

Leaper's Rock

by

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Cast:
Jack
Ryan

Place:
The Woods

SCENE I

JACK and RYAN are sitting at Jack's kitchen table. The window looks out at a forest at night. The wall clock to the side of the window reads 1:15. Both men are drinking coffee. There is a door that goes outside, and a door that goes the bedroom.

RYAN
More coffee?

JACK
Yeah, thanks.

Ryan pours Jack another cup and then refills his own.

RYAN
You should try and get some sleep. How is she?

JACK
Not good.

RYAN
Is she asleep?

JACK
Yeah.

RYAN
How long?

JACK
A few hours.

RYAN
Is she sleeping a lot these days?

JACK
Not as much as she should.

RYAN
What do you mean?

JACK
When she's awake she's in pain, when she's asleep she's not.

RYAN
Is the medication helping?

JACK
No.

RYAN

How long has she been in remission?

JACK

Six weeks.

RYAN

Six weeks? Why isn't she in the hospital?

JACK

No more insurance.

RYAN

What? Why not?

JACK

I haven't been working. Sara's been sick too long. Last time she went in the hospital they thought it was the last. She was in pretty bad shape. Doctor even came out once and told me she would be gone in a couple of hours. That was seven months ago.

RYAN

You can fight them can't you?

JACK

You mean a lawsuit?

RYAN

Yeah. Take them to court. Make the insurance pay.

JACK

With what? I'm broke. I'm not even sure I have a job anymore.

RYAN

I'm sure there are lawyers out there who would take your case pro-bono. Just the publicity alone would be more than worth it to them.

JACK

Publicity? What publicity? We're nobody's. I'm a faceless office worker for a corporation. I'm a number in somebody's computer. And Sara's just my sick wife who's making them fork out money. Besides, it would take time to find someone. Sara needs me here.

RYAN

I'll look for you. I'm sure I can find somebody.

JACK

By the time anything gets done she'll be gone. Then it won't matter anymore.

RYAN

Then sue them.

JACK

What'll that do? Money won't bring her back.

RYAN

You've got to teach them a lesson. You've got to hit them where it hurts. Insurance in this country is nothing more than legalized extortion. They take all your money and then when you need them to pay up they take forever, if they pay at all. And there's nothing anyone can do about it.

JACK

No! No lawyers, no lawsuits, no doctors, no hospital. Just her and me. The both of us. Until the end.

RYAN

Whenever that is

Both men sit in silence for a few moments looking at their coffee cups.

JACK

She's been really good about this.

RYAN

Yeah?

JACK

Yeah. She doesn't complain much. Only when it hurts really bad, which has been often lately. Sometimes she seems more concerned about inconveniencing me than about facing the fact that she's going to...die.

RYAN

She seems like quite a woman. I wish I could have met her.

JACK

She still has her good days. Sometimes she even gets out of bed and walks around a little.

RYAN

How long has it been since she had a good day?

JACK

Four days.

RYAN

I saw the two of you down by the lake not long ago.

JACK

That was when we first arrived. She wanted to be able to go for a walk every morning.

But after the first day she got so weak she could barely make it to the front door. She hasn't left the cabin since we got here. She inherited this place from her Uncle.

RYAN

Really?

JACK

He died of the same thing. Genetics. What a fucking bitch huh?

RYAN

Sometimes I wonder what would be worse. Having a cancer you're born with, or having one that you get. You know like from smoking.

JACK

My father has lung cancer. He's been smoking for over forty years.

RYAN

He still smokes?

JACK

Well, he figures he's dying so what's the point.

RYAN

Why? Is he angry?

JACK

At himself. That's probably why he still smokes, he wants to punish himself. At the same time he doesn't want to live with it so he's trying to kill himself.

RYAN

What about your mother? Doesn't he want to stay around for her?

JACK

They divorced over twenty years ago. They can't stand each other. My mother dragged him through a filthy custody battle. Things were said and done that could never be forgiven by either one of them.

RYAN

Are you and your father close?

JACK

Close enough to cry when he dies, but not close enough to go through what I am now.

Does that make me a bad person?

RYAN

No. It makes you a human being. None of us are perfect. Although I would have to say that you are as close.

JACK

What does that mean?

RYAN

Look at what you're doing. I don't think many people would make the sacrifices you've made for your wife.

JACK

That's bullshit.

