

FUR REAL

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. ELDERLY WOMAN'S GARDEN - DAY

The sun casts a warm glow over the quaint garden of an elderly woman's cosy home. The garden is a haven of colour and life, with blooming flowers, neatly trimmed hedges, and winding stone pathways.

EVELYN, (80's), wears a wide-brimmed hat and floral apron. She moves gracefully among the flowerbeds, tending to her beloved plants.

She smiles to herself, she seems content and happy.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - DAY

David, (30s), dishevelled and desperate, sits at a cluttered desk. The glow of his laptop screen illuminates his face.

DAVID
(whispering)
Come on, just one more hand.

He clicks the 'Raise' button, pushing his virtual chips forward. The digital poker table displays avatars—avatars that don't blink, don't sweat, but somehow judge him nonetheless.

HIGHROLLER666 (ONLINE)
All in.

David's heart races. His stack dwindles. The river card flips—a treacherous queen. His opponent's straight is complete.

DAVID
(voice trembling)
Get fucked.

His chips vanish. Thousands lost tonight. Thousands he can't afford.

The laptop screen taunts him. Other tables beckon. David's cursor hovers over "Deposit." He glances at his phone—texts from his bank. He's gone into his 'over-draft'. He's now gambling money he really doesn't have.

He slams the laptop shut. Darkness engulfs the room. Rain taps against the window.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I need Mom.

He sinks onto the couch, defeated. The silence echoes with regret.

INT. EVELYN'S FRONT ROOM - DAY

Evelyn sits on a worn-out armchair. She wears a floral dress and knitted slippers. Her dog, RUFUS, sits at her feet. The size of a man. In fact, Rufus is a man, dressed up as a dog. An impressive and realistic looking dog suit, but a dog suit all the same.

The room is cosy, filled with antique furniture, porcelain figurines, and sepia-toned family photos. Sunlight filters through lace curtains, casting patterns on the faded carpet.

EVELYN
(to Rufus)
Oh, Rufus. I never could have
thought that a stray dog could
bring so much happiness to my life.

Rufus wags his 'tail', and his very human tongue lolling out.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
(grinning)
You want to play?

She reaches for a tattered tennis ball, tossing it across the room. Rufus races after the ball, moving like a man on all fours. He gets the ball, returns and drops it at Evelyn's feet and gazes up at her.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
(squinting)
You're full of mischief today
aren't you?

Rufus cocks his head, as if understanding her words. Evelyn chuckles, brushing her fingers through his wiry fur.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
You know, Rufus, I feel like you
really do understand me.

Rufus nudges her hand, and she scratches behind his ears.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
I've been on my own for so long.
I've been so lonely, but with you
I'm not alone anymore.

Rufus blinks, and for a moment, Evelyn swears she sees a flicker of recognition in his eyes.

Rufus nudges her hand again, and she sighs.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
You're a good listener, Rufus.
Better than most people. I hope
you're happy here.

Rufus gazes at her, eyes filled with something akin to longing. Evelyn pats his head.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Don't ever leave me.

INT. EVELYN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Evelyn sits in her favourite armchair.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Evelyn's eyes widen, and she struggles to her feet.

INT. EVELYN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

She opens the door, revealing David dishevelled and carrying a worn leather briefcase.

EVELYN
David! What on earth are you doing
here?

David steps inside, glancing around the familiar space.

DAVID
(grinning)
Hi Mom. You don't mind me dropping
in do you?

Evelyn chuckles.

EVELYN
Of course not, I haven't seen you
since Christmas.

DAVID
(sighing)
I needed to come and see you.

Evelyn studies him, her eyes sharp despite her age.

EVELYN
(disappointed)
Shall we just get down to it? It's
money isn't it?

DAVID
(avoiding eye contact)
Yeah.

EVELYN
Would you like something to eat?
Something to drink?

DAVID
I'm broke Mom. No money for power,
for water. For food. I've got
nothing. I wouldn't be here if I
wasn't desperate.

Evelyn's expression softens.

EVELYN
I know.

DAVID
(teary-eyed)
I love you Mom, and I've got no one
else.

Evelyn reaches for his hand.

EVELYN
David, this isn't the first time
you've done this though, is it?

David wipes his tears.

DAVID
Do you want me to leave?

Evelyn smiles, tired.

EVELYN
No, I want you to rest. Come, lets
sit down and talk.

INT. EVELYN'S FRONT ROOM - DAY

Evelyn shuffles in, sitting back down in her armchair. David follows in closely behind her. He heads over to the comfy looking sofa, about to take his seat but stops, something catching his eye.

DAVID
(looking around)
Mom, what the hell is that?

David points to the corner of the room. There, dressed in a shaggy dog costume, stands Rufus, the man Evelyn had been playing with earlier.

EVELYN
That's my dog. He was a stray.
Turned up at my doorstep. He's been
living with me for a few months
now.

DAVID
(shocked)
That's no fucking dog.

Evelyn's eyes widen, and she's taken aback.

EVELYN
You're crazy David, now please,
don't swear.

DAVID
But Mom!

EVELYN
(raising her voice)
David. Sit down!

David complies, but doesn't take his eyes from Rufus.

INT. EVELYN'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

Evelyn, David, and Rufus sit around the dining table. Rufus literally sits, the same as Evelyn and David.

The room is cosy, lit by a chandelier that's seen better days. The aroma of home-cooked food fills the air.

