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Away from Her

By Sarah Polley

1 EXT RUNDOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD - FEBRUARY 2005 1

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.

2 EXT PIER- 1961 - SUMMER - DAY 2

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.

2.

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.

2A.

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

3.

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?

4.

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 :

Ssshhhh.

He grabs her hand. Kisses it.

5.

GRANT :

What good is it to be the lime

burner's daughterLeft with no trace

As if not spoken to in the act of
love

As if wounded without the pleasure
of a scar

You touched yourBelly to my handsIn the dry air and saidI 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:

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.

6.

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.

6A.

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)

7.

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.

8.

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.

9.

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.
10.

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.

10A.

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

11.

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?

12.

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.
13.

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:

14.

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.

14A.

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

15.

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.

16.

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.

17.

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.

18.

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.

19.

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.

20.

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)

21.

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."

22.

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)

23.

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.

23A.

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

24.

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.

25.

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.

26.

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?

27.

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.

28.

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.

28A.

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)

29.

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.

30.

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.

31.

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.
32.

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.
32A.

MADELEINE :

Well, we understand this is really the hard part.

(MORE)

33.

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.

33A.

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.

34.

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?

35.

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.

36.

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.

37.

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.

38.

MADELEINE :

Well. You let us know if you need any help arranging things.
He shoots her a glare.

FIONA:

(politely)
Thank you Mrs. Montpellier. 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.

39.

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.

40.

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?

41.

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?

42.

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.

43.

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.

44.

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.

45.

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.

46.

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.

47.

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

48.

95 INT DINING AREA - FEBRUARY 2004-MORNING 95

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...

49.

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.

49A.

FIONA :

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

(MORE)

50.

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.

51.

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)

52.

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.

53.

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.

54.

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.

55.

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.

56.

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.

57.

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.

58.

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)

58A.

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)

59.

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?

60.

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.
61.

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.

62.

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)

63.

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.

64.

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)

65.

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.

66.

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.

67.

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.

68.

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. *

69-71.

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.

*

*

*

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*

*

*

*

GRANT :

Not such a fun place to visit eh?

*

*

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

MONICA :

Excuse me?

*

*

Nothing.

GRANT *

*

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.

*

*

71A.

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? *

71B.

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.

*
*
*
*

122 INT DINING AREA -JANUARY 2005- MORNING 122

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

71C.

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.

72.

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.

73.

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.

74.

126 INT MEADOWLAKE DINING AREA-JANUARY 2005- MORNING

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

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)

74A.

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 *

75.

131 OMITTED 131 *

76.

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.

77.

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?
78.

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.

79.

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.

80.

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.

80A.

Grant looks off into the distance.

GRANT :

I wonder that too.

KRISTY :

I'll bet you do.

81.

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.

82.

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:

83.

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.

84.

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.

84A.

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

85.

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.

86.

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.

87.

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.

88.

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.

89.

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.

90.

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)

91.

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?

92.

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)

93.

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.

93A.

94.

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.

95.

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.

96.

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?
97.

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.

98.

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.

99.

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 BEDRRROM- 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:

100.

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.

101.

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.

102.

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.

103.

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)

104.

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. Forsooaken 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."

105.

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.