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# AWAY FROM HER



Written by  
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Based on the short story “The Bear Came Over The Mountain” by Alice Munro

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Grant, a handsome man in his 70's, with a constant twinkle in his eye, drives down a suburban looking street in a poor area of a small Ontario town. He consults an address that lies on the seat beside him. Looks at the houses as he passes them. Mostly rental houses. Some of the yards are marked by car tracks, the windows plastered with tinfoil or hung with faded flags. He finds the address he's looking for. A small house on a quiet street. He pulls into the driveway. This house is much better looked after though still modest. There are flowers freshly planted. He takes a moment. Stares at the house. Takes a deep breath.

GRANT'S MEMORY: of a beautiful 18 year old girl. She is leaning against the rail of a pier overlooking a great lake. It is windy and cold and raining lightly. The wind blows her pale blonde hair into her face. She is confident and strong. She is smiling, staring straight at us. She is yelling over the wind, a glimmer in her eye. We can't hear what she's saying. We hear the voice of a man in his 70's.

GRANT (V.O.)

She said, "Do you think it would be fun - Do you think it would be fun if we got married?"

A younger woman's voice is heard.

KRISTY (V.O.)

What did you say?

GRANT (V.O.)

I took her up on it. I shouted yes.

The 18 year old girl grins. She turns away and looks out at the water, happy.

GRANT (V.O.)

I never wanted to be away from her. She had the spark of life.

She looks back at us. Right into our eyes.

The image dissolves to white, ski tracks melt over her face.

"Harvest Moon," by Neil Young plays on the soundtrack.

3 EXT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE - JANUARY 2003 - MAGIC HOUR 3

A bird's eye view of a snowy, ice covered lake. A couple skis through frame. We follow their ski tracks in the opposite direction. To where they came from.

GRANT (V.O.)

Over our many winters, her hair  
went from pale blonde to silver.  
That's all. I don't think I noticed  
exactly when.

Credits over the ski tracks as we follow them. We arrive at a warmly lit cottage. It is old and large but not ostentatious. We pause here and then we continue on around their property. We find FIONA AND GRANT ANDERSSON, skiing together through their field. Grant is in his 70's, Fiona in her sixties. They are both stunning and sexy, with humour in their eyes. We recognize Fiona as the beautiful girl we saw at the beginning. She is ethereal, light, and sly. As though always enjoying a private joke. They pant hard as they ski side by side, glancing at each other.

CUT TO:

3A EXT GAZEBO - EVENING 3A

They stand in a gazebo at the edge of the lake, staring at the sunset over the frozen water. They stare silently, mesmerized.

CUT TO:

3B EXT GAZEBO - EVENING 3B

CLOSE ON Grant and Fiona's fingers, unlatching their skis from their boots.

4 INT ANDERSSON'S KITCHEN -JANUARY 2003- EVENING 4

The cottage is warm and comfortable. Rugs crooked on the floor and cup rings bitten into the table varnish. FIONA and GRANT are both tastefully dressed. They prepare dinner together. There's a sense of easy routine about it. Grant chops vegetables while Fiona tends the stove. There's not a lot of conversation about what they're doing. As he maneuvers around her to dump the vegetables into the pan his arms encircle her waist and he steals the spatula from where she has left it on the counter.

FIONA

Careful.

He hides the spatula behind his back. She turns to look at him, knowing what he's done.

FIONA  
Give me that.

He stays still. She scuffs his hair on the way out the door.

FIONA  
Alright then. You do it.

He smiles. Continues her work at the stove. We hear the television come on. A news segment about an election.

5 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -JANUARY 2003- EVENING 5

They eat a good looking dinner. Not labour intensive but carefully made.

FIONA  
Then they showed this totally irrelevant clip of him running. Apparently he likes to run when he's canvassing.

GRANT  
It must have had some context.

She takes a sip of wine. He laughs.

FIONA  
It didn't. And he runs like a goalie.

GRANT  
Oh and you're such a hockey fan. Show me how a goalie runs.

FIONA acts out a goalie running, laughing her head off. She sits back down.

FIONA  
Oh, It's too sad. He wants to be a good samaritan in the most boring possible way.

Grant laughs. A pause and then they both start giggling again. She looks at his clothes.

FIONA  
Don't you have another shirt?

6 INT ANDERSSON'S KITCHEN - JANUARY 2003 -NIGHT

6

FIONA and GRANT clean the kitchen together. A warm quiet between them. Grant steals tender glances at her as he does the dishes and she dries them. It's as though he is watching for something. She goes about putting the dishes away, oblivious to his eyes on her. This goes on for a while. We watch them work in silence, she puts the dishes in the cupboards. He hands her a frying pan. She stares at it for a moment. She opens the freezer and puts it inside. As he hears the freezer door open, he turns to look at her. She looks back at him, oblivious. She goes back to putting the dishes away in their proper places. He smiles at her. When the last dish is put away she leaves the room, feeling like she's missing something.

FIONA

I'll go make the fire.

He waits until she is safely in the other room, and then, sadly, takes the pan out of the freezer and puts it in a cupboard.

7 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -JANUARY 2003 -NIGHT

7

FIONA lies with her head on GRANT'S lap. There's a fire in the fireplace, the house orderly and cosy. It's snowing outside, big fairy tale snow flakes. He reads to her from a book of poetry.

GRANT

(reading)

You climbed the bank and said  
This is how you touch other women  
The grass cutter's wife, the lime  
burner's daughter  
And you searched your arms  
For the missing perfume  
And knew

Fiona strokes his face. Interrupts him.

FIONA

Don't worry darling. I expect I'm  
just losing my mind.

GRANT

Ssshhh.

He grabs her hand. Kisses it.

GRANT  
 What good is it to be the lime  
 burner's daughter  
 Left with no trace  
 As if not spoken to in the act of  
 love  
 As if wounded without the pleasure  
 of a scar  
 You touched your  
 Belly to my hands  
 In the dry air and said  
 I am the cinnamon  
 Peeler's wife. Smell me.

She falls asleep as he reads. He watches her sleep for a few moments.

8 INT ANDERSSON'S BEDROOM -JANUARY 2003-NIGHT 8

GRANT strokes FIONA'S hair. She smiles up at him, warm. They kiss, and slowly and calmly make love.

Title Card:

**The Diagnoses**

9 INT ANDERSSON'S BATHROOM -JANUARY 2003-NIGHT 9

GRANT is peeing. He finishes and washes his hands, catching a glimpse of himself in the mirror. On the mirror is a sticky note. It says "7am Yoga. 7:30 - 7:45 teeth, face, hair. 7:45-8:15 walk. 8:15 Grant and Breakfast." He puts his fingers to it, touched by it's precision.

10 INT ANDERSSON'S BEDROOM -JANUARY 2003-NIGHT 10

GRANT gets into bed behind FIONA. He spoons her, holding her close, kissing her neck.

GRANT  
 That was lovely.

FIONA  
 What was lovely?

He thinks for a moment.

GRANT  
 Nothing.

He looks at the back of her head, guilty and wondering. He leans over and kisses her forehead. She smiles. He turns away and closes his eyes.

11 EXT MARIAN'S HOUSE -FEBRUARY 2005- MORNING 11

Grant sits in his car, in the same shot as the opening. He gets out of the car and knocks on the door of the house in the rundown neighbourhood. Marian, an attractive woman in her 60's opens the door. She holds some flowers in her hand, as though she was just about to put them in a vase. She speaks with a fairly heavy American accent.

MARIAN

Yes?

GRANT

I don't quite know how to introduce myself. I used to see your husband at Meadowlake. I'm a regular visitor there myself. Those are some lovely flowers.

We will keep returning to this scene throughout the film, always picking up right where we left off.

12 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM- JUNE 2003- AFTERNOON 12

Fiona arranges wild flowers while Grant makes drinks. Warm spring light pours through the house.

GRANT

I've never seen those white ones before.

FIONA

The earth must really suit them there.

Grant goes to the kitchen and notices something as he goes to get a spoon to stir the drinks. On each of the kitchen drawers there are post it notes saying, "cutlery, dishtowels, knives." He looks at them, debating whether or not to say something. He laughs.

Fiona is busily arranging the flowers.

GRANT

You could always just open the drawers. Remind yourself.



FIONA

What?

He comes into the livingroom and stands in the doorway to the kitchen.

GRANT

Maybe all the labels... All the  
lists are defeating the purpose.  
(MORE)

GRANT (cont'd)

If you stop thinking about things  
the moment you write them down,  
maybe that's the end of your need  
to recall.

Fiona seems unperturbed by this question. Doesn't turn  
around.

FIONA

If only we recalled just what we  
needed.

She lets this hang in the air a moment. Then continues  
lightly.

FIONA

There was a story I heard at a  
dinner party, about the German  
soldiers on border patrol in  
Czechoslovakia during the war.  
Remember that Czech student you  
had? Veronica? We spoke once at a  
dinner party.

Grant is absolutely still. She tosses this casually.

CUT TO:

12A INT 1970'S DINNER PARTY 12A  
Veronica, a gorgeous young girl looks at us across the table.

CUT BACK TO:

12B INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM - JUNE 2003- AFTERNOON 12B  
Fiona glances at Grant. He is stock still.

FIONA

Don't get nervous. It's a good  
story.

And now she looks at him with a smile.

FIONA

She told me that each of the German  
patrol dogs wore a sign that said  
*Hund*. Why? said the Czechs, and the  
Germans said, Because that is a  
*Hund*.

She gives him an amicable smile. Not threatening in any way. He watches her, his breath is caught in his throat. She leaves the room and he lets his breath out. Stares at the post it notes. We flash quickly in and out of:

13 INT DINNER PARTY - 1970'S -NIGHT 13

GRANT'S MEMORY: Veronica, a beautiful creature with dark hair and shiny eyes, talks to someone animatedly at a dinner party, stealing furtive glances at us. We see her foot crawl up a pant leg under the table.

14 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM - JUNE 2003-EARLY EVENING 14

The doorbell rings. Fiona answers the door. Phoebe and William Hart, a couple in their 60's stand at the door. Fiona throws her arms around Phoebe.

PHOEBE

Where the hell have you two been?

WILLIAM

Phoebe's a nightmare to live with when she hasn't played bridge in a while. Call more often will you?

15 INT LIVINGROOM - NIGHT 15

They have drinks in the livingroom

FIONA

Well at least we're all waiting together.

WILLIAM

You wouldn't say that if you were waiting for a transplant.

PHOEBE

(to William)

Who have you become all of a sudden? Jesus, you sound like one of those "Stand up For Canada" conservative commercials.

FIONA

(winks at William)

Well he's not as young as he used to be Phoebe.

Grant is poking the fire. His hands covered in soot.

WILLIAM

I just don't think you can ignore how serious a problem these waiting lists are.

FIONA

I think they are a problem. I just don't think the solution is a shorter line for those who can afford it and longer lines for those who can't. Oh look, now you've made me all earnest and boring.

Grant looks down at his sooty fingers. He gets up and as he passes Fiona, he touches her face, leaving a big sooty fingerprint on her cheek. She looks up at him knowingly. She knows there's a mark on her cheek and tries hard not to smile. He tries not to smile too. It doesn't really work. He sits down.

FIONA

You're an idiot. Do you know that?

GRANT

It worked for you.

FIONA

It's a wonder I ever brought him home to the parents.

16 INT LIVINGROOM- JUNE 2003- NIGHT

16

They eat dinner.

FIONA

It was one of those craft shows where you look around and wonder that the laws of supply and demand have allowed for the production of so many macrame ducks.

PHOEBE

God those are everywhere. What do you do with them.

GRANT

You've got one of those as a little, whatdoyoucallit, light fixture holder or whatever it is.

PHOEBE  
I do not. Oh wait a minute I do.  
Fiona gave it to me.

FIONA  
Yes I did!

Fiona laughs. holds up the wine bottle.

FIONA  
Would anyone like some more...

She stops, totally unable to find the word she's looking for.

FIONA  
Some more...

Grant looks at her, looks at the HART's to see their reaction.

FIONA  
Ween.

She furrows her brow. Stares at the wine bottle.

FIONA  
Wane. Wane....

GRANT  
No, but I'll have some wine.

PHOEBE and William stare at her. William breaks the silence.

WILLIAM  
Yes. Yes that would be wonderful  
Fiona. Some more "wane."

They laugh. He holds his glass out to her. Fiona doesn't move to fill it. She stays standing there, thinking. Begins talking as though to no one in particular.

FIONA  
The thing is...

CUT TO:

17	OMITTED	17
18	EXT LAKE- FLASHBACK TO: SUNSET -JANUARY -2003	18

Fiona is skiing around the lake at sunset. She looks determined, focussed. Gradually she slows down.

Glides a little. Her focus becomes less clear, her face more and more blank.

FIONA (V.O.)

Half the time I wander around looking for something which I know is very pertinent. But then, I can't remember what I'm looking for...once the idea is lost, everything is lost and I have to wander around trying to figure out what it was that was so important earlier.

CUT TO:

19 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -JUNE 2003- NIGHT

19

Phoebe and Grant stare, speechless.

FIONA

I think I may be beginning to disappear.

PHOEBE

Oh Fiona. You've always been a funny sort of person though haven't you? I mean, remember - you'll remember this Grant - Remember when you two went to Florida that year? And Fiona left her fur coat in storage, and then just forgot about it? Remember that?

GRANT

Oh that was unintentionally on purpose. Like it was a sin you were leaving behind.

Fiona sits back down at the table, joining into the process of brushing the awkwardness aside.

FIONA

Well. The way some people made me feel about fur coats.

They laugh. Go back to more playful banter. We move to look out the window and move towards the snowy fields.

GRANT (V.O.)

Uh... How is your husband doing?

MARIAN (V.O.)

He's okay.

20 EXT MARIAN'S HOUSE - FEBRUARY 2005 - MORNING 20

Marian still stands in the door. ( We will keep returning to this scene throughout the film, picking up right where we left off.)

GRANT

My wife and he struck up quite a close friendship.

MARIAN

I heard about that.

GRANT

So. I wanted to talk to you about something if you had a minute.

21 EXT WOODS - APRIL 2003-LATE AFTERNOON 21

Grant and Fiona walk together through the woods. They reach a little hollow, skunk lilies everywhere. They are the size of platters and spring up like flames. It's surreal, and beautiful beyond belief. Fiona and Grant look at each other, amazed. Fiona bends down and touches one.

Fiona looks at the flower. Then away from it. Then back at it again. Closes her eyes. Opens them. Grant watches her quizzically.

FIONA

When I look away, I forget what yellow means. But I can look again.

She pauses. Thinks.

FIONA

Sometimes there's something delicious in oblivion.

Grant is moved.

FIONA

They generate a heat of their own.

Grant bends down to feel one.



FIONA

They generate a heat of their own.

She stops a minute. Thinks. She may have already said this. Looks at Grant hoping he didn't catch it. He smiles.

GRANT

I don't feel it.

FIONA

I think...I think...you're supposed to be able to put your hand inside the curled petal and feel the heat.

She tries it. He watches her. She looks up at him and smiles. This is a gorgeous place, and they are both a bit overwhelmed.

