

HERMAN
by
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HERMAN'S AGED MOTHER is bedridden. There is a walking stick alongside her bed. HERMAN, a meticulously tidy, neat man in his 60s, carries a suitcase and places it on her bed. He stands next to the bed while she opens the lid. Inside are several First Edition books. She picks one up - caresses it, then another - takes in its smell, and another - hugs it to her chest.

AGED MOTHER

One day, Herman, these will be yours.
You know they're worth a fortune.

HERMAN

Yes, mother.

AGED MOTHER

Leave them with me. I want to make
sure they're all there.

HERMAN walks to the door.

HERMAN

I've got to go.

He stands by the door.

AGED MOTHER

I'll expect you at lunchtime.

HERMAN

Yes, mother.

AGED MOTHER

Don't be late or you'll be for it.

HERMAN

No, mother.

He walks out into the passageway, his hand on the door handle.

AGED MOTHER (O/S.)

And don't forget my pills, I've run
out.

HERMAN

No, mother (to himself) three bags
full, mother.

HERMAN buttons his coat against the biting wind and pulls his hat down over his face. It is early morning and there is little traffic. He arrives at a book shop.

A nameplate hangs over the door which reads: "DOHERTY'S BOOKSTORE, Est. 1955." He unlocks the door and enters.

3

INT. THE BOOKSHOP - MORNING

3

HERMAN moves into the back of the shop and pulls aside the black curtain divider. He takes off his overcoat and hat, brushes the rain drops from both and hangs them up. He puts his scarf and gloves neatly in a drawer and slides a perfectly pressed apron over his head and ties the strings around his waist. He takes the feather duster and proceeds to dust the books in the shop, whistling as he goes.

HERMAN puts the feather-duster back in its place. He picks up the electric kettle, fills it with water and turns it on. He takes out a cup and saucer, puts in a teabag and adds exactly two teaspoons of sugar. The water boils and he is about to pour it into his cup when the bell above the front door jangles, indicating a customer. HERMAN peeks around the curtain. He is annoyed, but shrugs. A customer is a customer.

He approaches a TALL MAN appropriately dressed for the wintry weather.

HERMAN

Good morning. May I be of assistance?

TALL MAN

Herman Doherty?

HERMAN nods. THE MAN reaches inside his coat and brings out an envelope and shoves it into HERMAN's hand. He spins round and quickly walks to the front door. HERMAN is bewildered. He looks at the envelope, then at the disappearing MAN. He stands for several moments staring at the envelope.

He sips his tea and stares at the envelope propped up by the kettle. He finishes his tea, washes and dries his cup and puts it away. He takes the envelope in his hand and carefully opens it, making sure that he does not tear it. He unfolds the piece of paper inside. It reads:

"The property situated at 134 Main Street, Marsborough, has been sold to Pringle Developers. The said property will be demolished on 14th September 1995. Notice is hereby given for all four premises within said property to vacate within six weeks."

The paper flutters to the floor.

HERMAN wanders around the shop touching his treasured books. There are tears on his cheeks. He stands at the window and stares at the traffic.

A woman stops outside the window. HERMAN is lost in thought and doesn't see her. She waves and smiles. Then he sees her. He smiles.

HERMAN

Hello, Evie...

She mouths 'hello', then walks on, waving.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

...my darling.

He stares after her. Suddenly he turns and walks to the back room with determination.

4

EXT. THE STREET - MORNING

4

HERMAN, dressed in his hat and coat, locks the front door of the shop and hurries down the footpath. The rain pelts down but he doesn't change his stride until he reaches the liquor store. He stops abruptly causing a lady behind him to bang into him. She walks on giving him a filthy stare.

He looks inside the liquor store and moves towards the automatic doors. They open. Suddenly he turns away and strides across the road and enters the chemist shop instead.

5

INT. HERMAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

5

HERMAN enters the front door, very wet.

AGED MOTHER (O/S)

Is that you, Herman? You're early!

He ignores her, throws his wet coat onto the floor and flicks his scarf and gloves with it. He flings his wet hat into the corner.

Four static banging sounds come from overhead. He ignores them and walks across the carpet leaving muddy footprints and kneels down in front of a cupboard. He opens the cupboard door and tosses everything inside it onto the carpet until he finds a bottle of whiskey lodged right at the back. He draws it out and looks at it - it has a Christmas label tied round it with "Merry Christmas 1985, from Auntie Dulcie" written on it.

Another four static bangs come from overhead. He looks up, opens the bottle and leans back on his haunches taking a large gulp. He coughs and splutters.

Four static bangs louder than before sound overhead. He takes another gulp. This time he doesn't cough. He talks to the ceiling.

HERMAN

For Christ's sake will you shut up.

The banging persists. He takes another swig of whiskey.

AGED MOTHER (O/S)

HERMAN!!!

HERMAN

If you don't shut up I'll come up there and wrap that walking stick round your scrawny little neck.

AGED MOTHER (O/S)

Did you get my pills?

6 INT. HERMAN'S KITCHEN - MORNING

6

HERMAN takes the calendar off the wall and puts it on the kitchen table. He takes another swig of whiskey while he counts up six weeks. As he does his gaze goes to the picture on the calendar - a tropical island with blue/green sea, sand and palm trees. The banging overhead continues.

AGED MOTHER (O/S)

Did you get my pills, Herman?!

He looks at the ceiling then takes a glass from the cupboard and slams it on the counter. He crushes several pills into the glass and fills it with juice. He puts the glass onto a small tray alongside the pill bottle and heads upstairs.

7 EXT. - HERMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

7

A coffin is being loaded into a hearse.

8 INT. HERMAN'S LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

8

HERMAN sits in his lounge chair in front of the gas fire, a full bottle of expensive whiskey beside him. The calendar is propped up on the mantelpiece. There are two airline tickets next to it. There is a large suitcase on the floor in front of him. He leans over flicks it open and smiles. He pours whiskey into a glass, picks up the telephone and dials.

HERMAN

Evie...hello...this is Herman Doherty.