Evelyn serves a hearty casserole, and David eyes it suspiciously. Rufus, in his dog suit, sits upright, knife and fork in paw.

EVELYN
(to Rufus)
Bon appétit, my good little doggy.

Rufus nods, his eyes—too human—fixed on the plate. David shifts uncomfortably.

DAVID
(grumbling)
This is insane.

Evelyn chuckles, her eyes twinkling.

EVELYN
(to David)
He's amazing isn't he?

Rufus delicately cuts a piece of casserole, raises the fork to his mouth, and chews. David watches, incredulous.

DAVID
(sarcastic)
Right. Special. I can hardly believe he's real.

INT. EVELYN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David, rummages through the kitchen drawers.

David's gaze lands on Rufus, the man-dressed-as-a-dog, curled up in a dog bed by the window. Rufus's eyes follow David's every move.

DAVID
(grumbling)
Who the fuck are you? Are you after her money? Is that it? I should call the fucking police.

Rufus tilts his head, as if contemplating an answer.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(impatient)
Answer me!

Rufus puts his head back down, settling down to sleep.

David reaches down to Rufus, patting him down and roughly searching him. He comes up empty.

David then spots a wallet peeking out from under the dog bed. He pulls it out, revealing an ID card—FRANK OWENS.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(confused)
Frank? Who the hell is Frank?

'Rufus' continues to sleep. Acting as though David's discovery is no big deal.

David stares down at him with a feeling of pure rage.

INT. EVELYN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The following morning, Evelyn sits on the couch, her eyes alight with laughter as she scratches Rufus's head. Rufus leans into her touch, eyes half-closed in contentment. David's chest tightens.

DAVID
(whispering to himself)
This is such bullshit.

Evelyn glances up, catching David's gaze. Her smile widens, and she pats the spot next to her. His frown deepens.

EVELYN
He's been good for me, you know.
Rufus. He listens without judgment.

DAVID
(sighing)
You've been lonely haven't you Mom?
I've been negligent, Mom. Too busy
with my own life. I should've been
here for you.

Evelyn strokes Rufus's fur, her voice gentle.

EVELYN
Yes.

DAVID
I haven't been a very good son have
I?

EVELYN
You were a joy to raise.

DAVID
But as an adult?

EVELYN
You could have been so much more
than you are.

DAVID

A gambling addicted disappointment.

Evelyn's eyes shift back down to Rufus, she doesn't say it, but David knows that she agree with his statement. And he can't blame her. It's true.

INT. EVELYN'S HALLWAY - DAY

David stands ready to leave, coat and shoes on. Car keys in his hand.

Evelyn stands facing him. Rufus sitting next to her.

DAVID

Goodbye Mom.

David and Evelyn come together and hug, a loving embrace.

EVELYN

(teary-eyed)

David, please don't leave it so long before you come and see me again.

DAVID

(shakes his head)

I won't.

EVELYN

I do love you but...

DAVID

(interrupting)

Mom, you don't need to say it. I don't want any money from you. I'll find a way to be OK.

Evelyn reaches down to Rufus, linking arms with him she gets him to stand up.

EVELYN

I want you to take Rufus home with you.

David can't help but laugh.

DAVID

(confused)

Rufus? Mom, he's not even a real dog. He's-

EVELYN

He's more than you think. He's been my companion, my confidant. He's been good for me. I believe he'll be good for you.

DAVID

(laughing)

Mom, I can't take him home.

Evelyn's eyes twinkle.

EVELYN

You need someone like Rufus. Just for a little while. You can bring him back when you come and see me again. Maybe he'll teach you a thing or two about life.

DAVID

(teasing)

Maybe he'll end up preferring living with me?

Evelyn pats Rufus's head, and he gazes up at David, eyes filled with something akin to wisdom.

EVELYN

I won't let you leave without him David. Please. Make your mother happy for once.

David hesitates, then sighs.

DAVID

Fine, Mom. But if he starts talking, I'm sending him back.

Evelyn laughs, and Rufus wags his tail. As David leads Rufus out the door, he glances back at his mother, who waves with a mix of sadness and hope.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David, sits on a worn-out couch, laptop open in front of him. The room is sparsely furnished, a reflection of David's solitary life. The glow from the laptop screen illuminates his face.

Rufus, lounges nearby, watching David with curious eyes.

DAVID
(grumbling)
Just a few more hands, Rufus. I
need to win this.

Rufus tilts his head, as if understanding. But then, he stands on his hind legs, nudges the laptop shut with his snout, and picks it up in his paws. Finally tucking it under his arm.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(startled)
Hey! What are you doing?

Rufus carries the laptop across the room, placing it on a high shelf, out of David's reach. He sits back down, staring at David with an intensity that sends shivers down his spine.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(angry)
What's your game, Rufus? You want
to mess with me?

Rufus's eyes seem to say more than words ever could. David slumps back on the couch, defeated.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(sighing)
Do you have any idea how much I've
lost playing online poker?

Rufus comes over, nudges David's hand, seeking comfort. David hesitates, then scratches behind Rufus's ears.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(reluctant)
Alright. No more cards. At least
for tonight. But I can't make any
promises about tomorrow.

Rufus leans into the touch, and David realizes that this man-dog, cursed or not, has become his lifeline. Maybe Rufus needs him too, but in this moonlit room, it's hard to tell who's saving whom.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END