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THE SMASH HIT OF THE YEAR!

Ira Levin

Rosewater



R ROSEMARY'S BABY

a novel by IRA LEVIN

A D E L L B O O K

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Well, that's what happened to Rosemary . . . Or did it. . .?

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PART



CHAPTER 1

Rosemary and Guy Woodhouse had signed a lease on a five-room apartment in a geometric white house on First Avenue when they received word, from a woman named Mrs. Cortez, that a four-room apartment in the Bramford had become available. The Bramford, old, black, and elephantine, is a warren of high-ceilinged apartments prized for their fireplaces and Victorian detail. Rosemary and Guy had been on its waiting list since their marriage but had finally given up.

Guy relayed the news to Rosemary, stopping the phone against his chest. Rosemary groaned "Oh *no!*" and looked as if she would weep.

"It's too late," Guy said to the phone. "We signed a lease yesterday." Rosemary caught his arm. "Couldn't we get out of it?" she asked him. "Tell them something?"

"Hold on a minute, will you, Mrs. Cortez?" Guy stopped the phone again. "Tell them what?" he asked.

Rosemary floundered and raised her hands helplessly. "I don't know, the truth. That we have a chance to get into the Bramford."

"Honey," Guy said, "they're not going to care about that."

"You'll think of *something*, Guy. Let's just look, all right? Tell her we'll look. Please. Before she hangs up."

"We signed a *lease*, Ro; we're stuck."

"Please! She'll hang up!" Whimpering with mock anguish, Rosemary pried the phone from Guy's chest and

tried to push it up to his mouth.

Guy laughed and let the phone be pushed. "Mrs. Cortez? It turns out there's a chance we'll be able to get out of it, because we haven't signed the actual lease yet. They were out of the forms so we only signed a letter of agreement. Can we take a look at the apartment?"

Mrs. Cortez gave instructions: they were to go to the Bramford between eleven and eleven-thirty, find Mr. Micklas or Jerome, and tell whichever they found that they were the party she had sent to look at 7E. Then they were to call her. She gave Guy her number.

"You see how you can think of things?" Rosemary said, putting Peds and yellow shoes on her feet. "You're a *marvelous* liar."

Guy, at the mirror, said, "Christ, a pimple."

"Don't squeeze it."

"It's only four rooms, you know. No nursery."

"I'd rather have four rooms in the Bramford," Rosemary said, "than a whole floor in that—that white cellblock."

"Yesterday you loved it."

"I liked it. I never loved it. I'll bet not even the architect loves it. We'll make a dining area in the living room and have a beautiful nursery, when and if."

"Soon," Guy said. He ran an electric razor back and forth across his upper lip, looking into his eyes, which were brown and large. Rosemary stepped into a yellow dress and squirmed the zipper up the back of it.

They were in one room, that had been Guy's bachelor apartment. It had posters of Paris and Verona, a large day bed and a pullman kitchen.

It was Tuesday, the third of August.

Mr. Micklas was small and dapper but had fingers missing from both hands, which made shaking hands an embarrassment, though not apparently for him. "Oh, an actor" he said, ringing for the elevator with a middle finger. "We're very popular with actors." He named four who were living at the Bramford, all of them well

known. "Have I seen you in anything?"

"Let's see," Guy said. "I did *Hamlet* a while back, didn't I, Liz? And then we made *The Sandpiper* . . ."

"He's joking," Rosemary said. "He was in *Luther* and *Nobody Loves An Albatross* and a lot of television plays and television commercials."

"That's where the money is, isn't it?" Mr. Micklas said; "the commercials."

"Yes," Rosemary said, and Guy said, "And the artistic thrill, too."

Rosemary gave him a pleading look; he gave back one of stunned innocence and then made a leering vampire face at the top of Mr. Micklas's head.

The elevator—oak-paneled, with a shining brass handrail all around—was run by a uniformed Negro boy with a locked-in-place smile. "Seven," Mr. Micklas told him; to Rosemary and Guy he said, "This apartment has four rooms, two baths, and five closets. Originally the house consisted of very large apartments—the smallest was a nine—but now they've almost all been broken up into fours, fives, and sixes. Seven E is a four that was originally the back part of a ten. It has the original kitchen and master bath, which are enormous, as you'll soon see. It has the original master bedroom for its living room, another bedroom for its bedroom, and two servant's rooms thrown together for its dining room or second bedroom. Do you have children?"

"We plan to," Rosemary said.

"It's an ideal child's room, with a full bathroom and a large closet. The whole set-up is made to order for a young couple like yourselves."

The elevator stopped and the Negro boy, smiling, chivied it down, up, and down again for a closer alignment with the floor rail outside; and still smiling, pulled in the brass inner gate and the outer rolling door. Mr. Micklas stood aside and Rosemary and Guy stepped out—into a dimly lighted hallway walled and carpeted in dark green. A workman at a sculptured green door marked 7B looked at them and turned back to fitting a

peepscope into its cut-out hole.

Mr. Micklas led the way to the right and then to the left, through short branches of dark green hallway. Rosemary and Guy, following, saw rubbed-away places in the wallpaper and a seam where it had lifted and was curling inward; saw a dead light bulb in a cut-glass sconce and a patched place of light green tape on the dark green carpet. Guy looked at Rosemary: *Patched carpet?* She looked away and smiled brightly: *I love it; everything's lovely!*

"The previous tenant, Mrs. Gardenia," Mr. Micklas said, not looking back at them, "passed away only a few days ago and nothing has been moved out of the apartment yet. Her son asked me to tell whoever looks at it that the rugs, the air conditioners, and some of the furniture can be had practically for the asking." He turned into another branch of hallway papered in newer-looking green and gold stripes.

