

I HATE THAT

Written by

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INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

MICHAEL, casually dressed and SABINE, in slacks and high heels, wait for their guests to arrive.

MICHAEL

I wish they would get here already.  
They're always late.

SABINE

They're never late. They're usually  
right on time. And it's early. They  
aren't due for ten or fifteen  
minutes.

MICHAEL

I'll be glad when this is over.

SABINE

What are you talking about? Helen  
and Geoffrey are our good friends.

MICHAEL

They get on my nerves.

SABINE

Since when? This is the first I've  
heard of it.

MICHAEL

Since forever.

SABINE

What?

MICHAEL

If it's not one thing, it's another  
with them.

SABINE

So why did you invite them over and  
cook this lavish meal especially  
for them? You're not making sense.

MICHAEL

I know they're old friends Sabine,  
but I'm realizing that they drive  
me crazy.

SABINE

Great timing. Thank you so much for  
letting me in on that.

MICHAEL

They don't listen to what anyone else says. They just wait you out and then pick up where they left off. No response. No give and take. I hate that.

SABINE

Have you lost your mind?

MICHAEL

And they're always in a good mood. Always on top of their game. Always in control. I hate that.

SABINE

Michael, pour yourself a drink. And get a grip.

Michael starts for the side table where the drinks are set up, then turns back.

MICHAEL

And there's always something that's happened to them, that they just have to tell us about. Something so important. And we always get sucked into the importance of it all. I hate that. I really hate that it's always so fucking important.

Sabine gives Michael a long look. He turns and goes to the side table.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ENTRANCE - EVENING

HELEN, in blouse, jeans and heels and GEOFFREY, in shirt, jeans and jacket walk along the sidewalk to the front door.

GEOFFREY

Love those shoes.

HELEN

Thanks. I haven't worn them in such a long time, they feel like new.

As they arrive at the entrance, he puts his hand on her hip.

HELEN (CONT'D)

We're a few minutes early. We could walk around the block.

Geoffrey pushes the buzzer and gives Helen a kiss.

GEOFFREY

They won't mind. We're here now.  
Keeps them on their toes.

The buzzer RINGS and they enter the building.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ELEVATOR ENTRANCE - EVENING

Michael waits for the elevator. The door opens.

GEOFFREY

Did we get you out of the shower?  
We're right on time as usual.

MICHAEL

Hello, hello. Come in. How are you?

Hugs and kisses as Geoffrey and Helen enter. Sabine joins in, and they all make their way into the apartment.

HELEN

We brought wine and an apple tart.

SABINE

That's fantastic. How are you? I  
love those shoes.

Geoffrey hands Michael the wine. Sabine and Helen stand side by side to compare shoes.

HELEN

Great. Yeah, it's crazy. I pulled  
them out of the back of the closet.

Helen and Sabine head for the kitchen with the tart. Michael and Geoffrey make their way to the living room.

GEOFFREY

We thought about riding over on  
CitiBikes. There's a station on the  
next block. But Helen was afraid  
I'd drop the tart. It's a great  
thing to support. Good for the  
environment. Good for your health.

Michael goes to a side table to pour some wine for Geoffrey.

MICHAEL

Geoffrey, red or white?

GEOFFREY

Red please. The yearly pass is a good deal, but I just don't know if I'd actually use it. Have you tried it?

Michael pours two glasses of wine and hands one to Geoffrey.

MICHAEL

I have a bike.

GEOFFREY

If you did end up using it all the time, you can now get a butt enhancement. No really, I read about it in the Times Thursday Styles section. Guys are having liposuction on their love handles and having the fat injected into their gluteus maximus. Most guys are doing it to help keep their pants up, but I bet it would do wonders for sore bike butt.

Helen and Sabine return and sit down.

MICHAEL

Helen, what would you like to drink?

HELEN

Just some seltzer, please. I'll have a glass of wine with dinner.

SABINE

I'm ready for another.

Michael fixes their drinks and sits down. Geoffrey is still standing.

HELEN

It is so great to see you guys.

