

OLD MAN CHRISTMAS

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INT. ST. NICHOLAS' RETIREMENT HOME - DUSK

Smalltown, USA. As the sun sets, an elderly gentleman, RUDY, sits alone on the porch at a card table. He sports long socks and thick glasses, above which is strapped an old camper's headlamp.

He rattles dice in a cup and tosses them onto the table. Five and a two. No good. He looks around for any witnesses and scoops them back up. Rolls again - six and a one.

Another furtive glance over his shoulder before placing them back in the shaker. Rolls a two and a one. He grins and moves a game piece three spaces on a board in front of him.

He stands slowly, and moves to the opposite side of the table. Sits and once again rolls the dice, landing a pair of ones. No one notices him flip the one over to a six either. He moves his piece.

The daylight fades and Rudy switches on his headlamp.

Before long, a small group of old men, ASHER, DON and VICK, exit the home and spill out onto the porch. Each is dressed in his best khaki and cardigan.

They see Rudy at his game. And snicker. And point. And poke each other with canes. Rudy doesn't notice until...

DON

Rudy. Hey, Rudy! Who's winnin' today?

Rudy looks up, his headlamp blinding Don. Asher and Vick guffaw. Don smacks Vick with his cane.

A van pulls up to the front of the home.

RUDY

Oh hi, Don. Asher. Vick. You boys g-going somewhere?

Rudy stands clumsily as the three make their way to the van.

VICK

Oh, just a little night out on the town. Maybe catch a show.

RUDY

W-wait up and I'll c-come with you.

ASHER

No, no - we wouldn't want to interrupt your game. We know how important it is.

RUDY

It's no bother. We're... I'm at a g-good stopping point. Just let me get my...

The three pile into the van.

DON

No time, old man. They ain't gonna hold the curtain just for us.

ASHER

Besides, I don't think we have any more room.

Asher stretches out on the three-seater. The three laugh and close the doors as the van pulls away.

Rudy stands alone on the porch, his headlamp shining into the night.

INT. RUDY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Rudy enters, game board under his arm. Turns on a lamp.

RUDY

Well, I'll tell ya, you were doin' real g-good today.

He sets the game on a bedside table, next to a picture of an elderly woman in hiking gear. He addresses this picture as he dresses for sleep.

RUDY

I was ahead, but not by much. You might have even made a comeback if it weren't for those... ah, hell with 'em. Guess today just wasn't our d-day.

He slides under the covers, only then removing his headlamp, which he places by the picture, which he kisses. Lights out.

INT. RUDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emergency lights, ALARMS and commotion in the hallway wake Rudy from his sleep.

He tries to turn on the lamp - no good. Power is out. He fumbles for his glasses, but knocks them to the floor. He reaches, instead, for his headlamp - slides it in place and turns it on.

Without so much as a knock, the door to his room opens. Standing there is a firefighter - but without his glasses, all Rudy can see is a man in a red suit.

The fireman shields his eyes from Rudy's light.

FIREMAN

Are you ok? Can you walk?

RUDY

Yes, I think so. What's happening?

FIREMAN

There's been a fire - we have to get everyone out of here.

RUDY

Oh my lands!

FIREMAN

You could really help with that headlamp. Do you think you can lead people on this hall out to the front lawn?

Rudy stands and plants his feet in his house shoes.

RUDY

Sir, it would be an honor to serve again. You can count on me.

FIREMAN

Great - just out to the front lawn. Be careful, but don't waste time.

The fireman dashes off. Rudy grabs the picture of his wife and his robe and marches into

THE HALLWAY

Seniors begin to fill the hall - many wandering and confused. Rudy steps to the middle of the corridor, his bright beam piercing the darkness and smoke that has started to seep in.

RUDY

Your attention, p-please! I have been asked to lead you to safety.

SCARED WOMAN

What's going on?

RUDY

Everything will be ok. Now, if you will please follow me out to the front lawn. Closely now!

VICK

Is that Rudy? Who put him in charge?

ASHER

(mocking)

G-Get a load of this guy!

RUDY

The m-man in the... red suit...

DON

Oh, that's rich! The man in the red suit - sounds very official!

VICK

Where's Dr. Weinberg?

EVERYONE (OVERLAPPING)

Yeah, where are the nurses? I can't see. Where's Dr. Weinberg? Why should we follow you?

Rudy, nearly buckling, holds his wife's picture close. He starts again - this time his voice is clear.

RUDY

Everybody be quiet! Now you can stay here and complain and ask questions and hope for a Christmas miracle, or you can follow me and live! It's times like these, folks - I gotta tell ya, it's times like these that make a person who he is. Do we cower in the darkness, afraid to move, afraid to fight? Or do we say "no! I will not go gentle into that dark night!"

ASHER

It's "into that good night."

RUDY

Men and women of St. Nicholas'
Retirement Home! Now is the time!
Now is the time to show that
though we be old, we are strong!

(the crowd
stirs, cheers)

We will no longer be looked upon
as less-than, as a nuisance, as an
inconvenience. We will walk this
hall together and take our
rightful place as the elders of
society - recognized, revered and
respected! Now follow me! Follow
me to...

EXT. ST. NICHOLAS' RETIREMENT HOME - CONTINUING

DR. WEINBERG and the FIREMAN are gathering people into
groups and counting.

DR. WEINBERG

Ok, are we missing anyone?

Boom. An explosion in the building sends a gasp through the
crowd gathered on the lawn.

EXT. ST. NICHOLAS' RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

An elderly gentleman, Rudy, sits at a card table. He sports
long socks and thick glasses, above which is strapped an old
camper's headlamp.

He rattles dice in a cup and tosses them gently onto the
tabletop.

Behind him, Don, Asher and Vick sit sipping iced tea.

DON

Rudy. Hey, Rudy! Who's winning
this time?

The three laugh and poke each other with canes.

RUDY

She is... again.

He picks up the dice, puts them in the cup and hands it to
his wife, who sits opposite him.

VICK

Not so easy without cheatin', eh?

RUDY

No. But it's more fun this way.

The couple holds hands across the table.

FADE OUT