

"THE ONLY WAY IS UP"

Written by

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SEVENTH DRAFT
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FADE IN:

1. INT: VISITING ROOM AT A PRISON - DAY

We see DEREK FENSDALE, an inmate at a medium security jail, being visited by his wife, who is now the celebrated fortune teller MADAME ZOEPHEL. Derek is clearly in a poor state of health. They are sitting either side of a table. A WARDEN is visible sitting on the far side of the room, and although out of focus, his uniform is recognisable.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Derek you must look after yourself. I can see that you're not.

DEREK

Stop your fretting - I'm ok.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

You're back on the smack again aren't you?

DEREK

Leave it. You don't know what it's like in here.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Derek! At your age it could finish you off. You're not the man you were when you got put in here twenty years ago. How are you getting drugs in here?

DEREK

I have friends.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

You mean Jake. Well he's no friend of yours. I could kill that Jake for what he's done to you.

WARDEN

I'm afraid we're out of time Mrs Fensdale.

DEREK

You watch out for that Jake - he's a ruthless, evil bastard.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Oh don't worry, I'll watch him.

The warden stands up and comes over.

DEREK

You really can see him, can't
you? And the future, for him,
for me - you know what's coming?

MADAME ZOEPHEL doesn't answer, but Derek can see in her eyes
that she does know.

WARDEN

Come along now Mrs Fensdale,
visiting hours are over.

MADAME ZOEPHEL stands to leave. There are tears in her eye.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Good-by Derek.

Madame Zoepfel turns and hurries out, clearly overcome with
emotion.

2. INT: RUN-DOWN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We see NORA and her partner JAKE at home in their seedy flat.
They are low life. Nora is reading a newspaper and comes
across an article of interest.

NORA

Eeh! Would you believe it
Jake? He's snuffed it in jail!

JAKE

Who?

NORA

Fensdale!

JAKE

What! another nice little earner
bites the dust.

NORA

Shame - there's still plenty of
meat left on that bone - his
wife is still spending for both
of them. That "Madame Zoepfel"
act of hers doesn't fool me -
she's such an exhibitionist - it
must be costing a fortune.

We see a view of a tall block of flats, and then a view
looking in to one of the windows on a high up floor. We see
Madame Zoepfel, dressed as a mystic gazing into a crystal
ball. In the background there are props for her act. In the
ball she can see Jake and Nora in conversation.

JAKE

She certainly enjoys her charity
work; every fashionable good
cause, she's there doling it
out. Lord knows we could find a
use for her dough.

NORA

You're right there.

JAKE

You know charities like the back
of your hand - you should work
your charm on her.

NORA

I see a gleam in your eye Jake!
What's your big idea?

JAKE

Just a thought old girl, just a
thought. You have pretended to
be a posh old bird before, and
she's never actually met you.
Talk to her and give her a new
project to support.

NORA

I don't know Jake, she's no pushover.

JAKE

But deep down she feels guilty. She'll be glad to pony up if you offer her the chance to redeem herself.

NORA

Perhaps you're right. And the way things are now the only way is up!

We see MADAME ZOEPHEL from outside, through the window of her flat, high up in a tower block.

3. INT: RUN-DOWN LIVING ROOM - DAY

NORA

Let's see how this goes Jake ...

Nora picks up her phone, and speaks with a much more cultured voice than when talking to Jake. She is playing the part of ANGELA DOUGHTY, a representative of a charity, Eastern Housing Trust.

NORA

Good morning Mrs Zoepfel. I'm Angela Doughty.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Yes?

NORA

I am a volunteer for the Eastern Housing Trust. I can do little on the practical side but I concentrate on talking to people in the community to involve as wide a range of people in our work as possible.

We see Madame Zoepfel, talking to Nora on the phone, and at the same time watching her in the Crystal Ball.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

It sounds wonderful. Do I know you from somewhere?

NORA

I don't think so.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Just wondered how you got my details.

NORA

Well I know that you have done such good work in the community, supporting so many good causes. I have been inspired, I really have. Could I call on you Mrs Zoepfel? I could explain our plans, and financial needs, far more clearly than I can on the phone.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Well it is so good of you to take such trouble for a single donor.

NORA

In my job I meet so many potential donors, but I try to treat them all as individuals.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

I'm really most interested in your work. I think we should set a time and date.

4. EXT/INT: STAIRWELL OF A BLOCK OF FLATS - DAY

We see a block of flats, photographed to emphasize height and the geometric form of the staircase. We see NORA, now "power dressed" for business pretending to be ANGELA DOUGHTY, ascending the stairs (or riding up in lift), reaching one of the flats and ringing the bell. It is answered by MADAME ZOEPHEL.

NORA

Good afternoon Mrs Zoephel, I'm
Angela Doughty.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

Right on time - that's what I
like to see. Come through -
we'll have a cup of tea while we
talk.

We see Madame Zoephel leading Nora through to the sitting room. The decor includes lots of oriental and cultural ornaments and tapestries.

5. INT: SITTING ROOM OF MADAME ZOEPHEL'S FLAT - LATER

Madame Zoephel and Nora are talking in Madame Zoephel's sitting room.

MADAME ZOEPHEL

You must think my enthusiasm for
your charity very unusual, but
right from when you first
mentioned it, it felt like the
right thing to do.

NORA

It is so rewarding to meet
someone who understands and
appreciates our mission. But
your proposed donation is most
generous. Was there a
particular reason you're taking
action right now?

MADAME ZOEPHEL
Zoephel is my maiden name. My
husbands name was Fensdale.

NORA
(pause) Derek Fensdale? the
convicted ...

MADAME ZOEPHEL
Yes, that's how he will always
be remembered.

NORA
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to
imply ...

MADAME ZOEPHEL
To tell the truth that's how I
remember him too. He caused so
much misery and I want to use
his money to try and make amends.

NORA
Is that why the bulk of the
donation is in cash?

MADAME ZOEPHEL
Derek never trusted banks.

NORA
Do you wish to make the donation
today?

MADAME ZOEPHEL
I don't see why not.

NORA
Well that's great. The part you
want to pay by cheque - please
make it out to "Eastern Housing
Trust".

6. INT: STAIRWELL OF BLOCK OF FLATS - LATER

We see NORA coming out of the flat looking quietly pleased with herself.

NORA

(to herself)

The only way is up!

NORA summons the lift but it appears to be broken, so she decides to take the stairs. She sees that she is on floor nine and hurries down, but the next floor is ten and the one after that eleven. The floors seem to be numbered from top to bottom. Retracing her steps she climbs the stairs. She reaches floors twelve and thirteen. Becoming confused, she goes back down a floor, to fourteen! Standing on the stairs mid-way between floors, she can just see both floor numbers. Glancing to the floor above, it is fifteen. But casting her eyes down, the lower floor is sixteen. With rising panic, she starts to run up and down the stairs with the floor numbers increasing all the time.

NORA calls Jake on her mobile.

NORA

Jake! I need help. Madame Zoephel - I think she has real powers.

JAKE

Steady on Nora. She will be a tough nut to crack. Perhaps we need to lie low for a bit.

NORA

I can't Jake, I'd love to lie low, but whatever I do, the only way is up!

FADE OUT: