

Late Bloomers
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Translated from the French by
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1 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 1

The room is shrouded in darkness. We can only make out the bed and shapes under the covers. Giggly foreplay gives way to more eloquent breathing and movement.

ON-SCREEN: Adam and Mary, A Couple

2 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAWN 2

The first glimmers of daylight reveal the space: a large, garish Napoleon III hotel room. There are two bodies in bed under the covers. One of them stirs. A woman emerges: MARY, a radiant fifty-something.

Mary gets out of bed, looks around and walks past the bed to the window. She opens the curtains and looks at the room again. She looks lost.

MAN'S VOICE
(muffled by the covers)
Did they bring up breakfast?

MARY
This place is awful.

MAN'S VOICE
Did you order croissants?

Mary sits, still-puzzled, on the edge of the bed. Then she gets up and reads the label attached to the suitcase handle:
LHR - NCE.

MARY
What's NCE?

MAN'S VOICE
Nice, Côtes d'Azur. Did you order
croissants or toast?

The man peeks out from under the covers and we discover Adam, 60. Mary still looks lost. She keeps muttering "Nice..."

MARY
When did we get here? I can't
remember a thing.

ADAM
(gleeful)
What about last night, remember
that?

MARY

Yes. It's the rest that has me worried.

A long silence. Mary thinks long and hard. Alain watches her, but is not as worried as she is.

ADAM

How many children do we have?

MARY

Three.

ADAM

See? Everything's fine, you're just tired. What time did you order breakfast?

Mary looks around the room for something that might jog her memory. Adam watches her, looking somewhat more concerned.

ADAM

Do you remember how we met?

Instead of answering, Mary frowns - "*of course I do!*" - but then realizes she has to think about it. Another uncertain silence. Then she smiles.

MARY

We met through mutual friends. They kept saying they knew the perfect guy for me.

ADAM

How right they were!

MARY

No, I was perfect for you. I was so naive. Before I knew it we'd eloped.

ADAM

It was a romantic wedding!

MARY

3 guys from the site with hard hats under their arms as witnesses: a little girl's dream come true.

She smiles and then turns inward again. Her face tightens. Alain gets out of bed and walks toward the bathroom.

ADAM

You're just tired, you'll be alright.

(a smile)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Did you remember to hang that thing
on the doorknob for breakfast?

But Mary is still at sea.

MARY

(as though to herself)
James was born on the bus terminal,
Irene on the airport in Copenhagen.

ADAM

(surprised)
Not bad for someone with memory
loss. Even I can't keep all those
jobs straight.

MARY

You can't keep the kids straight,
Adam.

They share a smile. The tension and anxiety have lifted.

MARY

It's funny to think about the old
days.
(she smiles)
Maybe I'm like those old ladies who
lose their marbles, but remember
their childhoods perfectly.

But Adam's not smiling anymore. He finally looks concerned.
Mary shoots him a tender look.

MARY

I like it when you worry about me.

ADAM

As long as you haven't forgotten
your French.

MARY

I figured...

3 EXT. NICE, RETIREMENT HOME "LES SENIORALES" - DAY

3

Adam is seated in the front of a small golf cart. The driver
chatters away in French while Mary, who is seated in the
back, translates. As he drives, he points out condos,
assisted living units, conference rooms, a library, an
Olympic-size outdoor pool, an indoor pool, tennis courts, a
post office, a gift shop and restaurants. The place is like a
small city for seniors.

TOUR GUIDE

(in French)

I bet you don't have anything like this in England.

MARIE

No...

TOUR GUIDE

(in French)

So what do people do when they get old?

Marie translates for Adam. He laughs.

TOUR GUIDE

(to Adam, in French)

Is it for you?

MARIE

Huh?

TOUR GUIDE

Are you planning on buying a condo here?

MARY

(in English)

No. My husband is an architect. We're doing research.

The tour continues, but Marie looks worried. She translates, but has trouble concentrating. She observes the residents along the way. Those who are still walking stroll around in pairs or small groups, while the mobility-impaired get around with electric wheelchairs or canes. They all mill around the grounds in pastels looking content. Watching them, her eyes fill with worry.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

You didn't really think you had Alzheimer's, did you?

4 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE, LONDON - DAY

4

MRI images of a cross-section of Mary's brain.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

Why didn't you go see a doctor over there? He could've at least put your mind at ease.

Back in Britain, Mary watches as the doctor pores over the MRI scans. She is accompanied by Charlotte, a friend about her age.

DOCTOR

I'm taking you off your blood pressure medication. That's what's causing your memory loss.

MARY

Really? Is that all it is?

DOCTOR

You seem disappointed.

(a beat)

You should still be careful. Take better care of yourself. Get exercise, like Charlotte here.

CHARLOTTE

Exercise is for losers.

DOCTOR

You may not realize it, Charlotte, but you're very active. Those demonstrations of yours are great exercise. All that marching from Hyde Park Corner to Trafalgar Square...

CHARLOTTE

You've made your point.

The doctor sits down to study Mary's charts.

DOCTOR

How are the kids? Any worries there?

MARY

They're just fine.

CHARLOTTE

Fine alright. She's the backbone of the family and do you see a single one of them here?

MARY

I didn't tell them I was coming.

CHARLOTTE

Of course not, and it's not like Adam will. I bet it barely got through his thick skull.

DOCTOR

(to Charlotte)

Do you mind?

(to Mary)

Do you exercise regularly?

MARY

No, but I take care of my grandkids. If it were an Olympic sport, I'd win gold.

DOCTOR

Well, it's never too late to start. Are you retired?

MARY

No. I have several occupations.

CHARLOTTE

(surprised)

You are retired Mary!

MARY

(slightly annoyed)

I chose to stop teaching, but I don't do nothing. I still publish. I translate. I help out at Adam's firm.

DOCTOR

Find something to do, even if it's on a volunteer basis. Staying active is a health issue.

CHARLOTTE

(to the doctor)

It was your prescription that caused the problem. All you doctors are minions of the pharmaceutical industry. And now you start worrying about her health?

DOCTOR

You amaze me, Charlotte. Do you ever give up? You swamp me with political leaflets. You try to drag me to sit-ins. What's your group called, again? "The Grey Hounds"?

CHARLOTTE

Panthers. The Grey Panthers.

Mary isn't listening. She's tuned them out. She smiles.

CHARLOTTE

Mary? You OK?

MARY

I can't tell you how scared I was!
(her smile widens)
Yes, everything's great.

5 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM - DAY

5

In a large open loft-space, we discover a string of tables littered with blueprints, 3-D models and computers. Big faded aerial photos of marine terminals, train stations, and airports clutter the walls.

In a glass corner-office, Adam and his young assistant Maya (27) sit listening to Adam's financier, Richard (60), deliver a soliloquy. He's a born showman, shrewd and engaging.

RICHARD

People don't know how to die anymore. Old age just drags on and on and we have grown legions of wheelchairs. So where do we put them? Well, lucky for us, they usually have deep pockets or families willing to cough up to get rid of them. It's not hard to do the math.

Richard stops suddenly and pulls Adam aside.

RICHARD

You were in the South of France, you could have at least worked on your tan.

(in a whisper, Re: Maya)

I bet you haven't banged her yet. You wouldn't mind, would you?

ADAM

Don't start.

RICHARD

Really, I believe in sharing.

ADAM

Is it a retirement community or a swingers club you want built?

RICHARD

Why not combine the two? With Viagra they'll stay hard in their graves. Like all good ideas, it's ahead of its time. But sit on it, Adam.

ADAM

Can we get on with this?

They sit down again. Richard resumes.

RICHARD

I want quality. Only the best. For now we're talking about retirement homes, but soon it'll be luxury hospices with a whole menu of ways to die.

ADAMSS

You do realize Richard, that this project is new territory for us. We specialize in train stations, marine terminals, airports... That sort of thing.

Adam's partner glares at him.

PARTNER

(to Richard)

But don't get us wrong, we are interested.

RICHARD

Adam, 30 years ago you revolutionized transportation hubs. A retirement community is the same thing. It's a place on the way to somewhere else.

(off Adam's reluctant stare)

Take your time, keep researching and we'll talk again. You'll see, we're going to invent a world where young people will want to grow old.

6 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT, BATHROOM - EVENING

6

ADAM

No one wants to get old! Retiring to a luxury hotel with spa, sauna, cinema and swingers club isn't going to change that.

Adam's taking a bath. Mary is in front of the mirror applying her makeup. It's precision work: she needs reading glasses to see, but has to take them off to apply the mascara, which she can then only check by putting her glasses back on.

MARY

What will you do?

ADAM

With the downturn, the firm is in the red. We have no choice but to build the retirement homes.

Still putting her face on.

MARY

By the way, I finished translating
the French geriatrics article you
asked for.

(a beat)

Shit! Nora!

Mary rushes out of the bathroom.

7

INT. ADAM AND MARY'S HALLWAY - EVENING

7

Mary walks through her flat and out the door. She rings the doorbell across the hall. No answer. She rings again. Finally the lift doors slide open. Mary's mother NORA emerges. An alert 80, she is fashionably dressed, with impeccably styled hair and make-up.

MARY

Where were you this time?

NORA

(in a thick French accent)

Do I ask you about your life?

MARY

The kids will be here any minute.

NORA

I know.

Nora unlocks her door. Mary tries to follow her in, but Nora moves to block her.

MARY

I just want to make sure
everything's ready.

NORA

Six glasses and a bottle of
Champagne don't take much
preparation.

MARY

Did you make your kugel?

NORA

What do you think.

Mary tries to push her way in. Nora moves to block her again. It's a game. They both smile and Nora finally manages to close the door.

Mary walks back inside her own flat. She is about to close the door when someone comes up behind her. It's her son BENJAMIN a gangly, 25-year-old post-adolescent, with uncut hair and beard. He has a big duffel bag slung over his left shoulder.

MARY
You're not dressed!

Benjamin looks puzzled. He looks at himself, then at Mary.

BENJAMIN
I am dressed, mom.

MARY
Not for your father's ceremony.

BENJAMIN
I brought laundry. There must be a button-down in there somewhere.

MARY
It'll take too long. We have to be there by 8.

BENJAMIN
Really?

MARY
Go put your things near the washer, I'll find you one of your father's shirts.

Benjamin turns to go, but Mary changes her mind and takes the laundry.

