

...For Dummies

By

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INT. LIVING ROOM - SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

DOREEN (late thirties), wearing a nice dress, sits on the sofa with her same-aged husband DAVID, who is also dressed nice.

They both stare blankly ahead, sitting still. There's an anxious tension in the air.

TEXT ON SCREEN: *59 minutes and 59 seconds until Mark's arrival.*

David looks at his watch.

LATER

Doreen is now scrolling on her phone aimlessly.

TEXT ON SCREEN: *58 minutes and 36 seconds until Mark's arrival.*

DAVID
Let me see him again.

DOREEN
Hm?

DAVID
Show me the photo. Of Mark.

DOREEN
We looked at him plenty.

DAVID
Why won't you just show me?

DOREEN
Ugh.

Doreen opens a dating app on her phone and scrolls to the profile for 'Mark', showing photos of a nondescript handsome man in his twenties. David nods.

DAVID
Okay.

DOREEN
See? He looks the same as last time.

DAVID

I just --

DOREEN

You're not allowed to have second thoughts. This is our anniversary present.

DAVID

Well, I mean...

DOREEN

What?

DAVID

I just don't remember the decision-making process very well.

Doreen frowns.

DAVID

Like, I know we talked about it. I know we both agreed on a guy. I just don't remember *how*. The whole week is such a blur.

DOREEN

Would you be asking me this if Mark was a beautiful young woman?

DAVID

That's not the point.

DOREEN

It absolutely is! Why is there an expectation that I would be okay with leaving my comfort zone and not you?

DAVID

I've never done this with a man.

DOREEN

I've never done this with a woman! And since we both insist on being heteronormative, until they invent some sort of halfway-between gender that is neither man nor woman, one of us has to compromise. It just happens to be you that's compromising today.

DAVID
That actually exists.

DOREEN
What exists?

DAVID
Halfway between genders. They're called *binary* people.

DOREEN
Oh.

Doreen checks the app again. She shows the screen to David.

DOREEN
There's no option for "binary" on the app. Is there?

DAVID
Probably not. Maybe it's like having a mental illness or a big goiter on your neck; you don't advertise it on your dating profile.

DOREEN
That doesn't sound like the right thing to say.

DAVID
To who?

DOREEN
About *binary* people.

DAVID
It's just us here?

LATER

TEXT ON SCREEN: *52 minutes and 45 seconds until Mark's arrival.*

David and Doreen are now standing.

DOREEN
Okay, let's run through it again.

She walks towards the front door and mimes opening it.

DOREEN

"Oh, Mark, hi, I'm Doreen, have a seat." Then he has a seat...

She gestures to the couch.

DOREEN

Then you come out.

David pretends to emerge from the next room.

DOREEN

"This my husband David - did you want some wine, Mark?" David, *where* is the wine? It's the only part you have to do.

DAVID

I thought we were pretending. It's in the fridge.

DOREEN

No, go get it. You have to practice. The wine is important.

David quickly leaves and returns with a bottle of white wine.

Doreen gestures to an empty spot on the couch where "Mark" would be sitting.

David "pours" a glass of the wine (leaving the lid on) into the thin air. Then he put a coaster on the coffee table and places the wine bottle on the coaster.

DOREEN

Hm. No, no coaster. It makes us look uptight. Might scare him off.

DAVID

Okay, but, it *will* leave a ring.

Doreen thinks. She slips into the kitchen and returns with a patterned table cloth. She lays it out on the coffee table.

DOREEN

There.

DAVID

(completely serious)
That's really clever.

LATER

TEXT ON SCREEN: *41 minutes and 9 seconds until Mark's arrival.*

David and Doreen have opened the wine and are now sitting at the couch, sipping a glass each in silence.

LATER

TEXT ON SCREEN: *34 minutes and 11 seconds until Mark's arrival.*

As before - half the bottle is gone.

DAVID

Why can't I say I'm a phlebotomist?

DOREEN

Phlebotomy isn't sexy. "Oh, I handle urine all day".

DAVID

Okay, well I don't handle urine *all* day. Most of the time it's blood.

DOREEN

Just say you work in medicine, or something.

DAVID

What if he has follow-up questions?

DOREEN

Excuse yourself to go to the bathroom and I'll talk to him about holiday to Belgrade.

