

Living the Dream

by

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Frank sat in his white three-piece suit. The kind of suit that makes you not trust a man. Not trust him to sell you a car, walk your dog, or just look after my kid for like two seconds and I'll be right over there. And that was the point.

Frank sat at the lodge like he did every day. Reading a book. Putting his feet on the lodge coffee table, even though he shouldn't, but none of the young lodge staff was getting paid enough to tell him otherwise. Frank sat. Waiting for the right opportunity.

A young couple came in from the snow. They weren't beaten and exhausted like most skiers. They were beaming with excitement.

"That was amazing!" she said clutching his arm.

"I've never done anything like that," he said.

"We should do this every year."

"We should do this every day."

"Are you serious?" he said turning to her.

"Why not. I've graduated, and you hate your job, let's try it."

Frank put his book down. Took his reading glasses off.

"What would we do for money, no one's going to pay us to ski."

"You could buy a business in town," Frank said in his fake southern drawl.

Still smiling the happy couple turned to look at Frank.

"I'm sorry, to overhear, but I just couldn't help myself," Frank said with a fatty grunt as he pulled himself from the couch.

"We can't afford to buy a business," said the man.

"Now it just so happens that I know this..."

It was February.

"...dry cleaners that's a lookin' to change hands, and they're a very motivated seller,"

Frank said.

"Come one Brad, dry cleaning can't be that hard, we could totally do it," the young lady said about to rip Brad's arm off.

"I don't know there's a lot..."

"They're just down the block if'n you want to see the operation. We could stop by..."

It was Wednesday afternoon.

"right now," Frank said rubbing his belly.

Frank couldn't help himself.

"Oh come on, they're a block away. Let's go," Cindy said.

On the walk to the dry cleaners Cindy continued to talk. Not really to anyone. About all the things she would do in their new life in the mountain community.

Frank was beginning to feel bad again. Maybe the suit wasn't enough. Maybe it needed a walking stick. Nobody would buy anything from a man who clearly didn't need, but insisted on having a walking stick. Yeah. Maybe with a big skull or a snake's head on top.

"Here we are," Frank said as he held the door for the couple.

He can't stop. It's just so easy. And if he didn't do it, he'd have to go back to cold calling. And Frank gives bad phone.

The couple stood in the entryway of the small dry cleaners, impressed with how clean it was. In the back was a woman in her...40s working hard at pressing shirts. The steam rising off the garments, matting her bangs to her forehead.

Frank saw that the steaming woman showed no signs of movement and gave the bell at the desk a firm tap.

The woman looked casually at the new customers, and then at Frank. She ran to the front desk, rolling down her sleeves and fixing her hair.

"Oh hello, how are you today?"

"I'm good Betsy, how's business?" Frank said tugging at his suspenders.

Betsy looked at the new couple and then back at Frank.

"It's good. Busy, but good."

She forced a smile.

"What's new with you?" Betsy said dabbing away the perspiration.

"Well, I thought I'd show Brad and Cindy here your operation on the off chance they'd be interested in purchasing your fiiiiiiiiiiiiine establishment."

"Oh, well, I guess...What would you like to know?" asked Betsy.

"What do you do? I mean, what is there in running a dry cleaners?" Cindy said.

"Well, let's see. You take their clothes. You ask them what kinds of stains are on it. Do some pre-treating, put it in the solution, and then you put it on the carousel." Betsy said waving to the never-ending stream of rotating clothing.

"And that's it?" Brad asked.

"Well there's the occasional pressing, or special need, and of course you need to order the supplies..." Betsy trailed off.

"What are the negatives?" asked Brad.

Betsy stared at Brad. At this point she started to feel bad. But it was too late. She saw her out and she was going to take it.

"Oh, well, it can get a little busy. There's the angry customer now and then. But all and all it's good."

"So why are you selling," Brad pressed on.

Well, Frank thought. I could step in here, but that would seem like trying.

"Oh, well, my husband was transferred to another office, so we had to move."

"Where is your husband today?" Frank asked.

"He's at the bank," Betsy said coldly.

Cindy and Brad stared at Betsy.

"Well if that's it, I should get back to pressing," Betsy said.

"Of course, thank you for your time," Brad said.

The trio walked outside.

"See Brad, we could do this, it's not so hard," Cindy said lightly punching Brad.

"I don't know, there's so much we don't know about this..."

“Well would you look at that,” Frank said staring up into the sky.

Just then a rainbow stretched from the mountain, landing directly in back of the dry cleaners.

Frank thought, this is not my fault.

But it kinda was. After all it was 3:00.

They all looked up at the rainbow.

“Oh my god Brad, we have to do it. It’s a sign. We just have to,” Cindy said punching Brad with every ‘have to.’

“Ok, we’ll do it,” Brad said with a big smile to Cindy.

“Well all right then. Why don’t you step around to my office and I’ll draw up the necessary papers to get this started. My office is conveniently located on the next block.” The three of them walked toward Frank’s office.

Frank wouldn’t be able to hit the slopes today, but winter wasn’t the reason he moved to Lake Tahoe. He liked the summers better. And real estating was the perfect job. Sell a property and then hang out by the lake. Wait three months, repeat. Sure, he felt bad about his job. But he wasn’t forcing anyone to do something they didn’t want to do. And he had to make a living. After all, nobody’ll pay you to sit by the lake.