MARY
I don't want you ruining the surprise. Quick, Nora's waiting.

BENJAMIN
Did she make kugel?

Mary gives him a shove toward the door.

BENJAMIN
My Banana Yazoo!

MARY
Later!

She shuts the door in Benjamin's face, then opens it again.

MARY
Wait!

She grabs a bottle of Yazoo and hands it to him.

MARY

Your brother and sister should be
here any minute. Make sure you stay
at Nora's!

8

INT. BATHROOM AND BEDROOM - EVENING

8

Adam is still relaxing in the tub. He opens his eyes to the sound of Mary unfolding an ironing board in the adjacent bedroom. He can see her reflection in the mirror. She sets to work on a button-down.

ADAM

Is Nora okay?

Mary nods.

ADAM

Actually, I've decided to ask her
advice about the retirement home.
She's bound to have an idea or two.

MARY

Maybe it'll help us figure out what
she does all day.

ADAM

(in a loud whisper,
imitating Nora's accent)
She roams the streets calling, "Get
your Kugel, get your hot Kugel!"

He looks up at the mirror to gage Mary's reaction, but she's disappeared. Suddenly her head pops out from behind the door frame.

MARY

Very funny.

Adam chuckles at his own joke. He looks at his wife.

ADAM

You're very beautiful.

MARY

(smiles happily)
I feel good.

Adam pulls her into a languid kiss.

Mary lets herself enjoy it, then returns to the adjoining room.

ADAM

Hey, how many shirts are you ironing anyway?

She smiles but says nothing.

9

INT. HALLWAY AND NORA'S FLAT - EVENING

9

Adam emerges, followed by Mary. They are both dressed to the nines.

MARY

Go get Nora please.

Adam crosses the hall and opens Nora's door.

Out spring his three children. There is Benjamin, who we've already met; his older brother James (39), who is polite and a little stiff in his grey suit; and Irene (37), who is just the opposite. She is colorfully dressed and has determined eyes. Everyone yells out something different: "*Surprise!*" "*To the artist!*" "*Kudos!*"

Adam smiles, but looks perplexed. Beaming, he shoots Mary an inquisitive look.

MARY

I thought you'd like a toast with the family before the ceremony.

ADAM

Why not.

Nora arrives with a platter. Alain looks at it.

ADAM

Kugel! That's a surprise!

They smile at each other.

James takes the bottle off the tray. Mary looks at Nora's mismatching stemware.

MARY

We can't toast with that.

Nora rolls her eyes. Mary, followed by Benjamin, goes back across the hall while the others wait. James tries to keep the cork in the Champagne bottle. Finally, Nora plops into a chair. The others follow.

JAMES

(to Adam)

How was that place in France?

ADAM

It's a poor imitation of those retirement homes in Florida. I could never build anything like them. They're ghettos. It would have to be so much more human.

JAMES

Ghettos, maybe, but the truth is seniors like sticking together. That's why on our web site, we've developed an intermediate platform. As third-party facilitators, we're helping them to self-actualize.

A moment of perplexed silence.

IRENE

(to James)

Do you work in finance or something? Most of the time, I don't have a clue what you're saying.

She looks to her father and Nora for help, but they're just as nonplussed.

Mary comes back with another tray of crystal, Irene tries to help, but Mary won't let her.

Benjamin arrives with a new bottle of Yazoo.

BENJAMIN

Mom's so cool. She's the only one who can find Yazoo in a coffee-obsessed world.

IRENE

She does have things under control, I'll give her that. What are you doing?

She is interrupted by Adam who raises his glass and invites the others to do the same. All clink glasses.

10 INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT 10

SPEAKER

Our colleague has designed too many airports, marine terminals and train stations to count.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

It is these internationally
acclaimed works that make Adam the
uncontested leader of the
transportation revolution of the
1970s and 80s.

The Speaker stands on a stage. Adam sits nearby surrounded by
colleagues. He's facing an elegant crowd spread around 20
banquet tables.

He watches Mary who is at a table with their children and
Nora. He smiles at her.

SPEAKER

Today is a very special occasion
indeed. We're gathered here not
only to decorate Adam with the
Royal Institute's highest honor,
but to witness the demolition of
the West End Bus Terminal, one of
his earliest designs.

On stage, the Speaker solemnly presents Adam with the medal.
Adam is moved. He shakes hands and thanks everyone. Applause.

NORA

They give him a prize and to thank
him they level his buildings. The
nerve! He actually seems to enjoy
being mummified.

MARY

Nora!

Benjamin and Irene burst out laughing; James bristles. Mary
is preparing to admonish them just as Adam and the Speaker
come over.

SPEAKER

What a pleasure to see the whole
family here.

(to Mary)

You should be very proud, Madam.
I'm truly honoured to be presenting
this award to someone of my
generation.

Mary smiles and nods, but Adam isn't really listening, he's
distracted by all the attention he's getting.

SPEAKER

(to Mary)

Your husband is a great engineer.
They just don't make buildings like
his anymore. Nowadays train
stations and airports are - well, I
don't even know how they stand up!

Mary's smile is chiseled in stone.

SPEAKER

He and I are of a time when utility mattered. Young architects today are only interested in form. If you ask me, it's those bloody computers. People don't think anymore.

Adam comes over.

SPEAKER

This new museum is all the rage. They're already hunkered behind their computers working on it. But their heads, I assure you, are empty.

MARY

Uh-huh.

ADAM

(to the Speaker)

A new museum?

SPEAKER

The new Tate. Let the young have it! Who needs it!

Mary smiles more forcefully, shakes the man's hand and, making her exit, drags Adam in tow.

11 INT. RECEPTION HALL - MINUTES LATER

11

Irene, Benjamin, and James stand gazing out giant picture windows. We hear a series of explosions. Several buildings crumble before our eyes, in quick succession. The event is rebroadcast live on flat-screen televisions around the reception hall.

ADAM

(to Mary)

This is terrific, isn't it?

She flashes him an unconvincing smile. Nora creeps up behind her.

NORA

These bigshot architects are getting on in years. I'm betting on a funeral a month. I definitely have to go shopping for something black.

Mary doesn't find this funny. Her expression is suddenly pained.

NORA
Are you OK?

Marie stares at the crumbling buildings. She forces a smile.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON-SCREEN: *Mary*

12 INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY 12

Mary stands in the shallow-end surrounded by thirty- and forty year-old women bobbing up and down in place. Some are alone, while others gossip in small groups with multicolored pool noodles under their arms.

SWIM INSTRUCTOR
(to Mary)
Is this your first time?

MARY
(nodding)
My doctor says I need exercise.

SWIM INSTRUCTOR
Excellent. Okay, spread out
everybody.

Mary enjoys the relatively easy warm-up, but when the instructor puts on a techno remix, the water aerobics class changes gears. The other students, accustomed to the rhythm, have no problem following the routine. Their movements are like a lively, graceful, and colorful aquatic ballet. But Mary struggles to keep pace. In the dizzying onslaught of exercises, she reverses arms and legs. Soon she is sweaty and red-faced.

CUT TO:

At the end of the class, Mary emerges from the changing room winded and scarlet-red. She runs into the swim instructor on her way out.

SWIM INSTRUCTOR
Drink water and you'll feel better.
Next time, come to the afternoon
class.

Mary nods. She puts a coin in the soda machine and makes her selection. Nothing comes out. She tries to get her money back but to no avail. She sighs a tired and defeated sigh. Just then, a man walks over and rocks the machine. The drink falls. He hands it to Mary.

Taken aback, she thanks him demurely. The man, an athletic 60, flashes her a big smile and walks away.

13 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - DAY

13

Mary gets home. James is waiting with his two kids, Carolyn (6) and Henry (8).

MARY
(kissing the kids)
My angels!
(to James)
How are you? I hope you haven't
been waiting long. I'll be back in
a flash.

Mary puts her swim-wear in the bathroom.

In her room, she sits on the bed to catch her breath. James watches her.

JAMES
Maybe you should just take it easy
today.

MARY
Why? Don't they have their
activities?

JAMES
You look tired, mom.

MARY
I didn't want to be late so I ran.
I just have to catch my breath.

JAMES
You sure you'll be alright?

MARY
Yes.

She starts to get up. He tries to take her hand, but gets a dirty look instead. She gets up, trying to look graceful, but not quite succeeding. She turns away to hide her strained expression. She leaves the room.

14 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - EARLY EVENING

14

Mary collapses onto the couch, winded. She is still draped with the kids' things - their dance and fencing bags, and McDonald's balloons.

The doorbell rings. She raises herself out of the chair with a tired sigh and goes to open the door.

It's Nora, who smiles at Mary. But then she spots the kids' bags and the smile fades.

NORA
(apprehensive)
Are they still here?

MARY
They're having snack.

Nora turns to go back to her flat. Mary stops her.

MARY
At least say hello!

NORA
Oh please...

MARY
Nora, they're your great-grandkids.

NORA
The less I see them, the greater they are! I've already taken care of two generations, don't I deserve a break?

MARY
You don't have one of your mysterious outings? No? Then get in here!

Mary grabs her by the arm and drags her inside. Nora pats the kids on the head, then sits down next to Mary on the couch. From here the two adults observe the kids eating their snack. Carolyn plays with hideous, purple-haired dolls and Henry with his Nintendo DS. He brandishes it like a sword to attack his sisters dolls. Carolyn whines a lilting "I'm going to tell," which only encourages her brother.

NORA
I don't know which I hate more, little suits or little sluts.

MARY
Maman!

NORA
Don't you find it depressing to have protested, signed petitions and burned bras for that?

The kids get up and walk over to the couch. They avoid looking at Nora.

HENRY
 (to Mary)
 Can we watch a DVD?

NORA
 The machine is broken.

Henry and Carolyn don't seem used to Nora getting involved.

CAROLYN
 What about cable?

NORA
 Same.

HENRY
 But, like, what about normal TV?

MARY
 Benjamin started fiddling with it
 and it hasn't worked since.

HENRY
 (pointing to Nora)
 We could watch TV at her house.

NORA
 (to Mary)
 Oh no! You're the family martyr,
 not me.

CAROLYN
 So what are you supposed to do?

NORA
 Nothing. For the rest of the
 afternoon, I want you to just sit
 around being bored. It's good for
 your health and imagination. People
 who don't know how to be bored grow
 up to be idiots.

The children obey out of sheer terror.

