

GOLDEN HOUR

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INTERIOR-BEDROOM-DAWN

A SOFT GOLDEN LIGHT seeps through the curtains, casting an ethereal glow over the bed, where ALDEN (late 70s) awakens.

The bed creaks as he turns. An empty space beside him. But the pillow is still indented—as if someone just left.

His veined, trembling hand traces the nightstand, searching. He finds: a wristwatch, still ticking; his glasses, slightly askew, one lens smudged; and a sticky note, the handwriting shaky: **"Don't forget: water the lilies, buy roses for Evelyn."**

Alden slides on his watch and glasses, the world does not become clearer— it shifts in and out of focus, warping around the edges. He rises from the bed, his watch ticks.

Tick tick tick

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alden moves through the house, the floor groans beneath his slippers. We see windows with soft golden light, and a hallway lined with paintings and photographs. A curated world of familiarity and love, of two people who have spent a lifetime together.

INT. KITCHEN - GOLDEN HOUR

The light holds, thick as honey, refusing to shift. The wallpaper a soft yellow adorned with patterns of blue flowers. The fridge hums softly. A child's crayon drawing clings to its surface— a stick figure in a garden, scrawled beneath in messy letters: "I love you." The drawing partially obscures a calendar, where behind a note reads: ANNIVERSARY TRIP - 6:00 PM.

Albert's gnarled hands still nimble with habit, arranges a bouquet of lilies. His fingers trace the petals as though trying to remember something long forgotten. Across the small kitchen, EVELYN (late 70s), unseen at the table, hums a comforting tune. He smiles.

He prepares two cups of tea. One with a single cube of sugar—just how Evelyn likes it. He sets it on the checkered tablecloth, next to a vase, a crossword puzzle, and Evelyn's yellow phone. A HAND enters the frame—Evelyn's—lifting the teacup. She sips, crossword puzzle in front of her.

EVELYN

Four-letter word for 'fleeting'?

ALDEN

Gone.

She clicks her tongue, amused.

He smiles, content. He takes a bite of toast, swallows his tea, and reads from his phone. His eyes occasionally dart to Evelyn's vibrating phone on the table as they sit in the comfortable quiet.

Tick tick tick

INT. GREENHOUSE

CUT TO

Alden works in a small greenhouse. He sits in armchair surrounded by bookshelves filled with gardening and florist books, and a workbench scattered with pots and tools.

As he carefully repots a plant, A FAINT ROTTING SMELL wafts through the air. Alden sniffs, face contorting into disgust as he sifts through the soil searching for the source. His fingers brush against something within the dirt—A STICKY NOTE. He pulls it out.

"Don't forget: check the Myosotis seeds."

He chuckles to himself.

ALDEN
(softly, amused)
Now how did I manage to do that?

INT. BEDROOM - SUNSET

The light is lingers as if the sun has forgotten how to set. Alden pulls back the covers on his side of the bed. The other side is untouched.

ALDEN
(raising voice)
Coming to bed yet?

EVELYN (O.S.)
Soon.

Alden sighs, and rolls over to sleep, a light flickers in the hallway.

Tick tick tick

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

Alden wakes as golden light seeps through once again. A slow inhale, a slower exhale. His hand gropes the nightstand: Glasses. He puts them on, but the world remains blurry. A watch. Still ticking. Always ticking. A faded note: **Don't forget: Water the lilies. Buy roses for Evelyn.**

The bed creaks. He turns. An empty space beside him still indented. He smiles softly to himself.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alden shuffles through the house. He pauses. The hallway feels... longer. He pushes his glasses up and spots a picture frame slightly askew. He carefully adjusts it.

INT. KITCHEN- CONTINUOUS

Alden sniffs the air. The rotting smell is worse... Swollen. Festering.

The out-of-focus silhouette of Evelyn sits at the kitchen table. Crossword puzzle filled in, her phone face down next to a vase of roses.

ALDEN
Smells like the drain's backed up
again huh?

A soft voice from the table.

EVELYN (O.S.)
Mmm.

Alden hums the same tune his wife had hummed the day before. He pours two cups of tea. One for himself. One for Evelyn. His hand reaches out routinely only to grab nothing—the sugar is missing.