SABINE

Michael has been slaving over a hot stove all day and come up with another of his tour de force meals.

GEOFFREY

(to Michael)

Every time we come over for dinner, I feel like I am having an out of body experience.

MICHAEL

I do enjoy cooking.

Geoffrey sits down.

GEOFFREY

The key is do something you love to do. If you love doing it, you can't go wrong. Like, I know a guy, Fred Mosely at work, who loves to fix things, and you know there's nothing he can't fix.

HELEN

He fixed an old electric can opener we got when we first met. When it broke we were really upset, and you can't just go out and replace something like that. We gave it to old Fred, and he fixed it.

GEOFFREY

He's brilliant at fixing things.

HELEN

He just loves to fix things.

SABINE

I have this old peanut butter grinder that was my mother's from her hippie days in the 1970's. It looks like an armadillo. Really a beautiful piece of machinery, but I can't get it to work.

MICHAEL

That thing is beyond repair.

GEOFFREY

Give it to Fred. He'll fix it.

HELEN

If anyone can fix it, Fred can.

A pause in the conversation.

GEOFFREY

I have just recently found something that I really love to do.

HELEN

The thing of the week. I can't wait to hear what it is this time.

GEOFFREY

No, this is for real. We just saw this great documentary about Ricky Jay, the slight of hand artist.

HELEN

Oh no.

SABINE

I saw that. I love the part where he throws a card into a watermelon from across the stage.

GEOFFREY

So, I went and ordered a book on card tricks, and I've been practicing.

HELEN

Really?

GEOFFREY

I do it at odd moments. It's a very private kind of thing.

MICHAEL

Slight of hand makes the world go 'round. Look over there and you miss who's pulling the rug out from under you.

SABINE

So cynical.

GEOFFREY

At first I constantly messed up. Then it starts to kick in and you feel like you are floating on air.

MICHAEL

Because you're not only fooling your audience, you're fooling yourself as well. You're invincible. You're the puppet master pulling all the strings. A nice illusion powered by a delusion.

GEOFFREY

I don't know about that, but it sure feels good when you pull it off.

SABINE

Let's see something. Wow us with your magic touch, Geoffrey the Magnificent.

HELEN

Yeah, let's see what you've got, Mr. Magnificent.

GEOFFREY

OK. Just for that, I'll perform.

Geoffrey stands up and takes a deck of cards out of his coat pocket. The other three group together with Michael slightly to one side.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

I just happen to have a deck handy.

He starts to shuffle. A few cards drop on the floor and he quickly retrieves them.

HELEN

Off to an impressive start.

MICHAEL

Aren't you suppose to use an unopened pack?

SABINE

Quiet. The master needs to concentrate.

Geoffrey spreads the cards out in a fan after shuffling them with a flourish. He motions to Sabine.

GEOFFREY

Pick a card, any card.

Sabine takes a card.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

OK, take a good look at it, then put it back in the deck.

Sabine scrutinizes the card. Michael tries to look at it too, but she keeps it to herself. Sabine shows it to Helen. Michael tries to look at it again, but Sabine slips it back into the deck.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

OK. Now, I'll shuffle again. And cut to. Is this your card Sabine?



SABINE  
 Amazing. Yes, the six of clubs.  
 That's impressive.

HELEN  
 What other secrets have you got up  
 your sleeve?

GEOFFREY  
 What do you think? Not bad for a  
 beginner, hey?

MICHAEL  
 Who needs more wine?

Michael gets up and goes to the side table.

SABINE  
 (O.S.)  
 Dinner should be ready. I'm  
 starving, let's eat.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Helen, Geoffrey, Sabine and Michael return to the living room  
 after eating dinner. They carry in the tart, plates and  
 silverware.

SABINE  
 Everyone sit down, and I'll serve  
 the tart.

GEOFFREY  
 Let me help.

They settle in as Sabine and Geoffrey serve the desert.

HELEN  
 That was such a delicious meal.

SABINE  
 Michael gets all the credit.