15 INT. POOL CHANGING ROOM AND SHOWERS - DAY

15

In the locker room, Mary greets the instructor. She has come
 for the afternoon class he suggested.

At the pool side, she discovers a large group of sixty and
 seventy-year-olds with floral bathing caps and padded
 swimsuits. They gossip in small groups and chuckle at the
 swim instructor's jokes. Mary watches from a distance as the
 class begins, then leaves.

Mary looks self-conscious beneath the shower. She watches two teenage girls, a woman with a young child, and another pregnant woman.

Standing in front of a mirror, she studies herself: her waist, face, and breasts. She smooths out the skin under her throat, then notices the flab under her arms. She moves closer to get a better look and then steps back dejectedly.

16 INT. POOL, LOUNGE - DAY

16

Mary sits on a chair wearing a defeated expression. The lounge is populated mainly by men who sit talking or relaxing. There are thirty-, forty-, and fifty-year-olds.

An unremarkable young woman crosses the room and, predictably, the men turn to check her out. This is not lost on Mary. She looks at them, then has an idea.

She sits up very straight in her chair and holds her head high. She runs a hand through her hair and undoes the top button of her blouse. But there is no response, the men are oblivious.

She crosses and uncrosses her legs. She is sexy, but not obscene. She overtly cruises for stray looks, but finds none.

She gets up and goes to order a drink at the bar. Then she sits back down as elegantly as before.

Still nothing. Men's eyes graze her casually without interest. She's lost the game.

MAN

They're not the only ones not looking.

She looks up and is surprised to discover the man from the vending machine. It was he who just served her the drink at the bar.

MAN

These guys may be blind, but I see you.

MARY

(smiles)
Thanks.

MAN

No, thank you. All the pleasure is mine. Can I get you anything else?

Mary looks at the glass he just brought her. It's still full.

MAN

Order whatever you like. I can give you a swimming class if you don't like the ladies with floral shower-caps.

MARY

Are you an instructor?

MAN

I was...

(he holds out his hand)

Peter.

Mary shakes it.

MARY

Well, thanks Peter. You just saved my life.

She tries to pull her hand away, but he doesn't let go. His eyes are still glued to hers. He apologizes, lets go of her hand, and walks away. He turns around to wave but almost trips in the process.

17 I/E. STREETS, CHARLOTTE'S CAR - DAY

17

Charlotte's driving is erratic: she speeds up and slows down with no regard for traffic.

CHARLOTTE

So he made a pass at you?

MARY

Thank goodness! I laid it on pretty thick. It was like I didn't exist until he showed up.

Charlotte gives a little nod of recognition.

MARY

Did you do what I asked?

CHARLOTTE

About that... I was thinking, what about the Grey Panthers? We need volunteers.

MARY

No thanks. All those old ladies make me nervous.

CHARLOTTE

But they're our age.

MARY

There must be a charity somewhere looking for an ex-teacher.

CHARLOTTE

I thought after your years of loyal service to the school board, you wanted some time to yourself.

(glances at Mary, then
back at the road)

Now I see! That doctor got under your skin.

MARY

(lying badly)

Not at all.

CHARLOTTE

It definitely explains the swimming.

MARY

No.

CHARLOTTE

First exercise, now work! You're following his advice like it were gospel.

MARY

Don't be so hostile. I'm struggling here. Between the memory loss, Adam's ceremony, and the big 6-0 coming, I feel so unsettled. I know something has to change, but...

She's interrupted by the strident honking of a horn.

DRIVER

(to Charlotte)

Hey, granny, leave the wheels at home!

Charlotte is shocked. Mary smiles.

CHARLOTTE

Did you hear that? See how he combines misogyny and blatant ageism? Now do you understand why I'm a Grey Panther?

MARY

Don't drag the Grey Panthers into this, Charlotte. You've always been an awful driver.

CHARLOTTE

Bollocks with my driving. Back to the sex, drugs, and rock'n roll... well, without the drugs and rock'n roll. So, first you unbuttoned your blouse. Then what?

18 INT. CHARITY - DAY

18

Mary sits waiting. She looks at her reflection in a window and fixes her hair. Then she pinches back the skin under neck.

A smiling young woman in her twenties comes into the waiting room with her hand outstretched.

YOUNG WOMAN

Hi, I'm Karen, Child Outreach Coordinator. You must be Charlotte's friend.

Mary barely has time to nod.

KAREN

Charlotte's pretty hard core! Have you known her long?

MARY

Since the 70s. We did women's lib together.

Karen nods but doesn't seem to know what "women's lib" is.

MARY

What about you? How do you know her?

KAREN

Through my grandparents.

MARY

Of course.

(chews on this)

Well, I'd be delighted to put my years of teaching experience to good use for your cause.

KAREN

We'll talk about that later.

They take a tour of the state-of-the-art office, which is covered with posters of children with pleading eyes. The young director talks about efficiency and goals. Mary follows her, watching her ponytail swing back and forth in rhythm with her steps and words.

KAREN

We used to use college interns.
They would complain, come in late.
It was a nightmare! But with our
new volunteers, things are great.
They are so grateful to be working
with a dynamic young team!

They step into the office and the door closes.

CUT TO:

Later, the same door bursts open. Mary emerges, fuming. Karen follows, repeating over and over:

KAREN

What did I say?

19 INT. BUS - DAY

19

Mary is standing in the bus. She's still livid. A young man sitting in front of her gets up and offers her his seat. He wears the self-satisfied smile of a good samaritan.

MARY

(staring daggers)

Thanks but no thanks, asshole!

20 INT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

20

Still beside herself, Mary charges down a series of hallways. She pays no attention to the luxurious retirement home around her.

Adam comes to meet her. He barely has time to ask what's wrong:

MARY

You should have seen that bitch
with the ponytail! Right left,
right, left.

(imitating Karen)

Senior volunteers are so great!
They just love being exploited.

(with even more venom)

She wanted me to bake cookies for
Christ's sake! Do I look like the
granny type? I've had it with
Charlotte's harebrained ideas!

Adam stares at her, trying to understand.

ADAM

Charlotte's got a ponytail?

MARY

Is that all you have to say?

ADAM

What can I tell you? I have no clue what you're talking about. I have work to do!

MARY

Adam, don't you see? We've gotten older!

ADAM

Of course we have. I'm told it has something to do with the passing of time.

MARY

No, we haven't just gotten older, we've gotten old! The memory loss has opened my eyes.

ADAM

What memory loss?

MARY

In Nice! But that's only the beginning. There's also James. When he tried to help me up, he wasn't just being nice. I could see it in his eyes.

ADAM

I don't understand, what did James do?

MARY

And the Aquafit class! By the second session, I was with the denture crowd.

ADAM

Denture? Aquafit? What are you talking about?

MARY

Know the worst part? When I looked at these older women, I thought, at least they know how to have fun. The thirty-year-olds were so damn serious.

(she takes a deep breath)

I'm old and you're old!

MARY (CONT'D)

There, I said it! We've crossed over to the other side without even noticing!

Adam looks at her, almost relieved.

ADAM

When you called me, I thought something bad had happened.

MARY

It could get bad if we pretend it's not real. We have to change.

ADAM

You want to see old? Take the tour with me.

MARY

Old doesn't necessarily mean bedridden.

ADAM

I don't understand.

MARY

You don't want to understand! Don't you get it, Adam? That Royal Institute Award was your tombstone! Your transportation revolution happened 30 years ago.

ADAM

Enough! I'm working here!

They glare at each other and Mary spins around to go. Adam watches her walk down the hall, then goes looking for his colleagues. A male nurse shows up to escort patients to their rooms.

He sees Adam looking for the group.

NURSE

A little lost, are we?

ADAM

Yes. I mean, no. I'm with the tour.

The nurse looks at him again, trying to discern whether or not he's a patient.

Adam glances around nervously and is relieved when his partner arrives, accompanied by Maya.

ADAM

I'm with them.

He joins the others, glancing back nervously at the nurse.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON-SCREEN: *Alain*

21 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - EVENING

21

Adam is at home when, to his surprise, the doorbell rings. He gets up to answer it. A dozen women, all sixty and over, pour past him, through the door, and into the living room.

Adam stands frozen in the doorway for a moment. He walks toward the living-room but the doorbell rings again. He goes back to open the door and finds himself face-to-face with another group of older women. They brush past him too.

Adam is speechless. He starts to close the door when a third group enters. He can't believe his eyes. Then, Charlotte appears.

ALAIN

I figured you were behind this.

They greet each other. Mary arrives.

ADAM

Since when does Charlotte hold her meetings here?

MARY

The meeting is for you.

ADAM

For me?

MARY

About the other day, Adam... I really meant what I said. We're not 40 anymore, we have to change. I know we'll steer our way through. But I really am sorry about bothering you at work. So I asked these ladies over to help.

She takes his hand and leads him into the living room.

MARY

(to the ladies)

This is my husband, Adam. He's looking for a new retirement home concept.

The ladies greet Adam.

A WOMAN

Aren't you the one who designed the airport in Copenhagen? There are almost no loos. I had to walk halfway across the airport!

Adam looks at Mary with pleading eyes.

MARY

Adam, these ladies are the Grey Panthers. Charlotte and I thought this was the perfect opportunity for an architect to talk with his building's future users.

Soon the questions and comments become heckling. "*Don't forget the loos*" the woman repeats.

Adam's eyes are as big as saucers. He can't believe this is happening.

22 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM - DAY 22

Adam is trying to work on the retirement home project but he doesn't seem motivated. He gets up frequently to pour himself coffee.

Near the kitchenette, Maya chats with two interns. Their discussion revolves around the new Tate Gallery. A call for offers has been made. They talk in hushed but excited voices. Adam is indifferent at first. Then, he starts to listen in and finally interrupts.

ADAM

When's the deadline?

INTERN

In three months.

ADAM

Would you be interested in submitting a proposal?

The interns can't hide their enthusiasm.

MAYA

It's the in project.

ADAM

Find out everything you can. Get a team together. Keep it young. Just people from the office. We'll have a brainstorming meeting at my place.

23 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - DAY

23

Maya reads out the project requirements for the new Tate Gallery. She reminds everyone the deadline is in three months.

Adam and a few young staffers from the firm listen to the specs and throw out some ideas.

We hear the front door closing. Everyone looks up to find Mary standing in the doorway. Adam smiles at her, but she glares back disapprovingly.

