

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.

FABRINI

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.