GRANT

Well?

FIONA

I can't be sure. I can't be sure if what I'm feeling is the heat or my imagination.

She stands up. Changes her tone to a more certain one.

FIONA

The heat attracts bugs.

She begins to walk away.

FIONA

Nature doesn't fool around just being decorative.

Grant watches her walk away. Looks around at the gorgeous flowers, savours the image of his wife walking through them. Then follows.

23

EXT LAKE HURON BEACH -NOVEMBER 1960'S

23

GRANT'S MEMORY: Grant and Fiona in their 20's. They walk, holding hands along the beach. There are dividers every so often. Steel walls that have staircases on either side. They go up and down them. Occasionally there is space between the staircases so that you must walk, balancing on the narrow divide until you get to the next one. Grant helps Fiona over these, holding her hand as she balances. Close on her feet as she walks on the precarious edge. We rise up from her feet to reveal:

24 EXT LAKE HURON BEACH - SUNSET - NOVEMBER 2003

24

Back to the present:Fiona is walking along one of these edges now, with Grant helping her along in much the same way. Their noses red, their breath in the air. They do this in silence. And walk further in silence. They settle on the beach, sitting on a piece of drift wood.

FIONA

We better get back before it gets dark.

GRANT

You think after 50 years we won't find our way back? Just because it's dark?

She smiles. Takes his hand. They look out at the water.

GRANT

Let's stay here. A little longer.

25 EXT PARIS ONTARIO BRIDGE-NOVEMBER 2003- DAY

25

Grant and Fiona are walking along the bridge. Grant holds shopping bags.

GRANT

Cheese. What about cheese?

FIONA

Only if it's very high cholesterol.

They pass a couple about their age.

FIONA

Hi there Lauren, Michael.

They couple coolly nod their heads. Grant looks uncomfortable. There's some history here. Fiona sighs.

FIONA

Poor people. Poor human beings.

They continue walking.

FIONA

Oh. I forgot my list.

Grant stops.

FIONA

No no. Give me the keys. You go on  
ahead and I'll meet you there.

Grant hesitates for a split second. Then hands them to her.

GRANT

Okay. I'll see you there.

Grant continues on and Fiona walks in the opposite direction.  
She sees a dog walk by. She stops for a moment, thinking.  
She begins to look around, quite confused.

26 OMITTED 26

26A OMITTED 26A

27 EXT PARIS ONTARIO MAIN STREET- NOVEMBER 2003-DAY 27

We see her in the distance coming towards us down a steep hill. The occasional car stops and she walks around us. Finally she comes to a stop and just stands there, looking all around her, perplexed. A car comes to a stop in front of her. The driver is stunned. Finally sort of leans on his horn. She looks into the car and waves politely but is still distracted. A police officer, Buddy, hears the horn honk and comes out of a coffee shop and approaches her. She is patient. Doesn't rush her, even though the driver is obviously irate.

BUDDY

Hi there Mrs. Andersson.

FIONA

Hi Buddy.

She's not really paying attention to him. Still worried about something.

BUDDY

Would you like to have a coffee with me Fiona? I'm just inside there. In Cafe de Paris.

FIONA

Oh. I don't drink coffee Buddy. Makes me go to the bathroom.

BUDDY

Alright then. I'll buy you a tea. How's that? I think Mac there's in a bit of a hurry to keep driving on up the road. You know how he can be.

Fiona peers into the car again.

FIONA

Oh. Hi Mac. Is that you? Where are you on your way to?

Mac, an old farmer, leans out the window.

MAC

To the cattle auction if you don't mind!

FIONA

Not at all.

She stays where she is, looking around. Buddy leads Fiona gently out of the road.

28 INT CAFE DE PARIS -NOVEMBER 2003- DAY

28

Fiona and Buddy sit and sip tea at a table overlooking the river.

BUDDY

Can you tell me what your name is?

FIONA

Fiona. Fiona Andersson.

BUDDY

Can you tell me what the Prime Ministers name is?

Fiona laughs a little.

FIONA

If you don't know that, young lady, you really shouldn't be in such a responsible job.

Buddy laughs.

FIONA

Listen Buddy. You haven't seen Edith and George lately have you? I think they ran off on me.

Buddy thinks for a moment.

BUDDY

Who are Edith and George?

Fiona furrows her brow.

30 INT LATE 1960'S HOUSE.

30

GRANT'S MEMORY: Fiona opens the door to the bathroom. She is in her mid 20's. Crying. She looks up at us, defeated. This image plays over the following dialogue.

GRANT (V.O.)

Edith and George. Uhhh. Edith and George are...were... Some scraggly mutts she adopted some years ago. As a favour to a friend. She devoted herself to them for the rest of their lives.

BUDDY (V.O.)

How long ago...

GRANT

Oh. A lifetime ago. I think it may have coincided with the discovery that she was not likely to have children. Something about her tubes being blocked or twisted - I can't remember now.

31 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM- NOVEMBER 2003-EVENING

31

Buddy looks at Grant across the dining room table, Fiona skis on the lake in the background.

GRANT

I'm afraid I've always avoided thinking about all that...female apparatus.

BUDDY

So they were dogs. Dogs she had a long time ago.

Grant has a far off look.

GRANT

She picked them up on one of her more eccentric whims. But they were well looked after. I think I may have been picked up in much the same way. I don't think I understood that until quite recently.

He chuckles to himself.

BUDDY

Have you been to see Dr. Fischer about this?

GRANT

No. I suppose I don't really want to hear what she has to say do I?

BUDDY

You can't just walk down the centre of Main Street and then have everything go back to normal.

GRANT

No. I realize that.

32 INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE -NOVEMBER 2003- MORNING 32

Dr. Fischer is a kind, attractive small town doctor in her mid forties. Fiona and Grant sit in the office.

DR. FISCHER

And what year is it?

FIONA

It's 2003.

DR. FISCHER

And what is the Prime Minister's Name?

FIONA

(to Grant)

It seems to me Grant that no one in this town reads the paper.

Grant and Dr. Fishcer smile and glance at one another. Fiona catches this look and her eyes seem to hone in on something between them. Just as fast as this intensity came into her eyes, it goes away again.

FIONA

Peter Martin.

Grant lets out a small breath.

DR. FISCHER

And Fiona, if you were to find a letter on the street, addressed, with a stamp on it. What would you do with it?

Fiona looks at her.

FIONA  
I would mail it.

DR. FISCHER  
And where would you put it to mail  
it?

Fiona is silent. There is an endless pause.

DR. FISCHER  
And if there was a fire in a movie  
theater, and you were the first one  
to spot the fire. What would you  
do?

Another endless pause.

FIONA  
We don't go to the movies much  
anymore. Do we Grant? All those  
multiplexes playing the same  
American garbage. Have you seen my  
jacket?

She begins to look around the room. She gets up, looking  
under things, behind the desk.

GRANT  
It's on the back of the chair  
there.

She stops and looks at it. Then picks it up and puts it on.

DR. FISCHER  
Fiona. Would you mind if I asked  
you a few more questions? Would you  
mind taking a seat?

Sits back down. Feeling their gaze on her.

FIONA  
I was feeling a little cold. That's  
all.

33 INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM -NOVEMBER 2003-DAY 33

Fiona and Grant walk out of the office, holding some  
brochures. They pass a few elderly people and a mother  
holding a large baby. Fiona comments quite loudly.

FIONA  
What an ugly baby.



Grant lets out a laugh. They snicker together as they go out the door.

34 EXT COUNTY ROAD- NOVEMBER 2003-DAY 34

Fiona and Grant drive through town, and out into the country side. Down the country roads, through fields, past farms. The brochures sit between them, advertising a retirement home called Meadowlake. Most of them focus on early onset Alzheimer's. They look at each other every now and then. They turn down the desolate road towards their house. It runs through fields, across train tracks. They turn onto their road, and into their driveway.

35 EXT ANDERSSON'S DRIVEWAY - NOVEMBER 2003-DAY 35

They turn up the drive to their cottage Fiona looks at the cottage as though for the first time.

FIONA

When did we move into this cottage?  
Was it last year or the year  
before?

Grant stops the car. Answers directly, with courage.

GRANT

It was longer than that. It was  
when I left the University. About  
20 years ago.

Shakes her head, casually surprised.

FIONA

Hmmm. That's shocking.

She looks at the brochures. One for meadowlake, a few on living with Alzheimer's. They look at each other tenderly. She shrugs. Strokes his face.

FIONA

Let's just see how it goes shall  
we?

36 EXT MARIAN'S HOUSE - FEBRUARY 2005-MORNING 36

Marian still stands in the doorway of her house. She addresses Grant aggressively.

MARIAN

My husband did not try to start  
anything with your wife, if that's  
what you're getting at.

(MORE)

MARIAN (cont'd)

He did not molest her in any way.  
He isn't capable of it and he  
wouldn't anyway. From what I heard  
it was the other way round.

GRANT

No. That isn't it at all. I didn't  
come here with any complaints about  
anything.

MARIAN

Oh. Well I'm sorry. I thought you  
did.

She doesn't sound sorry. She looks at him for a moment,  
thinking.

MARIAN

You better come in, then. It's  
blowing cold in through the door.  
It's not as warm out today as it  
looks.

Grant enters the house. Relieved that he's been let inside.

37 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM - NOVEMBER 2003 - DAY 37

Fiona is pouring through books on Alzheimer's. Grant glances  
at her over his paper every now and then.

FIONA

"Never let a person make you feel  
guilty for your anger with God."  
Hmmm. Random.

GRANT

I don't see what the point is. We  
can't even be certain that this is  
what...you're far too young.

FIONA

There's a reason it's called "early  
onset" dear. Or maybe I've always  
been a flake. Oh. I like this.  
"Apraxia is usually present early  
in Alzheimer's disease...In the  
early stages, apraxia may be more  
apparent when the patient faces  
several choices. He may have no  
difficulty putting his shirt on,  
but when faced with a variety of  
shirts, ties, underwear, trousers,  
and coats, he may become confused  
as to which one to pick first."

She thinks about this.

FIONA  
 (with weight)  
 They left you undiagnosed a long  
 time.

She lets out a little laugh.

She lets this hang between them. They stare at each other. Something unspoken but clear. She flicks through pages. A tense silence. Then she begins to read again.

FIONA  
 Should the patient afflicted with  
 the disease remain at home, the  
 caregiver will very often be the  
 spouse.

38 INT ANDERSSON'S KITCHEN -FLASHBACK WINTER 2003- SUNSET 38

Over Fiona's reading we see : A pot of water sits on the stove untended, forgotten about. Grant approaches it. Looks at it, sad. He slowly removes it from the element. We stay on his face for a long time. He looks out the window at Fiona skiing around the large field in the pink sunset. She waves cheerfully. He waves back. She continues skiing, until she gradually comes to a stop, gliding a little. We see the earlier sequence that she told the Hart's about from his POV, through the window.

FIONA (V.O.)  
 The caregiver must preside over the  
 degeneration of someone he or she  
 loves very much; must do this for  
 years and years with the news  
 always getting worse;not better,  
 ...must every few months learn to  
 compensate for new shortcomings  
 with makeshift remedies;must  
 negotiate impossible requests and  
 fantastic observations;must put up  
 sometimes with deranged but at the  
 same time very personal insults;  
 and must somehow learn to smile  
 through it all.

(MORE)

FIONA (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 Caregivers must be able to diagnose  
 a wide variety of ordinary ailments  
 under extraordinary circumstances.  
 Imagine the person you love the  
 most suddenly upset about something  
 but completely unable to  
 communicate the problem or even to  
 understand it himself.

CUT TO:

39 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -NOVEMBER 2003-DAY 39

FIONA ponders this.

She smiles.

FIONA  
 Sounds like a regular marriage.

40 EXT LAKE - DECEMBER 2003 - LATE AFTERNOON 40

FIONA and GRANT ski side by side. They glance at each other,  
 in much the same way as we saw in the first scene.

GRANT  
 I think I'm done. I'm going to head  
 in and get supper ready.

FIONA  
 You have to try to keep up. You're  
 with a younger woman,  
 old man.

He laughs.

GRANT  
 You'll come back when you're  
 hungry.

FIONA  
 I might.

He skis towards the cottage. Leaving her to contemplate the  
 lake.

41 EXT LAKE/WOODS - DECEMBER 2003- LATE AFTERNOON 41

Fiona continues on skiing by herself. She stops at the edge  
 of the woods on the other side of the lake. She takes off her  
 skis and enters the woods. The woods are thick. The  
 occasional branch lightly touches her hair or her face. At a  
 certain point she decides to sit down. She sits in the snow.  
 Lies back and looks up at the trees.

Mesmerized by the pink sunset light pouring through the tops of the pines. She smiles.

42 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM - DECEMBER 2003- MAGIC HOUR 42

The sun is down. Grant stands alone, looking out the window and contemplating the ski tracks in the snow. A concerned look on his face.

43 EXT BRIDGE - DECEMBER 2003 - MAGIC HOUR 43

Fiona is walking across the bridge into town. A train goes by over the river bridge in the distance. She is in her ski boots. It's awkward. She looks worried, lost. Stops and looks first one way, then the other.

44 EXT WOODS -DECEMBER 2003- EVENING 44

Grant follows the ski tracks. He follows them to the edge of the woods on the other side of the lake. The skis lie unattended. Grant looks around. Worried now.

44a EXT COUNTRY ROAD - DECEMBER 2003 44a

Grant drives, worried.

44A EXT PARIS ONTARIO - DECEMBER 2003 - NIGHT 44A

Grant drives across the bridge through town. He sees Fiona, staring out at the river. He stops the truck and watches her for a moment. Then he rolls down the window.

GRANT

Fiona.

FIONA

Hello. I was just thinking how nice it is that it hasn't changed too much in this part of town.

Grant gets out of the truck and puts his arms around her, keeping her warm as they look at the limestone backs of the buildings on the river. Grant looks very concerned.

47 INT CAR - DECEMBER 2003-NIGHT 47

Grant drives Fiona home. They sit in silence for a long time.

GRANT

Where were you going Fiona?

FIONA

I was trying to get home by following the fence line. I've counted on fences always taking you somewhere.

She says this lightly, as a joke. Grant isn't amused. She looks at his furrowed brow.

FIONA

You're going to have to put me in that place. Shallowlake?

Grant breathes deeply.

GRANT

Meadowlake. We're not at that stage yet.

FIONA

Shallowlake, Shillylake, Sillylake. Sillylake it is.

He is irritated by her light manner.

48 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM-DECEMBER 2003- NIGHT 48

They sit in silence at the dining room table.

FIONA

We are at that stage. Grant.

She puts his hand gently on his.

FIONA

We are at that stage.

Grant holds his head in his hands, his elbows on the table.

GRANT

If we do think of it- If we do, it must be as something that isn't permanent. A kind of experimental treatment. A rest cure of sorts.

FIONA

Alright. Alright. We can think of it that way.

She strokes his hand lovingly.

