FABRINI

By Henry Christner

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FADE IN:

INT. ELEVATOR - DOYLE HOTEL - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

A MAN (52) and WOMAN (44), casual dress, stand by a luggage cart. JOE FABRINI (74), burgandy whipcord suit and gendarme cap, slows the descent.

WOMAN
Such as?

FABRINI
Jackie Kennedy.

WOMAN
No! Why would she stay here?

MAN
He means later.

Fabrini shakes his head.

FABRINI
In sixty-one. She came into Union Station but had to wait for a horse she'd shipped from Boston.

He looks around impishly, as if someone might hear.

FABRINI
She was with one of her stable hands from Middleburg.

WOMAN
Not in the same....

FABRINI
I see a lot of things. But I see nothing.

MAN
I'll just bet.
WOMAN
What was she like?

FABRINI
Very sweet. Like talking to you.

She touches the silver braid trim on his shoulder.

WOMAN
I must say, you do make people feel comfortable, Mr. Fabrini.

MAN
I imagine that comes in handy.

FABRINI
Yes, very true, very true. But I had to feel my way when I started.

MAN
Uh-huh.

FABRINI
You remember Ida Lupino.

WOMAN
Oh, yes.

FABRINI
She was here for a private party. Up in the old ballroom.

WOMAN
With her husband, I hope!

MAN
Howard Duff.

FABRINI
Way before him. She was only twenty-one or twenty-two. So pretty! Oh, my.

(beat)
But when she stepped in here, I froze. She scared me.
WOMAN
Aww.

FABRINI
Standing right where you are. All by herself. The two of us.

The woman looks at her feet.

MAN
What was so scary about her?

FABRINI
I'd just seen this new movie uptown where she murders her husband.
(beat)
She goes crazy at the trial and keeps screaming, "The doors made me do it! The doors made me do it!"

The car reaches the lobby. Fabrini pauses before opening the scissor gate.

FABRINI
I was afraid to open this door when we got up to the ballroom!
(beat)
Let me tell you. I used to slip into some of those parties when I was off duty? Not that night.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

The man and woman exit, walk toward the checkout desk. A BELLMAN (mid-30s) takes their luggage cart and follows.

Fabrini approaches a woman, MISS CARLSON (68), waiting outside the elevator. She sits in an upholstered chair next to a loaded cart.

He gestures toward the elevator.

FABRINI
Shall we? Miss...?
MISS CARLSON
Carlson. My son is checking in.

The accent is midwestern, but she has an air of royalty --
elegant dress, high cheekbones.

FABRINI
Come in on the train?

MISS CARLSON
Yes.

FABRINI
First time in Washington?

MISS CARLSON
No.

FABRIONI
Welcome to the Doyle, then!

MISS CARLSON
I stayed here years ago.
(beat)
Is the ballroom still upstairs?

FABRINI
Yes, but it hasn't been used as
such for a long time, I'm afraid.

The son, PAUL (42), tall, gray suit, approaches. Fabrini
maneuvers the cart onto the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Fabrini closes the gate, turns the lever. They rise.

PAUL
(to his mother)
The ballroom is closed.

MISS CARLSON
I know...It doesn't matter.
(to Fabrini)
Is it possible for us to peek in?
FABRINI
Of course, Madam. Now?

MISS CARLSON
No, no.

PAUL
It's the reason we're staying here.

MISS CARLSON
Paul.

PAUL
Her first love...before my late father. A dashing young man.

Miss Carlson smiles faintly.

MISS CARLSON
He was much older than I was.

FABRINI
The Doyle ballroom was quite a romantic place in the old days.

MISS CARLSON
Wonderfully romantic, yes.

FABRINI
I can see why he would fall in love with...forgive me.

She looks away for a moment.

MISS CARLSON
I was very young. My mother had returned to our room early. She allowed me to stay an hour more.

PAUL
You thought he was military, right?

MISS CARLSON
He mentioned being out of uniform. He wore a crisp white jacket; it was a cool summer evening. You could see the Capitol.
FABRINI
They must've opened the doors to the terrace.

MISS CARLSON
Yes. We danced every dance.

FABRINI
Memories are made of this.

MISS CARLSON
He said I reminded him of his very favorite actress...Ida Lupino.
(beat)
I didn't know who that was, but I was flattered because he said she was so pretty. He'd met her ten years earlier. When she was my age.

Fabrini stares at her a moment. His jaw muscles twitch.

PAUL
She still watches every time Ida Lupino is on Turner.

MISS CARLSON
Paul.

FABRINI
She was pretty then, I agree.

MISS CARLSON
The next morning, my mother and I checked out. That was that.

FABRINI
I must have had a different shift that day. I would remember you.

MISS CARLSON
Aren't you nice.

Fabrini eases the car to a stop, the floors aligned with precision. He slides open the gate.
MISS CARLSON
Shall I call you later about showing me the old ballroom?

FABRINI
It would be my pleasure, madam.

FADE OUT.