CUT TO:

24 INT. FLAT KITCHEN - DAY

24

Mary is in the kitchen. She frantically puts away anything she can get her hands on. Adam comes in.

MARY

No!

ADAM

No what? I didn't say anything.

MARY

No, I won't do this. I know the routine: meetings, dinners, all-nighters, "brainstorming." You'll start smoking again.

ADAM

I'll be fine. Don't worry about me.

MARY

No!

ADAM

Stop saying no!

MARY

I'm not worried about you. I'm worried about us. You still don't get it, do you?

ADAM

Get what?

MARY

What I said about getting older, about needing to change.

ADAM

Just because I'm 60 doesn't mean I can't have ambitions.

MARY

I'm not talking about you. I'm talking about us. I want things to change between us.

Mary is still cleaning up with a vengeance.

ADAM

(more tenderly)

This time it'll be different. I'll delegate. I promise.

He tries to take Mary's hand, but she pulls away.

ADAM

I'll delegate. My partner will be delighted.

25

INT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

25

PARTNER

No way! No! Nope!

Adam's face. They're visiting the retirement home again.

PARTNER

The answer's no.

ADAM

Okay, I get it.

PARTNER

What's gotten into you all of a sudden? This kind of project was never your thing. Anyway, forget it, it won't happen.

ADAM

Mind telling me why?

PARTNER

Look, Adam, I know I'm just a number cruncher, not an aesthete like you, but please hear me out. Our liquidity's all dried up. We need the retirement home money just to cover costs.

ADAM

Can't you find money somewhere else? I was just honored by the Royal Institute!

PARTNER

It's not exactly the award you get for being flavor of the month.

ADAM

Screw old people! I don't want to build luxury hospices!

PARTNER

Then you deal with Richard!

DIRECTOR

Please! They may be old, but not all of them are deaf.

Adam and his partner come to their senses. In the hallway, the old folks stare.

26 INT. BAR - EVENING 26

Adam and Richard sit side-by-side at the bar nursing drinks.

RICHARD

Who's your favorite tennis player?

ADAM

(surprised)

Bjorn Borg.

RICHARD

Remember his so-called comeback? He got trounced in the first round by a total unknown. It was pathetic!

ADAM

Who are we talking about here?

RICHARD

You and your delusions of grandeur.

ADAM

How is this a comeback, Richard? I've never done a museum.

RICHARD

You're looking for the same glory. You're wrong. The big project, the project of tomorrow, is ours.

ADAM

You mean Borg should have come back
to teach senior citizens tennis?

RICHARD

You want to start another
revolution? Fine! But let's do it
together.

ADAM

A retirement home revolution?

RICHARD

Why not? All your competitors are
already gaga over museums, what can
you offer that they can't?

They stare at each other.

RICHARD

You do these retirement homes,
Adam. Because if I find out that
you or anyone else at the firm has
misspent a single penny, I will dry
you up and make sure every single
paper clip used is signed off by
five auditors and myself faster
than you can say Alzheimer's.

Adam falls silent. Richard bursts into a hearty laugh and
slaps him on the back.

RICHARD

Don't make that face. I understand
you, Adam. A time comes in any
man's life when he has to prove to
himself he's still a man. That's
why God invented places like this.

Adam looks around. At first glance, its just a trendy bar.
But then he notices a few girls hanging out in the back.

ADAM

You've brought me to a brothel!

Adam gets up with a groan.

RICHARD

(grabs his arm)

Have we reached an understanding?

Adam nods and leaves.

27 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM - MORNING 27

Adam tries to work on the retirement home but he's still not motivated. Maya enters, accompanied by the young architects from the meeting.

MAYA

Excuse us. We were wondering: who's your favorite architect?

ADAM

(surprised)

Gosh! I'm not sure. Michelangelo, I guess.

MAYA

Michelangelo was 75 when he designed Saint Peter's Basilica.

ADAM

Really? But I'm not 75!

MAYA

Of course not. But it would be a shame to give up now. We're ready to see this thing through, if you are.

Adam looks at them and at Maya in particular. She is a smart and charming young woman. She speaks with conviction. He's touched.

ADAM

Thanks, but unfortunately I can't pay you.

MAYA

That's OK. We can figure the money out later.

The others concur, albeit less enthusiastically.

ADAM

We'll need a place to meet, hang plans, and make models.

MAYA

What about the filing room upstairs? If we clear out the boxes it could work.

YOUNG ARCHITECT

Like a secret headquarters! I like it!

Maya and her two companions are delighted. Adam rides high on their enthusiasm. He puts his hand on the young woman's shoulders.

ADAM

Thank you. Really, thank you.

28 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM, STUDIO - NIGHT 28

The offices are empty. Adam and his young team have finished setting up the studio upstairs. Boxes of files have been piled in the corner. Drafting tables, chairs, bulletin boards and desks have been installed. The place looks operational.

MAYA

It's early. Let's start right away.

Each team-member mans his station. Adam beams.

29 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - NIGHT 29

Adam comes in. He makes as little noise as possible. A light's on in the dining room, it's Mary. She walks up to him.

MARY

You smell of cigarettes.

ADAM

Get off my case, Mary. I'm not 15!

MARY

No. You only wish you were.

They glare at each other and she walks away.

30 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM, STUDIO - EVENING 30

Adam works on the Tate project with his young team. The mood is quiet and studious. Some of the interns listen to music on their iPods, while others are glued to their computer screens. Papers, plans, and photos are starting to overwhelm the studio.

31 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - NIGHT 31

Adam comes in, making as little noise as possible and nearly trips over a box on the floor. He bends down to pick it up.

He squints to read the label, then puts on his reading glasses. It's a telephone with oversized buttons that is made specifically for seniors.

Adam looks around and finds the telephone in question. He looks at it, handles it. He tries taking a step forward and a step back while raising and lowering his glasses. He realizes that he actually doesn't need them. He puts down the box. Mary stands watching him with a smile.

MARY
Practical, isn't it?

ADAM
A telephone for seniors?

MARY
That is what we are, after all. Looking around for glasses is a tremendous waste of time. The technology exists, we'd might as well use it.

ADAM
You call oversized buttons technology? I'm tired. I've got important work tomorrow. Be a dear and take it back. It's silly.

He tosses the box aside and goes into the bedroom, leaving Mary alone.

32 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM, STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON 32

Adam works with his young team. Maya scales the steps four-at-a-time.

MAYA
Richard's at the door!

The room flies into a panic. Laptop computers are closed, papers shoved into drawers, and floor plans ripped off the walls.

ADAM
Stop, stop! Don't worry, I won't let him up.

CUT TO:

Richard stands at the door. He's in high gear.

RICHARD
Been doing overtime for the old folks? Want to buy me a drink?

Adam mutters something unintelligible. He walks to the kitchenette and starts rummaging around.

RICHARD
(noticing the lights on
upstairs)
Why don't we go upstairs. It looks
cozier.

Without waiting for an answer, Richard walks over to the stairs. Adam tries to overtake him without arousing suspicion. His little game intrigues Richard, who speeds up and slows down to see how Adam will react.

ADAM
Let's go to the bar next door, I've
been stuck here all day.

Richard is the first to arrive at the stairs.

RICHARD
Well, seeing as we're already
here...

Adam looks petrified as Richard starts climbing the stairs. Before he arrives at the landing, Richard glimpses Maya darting behind some boxes. Believing he's understood, he flashes Adam a dirty grin.

RICHARD
You sly dog.
(he goes back downstairs)
I'm going. I'll stop by some other
time.

He rewards Adam with a big pat on the back and a hearty laugh. He leaves. Adam's head is spinning, he's white as a sheet. A moment later, the young team-members peek cautiously downstairs.

MAYA
Is he gone?

Adam comes to his senses and nods. The team-members clap and laugh.

ADAM
I need a drink! My treat!

Adam stands recounting the close call with Richard. Maya and the other team-members sit watching him. They all roar with laughter.

34 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - NIGHT

34

In the bedroom, Mary is fast asleep. Adam is a little tipsy. He quietly gets undressed and lies down. As soon as his head touches the pillow, we hear a soft whirring sound as the top part of the bed slowly rises. Adam is petrified. The bed stops in upright position. Adam gropes around for the controls, but the task isn't easy drunk. His eyes meet Mary's. She's awake and staring at him with amused defiance. They stay that way for a minute. Then Adam settles in as best he can for a night in a nearly upright bed.

35 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM, STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON

35

The mood is studious. Techno twitters in earphones.

Two young men mount the stairs with pizzas and soft drinks. As the others chow down, Adam takes a tiny nibble of pizza. He doesn't seem to like it, but eats it anyway.

YOUNG MAN

Here, have some Red Bull. It's an energy drink, it keeps you going.

ADAM

That's okay. I don't need it.

YOUNG MAN

Neither do we, but what a rush!

Adam takes the can from his younger colleague and takes a sip.

CUT TO:

We find Adam in the tiny studio bathroom. He's in a cold sweat. His heart pounds wildly and he's having trouble breathing.

He waits for it to pass, then comes out as though nothing were wrong.

36 ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - NIGHT

36

Adam comes home and goes directly to the bedroom. Their king-size bed has been replaced by two single adjustable beds side-by-side.

ADAM

Mary!

MARY (O.S.)

In here.

He walks into the kitchen.

ADAM

What's going on?

He stops dead. Next to Mary stands a contractor.

MARY

My husband's an architect. He'll help us.

Adam doesn't understand what's happening.

MARY

We'll have to raise the oven to avoid bending over. But I'm not sure what to do with the outlets.

ADAM

What are you doing?

MARY

I'm making things more practical. This gentleman is here about the kitchen.

Adam looks around the kitchen. On the table lies a pamphlet entitled "Ageing at Home." He storms out. She follows him, calling out "Adam." Her voice is sweet, her eyes tender. It looks like she wants to apologize, but no:

MARY

(with a smile)

Maybe we should make the doors bigger, too.

Adam doesn't answer. He's appalled.

37

INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM, STUDIO - EVENING

37

The studio is increasingly inundated with work, papers, floor plans, and photographs. New computer screens have been added. Adam sits talking to Maya.

ADAM

When I was your age I would have done it for free. It's a great opportunity.

MAYA

If you include the retirement home project, the overtime starts adding up.

Adam puts his head in his hands. He sighs.

