

I HATE THAT

Written by

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INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A tasteful sparsely furnished room.

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

MICHAEL

I wish they would get here already.
They are always late.

SABINE

I've never known them to be late.
They are usually right on time. And
it's early. They aren't due for
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

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

MICHAEL

Since forever.

SABINE

What?

MICHAEL

Yeah, they drive me crazy. If it's
not one thing, it's another.

SABINE

Well, I like them a lot. Why did
you want to have them over, if you
feel that way? And why have you
cooked this lavish meal for them?
You're not making sense.

MICHAEL

They are old friends, but I'm just
admitting to myself that I can't
stand them.

SABINE

Great timing for such a mind-boggling revelation. Brilliant. They'll be here any minute.

MICHAEL

What I really hate is that they don't listen to what you say. They just wait you out and then pick up where they left off. No response to what you say. No give and take. Like a steam roller. Like conversation is a competition not a cooperation. I hate that.

SABINE

Have you lost your mind?

MICHAEL

And they are 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 is always so damn important.

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

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - EVENING

A long corridor with many apartment doors on either side.

HELEN, thirties, in dress and high heels and GEOFFREY, thirties, in shirt, jeans and jacket walk down the hall.

HELEN

We're a few minutes early. Maybe we should have walked around the block again.

GEOFFREY

They won't mind. We're here now.
Keeps them on their toes. I love
those shoes.

HELEN

Thanks. I haven't worn them in
awhile. They feel like new.

The door opens. Michael stands in the doorway.

GEOFFREY

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

INT. APARTMENT ENTRANCE - EVENING

Michael stands aside and waves them in.

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.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

HELEN

We brought wine and a tart.

SABINE

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

Geoffrey hands Michael the wine. Michael puts it on the side
table.

Helen and Sabine head for the kitchen with the tart.

HELEN

Great. Yeah, it's crazy. I pulled
them out of the back of the closet.
They just feel so right somehow.

Michael and Geoffrey stand in the living room.

GEOFFREY

We thought about riding over on the
new CitiBikes. There is a station
on the next block. Helen was afraid
I'd drop the tart. They are pretty
cool. I really want to try it out.

(MORE)

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

It is a great thing to support. Good for the environment. Good for your health. And CitiBank makes a few bucks in the bargain. We want to ween those big banks off their dependence on taxpayer dollars, right?

MICHAEL

Let me get you some wine.

Michael goes to the side table and pours two glasses of wine. He hands one to Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY

The yearly pass is a good deal, but I just don't know how much I would actually use it. Have you tried it?

MICHAEL

I have a bike, but I need to get a new lock.

GEOFFREY

That's why this system is so great. You don't have to worry about locks and where to put your bike. And guess what. If you end up using it all the time, and you have a bony butt, 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 bum.

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 a nice tall glass of wine.

Sabine gives Michael a knowing look.

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

HELEN

It is so great to see you guys. It seems like forever, since we've all gotten together.

SABINE

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

GEOFFREY

Every time we come over to dinner, I feel like I've attained nirvana, and that I'm having an out of body experience.

MICHAEL

I do enjoy cooking. Blending individual ingredients into a satisfying whole is a very rewarding and instructive activity.

Geoffrey sits down.

GEOFFREY

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

HELEN

He fixed an old electric can opener that we are so attached to. We got it when we first met. When it broke we were really upset, because it was so much a part of our lives. And you can't just go out and replace something like that. We gave it to old Fred, and he fixed it. 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.

(MORE)

SABINE (CONT'D)

It looks like an armadillo. Really a beautiful piece of machinery, but I can't get it to work.

MICHAEL

That thing is busted. The motor is frozen up.

GEOFFREY

Give it to Fred. He'll fix it.

HELEN

If anyone can fix it, Fred can.

GEOFFREY

I have to tell you that 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. Awhile back, we 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

I know. So, after seeing the movie, I went and ordered a book on card tricks, and I've been practicing.

HELEN

Since when?

GEOFFREY

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

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

Exactly. And it is very engrossing. Mesmerizing, really. At first you constantly mess up, but then it starts to kick in and you are on another level. When it starts to work, you feel like you are floating on air.

MICHAEL

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

GEOFFREY

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

SABINE

So, 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 will perform.

Geoffrey stands up and takes a deck of cards out of his coat pocket.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

I just happen to have a deck handy.

He takes the deck out of the box and 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.

MICHAEL

I'm not taking my eyes off that deck.

GEOFFREY

That's right, keep your eyes on the deck. 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 been keeping from me?

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.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Helen, Geoffrey, Sabine and Michael return to the living room after eating dinner. They carry in the tart, plates, silverware and some ice cream. It is apparent that they have had a good deal to drink.

SABINE

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

GEOFFREY

Let me help. I'll scoop the ice cream. Two scoops for you, right Michael?

They settle in as Sabine and Geoffrey serve the desert.

HELEN

That was such a delicious meal. Thank you both so much.

SABINE

Michael gets all the credit. I just helped out.

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 just melted in my mouth.

They settle back to eat desert.

SABINE

The tart is fantastic.

MICHAEL

As I was saying, it's really outrageous. The public schools are underfunded and falling apart, private schools are getting ridiculously expensive and all they talk about is math and science, math and science.

SABINE

Michael, ice cream is melting.

MICHAEL

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

HELEN

I remember in college, I was on the meal plan to save money. But the food was so god awful, that we ended up eating pizza all the time. It took me years to work off those college pounds.

GEOFFREY

I joined a dinner club at school that had an excellent chef. Couldn't stand my club mates, but the food was superb.

SABINE

Delicious tart.

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

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 that you were trying to get pregnant.

HELEN

Oh no, we weren't.

GEOFFREY

There are enough people in the world already. We feel that adopting a child and giving them a good home is the right thing for us to do.

MICHAEL

That's amazing. I mean it's heroic really. Wow. Congratulations. We are really happy for you.

SABINE

I don't know what to say. I'm shocked. I mean, this is really a big deal. I'm just so surprised. You haven't said anything about it.

HELEN

We've been doing a lot of research. There is so much to figure out. And There are no grantees. We have a long way to go yet.

GEOFFREY

But, we're determined. And you know how we are when we set our minds to something.

INT. APARTMENT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

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

HELEN

Thanks so much for everything. It's been a wonderful evening.

GEOFFREY

It was great to see you both and catch up on things.

SABINE

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

HELEN

So are we. We'll keep you up to date on how it's going.

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. Helen and Geoffrey leave. Sabine and Michael close the door behind them. They look at each other.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sabine and Michael enter from the doorway and start to clean up the dishes and glasses.

SABINE

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

MICHAEL

Very intense for sure.

SABINE

You know, I started to see what you were saying. The self-centered 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 all.

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.