

DEBBIE'S DEGAS

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INT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Mid-century home and furnishings. Pinkish hues from the setting sun paint the side table that sits in front of a window.

Through the crack of the open curtains, a 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air has just parked. The headlights turn off.

EXT. CHEVY

A young woman sits in the driver seat.

DEBBIE, 17, spunky and radiant yet tunnel-visioned, applies make-up as she looks in the rear view mirror. Her lips move to speak as she rushes the blush job.

INT. CHEVY

DEBBIE
(as if convincing herself)
In and out. Easy. Right? Find the
painting. Snatch it. Double money.

She snaps her little blush case. She takes a deep breath. Now, she applies lipstick. Her hand shakes.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
It'll all be okay. You'll be okay.

Next to the little mirror on the visor, not only is her reflection shown, but also... a post card of NEW YORK CITY. She eyes it for a moment. Corrects her lipstick with her pinky. She shuts the visor.

A deep exhale.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
ay. You can do this. If things
get heavy, you know what you have
to do.

She looks down to the front passenger seat. A tiny, silver SIX SHOOTER gleams.

She gazes to the house.

CAM (O.S.)
God, I love you.

She looks to the rear mirror and adjusts it to the back seat.

Laying down and out of sight is CAM, 17, coy, and does what he's told. While he is handsome, one can easily tell that Debbie is out of his league.

CAM (CONT'D)
Say it back to me, will ya?

Pause.

Debbie closes her handbag after tossing the lipstick in. With her lips barely moving, she nonchalantly says through a flirtacious smile:

DEBBIE
Get that painting and I'll say it
for the rest of our lives.

CAM
ne.

Debbie exits the car.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS BOULEVARD

No looking back. Her heels click and clack at the same high speed as her heart beat as she approaches the decadent, mammoth house. She ascends the stairs to the front porch. Without a second to spare...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

No answer.

She peaks in through the window next to the door. No lights on. No movement.

Debbie looks back to the car quickly. Cam is hidden well. She turns back to the door and JUMPS.

DEBBIE
Ah!

Staring at Debbie through the window is-

DAMIEN CANTRELL, early 40s, debonair but holds an air of a hermit.

She recovers quickly and gives a small wave with a pleasant smile. Through catching her breath:

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Oh, how you scared me, Mr.
Cantrell.

The door opens. The tall figure of Damien reveals a man who sports a five-o'clock shadow.

DAMIEN

I don't wish to be bothered, Miss Debbie.

DEBBIE

Here.

She juts a check for \$40,000. Damien's hand slowly takes it. A faint blue stain on the tip of his thumb.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I want to make a deal with you.
Please, let me come in. Just a quick chat.

Damien eyes the check. He thinks about it. He seems hesitant at first, but a tiny light bulb goes off in his brain. Debbie raises a brow with a smile.

He gestures her in with a bit of a head swing.

After a quick scan of the boulevard, he closes the door.

INT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE

Damien turns to Debbie. Behind Damien through the window, Cam can be seen hopping out of the back seat of the Bel Air. The front door opens. With the gun in hand, he lightly shuts the door and then runs to the house.

Debbie ensures to keep her eyes on him. Damien flicks the check.

DAMIEN

Your daddy's gonna be upset that this money's missin'.

DEBBIE

I want the Degas back.

He laughs it off.


DAMIEN

A deal's a deal, Miss Debbie. Fair and square.

DEBBIE

Ⓛ wasn't my daddy's to sell. He was ill-informed by how much it was actually worth.

DAMIEN

Not my problem. d even the most foolish of sellers know to get an appraisal.

DEBBIE

That Degas is worth at least double what you paid.

DAMIEN

And?

Debbie's face turns flush. Antsy.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

How about some champagne? Calm your nerves.

DEBBIE

e. I ain't nervous. Two. I'm 17.

DAMIEN

If you're too young for champagne, you're too young to pay \$40,000 for a Degas.

DEBBIE

Fine. I'll take a drink. But a real man would offer me bourbon.

Damien leads her down the hall. A door to a basement is wide open. He shuts it, pulls out his keys and locks it.

DAMIEN

This way.

INT. STUDY

Across the room from Damien's bulky oak desk sits a mini-bar sitting under a window overlooking the street. As he approaches the bar, his demeanor is incredibly calm.

He puts his hand out on an arm chair opposite the desk as a gesture for Debbie to sit.

Debbie gathers herself as the sloshing of two generous glasses of bourbon are poured into a couple low balls. He sets the BOURBON DECANTER down. Damien opens the curtains and looks outside.

DAMIEN

Fireworks should be starting soon.

He hands one glass to Debbie. She takes it. He sits in his leather chair at the desk. He pulls opens a drawer. Inside...

A checkbook and next to it. A gun. He pulls out the checkbook.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
Now, let's talk business.

EXT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE

Cam creeps onto the porch. While tiptoeing and dodging any view from windows inside. He gets to the front door. With the gun raised, he takes his left hand and ever so slowly-

turns the handle.

