

Pulling Off Petals

by Greg Urbaitis

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CAST:

Liebchen

Old Jack

Schatz

Fraulein

ACT I SCENE 1

LIEBCHEN , in socks and wearing a white flowy dress, sits on a small stool in the middle of the stage, looking down, pulling petals off a flower. The floor around her is littered with petals and a few flower stems. Soft music is playing. OLD JACK enters behind her.

OLD JACK: You've waited a long time. Still have faith?

LIEBCHEN stops. She looks up, not at him, but directly ahead.

LIEBCHEN: I'm still here.

OLD JACK touches her shoulders.

OLD JACK: It's your choice.

LIEBCHEN smiles, plucks another petal, and drops it to one side.

LIEBCHEN: It is.

OLD JACK: Others have waited, not always happy with the outcome.

OLD JACK removes his hands and walks out in front of LIEBCHEN.

LIEBCHEN pulls a petal, examines it, tosses it to the same side.

LIEBCHEN: Perhaps they didn't have faith. Perhaps they gave up too soon.

OLD JACK walks through the discarded petals, moves them with his feet.

OLD JACK: You have waited longer than most, I'll give you that.

OLD JACK turns to LIEBCHEN.

OLD JACK: What's the score now?

LIEBCHEN: The score doesn't really matter.

LIEBCHEN pulls off another petal and tosses it to the same side.

OLD JACK: Oh no?

LIEBCHEN: No, not really. Oh, yes, I considered that at first, but the longer I waited, the more beautiful the surroundings have become.

LIEBCHEN gestures to the petals on the floor.

LIEBCHEN: Had I given up, had I kept count, I might not have noticed the end result. Isn't it beautiful?

OLD JACK bends down, picking up some petals, enjoying the texture of them in his hand.

OLD JACK: Beautiful to the eye, an intoxicating aroma, but . . .

OLD JACK dabs at the petals in his hand.

OLD JACK: Some of these are wet.

LIEBCHEN stops, looks up at OLD JACK, sizing him up.

LIEBCHEN: They simply haven't dried out yet. It takes time.

LIEBCHEN pulls off more petals.

LIEBCHEN: These aren't wet.

OLD JACK stands up, still holding the petals in his hand.

OLD JACK: So time has changed things for you.

LIEBCHEN: Yes, I would agree with that.

OLD JACK: Yes, time still changes things.

LIEBCHEN: Some things.

OLD JACK blows the petals from his hand. He walks over to her side.

OLD JACK: Do you not worry about time changing things for others as well?

LIEBCHEN: As you said, it's all about faith.

OLD JACK: And you still have it. But – if time can change, how can you be sure that what you're waiting for hasn't changed as well?

LIEBCHEN: Again – Faith.

OLD JACK: (Scoffing) Faith? Hah! Look at this:

*OLD JACK starts dervishly circling the stage. The MAIN LIGHTS lower.
A SPOTLIGHT goes up on SCHATZ and FRAULEIN who have entered the side of the stage.*

FRAULEIN: Are you sure you're okay with this?

SCHATZ: I'm sure I haven't been this happy in a long time.

SCHATZ and FRAULEIN kiss.

FRAULEIN: Me too. I was worried about you when it happened, but I'm sorry – you deserve to be happy.

SCHATZ: (Jokingly) Do I?

FRAULEIN playfully hits SCHATZ.

FRAULEIN: Stop it! Yes. Yes you do. (Pauses) I mean I admire how you stood by her through all the crap you went through and I'm sorry and everything, but you have a *right* to be happy too! You did the right thing and you should be happy knowing that, but that doesn't mean you have to stop living.

SCHATZ: I know.

FRAULEIN: Do you?

SCHATZ: Yes.

FRAULEIN: You promise?

SCHATZ: I promise.

FRAULEIN: Good! Now let me show you what being truly happy can feel like.

FRAULEIN grabs SCHATZ's hand and pulls him close to her, SPOTLIGHT goes off

*As she pulls him offstage.
MAIN LIGHTS go back up.*

OLD JACK bends down and picks up a flower stem.

OLD JACK: This was once a beautiful flower. Now it's been ripped of its adornment. Remind you of anything?

OLD JACK tosses it to the floor.

OLD JACK: You've destroyed *its* beauty. *You* did that.

LIEBCHEN gets up, goes and arranges petals around the stem turning it back into a flower. She stands up and surveys her handiwork.

LIEBCHEN: That's the way *you* see it. I still think it's beautiful. I – I *know* the beauty in it is due to its sacrifice. You just don't understand sacrificing for something beautiful.

OLD JACK becomes angered.

OLD JACK: Beautiful? This mess? I can turn this into ugliness.

OLD JACK starts crushing and smearing the petals with his feet.

OLD JACK: Look at it now. It's just a mess.

LIEBCHEN gets back up, walks around, surveying what OLD JACK did.

LIEBCHEN: I kind of like it! Very Jackson Pollock.

OLD JACK turns and faces LIEBCHEN

OLD JACK: Ever the optimist. But will you still be that way if you see more?