RYAN

That's not bullshit, Jack. You've given up a lot for her. You'll probably lose your job if you haven't already. You're running out of money for medicine. You probably don't even have enough for a funeral do you? Do you even know what you're going to do after she goes? You don't even care about the repercussions that will come from all this do you?

JACK

I am not perfect. I am no where near it.

Sara can be heard off stage groaning in pain. Jack rises and exits into the bedroom. Ryan crosses to the cupboard and gets a bottle of whiskey. He returns to his seat and pours a shot into his coffee. Jack comes back in.

RYAN

I thought you might need some.

JACK

Thanks.

Ryan pours the whiskey into Jack's cup.

JACK

Thanks again. I'm not perfect.

RYAN

Look, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you. I didn't mean for it to come out that way. I was just...

JACK

I know what you meant. You don't have to apologize. It's just... There are things I've done in trying to take of Sara... illegal things.

RYAN

Illegal things?

JACK

We have no more insurance. I can't afford the prescription medicine she needs, and the over-the-counter stuff isn't strong enough.

RYAN

What are you saying?

JACK

I'm using illegal drugs to treat her pain.

RYAN

What?

JACK

I know this guy who works in a hospital. For a small fee he's been stealing morphine for me. It's good stuff, and it helps.

RYAN

What if you get caught?

JACK

I've got to take that chance. If I didn't do you have any idea what she'd be going through? She'd die from the pain. A pain no one can imagine. I'd kill to stop that kind of pain.

RYAN

What happens if you get caught?

JACK

I have no choice. I have to take that chance. Sometimes I think I want to get caught. Then maybe after they arrest me they'll come to the cabin and take her to the hospital, and then someone will have to take care of her.

RYAN

You could go away for a very long time.

JACK

That doesn't matter. Without her my life means nothing. I have no one else.

RYAN

No kids?

JACK

We had one. A boy.

RYAN

Had?

JACK

He died. Same thing. Like I said, it runs in the family. He was diagnosed shortly after birth. He died when he was five.

Her uncle died at a younger age than Sara was when she diagnosed. For awhile there we thought that it would skip a generation and she would be safe.

RYAN

What was your son's name?

JACK

David. His death almost broke us up. But in the end it helped bring us closer together.

RYAN

Whatever doesn't kill you only makes you stronger. Sorry, bad cliché.

JACK

You're right. It did make us stronger. But this one will kill her, and it might kill me as well.

RYAN

You can't think that way.

JACK

I can't think any other way.

Both men sit in silence for a few moments.

RYAN

Where are her parents? Can't they help you out?

JACK

Died in a car accident when she was four. She was raised by her uncle. You know something. Cancer runs in my family too, except it's the you-give-it-to-yourself kind.

RYAN

What do you mean?

JACK

My father has lung cancer from smoking, my grandfather died from alcoholism, my grandmother smokes and drinks. She's got all kinds of shit wrong with her. My uncle did coke for years now he's got some kind of weird cancer eating up his sinuses. His son was a heroin addict for years and got AIDS. There are some others who have shit I can't remember.

RYAN

Let's talk about something else for a little while.

JACK

You're asking all the questions.

RYAN

OK, tell me how the two of you met.

JACK

Well, we met on a blind date. I was in college and my roommate had finally gotten a date with this girl he had been chasing all year. Two days before their date, Sara, her cousin, came in to town for a visit. So this girl tells him if he doesn't get a date for her their date's off. So after a lot of convincing, ass kissing, and then some bribing, he got me to agree to go out with her.

RYAN

Why didn't you want to go out with her?

JACK

The last blind date I went on was a complete psycho. She got obsessed with me and wouldn't leave me alone. She hounded me for over three months before she met some other guy to harass. After that I swore I would never go on a blind date again. But he kept after me. "Come on man, they're related. She can't be that bad. They got good genes. She's got to be a babe." Good genes. He said they had good genes. Anyway, we went out. Sara and I, of course, hit it off right away. Her cousin and my roommate hated each other. They argued the whole night. He took her home and Sara and I decided to stay out a little longer. You should have seen the two of them at our wedding. He was my best man and she was the maid of honor. You know, I haven't even talked to him in years. He was my best man and I haven't spoken to him in years. I don't even know where he is or what he's doing. Sometimes it amazes me how people just come in and out of your life and you don't even know they're gone until years later.

RYAN

If you had never gone on that date you never would have met her.

JACK

I know. Funny how things work out sometimes.

RYAN

Do you ever wish you had never met her?

JACK

No. Never. That's a lie. I did. Once.

RYAN

When was that?

