

Weekend Getaway

By

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INT. HOWARD'S STUDY - NIGHT

Study is sparsely furnished with a big desk and an office chair.

HOWARD JENSEN stands in front of a dress mirror. He is 80 years old and wears a dark gray suit with a monochrome tie. He adjusts the belt of his pants; he has clearly lost some weight. Other than that, he looks like a battle ax of an old man with a hard stare and strong features.

He takes off the suit and carefully drapes it over the back of the chair and puts on his "regular" set of clothes, khaki pants and a casual button down shirt.

Takes a last drag on the Cohiba and puts the cigar out in the crystal ashtray.

There's a folded up piece of paper next to the ashtray and Howard puts it in his pocket. He leaves the room and carefully closes the door behind him.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Howard walks down the hall to the stairs which lead to the ground floor. Something causes him to slow his gait, he grabs the railing to steady himself.

He loses his balance.

LIGHTNING outlines his body as he falls.

Howard crashes to the bottom of the steps, THUNDER follows.

BOTTOM OF STEPS

He rubs his injured ankle.

He is also surprised. Sits up halfway, which gives him a view of the corridor and the doorway to the basement. Turns over onto his knee and starts to crawl toward the phone that's on a stand near the front door.

A small green key that presumably has fallen out of his pocket lies on the carpet.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Two-lane blacktop that winds its way through dense forest.

A black Cadillac sedan whips down the road.

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Two teenagers in the front. ROB, black, is driving, MARSHALL, white, is in the passenger seat. They are 17 years old.

Marshall hands a joint to Rob, who inhales deeply and nods his head in approval.

MARSHALL

Not bad, right? He told me the secret is mixing egg shells in with the organic fertilizer.

ROB

(still inhaling)

Who?

MARSHALL

The janitor. I bought an ounce from that creepy mo'fo'.

ROB

With what? They took our money when we checked in.

MARSHALL

My Mom gave me a phone card.

Rob shakes his head.

A third teenager, WILL, leans forward from the back seat, where he was hitherto invisible. He is Asian and he's holding a book.

WILL

What if Wayne calls our parents for some reason?

Rob hands him the joint.

ROB

You're still stuck on that note?
Take a hit and relax, man.

Not relaxed, Will nevertheless takes a hit, leans back and goes back to reading his book.

(CONTINUED)

Marshall starts hunting around for something.

MARSHALL

I can't believe they even took our iPods.

ROB

(agreeing)

Downright un-American.

WILL

At least they let us keep our books.

Marshall and Rob shake their heads.

Marshall finds a CD on the center console, but can't read the label in the semi-darkness. Slides it in the player.

Cheesy, synthesized music fills the car, the kind that opens motivational audio books. It fades into a sensitive male voice.

SENSITIVE VOICE

(on CD)

The first step to freeing yourself from addiction. Be honest and admit that there are powerful, destructive forces shaping your behavior. Until you admit that you are powerless in the face of these forces, recovery is impossible.

Marshall turns it off.

MARSHALL

Talk about a buzz kill.

WILL

Is that Wayne?

ROB

Yup. He gave it to me last week to keep me on the right track.

WILL

You actually listen to it?

ROB

Only when my Dad's in the car.

They drive by a gas station, the only thing that's lit up in the night.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

DR. KALDOR, a doctor in his 60s is examining Howard, who is sitting on the examination table. The sleeve of one arm is rolled up.

HOWARD

For the fifth time, no recurring
dizziness.

DR. KALDOR

(German accent)

Okay, Howie, don't shoot me for
doing my job.

HOWARD

Who are you kidding? You enjoy
poking and prodding me. Dr. Mengele
has nothing on you, you sadistic
bastard.

DR. KALDOR

(unphased)

Nurse Scully was right. You're even
more unbearable now that Marie's
not here to put the muzzle on you.

(beat)

Be that as it may, I'd like to know
if this is related to...

Before he can finish, an attractive woman in her mid-forties walks into the room. She is dressed in business clothes, a smart-looking pantsuit, over it an elegant raincoat. Her hair is wet.

In one hand, she has a folded up umbrella, with the other, she's pulling a small luggage on wheels.

She is CAITLIN MAY, Howard's daughter.

CAITLIN

Friday rush hour. I came as fast as
I could.

HOWARD

Next time I'll take a spill during
off-hours.

CAITLIN

It's good to see you, too, Dad. Hi,
Dr. Kaldor.

(CONTINUED)

DR. KALDOR
It's been a while, Caity.

She kisses Dr. Kaldor on the cheek.

No kiss for Dad. Caitlin takes off her wet rain coat and drapes it on a chair.

HOWARD
I wouldn't get too comfortable.
We're leaving.

He rolls down his shirt sleeve.

Caitlin looks at Dr. Kaldor.

DR. KALDOR
He's lucky. He only sprained his ankle. I just need to see him in two weeks to take off the brace.
(to Howard)
Slow down on the curves, okay Howie? I can't have my nurses walk out on me.

HOWARD
A doctor and a comedian. Go to hell, Harry.

CAITLIN
(relieved)
So that's it?

Dr. Kaldor looks at her, then at Howard.

DR. KALDOR
For now, yes.
(beat)
I'll have a wheelchair brought.

HOWARD
Don't bother.

Howard tries to get up, but cannot generate enough leverage with one leg and falls back into the chair.

He grits his teeth against the pain. Dr. Kaldor leaves the room.

Howard eyes Caitlin's luggage.

