

Tomorrow Morning

INT. NORMAN'S ROOM -- DAY

1

NORMAN (77) lies in a double bed. A thick green duvet cover is bunched over his legs. He wears a pair of blue polka-dot pajamas.

He has a pair of bushy grey eyebrows, part of which are magnified by a pair of thick, black rimmed glasses. His hair has greyed but it is still long and thick. His skin is worn, but still taut.

His eyes are fixed on a dull gold ring on a nightstand beside the bed. The ring has no pattern, nor does it hold any precious stones. Nonetheless, the ring is unmarked and well polished from wear.

Behind the ring is a framed photograph. A phone and cradle sit to the right of the picture frame.

There is a knock on a door offscreen. Norman flinches and leers at a wooden door across the room.

NORMAN

Do you want me to get up and open  
it for you? Come in! Smart ass.

The door is unlocked. It swings open to reveal STEVEN (34). Steven wears a faded blue shirt with a silver name tag pinned on his left breast. He wears black pants that are creased at the knees. He needs a haircut, and there are bags under his eyes. Nevertheless, he has a kind face.

STEVEN

I heard smart!

NORMAN

Oh, Christmas must have come early  
for me!

Steven walks over to Norman. His eyes squint as he smiles.

STEVEN

Are you still around?

NORMAN

I was wrong, you're just an ass.

STEVEN  
Kinder words than my ex-wife had.

Steven chuckles and looks around. He spots Norman's cane leaning against a dresser at the end of his bed.

STEVEN  
Well there's your... what's your  
cane doing all the way over there?

He retrieves the cane and strolls back to Norman, twirling it as he walks. Once he makes it back to Norman, he leans on it with both hands like a Vaudeville entertainer.

NORMAN  
I hoped I wouldn't need it today.

STEVEN  
Thought your arthritis would go on  
winter holidays?

NORMAN  
No.

Norman looks Steven in the eyes. His jaw is set.

Steven looks hurt.

Norman looks away guiltily.

Steven offers Norman his hand.

Norman continues to stare off before reluctantly giving Steven his arm.

Steven helps Norman to his feet.

STEVEN  
Up we go!

The two shuffle over to Norman's bathroom door.

Norman detaches himself from Steven's hold and studies him. For an instant, his lips twitch into something reminiscent of a smile. He shuffles into the bathroom and closes the door behind him.

Through a small window, snowflakes drift lazily in the wind. There is a blanket of snow on the ground.

A July calendar hangs on the wall. There are thick red crosses marking off the days until July 17th.

There is the sound of a toilet flushing and water being run. The bathroom door opens. Norman looks for Steven, but he is gone.

He walks over to the dresser. There are two unsealed prescription containers sitting on top of it. He selects some clothes from the dresser and dresses.

When he is finished dressing, he walks to the nightstand and pauses. His hand searches frantically across the top of it. He knocks the phone and cradle onto the floor, but pays them no mind.

He totters purposefully over to the front door. He opens it.

He looks over at the containers sitting on his dresser. He tears his eyes from the containers and walks out the door.

The framed photograph sits alone on the nightstand. It shows a young man in a suit holding a woman with a wedding dress in his arms. They are frozen in laughter.

There is a strip of newspaper text pinned in the bottom of the frame.

It reads:

Elizabeth Charlton: August 30, 1942 - July 17, 2017.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

2

Norman arrives at a pair of elevator doors.

He hesitates before shakily pressing a button depicting an arrow pointing downwards, between the doors.

With a ding, the elevator doors on the left open up. There is no one inside of the elevator.

Norman eyes the room nervously. His tongue pokes out from one corner of his lips and slides to the other corner.

His legs are rooted to the carpeted floor.

The elevator doors close on Norman. He stares at the doors before turning and walking across the hall to a door with a stairs icon.

He opens the door and carefully makes his way down the stairs. He holds his cane in his offhand while he grips the railing.

At the bottom of the stairs is an opening to a lounge. A decorated Christmas tree is set up in the corner of the room.

Around the tree, various residents sit in chairs listening to someone playing christmas songs on a piano.

Norman looks up and sees Steven crouched down in the lounge. He smiles and talks with a resident sitting in a chair.

Norman picks up the pace. His foot catches on the last stair. He trips and his arms reach out in front of him and catch the floor. His cane rattles to the floor beside him.

A hush falls over the lounge and everyone looks up. Steven runs over.

STEVEN

He's alright! Just drank a little too much eggnog.

