

NO. 7

Written by

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Based on the life of Doug Himmelfarb

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INT. DOUG'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Antique treasures and collectibles rest on hanging book shelves. Paintings of the modern art variety cover the walls. Potted orchids rest on the wall-to-wall rug. A lone painting sits on an easel in a corner enshrouded in burlap.

Lying side by side under a ruffled sheet and smoking joints post-coitus are a beach tanned DOUG (45), a six-foot-four, larger-than-life oaf, sporting an unkempt mane, and FANNIE (30), a spaghetti-haired red-headed stoner with a gangly demeanor.

FANNIE

That was one hell of a pool party.

DOUG

Thank you.

FANNIE

Just like old times...

DOUG

Yeah, this is nice.

FANNIE

And that's the problem.

DOUG

What is?

FANNIE

We just picked up where we left off like time stood still and nothing's changed.

DOUG

I thought that was a good thing.

FANNIE

Let's face it, Doug. What *hasn't* changed is you and your fucking commitment issues.

DOUG

What? How can you say that? We haven't seen each other in like forever. You have no claim on me.

FANNIE

I can think of two who do.

DOUG

How've you been holding up?

FANNIE

Don't try to change the subject.

Doug eyes track marks up both her arms and notices Fannie following his gaze to them.

FANNIE (CONT'D)

Stop it.

DOUG

I don't judge.

FANNIE

Sure ya' do, while you shack up with two old ladies whose libidos flamed out in the forties. Weird.

DOUG

Who's judging who, here?

Fannie pouts.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I just... don't want to see you throw away your life on that shit.

FANNIE

My trust fund account has to be good for something.

DOUG

You should get a degree, pursue a career in something. You can't live off your folks forever.

FANNIE

Says the guy who lives off free room and board for landscaping. I take it you've moved in?

Doug shrugs sheepishly.

FANNIE (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. I wouldn't say another word if I were you.

DOUG

Something must get you psyched up to wake up every day--besides me.

FANNIE

Whoo-hoo! Not everyone can be a "master gardener."

DOUG

Horticulturalist. And I have other pursuits.

FANNIE

Like chasing dead artists?  
Are those two hags part of your antique collection now?

Doug frowns, but Fannie's oblivious.

FANNIE (CONT'D)

Hey, where are they, anyway? Don't tell me you poisoned them and stuck 'em in the cellar?

DOUG

Weekend in Santa Barbara. Back this afternoon.

FANNIE

So here we are. You really have them wrapped around your little finger, don't you?

Doug reaches for the nightstand to grab a magazine. He opens it to a property listing with a picture of an old courthouse, showing it to her. His eyes glaze over it.

DOUG

It's in Malibu. Primed for renovation.

FANNIE

Didn't know you had the money.

DOUG

Until I authenticate the Rothko painting, I'll help them invest theirs. It'll serve as collateral.

Doug glances at the burlap enshrouded painting in the corner. Fannie does too, but rolls her eyes at it.

FANNIE

Of course, I shoulda known. You come on to them like Harold came on to Maude. "Oh thank you for the lemonade, El." "Oh, can I get you anything, Ruthie?" It's like you're in love with them or something.

DOUG

I *am* in love with them. Like I am with you--but in a different, Platonic sort of way.

FANNIE

You hear how fucking crazy that sounds? And besides, you don't even know if it *is* real.

DOUG

Sure it is. From experts in the art world. Only a bit longer and I'll get the authentication I need. Did you know his paintings sell at auction for at least fifty million?

**From the open window, the PURR of a LIMOUSINE drives up to the home. MUFFLED VOICES of TWO WOMEN emerge from it.**

**The FRONT DOOR SLAMS SHUT. The two Women have entered.**

ELLA (O.S.)

Dougie, are you here?... I wonder where he is.

RUTH (O.S.)

He must be in the garden.

**Fannie clocks Doug's *Oh Shit* look. The party's really over. She gets out of bed and slips on her shorts and sandals.**

FANNIE

I'm out, Doug. There never was an us and there never will be.

DOUG

You should--

FANNIE

Don't worry, I wouldn't want the Sisters to catch you sleeping with another girl.

DOUG

Fannie...

**Fannie leaves, but Doug makes no effort to follow her.**

**VESTIBULE STAIRCASE - MINUTES LATER**

A fully-clothed Doug walks down the staircase, confirming that Fannie has left. GENE KELLY'S VOICE sings from the

## TV ROOM

Doug walks in to find elderly sisters ELLA (70), the more serious of the two, and RUTH (68) who always parrots her older sister, sit on a couch, watching *Singin' in the Rain*.

Ella turns her head back to the entryway.

ELLA  
Is that you, Dougie?

DOUG (O.S.)  
Oh--uhh... I was about to go outside to lay down the soil in the flower beds.

RUTH  
Nonsense. Dougie, please join us.

ELLA  
(to Ruth)  
The younger generation doesn't appreciate old movies.

DOUG  
Thanks, but I really have to--

RUTH  
Oh, just a few minutes...

Doug reluctantly sits down on a chaise beside them and notices a stray beer can on the floor that the Sisters overlooked.

ELLA  
Look at the athleticism, the gracefulness.

DOUG  
Actors back then could really sing, dance and act. Makes me wish I had taken up ballroom dancing.

RUTH  
Oh Dougie, you are the romantic one, aren't you.

DOUG  
I had lunch with Gene Kelly once, right after I moved out here.

ELLA/RUTH  
No!

DOUG  
 Yep, he really was a true  
 gentleman.

ELLA  
 Dougie, we want to talk to you  
 about what happened here over the  
 weekend.

Fearing the worst, Doug stands to make a quick exit.

DOUG  
 I... need to check the flower--

ELLA  
 Don't know what you've been up to,  
 but everything looks spotless. Both  
 outside as well as inside.  
 (beat)  
 And, since you've been such a  
 wonderful help keeping up our  
 properties that are getting so  
 cumbersome for us to manage--

RUTH  
 Yes, too cumbersome.

ELLA  
 Ruth and I have been talking and--  
 this goes against my better  
 judgment--but Ruth convinced me  
 that we should ask if perhaps you'd  
 be interested in managing *all* of  
 our properties.

DOUG  
 Well... I don't know what to say.

RUTH  
 Perhaps "yes"?

DOUG  
 ...Of course, YES!

They engage in a forced group hug. He can't believe his luck.

**INT. THE STUDY - THAT NIGHT**

**Doug ruminates in the dark behind an oak desk , illuminated  
 by a reading lamp. He stares at a KEY on the blotter.**

Doug looks around furtively before picking up the key which he inserts into a keyhole in the bottom drawer. He turns it until it CLICKS.

Doug opens the drawer to find a manila folder laying flat labeled "BANK FOLDER." He removes it and opens it, shocked by what he reads.

DOUG  
(to himself)  
Shit. I can't screw this up.

FADE TO BLACK.