

Claudia Barnett

## SEX LESSONS

### Characters

JACK, mid-30s. Silk boxers.

SALLY, mid-30s. Lingerie.

### Scene

A bedroom: a bed, a chair, a picture of SALLY, an alarm clock.

AT RISE. JACK *reclines comfortably.* SALLY *holds a sheet around herself and sits at the edge of the bed.*

JACK: *(He holds a pack of cigarettes out to her.)*

Cigarette?

SALLY: No thanks. I don't smoke.

JACK: Let's try that again.

*(He holds the pack of cigarettes out again.)*

Cigarette?

SALLY: Yeah. Okay.

*(She takes one.)*

JACK: Thank you.

SALLY: You're welcome.

JACK: No, you. Say "Thank you." Take the cigarette, and say "Thank you" with elegance and grace. Not "Yeah."

SALLY: Thank you.

JACK: This is not the time to be hunting down your panties. Relax. Stay a while. Say something nice. Something complimentary.

SALLY: That's a...nice photo on the wall. She's pretty.

JACK: Don't compliment the décor. Compliment me.

SALLY: You have very nice hair.

JACK: Tell me what a good time you've had.



SALLY: I've had a good time.

JACK: Sally. That is your name, right? Sally? You came to me for help. I'm trying to help you. But you don't seem to want to learn.

SALLY: I can do small talk. I didn't come to learn small talk.

JACK: There's nothing small about it. The post-coital conversation is essential. Or there'll be no second chance. Try again.

SALLY: Okay. That was great. Thanks.

JACK: Use my name. Jack....

SALLY: Thanks, Jack.

JACK: Tell me what you liked.

SALLY: Everything, Jack. You're incredible. Okay?

JACK: Tell me specifically.

SALLY: No. This is making me uncomfortable. I have to go.

JACK: We still have five minutes. Sally, you need to relax.

SALLY: How can I relax when all you do is criticize me?

JACK: I'm not criticizing. I'm teaching.

SALLY: I don't like your teaching style.

JACK: You seemed to like it twenty minutes ago.

SALLY: Now I see why you insist on getting paid in advance.

JACK: I have a 100-percent-satisfaction guarantee. If you don't feel you got your money's worth....

SALLY: No. No. I got my money's worth, okay? I just feel like.... Why should I have to compliment you? It's ridiculous. You know you're amazing. I shouldn't have to say it. I want *you* to compliment *me*.

JACK: Then you'll have to earn it.

SALLY: You mean you didn't enjoy...?

JACK: I mean I'm not going to be polite until you are. You'll have to take the first step here.

SALLY: Fine. Fine, Jack. I love what you did with your...and my...my.... I never would have thought the ankle was an erogenous zone. You have the tongue of a snow leopard.



JACK: Much better.

SALLY: Thank you.

*(Pause.)*

I'm waiting.

JACK: You have an ear fetish, don't you.

SALLY: That doesn't sound like a compliment. I'm going to leave. I have places to go.

*(She gets up, still wrapped in the sheet, and starts hunting for her clothing.)*

JACK: Oh, you do.

SALLY: Yes, I'm having dinner with my husband.

JACK: You're married?

SALLY: Of course. Why else would I be here?

JACK: Of course. Things getting stale. Husband's not an ear man?

SALLY: I didn't come here to be mocked. Where are my clothes?

JACK: We still have three and a half minutes.

SALLY: You've hidden my clothes.

JACK: Sally, please. Sit down.

SALLY: I need to take a shower.

JACK: I'll join you.

SALLY: No! ...No, thank you. Just....

JACK: Sit down and I'll give you a compliment.

SALLY: Please just give me my clothes.

JACK: Sit.

SALLY: Fine.

*(She sits on the chair.)*

JACK: On the bed. Sit by me.

SALLY: Fine!

*(She moves from the chair to the bed.)*

JACK: You're really very beautiful....



SALLY: But?

JACK: Don't interrupt. Your legs are long and muscular, and what you do with your toes is outrageous.

SALLY: You're mocking me.

JACK: I'm perfectly sincere.

SALLY: Is "outrageous" a good thing?

JACK: Absolutely. You're supple, limber, and lithe. These are very good things. You bend easily.

SALLY: Sometimes it hurts.

JACK: And then you scream, which is a nice touch, too.

