

POSITIVE AGING IN HAPPY VALLEY

First Ten Pages

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FADE IN

EXT. MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY

HERMIONE ROHAN, Caucasian (mid 40s), talking on cell phone in the driveway of a house, struggles to pack away a portable, collapsible table into the back of a compact DOG GROOMING VAN.

"The Pooch Pimp", with various canine themed accoutrements, including signage - '*The Best Friend's Best Friend*' - is something to behold.

HERMIONE

It'll be painless, I promise.

She listens to the response, apprehension pains her face.

HERMIONE

No, it won't take long ... If you can just be there to lend support. Not sure I can handle her by myself...

She rolls her eyes, exasperated.

HERMIONE

No, she's not headed for the big kennel in the sky. See you then?

She terminates the call.

A final heave and the folded table settles in the van.

Hermione enters the van, turns to the house and farewells a happy CLIENT, a clone of her sculpted poodle that barks its appreciation for its (ridiculous) haute coiffure.

INT. CYNTHIA'S OLD LIVING ROOM - DAY

CYNTHIA BAKER (early-70s), casual elegance, eases into a lounge chair.

She rests a walking stick on the chair's arm and delicately raises her heavily bandaged left ankle on to a small ottoman.

No sooner does she settle, comes the SOUND (O.S.) of a key turning in a door.

CYNTHIA

In here.

A boy of about twelve, RYAN ambles up and gives Cynthia a kiss on the cheek.

She goes to embrace him - he shoves a flashing, LED lit Rubric's Cube in her face, causing a near heart attack.

He eases away to the large sofa and immerses himself in his flashing device.

Cynthia gathers her wits, shrugs philosophically.

She brightens with the appearance of Hermione, holding a tablet, and her husband MALACHY (50), a serene man who proffers a gentle smile before sitting next to Ryan.

CYNTHIA

Your sister still coming?

HERMIONE

Traffic on the 95 again, I guess.

She sniffs the air.

CYNTHIA

In the kitchen, just brewed. And cookies. Soda in the refrigerator for--

HERMIONE

Best he doesn't. While he's subdued.

Cynthia looks to the occupied Ryan, nods in empathy.

Hermione hands her tablet to Malachy, exits into the kitchen, leaves Cynthia to muse over the workings of her grandson.

Her reverie is disturbed with the CHIMES of the front door. She turns her head in that direction and waits.

It chimes again ... and again.

Malachy stands just as Hermione enters with a tray of coffees which she hastily places on the coffee table.

Hermione gestures to her mother and Malachy to remain seated, checks her watch and heads to the front door.

MADELEINE'S VOICE (O.S.)

Traffic on the --

HERMIONE (O.S.)

Where's your spare key?

MADELEINE'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Couldn't find it.

Hermione ushers her sister MADELEINE (early 40s) into the Lounge Room. A supercilious woman, she carries a few extra pounds than her sister.

HERMIONE
 Not with your car keys?

Madeleine displays her smart watch.

MADELEINE
 "Keyless", these days. Five G. Car,
 house, lights, security ...
 microwave ... godsend for the
 career woman.

HERMIONE
 Who can't find a key?

Madeleine dismisses this comment, water off a duck's back, goes to Cynthia, the obligatory kiss on the forehead.

MADELEINE
 Hi, Mom.

A casual nod to Malachy, she sits the other side of Ryan, ruffles his hair - without response - reaches over and pours herself a cup of coffee.

Hermione pours her mother a coffee.

CYNTHIA
 The kids not with you?

MADELEINE
 Left them with the neighbors.

HERMIONE
 Gavin --?

MADELEINE
 Having issues with our project
 manager. So can't stay long.

Hermione rolls her eyes at her sister's indifference.

Diffusing the tension, Cynthia mutters.

CYNTHIA
 Another time, maybe.

Madeleine sips her coffee just as Ryan's device issues a SHRILL noise, causing her nerves to rattle. She places her cup back on the tray.

MADELEINE

Well then, let's see what's on offer, shall we?

Unfazed by Madeleine's brusqueness, Hermione takes her tablet from Malachy and kneels alongside her mother without so much as a nod to her sister.

With considerable effort, Madeleine obliges and kneels on the other side of Cynthia.

Hermione gestures to the furniture around them.

HERMIONE

We know where the heart is, Mom.
But let's face it, we also know it
hasn't been easy without the love
of your life.

Cynthia feigns a smile.

HERMIONE

See what you think.

