

SOLITAIRE

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

Too early for sunlight.

RANDY DAVIS (42), upon awakening, turns on a lamp and slides out of bed. He throws on a robe, shuffles into the

KITCHEN

where he puts a pot of water on the stove. He yawns, waits for the water to boil.

Outside, a ratty screen door bangs against its frame in the rustling wind.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Randy bicycles past a DINER. He turns a corner, dismounts and walks it up to a pole, where he unravels a chain from its frame and locks it up.

INT. RESTAURANT/KITCHEN - DAY

Busy place. A greasy, t-shirted COOK at a stove. A PREP COOK peels potatoes. Employees come and go.

Randy furiously scrubs a pot in front of a sink full of dishes.

A WAITRESS, AMY (38), a hint of a smile across her red lips, whisks past. Three plates lined up along the length of her arm. Too busy for proper conversation.

AMY

Mornin', Randy.

RANDY

Hi, Amy.

A BUS BOY comes up quick, drops another load of dishes into the sink.

Randy's gaze follows her as she hip-checks through a swinging door, out into the dining room.

INT. RESTAURANT/DINING ROOM - LATER

Randy sits at a booth way back in the corner, away from the guests.

He sips coffee as he turns over playing cards, face up, onto rows of seven.

Amy comes up behind, curiously glances over his shoulder.

AMY

What are you playin'?

He glances at her, turns over another card.

RANDY

Patience.

Amy sits across from him, lets out a sigh.

AMY

Three doubles in a row. There's gotta be a better way.

(rubs her face)

So, how do you play?

RANDY

Hmm?

AMY

Patience. How do you play?

He glances up at a clock on the wall.

RANDY

Well, most people call it Solitaire. I like to call it Patience. It's pretty entailed. I don't think I'd have enough time to explain it all.

AMY

Oh.

Amy shifts in her seat.

AMY

So, um, what are you doin' Saturday night? You wanna, I don't know...catch a movie or something?

Randy freezes, card in hand. Can barely look her in the eye. Her soft features, her nervous smile as she awaits an answer.

She waves her hand in front of his face.

AMY

Hello?

RANDY

Um... Yeah. Sure. What kind of movie?

AMY

I haven't really given it much thought until now. Maybe we'll just kinda wing it. Here. Write down your number.

She rips a sheet of paper from her pad, takes a pen and hands it to him.

RANDY

My phone number?

She nods enthusiastically.

AMY

Yeah. I'll call you, then I'll come by and pick you up. Say around...six?

RANDY

Okay. Six is fine.

She rises, takes the paper, folds it twice, and slips it into her apron.

AMY

Well, I'm off for the day. I'll see you tomorrow night then.

RANDY
All right. See ya.

INT. RANDY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Not even a hint of organization.

Randy on his knees, wiping down a table. He gets up, grabs a spray bottle and spritzes the blinds over the picture window.

LATER

He grabs a pile of newspapers from a corner, stuffs them in a garbage bag.

KITCHEN

Randy swipes away a pile of junk from the dining table.

EXT. CURBSIDE - DAY

Randy drops the last of six trash bags at the curb, claps the dirt from his hands.

INT. RANDY'S HOUSE/SHOWER - DAY

He lets the hot water soak his face.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Wearing just a bath towel, Randy looks with dismay into his closet. Slim pickings, but he spots a white shirt and a tie. He takes it from its hanger.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

In a chair at the table, Randy waits. He checks the clock. 6:15 PM. Glances over to an old phone on the wall. It doesn't ring.

He continues this vigil throughout the night as the hands on the lonely clock face change... 7:00, 8:00, 8:30...

He runs his thumb and index finger down the length of his tie, then silently rises from his chair.

He opens the backdoor, pushes the screen door and it falls off it's hinges...

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Randy's breathing quickens, teeth clenched. Furious bordering on wrath. He grabs the door and hurls it into the yard.

He lights a cigarette, takes a pull. The cherry glows red. Settling down, he rolls up his sleeve and presses the cigarette onto the skin of his bicep.

