

INT. - COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

GREY sits at a cafe table, a small mug of herbal tea to his left, and a half-eaten slice of lemon poppy seed cake to his right. He is dressed in scrubs of that of a caretaker.

He looks up, spots a couple he appears to recognize, and waves them over with a smile.

The couple approach him, unamused.

GREY
Good morning.

The man, EARL, pulls out his pocket watch, looks to his sister, MAISIE, and then back to Grey, who is taking a sip of his drink.

EARL
(condescending)
It's 12:01.

Grey puts his drink back on the table. He lifts his left arm to examine his wrist watch.

GREY
(starting over)
Indeed it is. Good afternoon.

Earl and Maisie take their seats in two empty chairs across the table. Earl glances to the namepin on Grey's shirt that reads: Grey Willis - Woodwin Retirement Home.

GREY (CONT'D)
Right then. Earl, may I call you Earl?

EARL
(irritated)
Mr. Thompson is just fine.

GREY
(to Maisie)
And you are?

MAISIE
His sister. Maisie. Ms. Thompson to you.

GREY
Very well. I know we spoke briefly over the phone...but once again, my name is Grey.
(MORE)

GREY (CONT'D)
I am your grandmother's caretaker
at Woodin Retirement Home.

He smiles briefly to the couple, but they remain silent.

GREY (CONT'D)
(clearing his throat)
Mr. And Mrs. Thompson, I am sure
you have been informed of the
situation with your grandmother.

Earl nods skeptically, as he watches Grey take another shaky
sip from his drink.

GREY (CONT'D)
(cautious)
Your grandmother...

EARL
...Theresa, bless her soul.

GREY
Oh, Mr. Thompson, I am well aware
of what her name is. She has
claimed quite a title for herself
at the Woodwin Home.

EARL
(defensive)
I beg your pardon?

GREY
Which is why I requested to meet
with you today. Her behavior
recently has been awfully strange.

EARL
(unsettled)
Our ninety-eight year old
grandmother who can barely leave
her room?

GREY
Yes.

Earl and Maisie turn to look at each other, both with
questioning expressions.

GREY (CONT'D)
At first I thought she had fallen
ill.

Earl leans back in his chair. Maisie remains sitting upright.

MAISIE

Well, that's absurd. Grandmother hasn't gotten a cold in over fifteen years.

GREY

Indeed. She was negative for every possible sickness. I wondered if it was something mental. She is alone, after all.

EARL

So you think she's sad?

GREY

I *thought*...she seemed to lose interest in her hobbies. She stopped going to Tuesday Bingo night, quit our puzzle club at the Home.

Maisie turns to Earl, not convinced by Grey's words.

MAISIE

Puzzle club brings little enjoyment to the elderly. You should know that.

GREY

She said she wanted to "pursue something greater."

MAISIE

She never was very outgoing-

EARL

(defensive)

So she wants to broaden her purpose in life? Your point?

GREY

I supposed it was an end-of-life crisis. She started missing nightly check-ups and was caught wandering the halls in early morning hours.

MAISIE

Wandering?

GREY
Each week for a month, Monday,
Wednesday, and Friday night, she
would leave her room for hours at a
time.

Grey takes a nervous sip from his drink.

GREY (CONT'D)
I followed her one night...

Earl and Maisie sit up, enraged and guarded.

GREY (CONT'D)
(worried)
I supposed it was a memory issue.
It was for her own safety and
concern.

MAISIE
(angry)
And curiosity, it appears. Employee
malpractice can get you fired, Mr.
Grey.

GREY
(ignoring her)
Shall I show you what I found?

Grey hoists a black duffle bag from under his seat, placing
it directly in front of Earl and Maisie. His tea and cake
shake slightly on the table.

Grey unzips the bag, flipping it over to pour out dozens of
card decks and casino chips. Earl and Maisie stare blankly.

GREY (CONT'D)
I discovered she had been
disappearing to meet with half of
the other members at the Home.

Earl picks up a casino chip, inspecting it with a faceless
expression.

GREY (CONT'D)
They would pay an entrance fee,
enter the ballroom, play cards.
There was food provided, drinks.
All paid for by your grandmother,
who had been embezzling money from
the Home's charity box.

Earl slowly reaches over to Grey's mug, his face remaining stern as he takes a condescending sip, before putting the drink back.

GREY (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

She was very popular among the community of patients. Not so much the employees. But, an entrepreneur, nonetheless.

MAISIE

As she always has been.

Grey looks at the two, confused. It is clear he had been expecting more of a reaction.

GREY

You do realize that your grandmother is running an underground gambling operation in a senior living establishment?

EARL

(defensive)

I apologize, but I really don't see what the issue is here...

GREY

Are you familiar with the rule of the law, Mr. Thompson?

EARL

I believe that in the few years she has left, if my grandma wants to live illegally, she should be able to do so.

GREY

(angry)

Do you even hear yourself, Mr. Thompson?

EARL

I do, quite clearly. She never gave herself the satisfaction of rebelling. You said it yourself, she is alone.

MAISIE

If she wants to let go, then so be it!

GREY

And her childhood excuses this scandal?

EARL

(enraged)

God forbid an old woman wants to live out her missed teenage years in her nineties. What's she to lose?

GREY

She's ill with a gambling addiction!

Earl and Maisie, outraged by Grey's comments, stand up in the coffee shop. Surrounding customers turn to stare at the scene. Earl throws his hands up in the air.

EARL

And? This will be her last chance to experience the thrill of living before we sprinkle her ashes over a cliff or something!

MAISIE

Honestly, after all this time working with senior citizens, you'd think you'd have some sympathy for our situation.

EARL

She only has a few years left!

MAISIE

Can't we just let this one incident slide?

GREY

(yelling)

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson!

The entire coffee shop falls silent. Earl and Maisie return to a strict and respectful attitude, returning to their seats.

GREY (CONT'D)

(peacefully)

It is best, for the safety of your grandmother, and the Home, that we find an alternate solution for this situation. Perhaps we contact the police-

EARL
(leaning in)
Listen. We brush this under the rug, and Grandmother gets to live out the rest of her life happily. In debilitating debt.

GREY
(settled)
It's unethical.

MAISIE
To let a senile woman live to the height of her life before it's over?

GREY
I...

EARL
She deserves this. She wants this. Quite frankly, she *needs* this. It's her only life before she dies.

The two stare at Grey, pleadingly.

MAISIE
Mr. Grey, you are her caretaker. You know what she desires. Please.

A few short moments pass. Grey stands up and collects his belongings.

GREY
Fine. I'll stay quiet.

Earl and Maisie let out a breath of relief. Grey begins to exit, but pauses after a few feet. He turns back to Earl and Maisie.

GREY (CONT'D)
But if she gets caught, I won't be the one taking the blame, and this whole "last, dying wish" thing will be sent straight to the press.

EARL
Pardon?

GREY
Your excused, Mr. Thompson. Enjoy the rest of your evening.

Earl and Maisie turn to look at each other. Grey exits from the coffee shop.

END SCENE