ADAM

What did Michelangelo do for money?

MAYA

He had patrons.

ADAM

Patrons.

(a beat)

I think I may have a solution.

And he goes out.

38 INT. COURT - EVENING 38

Adam waits in the palatial hall of the court

. Nora emerges from one of the courtrooms.

NORA

I'm afraid you can count me out.
I'm penniless. I've lost
everything.

ADAM

What do you mean everything?

NORA

Everything.

ADAM

How could you, Nora!

NORA

A spate of bad luck, that's all.
(smiles)
It's no big deal. My savings won't
do me much good anyway.

ADAM

How do you know?

NORA

Who are you fooling, Adam? Wait,
I'm coming with you.

She goes back into the courtroom and collects her things. She says goodbye to a group of 6 or 7 80 and 90-year-olds. They wave to Adam who stands in the doorway.

Together, he and Nora walk through the great hall arm-in-arm.

39 INT. HALLWAY BETWEEN ADAM AND NORA'S FLATS - NIGHT 39

Nora and Adam stand in front of their respective front doors.

NORA

Is your wife doing this on purpose or has she really lost it? The other day she tried to buy me an adjustable bed.

ADAM

She's trying to tell me something.

NORA

Well I hope you listen, Adam, for my sake. Next time she'll try to old-proof my tub.

She opens the door.

NORA

Go see James about the money. I don't have a clue what he does, but he seems good at it.

ADAM

I could never ask my son for money.

NORA

You prefer to rip off defenseless old French ladies.

ADAM

Old, granted! But defenseless? You've got Kugel!

They share a smile and Nora goes in.

In front of his door, Adam takes a deep breath and goes inside.

40 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT, BATHROOM - NIGHT 40

Adam watches Mary taking a bath.

ADAM

Mind if I join you?

Mary nods with a smile.

CUT TO:

Adam lowers himself into the water. He's in heaven. He closes his eyes.

MARY

I'm glad I didn't end up changing the tub.

Adam who is finally getting comfortable, mutters a "huh?"

MARY

I almost got a walk-in tub for the mobility impaired. But you have to wait while it fills up and drains. It's a great way to catch your death, if you ask me.

Adam opens his eyes and looks at her. What's she talking about?

MARY

(smiling)

Plus, if you forget and open the door while there's still water inside...

Adam sits up. He looks around the bathroom. It's the same, but with a slew of new additions: a lighted magnifying mirror, a non-slip floor, a fold-up seat in the shower, and grab bars near the toilets, in the bathtub and in other strategic places. His good mood sours.

ADAM

Why don't you buy a burial package while you're at it? Or start stocking up on Depends. You never know, with population ageing, there may be a shortage!

MARY

(very calm)

You may not have noticed, but you used the grab bar when you got in the bath. And the telephone is very practical.

ADAM

What about the bed?

MARY

What do you care? You barely sleep in it anyway. Most of the time you're at the office "delegating responsibility."

ADAM

What do you want? You want me to scrap the project, that it?

MARY

This isn't like you. You've never been interested in museums.

ADAM

Fine. So, I'll just keep designing the same old buildings with the same old collaborators. I'll live in our old-proof flat, and lose touch with the world. Great idea! After 60, life's over, right?

MARY

Don't pretend not to understand. The choice isn't limited to acting 20, or acting 80. There's a middle ground.

ADAM

And what would that be?

MARY

I don't know, I'm still searching. But I know those kids you're working with aren't going to make you younger.

Exasperated, Adam stands up to get out of the bath. He instinctively reaches for a grab bar, but stops himself. He loses his balance stepping out of the tub. He catches himself in the nick of time on another bar.

ADAM

You're making me old!

Mary blinks.

ADAM

From now on, I'm sleeping at the office.

He leaves the bathroom.

41

MONTAGE:

41

In this sequence, we find Adam and Mary going about their separate lives and their respective jobs.

At the agency. Adam sits alone at a drafting table. He picks up his mobile, hesitates, and finally puts it down again. He resumes reading the magazine "Young Architect."

It's daytime. Fully dressed, Mary lies on the adjustable bed. She raises and lowers it with a remote, staring up blankly at the ceiling. Charlotte appears at the door. She pulls Mary to her feet and forces her out of the flat.

At the agency. In the secret studio, Adam unwraps the clothes he's just bought. They're sportier than what he's worn until now.

In the offices of Charlotte's association. Mary works diligently. The other Grey Panthers have trouble keeping pace.

One night, in the studio. Alain's overtired team burns the candle at both ends. He talks to them, shows them plans and models. Seeing the tiredness in their eyes, he takes out a six-pack of Red Bull and hands it to them with a smile.

Mary is at the pool. Peter is giving her a private lesson.

In the early morning, Adam is sitting on his makeshift bed with a cup of coffee in hand. He looks unhappy.

The same morning, Mary prepares breakfast and realizes she's set the table for two. She sits down sadly.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON-SCREEN: *The Children*

42 INT. GREY PANTHERS OFFICE - DAY 42

Irene goes inside the storefront office and looks around.

IRENE
(to the room)
Good Afternoon, I'm looking for
Mary.

Someone points to another office at the back of a courtyard. Irene walks in and finds Mary. She's alone in a room full of computers, papers, and textbooks.

IRENE
I thought you were working with
Charlotte's old ladies.

MARY
They're not old ladies, some of
them are my age.

IRENE
But you're different.

MARY

I help out from time to time. In exchange, they lend me this room. I'm trying to start an afterschool programme. Not with volunteers, though. Everyone will get paid.

IRENE

That's great.

MARY

Is everyone OK? How are the twins?

IRENE

Everyone's fine.

MARY

Did you drive here? Would you mind dropping me somewhere?

Surprised, Irene nods. They leave.

43

I/E. INSIDE CAR AND IN FRONT OF POOL - DAY

43

They drive in silence. They shoot each other nervous sideways glances. A beat.

MARY

Is anything wrong?

IRENE

I should be asking you that.

MARY

Why?

IRENE

You and dad, for one.

MARY

Did your father send you?

IRENE

No.

MARY

James, then?

IRENE

Why are you so sure someone sent me?

MARY

Because you never just stop by. You always have something more important to do. The twins, your shift at the hospital. Usually you keep your distance.

IRENE

Usually you take care of everything. There's no room for anyone else.

The car stops in front of the pool. Mary thanks her and gathers her things.

IRENE

James says he doesn't understand how dad could leave you.

MARY

Then why doesn't he talk to your father?

IRENE

Oh, come on! He can talk current affairs, finance, or architecture with him, but nothing even slightly personal.

MARY

Deal with it. I'm doing just fine.

IRENE

Mom, it's been two months.

MARY

I said I'm fine! If that's all...

Mary gets out of the car. A beat. Irene follows.

IRENE

I just wanted to talk. But if you don't feel like talking come spend a weekend up at the house, get some fresh air... For once, I want to take care of you!

MARY

But everything's fine dear. Don't worry.

Irene watches her mother cross the street to the pool, then leaves.

44 INT. JAMES'S OFFICE - EVENING

44

The telephone interrupts James's work. He picks up the phone, surprised to hear who's on the line. He hangs up and meets Adam walking up the hall. As he comes closer, James can't help but notice his father's new wardrobe.

ADAM

(re: the office)

You've made changes, haven't you?

James shakes his head.

ADAM

That's funny. The place looks different.

JAMES

Maybe that's because you've never been here.

ADAM

You sure?

JAMES

I'll show you around.

(he smiles)

I'd love to.

James proudly shows his father around his office. He tries to explain the daily operations, flow charts, LAN architecture, and logistics. He talks about the development of the senior citizen division. The place is vaguely reminiscent of Adam's firm.

JAMES

What do you think?

ADAM

Did you know that Leonardo da Vinci did his best work thanks to patrons?

James is surprised.

ADAM

I mean Michelangelo.

JAMES

(puzzled)

Oh. No. Well, yes, maybe.

He's embarrassed. He doesn't know what to say and continues to wait for an explanation. But Adam can't seem to spit out why he's here. A buzzer. It's the front door.

CUT TO:

James opens the door: it's Maya. She has a big binder under her arm.

MAYA
Sorry I'm late.

JAMES
Who are you?

MAYA
Maya. I'm with your father. Didn't he tell you?

James is frozen in front of the door. Maya pushes her way inside. Adam comes to meet her.

MAYA
(to Adam)
Haven't you told him?

ADAM
Not exactly.

MAYA
But it's important. If you don't ask him, it's over!

James is stunned by what he thinks he's hearing.

MAYA
(to James)
Your father came to talk to you about our future plans.

JAMES
What plans?

ADAM
Come on, he's not interested.

JAMES
Yes, I am.

ADAM
(to Maya)
I can't do it. He's my son, it's too uncomfortable.

JAMES
What is it you want to do?

Adam takes Maya by the hand and pulls her away.

ADAM
(to James)
Forget it. I didn't want to bother you. Coming here was a bad idea.

They leave. James is puzzled.

45 INT. ADAM AND MARY'S FLAT - DAY

45

James gives his siblings a tour of their parents' newly renovated flat. Benjamin and Irene look on in disbelief at the bathroom, the bedroom with adjustable bed, the geriatric kitchen brochure, and finally the big-button phone.

Benjamin picks it up and sets it on the kitchen shelf. Then he slowly steps back, trying to establish at what distance he can no longer read the numbers. With each backward step he says, "*I can see, I can see...*"

Irene and James glare at him.

IRENE

(to James)

It's so cliché it makes me cringe!

JAMES

They came to see me! Together! You should have seen how he was dressed. He looks like he's back at university.

BENJAMIN

What about her? Is she cute?

JAMES

(ignoring him)

Have you ever thought about all the sacrifices mom made? Her whole life, her teaching career, everything revolved around us. We spent all our vacations on construction sites just to be a family!

IRENE

Enough, James. To her, they weren't sacrifices.

BENJAMIN

It's like me and my girlfriend. We've been together for a long time and we're ready to get our own place. But before we do, we're taking time off, just to be sure.

IRENE

What's your point?

BENJAMIN

It's the same with mom and dad. They're entering a new phase of life. If they stay together now it's, well, it's really "until death do us part." So they need a little space just to be sure.

Irene and James look at him, surprised by his reasoning. A beat.

BENJAMIN

(to James)

So is she cute or what?

IRENE

Who?