The expectation of it potentially being locked disappears as he opens it to a crack. Then, he remains still.

INT. STUDY

Damien takes a swig of his bourbon. Debbie struggles with her first taste. She winces as she swallows. Damien laughs.

DAMIEN
So- why do you want the painting back?

DEBBIE
To sell it for what it's actually worth.

DAMIEN
No, I understand that, but answer truthfully... what would you do with the money?

DEBBIE
You don't tell me how you can afford this house. All these nice things. You're doing quite well for yourself.

DAMIEN
I'm an art dealer. Now you go.

DEBBIE
I don't see much art around.

DAMIEN

Because after the buyin' comes the sellin'.

DEBBIE

Well, if this goes south for me, you're gonna make one helluva killing on the deal you made with my daddy.

She gives in.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I want to go to New York City. To be a star on Broadway. Plan on selling the painting there for a lot more money.

DAMIEN

That's an honest answer. A saddening answer, but honest.

Debbie goes to put her glass on the desk.

EXT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE

Cam turns his ear toward inside. He waits.

INT. STUDY

She barely puts her glass on the edge of the desk. It's so far off the mark that it must be purposeful.

She let's go. It slips off.

EXT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE

CRASH! Cam swiftly sneaks in the house and shuts the door at the commotion from the study down the hall.

INT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE

Cam, with his back to the door, waits in complete silence.

DAMIEN (O.S.)

Kutzz! No, don't touch it.

As Cam stands like a statue, he winces at Damien entering the hall from the study. He points his gun in utter fear, but Damien turns the opposite direction down to the kitchen.

Cam let's go of that breath he held in and glides silently to the LOUNGE.

Damien enters the hallway with a rag and small basket. He swivels into the study.

INT. STUDY

Damien impatiently enters the room. Debbie picks up some shards from the floor and sets them on the desk. A bit of blood comes from one of her fingers.

DAMIEN

I told you not to touch it. Come here.

He takes her hand and gently puts the rag over it. Debbie's hand is in both of his. He brings his eyes up to hers. A tender moment. She looks down and sees a few white stains on his sleeve. Nothing of it, Debbie smiles and then coyly turns away.

New tactic.

Damien zones in for a moment. His eyes say: she is absolutely radiant. He snaps out of it and leaves the rag in her hand.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

You know, miss Debbie, you better be careful in New York.

DEBBIE

Why's that?

DAMIEN

Seventeen?

She nods.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Because western Louisiana looks a lot like east Texas if you catch my drift.

She gets in closer. A predator. Plays with his hair.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Your daddy works his ass off, ya hear? I know that for a fact. When he came in, I shook his hands. Sandpaper. Gritty. He got lucky to discover that painting.

(MORE)


DAMIEN (CONT'D)

He's broke, honey. He's an honest man and he's broke. You see where I'm going?


DEBBIE

That don't matt-

DAMIEN

It does. Because \$40,000 to him is a life-changer. w, you want to void the deal, take the money and run and leave him high and dry with four kids. So you can go be a star. Pitiful.

DEBBIE

 wasn't his to sell! My momma left that painting to me! I'm the victim in all this. NOT HIM!

DAMIEN

You're young. Stupid. And obtuse.

DEBBIE

The hell does obtuse mean-


INT. LOUNGE ROOM

Cam stands at the edge of the wall. He snaps out of his tense moment and turns his head. Against the wall is... a rectangular item wrapped in brown paper. Cam sets his gun on curio cabinet next to a china vase.

He inches closer to it. An address label shows: MR. BELVEDERE 124 WAVERLY BLVD. BATON ROUGE.

Yelling continues in the other room.

DAMIEN (O.S.)

It means slow to understand. I might've indled your father for a lower price, but you're about to bury him. No way is this deal happening.

Cam rips the front of the paper open to reveal (INSERT PAINTING HERE). He jumps up in excitement.

CAM

(to himself)

We got it.

DEBBIE (O.S.)
Well, you'll have to kill me before
I leave this house.

DAMIEN (O.S.)
Wait! Just wait. I might have
another option.

Cam stops and listens.

INT. STUDY


While still standing, Damien gulps the last of his bourbon.

DAMIEN
24 year old bourbon, by the way.

He sits. As he makes out a check:

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
If \$40,000 is a big deal to your
pops, then... \$30,000 is a sure-
fire big deal for you. I'm paying
you \$30,000 off the books to get
the hell out of my house and say no
more of it.

Debbie doesn't shutter.

DEBBIE
. It's worth at least a hundred
grand.

DAMIEN
Miss Debbie, take a breath and
think about this now.

He rips the check from the book. He holds it out to her. She
grabs it.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
This is all you're walking out
with. You're young. If you're
smart, this will last you a long
time. Hell, even if you're not
smart it should. Don't get greedy.

Fireworks ignite a ways into town.

Debbie stands up and walks toward the window. She ponders.