*(A buzzer buzzes, or a bell rings, loudly. Jack stands, turns off the alarm, puts on a robe, and plops himself into the chair. Sally relaxes.)*

Whoa! That was fun. Did you have fun? That was amazing. I feel liberated. Invigorated. Don't you feel invigorated?

SALLY: I feel like I've been dipped in mud.

JACK: That's sexy.

SALLY: Like I need to be sanded down and bleached.

JACK: You're saying you didn't have a good time? You seemed to have a good time. Until the talking. Then you got crabby.

SALLY: Jack's great in bed, but what a creep.

JACK: He's just doing his job.

SALLY: What kind of person gives sex lessons for a living?

JACK: It's not "a living." It's just part-time. Consider it his contribution to society. He's helping make the world a better place, one pathetically needy female at a time.

SALLY: You don't need to insult Sally.

JACK: Don't take it personally.

SALLY: Of course not.

JACK: You haven't even seen her in years. It's not like you're still friends.

SALLY: We were never really friends.

JACK: You're nothing like her.



SALLY: Nothing? What about my legs and toes? And what you said about my being limber? Supple? And lithe?

JACK: That was Jack.

SALLY: So it wasn't true?

JACK: Of course it was true. But it wasn't me saying it, and it wasn't about you. It was Jack and Sally.

SALLY: But you've never met either of them! Why would you want to *be* such a creep?

JACK: It's my birthday.

SALLY: That's supposed to explain it?

JACK: When it's your birthday, you choose. Today's my turn. Anyway, *you* told *me* about the sex lessons.

SALLY: I know. Isn't it funny. It was 15 years ago, and I can't get it out of my head. But I'd never want to be Sally.

JACK: What kind of person takes sex lessons?

SALLY: She was always competitive, got A's in every class. I guess everything was school to her, even sex.

JACK: Do you think she got an A?

SALLY: I don't know. You're the one doing the grading.

JACK: Not me. Jack. And I meant the real Sally. Your friend.

SALLY: I don't want to think about it.

JACK: Neither do I.

SALLY: It's too pathetic.

JACK: I know.

SALLY: I'm glad we're not like that.

JACK: I know.

SALLY: Not that I would mind a little praise every now and then. But I do have self-confidence. I know I'm good. I know I don't need lessons to keep my husband interested.

JACK: (*Pause.*)

Of course not.



SALLY: And that you really are an ear man.

JACK: Of...course.

SALLY: You're not?

JACK: No, no.... I mean yes. I am. If you like it, I like it.

SALLY: You mean you're really into *toes*?

JACK: It may be just a phase.

SALLY: You could have told me. You could be more assertive.

JACK: You don't think I'm assertive?

SALLY: You need to say what you like.

JACK: Like Jack?

SALLY: Oh god. I didn't mean that.

JACK: I think maybe you did. See you learned something about yourself today. Didn't you. It makes you more objective.

SALLY: Just thinking I may have thought that makes me feel like I have fungal spores in my brain.

JACK: Sexy.

SALLY: Not to mention my more vital organs.

JACK: Sounds like it's about time for that shower.

*(He picks up the alarm clock.)*

Ten more minutes? It is my birthday.

SALLY: Your present was one hour. Can't we just be ourselves? Don't you want to be with *me*?

JACK: Of course. I want to be with. You. You're supple, limber, and lithe.... Your legs are long and muscular....

SALLY: That's not me. That's Sally.

JACK: And you think snow leopard tongues are sexy. Mee-ow.

SALLY: Not me. Sally.

JACK: She's hot, isn't she? She must be hot.... I think I may be falling for Sally. She's petulant and humble.

SALLY: You've never met Sally. You wouldn't like Sally.



JACK: She's everything I've ever wanted in a woman.

SALLY: I'm everything you've ever wanted in a woman. You called Sally "pathetically needy."

JACK: Maybe I'm what she needs.

SALLY: Jack didn't like Sally. Jack would prefer me.

JACK: You know, you're right. Jack would.

SALLY: Jack's better in bed than you.

JACK: Mee-ow.

SALLY: It's almost time for your birthday dinner.

JACK: Maybe it's time to swap, to switch. To trade. You take Jack, I keep Sally.

SALLY: You can't keep Sally. Sally's gone.

JACK: But I'm not ready to say goodbye.

END OF PLAY