JACK

There was this time several months' back. The last time she was in the hospital. She was real bad and the nurses kept saying it wasn't time for her medication yet.

There wasn't anything I could do to help. And I started thinking how much easier my life would be if I had never met her. I could have a wife who was healthy, might even have children. I'd still have my job, and everything would be just perfect. Then I started feeling guilty for what I was thinking. Then the guilt turned to hatred. I eventually began to resent her for making me hate myself, and then that turned to hatred for her. I hated her for being sick, I hated her for the pain I was going through, I hated her for not dying. Then I hated myself even more. After that I swore I would never again let myself feel that way.

RYAN

You look tired. How long has it been since you slept?

JACK

I don't know. Two, maybe three days.

RYAN

Why don't you rest for awhile?

JACK

I can't. I have to take care of her.

RYAN

I can keep an eye on her. If she wakes up I'll get you and you can give her her... medication.

JACK

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

Jack rises and goes into the bedroom.
Ryan begins to clean up the table.

SCENE II

2 Hours Later - Ryan is in his seat reading the paper. The dishes in the sink have been washed. His coffee sits on the table in front of him. Jack enters from the bedroom.

JACK

Thanks. That's just what I needed.

RYAN

It's only been a couple of hours. Why don't you go back to bed, get some more sleep.

JACK

I can't. Once I wake up, I'm up. Besides, this is the most sleep I've had consecutively in almost a week.

RYAN

Maybe you should take something to help you sleep. I could run to the store for you.

JACK

No, that's all right. I really need to be up to watch her.

RYAN

How long have you been off work?

JACK

I don't know, maybe a few weeks.

RYAN

Do you think you've lost your job by now?

JACK

I don't know. I haven't talked to my boss since I left. The phones here aren't turned on. Besides, I really don't know if I care anymore.

RYAN

What are you going to do after she goes?

JACK

I don't know. I really don't think that far ahead.

RYAN

Don't you think you should?

JACK

I've tried. I've tried to picture my life without her. I just can't. All these years of marriage, and I can't possibly see any future without her in it. I'm incomplete without her. She said she wants to be buried by Leapers Rock.

RYAN

You mean that huge boulder down by the covered bridge?

JACK

Yeah.

RYAN

Why there?

JACK

When she was a kid she spent every summer up here. She told me her happiest memories were of jumping off that rock.

RYAN

Are you?

JACK

Of course. It's her last wish.

RYAN

How are you going to get her down there? That's quite a ways to carry a body.

JACK

It won't be hard. She's down to about ninety pounds.

Sara groans with pain again. Jack rises and goes into the bedroom.

JACK

It happens more often now.

RYAN

What does?

JACK

The attacks. I'm using twice the morphine than when I started. I'm not sure I can get enough next time I go back.

RYAN

Have you ever thought about...?

JACK

What? Thought about what?

RYAN

Making it easier for her.

JACK

What are you talking about?

RYAN

Ending it for her.

JACK

Are you saying what I think you're saying?

RYAN

Maybe it's the best thing for her Jack. How long can she...

JACK

That's my wife you son-of-a-bitch. You're talking about murdering my wife.

RYAN

I'm talking about ending her suffering Jack. How much longer will she go through this?

JACK

I can't. I just can't.

RYAN

It's what's best for her.

JACK

I can't!

RYAN

You're willing to sacrifice everything for her but that.

JACK

What?

RYAN

You're willing to sacrifice everything, but when it comes right down to it. You're too selfish.

JACK

What? Not wanting to kill my own wife is selfish? Where the fuck do you get off saying that?

RYAN

You won't sacrifice your own guilt. You've done everything a person could be asked to do. You've sacrificed your job, you've lost most of your money, and you'll probably go to jail for buying the morphine. So far you've done nothing to feel guilty about. Now, when she needs you to make the biggest sacrifice of all. You can't do it. You won't sacrifice your guilt for her.

JACK

Selfish?

RYAN

Selfish.

Jack runs over and grabs Ryan by the shirt. He pulls him out of his chair and slams him into the wall. He pulls his fist back to hit him and suddenly freezes.

RYAN

Go ahead! Do it! If that's what you need to do to make you feel better, then fucking do it. But don't forget why. Don't forget who you're really angry at. It won't change what needs to be done. It'll hurt you more than anything else, but you need to think about her. Think about the pain she's going through. Nothing you do can save her now. All you can do is stop her pain. You have to think about her. You said before you would kill to stop her pain. Would you? Would you really?