DEBBIE

What a lovely view you have of the fireworks... From your castle.

She rips the check to pieces. They fall to the floor. Damien lowers his head in disappointment. Debbie zones out on the fireworks. Takes a swig straight from the DECANter.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Happy Fourth.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM

Cam picks up the painting. Then, then he absentmindedly grabs his gun. He's a bit more cocky with his movements at the sound of the fireworks.

He swings around and knocks the china vase off the curio with his gun.

CRASH!

INT. STUDY

Debbie's mouth goes agape at the sound. Damien looks right at her, eyes like daggers. He slides open the drawer and snags his gun. He RUSHES out the room. Snapping out of it, Debbie follows with the BOURBON DECANter in hand.

INT./EXT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE - HALLWAY

Damien moves with purpose toward the front door. When he gets there, he raises the gun.

DAMIEN

Stop!

A bullet ricochets off the trim outside the door.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Stop kid!

Fireworks still bombast the atmosphere. Another bullet ricochets.

Damien shoots!

BANG!

From Damien's perspective, Cam falls to the ground and grunts in agony.

Damien takes a step forward but Debbie swings the clunky BOURBON DECANTER and knocks Damien down. THUD! It doesn't even break it's so bulky.

Damien is down for the count. Not knocked out, but discombobulated.

Debbie runs over Damien. She gets to Cam.

EXT. NEW ORLEAN'S BOULEVARD

She gets on her knees next to Cam. He's bleeding from his upper shoulder. He looks at his hand full of blood.

CAM
That's a lot... a lot of blood.

DEBBIE
You'll be okay, I promise.

His bloody fingers goes to touch the painting.

CAM
We got-

DEBBIE
Whoa, whoa, take it easy. Don't want to muss up the Degas. Right?

She laughs a bit to ease the tension.

CAM
Hey, Debbie, now... do you love me?

He passes out.

DEBBIE
Yeah, I love you.

She kisses his forehead. Then- she checks the painting to be sure it's-

(INSERT PAINTING HERE).

It is.

She stands up and darts to the car. She sets the painting in the back seat and starts the Bel Air up. Headlights pop on.

INT. CHEVY

She looks to Cam then back into the mirror.

DEBBIE

I love you very much.

She puts the Chevy in gear and drives down the street. She sees Damien trudging down the stairs. She turns her head toward him. He doesn't pursue her. He stops at Cam and gets down to a knee.

She looks in the mirror at the Degas in the light of exploding fireworks.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

 tcha.

The car disappears over the hill.


INT. SLEEK APARTMENT - DAY

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER | UPSTATE NEW YORK

An older man, BUYER, 60s. Combs the painting with a MAGNIFYING GLASS as he does, Debbie waits.


He sets the magnifying glass down.

BUYER

This s painting willed to you?

Debbie nods.

BUYER (CONT'D)

You know, when Degas me to New Orleans, he wasn't famous yet. But those five months shaped his career in profound ways.

Debbie raises a brow.

BUYER (CONT'D)

What I'm saying is, maybe your time in New York won't be a total waste.

DEBBIE

I don't understand.

BUYER

This painting would go for upwards of \$200,000.

Debbie puts her hands to her face in complete excitement. She holds it in.

DEBBIE
That's wonderful news.

BUYER
If it were real.

Her smile instantly fades. She falls into a plush chair.

BUYER (CONT'D)
Sorry to disappoint you. It's a
good fake. But any true collector
would know the difference.

DEBBIE
But-

She buries her face in her hands. She sobs.

INT. DAMIEN'S ESTATE - HALLWAY - DAY

Damien swings the keys around his fingers. He unlocks that
door to the basement.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
Now, miss, did you know that Edgar
Degas is the only of the First
Impressionists to ever cross the
Atlantic?

INT. BASEMENT

He descends slowly down the stairs. Revealed are 'rectangular
shaped' objects covered under cloth tarps. Some are on easels
while others are lined against the walls. Dozens of them. He
heads straight to the one in the center of the room. He pulls
the cover.

(INSERT PAINTING HERE)

DAMIEN (V.O.)
This is his earlier work. Before he
became truly famous around the
world. This, madame, is rare.

Damien brings in another easel with a blank canvas the exact
same size as the original painting. He sets it beside the
Degas.

INT. HIGH CLASS ESTATE - DAY

DAMIEN

It represents how an artist's most unknown work can be the eclipse of his greatness yet to come. What do you think, Miss Belvedere.

He unveils the painting.

MISS BELVEDERE, 70s, claps her hands in excitement. Through an exhale she proclaims:

MISS BELVEDERE

Sensational. Just sensational.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

With a classical piece playing on the GRAMOPHONE, Damien is seen between the two easels. He studies both of them.

He sits back and puts his hands behind his head.

Over his shoulder, he looks at two identical paintings of (INSERT PAINTING HERE) on their canvases.

DAMIEN

Good.

There is no indication of which one is...

The authentic Degas.

FADE TO BLACK.