queen of the mob, Queenie Bartlett, visits the frosty scientist, Dr. Constance Hudson, at her lab.

CONSTANCE

Your offer is extraordinary. But you understand, there can be no strings attached.

QUEENIE

Dr. Hudson, my only goal is for you to succeed. Losing your funding was a rotten break.

CONSTANCE

The scientific bureaucracy has effectively neutralized my attempts to create life from life.

QUEENIE

Well, your dark days are over. Whatever you need, I'll foot the bill. The double, the identical twin. It shows up full size? The same age as the original?

CONSTANCE

That is what I am attempting to do. Yes.

QUEENIE

But can you stuff the brain with all the memories of the original person?

CONSTANCE

I am of the belief that memory is connected to cellular structure.

QUEENIE

What about the sense of humor? Would the double have to be a grim-faced Gussie?

CONSTANCE

Wit can be viewed as a by-product of cerebral configuration.

QUEENIE

What about love? Can you transfer feelings from one person to another?

CONSTANCE

Mrs. Bartlett, are you by chance hoping I would make a double of you?

QUEENIE

That's the ticket.

CONSTANCE

You are intrigued by the fantasy of being in two places at once?

THE THIRD STORY

QUEENIE

Yes. Because one of us will be lying in a grave. I'm dying, Dr. Hudson. I need this double to carry on my work and to protect my son.

CONSTANCE

Your work is not unfamiliar to me. I've read about "the Bartlett Syndicate" in connection with Senator Crenshaw's investigation of organized crime.

QUEENIE

Don't believe everything you read in the papers. Sure, I walk on the shady side of the street from time to time, but no more than any of the folks you vote for on Election Day. One more question. If this double is exactly like me, wouldn't it also have the same tumor?

CONSTANCE

I shouldn't think so. But there would be that risk. However, you seem like a woman who thrives on risk.

QUEENIE

When do we get started?

CONSTANCE

My work has never ended. Despite my financial woes, I've maintained a skeleton staff.

QUEENIE

I meant, when do you make my twin?

CONSTANCE

I'm still doing clinical trials on rodents. I will not be rushed. My credo has always been "Collect, collate, evaluate."

QUEENIE

Evaluate this, Dr. Hudson. I'm a dame on borrowed time.

CONSTANCE

Well, Mrs. Bartlett, I'll certainly pursue this avenue of thinking and get back to you.

QUEENIE

Lady, you beat the band.

CONSTANCE

I beg your pardon.

QUEENIE

You're in no position to turn up your fine schnozzola at my offer. I've done my research as well. You owe months of back rent on this shabby piece of real estate. In fact, at the end of this month, you're going to be tossed out on your biological keister. I'll have my lawyers draw up the papers and you'll find me at Bullocks shopping for a fashionable new wardrobe for my twin. Good day, Dr. Hudson. (*Queenie exits, followed by Constance.*)