49 INT MARIAN'S HOUSE - FEBRUARY 2005-MORNING 49

MARIAN leads GRANT down the front hallway and past the Livingroom. It is very neat and organized. The house of a truly practical person. Everything polished and organized. A plastic runner down the hall to protect the carpet. It stands in sharp contrast to the comfortable disorder of his house.

MARIAN

We'll have to sit in the kitchen  
where I can hear Aubrey.

50 INT MARIAN'S KITCHEN - FEBRUARY 2005 - MORNING

50

MARIAN pulls out a chair for GRANT to sit in. From a room off the kitchen, he can hear the sounds of a television. The door is slightly open and he can just see a man's feet, supported on a wheelchair.

MARIAN

You might as well have a cup of  
coffee.

GRANT

Thanks.

MARIAN

My son got him on the sports  
channel a year ago Christmas, I  
don't know what we'd do without it.

GRANT

It must be a struggle.

MARIAN

Well. You know. You know what  
struggle is by now. Don't you?

She pours him a coffee.

51 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -DECEMBER 2003-MORNING

51

Grant is standing in his coat in front of Fiona, who is sipping her tea while she looks out the window.

GRANT

You're sure.

FIONA

I'm sure.

GRANT

You don't want to just get a sense  
of the place? I don't want to make  
this decision alone.

Fiona furrows her brow.

FIONA

What place?



Grant sighs, goes to answer.

FIONA  
Just kidding.

She allows herself a little laugh. He shakes his head.  
Smiles.

FIONA  
You're not making this decision  
alone Grant. I've already made up  
my mind.

52 EXT MEADOWLAKE - DECEMBER 2003-MORNING 52

Grant stands in the parking lot outside the Meadowlake  
Retirement Facility.

53 INT MEADOWLAKE CHECK IN AREA - DECEMBER 2003-MORNING 53

It's a clean, bright facility. A few elderly people walk past  
on walkers. Grant watches a woman look carefully at ten  
walkers that are parked together. She examines each one,  
trying to figure out which one is hers. Finally chooses one  
and goes on her way. Grant looks at her, wondering if Fiona  
is really at the point where she needs to be here. He watches  
a nurse tend to one of the women, THERESA, who is also helped  
along by her son, LIAM. The nurse, Betty, talks to the woman  
as though she is three years old. Grant watches with concern.

BETTY  
Now, Mrs. Taylor. Are you ready for  
your bath? It's bath time  
Mrs. Taylor. That'll be nice won't  
it?

THERESA  
Yes, that'll be fine.

LIAM  
I'll come with you Mom.

Madeleine, the very prim looking supervisor comes out from  
behind the desk to meet Grant. Shakes his hand sharply, with  
a pasted on smile.

MADELEINE

Mr. Andersson. Madeleine  
Montpellier. I'm the supervisor  
here at Meadowlake.

GRANT

Hi there.

MADELEINE

Now I'm just going to take you on a  
quick tour of the facility and then  
we can sit down and discuss Mrs.  
Andersson's condition and the  
appropriate time for admitting her.

She leads him down a long bright hallway, blasting with  
light.

MADELEINE

As you can see, we get a lot of  
light.

GRANT

Yes. I see that.

54 INT MEADOWLAKE CORRIDOR - DECEMBER 2003-MORNING

54

Madeleine leads Grant past a conservatory where residents are  
doing a puzzle.

MADELEINE

And there, as you can see, they're  
in the middle of a puzzle over  
there. They've always got a puzzle  
on the go.

They pass MRS. ALBRIGHT and MICHAEL, two residents of  
Meadowlake who are having a conversation.

MICHAEL

Hello there sweet Madeleine.

MADELEINE

Hello Michael.

They go past a TV area with a giant state of the art  
television.

MADELEINE

As you can see, our entertainment system is state of the art, and residents can gather here to watch together.

She leads him into a dining area, with many windows. An elderly man plays the same key over and over, creating an unsettling soundtrack. The place is decorated for Christmas, with a giant tree and lots of lights. Elderly people of various capacities eat their lunch with varying degrees of help from staff, many have family members visiting. There are many stages of alzheimer's here, but none as strong and capable looking as Fiona. Grant looks nervous.

MADELEINE

Now we can accommodate any dietary preferences or restrictions. We're just serving up our Christmas dinner early for the families.

Grant looks at the people eating. Who, among them, would Fiona ever elect to spend time with?

She leads him to the elevators.

MADELEINE

The old Meadowlake is next door. It's a day centre now. But this one, for the permanent residents, is brand spanking new.

(MORE)

## MADELEINE (cont'd)

They pause outside the elevators. Madeleine presses the button.

A resident, ELIZA, walks by leaning on her walker. On her walker is a cup of tea. She walks at such a slow pace, it seems to take her forever. She looks up at Grant.

ELIZA

Just taking my tea for a ride.

Grant smiles warmly at her. Another woman, Florence, walks by. Eliza addresses her.

ELIZA

Look at this one Flo. A real charmer isn't he? Would you say? Are you a charmer?

Grant laughs.

GRANT

Oh I think you could say I was a bit of a charmer.

He gives her a lovely smile. Dashing.

ELIZA

You're a rascal. Are you moving in with us?

MADELEINE

Mr. Andersson is here about his wife, Eliza. Behave yourself.

ELIZA

Oh I should have known it. At this age it's...what do the kids call it Flo? A real cluster fuck. The charmers are all taken. Or dead. Mostly dead.

Grant laughs. The elevator doors open and before he gets in he give Eliza a little peck on the cheek. She's thrilled.

GRANT

You're pretty charming yourself sweetheart.

Eliza beams.

55 INT SECOND FLOOR - DECEMBER 2003-MORNING

55

The elevator doors open and Madeleine and Grant come onto the second floor. The residents are being fed by young attendants. Something Brittany Spearsish is playing on a cheap stereo system. Almost everyone here is totally silent except for a few that are moaning. These people are very far gone. Grant looks alarmed.

MADELEINE

Now this is the second floor - our extended care wing. The elevators here have a lock down system. This is where residents can move to once they get more progressed.

Grant smiles.

GRANT

Interesting choice of words.

Madeleine looks at him. She doesn't like him much. Smiles anyway. That pasted on smile again.

MADELEINE

I'll show you some of the rooms here while we're at it. Then I'll show you our regular floors where Mrs. Andersson will be living.

GRANT

That won't be necessary. My wife won't be "progressing" to this floor.

He says it with determination. Looks right at her.

MADELEINE

Alright.

They press the elevator button again. Wait. An awkward pause in the conversation between Grant and Madeleine. A Britney Spearsish song is playing. Something occurs to Grant. He turns around to glance at one of the young attendants. She sings along to the music.

GRANT

Who chooses the music?

MADELEINE

I'm sorry?

GRANT

I'm assuming it's not the "residents." I don't see any of them singing along.

Madeleine glances back.

MADELEINE

The rooms on our regular floors have their own stereo systems. The residents can play whatever they want.

They enter the elevator. Grant stares at the 2nd floor and its residents as the doors close.

GRANT

How kind.

56 INT MADELEINE'S OFFICE-DECEMBER 2003- MORNING

56

Madeleine sits across from Grant and hands him some documents.

MADELEINE

Now we don't accept anyone during the month of December, so Mrs. Andersson would have to wait until January to make the big move. Then we'd have one of our executive rooms available just like the one I showed you.

Grant looks at her questioningly.

MADELEINE

December...Christmas just has so many emotional pitfalls.

GRANT

Right.

Kristy, an attractive woman in her late thirties enters the room.

KRISTY

Sorry to interrupt Madeleine. I'm just looking for the documents on Aubrey Bark.

MADELEINE

Go ahead. Mr. Andersson, this is Kristy, our managing nurse.

Kristy reaches out her hand. Jovial, sweet.

KRISTY

Against some people's better judgement.

MADELEINE

Mr. Andersson is here about his wife, Mrs. Andersson who will be a resident here with us in January.

KRISTY

Hi there.

GRANT

Hi.

Madeleine gets back to business. Kristy is searching the binders on the bookshelf.

MADELEINE

We also have a policy that our new residents can't receive visitors or take phone calls for the first thirty days. To give the resident time to adjust.

GRANT

What kind of visitors?

MADELEINE

Everyone. Even close family.

Grant looks taken aback.

GRANT

I couldn't just leave her here.

MADELEINE

Well, we understand this is really  
the hard part.

(MORE)



MADELEINE (cont'd)

But most people need that time to get settled in. Before we had the rule in place, they'd often forget over and over again why they were being left here. Whereas we find, if they have a month to adjust, they end up happy as clams. Meadowlake's their home then. After that, it's perfectly fine for them to take a little visit home every now and then. Of course, that doesn't apply to the ones on the second floor. It's too difficult, and they don't know where they are anyway.

GRANT

My wife isn't going to the second floor.

MADELEINE

No. I just like to make everything clear at the outset.

Kristy is heading out the door with a binder. She gives Grant a squeeze on the shoulder.

KRISTY

We'll take good care of her. I promise.

She smiles warmly, genuinely. Grant looks up at her. Trusts her. Gives her a smile.

57 INT MEADOWLAKE DINING AREA - DECEMBER 2003 - AFTERNOON 57

A female resident at meadowlake sits absolutely silently. Her friend, about the same age, sits equally silently, her hand on her friend's face. They stare at each other lovingly, tragically. Many residents eat with children and grandchildren. Meadowlake is heavily decorated for the holidays, and a turkey dinner is being served. The camera moves among the tables catching snippets of conversation. Michael sits with his family, talking, as do MRS. JENKINS and MRS ALBRIGHT. Mrs. Albright's daughter, REBECCA, complains to her that she complains too much. Eliza sits with her family. She speaks in sign language to her hearing impaired daughter, STELLA. She is very affectionate with her. The rest of the family talks among themselves, not paying attention to either of them. We travel along the tables catching snippets of conversation.

A woman a little younger than Grant, MARIAN sits down beside him, staring at a man in a wheelchair who sits among the other residents, staring vacantly. She watches him, with tears in her eyes. Grant looks in her direction compassionately. She gives him a little smile through her tears. She picks up her purse and walks out.

Grant watches as the families take leave of their relatives. Slowly, in a series of dissolves, the common area empties out. Leaving the residents feeling empty, alone, and gasping for more.

They stare out windows, or wheel or shuffle themselves back to their rooms. The light has changed. It is late afternoon and Grant has been sitting there watching for a long time.

59 INT ANDERSSON'S BEDROOM -DECEMBER 2003- NIGHT 59

Grant lies in bed staring at the ceiling while Fiona sleeps.

60 INT ANDERSSON'S BEDROOM -DECEMBER 2003- MORNING 60

Grant still sleeps. Fiona gets up quietly.

61 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -DECEMBER 2003- MORNING 61

Fiona sits at the dining room table stirring her coffee. Grant enters in his housecoat, rubbing his eyes.

GRANT  
Smells good.

FIONA  
I was going to go for a ski but I thought I shouldn't chance it. What with the Alzheimer's and all.

She smiles at him.

GRANT  
Why didn't you wake me?

She picks up some forms from the dining room table.

FIONA  
What are these Grant?

GRANT  
They're the... The forms to fill out. If you decide to go to Meadowlake.

She looks frustrated.

FIONA  
But that is exactly what I have decided. You were to go and sign these forms. And leave them there. Is it cold? Is it dark?

GRANT

No. It gets a lot of light.

She looks at him, questioning.

GRANT

I wouldn't be allowed to visit for  
30 days.

She comes around to him, puts her arms around him.

FIONA

30 days isn't such a long time  
after 44 years.

GRANT

I don't think I like the place.

FIONA

I don't think we should be looking  
for something we like here Grant. I  
don't think we'll ever find that. I  
think all we can aspire to in this  
situation is a little bit of grace.

Grant sees her unmovable determination and nods.

63 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -DECEMBER 2003-NIGHT 63

There is a Christmas tree lit up and a fire in the fire  
place. Grant and Fiona dance to "Harvest Moon" by Neil Young.  
She puts her feet on top of his and he leads her around the  
room. They murmur softly to each other.

64 INT ANOTHER HOUSE ( LATE 50'S) 64

GRANT'S MEMORY:

Grant and Fiona ( in her teens), dance exactly the same way.  
He moves a strand of hair away from her forehead lovingly.  
She bats his hand away laughing. Pulls his earlobes lovingly.

65 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -DECEMBER 2003-NIGHT 65

Grant tries to move a strand of hair away from her forehead.  
She lets him for a moment. Then playfully bats his hand away  
in much the same manner as when she was younger. Again, she  
tenderly pulls his earlobes.

66 INT ANDERSSON'S FRONT HALLWAY -JANUARY 2004- EARLY MORNING 66

Fiona's bags are packed. She is dressed up a little. She  
looks at herself in the mirror. Grant watches her.

FIONA

I guess I'll be dressed up all the time. Or semi dressed up. It'll be sort of like in a hotel.

She puts on her good coat. Applies her usual red lipstick.

FIONA

How do I look?

GRANT

Just like always. Just as you've always looked.

FIONA

And what does that look like?

GRANT

Direct and vague. Sweet and ironic.

FIONA

Is that how I look?

She looks directly at him. They watch each other. Smile.

67 EXT COUNTY ROAD -JANUARY 2004- EARLY MORNING 67

Grant and Fiona drive in silence. "Harvest Moon" continues to play. Fiona spots something just off the road.

FIONA

Oh. Remember?

Grant looks and sees the little hollow where they walked in the spring. The bright yellow flowers are gone. Now it is covered in snow. Grant smiles at her. Looks ahead. It's all he can do to not turn the car around.

FIONA

You look surprised Grant.

GRANT

Not surprised. Just grateful. I'm grateful you can remember that.

68 INT MEADOWLAKE CHECK IN AREA -JANUARY 2004- MORNING 68

They stand in the check-in area, waiting for someone to come to the desk. A tear falls down Fiona's face.

FIONA

You've been good to me Grant.

Grant clutches the hand on his face. Kisses it desperately.

Madeleine comes out of her office. Senses the weight of the moment she is walking into.

MADELEINE

Should I give you two a moment?

GRANT

Yes please.

FIONA

No thank you. I'll go to my room now.

MADELEINE

Alright Mrs. Andersson. We'll get you settled into your room. And then I'll take you on a tour of the facility.

Grant looks pleadingly at Fiona.

FIONA

Yes. That sounds lovely.

She gives Grant a squeeze on the arm. He reluctantly follows them towards the rooms.

69 INT FIONA'S ROOM - JANUARY 2004- MORNING 69

It's a nice room. A bright window. Tastefully decorated.

FIONA

Yes. This will do just fine.

Madeleine glances at the few suitcases they brought in with them.

MADELEINE

I'm glad you like it Mrs. Andersson. Is this all you brought with you today?

FIONA

For now.

GRANT

We'll see how it goes.

Madeleine takes a gage of their different ideas of the situation. Talks to Grant, pointedly.

MADELEINE

Well. You let us know if you need any help arranging things.

He shoots her a glare.

FIONA

(politely)

Thank you Mrs. Montpelier. Now if you wouldn't mind, I'd like to say goodbye to my husband. We haven't been apart for a month for the last 44 years. It will be quite something.

