

When Strangers Come To Stay

By

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OVERTURE. OPENING MUSIC IS OFF KEY.

EXT. DOWNTOWN. EARLY MORNING.

Fade from black to early morning before commuters begin their journeys. leafy sidewalks, suggesting the onset of autumn. hazy sunshine. an assortment of large buildings, modern and old. diners, bookstores, etc.

DISSOLVE

People begin to appear on the sidewalks, automobiles on the road and delivery vehicles outside of commercial premises.

DISSOLVE

The sidewalks are now very busy. the road is full of traffic and the noise of automobiles and clanging of tram cars.

MUSIC STOPS.

CUT TO

INT. MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE. DAY.

A CLOSE UP OF SARAH.

A woman in her mid- fifties, looking anxious.

THE VIEW PANS OUT AS THE CAMERA CONTINUES TRACKING AND WE SEE THAT THE WOMAN IS HALF DRESSED AND WEARING A HOSPITAL ROBE BENEATH HER COAT, MOVING HURRIEDLY ALONG A CORRIDOR.

Music now changes to the sound an orchestra warming up its instruments.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM. DAY.

CLOSE UP OF JUSTINE AND CAROL-ANNE,

A woman in her late thirties/early forties with a man in his early thirties, lying in bed. They stare at a television in the background.

CUT TO

INT OF COFFEE SHOP.

SIDE VIEW OF JOHN AND MARY.

CUT TO

CLOSE UP OF MARY,

A woman in her forties, with a non expressive look on her face.

CUT TO

A CLOSE UP OF JOHN HER HUSBAND.

A man in his late fifties sat opposite his wife. a sorrowful expression on his face.

Music continues to the strain of screeching violins warming up above the rest of the orchestra.

CUT TO

SIDE VIEW OF JOHN AND MARY.

They both stare at each other. there is a plate glass window behind them which is sign written with the logo- 'happy beans make happy coffee.'

CUT TO

INT. COLLEGE CANTEEN. DAY.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP OF ANDREW.

A young man in his late teens, sat at a table with his hands poised above the keyboard of his laptop. he has a look of resignation on his face. music now evens out as the orchestra comes to the end of its warm up. Andrew begins tapping the keys on the keyboard and as he does we hear him narrating the message inside his head.

ANDREW

Dear mom, things didn't quite turn out as we planned.

Music, the orchestra now begins with the opening bars of the Blue Danube by Strauss.

CLOSE UP VIEW OF ANDREW'S FACE ILLUMINATED BY THE SCREEN OF HIS LAPTOP.

We see the letters of his message reflected on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO

INT. APARTMENT. DAY.

MEDIUM SHOT.

Justine and carol-anne talk. we hear the blue danube by strauss coming out of the tv accompanying an advertisement for a funeral parlor.

JUSTINE

It was always on your terms.

CAROL-ANNE

What's that supposed to mean?

JUSTINE

Whenever a situation required a natural response, a simple step forward, you stepped back.

CAROL-ANNE

I put my marriage on the rocks for you.

JUSTINE

In fact, you didn't step back. You jumped.

CAROL-ANNE

I put my fucking marriage on the rocks for you!

JUSTINE

I found you on the rocks! And you described every single one of them in great detail.

CAROL-ANNE

What! How dare you!

JUSTINE

Your marriage was ship wrecked a long time before I got washed up on your shores.....

The tv shows the beaming face of a funeral director trying to look benevolent as the coffin disappears into the incinerator. as the curtains of the incinerator close the music abruptly ends.

CUT TO

INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY.

SIDE VIEW OF JOHN AND MARY.

JOHN

I love you Mary. I love you more  
than anything else in my life.

MARY

It's not that simple anymore John

JOHN

What's changed, Mary? Tell me and  
I'll put it back the way it was,  
how things used to be. We were  
happier then.

MARY'S EYES BEGIN TO WATER.

CUT TO

INT. MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTION. DAY.

WIDE SHOT.

Looking past the older woman we see a young man standing by  
an open door further down the corridor behind her.

YOUNG MAN

Mom, where are you going? You can't  
leave.

The woman continues to move along the hallway towards two  
large glass plated doors. a uniformed man moves in front of  
them.

YOUNG MAN

Mom, please, listen to me. You're  
safe here. They want to look after  
you. Come back to your room,  
please?

CUT TO

EXT. DAY. MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE.

VIEW OF THE BACK OF AN OLDER MAN RUNNING ALONG THE PATHWAY  
THAT LEADS TOWARDS THE PLATE GLASS DOORS.

CUT TO

INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY.

MARY  
I've...moved on, John...

JOHN  
But you can't. How?

MARY  
...inside here (SHE TOUCHES HER  
HEART) I've moved on.

JOHN  
That's impossible. You were fine  
yesterday.

MARY  
It hasn't happened overnight, John.  
It's been happening over 25years of  
overnights.

JOHN  
What are you trying to say, Mary?

MARY  
It's gone.

JOHN  
But I would have known.

MARY  
Whatever it is, or was, is gone.

JOHN  
I know that things haven't been  
happening in the bedroom lately...