Hermione swipes open her device and taps.

Reluctantly, Cynthia turns her attention to the screen:

TABLET SCREEN:

A CORPORATE VIDEO PLAYS

MONTAGE OF SHOTS with accompanying CORPORATE V.O.

AERIAL - A huge complex covering twenty-five acres or more of lush, sub-tropical greenery.

EXTERIORS - of various dwelling types: a huge four level apartment block; smaller scale apartments on three sides of a glorious subtropical garden; detached townhouses laid out like a small village ...

CORPORATE (V.O.)

Welcome to The Happy Valley Retreat
for Positive Aging ... in the
utopia that is Miami ...

APARTMENT INTERIORS - spacious, sumptuous

CORPORATE (V.O.)
 Where we offer you old fashioned
 life choices ...

SWIMMING POOL – resort class, younger Retirees frolic

BOWLING GREEN – set amidst palm trees, mixed gender players,
 retired tragics of “The Bold and Beautiful”

ENZO’S RESTAURANT – silver service, views to lush gardens

CORPORATE (V.O.)
 With an emphasis on life ... And
 living out your senior years in
 consummate style ...

MEDICAL CENTRE – and a matinee handsome physician listens
 through his stethoscope on a Black male patient’s chest ...

CORPORATE (V.O.)
 In the company of true, caring
 professionals, with your well-being
 in mind ...

The CORPORATE (V.O.) FADES

INT. DOC MARTINI’S CONSULTING ROOM – DAY

DR VERN MARTINO (33), the physician in the video (known
 henceforth as Doc Martini), completes a chest examination of
 a senior patient, Black American DENZEL MOSE (mid-70s).

The Doc slings his stethoscope around his neck.

DOC MARTINI
 Faculties seem fine. Everything
 seems to be ticking over okay.

Denzel, still a reasonable male specimen, looks at his nether
 region with a smile.

DENZEL
 Everything?

DOC MARTINI
 Ah, yes. Been meaning to talk to
 you about that.

DENZEL
 I’m fine. I don’t need any.

DOC MARTINI
 Any --?

DENZEL

Little blue ones.

DOC MARTINI

I suspect they're the last things
you need.

DENZEL

It's just that when most guys reach
my age --

DOC MARTINI

I'm talking about your dalliances
with the doddering widow Dolmsky.

DENZEL

Who?

DOC MARTINI

I think you know who I mean.

DENZEL

Sorry, Doc. The ol' memory. You
know how it is.

DOC MARTINI

I'll change your meds if you like.
You are still taking them?

Denzel raises a hand to rebuff the suggestion.

DOC MARTINI

Right now I'm concerned about this
other patient's welfare.

DENZEL

You're the Doc.

DOC MARTINI

Exactly. So I must warn you that
having sexual relations with her
could have dire consequences.

DENZEL

Dire?

DOC MARTINI

I'll be frank with you Mister Mosé.
She has a condition.

Denzel looks for enlightenment.

DOC MARTINI

You know I can't reveal --

Denzel places a finger to his lips - "mom's the word".

Doc Martini relents and whispers.

DOC MARTINI

Mrs. Dolmsky has acute angina.

DENZEL

I wouldn't know. I've never ventured down that --

DOC MARTINI

Angina. Her heart. She has an obstruction to the coronary arteries.

DENZEL

Consequences?

DOC MARTINI

Dire. I suggest you stick to more passive pursuits.

EXT. BOWLING GREEN- DAY

Within its own manicured park setting in the Happy Valley Retreat, palm trees swaying in the gentle breeze.

FELIX SEBASTIAN (mid-70s), ginger hair, freckles, a modern day Van Johnson, in flamboyant bowls outfit, GRUNTS as he bends and delivers his bowl.

He stays with knees bent for an inordinate amount of time as the bowl approaches the kitty.

Denzel and, a third player in the group, HARRISON PAINTER (mid-70s), conservative, well-fed and pampered, start down the rink but stop in their tracks when Felix MOANS.

Instinctively, they turn back to their comrade ...

FELIX

There aren't any more passive pursuits.

I/E. ELECTRIC BUGGY/BOWLING GREEN - DAY

On a pathway that skirts the perimeter of the Bowling Green, an electric buggy with three people on board glides along with a gentle hum.

An apprehensive Cynthia in the back of the vehicle with Hermione, looks to the Bowling Green ...

BOWLING GREEN

Denzel and Harrison struggle to assist Felix from his bowed over position ...