MADELEINE

Absolutely. You just come and find me in my office when you're ready.

FIONA

I will.

Madeleine leaves the room.

Grant sinks down on the bed, grabbing Fiona's hands and pulling her down with him.

GRANT

Please Fiona.

FIONA

Grant. You know what I'd really like?

GRANT

Fiona...

She strokes his face. Kisses him.

FIONA

I'd like to make love. And then I'd like you to go. Because I need to stay here. But if you make this hard for me I think I'll cry so hard I'll never stop.

She has tears rolling down her cheeks. It's excruciating but he manages to nod. She kisses him again. They make love on the well made bed.

70 INT FIONA'S ROOM -JANUARY 2004- MORNING -LATER 70

Grant and Fiona lie in each others arms. He clings to her. She kisses him lightly on the forehead.

FIONA  
Go now. Go now.

He kisses her passionately. Pulls himself away. Awkwardly puts his clothes on. He is clumsy. He does up his shoes. It seems to take forever. Fiona just watches him. He gives up, leaving his shirt open, his pants undone. He leans in for one final kiss. Tears himself away. Leaves the room. Fiona waves lightly at the closed door.

71 INT CORRIDOR -JANUARY 2004- MORNING 71

Grant stands outside the door doing up his pants. A nurse passes by. Looks shocked. Grant shrugs awkwardly. Walks down the hall.

72 INT CONSERVATORY -JANUARY 2004- MORNING 72

Grant sees Kristy, the managing nurse, tending to an old man in a wheelchair. The man has vacant eyes. He tentatively approaches her.

GRANT  
Hello there.

She warmly extends her hand.

KRISTY  
Kristy. We met on your tour. Is Mrs. Andersson settled in?

He nods noncommittally.

GRANT  
I was wondering if I could talk to you for a minute. Ask your advice.

KRISTY  
Sure. Mr. Bark and I were just reading here. Maybe when I'm finished this chapter I'll come find you in the check-in area? How's that?

GRANT  
Yes. That'll be fine thanks.



Kristy goes back to reading to this almost comatose man. Clearly, and without condescension.

73 INT MEADOWLAKE DINING AREA - JANUARY 2004- MORNING 73

Grant sits nervously on one of the plush chairs. He watches as Eliza speaks in sign language with a woman in her 30's who appears to be her daughter. They are animated and involved. Madeleine peeks her head out the door.

MADELEINE

Is she ready for the tour?

GRANT

Uh. I'm not sure. I need a moment to think about all this.

Madeleine comes and sits beside him.

MADELEINE

If I may say so Mr. Andersson. Your wife seemed quite happy to come in today. It can be much more difficult than this. It almost always is. I can't emphasize enough how valuable a lack of drama can be in a situation like this.

Grant smiles a little. Dumbfounded at her insensitivity.

MADELEINE

I'll give her a few minutes and then I'll go and see how she's doing.

Madeleine leaves. Grant watches as FRANK, male resident is slowly escorted in the doors by BETTY, the nurse. FRANK speaks quickly and constantly as he comes through the doors.

FRANK

And we're moving down the centre, and young Betty is helping me, and we're going back up, back up to the second floor and we're moving past the dining room...

KRISTY

Hi there Mr. Andersson. Now how can I help you?

She takes a seat beside him. She notices him watching the male resident.

KRISTY

Oh. That's Frank. He used to be the play by play guy for the Winnipeg Jets.

Grant watches him as he goes, still doing a play by play of his every movement. Dumbfounded.

GRANT

Really.

Kristy smiles.

KRISTY

He loved his job too much to retire.

She shrugs.

KRISTY

Frank's on the second floor.

GRANT

I just... My wife has always been a different sort of person. And I'm wondering. I was told that Alzheimer's can't be confirmed until after... And on the way here today, she just... We passed the conservation area where we went on a walk last spring. There were these gorgeous flowers. These skunk lilies.

KRISTY

Those are beautiful aren't they.

GRANT

They really made an impression you see. And today, even though the whole place was covered in snow, she said "Oh. Remember." Now that was quite recently. About nine months ago. Isn't the short term memory the thing that goes first?

KRISTY

Well. Yes. But not all at once. And what's comforting is the long term memory sometimes stays for quite a long time.

Grant looks uncomfortable.

GRANT

Yes. Her long term memory seems very intact.

This has a weight to it. She looks at him carefully. Absorbing his tone.

GRANT

When she said that. About the skunk lilies. It was all I could do not to turn the car around. What if... What if all this is just her...being herself? She's so young to...

Kristy lets him think in silence for a moment.

KRISTY

She is young. And this is hard. No doubt about that. A month is a real long time. Between you and me, I don't know about the policy myself. I think it makes it easier on the staff is what I think. But look. Here's my pager number. You can call me whenever you want. Call every day if you feel like it. I'll let you know how she's doing. And I'll keep a special eye on her.

She sees he's still nervous.

KRISTY

Look. We're pretty nice around here. I don't know about the ones in charge. But the ones that will be in direct contact with Mrs. Andersson. We're a pretty nice bunch if i do say so myself.

He sighs.

GRANT

I don't know what to do.

Madeleine enters again.

MADELEINE

Mr. Andersson. Here's a note from  
Mrs. Andersson. She asked that I  
pass it along.

He opens it up. It reads: "Go now. I love you. Go now. Fona."  
He stares at the spelling mistake.

GRANT

(whispering)  
Okay. Okay.

He turns to Kristy.

GRANT

Thanks so much.

He leaves the building. Kristy looks after him  
compassionately.

74 EXT COUNTY ROAD -JANUARY 2004- MORNING 74

K.d. Lang's version of "After the Goldrush" plays over the  
next several scenes.

Grant drives home sadly. He passes the Skunk Lily Hollow.  
Looks at it solemnly.

74A INT ANDERSSON'S BEDROOM - JANUARY 2004- NIGHT 74A

Grant reads from a book on Alzheimer's. This voice over  
continues over the next few scenes.

GRANT (V.O.)

Throughout much of the thinking  
brain, gooey plaques now crowd  
neurons from outside the cell  
membranes, and knotty tangles  
mangle microtubule transports from  
inside the cells.

75 INT MEADOWLAKE DINING AREA -JANUARY 2004- MORNING 75

Kristy introduces Fiona to the man in the wheelchair with the  
vacant eyes. She greets him warmly. Sits down beside him.

76 INT ANDERSSON'S KITCHEN -JANUARY 2004- NIGHT 76

Grant does the dishes. When he goes to put the frying pan  
away he pauses. Looks at it. Then puts it in a cupboard.

77 EXT LAKE JANUARY 2004- MAGIC HOUR 77

Grant skis around the lake all by himself. He skis around and around as the sun goes down and leaves the sky pink over a countryside that seems to be bound by waves of blue-edged ice. He stops on the other side of the lake from the house. Stares at the house. Extremely wide shot of Grant standing alone in the snowy field staring at his lonely cottage.

GRANT (V.O.)

All told, tens of millions of synapses dissolve away. Because the structures and substructures of the brain are so highly specialized, the precise location of the neuronal loss determines what specific abilities will become impaired. It is like a series of circuit breakers in a large house flipping off one by one.

79 EXT LAKE - JANUARY 2004- NIGHT 79

Grant stands still on the lake, still looking back at the house. One by one, all the lights in the house switch themselves off.

82 EXT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE - EARLY MORNING 82

Grant takes down a string of Christmas lights from the front of the house.

83 EXT LAKE -JANUARY 2004- DAY 83

36 fps as Grant laces up his ski boot. Takes a few strides. Decides against it. Heads back to the cottage.

86 INT MARIAN'S KITCHEN -FEBRUARY 2005 -MORNING 86

On the kitchen counter there are all sorts of contrivances and appliances - coffeemaker, food processor, knife sharpener, etc. All look new and expensive, as if they had just been taken out of their wrappings or polished daily. Grant decides it might be a good idea to admire things.

GRANT

That's a great looking coffeemaker. I always meant to get one of those. I saw they had them on sale at the Canadian Tire.

MARIAN

They gave us that. Our son and his wife. They live in Kamloops, B.C. They send us more stuff than we can handle. It wouldn't hurt if they would spend the money to come and see us instead.

GRANT

(philosophical)

I suppose they're busy with their lives.

Marian gives a sharp laugh.

MARIAN

They weren't too busy to go to Hawaii last winter. You could understand it if we had somebody else in the family, closer at hand. But he's the only one.

She pours the coffee into two brown and green ceramic mugs that she takes from the amputated branches of a ceramic tree trunk that sits on the table. She sits down with him. Grant hesitantly begins to speak.

GRANT

People do get lonely. If they're deprived of seeing somebody they care about. Fiona, for instance. My wife.

MARIAN

I thought you said you went and visited her.

GRANT

I do. That's not it.

87 INT ANDERSSON'S BEDROOM -FEBRUARY 2004- MORNING 87

Grant smooths his hair. Appraises his appearance carefully.

FLASHBACK:

89 INT DIFFERENT HOUSE 89

GRANT'S MEMORY: Grant, in his 30's, smooths his hair in the bathroom mirror. Fiona appears behind him. Straightens his tie for him. She encircles her arms around his waist. Kisses his neck. They stare at each other in the mirror.

91 EXT COUNTY ROAD -FEBRUARY 2004- MORNING 91

Grant drives down the long country road to Meadowlake. He looks so excited and happy.

Title card:

**AUBREY AND THE FORGETTING**

92 INT MEADOWLAKE CORRIDOR FEBRUARY 2004-MORNING 92

Grant goes down the hall quickly, the flowers held awkwardly in his hands. Madeleine sees her office.

MADELEINE

There you are. I'll take you to her.

She looks at the flowers.

MADELEINE

Wow. Narcissus this early. You must've spent a fortune.

They walk down the corridor.

MADELEINE

Funny. They all come in with flowers. Even if they're not the flower buying type. They all turn into guilty husbands. Only thing missing is the affair. The important thing to remember is you've done nothing wrong.

They pass a few people in wheelchairs, staring off into space, murmuring to themselves, etc. A woman passes them, clearly in a haze.

MRS. ALBRIGHT

I'm certain I left my sweater in the church. Just this morning. I left my sweater in the church.

Kristy, who is passing by, tenderly places her hand on the old woman's shoulder.

KRISTY

Well maybe someone picked it up for you and put it in your room Mrs. Albright. I'll help you look for your sweater.

The woman calms down. Nods. Goes back in the direction she came from. Kristy sees Grant.

KRISTY

Great to see you Mr. Andersson.

She gives him a squeeze on the shoulder. She continues down the hall.

MADELEINE

There now. You remember from last time you were here don't you? There's her room right there. Her name plate's right on the door. I'll leave you to it.

Madeleine leaves. Grant pauses in front of the door. Looks at the handmade nameplate. It is sloppily made, but has "Fiona," neatly written, and a few yellow clay flowers decorating it. They are very like the skunk lilies. He touches them gently. Smiles. Pauses a moment. Not sure if he should knock or not. Decides he should. Knocks gently. He opens the door.

93 INT FIONA'S ROOM -FEBRUARY 2004- MORNING 93

Grant peeks his head in the door.

GRANT

Fiona?

No answer. The room is empty. There is still nothing personal in the room. The bed is made. There is a glass of water and a box of kleenex on the bedside table. No photos, pictures of any kind, not a book or a magazine. He looks around disappointed. Leaves the room.

94 OMITTED 94



Residents sit along the walls, in easy chairs, others at tables in the middle of the carpeted floor. The same man that was playing the piano during Grant's tour, plays it again now. Picking away with one finger and never achieving a tune. A group of residents sit and play cards. Grant sees Fiona, in profile, sitting up close to the card table but not playing. She is sitting very closely beside the man in the wheelchair. She looks a little different. Her hair is pulled back in an unfamiliar style. Her usual red lipstick gone. Kristy comes up behind Grant.

KRISTY

There she is. You just go up and say hello and try not to startle her. Remember she may not - Well. Just go ahead.

Kristy looks concerned. Grant walks towards the table. As he approaches, all the card players look up, including Fiona. The rest of the players look back down at their cards again, except Fiona. She smiles her sly, charming smile, pushes back her chair and comes around to him, putting her fingers to her mouth.

FIONA

(whispering)

Bridge. Deadly Serious. They're quite rabid about it.

She draws him towards the coffee table. Sits him down beside her. Speaks to him very politely, as you would an acquaintance.

FIONA

I can remember being like that for a while at college. My friends and I would cut class and sit in the common room and smoke and play like cutthroats. One's name was Phoebe, I don't remember the others.

GRANT

Phoebe Hart.

FIONA

You knew her too? Can I get you anything? A cup of tea? I'm afraid the coffee isn't up to much here.

GRANT

I don't drink tea...

Grant is paralysed. He wants to throw his arms around her but something about her demeanour makes it impossible. At a loss, he searches around for something to say.

GRANT

I brought you some flowers. I thought they'd do to brighten up your room. I went to your room, but you weren't there.

FIONA

Well no. I'm here.

There is an awkward pause.

GRANT

You've made a new friend.

He indicates the man in the wheelchair. The man looks up, Fiona looks back at him.

FIONA

It's just Aubrey. The funny thing is I knew him years and years ago. He worked in the store. The hardware store where my grandpa used to shop. He and I were always kidding around and he could not get up the nerve to ask me out. Till the very last weekend and he took me to a ball game. But when it was over my grandpa showed up to drive me home. I was up visiting for the summer. Visiting my grandparents - they lived in a cottage on the lake.

GRANT

Fiona. I know where your grandparents lived. It's where we lived. Live.

Fiona is distracted by Aubrey's look. He is looking at her quite intensely, with a kind of command in his eyes.

FIONA

Really?

Fiona turns back to Grant nervously.

FIONA

I better go back. He thinks he  
can't play without me sitting  
there.

(MORE)

FIONA (cont'd)

It's silly, I hardly know the game anymore. I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me.

GRANT

Will you be through soon?

FIONA

Oh we should be. It depends. If you go and ask that grim looking lady nicely she'll get you some tea.

She indicates a particularly stern looking attendant behind a coffee urn.

GRANT

I'm fine.

FIONA

So I'll leave you then, you can entertain yourself? It must all seem strange to you, but you'll be surprised how soon you get used to it. You'll get to know who everybody is. Except that some of them are pretty well off in the clouds, you know - you can't expect them all to get to know who you are.

She leaves Grant and goes back to her chair at the table. She whispers something into Aubrey's ear and taps her fingers across the back of his hand. Grant watches them for a while. Then gets up and leaves. As he does Aubrey gives him a suspicious look. Fiona gives him a polite little wave.

96 INT BRIGHT HALLWAY-FEBRUARY 2004-AFTERNOON 96

We watch Grant as he walks alone down the long hallway, bathed in late winter afternoon light.

97 EXT GRANT'S VEHICLE/ANDERSSON'S DRIVEWAY - FEBRUARY 2004- 97  
AFTERNOON

Grant drives home.

98 EXT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE- FEBRUARY 2004-AFTERNOON 98

Grant gets out of the car. Pauses before he puts the key in the door. Sighs. Leans his head against the door.