The lounge resumes talking.

Steven reaches down and helps Norman to pick himself up and regain his balance. Once he is standing, Norman swats Steven's hands away, but Steven insistently helps him over to an unoccupied chair sitting nearby.

There is a picture framed on the wall behind the chair. It shows Steven smiling. At the bottom of the picture is a golden scrawl reading "Employee of the Month - November."

Once Norman has sat down, Steven begins to ask him if he is okay. Norman stares into Steven's eyes. Steven's voice becomes muffled and indiscernible.

NORMAN

Tell me you didn't do it.

Steven stops talking. He looks afraid.

STEVEN

Are you you sure you didn't...?

Steven tries to check Norman's head. Norman swats his hands away.

NORMAN

My ring. Did you take my-

STEVEN

Norman, I'm worried about you, and the residents, well, frankly, they're disturbed.

The residents chatter amongst themselves. No one is paying attention.

Steven takes a deep breath. He tries to sound stern, but he cannot hide his shame.

STEVEN

One more fall like that and I'll  
have to move you to a nursing home.  
My hands are tied, Norman. My  
hands are tied!

Steven turns and walks briskly away.

NORMAN

Steven!

He starts to stand up. He grimaces and falls back into the chair.

NORMAN (cont'd)

Steven!

INT. ASSISTED LIVING DINING HALL -- DAY

3

Norman sits at a table across from an empty chair. There is a plate with scraps of food and cutlery on it. Beside the plate there is an empty water glass with a few ice cubes melting at the bottom. In the middle of the table is an ornamental nutcracker.

At the tables around him, residents talk with each other.

PEGGI (74) comes over and sits in the chair across from him. She is lean and wiry.

Norman glares at her but says nothing. He looks down at the table.

PEGGI

I hope I'm not being a bother. I  
think Katherine and Nelly ate  
earlier today. Well, it means I  
get to learn some new faces, isn't  
that right?

Norman does not respond.

PEGGI

Course it could be that I'm the  
early one. Hardly seems like it,

(MORE)

PEGGI (cont'd)  
though. Look at how bright it is  
for the morning! This is  
breakfast, isn't it?

NORMAN  
Lunch.

PEGGI  
Hmm?

Norman does not say anything further.

Norman shifts uncomfortably in his chair. He places his right hand over his left hand and jerks his right hand away. He looks down at his bare left ring finger.

PEGGI (cont'd)  
You have no ring on your finger.  
Never married?

Norman slaps the table with his right hand. The ornamental nutcracker falls over.

NORMAN  
Mind your own damn business!

Peggi recoils and shrinks into her chair. She looks at the table.

Norman says nothing. He exhales, and his body loosens up. He puts the nutcracker back on its feet and drops his hands into his lap.

NORMAN (cont'd)  
I'm sorry. That was uncalled for.

There is a stretch of silence.

PEGGI  
I never married.

Norman looks at her.

PEGGI (cont'd)  
Sometimes I wish I had. Some days  
I lie in bed all morning and  
imagine there's someone in there  
with me, keeping me warm.

Beat. Norman concentrates on Peggi.

PEGGI (cont'd)

It's the memories I regret the most. I never got to make them. I look around at some of these widowed folks, just sitting there, staring off somewhere... watching the past. Oh, you should see their eyes.

Norman stares intently at Peggi.

PEGGI

What do they see? Is it their first kiss that pulls them? Their wedding day? Or is it another type of moment? Something... normal. The sort of thing they didn't notice as it happened. Lying peacefully together on the couch with their lover, with nothing in the world to be said. Listening to the radio, even if it's only because the noise made both of them comfortable. I wish I could be there with them. But I don't have the heart to ask them, to pull them away. There's nothing for us, here.

Norman looks touched before his face becomes pensive. He reaches across the table and takes Peggi's left hand in his own.

NORMAN

There are memories to be made, here, same as back there. Once upon a time, that first kiss, that wedding night, that was yesterday. Yesterday in 1960 was no different than yesterday is, today. You still have to live with it when you wake up the next morning, empty bed or not.

Peggi looks at Norman. Any signs of confusion have been wiped from her face. Then her eyebrows knit and her gaze falls to Norman's hand.

PEGGI

You have no ring. Did you never marry?

Norman looks at Peggi with envy and pity.

He gets up and turns to leave.

Peggi's hand clamps onto Norman's shoulder. Norman turns around to face Peggi.

