

# Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts

Joan Baez

The festival was over and the boys were all planning for a fall  
The cabaret was quiet except for the drilling in the wall  
The curfew had been lifted and the gambling wheel shut down  
Anyone with any sense had already left town  
He was standing in the doorway lookin' like the Jack of Hearts  
He moved across the mirrored room, "Set em up  
for everyone", he said  
Then everyone commenced to do what  
They've been doin' before he moved their heads  
He walked up to a stranger and he asked him with a grin  
"Would you kindly tell me, Mister, what time the show begins?"  
He moved into the corner, face down like the Jack of Hearts  
Backstage the girls were playin' five-card stud by  
the stairs  
Lily had two queens and she was hopin' for a third to match her pair  
Outside the streets were fillin' up and the window was open wide  
The gentle breeze was blowin', you could feel it from inside  
Lily called another bet and drew up the Jack of Hearts  
Big Jim was no one's fool, he owned the town's only  
diamond mine  
He made his usual entrance lookin' oh, so dandy and so fine  
With his bodyguards and his silver cane and every hair in place  
He took whatever he wanted to and he laid it all to waste  
But his bodyguards and his silver cane  
They were no match for the Jack of Hearts  
Rosemary combed her hair and took a carriage into town  
She slipped in through the side door lookin' like a queen without a crown  
She fluttered her false eyelashes and whispered in his ear  
"I'm sorry, darlin', that I'm late", but he didn't seem to hear  
He was staring into space over at the Jack of Hearts  
Well, I know I've seen that face somewhere  
Big Jim was thinkin' to himself  
Maybe down in Mexico or a picture up on somebody's shelf  
But then the crowd began to stamp their feet  
And the house lights did dim  
And in the darkness of the room there was only Jim and him  
Starin' at the butterfly who just drew up the Jack of Hearts  
Lily was a princess, she was fair-skinned and  
precious as a child  
She had that certain something  
It was a kind of a flash every time she smiled  
She'd come away from a broken home, had lots of strange affairs  
With men in every walk of life who took her everywhere  
But she'd never met anyone quite like the Jack of Hearts  
The hangin' judge came in unnoticed and was being  
wined and dined

The drilling in the wall kept up but no one seemed to pay it any mind  
It was known all around that Lily had Jim's ring  
And nothin could ever come between Lily and the king  
No, nothing ever could except maybe the Jack of Hearts  
Rosemary started drinkin' hard and seein' her reflection  
in the knife  
She was tired of the attention, tired of playin' the role of Big Jim's wife  
She'd done a lot of bad things, even once tried suicide  
Was lookin' to do just one good deed before she died  
She was gazin' to the future, riding on the Jack of Hearts  
Lily took her dress off, buried it away  
"Has your luck run out", she laughed at him  
"I guess you must've known it would someday  
Be careful not to touch the wall, there's a brand-new coat of paint  
I'm glad to see you're still alive and you're lookin' like a saint"  
Down the hallway footsteps were comin' for the Jack of Hearts  
The backstage manager was pacing all around by  
his chair  
"There's something funny goin' on, I know, I can just feel it in the air"  
He went to get the hangin' judge but the hangin' judge was drunk  
And the leading actor hurried by in the costume of a monk  
But there was no actor anywhere better than the Jack of Hearts  
Lily had her arms around the man that she dearly  
loved to touch  
She forgot all about the man she hated, who hounded her so much  
"I've missed you so", she said to him and he thought she was sincere  
But in the hallway he felt jealousy and fear  
Just another night in the life of the Jack of Hearts  
Well, no one knew the circumstance  
But they say it happened pretty quick  
The door to the dressing room burst open and a cold revolver clicked  
And Big Jim was standin' there, you couldn't say surprised  
Rosemary right beside him, steady in her eyes  
She was with Big Jim but she was leanin' to the Jack of Hearts  
Two doors down and the boys finally made it  
through the wall  
Cleaned out the bank safe, it's said that they got off with quite a haul  
And in the darkness of the riverbed, they waited on the ground  
For one more member who had business back in town  
But they couldn't go no further without the Jack of Hearts  
Well, the next day was hangin' day  
And the sky was overcast and black  
Big Jim lay covered up, killed by a penknife in the back  
And Rosemary on the gallows, boy, she didn't even blink  
And the hangin' judge was sober, Lord, he hadn't had a drink  
And the only person on the scene missing was the Jack of Hearts  
Well, the cabaret was quiet now and a sign  
said, 'Closed for repair'  
Lily had already taken all of the dye out of her hair  
She was thinkin' 'bout her father whom she very rarely saw  
Thinkin' about Rosemary and thinkin' about the law  
But most of all she was thinkin' about the Jack of Hearts

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