99 OMITTED

99

100 INT DINING AREA - FEBRUARY 2004-MORNING

100

Grant sees Fiona at the same table she was at the day before. Right beside Aubrey. He catches her eye. She waves politely. Indicates that she'll be a few minutes. Aubrey gives her a stern look. She places her hand on his. Grant, defeated, sits down on the sofa with the wilted flowers on his lap. Kristy sees him and sits down next to him.

KRISTY

You caught her at sort of a bad moment. Involved in a game.

GRANT

She's not even playing.

KRISTY

Well, but her friend's playing. Aubrey.

GRANT

So who is Aubrey?

KRISTY

That's who he is. Aubrey.

She looks up to see the look on Grant's face.

KRISTY

They get these attachments. That takes over for a while. Best buddy sort of thing. It's kind of a phase.

He goes to say something. It's hard to get the words out.

GRANT

Does she even know who I am?

KRISTY

She might not. Not today. Then tomorrow - you never know, do you? Things change back and forth all the time. You'll see the way it is once you get used to coming here.

(MORE)

KRISTY (cont'd)

You'll learn not to take it all so serious. Learn to take it day by day.

They watch Aubrey and Fiona. It is difficult for Aubrey to manage the cards. Fiona shuffles and deals for him, and sometimes moves quickly to straighten a card that seems to be slipping from his grasp. A wisp of Fiona's hair touches his face and he gives a husbandly frown.

Fiona pushes her chair back and comes over to greet Grant. Grant stands, and awkwardly goes to kiss her on the cheek. She politely accepts, though it's clear that this makes her uncomfortable. She shoots a nervous glance back at Aubrey who intentionally drops all of his cards to the floor.

FIONA

(to Grant)

Oh I'm sorry. I'll have to go fix that now.

Grant watches as Fiona bends down and picks up all of Aubrey's cards. Aubrey calms down as she takes her place beside him and continues on with the game.

101 OMITTED 101

102 INT MEADOWLAKE TV AREA -MARCH 2004- DAY 102

Grant watches as Fiona and Aubrey watch golf on television with the other residents. He sits a few chairs away from them. They are totally transfixed. There is silence as the player makes his swing and the ball makes its lonely, appointed journey across the sky. Aubrey and Fiona hold their breaths. Aubrey's breath breaks out first, expressing satisfaction or disappointment. Fiona's chimes in on the same note a moment later. Grant notices this with irritation.

He gets up to leave, trying to make eye contact with Fiona, but fails.

103 OMITTED 103

104 INT BRIGHT HALLWAY -MARCH 2004- MORNING 104

Grant sees Fiona pushing Aubrey down the hall.

GRANT  
Hello Fiona.

FIONA  
Oh hello there. You're very persistent aren't you.

Grant awkwardly holds out some books.

GRANT  
I brought you some books. I notice they don't have all that many around here.

GRANT  
Letters From Iceland by Auden. We always meant to read it together. Remember?

She looks at him blankly. He looks at Aubrey who is staring up at him, irritated at being interrupted.

GRANT  
Fiona. Do you think... would it be possible to talk alone?

FIONA  
Oh. I'm not sure. Aubrey's card game starts in a few minutes and then we usually go walking and then he does his drawing.

GRANT

(irritated)

Well perhaps you could make some time a little later. I'll wait here. Or I'll come back in a few hours.

FIONA

(playfully)

You are persistent aren't you?

She continues walking with Aubrey, leaving him alone. Aubrey is holding a few drawings on his lap and as they walk away, one flutters loose. Grant picks it up and is about to hand it back to him. He stops as he gets a good glimpse of it. It's a very precise drawing of Fiona as she looked when she was younger. He stares at it, and then after Aubrey and Fiona.

105 OMITTED 105

106 INT MEADOWLAKE STAIRWELL -MARCH 2004-DAY 106

Grant stands looking through the window watching Fiona pushing Aubrey around. Fiona catches his eye. Now she looks a little concerned. She turns Aubrey around in the other direction before he can see Grant.

Eliza comes up behind Grant giggling.

ELIZA

That Fiona and Aubrey. They've really got it bad, haven't they?

Grant smiles, uncomfortable.

ELIZA

Maybe it's time you started branching out too you rascal.

He gives her a polite smile and leaves.

107 INT MEADOWLAKE TV AREA- MARCH 2004 - AFTERNOON 107

Grant sits watching a hockey game with some of the residents. Frank is doing play by play to the game. Grant goes over and turns of the sound on the TV. The residents clap as Frank takes over the commentary.



Fiona approaches him from behind. Puts her hand on his shoulder. He looks around with a start. Grasps her hand, thinking she remembers him. She politely pulls it away.

FIONA

I just came down to say. Aubrey is having his afternoon nap. If you'd like to talk.

GRANT

Yes. Shall we go somewhere a little quieter?

FIONA

If you like.

108 INT FIONA'S ROOM - MARCH 2004 -AFTERNOON

108

Fiona sits in a chair. Grant sits on the bed. Smooths out the sheets remembering their last encounter in this room. He looks around at the walls which have many of Aubrey's drawings pinned up. They are all different angles of Fiona, looking so much like the images we've seen of her in the past, it's uncanny.

FIONA

You said you have some books for me.

GRANT

Yes.

He takes the books out.

GRANT

Letters From Iceland.

FIONA

Yes you said. By Auden.

GRANT

(excited that she remembers)  
Yes. That's right.

FIONA

Now where is Iceland.

Grant sinks. As he describes Iceland we see Super 8 and archival footage of Iceland. Earthquakes, geysirs, highway bridges carried off by giant movements of ice and water.

GRANT

Iceland is... It's in the middle of the Atlantic. It's an island. It's the youngest country in the world. It's constantly erupting. Volcanos and earthquakes. It's always...shaking itself off.

Fiona replies with casual interest.

FIONA

Hmm. Wouldn't it be nice. To be from a young country.

GRANT

You are. That's where you're from. Where your people are from. They immigrated here in the late 1800's. Your people were on the first voyage from the north. A place called Akyuyeri. They came to Canada. That's where you're from Fiona. And I teach... I taught the myths from there. Norse Mythology.

Fiona looks very vulnerable.

FIONA

I must have been there then. Have I been there?

GRANT

No.

FIONA

But ... Wasn't I curious?

GRANT

Oh you're very curious. Very curious.

He smiles tenderly. Strokes her hand.

GRANT

You always said, there ought to be one place you thought about and knew about and maybe even longed for - but never did get to see.

She smiles sadly.

FIONA  
Did I I say that? \*

GRANT  
Yes. You said that. \*

She smiles. Then something occurs to her. She looks at him. Upset. She looks quite angry and quite present. She stares at Grant for a long time, totally familiar and direct. Grant looks afraid of what she might be about to say. \*

Then her polite manner is back, suddenly. All of a sudden she treats him like a stranger again.

FIONA  
Well I better go see to Aubrey.  
He'll be wanting a little walk  
around I suppose. It was nice  
chatting. I suppose you'll be back  
again tomorrow.

She goes to stand up. He takes her hand back. She looks down at it.

GRANT  
Fiona.

FIONA  
Yes?

GRANT  
What are you doing? What are you  
doing with Aubrey?

She takes her =hand back. Looks him in the eye.

FIONA  
He doesn't confuse me. He doesn't  
confuse me at all.

She walks to the door. Turns around. Very polite and formal.

FIONA

Well. It was nice chatting. I suppose you'll be back again tomorrow.

Grant sits on the bed for a while, thinking. He places the books carefully on the bedside table.

109 INT BRIGHT HALLWAY- MARCH 2004 -AFTERNOON 109

36 fps. Grant is on his way out the door. He passes Fiona helping Aubrey out of his chair. He holds onto the rail on the wall and supports himself by leaning on her as he takes a few tentative steps. A small group of residents and nurses clap. Both Fiona and Aubrey look somewhat proud and bashful. Grant leaves.

110 INT DINING AREA-MARCH 2004 - LATE AFTERNOON 110

Grant and Kristy eat slices of pie and drink coffee.

GRANT

Who is he?

KRISTY

He's...Aubrey?

GRANT

Yes. Aubrey.

KRISTY

Aubrey. He was the local guy for this company that sold weed killer and all that kind of stuff. He was a fine person.

Grant nods.

GRANT

What happened to him? Did he have a stroke?

KRISTY

When he was not very old or even retired he suffered some unusual kind of damage. They just went on holiday somewhere and he got something, like some bug, that gave him a terrible high fever? And it put him in a coma and left him like he is now.

(MORE)

KRISTY (cont'd)

Between you and me I wouldn't be surprised if it had something to do with that weed killer. His wife is the one takes care of him usually. She takes care of him at home. She just put him in here on temporary care so she could get a break. Her sister wanted her to go to Florida.

(MORE)

KRISTY (cont'd)  
See, she's had a hard time, you  
wouldn't ever have expected a man  
like him-

GRANT  
I see.

Grant tries to use a calm, indulgent tone.

GRANT  
Do these affections between  
residents...do they ever go too  
far?

KRISTY  
Depends what you mean.

There is an awkward silence. Grant is getting nervous.

KRISTY  
The trouble we have in here, it's  
funny, it's often with some of the  
ones that haven't been friendly  
with each other at all. They maybe  
won't even know each other, beyond  
knowing, like, is it a man or a  
woman? You'd think it'd be the old  
guys trying to crawl in bed with  
the old women, but you know half  
the time it's the other way round.  
Old women going after the old men.  
Could be they're not so wore out I  
guess.

She stops smiling, as if she's afraid she has spoken too  
callously.

KRISTY  
Don't take me wrong. I don't mean  
Fiona. Fiona is a lady. She's a  
real lady.

GRANT  
Well I sometimes wonder-

KRISTY  
(a little sharply)  
You wonder what?

GRANT

I wonder whether she isn't putting  
on some kind of charade.

KRISTY

A what?

GRANT

Some kind of act. Maybe a kind of  
punishment.

Kristy looks at him fondly. Pats his hand.

KRISTY

Now why would she do that.

He looks at her in a way that makes her know that he's  
talking about something very real.

KRISTY

Oh.

111 EXT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE - MARCH 2004 -LATE AFTERNOON 111

Grant shovels snow. He throws himself into the work,  
exhausting himself.

112 INT MEADOWLAKE DINING AREA/CORRIDOR-MARCH 2004 - MORNING 112

Grant watches from the the couch in the dining area while  
Aubrey walks, a little more confidently now holding onto  
Fiona for support. Fiona is wearing a very bright, tacky  
sweater. Completely different from her other clothing.  
Madeleine walks by. Grant gets her attention.

GRANT

Excuse me. Excuse me!

MADELEINE

Yes Mr. Andersson. What can I help  
you with?

GRANT

She's...Fiona. She's wearing  
someone else's sweater.

Madeleine looks over at Fiona.

MADELEINE

It's pretty isn't it.

GRANT

No. It isn't pretty. It's tacky.  
And she would never wear it.

MADELEINE

Well, if you like you can talk to  
the on duty attendant on Mrs.  
Andersson's wing.

Grant keeps watching Fiona, supporting Aubrey as he makes his way slowly across the room. Madeleine pauses to watch with him.

MADELEINE

It's a marvel really. The way she's  
getting him up and out of that  
chair.

She walks off. Grant watches Fiona laughing with Aubrey who is smiling a little. Grant gets more and more upset. He goes up to Fiona, grabs her wrists.

GRANT

Fiona.

She is startled.

GRANT

Fiona. I'm your husband. Fiona.

She looks away. She doesn't want to see him. Keeps her head locked to the side.

GRANT

Fiona. It's Grant. Your husband.  
We've been married for 45 years.  
Look at me. Fiona. We live in your  
grandparents cottage. We ski every  
day together on the lake. Every  
night we make dinner together and I  
read to you and you fall asleep in  
my lap and I carry you to bed. You  
proposed to me when you were 18.  
That is not your sweater. We've had  
a good life together. Those are  
your words, not mine. Fiona. That  
is not your sweater.

Fiona won't look at him. Has tears streaming down her face. Aubrey is making panicked sounds. Wants to help her get free of Grant but can't move. She pulls her wrist away from him violently.



Then pulls the sleeves of her sweater straight and composes herself. She helps Aubrey to sit back down in his wheelchair. He is making desperate animal sounds. She coos to him trying to settle him down. Grant puts his face in his hands. Once Aubrey has settled somewhat, Fiona takes Grants hand and leads him around the corner. Aubrey's sounds grow louder and louder.

Fiona looks sternly at Grant. Seems about to say something. A long pause while she looks at him. Whatever it was she was going to say, she decides not to say it.

FIONA

I'll see you again tomorrow I suppose. Please don't...Please Don't.

Grant nods, devastated. Fiona laughs, embarrassed by everything that has just happened.

FIONA

You are persistent aren't you. I wish I knew what...

She laughs lightly. Brushes her tears away.

FIONA

We'll see you again tomorrow I suppose.

She walks away from Grant. Gets Aubrey out of his chair again and supports them as they walk down the hall.

112A INT BRIGHT HALLWAY - DAY 112A

Grant watches them go as they walk, together, away from him, down the long, sun bathed corridor. (36 fps)

113 INT MARIAN'S KITCHEN -FEBRUARY 2005 - MORNING 113

Grant sits nervously at Marian's table. He is gearing up to say something. Not sure how to begin. He stirs his coffee, thinking. Marian watches him closely.

MARIAN

You're not doing too well are you?  
No big surprise. What we're dealing with here isn't so easy. I thought I'd married someone who'd be there with me to the final stretch. And I'm betting you thought the same. It didn't work out that way.

(MORE)

MARIAN (cont'd)

So. I think you came here for a reason. I'm the kind you can just say things flat out to. So shoot.

Grant takes a breath and then takes the plunge.

GRANT

I'm wondering if you could consider taking Aubrey back to Meadowlake. Maybe just one day a week for a visit? It's only a drive of a few miles, it wouldn't be too difficult would it?

He has an idea.

GRANT

Or...if you'd like to take the time off - I suppose I could take Aubrey out there myself. I wouldn't mind at all.

This wasn't part of what he had planned to say, and he's rather dismayed to hear himself suggest it.

GRANT

I'm sure I could manage it. And I'm sure you could use a break.

While he talks she moves her closed lips and her hidden tongue as if she is trying to identify some dubious flavour. She gets up and gets some milk. Pours it into his coffee. Goes back to the counter and grabs a plate of ginger cookies. They are perfectly round. She sets the plate down in front of him.

MARIAN

Homemade.

GRANT picks one up. Marvels at its perfect roundness.

GRANT

Really.

She pours milk into her coffee. Stirs it. GRANT waits in the interminable, awkward silence. Glances at AUBREY's feet, visible through the door.

MARIAN

No. No I can't do that. And the reason is, I'm not going to upset him.

GRANT

(earnest)  
Would it upset him?

MARIAN

Yes, it would. It would. Bringing him home and taking him back. Bringing him home and taking him back, that's just confusing him.

GRANT

But wouldn't he understand that it was just a visit? Wouldn't he get into the pattern of it?