BENJAMIN

Well, this girl. Maya.

IRENE

(laughing)

Stop!

JAMES

Our parents are about to join the swelling ranks of divorcees over 50. You think that's funny? I don't. So let's get on with it.

He picks up the books and magazines sitting on the table and storms into the living-room. Irene and Benjamin share a look. Then Irene goes out to join James. Benjamin follows reluctantly.

CUT TO:

Sitting side by side on the couch, Irene and James both have their noses in books such as: "Ageing Parents, Caring Kids," and "The Generation Talk." Benjamin reads "Saga Magazine." The coffee table is littered with other books and magazines on the same subject.

BENJAMIN

This is great. Listen!

JAMES

No, Benjamin! The rule is, only if it's about divorce or relationship issues.

BENJAMIN

But it's funny!

James sighs and tosses his book aside.

JAMES

These books aren't going to give us
a workable strategy for getting
them back together anyway.

IRENE

That's why you asked us here? To
develop a strategy?

BENJAMIN

These are our parents, not your job-
job. We don't do strategic planning
in this family!

JAMES

You obviously couldn't care less.
As long as mom irons your shirts...

BENJAMIN

I do care!
(a beat)
But I'm sure they'll get back
together.

JAMES

Because of your little theory? Our
parents aren't 25 anymore.

BENJAMIN

So? Age doesn't change anything.

Everyone goes back to reading. James reflects.

JAMES

We must reopen lines of
communication between them.

BENJAMIN

I'll just invite them to my show.
After that, you can implement your
"strategy" if you want. Just leave
me out of it.

JAMES

You're having a show? Of what?

BENJAMIN

You know, my stuff.

JAMES

Their little baby is having a show!
Perfect!

(to Irene)

We get them face to face, then
supervise just in case.

46 INT. "HIP" GALLERY SPACE - NIGHT 46

This doesn't look like an art show. It's more like a nightclub. We're in an empty warehouse with flashing lights. A DJ spins techno.

The place is hopping. Irene and Adam push their way through the young, trendy crowd.

ADAM
Are you sure this is it?

Irene nods. As they wait in line for the coat check, she surveys the crowd. She thinks she sees James and Mary. She makes big hand gestures.

Adam hands Irene his coat. She discovers her father's dashing new look.

ADAM
(off her look)
What?

IRENE
Uh, nothing. I see James, let's go.

James and Irene try to organize a rendezvous using hand signals. From time to time, they pick each other out of the crowd. Through the glaring lights and blaring music, they try to designate a meeting place. Then they lose each other again.

They try to call each other on their mobiles, but the music's too loud.

Once again they stand on tiptoe and gesture angrily to one another.

James finally indicates that her sister should stay put. He and Mary will come join them. He turns to take his mother's hand, but she's standing gazing at one of the artworks. It consists of dozens of dramatically lit pairs of shoes. They are painted, cast in plastic, melted or majestically flattened. Giant digitally altered blow-ups of shoes adorn the walls.

MARY
This time there must really be something wrong with my brain.
Where are Benjamin's sculptures?

JAMES
This is it. It's all here. Come on,
I see Irene.

But Mary's feet are nailed to the ground.

MARY

But this isn't art.

JAMES

In my line of work we call it a product launch.

(surveying the crowd)

Shit, where is she?

He waves to his sister.

Irene answers by text message, "At the bar." She pulls Adam in that direction. As they pick their way through the crowd, they get their own look at Benjamin's work.

ADAM

I love it!

Irene glances over her shoulder to make sure her father is following and dives into the crowd. She doesn't notice the young man who pounces on Adam as he walks by.

JOURNALIST

Good evening, I'm with Vice Magazine. Can I ask you a few questions?

Adam signals that he can't hear the question because of all the noise. But he answers anyway.

ADAM

Since being honored by the Royal Institute, I've been concentrating on the Tate. We've been focusing on using raw materials. You must have heard about it. The new Tate?

The journalist seems to have trouble understanding what Adam's saying.

ADAM

Can you hear me?

JOURNALIST

Yes, I can hear you fine. It's just that I was asking about your son.

ADAM

My son? Which son?

JOURNALIST

(confused)

Benjamin.

Adam tries not to show it, but he's embarrassed by his gaffe. Meanwhile, Irene who's made her way across the room, joins James at the bar.

JAMES
Where's Adam?

IRENE
(turns around)
Shit. He must have stopped along
the way. Anyway, he's very pleased.
I'll go find him.

JAMES
(stopping her)
It's going to be more complicated
than we thought. Mom's not happy.
Benjamin is not exactly the artist
she was expecting. To be honest,
I'm a little surprised at Mr.
Banana Yazoo myself. He's pretty
good!

Benjamin arrives, happy and a little sloshed.

BENJAMIN
So how's the parental strategy
going?

Mary stands on the mezzanine gazing out over the crowd. She spots her children and then her eyes meet Adam's. She gives him a little wave. He makes a gesture designating the exhibit and indicating how much he likes it. With a frown she indicates she doesn't.

They look at each other. A beat.

Mary makes another gesture indicating what she thinks of his new clothes. He smiles, a little embarrassed.

Nora meets Adam and the kids. Everyone greets everyone else. They try to talk, despite the noise. No one seems to notice Mary. She waits for a moment, feeling excluded.

Then she leaves.

47 INT. POOL - NIGHT

47

At first, total darkness.

Then a few giant spotlights come on in quick succession, revealing the pool. The light reveals Mary too. She's wrapped snugly in a big towel that covers her from her neck to her ankles. She squints into the light.

Peter turns the house lights back off, leaving only the pool lights on. The place is bathed in an otherworldly light.

Peter walks up to Mary and lets the towel around her slowly fall to the ground.

PETER
You're beautiful.

IRENE
I feel transparent, invisible,
useless, empty...

PETER
(smiling, gently)
I don't need a thesaurus.

MARY
(nervous)
It's an old habit. I'm a teacher. I
mean, I was. It's funny because
I...

He puts a finger to her lips. Then he pulls her into the water with him. There, he kisses her and starts to undo her bathing suit. Mary kisses back with ardor.

48 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM - NIGHT

48

Adam comes back from the opening. He walks through the office. Instead of going up to the studio, he sits down on the stairs and collects his thoughts.

He hears the sound of enthusiastic voices upstairs. It's his team at work. He smiles.

Suddenly Maya pops her head out from above.

MAYA
We need to write a pitch.

ADAM
A pitch?

MAYA
10 lines introducing the project
and architect.

ADAM
Oh. But I don't need an
introduction. They know who I am.

MAYA
It's mandatory.
(she hands him a sheet of
paper)
I've outlined a few ideas.

Adam continues to read attentively. She looks at him nervously, like a good student who's just turned in a term paper. She sits next to him. He smiles. He's touched by what he's just read. He looks up to congratulate her. When he does, she leans in and steals a kiss.

49 INT. MAYA'S FLAT - NIGHT 49

Adam and Maya come into the flat kissing. She pries herself away to turn some lights on.

Adam stands in the doorway, looking around the flat. It's filled with the things any twenty-seven-year old woman might have: pictures, furniture, magazines...

He hasn't noticed her undressing. When the kissing resumes, her nudity takes him by surprise. He just stands there for a moment, dumbfounded before her body. He seems to have forgotten what to do with his hands.

50 INT. POOL - NIGHT 50

Mary finishes dressing. She gets ready to leave. She smiles at Peter. Her smile says: I had a good time, but that's all.

51 INT. MARY AND ADAM'S FLAT - NIGHT 51

Mary comes in and sits down. She stays in the dark a long time thinking. Then she gets up suddenly and goes back out.

52 INT. OBSTETRICS - NIGHT 52

Irene charges through the maternity ward in her hospital gown.

She finds Mary waiting at the front desk.

IRENE
(surprised)
What are you doing here?

MARY
You were right. I could use some
taking care of.

Irene looks surprised, then smiles. She picks up a chair and sets it down in the hallway of the maternity ward. She gets her mother settled.

IRENE

Promise me you won't move. I've got to finish my shift. I'll be as quick as I can.

Mary finds herself alone at one end of the hall, as Irene and the other midwives, anesthesiologists, and doctors dart by.

53 INT. OBSTETRICS - DAWN 53

Mary is still sitting in the small armchair in the middle of the bustling clinic. The tension is palpable now. There aren't enough staff and the deliveries are difficult. The personnel passes back and forth in front of her. She watches them with curiosity. She feels excluded.

Irene emerges from one of the rooms and hands her a bouffant cap, a pair of overshoes, and a hospital gown. "*Come with me,*" she says.

They enter a delivery room where a very young woman is in labor. Mary takes the young woman's hand and looks at her with maternal concern. Then she flashes her daughter a smile as if to say "*I'm ready.*"

IRENE

(to Mary)

No. Holding her hand's not going to cut it.

(she takes her aside)

She isn't pushing, she doesn't understand how. When I tell her to push, you raise her head. Okay?

First attempt:

IRENE

Come on, push.

Mary props up the patient's head. The woman grabs on to the guardrails and makes a face distorted with pain and effort. Mary looks at Irene who seems frustrated.

IRENE

(to the patient)

Stop. You're not going to give birth with your face. Making faces isn't going to help. You have to push. I can't do it for you.

Second attempt. Another pained expression. Irene sighs.

Third attempt. Another near-miss. Mary feels like laughing.

IRENE

(to Mary)

Okay, you're going to lie down on her stomach, and when I tell her to push, you apply pressure.

This doesn't reassure the patient. Mary is surprised.

Irene shows her mother what to do. Mary lies down over the pregnant woman's stomach and holds on to the opposite guardrail. Each time Irene orders the girl to push, Mary presses down hard on her stomach. She meets her daughter's eyes and the two almost burst out laughing.

Finally the expulsion occurs. Mary is moved.

54

INT. BAR - NIGHT

54

Adam and Richard are back at the bar where they met previously.

ADAM

I freaked...

RICHARD

You mean you didn't.

ADAM

Very funny. I work with this girl. She's been my biggest advocate. I never wanted to sleep with her!

RICHARD

You're just afraid you won't get it up. Happens to me too. Especially with the young ones.

ADAM

It's not that! She was standing there naked, and I thought about how much I love my wife's body.

RICHARD

You didn't end up there by accident. You led her on because you needed her. That's your problem in a nutshell. You express virility through work, not sex. That's why I assumed you were shagging her at the office. You'd have had no trouble nailing her there.

