

It's a funny thing, dementia. Some things are hard to remember, others too painful to forget.

With populations in the West rapidly aging, there's a growing phenomenon in our midst, discussion of which was often considered taboo – until now. *Positive Aging in Happy Valley* transcends the genre with its blithe treatment of the issue of dementia – time for a laugh at what, for many, might prove to be our kismet.

Logline: *When an elderly widow, newly arrived in a retirement facility, encounters her long forsaken true love, she confronts head-on the complications of his early onset dementia and finally wins back his heart.*

When seventy-something widow Cynthia Baker transitions to the sprawling Happy Valley Retreat for Positive Aging in Miami, the trepidation accompanying her sea-change is alleviated when she hits it off with the affable Felix Sebastian.

But the budding relationship is tested when she encounters a ghost from somewhere back in her long-ago – Denzel Mosé, her rare black pearl. Not good karma, for way back then a heart was surely broken.

Suspecting serious history, Felix takes a back seat, his own friendship with Denzel now seemingly tenuous.

Suppressing memories of the past, Cynthia tries unsuccessfully to ease back into Denzel's life. Inconsolable, she seeks comfort from one of her daughters (and a few bottles of wine) and reveals her whirlwind romance with Denzel in the 1970s – aborted under pressure from racially bigoted parents – only to endure an eventual marriage of convenience to another whom she didn't really love.

It's Denzel she truly loved. Still loves. And, damn it, she's going to win him back.

When offered an olive branch, Denzel concedes there's no harm resurrecting some of their youthful rebellious times and before you know it, the seniors have consummated their renewed accord (yes, 'research' confirms, it does happen). Young at heart again. An item again?

Freshening up in his bathroom after their escapade, Cynthia notices a post-it sticker: "take meds". Curiosity gets the better of her and she finds in his medicine cabinet an array of restricted prescription medications ... but good breeding prevents her probing further.

As a coda to their afternoon delight, they commit to dinner that night.

Cynthia waits expectantly for her date – but he's a no-show. A case of crossed wires perhaps? Unable to contact him, she fronts the restaurant, where she

encounters Felix who suspects it's more a case of "wires no longer connected" – seems it's not the first time Denzel's commitments have gone awry.

Serious soul searching ensues, and when Cynthia, biting the bullet, declares her undying love for him, despite his shortcomings, a nerve is struck and Denzel's own true feelings for her are at last re-kindled. While Cynthia celebrates this renaissance with her two daughters, Denzel heads off to join Felix et al for golf – but unfortunately, not only does his mind wander, so too does his driving, and following a raft of traffic violations, he ends up in a police cell awaiting bail.

And while the cops just want Denzel off the road, Cynthia now has real concerns about his mental disposition.

Convinced it's more than just forgetfulness, Cynthia approaches Happy Valley's resident physician, Doc Martini, and presents Denzel's symptoms as her own. He may be Botox-ed to the max, but the Doc is no-one's fool – while it is conceded that the symptoms indicate the early onset of dementia, only Denzel's immediate family can legally be privy to his medical info.

Only one course of action then! Revisiting the site where, in 1972, Cynthia rebuffed Denzel's marriage proposal, she now proposes to him. With his broken heart now assuaged, he accepts.

However, following another driving misadventure, this time with Felix in preparation for the wedding, Denzel again finds himself in lock-up – with his best man. Cynthia pleads their case. There's an ultimatum – keep them off the road or else! – and the wayward seniors are released to attend to a more important agenda ...

... the wedding in the garden expanse of the Happy Valley Retreat. All goes as well as could be expected. But with the newlyweds set to embark on a Caribbean cruise (bearing in mind this is fiction, given the current covid climate) Denzel suffers a big-time relapse, the cruise ship sailing without them.

Thus, is their Kismet.

Cynthia and the love-of-her-life Denzel see out their days together, until death do them part ... sailing eternally placid waters on the "little cruise ship" that is the Happy Valley Retreat for Positive Aging.

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