MARIAN

He understands everything all right.

She says this as though he has just insulted AUBREY.

MARIAN

If I go to all that trouble I'd prefer to take him someplace that was more fun. It'd make more sense to take him to the mall where he could see kids and whatnot. If it didn't make him sore about his own two grandsons he never gets to see. I've got to get him all ready and pack up his chair and maneuver him into the car, and he's a big man, he's not so easy to manage as you might think. All that and what for?

GRANT

But even if I agreed to do it? It's true, you shouldn't have the trouble.

MARIAN

(flatly)  
You couldn't. You don't know him. You couldn't handle him.

(MORE)

MARIAN (cont'd)

He wouldn't stand for you doing for him. All that bother and what would he get out of it?

Grant considers saying something about Fiona. Decides not to. She gets up and fetches her cigarettes and lighter from the window above the sink.

MARIAN

You smoke?

GRANT

No, thanks.

MARIAN

Did you never? Or did you quit?

GRANT

Quit.

MARIAN

How long ago was that?

He thinks about it.

GRANT

Thirty years. No - more.

Grant's mind wanders momentarily, remembering the circumstances in which he quit.

MARIAN

I've quit quitting.

She lights up.

MARIAN

Just made a resolution to quit quitting, that's all.

She looks at him, sizing him up.

MARIAN

So your wife's depressed? What's your wife's name? I forget.

GRANT

It's Fiona.

114 INT CONSERVATORY-MARCH 2004- NIGHT

114

Aubrey and Fiona sit by the fountain. They sit among the lush and tropical looking plants. Fiona talks softly to him. We move around the fountain to find Grant sitting alone, catching glimpses of them through the leaves. Mixed in with the sound of the leaves rustling and the birds in the cages and the sound of splashing water is Fiona's soft talk and laughter. Then a sort of chortle which sounds like it might be coming from Aubrey. Then some words, which are definitely coming from Aubrey. His voice is soft and strained. Grant squints his eyes, trying desperately to make out what he is saying. Then there is silence. Then a few clear words.

AUBREY

Take care. He's here. My love.

Grant looks into the blue bottom of the fountain's pool. Stares at the coins.

KRISTY (O.S.)

And how old were you when you met?

115 EXT MEADOWLAKE - MARCH 2004 -DAY

115

Kristy takes a smoke break. Grant sips a coffee to keep her company.

GRANT

She was 18.

KRISTY

Holy. That's pretty young to get married eh?

GRANT

It wasn't my idea. But it was a good one I think.

KRISTY

She proposed to you?

Grant nods.

KRISTY

Well that's lovely. That's what I think. How'd she do it?

GRANT

I don't think she planned it necessarily. We were in Tobermory, waiting for the ferry to Manitoulin. It was raining and miserable and she was happy and sick of my sour mood.

KRISTY

So what'd she do? What'd she say?

GRANT

She said, "Do you think it would be fun - Do you think it would be fun if we got married?"

KRISTY

What did you say?

GRANT

I took her up on it. I shouted yes.

Grant takes a deep breath.

GRANT

I never wanted to be away from her. She had the spark of life.

116 EXT PIER - 1961

116

GRANT'S MEMORY: The image of Fiona at 18 from the beginning of the film. She looks at us. Right into our eyes. Over this we hear:

KRISTY (V.O.)

You know. Nothing takes away what happens to you. Where you've been, what you've experienced. I don't think so. Even if it's gone away somehow, even if you can't remember it. It's still there. It's still what you are.

117 EXT MEADOWLAKE -MARCH 2004 -DAY

117

Kristy watches him, sympathetic.

GRANT  
It's curious.

KRISTY  
What's curious?

GRANT  
All that. The "madly in love" part.  
The beginning. When I hear myself  
tell the story, it sounds  
so...crucial. And it was I suppose.  
But compared to what we ended up  
with it seems very...superficial  
somehow.

118 EXT LAKE HURON BEACH - APRIL 2004 -DAY 118  
Grant walks along the beach, up and down the metal barricades  
as he did with Fiona. 36 fps.

120 INT CONSERVATORY- DECEMBER 2004 - EARLY EVENING 120 \*  
Grant watches as the residents play Bingo. Eliza plays bingo \*  
with her daughter. They sign to each other. Her daughter \*  
looks absolutely joyous as she plays with her mother, and she \*  
describes to her the game in sign. Fiona, wearing that \*  
bright, tacky sweater helps Aubrey play. Kristy takes a seat \*  
beside Grant. \*

GRANT \*  
They never sorted out the clothes. \*

KRISTY \*  
Oh. They...tried to. She's become \*  
very attached to that sweater. \*

Grant nods. \*

121 INT DINING ROOM

121 \*

Meadowlake is decorated for Christmas again. A badass teenager with blue hair and a whole lot of piercings watches her grandfather and her parents play Bingo. Her grandfather has food all over his chin. The badass teenager leaves the table. Grant sits alone at the fountain, watching Aubrey and Fiona sitting in the distance. They lean in close and whisper, oblivious to the invasion of visitors. The badass teenager. MONICA comes and sits beside Grant on the fountain in a huff. She puts on her headphones which blare thrasher music. Grant notices her. Continues to watch Aubrey and Fiona as he talks to the young girl beside him.

GRANT \*

Not such a fun place to visit eh? \*

Monica lifts up her earphone. The music is deafening. \*

MONICA \*

Excuse me? \*

GRANT \*

Nothing. \*

She turns off the music. \*

MONICA \*

No. What were you gonna say? \*

GRANT \*

Just. Not such a fun place to visit eh? \*

MONICA \*

Fuckin Depressing. \*

She glances at him, thinking she may have offended him. \*

MONICA \*

No offence. \*

He smiles. \*

GRANT \*

No offence taken. \*

MONICA \*

Sorry. I'm just on the rag. \*



GRANT \*  
That would do it, yes. \*

They sit in silence for a moment. \*

MONICA \*  
I'm not in the mood for Grandpa \*  
when I'm on the rag, know what I'm \*  
sayin? \*

Grant smiles. \*

GRANT \*  
You never know. I'm not an expert \*  
on families. But someday you might \*  
be glad you came. \*

Monica looks at him. Assesses him. \*

MONICA \*  
No one came to visit you eh? That \*  
must suck huge. \*

GRANT \*  
No. I'm... I don't live here. I'm \*  
just visiting someone. \*

Monica makes a show of looking around for the person he's \*  
visiting. \*

MONICA \*  
Who? What's your deal crazy man? \*

Grant smiles. Likes her. He indicates Fiona. \*

GRANT \*  
I'm visiting that woman over there. \*

Monica looks over. \*

MONICA \*  
Which one? \*

GRANT \*  
The beautiful one. With the shock \*  
of hair. \*

MONICA \*  
The one sitting with her husband? \*

GRANT  
You could say that.

MONICA  
Why wouldn't you?

GRANT  
Why wouldn't you what?

MONICA  
Say that.

GRANT  
Uh...you wouldn't say  
that...because I'm her husband.

Monica looks at Fiona and Aubrey, deep in conversation.

MONICA  
So...why aren't you sitting with  
her?

GRANT  
Oh... I've learned to give her a  
little bit of space. She's in love  
with the man she's sitting with. I  
don't like to disturb her. I  
just...like to see her I suppose. I  
like to make sure that she's doing  
well.

He looks at the Monica selfconsciously. Embarrassed.

GRANT  
I suppose it seems rather pathetic.

Monica stares at him for a long time. A little tear in her  
eye.

MONICA  
If the guy I'm dating right now? If  
he was like you? I should be so  
lucky.

She gives him a hefty pat on the back. Makes him lay her five  
and goes back to her Grandpa. Grant laughs to himself. The  
biggest, most genuine smile we've seen from him in a long  
time.

Grant looks around the card tables for Fiona. Eliza yells out  
to him, excited.

ELIZA

She's not here! She's sick! He's  
not here either!

She looks very proud of having this information. And way more  
out of it than we've seen her. Her hair is messy, her clothes  
awry. Grant nods.

123 INT CORRIDOR - JANUARY 2005-MORNING 123

Grant hurriedly makes his way down the corridor to Fiona's room, a book under his arm. Grant knocks lightly at Fiona's door. He opens it gently.

124 INT FIONA'S ROOM - JANUARY 2005-MORNING 124

Fiona is sitting straight up in the bed, which is cranked up like a hospital bed. She's wearing a nightgown and looks very pale. Aubrey is beside her in his wheelchair, which is pushed as close to the bed as it can get. His face also has a gray, worn out expression. He is wearing a jacket and tie and his hat rests on the bed. He looks as though he's going somewhere. As Grant enters, they both look up at him with stony, grief-ridden apprehension that turns to relief, if not to welcome when they see who he is. Not who they thought he'd be. They grasp each others hands and do not let go. Grant is taken aback. He sets the book down at the foot of the bed.

GRANT

I...I brought you a book Fiona.  
It's about Iceland. I thought maybe  
you'd like to look at it.

FIONA

Why. Thank you.

She turns her attention back to Aubrey who is pulling his hand away from her. He puts his hand over his face as he weeps uncontrollably. He is embarrassed about his running nose, especially in Grant's presence.

\*

FIONA

What is it? What is it, dear heart?  
Oh, all right. Oh, here.

She pulls some tissue out of the box.

FIONA

Here. Here.

She tries to wipe his nose, but Aubrey grabs the kleenex away from her and does it himself.

FIONA  
 (whispering, to Grant)  
 Do you by any chance have any  
 influence around here? I've seen  
 you talking to them.

Aubrey makes a noise. Like an animal wail. He pitches his upper body towards her. She scrambles half out of bed to catch him and holds onto him. Grant doesn't know whether to help or not. Decides he'd better not.

FIONA  
 (to Aubrey)  
 Hush. Oh, Honey. Hush. We'll get to see each other. We'll have to. I'll go and see you. You'll come and see me.

Aubrey makes another animal wail into Fiona's chest. There is nothing Grant can decently do but get out of the room.

125 INT CORRIDOR - JANUARY 2005-MORNING

125

Grant closes the door gently. Puts his back to it and leans on it, sighing. Madeleine walks by.

MADELEINE  
 I just wish his wife would hurry up and get here. I wish she'd get him out of here and cut the agony short.

GRANT  
 Should I stay?

MADELEINE  
 What for? She's not sick you know.

GRANT  
 To keep her company.

MADELEINE  
 They have to get over these things on their own. They've got short memories. That's not always so bad.

Grant walks down the corridor, rattled. Stops and looks out the window to see a woman in a tartan pants suit in the parking lot getting a folded-up wheelchair out of the trunk of her car.

126 INT MEADOWLAKE DINING AREA-JANUARY 2005- MORNING 126

Grant arrives at Meadowlake. Looks for Fiona. She's not there. Eliza sees him and gleefully calls to him.

ELIZA

She's still sick! But he's gone!  
You must be happy about that!

127 INT FIONA'S ROOM -JANUARY 2005- MORNING 127

Grant gently opens the door to Fiona's room. She is weeping. An untouched plate of food sits beside her. She looks up to see him. \*

FIONA

Oh. Hello.

She goes back to weeping. Grant is at a loss. He begins to leave, then changes his mind. He comes and sits next to her while she cries. He looks at her hand on the bed, and debates whether or not to take it in his own. Slowly, gently, he holds it. \*

GRANT

Perhaps I could read you something.  
If you like. \*

FIONA

Oh. Alright. I don't have any books  
though. \*

Grant looks at the stack of books on the dressing table that he has brought over the last several months. He feigns surprise. \*

GRANT

Oh look. Here's some. Here we are.  
I'll read something from Letters  
From Iceland. \*

FIONA

Ice-land. \*

He begins to read to her. She is staring into space. Not hearing. We stay very close on her during the following. Occasionally we go to grainy archival footage of Iceland. It appears to be part of Fiona's memory, or thoughts. \*

GRANT

Isn't it true however far we've  
wandered \*

(MORE) \*

## GRANT (cont'd)

Into our provinces of persecution \*  
 Where our regrets accuse, we keep \*  
 returning, \*  
 Back to the common faith from which \*  
 we've all dissented, \*  
 Back to the hands, the feet, the \*  
 faces \*

Children are always there and take \*  
 the hands \*  
 Even when they're most \*  
 terrified;those in love \*  
 Cannot make up their minds to go or \*  
 stay; \*  
 Artist and Doctor return most \*  
 often; \*  
 Only the mad will never never come \*  
 back. \*

For doctors keep on worrying while \*  
 away \*  
 In case their skill is suffering \*  
 and deserted; \*  
 Lovers have lived so long with \*  
 giants and elves \*  
 They want belief again in their own \*  
 size; \*  
 And the artist prays ever so gently- \*

'Let me find pure all that can \*  
 happen. \*  
 Only uniqueness is success! For \*  
 instance, \*  
 Let me perceive the images of \*  
 history, \*  
 All that I push away with doubt and \*  
 travel, \*  
 Today's and yesterday's, alike like \*  
 bodies. \*

128 OMITTED

128 \*

129 OMITTED

129 \*

131 OMITTED

131 \*



132 INT TV AREA-JANUARY 2005 -DAY

132 \*

Fiona watches the news with Grant and some other residents. Scenes of violence and chaos in Iraq.

FIONA

How could they forget Vietnam?

Grant stares at her. This sounds very much like her as she was. Someone switches the TV station to golf. As she looks at the screen she is hit with a fresh bout of grief. She begins to cry silently. Grant reaches out to touch her hair. She bats his hand away.

FIONA

Oh. It's just the big screen. Hurts my eyes.

133 INT DINING AREA MEADOWLAKE

133

Kristy sits and has a coffee with Grant on her break. They watch 2 old men in the common area playing horseshoes. One of them throws the horseshoe and then they both stand there like statues, not sure what happens next.

KRISTY

Her muscles are deteriorating. If she doesn't improve soon we're gonna have to put her on a walker.

GRANT

I keep trying to get her walking.  
She just doesn't seem to want to go  
anywhere.

KRISTY

But you know once they get a walker  
they start to depend on it and they  
don't walk much anymore, just get  
wherever it is they have to go.

Grant scratches his head. Looks worried.

KRISTY

You'll have to work at her harder.  
Try and encourage her.

Kristy goes and retrieves the horseshoe and gives it to the  
man who threw it. He throws it again. And then waits again.

134 INT FIONA'S ROOM -JANUARY 2005 -MORNING 134

Grant enters with a lot of energy.

GRANT

How do you feel about a little  
field trip Mrs. Andersson?

135 EXT HURON COUNTY ROAD -JANUARY 2006- MORNING 135

Grant drives Fiona down the road to their home. They pass the  
hollow. He notices it. Looks at her to see if there is any  
recognition. She vaguely seems to register something. Touches  
the glass of the window.

136 EXT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE -JANUARY 2005- MORNING 136

Grant leads Fiona to the door. She looks at it. Some  
recognition.

137 INT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE -JANUARY 2005- MORNING 137

Grant watches as Fiona makes her way around the house.  
Touching things, admiring pictures and objects. He watches  
her intently.

FIONA

They've kept it so like it was.

GRANT

Who has?

