

CLEANING LADIES

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Four women sit playing cards around a table.

Mid to late twenties, each one represents a distinct type; ANNA, the boss, SAM, bold and sassy, LOU, a shy intellectual, and PAX, cool, calm, the peacemaker.

In the middle is a pile of cash.

Sam pours out measures of tequila into shot glasses and hands them out.

Anna deals out cards to each of them.

ANNA

Last hand.

SAM

(Drinking her shot, then pouring another) Enough of the suspense, why did you call us here, governor?

ANNA

Don't call me that.

SAM

Call you what?

ANNA

Governor.

SAM

Sorry, Guv.

PAX

Why don't you like us calling you that?

They pick up their cards.

ANNA

Because it pretends to be a show of respect but really infers a lack of it.

Lou frowns, pushes her glasses up her nose.

LOU

'Implies'

ANNA

What?

LOU

(Nervously) I think it should be
'implies,' not 'infers.'

Everyone's looking at her now.

PAX

Want to explain that one, Lou?

Lou's lip trembles.

LOU

Well, 'implies' means to suggest something, whilst 'infers' means to deduce or come to a conclusion. So, in the context just used it should be, er (very quietly) 'implies.'

ANNA

(Sarcastically) Well, that's just fascinating.

LOU

I read a lot.

SAM

The dictionary?

PAX

There's nothing wrong with bettering yourself.

SAM

(A little drunkenly). Didn't I ask a question a moment ago?

ANNA

You asked me why I called you here.

Eyes peer at each other from behind their respective hands.

Anna's phone suddenly rings.

She answers, growing more incredulous as she listens.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Well, you shouldn't have put a microwave meal in the oven, should you? You did what to the microwave?

She rubs her temples.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Look, order pizza. (A beat) You can
 find one online. Yes, use my
 laptop.

She cuts the call.

Lou smiles.

LOU
 Your son?

ANNA
 Husband.

SAM
 Bill.

She says the name with some relish.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (Savouring the words)
 I remember Bill. The one you stole
 from me.

ANNA
 (Irritated)
 I didn't 'steal' him.

Sam doesn't acknowledge the remark.

SAM
 Not quite the catch you thought he
 was, I guess. (Smiling sweetly)
 Shame. So, you were about to tell
 us why we're here.

Anna's phone rings again. She slams it to her ear.

ANNA
 You let what out? (Sighs). Well,
 it'll come back. (A beat) Why?
 Because it's a dog. It'll get
 hungry. (Trying to stay calm and
 failing). I can't listen to any
 more of this crap. Don't phone me
 again.

She slams the phone onto the table.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 (Composing herself)
 I called you here to discuss a
 cleaning job.

The others suddenly study there cards.

ANNA (CONT'D)
A last one.

LOU
I think I'm out.

PAX
Me to, I'm out.

SAM
Yeah.

ANNA
No-one's out until I say they are.

She picks a card up from the deck and shows it the others.
It's the queen of spades.

ANNA (CONT'D)
The queen speaks, and right now
she's telling you, one last
cleaning job.

Her phone buzzes, a text message. She checks it.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Jesus, he's blown up my laptop now.

Her face colours, furious.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Spilt a drink all over it.

SAM
So, we're still cleaning ladies.

PAX
Until we do this last job.

LOU
Who's the, the (A beat) you know.

Anna taps her phone.

LOU (CONT'D)
You can't be series, Anna. What's
he done to...

Pax lays a hand on her friend's shoulder.

Sam's far less perturbed.

SAM
So, how do you want this to go
down?

ANNA
I leave the details to you three,
but don't dump the rubbish near to
my house.

Sam grins.

SAM
Land fill?

ANNA
Why not.

PAX
Don't you want to supervise?

Anna shakes her head.

ANNA
I'll be somewhere tropical.

A few more cards are played in silence.

Then Anna lays her cards down.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Royal flush.

She scoops up her winnings.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Thank you, ladies. Think I'll call
it a night.

She walks towards the door.

SAM
Hey.

Anna stops, regards them.

PAX
How will we know where to contact
you?

LOU
You know, when the 'cleaning' is
done.

Anna smiles.

ANNA
I'll send you a postcard.

FADE OUT