"Did she die in the apartment?" Rosemary asked. "Not that it—"

"Oh, no, in a hospital," Mr. Micklas said. "She'd been in a coma for weeks. She was very old and passed away without ever waking. I'll be grateful to go that way myself when the time comes. She was chipper right to the end; cooked her own meals, shopped the departments stores . . . She was one of the first women lawyers in New York State."

They came now to a stairwell that ended the hallway. Adjacent to it, on the left, was the door of apartment 7E, a door without sculptured garlands, narrower than the doors they had passed. Mr. Micklas pressed the pearl bell button—*L. Gardenia* was mounted above it in white letters on black plastic—and turned a key in the lock. Despite lost fingers he worked the knob and threw the door smartly. "After you, please," he said, leaning forward on his toes and holding the door open with the length of an outstretched arm.

The apartment's four rooms were divided two and two

on either side of a narrow central hallway that extended in a straight line from the front door. The first room on the right was the kitchen, and at the sight of it Rosemary couldn't keep from giggling, for it was as large if not larger than the whole apartment in which they were then living. It had a six-burner gas stove with two ovens, a mammoth refrigerator, a monumental sink; it had dozens of cabinets, a window on Seventh Avenue, a high *high* ceiling, and it even had—imagining away Mrs. Gardenia's chrome table and chairs and roped bales of *Fortune* and *Musical America*—the perfect place for something like the blue-and-ivory breakfast nook she had clipped from last month's *House Beautiful*.

Opposite the kitchen was the dining room or second bedroom, which Mrs. Gardenia had apparently used as a combination study and greenhouse. Hundreds of small plants, dying and dead, stood on jerry-built shelves under spirals of unlighted fluorescent tubing; in their midst a rolltop desk spilled over with books and papers. A handsome desk it was, broad and gleaming with age. Rosemary left Guy and Mr. Micklas talking by the door and went to it, stepping over a shelf of withered brown fronds. Desks like this were displayed in antique-store windows; Rosemary wondered, touching it, if it was one of the things that could be had practically for the asking. Graceful blue penmanship on mauve paper said *than merely the intriguing pastime I believed it to be. I can no longer associate myself*—and she caught herself snooping and looked up at Mr. Micklas turning from Guy. "Is this desk one of the things Mrs. Gardenia's son wants to sell?" she asked.

"I don't know," Mr. Micklas said. "I could find out for you, though."

"It's a beauty," Guy said.

Rosemary said "Isn't it?" and smiling, looked about at walls and windows. The room would accommodate almost perfectly the nursery she had imagined. It was a
aced on a narrow courtyard—

but the white-and-yellow wallpaper would brighten it tremendously. The bathroom was small but a bonus, and the closet, filled with potted seedlings that seemed to be doing quite well, was a good one.

They turned to the door, and Guy asked, "what are all these?"

"Herbs, mostly," Rosemary said. "There's mint and basil . . . I don't know what these are."

Farther along the hallway there was a guest closet on the left, and then, on the right, a wide archway opening onto the living room. Large bay windows stood opposite, two of them, with diamond panes and three-sided window seats. There was a small fireplace in the right-hand wall, with a scrolled white marble mantel, and there were high oak bookshelves on the left.

"Oh, Guy," Rosemary said, finding his hand and squeezing it. Guy said "Mm" noncommittally but squeezed back; Mr. Micklas was beside him.

"The fireplace works, of course," Mr. Micklas said.

The bedroom, behind them, was adequate—about twelve by eighteen, with its windows facing on the same narrow courtyard as those of the dining-room-second-bedroom-nursery. The bathroom, beyond the living room, was big, and full of bulbous white brass-knobbed fixtures.

"It's a marvelous apartment!" Rosemary said, back in the living room. She spun about with opened arms, as if to take and embrace it. "I love it!"

"What she's trying to do," Guy said, "is get you to lower the rent."

Mr. Micklas smiled. "We would raise it if we were allowed," he said. "Beyond the fifteen-per-cent increase, I mean. Apartments with this kind of charm and individuality are as rare as hen's teeth today. The new —" He stopped short, looking at a mahogany secretary at the head of the central hallway. "That's odd," he said. "There's a closet behind that secretary. I'm sure there is. There are five: two in the bedroom, one in the

second bedroom, and two in the hallway, there and there." He went closer to the secretary.

Guy stood high on tiptoes and said, "You're right. I can see the corners of the door."

"She moved it," Rosemary said. "The secretary; it used to be there." She pointed to a peaked silhouette left ghostlike on the wall near the bedroom door, and the deep prints of four ball feet in the burgundy carpet. Faint scuff-trails curved and crossed from the four prints to the secretary's feet where they stood now against the narrow adjacent wall.

"Give me a hand, will you?" Mr. Micklas said to Guy.

Between them they worked the secretary bit by bit back toward its original place. "I see why she went into a coma," Guy said, pushing.

"She couldn't have moved this by herself," Mr. Micklas said; "she was eighty-nine."

Rosemary looked doubtfully at the closet door they had uncovered. "Should we open it?" she asked. "Maybe her son should."

The secretary lodged neatly in its four footprints. Mr. Micklas massaged his fingers-missing hands. "I'm authorized to show the apartment," he said, and went to the door and opened it. The closet was nearly empty; a vacuum cleaner stood at one side of it and three or four wood boards at the other. The overhead shelf was stacked with blue and green bath towels.

"Whoever she locked in got out," Guy said.

Mr. Micklas said, "She probably didn't need five closets."

"But why would she cover up her vacuum cleaner and her towels?" Rosemary asked.

Mr. Micklas shrugged. "I don't suppose we'll ever know. She may have been getting senile after all." He smiled. "Is there anything else I can show you or tell you?"

"Yes," Rosemary said. "What about the laundry facilities? Are there washing machines downstairs?"