DAVID

Is Serbia sexy?

DOREEN

Yeah. Eastern Europe is sexy now.

DAVID

Since when?

DOREEN

The nineties, I think. I read it somewhere.

LATER

TEXT ON SCREEN: *26 minutes and 13 seconds until Mark's arrival.*

The bottle is empty. Doreen is sitting on David's lap, facing him. At first it seems sexual - but then it becomes clear this is another rehearsal.

DOREEN
So then he's here...

She gestures to the empty seat on the couch.

DOREEN
And you take your shirt off.

David starts take his shirt off.

DOREEN
Oh, god, not now. Jesus.

DAVID
Sorry...wait, wouldn't we be in our bedroom by now?

DOREEN
No, remember? Not until I have *my* shirt off.

DAVID
Uh huh. But that only works if he kisses you first. What if he kisses me?

DOREEN
I don't think he will.

DAVID
But shouldn't we prepare in case?

Doreen sits on the seat beside David. She is thinking.

DOREEN
Okay, so if he does, I'll lean over..

She mimes leaning over.

DOREEN
And take *his* shirt off. Then, while you're kissing him, you undo my blouse.

DAVID
That seems difficult.

DOREEN
No, they're not real buttons. You just pull.

DAVID
Got it. Then we go to the bedroom...

DOREEN
Well, yeah. You know the rest.

David scrolls on his phone.

DAVID
It's "non-binary", by the way.

LATER

TEXT ON SCREEN: *14 minutes and 58 seconds until Mark's arrival.*

As before. Doreen checks the time on a wall clock. She looks at the empty bottle of wine.

DOREEN
David...

DAVID
What?

DOREEN
(pointing)
Which bottle of wine was that?

DAVID
Oh my god, how stupid do you think I am?

DOREEN
Not stupid. Careless. It's different.

DAVID
Uh-huh. His wine is still in the fridge, don't worry.

Doreen seems unimpressed. David stands, walks to the kitchen, and returns with an unopened bottle of wine. He puts it on the coffee table. Doreen inspects the neck of the bottle.

DOREEN
Wow. You did a good job resealing
this.

DAVID
Thanks.

LATER

TEXT ON SCREEN: *1 minute and 2 seconds until Mark's arrival*

Doreen is standing again. David sits.

DOREEN
I wanna go over it one more time.

David sighs.

DAVID
Really? I feel like we've...

DOREEN
Yeah, yeah. Okay, so pretend this
is our bedroom.

DAVID
Done.

Doreen leans by the sofa.

DOREEN
You're distracting him. You know,
few seconds of a B.J. You've been
practicising right?

DAVID
(shamefully)
Yeah...

DOREEN
And I lean under the bed...

Doreen pretends to grab something from under the sofa.

DOREEN
His back is to me. He's starting to
feel real tired now.

DAVID
Uh huh.

DOREEN

And I get him with the baton.

She mimes a hard THWACK over the imaginary Mark. David nods. Doreen has a sudden "oh no" moment.

DOREEN

Shit. Did we check the bathtub?

DAVID

Eugh. Yes. The ice hasn't melted.
Calm down, Doreen.

Doreen takes a cursory, last-minute look around the room.

DAVID

Everything is fine!

Doreen pointedly grabs a book from the bookshelf, recently put back on display.

It's spine reads "*Butchery For Dummies: Dealing With Entrails.*" She stashes the book behind the shelf.

DAVID

Oh. Sorry.

Doreen shakes her head. She sits back next to David, looking at the clock.

There is a long, unbroken thirty seconds as David and Doreen sit at the sofa, wordlessly.

Finally:

The door-bell rings.

Doreen stands up and turns to David.

DOREEN

Happy anniversary.

They quickly kiss. David walks into the next room, ready to make his entrance.

She walks to the door. Takes a deep breath.

Opens it. The door itself blocks a view of the person in the doorway, but we hear his VOICE.

VOICE (O.C)

Hi, I'm Mark.

DOREEN
Oh, Mark, hi, I'm Doreen, have a
seat.

CUT TO BLACK

DOREEN (V.O)
This is my husband David.

DAVID (V.O)
Hi.

DOREEN (V.O)
Do you want some wine?