

OLD FOLKS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MODERN MANSION - DAY

A sleek, Norman Jaffe-designed mansion stands against the backdrop of a crisp, clear sky. ELLA (28) pulls up to the driveway in a matte black Mustang, her one indulgence, a silent nod to the adrenaline-fueled nights of her gamer past. The engine purrs to a stop as she steps out, her heels clicking on the polished stone.

Ella strides up to the imposing front door, its steel-and-glass façade reflecting her determined expression. She raps her knuckles against the door, the sound echoing through the quiet morning.

ELLA
Gideon!?

She waits, glancing around, but the only response is the distant hum of the ocean. Frustrated, she knocks harder, then tries the keypad. ACCESS DENIED flashes in red.

ELLA (CONT'D)
That fucker...

With a swift, practiced motion, she overrides the keypad. The door CLICKS open with a mechanical whirr.

ELLA (CONT'D)
I'm coming in. I don't care if
you're dressed --

INT. STARR RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Ella steps into the dimly lit interior. Heavy curtains block out the daylight, casting the room in shadow. The space is a chaotic mess—clothes strewn across the floor, half-eaten meals abandoned in Tupperware containers, the stale air heavy with neglect.

Ella squints, trying to adjust to the darkness.

ELLA
Gideon?

She takes a cautious step forward, her voice louder now, almost urgent.

ELLA (CONT'D)
Gideon!?

A low, muffled groan emerges from beneath a pile of blankets on the couch.

GIDEON (FROM UNDER THE COVERS)

Ugh. What time is it?

ELLA

It's eleven.

(beat)

In the morning. Thursday.

(tongue-in-cheek)

In case you were wondering.

(beat)

Why'd you lock me out?

A hand slowly emerges from the mound of blankets, followed by GIDEON STARR (28). His once boyish charm is now buried under the weight of unwashed hair and a pallor that speaks of weeks spent indoors. His eyes, though weary, flicker with a trace of life as he struggles to sit up.

GIDEON (HOARSE)

My pills...

ELLA

What?

Gideon's voice cracks again, barely a whisper.

GIDEON

Pills... Kitchen table...

Ella moves toward the kitchen but pauses, scanning the room. She spots a remote on a cluttered coffee table and presses a button. The curtains glide open, flooding the room with sunlight. Gideon winces, groaning in protest.

Despite the disarray, the home's stunning architecture and sweeping ocean views are revealed. The mess feels almost out of place, like a wound on something once beautiful.

Ella finds the pills—a massive weekly organizer like those used by the elderly—and returns to Gideon.

ELLA

I loved your grandparents. They were like my family, too. But it's been three months since...

She gently hands Gideon the pill case. He takes it, his hands trembling slightly.

GIDEON

They raised me. They were MY
parents.

ELLA

I know...
(she wipes away his
tears)
What's that noise?

Ella's eyes dart around the room, searching for the source of
a faint, unsettling sound.

ELLA (CONT'D)

It sounds like.... Frogs!

Having located the source of the sound.

GIDEON

Leave it. That's my sound machine.

She puts it down.

ELLA

I remember this. It was in your
room when we were kids.

Ella looks around again.

GIDEON

Can you get me a glass of milk
please?

Ella walks over to the kitchen.

ELLA

G, things can't go on like this.
I'm serious.

GIDEON

Warm.

A look of exasperation.

She stops when she sees an assortment of dead bouquets of
flowers covering the kitchen table. She returns with the
milk, a blanket and picks up the remote. Turns on the TV.

ELLA

I can't keep checking up on you.
I'm running our company all alone.
Philippe keeps sniffing around your
office like a weasley dog.
(Beat)

(MORE)

ELLA (CONT'D)

Just do me a favor and get some kind of help, okay?

GIDEON

Yeah, okay.

ELLA

Good!

(grabs remote)

Now what do you want to watch?

Ella starts flipping through the channels, but stops when a commercial for a senior citizens home comes on --

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Do you want to party like you're 19, when you're 99?

ON SCREEN: A bunch of ELDERLY PEOPLE with terrible stage makeup do various activities; race wheelchairs, ballroom dance, play Chinese Checkers.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Then Shady Pines Senior Living is the place for you!

ELLA

They'll take care of you there.

Even bathe you.

(laughs)

You just have to wait fifty more years.

Gideon leans into the screen with interest.

ON SCREEN: STAFF give attentive care to the seniors.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...A state of the art facility that has been family owned and operated for over forty years, Shady Pines understands comfort.

An idea sparkles in Gideon's eyes.

PUSH IN on the screen, where TERRY (40's) stands with dozens of staff and seniors, in front of the facility.

TERRY

Join the Shady Pines family, and be sure your aging loved ones are taken care of.

INT. SHADY PINES SENIOR CENTER - OFFICE - DAYTIME

TERRY(40s, eternally frazzled) is standing on a chair installing a curtain where a door was recently removed.

There are piles of bills and his office is in general disarray. There are hand written cards taped up all over the office.

On the desk is a picture of Shady Pines in its heyday.

The phone on his desk RINGS.

TERRY
Stephanie.

Phone RINGS again.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Stephanie?

RINGS again.

TERRY CONT'D
Stephanie!

