

Escape

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. NURSING HOME COMMON AREA - DAY

It's almost lunchtime in the white, fluorescent lit common area. It's somehow both sterile and unkempt. Residents slowly shuffle towards the tables. DONOVAN (late teens) and his grandmother JUDITH (80s) sit across from each other.

DONOVAN

Are you serious?!

JUDITH

Oh sure. I was hauling my weight in albacore every season. Right off the coast of Alaska.

DONOVAN

That's wild.

An elderly man approaches Judith and leans close to her.

ELDERLY MAN

That's my walker.

He points at the walker stationed next to Judith's seat.

JUDITH

No it's not.

ELDERLY MAN

Yes it is. Give it back to me.

JUDITH

No. See the sticker here? The one with my name on it?

She points at the sticker on the walker. It says "Judith Reeves". The man scowls at her. He slouches away, almost aimlessly. She turns back to Donovan.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

I've had enough of this place.

DONOVAN

They'll be focusing on their lunch soon enough.

JUDITH

Mashed peas are the highlight of the day here.

A second elderly man starts walking towards the exit. He pushes the door but it won't budge. There is a keypad next to it. One of the nurses rushes towards him and guides him towards his seat.

NURSE

Now Mr. Aldritch, you know that's not safe. Come on, it's nearly lunchtime.

MR. ALDRITCH

I want to go out for lunch.

His words fall on deaf ears. Donovan turns his attention back to the conversation.

DONOVAN

So, you want to go over the plan again?

JUDITH

Donny, I don't want to talk about anything else.

Donovan smiles.

DONOVAN

Lets do it.

Fantasy MONTAGE comprised of QUICK CUTS

Donovan talks to the head nurse sitting at the nurse's station.

DONOVAN (V.O.)

I chat up the head nurse. You know, "How are the kids? Have you done something with your hair?" Really leaning into the polite grandson bit.

Donovan starts coughing hysterically, eventually keeling over and falling to the floor.

DONOVAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Then, it's showtime. All the nurses rush over to me. I'm the center of attention.

As all eyes are on Donovan, Judith quickly swaps her pills with those of the woman sitting next to her. She quickly downs the cup, full of yellow and red pills.

JUDITH

Meanwhile, I make sure I have  
some extra pep in my steps.

EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY

A black sedan rolls right up to the curb of the home and  
brakes abruptly.

DONOVAN

Right. So just about then my  
friend Caleb sets up-

INT. NURSING HOME COMMON AREA - DAY

The montage is interrupted by a nurse, Marcel (late 20's)  
bringing a tray of food and setting it in front of Judith. He  
is genuinely pleased to see she has company.

MARCEL

Here you go Judith. And who is  
this handsome young man?

JUDITH

Oh Marcel, this is my grandson,  
Donny.

If there was one person who made this place tolerable, she  
thought.

MARCEL

THE Donny? The one who got a 1520  
on his SATs?

JUDITH

Uh huh.

MARCEL

The one who writes you all those  
fancy letters?

JUDITH

Yes sir.

MARCEL

The one who sang at the-

DONOVAN

Yup, that's the one! It's great meeting you- Marcel was it? Listen, grandma's teaching me all the ancient family recipes, real important stuff here. You mind coming back a little later?

MARCEL

No problem at all. (Whispers) I snuck you an extra Jell-O Judith, I know you like the green ones.

JUDITH

Oh thank you, deary.

MARCEL

Always, sweetie.

Marcel moves on and sets a lunch tray next to Judith's neighbor, and then sets a cup full of yellow and red pills on it.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

There you go Mrs. Henderson.

She is too catatonic to respond. Marcel sets off to continue dispensing lunch trays to other residents.

DONOVAN

Anyway, where were we?

JUDITH

Your friend.

DONOVAN

Oh, right.

The MONTAGE resumes.

EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY

A black sedan rolls up right up to the curb of the home and brakes abruptly.

DONOVAN (V.O.)

So my friend Caleb sets up outside. Ready to make a clean break.

INT. NURSING HOME COMMON AREA - DAY

JUDITH (V.O.)

Then, when no one is looking I  
pull the fire alarm.

Judith uses her walker to get to the fire alarm, checks that the coast is clear, breaks the glass with the leg of the upturned walker and then pulls it.

EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Everyone is rushing outside, nurses and other staff are helping those who need assistance to move. Aside from that, it's hard to call the evacuation orderly.

DONOVAN (V.O.)

With all the commotion, no one  
would even notice us slipping  
into the car.

Donovan helps Judith into the car, jumps in after her and it speeds away before Donovan finishes closing the door.

JUDITH (V.O.)

Where would we go Donny?

DONOVAN (V.O.)

Where do you want to go?

JUDITH (V.O.)

Somewhere far from here.

INT. NURSING HOME COMMON AREA - DAY

The MONTAGE ends

DONOVAN

You got it! Well, what do you  
think of the plan?

JUDITH

It's the perfect crime.

DONOVAN

I take it you're an expert?

JUDITH

On that and a great many other  
things.

Donovan chuckles.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

When do you think we cou-

A woman, Sarah, (mid 40s) enters the room. She is wearing a navy skirt suit. She scans the room for a second before noticing Judith and Donovan, and raises her arm towards them.

SARAH

Donovan!

She approaches them.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late, I got hung up at work. Hello Meema!

She kisses Judith on both cheeks.

JUDITH

Hi Sarah.

If only she visited more. These days Judith sees her mostly when she picks up Donovan.

SARAH

Donovan honey we have to go, I'm double parked outside.

DONOVAN

Oh, uh, OK. Just give me a minute.

He turns to Judith.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

OK grandma. Looks like I have to go. But I really like making up these stories with you. We should do it again next time.

JUDITH

Stories...

There has been a misalignment of assumptions. Judith slouches in her chair as if half the air has left her body.

DONOVAN

Yeah. They're really fun. We really get into it, huh?

Judith forces a smile.

JUDITH

Mhmm. You've become quite the storyteller, Donovan.

(beat)

Will you come visit again next week?

She never calls him by his full name.

DONOVAN

Oh, I think I'm working next weekend. But maybe the one after that?

JUDITH

Of course. Looking forward to it. You run along now.

DONOVAN

OK grandma. See you next time.

He rises from his chair and kisses her on her forehead.

JUDITH

Love you.

He's already speed walking towards the door. He responds without looking back.

DONOVAN

You too!

Judith reaches under the table and produces a small medicine cup, full of yellow and red pills. While the lady sitting next to her isn't looking, she places the cup on her tray. She turns to her own lunch tray, opens the foil lid of her Jell-O cup, and starts digging in.

FADE OUT.