Peggi looks frightened and desperate.

PEGGI (cont'd)  
 They're going to put me in a  
 nursing home. They think I'm not  
 listening but I've heard them  
 scheming. Don't let them put me  
 there!

Norman gently removes Peggi's hand from his shoulder. He holds it before letting it drop down.

NORMAN  
 Goodbye, love.

He turns and walks away.

INT. LOUNGE -- DAY

4

Norman navigates his way through the commotion of the lounge.

He looks up and sees Steven walk toward the elevators with an old woman.

Norman quickens his gait.

Just as the elevator doors are closing on Steven and the resident, Norman sticks his cane between the doors. They slide open.

Norman takes a deep breath and steps inside. The elevator doors close behind him.

Norman shuffles over to the elevator panel and presses the button for the third floor. He finds a spot in the corner and looks stiffly at the doors.

There is silence while the elevator moves to the second floor. With a ding, the doors open, and the old lady steps out. The doors close again. Norman continues to stare rigidly forward.

STEVEN  
 Norman, I...

Steven's voice chokes off. He composes himself.



STEVEN (cont'd)  
Say you had a problem you could  
only fix by hurting someone. And  
you could either choose a total  
stranger, or your closest friend.  
What would you do?

Norman does not react.

Steven looks down, and fumbles for something in his pant  
pocket. He pulls out the ring. He holds it out to Norman.

STEVEN (cont'd)  
I'll understand if you tell.

The elevator doors open.

Norman takes the ring from Steven. He turns it over with  
his fingers.

Steven walks toward the open doors.

NORMAN  
I'd ask.

Steven turns back around.

NORMAN (cont'd)  
I'd ask the friend if they would  
help me, even if it meant hurting  
themselves. If they said no...  
then they were never really my  
friend.

Norman holds the ring out to Steven.

NORMAN (cont'd)  
Take it.

Steven looks at Norman. He cannot speak. Norman nods to  
him.

Steven steps cautiously back to Norman and reaches for the  
ring. He pauses, then picks it gingerly out of Norman's  
hand. He stares at it.

Norman exits the elevator.

Somebody's footsteps thud on the carpeted floor from around  
the corner of the hallway.

A MAN with a silver name tag steps around the corner. The  
name tag reads: Mike -- Manager.

The elevator doors start to close. Steven looks up.

Norman plants his right foot on the floor in front of him, then wraps his left leg around his right shin. He trips and falls to the floor.

STEVEN

No!

Steven sticks his hand between the doors as they are about to seal shut. The doors begin to open.

Steven scrambles out through the narrow opening to help Norman up, but the manager has already seen Norman fall.

Steven crouches down beside Norman and looks desperately at him. Steven is on the verge of tears.

Norman places his hand on the side of Steven's head. He looks wistfully into Steven's eyes.

NORMAN

It's time I started thinking about tomorrow morning.

Steven puts his head to Norman's heart and trembles. Norman holds it there and closes his eyes. His chest rises and falls.

INT. NURSING HOME DINING HALL -- DAY

5

ONE MONTH LATER

Norman sits at a table across from an empty chair. He looks up at the dining hall's entrance.

There is no one there but a HOSTESS.

He returns his attention to his own table. Shakily, he uncaps two small containers and takes a pill from each.

He has no ring on his left hand.

He swallows each pill one at a time with water from a glass.

The hostess speaks at the dining hall's entrance.

HOSTESS

You're new here, huh? Good to meet you. Let's get you somewhere to sit. Right this way.

Norman looks up.

The hostess is walking with Peggi.

HOSTESS

There's an empty table for you over here.

Norman raises his hand and clears his throat to catch the hostess' attention.

NORMAN

There's room here.

The hostess shows Peggi to the empty seat across from Norman. Peggi sits down.

There is silence. Norman fumbles with his hands.

PEGGI

You aren't wearing a ring.

Norman looks like he is about to say something, but he stops himself.

He fumbles in his shirt pocket for something. He pulls out a scrap of paper and looks at it. A look of contentedness spreads across his face. He nods at the paper.

Norman puts the paper on the side of the table.

He reaches out and pulls Peggi's left hand onto the table with his own. He squeezes it lightly.

NORMAN

Neither are you.

The piece of paper sits beside their hands. It is a photograph. It shows a young man in a suit holding a woman with a wedding dress in his arms. They are frozen in laughter.

CUT TO BLACK

TITLE CARD: TOMORROW MORNING