

57 PERCENT UP

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY SUBURB - ESTATE ROAD - DUSK

Streetlights flicker to life.

As they warm up, their glow spreads across the houses either side of this ordinary road.

But not that ordinary - there's no traffic, or people.

It's like a scene from a movie where we expect a distant scream to break the silence.

But nothing happens...until...a small CAR enters the road, disturbing the static view.

It slows down to a crawl.

INT. KAREN'S CAR - DUSK

A mess of a car. Litter covers the dashboard and floor.

KAREN, 40, weathered faced, tired eyes, checks an address on a clipboard. Cigarette in hand, she scans the passing houses.

KAREN

Sixty five. Bingo.

Despite finding her destination, her gaze lingers on the House. Something on her mind.

EXT. ROADSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

The car pulls up.

Dressed in a Nurse's uniform, Karen steps out. Flicks her cigarette onto the ground.

She leans back into the car, grabs both her hand bag and a medical rucksack. An identity badge hangs around her neck.

EXT. REG'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DUSK

The door creaks opens as far as a security chain permits. Around the corner peers REG, 95, pale, skinny, frail.

KAREN

Hello Mr Jones, I'm Karen, your district Nurse. I've come to check your dressings.

She holds up her name badge.

REG

Oh, where's Sarah?

KAREN

I'm sorry, she's been with the police today. Had something stolen, I think. She'll be back tomorrow. Can I come in?

INT. REG'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DUSK

With a stick to help him walk, Reg shuffles into his lounge. He winces with each step.

Karen follows him in, gazes around the room. It's like a time capsule from the 1960's. Everything dated, everything faded.

And pride of place is 'his' chair, a worn out recliner. Alongside sits a handy table for his bits and pieces, an iPad being the only modern gadget.

Reg sits down and lifts his leg onto a foot-stall.

REG

It's still painful. I can't walk much. Stupid fall.

Karen drops her bags at the foot of his chair.

KAREN

My dear, it happens. And more so when you live alone. But I see you've got an iPad. To keep in touch with the family?

REG

Yes. It's all mumbo jumbo to me, but I get to see the grandkids. Actually, it's amazing what you can see on this thing.

Karen rolls up Reg's trouser leg to expose his injury.

KAREN

I've seen a few elderly patients using iPads, helps them feel connected. Ok, let's change these dressings. Have you taken your pain killers?

REG

This morning, I think.

KAREN

Well, I'll get you some.

Karen attends to the dressings.

Reg watches her closely, curious. She's scruffy, nicotine stained fingers, scuffed shoes - not what he expected.

REG

You been a nurse long?

KAREN

Sort of, I stopped a while ago. Had to give it up. But when they asked for old Nurses to come back, it seemed like a nice...

(smiles at Reg)

...opportunity. And your work?

REG

Oh, family business. Buying and selling. We were from the East End of London, moved out after the war.

KAREN

Were you there during the blitz?

Reg's eyes light up - a strong memory.

REG

Oh yes. Right in the heart of it. It wasn't easy but, in some ways, it was the best of times. You learnt a lot about people, what they could do. What they hid.

Karen sits back, pleased with her work.

KAREN

Feel better?

REG

Suppose. Still hurts, but thanks.

KAREN

Let's give it a few minutes to settle and I'll get you those pain killers. Where do you keep them?

REG

Oh, umm, in my bathroom, upstairs. Just give me a minute I'll--

KAREN

--don't you worry, I can get them.

REG

Thanks. Any chance of a cuppa? I persuade all my nurses to make me a tea. If you don't mind?

KAREN

That's fine.

INT. REG'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Karen cautiously enters, checks behind her.

She opens various draws, finds some cash. She pockets most of it, puts a little bit back.

Next, a jewellery box. Inside, various old rings, watches, earrings. She considers those with gems, pockets a few.

Karen shuts the box and heads into Reg's--

BATHROOM

She rummages through a large box of medicine, grabs two pills, and then takes a box for herself.

INT. REG'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Karen strolls in smiling, a mug of tea in hand.

KAREN

There you are, luv. Sorry it took a while. Here's your pills.

REG

Oh, you're a star.

Reg takes the pills with a glass of water.

REG

I think you should leave now.

Karen's head snaps up.

KAREN

Pardon?

REG

It's time for the clap.

Karen stares blankly at him.

REG

You know, the eight o'clock clap, for the health workers, outside. They like it around here. Only thing people go outside for.

KAREN

Oh, I see. I'm not sure. I feel guilty. Just returned.

REG

Now, what could you feel guilty for? Come on, you don't want to miss it.

Reg gingerly stands up. He gazes down.

REG
Don't forget your bags.

KAREN
Oh, yes. How could I forget?

Reg places a hand on her shoulder - he smiles.

REG
During the blitz, folk often got
flustered when the light shined on
them... Let's go.

Karen forces a thin smile.

I/E - REG'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Reg opens the door for Karen.

REG
Best I say goodbye, if Sarah is
coming back.

KAREN
Well, you may see me again.

REG
Oh, I doubt it.

Karen frowns - what did he mean?

REG
You must have many patients. Oh
look, your fans are here.

Karen gazes down the road at the NEIGHBOURS. They start
clapping, cheering and banging pans in support.

They spy Karen in her nurses uniform and cheer. She blushes.

KAREN
Just like the blitz spirit?

REG
A bit. Guess what, I read that
crime went up 57 percent in the
blitz. So many...opportunities.
(under his breath)
Good times.

Flustered, Karen gathers her kit.

KAREN
Surely not now.

REG
You'd be amazed what I've seen.

INT. REG'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - FLASHBACK

From his chair, Reg hears Karen's footstep upstairs. In his hand he holds his iPad. He taps on an icon.

INSERT

IPad Screen - Captured by a hidden camera, Karen pockets the cash.

BACK TO SCENE

Reg chuckles. He's not fazed.

With his stick he hooks Karen's handbag. Inside, he finds a wad of cash and several credit cards with different names.

REG
The years may change, but people
stay the same. What a shame...
(to the credit cards)
...she can't report you missing.

Reg laughs and pockets the cards.

END FLASHBACK

I/E - REG'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Karen soaks up the applause. Reg gives her a 'thumbs up' as he shuts the door and steps back into the--

HALLWAY

He reaches over to a phone, dials a number.

REG
(to phone)
Stevie my boy, it's Reg. I've got
some new credit cards for you.
(laughing)
Yes, more! It's like collecting
apples, they fall into my lap...
No, come round tomorrow, I've got
to call the Police first... Why?
Well, I've just been robbed. It's
disgusting. This generation is
messed up.

Reg laughs.

FADE OUT.