From the corner of his eye, he catches it sitting atop the adjacent counter. He shakes his head to himself— "*how forgetful of me*". He plucks up a single cube of sugar, just how Evelyn likes it.

ALDEN
You know, I was thinking... Forty
years, and I still don't know if
you actually prefer the oolong, or
if you just drink it because I do-

He carries the teacups to the dining table where Evelyn is seated— but her chair is empty. Alden stares. Confused.
Wasn't she just here?

ALDEN (CONT'D)
Evelyn?

TICK. TICK. TICK.

Evelyn's phone buzzes again at the now empty table. There's a strange, empty silence, like the house is holding its breath. Until-

EVELYN (O.S.)
 (from another room)
 Dear! Could you bring my tea in
 here please?

Alden stares towards the sound of Evelyn's voice in bewilderment before shrugging off the occurrence. He follows the golden light down the hall, his eyes linger on picture frames— faces now blurred. The only sound of the clock.

The ticking seems louder today.

INT. GREENHOUSE

Alden moves methodically, pruning daffodils. His glasses sit low on his nose, the world a blur at the edges—half-sharp, half-smudged. The shears SNIP—SNIP—SNIP— SNAP!

Alden flinches. He lifts the shears. A severed flower head drops to the table—cut too close to the stem. It lands with a soft thud, its petals already wilting. He blinks. Adjusts his glasses. The flower is intact.

His breath shudders. Fingers tightening around the shears, his grip too firm. A furrow creases his brow—something itches at the back of his mind.

INT. BEDROOM - SUNSET

The room is too golden, like it's stuck in a perpetual sunset. Alden lies in bed alone, and rests his glasses on the nightstand. He stares offscreen towards the sound of movement.

ALDEN
 Coming to bed?

EVELYN (O.S.)
 Just a moment, dear.

Alden nods and turns over in bed. Until...A CREAK.

His eyes flutter open. In the doorway there is the barely visible outline of a person standing. He throws on his glasses and the blurred world struggles to focus. No one.

ALDEN
 Evelyn? Is that you?

Silence. Only the sound of a distant phone buzzing, and the steady ticking of a clock with unmoving hands.

TICK. TICK. TICK

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Alden wakes up. He reaches for his glasses from the nightstand, only to find: his watch, and a note: "**Don't forget: Water the lilies. Buy roses for-**"

The ink is smudged. Unreadable.

He turns to the other side of the bed. Empty. Neatly made as if not touched for some time.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alden shuffles down the same hallway...But something is wrong. The hallway seems impossibly long. He steps forward. The wooden floor CREAKS beneath him. The sound repeats— An echo? Or footsteps behind him? He turns.

Nothing— except a picture frame of him and Evelyn lies broken on the ground. Alden furrows his brow, adjusting his glasses. He delicately recovers the photo and carries it into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

A golden lit empty room with the sound of Evelyns humming coming from somewhere distant. The wallpaper, a sickly yellow adorned with patterns of red flowers, a droning fridge with a child's drawing, a checkered table cloth kitchen table with a vase of lilies, a yellow phone and a blank crossword puzzle.

The rotting smell is stronger. He checks the trash—empty. Checks the sink—clean. He rubs his temples. Something feels...off.

ALDEN

Evelyn, do you not smell that?

The hum continues, but no response. Alden prepares two cups of tea, reaching for the sugar, missing again. He whips his head around, the sugar nowhere to be seen. Alden calls off screen.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

Honey?

From the other room—her voice, faint.

EVELYN (O.S.)

Hmm?

ALDEN

Did you move the sugar?

There is no response, only humming that seems to lag like a record skipping, before catching up. Evelyn's phone buzzes, the clocks ticks too loud, The house feels too still.

The faint, rotten smell curls through the air causing his face to once again contort in disgust. Agitated and impatient he shakes his head and moves to the fridge, yanking it open, searching for the source of the stench- then stops.

A child's drawing is pinned to the fridge door. His anger softens. A faint smile tugs at his lips. Beneath it, the calendar. His hand drifts toward the drawing, ready to move it aside-

EVELYN (O.S.)
Darling! Could I borrow you for one moment?

Alden's hand jerks away. He shuts the fridge.