FIONA  
The people who live here.

138 EXT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE -JANUARY 2005- DAY

138

Fiona walks out the back door. Grant follows. She sees the skis propped up against the wall. She touches them gently, her eyes welling up with tears. She sinks down on the ground.

FIONA  
Everything...

Grant kneels down beside her. Takes her hand. She takes it back.

FIONA  
Everything just reminds me of him.

Grant searches her eyes which are staring off into space, right past him.

FIONA  
I wasn't enough I suppose.

GRANT  
Who?

She is silent.

GRANT  
Who Fiona? Who does everything remind you of?

She looks back at him.

FIONA  
I'd like to go now if you don't mind.

He sits with her. We pull away from them, sitting together on the back porch. She's a million miles away.

139 EXT COUNTY ROAD -JANUARY 2005- AFTERNOON

139

They drive past the hollow again. Fiona smiles ever so slightly. Looks at Grant. He smiles back at her, trying to ascertain whether or not she remembers.

FIONA  
Everything just reminds me of him.

He looks ahead. Defeated.

140 EXT MEADOWLAKE - COURTYARD-JANUARY 2005- DAY

140

Kristy has a smoke and wraps up a cell phone call. Grant comes out to join her.

GRANT

I think I want to ask you about the second floor. Just to know a bit more about it.

KRISTY

Well. It's for people who have really lost it.

GRANT

And what do they do? What happens after they've...lost it.

KRISTY

Some just sit. Some sit and cry. Some try to holler the house down. You don't really want to know. But...sometimes they get it back. You go in their rooms for a year and they don't know you from Adam. Then one day, it's "oh, hi, when are we going home?" All of a sudden they're absolutely back to normal again.

Grant looks vaguely hopeful.

KRISTY

But not for long. You think, wow, back to normal. And then they're gone again.

She snaps her fingers.

KRISTY

Like so.

Grant stares off. Tears in his eyes.

GRANT

Are you married? I haven't even asked you about yourself.

KRISTY

Technically I guess yeah. Got three kids. Their father's somewhere in Alberta I think. Makin it rich maybe. I wouldn't know.

GRANT  
How old are your kids?

KRISTY  
Ten, three and eight.

GRANT  
Must be a struggle.

KRISTY  
Oh, ya know. It knocks the wind out of ya every now and then. But you pick yourself back up like everyone else.

Grant looks at her, thinking.

GRANT  
I suppose... I suppose our lives must seem easy to you. We got through life without too much going wrong. What we have to suffer, now that we're old hardly counts I suppose. That's what you must think.

Kristy stares at him, shocked at the condescension in his tone. And thoroughly insulted by the sentiment. There is a lot of anger in her eyes. She half smiles, glaring.

KRISTY  
You don't know what I think. To tell you the truth I'd rather be the one who stayed than the one who left. I'll bet you weren't always the doggedly devoted husband. Am I right? When you said you thought maybe she was punishing you for something. I'll bet maybe you had something pretty specific in mind didn't you?

He looks at her for a moment.

KRISTY  
You see a lot in this job. You see the end of things, all day long. In my experience, at the end of things, it's almost always the men that think not too much went wrong. I wonder if your wife feels the same way.

Grant looks off into the distance.

GRANT  
I wonder that too.

KRISTY  
I'll bet you do.

He turns to look at her. Decides to confide in her, now that she seems to have lost all respect for him anyway.

GRANT

Do you remember the day we came in here? How badly I didn't want to let her go?

141 EXT COUNTY ROAD -FLASHBACK-JANUARY 2004- MORNING

141

We've seen the beginning of this scene before. Grant and Fiona drive in silence. "Harvest Moon" by Neil Young plays in the tape deck. Fiona spots something just off the road.

FIONA

Oh. Remember?

Grant looks and sees the conservation area where they saw the skunk lilies. Grant smiles at her. Looks ahead. It's all he can do to not turn the car around.

FIONA

You look surprised Grant.

GRANT

Not surprised. Just grateful. I'm grateful you can remember that.

FIONA

I'm not all gone Grant. I'm just going.

She leaves a pregnant pause. The scene continues.

FIONA

There are things I wish would go away but won't. Things we don't talk about.

Grant looks very unsettled. Fiona continues on. Sincere. No venom at all. Almost lightly.

FIONA

You never left me. You still made love to me in spite of disturbing demands elsewhere. You never stayed away from me a single night. There was no making up elaborate stories in order to spend a weekend in a tent on Manitoulin Island. You went easy on the dope and the drink. You continued to publish papers, make progress in your career. You never had any intention, so far as I could tell, of throwing up work and marriage and taking to the country to practice carpentry or keep bees. Thank you for that. That would have been ugly.

She means it. He is stunned.

FIONA

But all those sandals Grant. All those bare female toes.

CUT TO:

142 INT UNIVERSITY CLASS - 1970'S

142

GRANT'S MEMORY: We see glimpses of long hair, toes in sandals. A University class, full of young women looking up at us with adoring eyes.

FIONA (O.S.)

What could you do but be a part of the time you were a part of. All those pretty girls. It didn't seem like anyone was willing to be left out. And hey. You got in shape.

CUT BACK TO:



143 EXT COUNTY ROAD - JANUARY 2004 - MORNING

143

FIONA

You quit smoking even. A wife of twenty years knows that it isn't for *her*. Do you remember how hard I tried to get you to quit when we were first married. You felt so sick when you finally did it. But you kept to it. And I thought. "A big reward must be coming his way." But you seemed happier. Even though you were...away from me sometimes. You were easier to live with in many ways. I think you did alright. Compared to your colleagues. The ones who left their wives. And the women who wouldn't put up with it.

She gets wistful.

FIONA

I never quite understood those women to tell you the truth.

She loses her train of thought. Is silent for a moment.

FIONA

I think people are too demanding. Aren't they? People want to be in love every single day. What a liability.

Grant goes to say something. She interrupts him.

FIONA

And then that silly girl. That silly girl Veronica. Girls that age are always going around talking about killing themselves.

CUT TO:

144 INT 70'S CLASSROOM

144

GRANT'S MEMORY: of Veronica. Close on her face, looking into our eyes. Pain and anguish in her eyes.

FIONA (V.O.)  
 That was it for then. No more New  
 Year's or Christmas Invitations for  
 the Andersson's.

CUT BACK TO:

145 EXT MEADOWLAKE PARKING LOT JANUARY 2004 - MORNING 145

They pull into the parking lot.

FIONA  
 We moved out here. Without making  
 the mistake of confessing. You  
 promised me a new life. We moved  
 out here. And that's exactly what  
 you gave me.

She smiles fondly.

FIONA  
 How long ago was that?

GRANT  
 Twenty years.

Fiona shakes her head.

FIONA  
 Well that's shocking.

She smiles serenely.

FIONA  
 So you see. I'm going but I'm not  
 all gone.

Fiona goes to open the car door. Grant grabs her hand.

GRANT  
 Fiona.

FIONA  
 Yes dear.

GRANT  
 Don't go.

She pats his hand. Gives him a kiss.

FIONA  
 That's what is happening Grant.  
 It's happening right now.

She gets out of the car. Like a zombie he follows her. Takes her bags out of the trunk and follows her, blindly into the building.

145A OMITTED

145A

146 INT MEADOWLAKE CHECK IN AREA -JANUARY 2004- MORNING

146

Fiona approaches the front desk, Grant following behind, trying to keep up with her with all the bags.

GRANT

Fiona...

FIONA

(to receptionist)

I'm checking in today. My name is Fiona Andersson.

GRANT

Fiona let's come back another time.

The receptionist brings up a file.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes Mrs. Andersson. We have your room all ready for you.

FIONA

Perfect. Will you show me to it please?

RECEPTIONIST

Absolutely. We'll have our supervisor Mrs. Montpellier show you. Now you haven't taken the tour yet. Is that correct?

FIONA

Yes. That's correct.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll go fetch her. She's just in her office right now. But she's expecting you.

The Receptionist exits into the back office.

GRANT

Please Fiona. Not now. I can't go away from you like this.

Fiona smiles a little. Lets this sink in for a minute. Puts her hand tenderly on his face.

FIONA

You've been good to me Grant. We had nothing to tie us down Grant. You could have just driven away and forsaken me. But you didn't. And I thank you for that.

Over Fiona's face, looking sincerely up into Grant's we hear Grant, telling Kristy the rest of the story.

GRANT (O.S.)

And then we went to her room, and she asked me to make love to her there and then go. And so I did. I went. And I never really saw her again... Or she never really saw me I suppose.

147 EXT MEADOWLAKE -JANUARY 2005-DAY 147

Kristy watches Grant. Taken aback. She shakes her head. She stubs out her cigarette and walks away from him. Grant watches her go.

CUT TO:

147A INT MEADOWLAKE STAIRWELL - JANUARY 2005 - DAY 147A

We see Grant stand alone as Kristy walks away from him. Pull back to reveal Fiona, watching.

148 INT CONSERVATORY - FEBRUARY 2005-DAY 148

Grant reads to Fiona from Letters From Iceland. She is far off.

GRANT

*The desires of the heart are as  
crooked as corkscrews  
Not to be born is the best for man  
The second best is a formal order  
The dances pattern, dance while you  
can.*

Grant notices how far off Fiona is. Stops reading.

GRANT

Fiona?

She doesn't respond.

GRANT

Is there any way to let this go? Do you think?

Fiona smiles sadly. Strokes his hand.

FIONA

(weakly)

If I let it go, even for a minute,  
it'll only hit me harder when I  
bump into it again.

GRANT

Okay. Okay.

Grant grabs her hand. Kisses it.

He goes back to reading to her. She cries silently.

GRANT

*Dance, dance, for the figure is  
easy  
The tune is catching and will not  
stop  
Dance till the stars come down with  
the rafters  
Dance, dance, dance till you drop.*

149 INT MADELEINE'S OFFICE -FEBRUARY 2005 -DAY

149

Madeleine sits across from Grant, Fiona's file in front of her.

MADELEINE

The thing is, I'm sure you know, we don't do any prolonged bed care on the first floor. We do it temporarily if someone isn't feeling well, but if they get too weak to move around and be responsible we have to consider upstairs.

Grant thinks for a moment.

GRANT

Would you happen to have Aubrey's address?

MADELEINE

Excuse me?

GRANT

Aubrey and his wife. Do you know where they live?

150 INT BRIGHT HALLWAY- FEBURARY 2005 -LATE AFTERNOON 150

Grant watches Fiona walk away from him down the long corridor, bathed in that late afternoon light.

MARIAN (O.S.)

Fiona. Her name's Fiona huh? And what's yours? I don't think I ever was told that.

151 INT MARIAN'S KITCHEN - FEBRUARY 2005 - MORNING 151

Marian stares at Grant, inquisitively. GRANT looks down, feeling slightly defeated by her attitude.

GRANT

It's Grant.

She suddenly sticks her hand out across the table.

MARIAN

Hello Grant. I'm Marian.

He shakes her hand, tentatively.

MARIAN

So now we know each other's name, there's no point in not telling you straight out what I think. I don't know if he's still so stuck on seeing your - on seeing Fiona. Or not. I don't ask him and he's not telling me. But I don't feel like taking him back there in case it turns out to be more than that. I can't afford to risk it. I don't want him getting hard to handle. I've got my hands full with him as it is. I don't have any help. It's just me here. I'm it.

GRANT lowers his voice to a whisper.

GRANT

Did you ever consider - it *is* very hard for you - did you ever consider his going in there for good?

MARIAN doesn't seem to feel the need to lower her voice.

MARIAN

No. I'm keeping him right here.

GRANT

Well. That's very good and noble of you.

MARIAN

You think so? Noble is not what I'm thinking about.

GRANT

Still. It's not easy.

MARIAN

No it isn't. See, I don't have much of a choice. If I put him in there I don't have the money to pay for him unless I sell the house. The house is what we own outright. Otherwise I don't have anything in the way of resources. I get my pension next year, but even so I could not afford to keep him there and hang on to the house. And it means a lot to me, my house does.

GRANT

It's very nice.

MARIAN

Well, it's alright. I put a lot into it. Fixing it up and keeping it up.

GRANT

I'm sure you did. You do.

MARIAN

I don't want to lose it.



GRANT

No.

MARIAN

I'm not *going* to lose it.

GRANT

I see your point.

MARIAN

The company left us high and dry. Basically he got shoved out. It ended up with them saying he owed them money and when I tried to find out what was what he just went on saying it's none of my business. What I think is he was doing...well he was pretty stupid. But I'm not supposed to ask so I shut up. You've been married. You are married. You know how it is. And in the middle of all this we're supposed to go on this trip with these people and can't get out of it. And on the trip he takes sick from this virus you've never heard of and goes into a coma. So that pretty well gets *him* off the hook.

GRANT

Bad luck.

MARIAN

I don't mean exactly that he got sick on purpose. It just happened. He's not mad at me anymore and I'm not mad at him. It's just life.

GRANT

That's true.

MARIAN

You can't beat life.

She flicks her tongue in a cat's businesslike way across her top lip, getting the cookie crumbs.

MARIAN

I sound like I'm quite the philosopher don't I?

(MORE)

MARIAN (cont'd)  
They told me out there you used to  
be a university professor.

GRANT  
Quite a while ago.

MARIAN  
I'm not much of an intellectual.

GRANT  
I don't know how much I am either.

MARIAN  
But I know when my mind's made up.  
And it's made up. I'm not going to  
let go of the house. Which means  
I'm keeping him here and I don't  
want him getting it in his head he  
wants to move anyplace else. It was  
probably a mistake putting him in  
there so I could get away, but I  
wasn't going to get another chance,  
so I took it. So. Now I know  
better.

She shakes out another cigarette.

MARIAN  
You're thinking - there's a  
mercenary type of a person.

GRANT  
I'm not making judgements of that  
sort. It's your life.

MARIAN  
You bet it is.

Marian looks at him for a moment. Takes him in.

GRANT  
Did your husband - did Aubrey work  
in a hardware store in the summers  
when he was going to school?

MARIAN

I never heard about it. I wasn't raised here.

Grant smiles. He has lost.

GRANT

No. No I didn't think so.

152 INT MARIAN'S HOUSE HALLWAY -FEBRUARY 2005- MORNING 152

Marian opens the door for Grant. He shakes her hand.

GRANT

Thank you for your time Miriam.

She's suddenly sensitive. A bit vulnerable.

MARIAN

It's Marian.

She seems hurt. The door closes. MARIAN thinks for a moment. Then leans on the door.

MARIAN

(to herself)

What a jerk.

But that's not what she's thinking.

SCENE 153 OMITTED

SCENE 153 OMITTED

154 INT MARIAN'S HOUSE - FEBRUARY 2005-DAY 154

MARIAN sits down at her kitchen table, pensive. She glances at AUBREY's feet through the doorway. Stirs her coffee.

155 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -FEBRUARY 2005-EVENING 155

Grant presses play on the answering machine. He stands at the table with his head hung. As he hears the message, he turns his head slowly to look at the phone.

MARIAN (O.S.)

Hello, Grant. I hope I got the right person. I just thought of something.