GEOFFREY  
 Michael, you've done it again.  
 Knocked me off my feet.

MICHAEL  
 My pleasure.

HELEN  
 The salad had such a delicate  
 flavor.

GEOFFREY

And the scallops melted in my mouth.

They settle back to eat desert.

SABINE

The apple tart is fantastic.

MICHAEL

As I was saying, it's really outrageous. All anyone talks about is math and science, math and science.

SABINE

Where did you get it.

MICHAEL

No art, no literature, no music, just fucking math and science.

HELEN

In college, I was on the meal plan to save money.

GEOFFREY

I joined a dinner club that had an excellent chef.

HELEN

But the food was so god awful, we ended up eating pizza all the time.

GEOFFREY

Couldn't stand my club mates, but the food was excellent.

HELEN

It took me years to work off those college pounds.

SABINE

Delicious.

There is an awkward silence.

HELEN

We have some important news to share with you.

GEOFFREY

You are the first people to know about this.

HELEN

We wanted to be really clear about it before we told anyone.

Sabine and Michael look at each other.

GEOFFREY

We are going to adopt a baby.

Silence.

SABINE

What? Wait a minute. Back up a little here. Are you serious?

HELEN

Totally. We've looked at it from every angle, and we're going to do it.

GEOFFREY

We are totally committed and so excited.

MICHAEL

Wow. That is some announcement.

SABINE

But, we didn't even know you were trying to get pregnant.

HELEN

We aren't.

GEOFFREY

We could, but we're not.

HELEN

We could give so much to a child in need of a loving, supportive home.

GEOFFREY

The world is such a mess. Bringing another person into it right now seems crazy, when there are so many kids who need help.

HELEN

It's been a real journey to come to this decision.

MICHAEL

That is so weird, because I have been thinking about that myself.

Sabine gives Michael an incredulous look.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And I have no idea where those thoughts are coming from.

SABINE

(to Michael)

There seems to be all kinds of stuff lurking in there.

MICHAEL

It's an amazing idea, really amazing.

SABINE

I don't know what to say. I'm shocked. I mean, this is really a big deal.

MICHAEL

What a beautiful thing to take on. Wow. Fantastic.

SABINE

I'm just so surprised. You haven't said anything about it.

HELEN

We were thinking about kids, then this idea popped up. We've been doing a lot of research. There are no guarantees. We have so much to figure out.

GEOFFREY

Yeah, but we're determined. They say, "The longest way 'round is the shortest way home." And you know how we are when we set our minds to something.

MICHAEL

Incredible.

SABINE

I'll say.

INT. APARTMENT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Helen, Geoffrey, Sabine and Michael stand by the door saying good bye.

HELEN

Thanks so much for everything.

GEOFFREY

It was great to catch up on things.

SABINE

Please let us know if we can help out. I'm still trying to get my head around it.

HELEN

So are we.

MICHAEL

All I can say is, Wow. And Geoffrey, go easy on the cards. Seems like you've dealt yourself quite a hand already.

They all say good night and hug. The elevator door closes on Helen and Geoffrey. Sabine and Michael look at each other.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sabine and Michael return and start to clean up.

SABINE

Can you believe that? To tell you the truth, I'm kind of pissed off. I mean, they laid that on us like a ton of bricks. Out of nowhere.

MICHAEL

Very intense for sure.

SABINE

They're not even married.

MICHAEL

What difference does that make?

SABINE

I don't know.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

They look at each other.

SABINE

I started to see what you mean about them. The self-involvement, the happy about everything way they carry on. And then almost right on cue, just like you said, there was the big revelation.

MICHAEL

A really big revelation.

SABINE

Yeah, damn it. That was really annoying. From out of nowhere. Fuck. I just don't know what to make of it.

MICHAEL

I don't know. I mean, I'm impressed. It's really brave of them. I have a lot of respect for their decision.

SABINE

What? I thought you couldn't stand them. All that good natured sincerity was suppose to be driving you nuts.

MICHAEL

Well, I've changed my mind.

SABINE

Your kidding. No way. I hate that.