

POSITIVE AGING IN HAPPY VALLEY

Written by

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FADE IN

EXT. HERMIONE'S DOG GROOMING VAN - DAY

HERMIONE ROHAN (mid 40s), talking on cell phone in the driveway of a house, struggles to pack away a portable table into the back of a compact dog grooming van --

"The Pooch Pimp", not quite as severe as Harry's "Mutt Cutts" van in *Dumb and Dumber*, but, with various canine themed accoutrements, including a fur covered aerial rising from the back of the roof, still something to behold.

HERMIONE

It'll be painless, I promise.

She listens to the response, apprehension pains her face.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

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

She holds the phone from her ear - she's heard it all before.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

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

She terminates the call, a final heave against the folded table and it settles in the van, dislodging a small plastic container of dog shampoo which splatters on the driveway.

She grabs a ragged towel and conscientiously cleans up as best she can.

She hastily rescues the container, hops in the van, reverses on to the roadway, drives off, leaving a slimy tire tread pattern trailing behind.

INT. CYNTHIA'S HOUSE - LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

ANOTHER DAY:

CYNTHIA BAKER (70), a touch of easy elegance about her, eases into a lounge chair.

She rests a walking stick on the 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 eleven, RYAN, a modern, LED lit Futuro Rubric's Cube in hand, ambles up and gives Cynthia a kiss on the cheek.

When she goes to embrace him, he eases himself away to the large sofa and immerses himself in his flashing device.

Cynthia shrugs philosophically but doesn't dwell. Instead she perks herself up with the appearance of Hermione and her husband MALACHY (50), a quiet, serene man who proffers a gentle smile before sitting next to Ryan.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Thought perhaps your sister might be early.

HERMIONE

Yeah, well.

She sniffs the air.

CYNTHIA

In the kitchen, just brewed. And cookies.

(indicates Ryan)

Soda in the refrigerator.

HERMIONE

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

Hermione hands her i-Pad to Malachy, exits into the kitchen leaving Cynthia to muse over the workings of her young grandson.

But 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.

Gesturing to her mother and Malachy to remain seated, Hermione heads to the front door, Ryan all the while oblivious to proceedings.

HERMIONE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Where's your spare key?

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

Hermione ushers her sister MADELEINE (early 40s), an overbearing woman, into the Lounge Room.

HERMIONE
 Not with your car keys?

MADELEINE
 (holds up her smart phone)
 "Keyless", these days. Five G. Car,
 house, lights, security, baby-
 sitters... all linked. We're well-
 connected.

HERMIONE
 Well connected?

MADELEINE
 Does everything for the career
 woman.

HERMIONE
 Except find a simple house key?

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

MADELEINE
 Hi, Mom.

She sits the other side of Ryan, ruffles his hair without
 response.

Seeing the coffee, she reaches over and pours herself a cup.

Hermione pours her mother a coffee.

CYNTHIA
 The kids not with you?

MADELEINE
 Left them with the neighbors.

HERMIONE
 Franco --?

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

Hermione rolls her eyes at her sister's indifference.

Sensing the tension between her daughters, Cynthia mutters.

CYNTHIA
Another time, maybe.

Madeleine gulps down her coffee, places the cup back on the tray.

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

Unfazed, Hermione checks Cynthia's coffee.

HERMIONE
More coffee?

She's had sufficient.

Reassured, Hermione takes her i-Pad from Malachy and kneels alongside her mother without so much as a nod to her sister.

With considerable effort, Madeleine, with her few extra pounds, obliges and kneels on the other side of Cynthia.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)
Let's face it, Mom. Living alone this past year can't have been comfortable. And here you'll still have your independence. See what you think.

She swipes open her device and:

TAPS IN A CORPORATE VIDEO AND PLAYS:

Various images appear...

MONTAGE OF SHOTS with accompanying CORPORATE V.O. :

EXTERIORS – of various dwelling types: a huge four level apartment block; smaller scale apartments on three sides of a glorious subtropical garden; detached homes; all set amidst an expansive subtropical enclave.

CORPORATE (V.O.)
Welcome to The Happy Valley Retreat
for Positive Aging ...