ALDEN:
Coming sweetheart

He steps into the bedroom. The room is empty. No sign of her. The golden light hasn't shifted, as if time has stalled. Alden grips the doorframe.

ALDEN: (CONT'D)
Are you in the kitchen?

No answer. Alden leaves for the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A shadow moves. No-the hallway itself is shifting, stretching. Alden paces forward, muttering under his breath, when suddenly there is the sound of a SLAM behind him. He whirls. The bedroom door-shut. He didn't close it... *Did he?* His breathing quickens. He turns away, moving back down the hall towards the kitchen. But when he turns the corner-

He's back where he started. His eyes dart to the wall. The broken picture frame from before-now back in its place, untouched. Alden blinks and swallows hard.

INT. KITCHEN - GOLDEN HOUR

Alden stumbles in and flicks the light switch. Nothing.

The house is bathed in the golden glow, trapped in time. The light is wrong. Too golden. The kitchen is empty, wrong. The wallpaper too yellow, the flowers on it too red. The vase now full of rotten lilies- lilies, they were lilies werent they? A sticky note on the vase reads "**Don't forget to water me!**". The water in the vase is CLOUDY, thick with decay. Evelyn's teacup is sitting on the table next to a completely filled out crossword puzzle and a yellow phone. Alden approaches the table and grabs the cup, a thick layer of dust blankets the rim. Alden swallows dryly and mutters under his breath.

ALDEN
Evelyn, where have you gone?

CLICK

The sound of Evelyn's tongue clicks the exact same way as it did before can be heard right next to Alden. He whips around. There is no one there.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

Evelyn?!

Stillness. Thick. Suffocating. Alden parts his lips to shout again when suddenly

SCREEEEECH

Alden whirls. The chair—neatly tucked under the table just moments ago—is now pulled all the way out. The panic sets in. He bolts for the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ALDEN

(voice shaky, frightened)

Evelyn did you rearrange the house on me? What's going on?!

The walls seem to breathe. The hallway much darker, longer, stretching into something vast and unknowable. He reaches the bedroom door, yanks it open and steps into—

INT. GREENHOUSE

His breath catches. The space **is wrong**. Smaller. Stifling. Pots broken, plants long dead. He bolts out the room to retrace his steps—

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway is **TOO LONG**. His heart pounds as he spins back, running corner after corner, doorway after doorway— The house is unfamiliar. Where are the pictures? Where is the bedroom? He turns—

INT. KITCHEN - GOLDEN HOUR

He stops. He's in the kitchen again, the golden light infects the space. The wallpaper pattern slithers subtly, almost imperceptible. The tablecloth is gone. The vase. The crossword. Gone. In their place, a single sticky note: "Don't forget..." The ink smudged, trailing off into nothing. Beside it, a yellow phone.

Alden's eyes drift to the fridge. Something is... different. His fingers, trembling, reach up. A child's drawing, taped over a Calendar. He peels it away. And then— he sees it.

Every single day reads: "ANNIVERSARY TRIP - 6:00 PM." Again. And again. And again. The same date. Every. Single. Day.

His breath shallows. His fingers tremble as he flips to the next page. The same. The same. The same. Until finally- A single change.

"Evelyn's Funeral- 6:00 PM"

The house exhales. Alden stumbles back. His glasses slip down his nose. His vision blurs. The yellow phone BUZZES behind him. For the first time, he picks it up. The screen illuminates:

Alden<3: 40 MISSED CALLS

Alden <3: Where are you?

Alden<3: Evelyn?

Alden<3: Why won't you answer me?

Alden<3: I'm scared. Please come home.

FACEBOOK: 1 year ago today: In Memorium Evelyn Ambrose , gone but not forgotten.

Alden stares, head shaking in slow, numb horror. His own words. Typed by his own hands. But he does not remember.

ALDEN
(barely a whisper, voice
breaking)
W-when did I..?

Tick tick tick

A golden light flickers from outside the window as curtains bellow.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

The soft light holds still. Alden stirs awake. His hand gropes the nightstand: Glasses. A watch. A note. He turns, an empty space beside him. Still indented. He smiles softly to himself.

ALDEN
Up early again dear?

FADE TO GOLD.