

OLD FLAMES

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. NURSING HOME - RICHARD'S ROOM - NIGHT

RICHARD (late seventies), a man with close-cropped hair and distant, clouded eyes, sits in an armchair between his bed and the window. It's a nice chair, for a nursing home; the window is ajar and the curtains waft gently as he stares at nothing in particular; he's blind.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I've always said that I wouldn't change a thing about my life. Of course, that's just a thing people say--it's easier than admitting the truth, isn't it?

THROUGH THE WINDOW

LIGHTS FLICK ON in the window of a room across the courtyard.

RICHARD (V.O.)

There are far too many things we would change, if we could. Places we wouldn't go. Things we would force ourselves to say.

BY THE CUPBOARD

Richard's WALKING CANE leans; it's for vision, not stability. A MILITARY MEDAL sits on the table.

RICHARD (V.O.)

There's nothing much for it. Easier to just say you have no regrets.

BY THE WINDOW

Richard's eyes flutter shut.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Especially when all you have is time to look back on them.

THE DOOR

A quick rapping. Richard jumps.

RICHARD

Come in?

A NURSE bursts in, completely frazzled.

NURSE

The new patient--she's having a
meltdown.

Richard's face sets with understanding.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSING HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The nurse stops outside of Angie's door and begins pulling
out keys to unlock it.

NURSE

We're here.

NAMEPLATE BY THE DOOR

It reads "Angeline LaBouf." Below it, a series of dots--
Braille. Richard absently reaches up and runs his fingertips
over it.

RICHARD

Yes.

(beat)

You're certain this is a good idea?
I mean, I've never met the woman,
there's no way of knowing how she's
going to...

The nurse finishes unlocking the door, but her hands still.

NURSE

(beat)

Well--no. But at this point, she's
worked herself into such a fit,
we're worried that...well, you
always seem to be a very calming
presence.

RICHARD

I certainly hope so.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSING HOME - ANGIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Richard steps in, cane ahead of him.

RICHARD

Excuse me, might I come in?

ANGIE (O.S.)
 (playfully)
 Well, *hello* there, sailor.

BY THE BED.

ANGIE stands by the window, holding the curtains. Her hair is frazzled, her gown is crumpled, but her grin is sincere.

RICHARD
 Sorry to bother you, but perhaps
 you can help me--I'm looking for a
 lovely lady named Angeline?

ANGIE
 Why, I do believe you must be
 looking at one this very moment.

Richard walks towards a chair; he knows the layout of this room reasonably well, given that they're all the same. Angie remains by the window.

RICHARD
 Well, isn't that convenient. Mind
 if I have a sit-down?

ANGIE
 (wryly)
 If you must.

Her expression turns sour; she looks warily in the direction of the door. Richard, for obvious reasons, doesn't notice.

RICHARD
 We haven't met; my name is--

ANGIE
 (interrupting)
 How did you get in here?

RICHARD
 What?

Angie crosses to the door, leaning on things on her way, resulting in a series of concerning scraping noises.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Angeline? Are you alright?

ANGIE
 How did you get in? The door was
 locked--

RICHARD

You...must Have unlocked it.

She turns the deadbolt. Richard tilts his head up slightly at the sound.

ANGIE

(beat)

Right. Yes, that...sorry, I forgot. I'm all scrambled, these *awful* folks came in here earlier and *attacked* me--

RICHARD

Attacked you?

ANGIE

Yes, they broke in here and tried to drug me, tried to hold me down, but I scared them off--you shoulda been here, honey. They wouldn't have been so bold if a big, strong, soldier like you had been in here.

Richard laughs faintly, a hand coming up to touch the scars on his cheekbones.

RICHARD

That's certainly kind of you.

Angie crosses laboriously over to the bed, sitting on it across from Richard.

ANGIE

Don't you deserve kindness?

RICHARD

Well, I...suppose we all do.

(beat)

I'm sorry, I meant to introduce myself; my name's Richard.

ANGIE

George, don't be silly. You're not fooling me with all this makeup.

She touches the scars on his face, causing him to start.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I wish you didn't have to go away.

RICHARD

...Go away?

ANGIE

Every time they postpone your departure, I praise God--I know, that's so selfish of me, to celebrate when there are so many boys dying, but they're not you.

As she speaks, Richard looks away, this striking a chord with him.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

They're not my Georgie.

Richard inhales sharply.

RICHARD

I'm sorry, I'm not...

ANGIE

(playfully)

Don't play coy with me, I already caught you, silly boy.

He contemplates for a moment: to insist on his identity being mistaken would upset her. To indulge her delusions could hurt her.

She just needs to sleep.

RICHARD

(quietly)

You certainly did.

ANGIE

You see! So, then, if you're caught, maybe you don't need to...

She trails off, and her gaze goes vacant. Richard waits, trying to discern the meaning of the silence, but it continues too long.

RICHARD

Actually, I've decided not to ship out.

ANGIE

What do you mean?

RICHARD

Special case. I can stay with you--if you want.

ANGIE

Oh, Georgie, you know I do--

RICHARD

Then I will. Won't you lie down for me, darling? I need to take care of the details, but the sooner you go to sleep, the sooner I can be back with you.

ANGIE

(excitedly)

You expect me to sleep, after--?

RICHARD

Yes.

She places her hand is on his.

He takes it, brings it to his lips softly.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I've always loved you, darling.
I'll still love you when you awake.

CUT TO:

INT. - NURSING HOME - MOMENTS LATER

The nurse is standing just outside when the door opens again. Richard holds a finger to his lips as he carefully shuts the door.

NURSE

How did it go?

RICHARD

If you give her a few minutes, she should be asleep.

The nurse smiles, relieved, and seemingly oblivious to Richard's pained expression.

NURSE

That's wonderful--thank you so much. I don't know how you did it--

RICHARD

I don't know if I can help with her again.

NURSE

What?

RICHARD

She...she thinks I'm someone else.

The nurse gives him a quizzical look, prompting him to elaborate.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

A suitor, I think. George. I had to, well, play along a bit, but I don't know if it's healthy for her for me to pretend like that.

(beat)

Don't know if it's healthy for either of us.

He begins walking in the direction of his room, and after a moment the nurse follows.

NURSE

Are you...alright?

RICHARD

(beat)

Should be. She just reminds me of someone I used to know, is all.

NURSE

(beat)

The same kind of person you remind her of?

He doesn't respond immediately.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSING HOME - CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

Angie and Richard sit next to each other in the cafeteria, eating. Angie seems calm.

The nurse watches on with a slightly furrowed brow.

ANGIE

Are you alright, Georgie? You've hardly said a word all morning.

RICHARD

(beat)

I'm just happy to be with my girl.

She smiles, and takes one of his hands in hers. This time, he doesn't jump.

FADE TO BLACK.