Jack lets go of him and sits back in his seat. He puts his head in his hands and cries.

JACK

Don't you think I want to? Don't you think that every day I stand over her bed and wish that I could?

RYAN

I know.

Ryan goes to his chair and sits down.

JACK

I can't, I just can't. Part of me wants to end it for her, but the rest of me doesn't want to let her go. She's the most perfect part of my life. We fit each other. Before her I had everything going my way. I was almost out of school. I had a great job lined up. I had no worries. But there was something missing that I could never put my finger on. It was her. I had...an emptiness inside that she filled. She made me complete. I had never met a woman who so completely knew me. She just naturally did everything right. She knew how to read my moods, and how to treat me when I was in them. She knew how to make me happy when I was down, she pushed me when I needed it and left me alone when I needed to be. No one knew what exactly I needed until she came along. I never told anyone what I looked for in a woman, but she was it. It's like...she read the book I never wrote.

RYAN

Sometimes the right thing to do is the most difficult thing to do.

JACK

I can't. I just can't do it.

Ryan rises, picks up Jack's coffee cup and crosses to the sink. He dumps out Jack's coffee, opens the cabinet and gets the whiskey. He crosses back to the table and pours a shot into Jack's cup. He sets the cup in front of Jack and sets the bottle down. Jack downs it.

JACK

Thanks.

Ryan pours another shot and takes his seat. Sara is heard moaning offstage. Jack rises and goes into the bedroom. Ryan sits more comfortably than he did before. Jack returns after a few moments and sits down.

JACK

I don't know what to do. I'm almost out of morphine. I don't see this guy for three more days and there's no way its going to last that long.

RYAN

I know some people. I can help you out.

JACK

Thanks, but I won't even have access to money for two more days. I couldn't buy anything anyway.

RYAN

Don't worry about it. I'll take of everything.

JACK

Thank you.

Ryan rises and crosses to the door. As he gets there Jack stops him.

JACK

Why? Why are you doing this for me?

RYAN

That's what friends do for each other.

JACK

But, we barely know each other.

RYAN

We know each other better than you think. Give it time, you'll see.

Ryan exits.

SCENE III

One hour later - Jack is sleeping at the table. Ryan enters carrying a paper bag. He sets it down on the table and sits down. Jack wakes up and looks at Ryan, and then notices the bag.

JACK

Is that it?

RYAN

Yes, and something else.

JACK

What? No.

RYAN

Yes. One will end her pain, and the other will end her suffering.

JACK

You son-of-a-bitch. I told you I couldn't do it.

RYAN

It doesn't matter anymore. The choice you've been avoiding is here. It's right in front of you.

JACK

Choice? What choice?

RYAN

We've talked about this already. Do you love her? Really love her? Then choose.

JACK

Which one?

RYAN

The blue cap.

JACK

What is it?

RYAN

It doesn't matter.

JACK

Will it hurt?

RYAN

No.

Jack reaches into the bag and brings out the vile with the blue cap.

JACK

I don't know if I can.

RYAN

It's not about you anymore, Jack. It's about her. You've been making sacrifices for years. You can't stop now. You have to think about her. Think about what she's going through. How long will she hold on? Days? Weeks?

JACK

Maybe she'll have another remission. Maybe we can have some more time together.

RYAN

Maybe. Or maybe she'll finally start bleeding into her lungs. That's been known to happen with these cases. Maybe that's how she'll die. Is that what you're waiting for? Is that how you want her to go?

JACK

No.

Slowly Jack rises and crosses to the bedroom door. He stops at the door and looks back at Ryan sitting at the table. Without a word he goes into the bedroom. Ryan rises and brings the coffee cups to the sink. He returns the bottle to the cabinet and takes his seat. A few moments later Jack returns from the bedroom. No emotions show on his face at all. He sits down at the table and just looks straight ahead.

RYAN

It shouldn't take very long.

JACK

It already happened.

RYAN

It did? It worked that fast?

JACK

No. She was gone before I got to her.

RYAN

I'm sorry. Do you want me to help you to take her down to Leapers Rock?

JACK

No. I'll wait awhile.

RYAN

Just let me know when you want to take her down and I'll help.

JACK

No. I have to do it myself. I need to be alone right now.

RYAN

I understand.

Ryan picks up the bag and crosses to the door.

Hey? JACK

Yeah? RYAN

Who are you? JACK

A friend. RYAN

Ryan exits. Jack sits at the table for a moment.

END OF PLAY