HOWARD
Are you leaving Julian?

CAITLIN
(quickly)
I came straight from the airport.
(looks at Howard's leg)
I thought Canzano fixed the
banister last week.

HOWARD
Not well, obviously.

Caitlin doesn't entirely buy this. She stares at his ankle.

CAITLIN
No dancing tonight.

HOWARD
(distracted)
No.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Cadillac turns onto a steep, unpaved driveway, past a mailbox on which letters in an old-fashioned font spell JENSEN.

Headlights illuminate a sign.

SIGN - FOR SALE - VERMONT LEISURE HOMES - ANGELA CHERRY

Underneath, maple leaf, phone number, picture of a smiling red-haired woman, all teeth and confidence.

The driveway is lined on the left by the steep hill that leads to the road (the house lies in a valley) and on the right by tall pine trees. Seemingly it comes to an end, then a 90 degree turn to the right reveals a house. Headlights illuminate a dwelling, somewhere between a small house and a cabin.

The headlights also catch the wheel of a motorcycle, but the boys don't notice it.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Front door of a house opens from the inside.

Caitlin and Howard enter. Caitlin pulls her key out of the lock and puts it in her purse.

(CONTINUED)

She's holding a vial of prescription pills.

CAITLIN

Where are your keys?

HOWARD

Don't know. Maybe I was too busy getting taken out on a stretcher to grab them.

Howard makes his way to the kitchen on crutches.

We can now clearly see the foyer, and some of the living room. Unlike most senior citizen homes, Howard's is sparse. No stuffy sofas, no three-tiered coffee table, no knick-knacks. Furniture is old, but in good shape.

Caitlin turns on the lights.

Wrought-iron key-shaped key holder on the wall, no keys on it.

She opens one of the cabinets. It has many other vials. She takes one out and looks at it.

INSERT - Bottle - Faded label. Osteproxin. Marie-Catherine Jensen.

Uncomfortable, she puts it back and puts Howard's pills next to it and closes the door.

Opens the fridge. Slim pickings. Quart of milk, some butter, carton of eggs, half a loaf of bread.

Tries the cabinet above the fridge

Empty save for a box of macaroni and cheese.

CAITLIN

Jesus. When was the last time you went grocery shopping?

Caitlin starts prepping. She reads the label on the box of macaroni and cheese, then pours water into a measuring cup like a neophyte cook.

Howard watches this with disdain. Notices the answering machine's blinking red light and starts crutching his way toward it.

HOWARD

You don't have to stay here tonight, you know. I don't want to keep you from your files...

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Save your breath, Dad. I'm staying.

HOWARD

...or your husband.

CAITLIN

I'm alone. Marshall's at the rehab thing and Julian's on his way to a conference in New Hampshire. He's spending the night at the cabin .

HOWARD

The third conference in New England in the last six months. Must be some kind of record.

CAITLIN

It's not what you think. I saw the invite.

HOWARD

He'll have to find a motel next time. June, too. I finally found a buyer.

CAITLIN

June?

Howard presses the red light. The answering machine gurgles to life.

With a satisfied grin, Howard plops into a chair.

FEMALE VOICE

(chipper, through answering machine)

Hi, Mr. Jensen, this is Angela Cherry calling. I have some good news and some bad news. The couple who signed the papers two days ago changed its mind.

This wipes the smirk off Howard's face.

ANGELA

(cont'd)

Under Vermont law, home buyers have three days to do that, so there's nothing I can do. So that's the bad news. The good news is I already have another couple who's interested and I will show them the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA (cont'd)

place on Saturday, or Sunday morning at the latest. I know how anxious you are to sell it, so I'm doing everything I can to make it happen. Call me if you have any questions. Bye now.

(she hesitates with the unpleasant news)

Oh, another thing. There's no running water again. I'll have to call Falzerano, he'll charge us double because it's the weekend, but we don't really have a choice.

Howard is pissed. Stomps his injured leg, winces in pain.

HOWARD

For Christ's Sakes. Is it too much to ask for people to make a decision and stick to it?

Caitlin is surprised at his reaction.

HOWARD

Goddamn tire kickers...just when I thought everything was taken care of.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The boys are standing on the front porch of the cabin.

Rob looks around. Will shivers against the night chill.

ROB

Nice night for a lynching.

Will zips up his sweatshirt.

WILL

Too cold.

Marshall shakes his head, unlocks the door. He strikes a lighter and steps inside.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Marshall walks through the living room. What little is illuminated by the flame seems neat and tidy. He walks through a short corridor that leads to the kitchen.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN

Small kitchen table with four chairs, old water cooler with bottle on it, little water left in it.

Marshall walks to the back wall, opens the fuse box. To his surprise, the main switch is already in the ON position.

MARSHALL

Alzheimers.

He turns on the kitchen light, then walks back to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Marshall turns on the main light. It's connected to the standing lamp in the corner and it's not very bright.

Smallish living room with sofa, love seat, armchairs and fireplace on one end, with an antique rifle above it. Hallway leading to kitchen on the other. Wall opposite the front entrance has two doors in it, presumably leading to bedrooms.

Rob and Will enter.

Marshall opens the first bedroom, walks in.

GUEST BEDROOM

Marshall clicks on the light. Small guest bedroom with narrow bed, night table, dresser.

LIVING ROOM

Marshall steps back into the living room, walks to the master bedroom, opens the door and steps inside.

MASTER BEDROOM

Marshall's POV. Light goes on, reveals two figures in bed.