MARY  
And maybe it was never there.

JOHN  
...but you know how hard I  
work. And besides, we can  
visit a specialist and get  
some therapy.

MARY  
What?

JOHN  
You know, if there is a problem in  
the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

You think that this is about,  
fucking?

JOHN

Oh, why do you use that kind of  
talk Mary? You know how it makes me  
feel.

MARY

Feel?! You finally have feelings?!  
And you show them when I say 'that'  
word?

JOHN

It's cheap talk for cheap people,  
Mary. We both know that. Now...

MARY

Cheap? I sound Cheap? Ha-Ha, Ha!  
John, that's the nicest thing  
you've ever said to me in all our  
years of our marriage. Do you know  
that?

JOHN

Now, come on Mary, be reasonable.  
Please.

MARY

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!  
There. That must make me the  
cheapest woman you've ever met.

JOHN

You don't have to be this way.

MARY

It's how people talk, John. Even  
adults!

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM. DAY.

CAROL-ANNE

You never complained.

JUSTINE

Maybe I should have.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL-ANNE

But you didn't. No, when momma came to feed, you came running and couldn't get enough.

JUSTINE

Your milk of human kindness?

CAROL-ANNE

Whatever way it arrived, you were there panting like a love sick puppy waiting to be fed.

JUSTINE

Your milk is full of poison.

CAROL-ANNE

And what does that say about you? You drank as if it was the last chance saloon!

JUSTINE

Maybe I did. Maybe your husband does as well.

CAROL-ANNE

My husband allows me to get on with my life!

JUSTINE

Your husband doesn't care! You're his tax free allowance!

CAROL-ANNE

At least he's around when I need him!

JUSTINE

And you make sure everyone's around when you need them!

CAROL-ANNE

You asshole! You fucking asshole!

CUT TO

INT. MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE. DAY.

Sarah has stopped short of the guard and stares ahead.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
Anthony?

MAN OUTSIDE  
Sarah, it's me. I've come to get  
you Sarah.

SARAH  
No one believed me.

YOUNG MAN  
Mom? Who's that man Mom?

CUT TO

INT. COLLEGE CANTEEN. DAY.

CLOSE UP PANNING TO WIDE.

ANDREW  
And maybe this isn't the place that  
we'd hope it would be. Instead of  
finding that vineyard we spoke  
about, I discovered an orchard  
where the trees haven't been looked  
after and most of the fruit is  
fallen, rotting on the ground. I'd  
be lying if I was to tell you that  
I'm happy, but as you always said:

V/O OF ANDREW'S MOTHER  
'Sticky treacle tastes so good. But  
when your teeth are gone, the  
sticky treacle don't taste so  
sweet.'

CUT TO

INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY.

JOHN  
Is there someone else, Mary?

MARY  
Wha..?

JOHN  
You know that you can tell me if  
there is? I won't judge you, I  
promise.

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
Yes John, there is.

JOHN  
It's what I guessed. It happens in  
the best of marriages and I'm as  
much to blame for your behavior...

MARY  
It's ME!!

JOHN  
...I should have noticed...what?

MARY  
It's me, John! I'm the 'someone  
else' in this marriage!

JOHN  
I, don't get it.

MARY  
Why the hell should you? You're  
never here! (MARY LAUGHS).

JOHN  
How can you laugh at a time like  
this?

MARY  
Laugh? Would you sooner I cry?  
Would you understand tears and  
anguish?

JOHN  
I'm...lost, Mary.

MARY  
Of course you are, we all are. We  
bump into each other at the wrong  
time in our lives and think we've  
been found! And maybe we have, but  
it doesn't stop there, John. We've  
got to keep on finding each other  
as much as we can, or we become get  
lost again.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM. DAY.

CAROL-ANNE

Do you have any idea what a relationship is? Do you know how one of those things work?

JUSTINE

Tell me.

CAROL-ANNE

Maybe you picked up some tips on your travels, whilst wandering in and out of other people's lives. But it takes more than the occasional moonlight walk and the strain of violins and bed springs to take it further than the morning after.

JUSTINE

Well, I thi...

CAROL-ANNE

I don't give a fuck what I,I,I, thinks! Don't you dare judge me! You came from nowhere and you're heading nowhere! All you have are your looks and a bag of stories to charm the women with!

JUSTINE

Oh yeh? Huh.

CAROL-ANNE

Oh fucking yes mister! Now get the hell out of my bed!

CUT TO

INT. COLLEGE CANTEEN. DAY.

ANDREW

I think that you'd be proud of me Mom, I made my first big decision today, on my own. I know why you meant for me to go away from you, why you wanted me to stand alone, unaided. Well, I know how hard it was for you to let go of me and it was just as hard for me to leave you. But it was the right thing to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW (cont'd)  
do. And today, I decided that I'm  
not going to stay in this place any  
longer. It's time to move on.

BY THE LIGHT OF THE LAPTOP SCREEN WE SEE A SMILE APPEAR ON  
ANDREW'S FACE. THERE'S A PAUSE AS THE LAPTOP IS CLOSED  
FOLLOWED BY SCREEN BLACK OUT.