ADAM

But that's not the problem. I...

But Richard, who's pretty soused, interrupts.

RICHARD

That's why you have to be in control of when and how you do it. The important thing is to show no weakness. When you're in bed with a girl you have to be ready to risk everything. If not you go soft every time. Luckily girls usually blame themselves for not being sexy enough...

A fresh round of whisky.

RICHARD

I'm not allowed to take Viagra.
(pointing to his heart)
I have a defibrillator.

He taps on his chest, producing a metallic sound.

RICHARD

Modern technology is amazing. If my heart gives out, "zap!" A little jolt and I'm back in business.

Adam looks at him, speechless.

RICHARD

I have a plastic hip and a replacement knee...

Each time Richard talks about a body part, he points to it.

RICHARD

The orthodontist implanted new incisors, the orthopedist gave me insoles to straighten my back, the audiologist fitted me with a digital hearing aid. I need over an hour to take everything out.

More refills. Richard cracks up.

RICHARD

I'm the Six-Million Dollar Man!

Adam smiles feebly.

RICHARD

It's hard being a young man trapped in an old man's body.

This time, Adam is touched.

55 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM, STUDIO - DAWN 55

Adam sits at his desk with his head in his hands. He stays that way for a long time.

Then, he looks up to find himself staring at the scale model of his Tate Gallery proposal.

He proceeds to take it apart piece-by-piece.

56 EXT. OBSTETRICS - EARLY MORNING 56

Irene joins Mary who is waiting outside the maternity ward.

MARY

When I saw that woman with her baby, I realized, I don't know you kids any better than she knows hers.

IRENE

What makes you say that?

MARY

Benjamin, his show. It's so easy to get caught up in the expectations we have for you...

Irene smiles. A moment of contemplation and silence in the waxing morning light.

MARY

I messed up, Irene!

IRENE

No, you didn't! Benjamin's great, he's just an artist of his time.

MARY

I'm talking about your father.

Irene falls silent. She's been waiting for this.

MARY

He started acting out like he used to in the construction-site days. The endless meetings, the all-nighters...

IRENE

Isn't it a good thing he's keeping busy?

MARY

Yes, but jumping on the first hip project he sees?

IRENE

So that's what the new clothes are about.

Mary nods.

IRENE

You did old-proof your house.

MARY

I just wanted to buy a big-button phone to make him understand. But he's stubborn and so am I. Things got out of hand.

IRENE

Nothing's changed. When you want something, you twist his arm to get it. That's your strategy.

MARY

That's the way I've always operated with him. You and Benjamin wouldn't be here if I'd left it up to him. You arrived too soon, and Benjamin too late...

Irene is moved.

MARY

Even if I do provoke these fights, I've always known when it was time to change. Only this time, I went too far.

Her eyes fill with tears.

MARY

I miss him. I miss him so much!

Irene looks at her mother, than takes her by the arm.

IRENE

You wanted me to take care of you? Fine. I'm taking you home. Enough is enough.

57 INT. ADAM'S ARCHITECTURE FIRM - DAY

57

The model is now in pieces. Adam dozes. He's awakened by the sound of voices and laughter from the office below. He goes to take a peek downstairs. He finds himself face to face with James, who's on his way up.

ADAM
What's going on?

JAMES
They're trying on a special suit I brought. It simulates the effects of ageing.

Adam rubs his eyes, not understanding.

JAMES
I thought it might help with the retirement homes.

ADAM
(still out of it)
Of course. Thank you.

An embarrassing silence. James hesitates.

JAMES
Did you know there's a difference between cognitive age and real age?

ADAM
No.

JAMES
Cognitive age is how old we feel. On average, it's eight years younger than our real age.

Adam nods, but doesn't understand what his son's getting at.

JAMES
(quickly, as though he's memorized this)
In your line of work, there's no obligation to retire. So you don't have any indication of your real age. That's why this old-age home you're building is the source of so much inner-conflict. It's like looking in a mirror. You're at a turning point, so it's only natural you'd end up screwing one of your assistants!

Adam freezes: *how does he know?*

JAMES
Like Irene says, it's a cliché.

ADAM
(stunned)
Irene knows too? Already? But how?

JAMES
Benjamin, too. I told them myself!
When you came by the other day, I
really thought you wanted my
blessing.

ADAM
The other day? But it only happened
last night!

A moment of confusion.

JAMES
The other day, at my office...

ADAM
I came to ask you for money!

JAMES
Money?

ADAM
For that...
(he points at the
sketches)
The firm doesn't have the liquidity
to finance my project. So I've been
working on it here, with a few
volunteers.

JAMES
(incredulous)
You mean, you couldn't find funding
for a project?

Adam shrugs impotently.

JAMES
Why didn't you say something?

ADAM
I had scruples.

JAMES
You had scruples?

ADAM
(annoyed)
Yes! I can't find money anymore! I
have scruples!

ADAM (CONT'D)

You must be right, I am getting old! Okay, well, thanks for bringing the... whatever. I'd like to be alone now.

James smiles and hugs his father. Adam is surprised. He stands there for a minute before following his son downstairs.

On the lower-level, he finds the employees trying on or commenting on James's old-age simulator. It's a full-body suit that is weighted and padded to imitate the effects of ageing. It includes ear flaps to impair hearing and yellow-tinted glasses to blur vision. The young employees take turns trying it on. They laugh and crack jokes about old people and ageing. Adam watches them. His partner stands next to him.

PARTNER

So, is your Tate design still an architectural remix of today's greatest hits?

Adam freezes.

PARTNER

When you've gotten over your youth-obsession let me know and maybe we can try working together. On the retirement homes, or even the museum.

Adam turns to him and smiles sadly.

ADAM

Thanks, but it won't work. I need Mary. Without her, I'll never get anywhere.

His partner hands him an envelope.

Adam opens it and reads the note. His eyes brighten. He starts to go. Then he turns to the entire group:

ADAM

(jubilant, Re: the simulator suit)
I'll try it on when I get back.
It'll fit me like a glove.

And he leaves.

CHARLOTTE

You left a note!

Charlotte stares at Mary. Mary stares back.

CHARLOTTE

Coward!

MARY

Maybe I'm not so good at making up anymore.

(smiles)

But it was kind of titillating standing there searching for the right words, and then slipping the envelope under the office door.

Charlotte is appalled.

CHARLOTTE

Get back there!

She starts pushing Mary out the door.

MARY

No. I have a meeting for the afterschool programme. It's important.

CHARLOTTE

Listen Mary, I'm very impressed by all the energy you've put into getting this charity off the ground. And your policy of paying volunteers has succeeded in making me feel like a capitalist pig...

Mary waits for the "But."

CHARLOTTE

But don't end up like me. Don't use your association to fill an emotional void, because you have no one at home. Not to mention the money problems at the end of the month. It's a lonely life. Really.

Mary's surprised by Charlotte's sincerity. The door opens suddenly.

VOLUNTEER

Mary, telephone...

MARY

(happily)

Is it Adam?

VOLUNTEER

No, it's your mother. She's at the court.

MARY
Was she arrested?

VOLUNTEER
No, she fainted.

Mary rushes out the door.

59 INT. COURT - LATE AFTERNOON

59

Looking worried, Mary rushes into the great hall. A small crowd, including several paramedics, has gathered in front of one of the courtrooms.

The situation is a little surreal. Nora's group of elderly friends are facing off with the medics. Adam is there too, negotiating with one of them.

ADAM
I told you, I'm her son-in-law. I
can sign the discharge!

MARY
(to Adam)
What are you doing here? Where's
Nora?

Mary spots her on a stretcher. She's being fed oxygen, but she's conscious. Nora's friends are protecting her with their blockade.

Mary kneels down next to her mother. One of the medics calls out to her:

MEDIC
Excuse me! What are you doing?
Don't make a bad situation worse!

ADAM
She's her daughter.

The paramedic fights his way over to Mary.

MEDIC
We have to take your mother to the
hospital and they're trying to stop
us! Help us!

ADAM
(to Mary)
She fainted, but she's okay now.
She said so herself.
(to the medic)
She should know, she was a doctor!

OLD MAN

(to Mary)

She made us swear never to let them
take her to a hospital.

They all gather around Mary. Everyone talks at once.

MARY

Quiet!

(to Nora)

You have to go to the hospital,
mom. I'll come with you.

Nora tries to pull off her oxygen mask: "*I want to go home!*"
One of the medics rushes over to try to calm her down.

MARY

Okay, okay, I understand...

(to the medic)

Can she be moved?

The medic nods.

MARY

Can you help my husband put her in
a cab?

MEDIC

We're not allowed to do that.
You'll have to sign a discharge and
that's that.

MARY

You must be joking.

ADAM

Here we go again about the
discharge!

OLD MAN

(to Adam)

We can help. We have a minibus.

Mary seems to register the old man's presence for the first
time.

MARY

Who are you?

(to Adam)

Do you know each other?

LEO GOLDENBERG

(to Mary)

My name's Leo Goldenberg. Your
mother collapsed very suddenly. At
first I thought she was faking it.
She can be a pretty sore loser.

MARY
What did she lose?

LEO GOLDENBERG
Her bet.

MARY
Her bet?

LEO GOLDENBERG
We bet three years. Over there, at
PB.

MARY
(totally lost)
PB?

LEO GOLDENBERG
Plea bargaining.

MARY
Plea bargaining?

LEO GOLDENBERG
Immediate sentencing if you like.
Nora's right, you do have a screw
loose. You keep repeating
everything I say.

60 INT. SHORTBUS - LATE AFTERNOON

60

Leo drives. Nora sits next to him. Mary and Adam are sitting side-by-side in the next row of seats. The bus is chock-full of the rest of the elderly betting circle.

LEO GOLDENBERG
I'm a lawyer. I should say I was.
I'm retired now. It was my idea. We
go every day and bet on the
sentence. We used to go to trial
court, but you sometimes have to
wait months for a verdict. At our
age, we'd have time to die ten
times over before getting the
results. We go to PB because the
judgement comes down the same
evening. Plus, the defendants tend
to be younger. It's always a
comfort to see how stupid young
people are!

His short speech is punctuated by comments, murmurs of approval, and laughter from the others.

Mary watches her mother out of the corner of her eye. She and Adam smile and laugh at Leo's explanation and the others' comments.