ELECTRIC BUGGY

Cynthia flinches at the sight.

The driver of the buggy, ZEB GROBNAK (45), CEO of the facility, with a face that could pass for an overly-tanned young Tony Bennett, leans back to address his guests.

ZEB

With all this on your doorstep,
we'll have you tanned up like a
film star in no time.

Cynthia checks out Zeb's olive skin accentuating his pearly whites framed by botoxed lips.

ZEB

So there you have it. The Happy
Valley Retreat.

CYNTHIA

A nice enough place, I suppose. To
grow old.

ZEB

We like to think of it as positive
aging. And there's no better place
to do it than on our little cruise
ship sailing eternally placid
waters.

Hermione looks over at the activity on the Green, gently massages Cynthia's strapped left leg.

HERMIONE

They all seem to be sailing
smoothly.

BOWLING GREEN

A bowl lies on its side, blue insignia upward, second closest to the Jack. Denzel kicks it out of the way prompting a call from Felix.

FELIX

Whoa, there. You're forgettin' what color you are.

Denzel corrects himself, refers to the bowls.

DENZEL

All look alike to me.

And he wanders toward a yellow-insignia bowl way towards the back of the Rink. In the B.G. the buggy retreats along the path.

ZEB (V.O.)

Now for our pièce de résistance.

INT. ENZO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Silver service restaurant, a handful of elderly DINERS sway their heads to the music from a CROONER at a grand piano.

ARTHUR the Waiter clears plates from the table where Zeb hosts Cynthia and Hermione to luncheon.

ZEB

Obviously Enzo's attracts a tariff as I'm sure you will appreciate. But most of Happy Valley's community manage to enjoy its charms, particularly on those special occasions. Wedding anniversary ...

CYNTHIA

Widowed.

ZEB

... Bar mitzvahs.

In unison they look perplexed.

ZEB

For our 83 year olds.

In unison they subtly shake their heads.

ZEB

Birthdays. The occasional re-union.

HERMIONE/CYNTHIA

Re-union?

ZEB

You never know ... The occasional marriage, even.

Again both Cynthia and Hermione check out the painted-up, very senior citizens in attendance.

ZEB

Yes, we do have them.

Zeb raises his glass of red wine, prompting the two woman to do the same.

ZEB

And other milestones in life.

Cynthia stares at Hermione.

CYNTHIA

The only one left comes with a headstone.

Zeb gives a politician's smile and, assuming a deal done, sips his wine.

EXT. CYNTHIA'S HOUSE - DAY

A REALTOR erects a 'FOR SALE' sign on the front lawn.

INT. CYNTHIA'S (NEW) APARTMENT - DAY

A short entry hall leads on to a flight of stairs, equipped with an elevator chair.

WALK-IN CLOSET - UPSTAIRS

Hermione hangs a bathrobe in a walk-in closet. She looks through a door into the adjoining

BATHROOM

Very spacious, first class in every respect. Mobility bars strategically placed to assist the elderly.

LIVING ROOM - GROUND LEVEL

In close proximity to the stairs, a sumptuous room furnished with many of Cynthia's own possessions.

Cynthia, in jeans and casual top, stands with her back to the window, alongside a business suited Madeleine whose restless body movements betray a desire to be elsewhere.

Hermione joyrides down in the elevator chair.

She jumps off at the bottom, looking like a kid at a fair ground.

She saunters into the Living Room.

HERMIONE
Enough fun for one day.

She looks uneasily at her sister, addresses her mother.

HERMIONE
Perhaps we'll leave you to settle
in, okay?

MADELEINE
You okay with that, mom?

A simple, *fait accompli* shrug from Cynthia.

Hermione hugs her mother sincerely.

Madeleine steps forward and gives her mother a peck on the cheek.

MADELEINE
It'll be a load lifted.

Hermione gives Madeleine a scathing glare.

MADELEINE
From your leg.

Cynthia, slight limp, sees her daughters to the front door.

On their departure, she ventures toward the stairway elevator chair. She looks up at the landing and decides on the chair.

CYNTHIA
A load lifted, indeed.

She fiddles with the controls and slowly the chair starts its ascent.

Halfway up, and for no apparent reason, it stops and slowly descends.

Cynthia fiddles frantically with the controls and, like a scene from a silent movie, it suddenly ascends again at high speed, stops abruptly halfway up, jolting Cynthia's head.

She looks back down the stairs, she looks up the stairs, seemingly caught in limbo.