

ELDERS WAY

by

Marcin Klinkosz

INT. MARY'S FLAT. CORRIDOR - DAY

MARY (60's), buttons her jacket. She looks way beyond her age and extremely tired.

MARY

(loud)

Going out for groceries. Back in an hour.

The floor SQUEAKS under steps but no one answers.

Mary takes a cane, ready to go out as RADIO PRESENTER announces.

RADIO PRESENTER (V.O.)

The government implements draconian isolation and medics are no longer allowed to give respirators to anyone aged over 60. We strongly advise all seniors to stay at home.

Mary holds the door handle for a beat. Considers it.

MARY

They treat us like children --

She releases the door handle, deflated. Takes off her coat.

She crosses a small, old apartment. One of those, where the living room, kitchen, and toilet are almost in the same place. There's nothing new inside but it looks well-kept.

Through the curtains, Mary glances at the empty street.

INT. MARY'S KITCHEN - LATER

Mary sits alone at the table. In an elegant dress and jewelry. In the middle of the night date.

The remains of a half-eaten dinner lay on the plate. A small cake with a candle in it sits untouched. Mary stirs sugar in her tea.

MARY

I don't know why people complaining about staying home together.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm not saying I didn't want to strangle you over those thirty years --

No response. Just a SIGH from the other side of the table.

MARY

You know what? I have an idea...

She gently stops stirring, twists her wedding ring, lost in memory.

INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mary puts an old box on the table. She sits down in the armchair and checks the photos in the box. She pulls out a wedding picture showing YOUNGER HER (30s) and ROBERT (30s), her husband.

She touches her husband's cheek on the photo.

MARY

It was different back in the days.
People cared for each other,
talked to each other --

No answer. Only the floor CREAKS and STEPS.

In the end, she takes out the family photo. ANNA (8), her daughter sitting on Robert's shoulders.

Next photo. Older Anna (16), rebellious, heavy boots, punk haircut. She looks forced to take the family photo, stands away from her parents.

Mary smiles, gently -- a genuine though somehow melancholy smile.

Suddenly there is a LOUD KNOCKING at the door. Mary struggles to get up from the chair.

INT. MARY'S FLAT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

She looks through the eyehole, sees no one.

MARY

Who's there?

No answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

I have gas.

Still nothing. Mary takes the pepper spray from the cabinet. She unlocks the locks, keeping the security chain latched, and cracks open the door,-- Sees nobody.

MARY

(loud)

It ain't funny.

She looks down, spots something. Undoes the chain and opens the door.

She picks the box from the ground and checks if there's anybody outside. She's alone.

Mary checks the address card. She can't read without her glasses. Takes the box, closes the door behind her.

INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mary wears her glasses, unpacks the box. Pulls out a piece of paper, glances at it and puts it away. She pulls out a laptop, places it on the table and stares at it.

MARY

Some kind of DVD player -- No idea where they put the cassettes.

She looks at the device from every angle, curiously reads the note. She puts it away, gently opens the laptop, presses the power button.

The communication software launches automatically. Camera is on. Mary glances at her wrinkled face on the screen. She waves her hand as in front of the mirror.

Suddenly the sound of an incoming call breaks the silence. Mary jumps in her armchair. Stares at the laptop. The messenger keeps ringing for a while, then stops.

Mary checks the instructions on the paper. The communicator rings again. Mary swipes over the green button and answers the call.

Her eyes get wide open. As if she saw a ghost.

ON SCREEN

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CIARA (16), a girl who looks just like young Anna. The same rebellious look, the same hairstyle.

WE INTERCUT BETWEEN THEIR CONVERSATION.

CIARA

Hi Grandma...

Mary's eyes well up. She covers her mouth with a trembling hand.

CIARA

Relax. Mom doesn't know I'm calling. She would get crazy...

As she speaks, adult Anna(40's) enters the room. Ciara covers her laptop with a blanket.

ANNA (O.S.)

Who are you talking to?

CIARA

Nobody --

Beat.

ANNA (O.S.)

If it's this Bart again, you are grounded for the rest of your life.

Mary smiles under her breath.

MARY

As if I heard your father...

Anna takes the blanket off Ciara's laptop, pops her face into the camera.

ANNA

Mom?

(to Ciara)

What did I tell you? Why you never listen to me...

MARY

Like mother, like daughter. --
It's not her fault. I called her.

She's a terrible liar, Anna notices it and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA

Mom, you couldn't even operate the VCR. The clock on the wall stopped. You need to change the batteries.

Mary checks the clock. It stopped.

ANNA

Something's telling me that someone else is responsible for this intrigue --

Mary makes a face and mocks Anna. Ciara suppresses the laugh. Eventually...

ANNA

It's good to see you, Mom --

MARY

It's good to see you too, pumpkin.
-- You look like two drops of water. See?

Mary places a family photo in front of the camera. It's too close, but she adjusts. Ciara stares at the picture.

CIARA

I must tell you, Mom, you had some style. And you forbid me to wear skirts...

ANNA

That's different --

Beat.

All burst with laughter while there's another KNOCKING at the door. Mary looks over her shoulder.

MARY

Give me a second...

INT. MARY'S FLAT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Mary glances through the eyehole, opens the door. No hesitation. She grabs a shopping bag from the ground.

She smiles, peeks into the bag and returns to the computer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

(loud)

Thank you, Thomas --

Anna and Ciara, curious, wait for some explanation.

MARY

Neighbour. Helps me with the shopping. Sometimes we even talk over the wall. -- He's hot...

Anna smirks.

ANNA

What about Dad? Is he jealous?

Mary's slight smile disappears. She glances at the wedding picture. Anna notices that.

ANNA

Please don't tell me that you've argued again. Can't he let go even on your anniversary?

Awkward silence.

ANNA

(loud)

Stop sulking, Dad.

No answer. Just a loud SIGH off-screen. Mary gets lost in the thought.

Anna eventually gets it and her eyes well up.

Now we can see that there's only one place setting on the table. Next to the wedding picture lays a gold wedding ring, Robert's.

SIGHS are coming from the OLD DOG sleeping in the second armchair. STEPS and SQUEAKS come from Mary's neighbour.

The tears fall, but Anna wipes them away. Ciara hugs her.

Long beat.

SUPER: DON`T WAIT FOR ANOTHER PANDEMIC. IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE.

INT. MULTISCREEN - DAY

Screen split in four. Mary, Anna, Ciara giggle. Thomas (18), Mary's handsome neighbour joined the chat. Ciara can't take her eyes off him.

Anna notices it and clears her throat. Ciara rolls her eyes and nods to Thomas "thank you".

Mary presents souvenirs from the box in front of the camera, Anna's trophies, photos of Robert.

MARY

Do you remember, how Dad caught
you filling your bra with his
socks?

ANNA

Mom...

Anna's face turns red. Thomas's abashed. After a beat all burst with laughter. The clock on Mary's wall TICKS again.

THE END