

LAST EMBRACE

Written
by

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY COTTAGE - NIGHT

Red and blue lights illuminate EDMUND, still handsome at 83, his bright blue eyes filled with anguish, hands cuffed in his lap, despair on his careworn face.

A POLICEMAN pushes him in a wheelchair towards a police car.

A second POLICE OFFICER helps manhandle Edmund into the car.

The door slams.

Edmund stares as paramedics wheel a body bag out of the cottage. A tear slides down his cheek.

INT. COUNTRY COTTAGE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sixtieth wedding anniversary cards flicker red and blue from the outside lights.

A stereo and lots of old vinyl. A ballroom dancing trophy.

A regurgitated puddle of undigested pills.

A broken lamp.

A jagged hole in the wall.

A rumpled, unmade single bed; a shotgun upon it.

INT. COUNTRY COTTAGE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Edmund sits bare-chested on the single bed.

A tray of freshly brewed tea on a table.

Dust and old cups of tea everywhere.

Urine bottles. Pills. A Zimmer frame.

WINNIE, 78, radiant beauty shining from her wise old face, helps his creaky bones into a bright blue shirt.

WINNIE

Why this one? Who's coming to see
an old crank like you?

Edmund chuckles a toothy grin at her.

EDMUND

It's your favourite.

WINNIE

It is?

She fingers the worn cotton.

WINNIE

It is soft.

She gazes at him.

WINNIE

Paul Newman eyes.

The love between these two is strong. It shows in their body language and the way they look at each other.

EDMUND

That's what all the girls say.

WINNIE

They do?

A loud noise from the hall startles Winnie. She knocks over some talcum powder. It puffs up in a cloud.

WINNIE

Bugger. Oh. Oh Ed!

She flaps at the spill with a towel, panic in her eyes. Edmund takes the towel with infinite patience.

EDMUND

It's just the post, Win. I'll see to this. You get the post.

WINNIE

Post?

EDMUND

Yes, love.

Winnie shuffles out, bumping into things softly on her way.

Edmund pulls the Zimmer frame towards him and struggles to get off the bed. He almost knocks over a urine bottle.

Bends to pick it up but can't quite reach.

Winnie re-enters, a cotton shirt in her hands.

WINNIE

Your favourite look, nice and warm.

Confusion crosses her face as she spies the shirt on him.

EDMUND

The post, Win?

WINNIE

Oh.

She muddles out again.

Edmund expertly manoeuvres himself to the sofa.

Winnie comes back in, dozens of envelopes in her grasp.

WINNIE
It's your birthday.

EDMUND
Open one, love, go on.

She does. A beautiful Diamond Anniversary card.

INSERT: *Sixty years & counting, congratulations!*

She looks at him, eyes shining.

EDMUND
Read it out.

WINNIE
"Dear Freckles and Foxtrot-trot"--

She goes into peals of laughter.

EDMUND
No guesses there.

WINNIE
Dear old Mitzi. Ooh we should visit
her Ed, we could go dancing. Shall
I put some music on?

EDMUND
Anything you want, my love.

Winnie heads for the stereo. Spots a urine bottle.

She picks it up, sees tea cups on the table and goes to pour.

EDMUND
One thing at a time, eh Win?

WINNIE
I don't know how you put up with
me.

His look says it all; he loves her.

Winnie takes the bottle out. Edmund pours the tea.

WINNIE (O.S.)
Where's his bowl Eddie? Why d'you
keep hiding it?

Edmund sighs. Sounds OS of cupboards opening.

WINNIE (O.S.)
Taz? Tazzy-boy, puss, puss.

Winnie enters, a dishcloth in her hands.

WINNIE

I bet he's off at Mrs. P's. There's no food here, we must get some in Ed, you won't forget?

EDMUND

No love. I won't. Now come and read the rest of these. Our anniversary cards, remember?

WINNIE

Yes. I remember.

She snuggles next to him on the sofa and picks out the biggest envelope. She tears it open. Ed watches her face.

A large booklet for a nursing home falls out. An old manor house with a manicured lawn and ducks on a pond.

WINNIE

Ooh look! How lovely.

She opens it up. Ed's face falls.

EDMUND

No, not that one, here.

He tries to take it, thrusts another card at her.

Realisation dawns. She looks at him.

EDMUND

Win?

WINNIE

We're going here.

She smiles up at him.

EDMUND

Win...

WINNIE

It's pretty. We'd give all the ducks silly names and Taz would stalk them...

(she recalls)

He's dead isn't he? We had to put him to sleep.

EDMUND

Yes.

WINNIE

His kidneys.

(fresh grief engulfs her)

(MORE)

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Weeks ago wasn't it? Months. I'm getting worse.

EDMUND

It's getting worse.

WINNIE

But we're going here.

He shakes his head.

EDMUND

Not we--

She speaks over him. Too bright.

WINNIE

We'll be fine, there's proper carers and nurses and everything. So much better for you, they'll love you, old blue eyes. We'll be fine. We will, we will. Won't we?

Edmund kisses her hand.

EDMUND

Win...

WINNIE

No.

She snatches her hand away.

WINNIE

Don't say it.

She goes to the stereo. Puts on an old dance hall album.

Ed heaves himself up. They stare at each other.

She crosses into his arms. They hold each other.

WINNIE

When?

EDMUND

Tuesday. Today's Saturday.

They sway to the music, cheek to cheek.

WINNIE

I can't Ed, I can't. Not without you.

EDMUND

We don't have a choice, my love.

WINNIE
It's not fair.

She throws a cushion at the stereo, the needle squeals.

WINNIE
NOT FAIR.

She loses control of her emotions.

Edmund sinks to the sofa, tears stream down his face.

LATER

An old black and white photograph of a YOUNG WINNIE and EDMUND on their wedding day. Beautiful. So happy.

Winnie looks through an album. Edmund snores next to her.

She turns to a flyer for a 1950 production of Romeo & Juliet.

WINNIE
Eddie. Eddie.

INT. COUNTRY COTTAGE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

A beautiful sunset through the window.

The anniversary cards have been put up. The old mugs of tea cleared away, the trophy dusted and in pride of place.

Winnie wears a dress and lipstick. Ed's hair is brushed.

Music plays. A pile of sleeping pills on the table.

Edmund keeps kissing her hand.

Winnie sips from a mug, her eyes droop and close.

WINNIE
Ed. Before I forget.

Ed puts a fist to his mouth. Winnie hands him a pillow.

WINNIE
Ed?

EDMUND
Anything for you my love. Anything.

WINNIE
I won't be without you.

WINNIE
Me neither Win.

They kiss. Deeply, passionately, tears mingling.

She lies down.

Edmund holds her. She eventually snores.

He picks up the pillow. Emotion wracks his face.

He smothers her. Her feet kick; not for long.

EDMUND

I love you. Oh, I love you so much.

He smooths Winnie's hair then swallows all the pills.

Grasps her hand. And waits.

Then wretches.

The undigested pills spew to the floor.

He struggles to reach them, scoops some up, vomits again.

Panic sets in. He grabs his Zimmer, knocks over a lamp.

Crosses to a cupboard.

Pulls out an ancient shotgun and a crumbly box of shells.

He hobbles back to the sofa and uses his last remaining strength to break the gun open.

Places two shells in and cocks it.

It fires, tears a hole in the wall.

Edmund puts the gun under his chin.

CLICK. CLICK.

Edmund pulls frantically at the trigger.

Nothing.

Shouts outside. The sound of a gate slamming open.

NEIGHBOUR (O.S.)

Ed! Winnie! Are you alright?

One last, futile CLICK.

FADE OUT.