(MORE)

MARIAN (O.S.) (cont'd)

There is a dance here in town at the Legion supposed to be for singles on Saturday night, and I am on the supper committee which means I can bring a free guest. So I wondered whether you would happen to be interested in that? Call me back when you get a chance. 281-3457.

The machine beeps and another one plays. This time, her voice has a little tremor of nerves, an affected nonchalance, a hurry to get through and a reluctance to let go.

MARIAN(O.S.)

I just realized I'd forgot to say who it was. Well you probably recognized the voice. The accent. It's Marian. I'm still not so used to these machines. And I wanted to say I realize you're not single and I don't mean it that way. I'm not either, but it doesn't hurt to get out once in a while. Anyway, now I've said all this I really hope it's you I'm talking to. It did sound like your voice. If you are interested you can call me and if you are not you don't need to bother. I just thought you might like the chance to get out. It's Marian speaking. I guess I already said that. Okay, then. Good-bye.

GRANT stares at the machine for a long time.

156 INT ANDERSSON'S KITCHEN -FEBRUARY 2005- EVENING 156

GRANT makes himself an omelette.

157 INT MARIAN'S HOUSE -FEBRUARY 2005- EVENING 157

Marian watches closely as Aubrey eats his dinner.

158 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM -FEBRUARY 2005-EVENING 158

GRANT eats his dinner, thinking.

159 INT MARIAN'S HOUSE -FEBRUARY 2005- EVENING 159

MARIAN does the dishes, thinking very hard about something. She goes to the phone. Looks at it a long time.



160 INT ANDERSSON'S COTTAGE -FEBRUARY 2005- NIGHT

160

GRANT does the dishes. Grant goes to put away the frying pan. He stares at it for a long time.

MARIAN (O.S.)

Grant. This is Marian. I was down in the basement putting the wash in the dryer and I heard the phone and when I got upstairs whoever it was had hung up. So I just thought I ought to say I was here. If it was you and if you are even home. Because I don't have a machine obviously, so you couldn't leave a message. So I just wanted. To let you know. Bye.

Grant picks up the phone.

GRANT

Hello Marian.

161 OMITTED

161 \*

162 OMITTED

162 \*

163 EXT MARIAN'S HOUSE - FEBRUARY 2005- EVENING

163 \*

Grant knocks on MARIAN's door. He is dressed in a suit with some roses in hand. MARIAN comes to the door a lot more vulnerable than when we first met her. She's dressed up a little as well.

GRANT

So.

MARIAN

There you are.

They look at each other. Taking stock of the situation.

GRANT

Here I am.

Marian motions him inside.

MARIAN

I'm just putting on the finishing touches if you get my meaning. Give me a minute. Have a seat in the kitchen if you want. I've got the neighbours daughter over to see to Aubrey.

Marian exits to the bathroom. Grant goes to the kitchen. Sits down. Looks around at the orderly details of this life. Monica, who we met earlier at Meadowlake, comes in and turns the kettle on, not seeing Grant. She talks to AUBREY, whose feet are again visible through the doorway.

MONICA

Just gimme a sec Mr. Bark. Your tea's a comin.

Grant stares at the back of her head, waiting for her to turn around.

GRANT

Hello there.

Badass turns around.

MONICA

HEY!!! How are ya? How's your long lost love?

GRANT smiles.

MONICA

What are you doing here?

MARIAN enters, all gussied up and ready to go.

MARIAN

Well. Let's be off. Free drinks  
only last til eight.

He forces a smile.

GRANT

You look lovely.

He gets up to leave. Monica has her jaw hanging open. MARIAN heads for the door. GRANT goes to follow her but Monica stops him. Monica stares at him, upset.

He looks at her, a little guilty and ashamed.

GRANT

Life is...complicated.

Monica shakes her head. He pats her comfotingly on the shoulder as he leaves the room.

164 INT MARIAN'S HOUSE - FEBRUARY 2005 - EVENING 164

Monica brings AUBREY his tea. She has tears in her eyes. At the sound of the car driving off, he turns his head mournfully to the window. He slowly shakes his head. Monica holds his hand, but looks away, embarrassed. Evening winter sunlight pours in sadly.

165 INT DANCE HALL -FEBRUARY 2005- NIGHT 165

MARIAN and GRANT dance. Grant has a far off look, not totally engaged.

FLASHBACK:

December 2003

GRANT'S POV of FIONA skiing beside him in the field behind their house. She looks at him, out of breath and laughing.

166 INT DANCE HALL -FEBRUARY 2005 NIGHT 166

Grant closes his eyes, trying to block out the image. Marian looks up at him. Direct.

MARIAN

What are you thinking about?



GRANT  
Oh. Not much. Skiing.

Marian watches him. Knowing that isn't all.

MARIAN  
Downhill?

GRANT  
Cross-country.

She shrugs.

MARIAN  
I'm more of a thrill seeker I  
guess.

She looks off, smiles to herself.

GRANT  
What are you thinking about?

MARIAN  
I'm thinking. You never know how  
these things are going to turn out.  
You almost know. But you can never  
be quite sure.

GRANT looks down at her. A little shocked at the direction  
his life is about to go in.

167 EXT WOODS - TIME TRANSITION 167

Close on a skunk lily covered in snow. We stay on it as the  
snow slowly melts off it, sun illuminates it, rain falls on  
it, wind blows it, and the snow falls again.

168 INT MARIAN'S BEDROOM -DECEMBER 2005 - EVENING 168

GRANT sits on the bed his thoughts still a million miles  
away.

FLASHBACK:

169 INT ANDERSSON'S LIVINGROOM - JANUARY 2003 169

Fiona peeks over a Norse Mythology book, lit by the fire,  
laughing.

170 INT MARIAN'S BEDROOM- DECEMBER 2005 - EVENING 170

MARIAN's bare legs pass through frame in the f.g. GRANT  
smiles up at her, distracted. He is in a thousand pieces.

171 EXT SKI LIFT - DECEMBER 2005 - MORNING

171

MARIAN and GRANT on the ski lift. Marian grabs Grant's hand.

GRANT

I'm thinking...that next time we go skiing It might make more sense to put Aubrey back into Meadowlake. Just for the day. Instead of leaving him at that teenager's house.

MARIAN

Monica.

GRANT

Sorry?

MARIAN

Monica. That's her name.

GRANT

Ah. Monica. What do you think?

MARIAN

I'm thinking that sometimes you just have to make a decision to be happy. You just decide. Things aren't ever what you hoped they'd be. Not ever. Not for anybody. The only thing that separates one kind of person from the other, is that there are some who stay angry about it, and there are some who accept what comes their way.

GRANT

Which kind of person are you?

MARIAN all of a sudden looks very vulnerable. All her hardness just melts away.

MARIAN

I was pretty damn mad. But right now...I'm looking at what came my way...and I think...maybe I could become the other kind of person.

Marian gets embarrassed by how much she has revealed and laughs it off.

MARIAN  
Quite the philosopher eh?

She takes a moment. Looks at him knowingly.

MARIAN  
I know what you're doing Grant. I know why you're here. I'm a little unpolished but I'm not stupid. It'd be easier on me if you could pretend a little. Pretend you're here for me. Not just to get Aubrey back to Fiona. Think you could do that for me?

Grant takes her hand.

MARIAN  
I'm just trying to make the decision to be happy. I could use a little help here.

Grant nods, moved. He takes her hand. They ride the rest of the way in silence. We see them from a distance, the ski lift taking them further and further up the hill and away from us.

172 INT MARIAN'S BEDROOM- DECEMBER 2005

172

Grant and Marian have sex. It is quite intense. They are both in their own worlds. Both, for their own reasons, on the verge of tears. When it is over, they fall back overcome. They are silent for a long while.

MARIAN  
(with tears streaming down her face)  
Now what were we talking about again?

Grant looks at her. They both laugh.

TITLE CARD:

**THE RETURN**

173 INT CHECK IN AREA

173

KRISTY

Hello there Mr. Andersson.

Madeleine peeks out.

MADELEINE

We didn't get to see you yesterday.

GRANT

No. I went skiing.

MADELEINE

Good for you to get away.

Grant nods.

174 INT FIONA'S ROOM - JANUARY 2006 - MORNING

174

GRANT knocks at the door, opens the door slowly. FIONA is still in bed, looking even paler, even skinnier. He sits beside her. She has her back to him, and slowly reaches out her fingers to touch one of Aubrey's drawings which is pasted on the wall.

175 INT MEADOWLAKE ELEVATOR AREA- JANUARY 2006 -MORNING

175

MADELEINE catches GRANT just as he is leaving.

MADELEINE

Mr. Andersson. As you can see, we're going to have to move Mrs. Andersson to the second floor quite soon. She hasn't been out of bed for the last few weeks and...

GRANT whirls around on her, screaming, tears flying out of his eyes.

GRANT

Yes! Yes! I'm quite aware of your policy! I'm more than aware of your fucking policies!

KRISTY watches him from behind the counter. A lot of empathy in her eyes. Frank, the play-by play guy for the Winnipeg Jets walks through the doors, escorted by an attendant.

FRANK

...and We're back in Meadowlake,  
going back to the second floor, and  
passing a man with his heart broken  
on the left, broken in a thousand  
pieces...

Grant stares at him for a moment and then leaves.

176

EXT MEADOWLAKE - JANUARY 2006-MORNING

176

Grant stands outside Meadowlake, staring at Eliza who is walking around the pond, being followed by her daughter who signs to her, trying to get her attention. She keeps looking back at him, irritated and confused. Finally she stops chasing her. Stands alone, weeping at the edge of the pond while Eliza hurries back into Meadowlake. Kristy appears beside him, smoking.

KRISTY

She was the only one in the family  
who bothered to learn sign  
language. Now she doesn't remember  
how, or maybe even who she is.

GRANT

Her daughter?

KRISTY

Yup. It's left her pretty stranded.  
Marooned.

Grant stares at the sight of the woman, alone, looking to where her mother disappeared.

KRISTY

I thought of you the other day. You  
know the billboard in front of the  
United Church in Brantford? They  
post different biblical type stuff.  
The other day it said "It's never  
too late to become what you might  
have been."

Grant laughs at the irony of this.

GRANT

That doesn't sound all that  
biblical.

KRISTY

Well. Maybe they're gettin creative  
on us.

Grant smiles at her. She gives him a little squeeze on the  
shoulder and leaves. It means the world to him. He stares out  
at the pond and thinks.

177 OMITTED

177 OMITTED

178 INT MARIAN'S HOUSE-FEBRUARY 2006- SUNSET 178

Marian's house is full of moving boxes. Grant stares out of  
Marian's kitchen window. She passes by with a box she has  
just packed. She pauses. She looks at him. She keeps going  
into the other room. He looks out the window.

179 INT MEADOWLAKE CORRIDOR - FEBRUARY 2006 - DAY 179

Kristy and Madeleine push Fiona in her bed, down the hall,  
Grant follows.

180 INT ELEVATOR - FEBRUARY 2006 - DAY 180

They are silent as the elevator takes them to the 2nd floor.

181 INT SECOND FLOOR -FEBRUARY 2006- DAY 181

The elevator doors open on a group of very far gone  
residents. They eat in silence. Someone drops a plate and it  
crashes on the floor. They push the stretcher past the group  
and into a room.

182 INT FIONA'S NEW ROOM -FEBRUARY 2006- DAY 182

They put the bed beside the window. Fiona stares outside.  
Grant watches her look out the window.

183 EXT MARIAN'S HOUSE -MARCH 2006- EARLY MORNING 183

Grant and Marian load the last of Marian's belongings into a  
moving truck. The moving truck drives off. And then, as  
though he is another box, they load Aubrey and his wheelchair  
into Grant's car. Marian gives him a kiss on the forehead.

MARIAN

I'll see you soon Aubrey.

184 EXT COUNTY ROAD -MARCH 2006- EARLY MORNING 184

Grant and Aubrey drive in silence. Aubrey looks straight ahead. He very slowly, almost ominously turns his head to look at Grant. Grant turns to make eye contact. They lock eyes for a moment. Then look away.

185 INT MEADOWLAKE CHECK IN AREA -MARCH 2006- MORNING 185

Kristy looks up as Grant wheels Aubrey in the door. Her jaw drops. She looks up at Grant, understanding what he's doing. She smiles at him. Grant looks at her and shrugs.

186 INT 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR -MARCH 2006- MORNING 186

Grant walks down the hallway. Kristy pushes Aubrey in his wheelchair towards Fiona's room. Grant takes a deep breath. They stop outside the door. Grant turns to Kristy and Aubrey.

GRANT

If you wouldn't mind...Could I have  
a moment alone before you come in?  
To explain things?

Kristy looks up at Grant with all the respect in the world. Aubrey nods.

Grant enters Fiona's room.

187 INT FIONA'S NEW ROOM - MARCH 2006-MORNING 187

Fiona is in her room but not in bed. She is sitting by the open window, wearing a seasonable but oddly short and bright dress. She has the Auden book in her lap. She looks up at Grant and smiles.

FIONA

Look at this beautiful book I  
found, it's about Iceland. You  
wouldn't think they'd leave  
valuable books lying around in the  
rooms. The people staying here are  
not necessarily honest. And I think  
they've got the clothes mixed up. I  
never wear yellow.

She runs her fingers over the book tenderly.

FIONA

I seem to remember you reading this  
to me. You were trying to make me  
feel better. You tried so hard.

(MORE)

FIONA (cont'd)  
 You're a lovely man you know. I'm a  
 very lucky woman.

GRANT  
 Fiona...

FIONA  
 You've been gone a long time. Are  
 we all checked out now?

Grant is very thrown. He doesn't know how to respond to all  
 this. Decides he shouldn't. He inhales and continues.

GRANT  
 Fiona, I've brought a surprise for  
 you. Do you remember Aubrey?

She stares at him for a moment, as if waves of wind have come  
 beating into her face. Into her face, into her head, pulling  
 everything to rags.

FIONA  
 Names elude me.

The look passes, as she retrieves, with an effort, some  
 bantering grace. She sets down the book carefully and stands  
 up. She lifts her arms to put them around him. He holds her,  
 astonished. Settles into the embrace. She pulls his earlobes.

FIONA  
 I'm happy to see you.

She smiles, smells his shirt.

FIONA  
 You could have just driven away.  
 Just driven away without a care in  
 the world and forsook me. Forsooken  
 me. Forsaken.

He keeps his face against her white hair, her pink scalp, her  
 sweetly shaped skull. With tears in his eyes he says:

GRANT  
 Not a chance.

Kristy opens the door slightly, and sees them embracing.  
 She's amazed. She looks back at Aubrey, offscreen. Only his  
 feet are visible through the doorway.

Fiona and Grant hold each other like they'll never let go.

We hear k.d. Lang's version of "Helpless."



188 EXT LAKE -DAY 188

We race backwards over ski tracks in the snow. They go on and on and on until they melt and dissolve into:

189 EXT PIER - 1961 -MORNING 189

GRANT'S MEMORY: Fiona at 18, looks at us. Smiling. Full of life. She turns away from us.

FADE TO WHITE.