They look very young among these truly elderly seniors.

61 INT. NORA'S FLAT - EVENING

61

Mary finishes thanking and saying goodbye to Nora's friends. They're on their way out.

LEO GOLDENBERG
She doesn't want to go back to the hospital.

MARY
What are you talking about?

LEO GOLDENBERG
Let her tell you.

CUT TO:

Mary enters her mother's bedroom. Nora is lying on her bed. Adam stands next to her.

MARY
What's all this about the hospital?

A beat. Adam and Nora looks at each other.

NORA
I've had stomach cancer for 5 years, Mary.
(to Adam)
And it has nothing to do with my Kugel!

Adam and Nora share a smile. Mary doesn't blink.

MARY
Five years!

NORA
It's one of the advantages of being very old. As the body's metabolism slows, so does disease.

Mary looks at Nora, then at Adam. Then back at her mother. She tries to speak but stutters.

NORA
Sit down, you look awful.

Mary obeys.

NORA

My prognosis is crappy, but I feel pretty good.

Mary listens, but she can't seem to get her head around this.

NORA

I kept it from you because I didn't want you to worry. I'm supposed to take care of you, not the other way around. I told Adam because I knew that wasn't his style...

Adam looks at Nora. He's not sure whether to take this as a compliment.

NORA

...and for situations like today's. Except that the paramedics wouldn't let him sign the discharge.

Mary finally snaps out of it.

MARY

But, mom! You have to go to the hospital! Be reasonable!

NORA

(explodes)

Reasonable! I should be reasonable? As long as I make you all laugh with my eccentric granny act you look the other way. Reasonable! What do you think? When you get old you suddenly become wise, play bridge and reflect on the meaning of life?

Nora lies back and closes her eyes. Mary is moved.

A beat. She thinks.

MARY

Okay, no hospital. We can have the doctors come here.

NORA

Mary, stop trying to control everything.

They look into each other's eyes.

NORA

Get my planner. It's in my bag. There's a list of nurses.

Mary gets the notebook. Nora shows her the page.

MARY

I'll call.

She leaves the room.

NORA

I'll have time to bake more Kugel.

ADAM

I can't wait.

They muster smiles.

NORA

I hope you haven't forgotten the rest of our agreement.

ADAM

Nora...

NORA

You promised me you wouldn't back out, Adam. You're the only one in the family that can do this for me. You're the only one self-centered enough to understand.

ADAM

Thanks! That's the second compliment today.

NORA

This isn't going to be pretty, and I'll need help.

ADAM

Do you realize what you're asking?

NORA

You've given the dog shots.

ADAM

This is different! How can you...

Nora sits up in bed and grabs him by the collar.

NORA

Dying is bad enough, I don't want to suffer.

ADAM

There are things you can take for the pain.

NORA

What about for the dying?

A noise. Mary stands, choked-up, at the door. She looks at her mother as though she were about to scream.

NORA
You eavesdrop now? At your age? You haven't eavesdropped since you were nine.

MARY
You can't do this!

NORA
Mary...

She walks up to Adam.

MARY
If you do this... If you do this, I'll divorce you!

She leaves them there.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON-SCREEN: *Five Months Later*

63 INT. FLATS AND HALLWAY - DAY 63

The doors of the two flats are opened.

ON-SCREEN: *The Family*

Mary waits in Nora's flat and Adam waits just across the hall. Irene, James, and Benjamin arrive on the landing. Everyone is dressed in black.

Benjamin notices the boxes piled high in the doorway. They are labeled "Adam's Stuff." He points them out to the others. James and Irene glance at them with worried expressions.

JAMES
Time to go.

Adam meets his kids in the hall. Mary looks up Nora's flat.

MARY
I'll catch up with you.

Mary brushes past Adam in the doorway of their own flat. She doesn't look at him or even acknowledge he's there.

Irene, James, and Benjamin take the stairs with their father.

Mary steps back into the hall and then closes her door.

She calls the open-cage lift. She gets in. The car descends.
A moment later, we hear the lift grind to a halt.

MARY (O.S.)

Oh no.

She presses the buttons, but to no avail.

64 I/E. CAR AND STREET ADJACENT TO BUILDING - DAY 64

Adam, Benjamin, and Irene sit in the back seat of the car, waiting.

IRENE

What's with the boxes?

ADAM

I'm moving into the office. For good.

Irene and Benjamin share a look. James peers in through the window.

JAMES

The lift's stuck. I'll call a repairman.

Benjamin gets out of the car and plants himself in front of his brother.

BENJAMIN

Now's the time for your parental reconciliation strategy.

James chews on this. Adam sticks his head out the window.

ADAM

Someone should really stay behind.
We can't leave your mother all alone.

James and Benjamin both look at Adam. So does Irene. A beat. Adam get's the message.

ADAM

I'll stay, then.

He gets out of the car and disappears into the building.

65 INT. LIFT AND STAIRCASE - DAY

65

Adam sits on the stairs. Next to him, Marie waits in the broken lift. She stands as far away from him as the tiny car will allow.

They don't speak.

66 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

66

There's a large turnout at the cemetery, including a crowd of elderly guests, Nora's friends from the court and, of course, the family.

Chairs have been set up around a bandstand with podium. There are wreaths of flowers. The French and EU flags fly next to the Union Jack. It all looks rather official.

The crowd is beginning to grow impatient. Some glance at their watches, others whisper about what's holding things up. James, his wife, and their kids, Carolyn and Henry, are sitting with Irene and Benjamin. Charlotte arrives out of breath. She greets the family and embraces Irene.

CHARLOTTE

Did I miss anything? I was making kugel. It was harder than I thought.

(she shows her bag)

I don't know what got into me. I'm against baking.

IRENE

(smiles)

Zoey made some too. We can compare recipes.

CHARLOTTE

(sees Carolyn)

Is that her?

IRENE

No. That's Carolyn and Henry, James's kids. My twins are over there. Zach and Zoey.

She points to two gangly teens who stand on the other side of the stage. They don't look anything alike.

CHARLOTTE

(to Carolyn and Henry)

Don't be sad. You're lucky to have known your great grandmother.

CAROLYN

We're not sad.

CHARLOTTE

(surprised)

Of course not. She lives on in your hearts.

CAROLYN

She does?

The kids put their hands on their hearts. They look worried. Henry pulls on his dad's sleeve as he talks to Adam's partner.

HENRY

Hey, dad! Are you sure Nora's in the coffin?

JAMES

Of course. We talked about this sweetie.

(to Adam's partner)

Sorry, I didn't catch that last part...

Standing around Adam's partner are all the young architects from the firm.

PARTNER

(to James)

They insisted on coming. See, your grandmother's become a sort of hero around the office. Her ideas on the old-age home have proved invaluable.

JAMES

So, how's it coming?

PARTNER

(exalted)

It's a completely new type of structure. I think your dad is truly revolutionizing the retirement home. We call it N.O.R.A. The New Organization for Retirees and the Aged.

Benjamin and James are surprised and touched.

67 INT. LIFT AND STAIRCASE - DAY

67

Mary is still stuck in the lift. Adam sits waiting. They haven't exchanged a word but they have moved noticeably closer to each other.

68 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

68

The audience has now gathering in front of the bandstand. Many of its members are already seated and wait almost silently. James and his wife, and Irene and Benjamin wait with the kids.

IRENE

Why are the repairs taking so long?

James's face pales.

JAMES

The repairman!

He is literally paralyzed. Irene turns to him.

IRENE

You didn't call!

Zach and Zoey, the twins, laugh. James can't move or answer.

BENJAMIN

You're pursuing this getting-mom-and-dad-back-together strategy all-out. Now I understand why you have such a successful career.

IRENE

Go on! Call!

A man walks up to Irene.

MAN

Might we begin? The Minister has other obligations.

Irene looks at James who's stepped off to the side to make the call. She sighs.

ZOEY

(to Irene)

Why don't we just start without them.

ZACH

(to the man)

After all, it was Adam who unplugged Nora...

ZOEY

And Mary who was against it.

ZACH

They've been a total pain ever since. They'll ruin everything. Seriously!

The man's jaw drops into his lap. Meanwhile the crowd, already hushed, has now fallen silent.

Irene manages a smile.

69 INT. LIFT AND STAIRS - DAY

69

Adam is still on the steps and Mary in the lift.

ADAM

(on the phone)

What do you want me to say? Yes,
start without us. She says it's
alright.

He hangs up. There's a lump in Mary's throat. She moves closer to Adam. They finally look at each other.

70 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

70

The official ceremony has begun. Mary and Adam's seats are empty. At the podium the Minister makes a long speech about Nora. She was a former member of the French Résistance from Alsace. After the war she married an Englishman and practiced medicine in Britain. She worked for the EU Health Programme under several administrations. The nation salutes her.

The members of the family who are present listen attentively. The emotion is palpable.

71 INT. LIFT AND STAIRCASE - DAY

71

Mary and Adam are now as close as they can be given their predicament.

MARY

I wanted us - you - to change. It
was mainly about your job...

(a beat)

But you kept Nora's secret. You
took care of her. You would never
have done that before. You did
change - not in the way I expected -
but you did.

Adam looks at her. He anxiously waits for the rest.

MARY

I hate you. I hate you so much for
helping her. But I'm so grateful
too.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm proud of you and the kids for taking care of everything. For staying with her until the end. You know what else? I'm proud of myself too, because I did a damn good job. You're exactly the family I'd hoped for.

(a beat)

I wish I could stop being angry with you, but I can't. I just can't.

Adam sighs sadly.

72

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

72

The ceremony is over. The bandstand is empty.

The Minister shakes hands.

Just as the last cars and important guests are leaving, Adam and Mary - freed from the lift - appear.

They run up the cemetery road against the departing crowd.

The Minister goes to shake Adam's hand, but he keeps right on running.

The whole family is waiting at the place where Nora has been laid to rest.

Mary walks up to the plot. The others make room for her.

She stands facing the hole for a long while.

CUT TO:

The family, now united, walks calmly and silently back down the cemetery road. Mary brings up the rear.

A voice breaks the silence.

HENRY

Do Adam and Mary have a place here?

Everyone stops. They're surprised and a little embarrassed.

ADAM

Good question. It could be here, for example. Look.

He takes his wife's hand.

He lays down with much difficulty on the grave and pulls Mary on top of him.