He peaks his head through the curtain. She is not at her desk. He practically falls off his chair as he grabs the phone just in time...

On the Phone:

TERRY
Shady Pines. Yes. This is Terry.
Hello Mr.. There are no more costs
to cut! Yes I understand. I
understand but if I could just.
Yes, I will sir. Thank you sir.

He hangs up the phone.

TERRY (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
And fuck you, sir.

EXT. SHADY PINES SENIOR HOME - DAY

Two ELDERLY GENTLEMAN sit at an outdoor table playing a serious game of chess.

A cab pulls up to the entrance.

INT. CAB

The cab driver looks around at the dilapidated building, the empty storefronts, the garbage strewn streets, and then looks back at Gideon...

CABBY

You sure this is the place?

Gideon nods.

EXT. SHADY PINES SENIOR HOME

The Gentleman look up from the game and watch in curiosity as Gideon gets out, donning a sweatpants & tie combo, trash bag in hand.

Gideon looks up at the shabby old SHADY PINES sign and exhales in relief.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY SHADY PINES- CONTINUOUS

Gideon SHUFFLES down the beige hallway in his slippers. Senior residents shuffle by in their slippers and walkers at the same pace. A HANDY MAN passes by carrying a door.

CUT TO:

INT. TERRY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gideon is led by STEPHANIE (50's, a cartoon of a secretary) and walks into Terry's office. She pays no attention to Gideon's mismatched appearance. She sees it all in the home.

STEPHANIE

Terry, a Mr...

She gesture to Gideon.

GIDEON

Starr.

STEPHANIE

Mr. Starr is here to see you.

TERRY

(To Stephanie)

Oh, you're back.

(To Gideon)

Welcome, Mr. Starr. How can I help you today?

Gideon enters and Terry motions for him to sit.

GIDEON

How soon can you take me?

Not really listening, Terry launches into "sell mode".

TERRY

Well, Shady Pines is a wonderful facility. Please sit. Really state of the art. We care for all our aging loved ones as if they are. We provide full time...

(Gideon's words register)

What did you say?

GIDEON

How soon can you take me?

TERRY

Mr. Starr. There is some mistake. Wait a minute...Am I on one of those candid camera shows?!

He looks around for the camera, fixes his hair. Gideon nods no.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Oh. Well.

(Composing himself)

I assumed you were here to look for one of your parents.

GIDEON

My parents died when I was a baby. My grandparents raised me. But they died, too.

Terry looks Gideon up and down and finally takes in his disheveled appearance.

TERRY

Oh.

Terry puts his hand on Gideon's shoulder.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Is there someone I can call for you? Maybe a friend?

GIDEON

I have a lot money.

There is a KNOCK at the curtain. A male Nurse, VANCE (30s) is at the curtain.

VANCE

(to Terry)

Sorry to interrupt, Terry, but there is an emergency.

(to Gideon)

Hey Man.

TERRY

Vance. This is Mr. Starr.

They shake hands and Vance, does a double take, tries to place Gideon's face.

Vance and Terry step outside the office.

CUT TO

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE TERRY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

TERRY

What is it now Vance?

VANCE

Terry, I guess some of the nurses are talking about walking out.

(Noticing..)

What happened to the door?

TERRY

Shit. Shit. Shit.

(About the door)

Termites.

VANCE

I knew things were bad and this place ain't exactly the Four Seasons but ... Termites!?

Terry, holding on by a thread, LEANS against the wall. Vance peers back behind the curtain into Terry's office.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Holy shit. Terry! That's Gideon Starr!

TERRY

Who's Gideon Starr, Vance?

VANCE

You know how I'm into all that AI shit. I've even got my app that I've been working on.

TERRY

Not the app again.

VANCE

Gideon Starr!

TERRY

So?

VANCE

He's like Forbes 30 under 30. He started that tech Augmented Reality company when he was like fifteen or something. One of the youngest billionaires!

At the mention of 'Billionaire', Terry sees a ray of hope.

TERRY

Excuse me, Vance.

Terry gives Vance a kiss on the forehead and turns back to his office.

Terry approaches Stephanie.

TERRY (CONT'D)

He still inside?

STEPHANIE

Yep.

TERRY

Did you offer him anything?

STEPHANIE

He wanted... warm milk.

Terry collects himself before opening the curtain and walking in.

INT. TERRY OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

Terry strides back around his desk, re-takes his seat.

TERRY

As I was saying. This is highly unusual.

GIDEON

(Quietly)

I have lots of money. I just need someone to take care of me for a little while.

Gideon reaches into his trash bag and pulls out wads of cash.

TERRY

Well that, Mr. Starr, we can absolutely provide.

He puts the wad on Terry's desk.

GIDEON

I want what I saw in the commercial.

TERRY

Oh you saw that? Is that how you chose us?

Gideon nods. Tears in his eyes.

TERRY (CONT'D)

The residents here need constant care. Some of them can't feed themselves, dress themselves. They can't perform simple daily tasks.

Gideon takes a sip of his warm milk. His fragile state more evident than ever.

GIDEON

That sounds good.

Terry, hesitates as he is about to go against his own interests...

TERRY

Mr. Starr are you sure this is the place for you? This is what you are looking for? These nurses have to bathe them sometimes.