He takes it away. Immediate blister. Takes another drag, then burns himself again.

He finishes the smoke, flicks it into the darkness. Wipes the ash from his arm, wipes his face and steps back into the

INT. KITCHEN

He goes to turn out the light when -- *KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.*

LIVING ROOM

He opens the door. It's Amy, wearing a pretty red dress and a sweater.

AMY

Oh my God, Randy... I am so sorry.

RANDY

I thought you weren't coming.

AMY

No, no. What happened was I had to get a babysitter for my daughter. She cancelled on me. So I had to call my sister. She said she could do it but not until later. Then I went to call you and realized I put your phone number in the wash...

(exasperated)

I just totally lost track. Henry down at the diner told me where you lived.

RANDY

I see.

She tries to catch her breath.

AMY

Are you gonna invite me in?

RANDY

Oh yeah. Sure.

He pushes the door open. She steps in, surveys her surroundings.

AMY

This is a cute little place you got.
Very clean.

RANDY

Thanks.

AMY

I'm so sorry. I feel like an idiot.

RANDY

Don't...feel that way. Really. It's
okay.

She notices a row of pictures lined along a shelf above the TV. She heads over, points to one -- **THREE MEN IN MILITARY DRESS.**

AMY

Is that you?

Randy removes a piece of lint from his shirt, suddenly realizing how ill fitting it is.

RANDY

Yeah, that's me.

AMY

My God, you look so young. And who's
this little angel?

She refers to the picture next to it, a smiling **LITTLE GIRL**, no more than six.

Randy sides up next to her.

RANDY

That's my daughter.

AMY

You have a daughter too. She's beautiful. Does she live with you?

He shakes his head.

RANDY

No. She lives with her mother.

AMY

I see. Do you get to see her much?

RANDY

I don't see her at all.

AMY

Oh, that's terrible. That's not by choice, is it?

RANDY

No, no. God, no. I just...

Amy studies him. The lines on his face, the slope of his puppy dog eyes.

Randy looks up at the picture of him in his Army fatigues. He picks it up, places it back.

RANDY

I'm not...ready yet.

AMY

(quietly)

Okay.

Amy clasps her hands together, embarrassed. Randy clears his throat, tries on a weak smile.

RANDY

So...

AMY

Well, would you still like to do something? We can try and make the most of this night. If you want to, that is.

RANDY

Sure. I guess it's too late for the movies, huh?

AMY

Yeah, I think so. Oh, I know. You can show me how to play that game. Remember? Patience.

RANDY

Okay. I'll have to get a deck of cards. It's a one player game, though.

He leaves.

Amy meanders about the room when she spots a shelf full of board games. This catches her interest. She reads, tracing a finger along the titles as she goes.

She carefully removes a box from the pile.

Randy comes back with his cards.

AMY

Can we play this instead?

RANDY

Chutes and Ladders? You serious?

She nods happily.

AMY

I haven't played this since I was a little girl.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A deck of playing cards lies untouched on the counter.

Seated across from Randy, Amy moves her piece on the board.

AMY

Five, six... Oh, a chute.

Randy watches as she slides her piece down.

RANDY

Some people believe everything in life happens by chance. You know, like a game.

AMY

Do you believe that?

RANDY

(shrugs)

I don't know. I've had my share of ups and downs, I can tell you that.

AMY

(pauses, then)

Well, all I can tell you about games is they're more fun when played with two.

RANDY

I guess you're right.

Randy rolls the dice. Seven. He moves his piece.

AMY

Do you smoke?

Randy rubs his arm.

RANDY

Every once in a blue moon. Why?

AMY

No, it's okay. I just thought I
smelled smoke is all.

(nervous laugh)

I used to smoke. Stopped though.

RANDY

What made you stop?

She picks up the dice, rolls, makes her move.

AMY

I guess I realized there were - are -
better ways to ease the pain that
living brings.

RANDY

Like what?

Reaching across the table, she takes his hand and lays the
dice in his palm. She looks him in the eye, her face warm and
inviting.

AMY

Your move.

FADE OUT.