APARTMENT INTERIORS – spacious, sumptuous

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

SWIMMING POOL – resort class, younger Seniors frolic

BOWLING GREEN – set amidst palm trees, mixed gender players,
 retired stars 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 patient’s back ...

CORPORATE (V.O.)
 In the company of true, caring
 professionals ...

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, DENZEL McCALLUM (mid-70s)

He slings his stethoscope around his neck.

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

Denzel 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 widow Murphy.

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 (CONT'D)
Right now I'm concerned about
another patient's welfare.

DENZEL
You're the Doc.

DOC MARTINI
Exactly. So let's talk about Mrs.
Murphy. Having sexual relations
with her could have dire
consequences.

DENZEL
Dire?

DOC MARTINI
I'll be frank with you Mister
McCallum. She has a condition.

Denzel looks for enlightenment.

DOC MARTINI (CONT'D)
 You know I can't reveal --

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

Doc Martini relents and whispers

DOC MARTINI (CONT'D)
 Mrs. Murphy has acute angina.

DENZEL
 I wouldn't know. I've never
 ventured that far.

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 park setting in the Happy Valley Retreat, palm trees swaying etc.

At one end of a lawn rink, Denzel with another couple guys (both mid-70s):

HARRISON, conservative, well-fed and pampered, and

ABE, of African ancestry, with short-cropped graying salt'n'pepper hair in more flamboyant bowls outfit.

Abe 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 Harrison start down the rink, but stop in their tracks when Abe moans. Instinctively, they turn and assist him up from his bowed over position.

ABE
 There aren't any "more passive
 pursuits"!

I/E. ELECTRIC BUGGY - 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.

Hermione holds the hand of an apprehensive Cynthia in the back of the vehicle driven by ZEB GROBNAK (45), CEO of the facility.

With a face that could pass for an overly-tanned young Tony Bennett, Zeb 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 (CONT'D)

So there you have it. The Happy
Valley Village Retreat. We like to
think of it as a cruise ship on
eternally placid waters.

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.

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

HERMIONE

Good rehab therapy.

CYNTHIA

I'll think about it.

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 Abe.

ABE

Whoa, man. You forgettin' what
color you are?

Denzel corrects himself, refers to the bowls.

DENZEL

All look alike to me.

And he wanders toward a yellow bowl way towards the back of
the Rink and catches but a glimpse of the buggy heading away
along the path.

HERMIONE (V.O.)

They look like gentlemen.

CYNTHIA (V.O.)

I said I'll think about it.

INT. ENZO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The Retreat's silver service restaurant. 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 guests
manage to enjoy its charms on the
odd occasion.

Both Cynthia and Hermione assess the jewelry and other
accoutrements of the handful of diners.

ZEB (CONT'D)

There are some, of course, who
simply cannot get enough. But
usually it's the venue of choice
for those special occasions.
Birthday. Anniversary.

CYNTHIA

Widowed.

ZEB

Bar mitzvahs.

In unison they look perplexed.

ZEB (CONT'D)

For our 83 year olds.

In unison they subtly shake their heads.

ZEB (CONT'D)
The occasional re-union.

HERMIONE/CYNTHIA
Re-union?

ZEB
You never know.

Zeb looks willingly at his two guests but with no response he politely clears his throat.

ZEB (CONT'D)
The occasional marriage.

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

ZEB (CONT'D)
Yes, we do have them.

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

ZEB (CONT'D)
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 raises his glass.

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 elevator chair.

WALK-IN CLOSET - UPSTAIRS:

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

BATHROOM:

Very spacious, sparkling tiles over walls and floor, first class in every respect. Various chromed/stainless steel 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 the elevator chair, saunters in.

HERMIONE

Done.

She looks uneasily at her sister, addresses her mother.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

We'll leave you to settle in, okay?

MADELEINE

You okay with that, mom?

Hermione hugs her mother sincerely.

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

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

It'll be a load lifted.

Hermione gives Madeleine a scathing glare.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

From your leg.

Cynthia sees her daughters to the front door.

On their departure, Cynthia approaches the stairway elevator chair. She looks up at the landing and cautiously ascends the stairs by foot, favoring her left ankle.

CYNTHIA

A load lifted, indeed.

At the landing she gathers her breath, looks back down at the elevator chair, as if she's now caught in purgatory.