

ETERNAL MEMORIES

by

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INT. ETERNAL MEMORIES - SHOWROOM - DAY

The door opens RINGING the bell affixed above it. CHARLES TORALE (60's) enters, stopping a few feet in. He removes his wool cap.

He looks around. Beautiful studio prints on the walls. A table with various marble and granite surfaces. A TV built inside a tombstone plays a narrated slide show of black and white images of Sailors.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...was stationed at Pearl Harbor.  
He awoke that Sunday morning in  
December of 1941, like many of his  
shipmates, to the sounds of the  
Japanese attack.

The TV cuts to a BOW TIED MAN, interview style.

BOW TIED MAN (SCREEN)

My father only spoke to me about  
that day once. He said that there  
was no reason why he didn't die  
that day. That God spared him and  
he owed it to God to show him he  
didn't make a mistake.

The program continues MOS. Charles opens a fancy binder and flips through pictures and specs of custom grave monuments with televisions built in, stopping at the one entitled the Serenity: nine thousand dollars.

HENRY (O.S.)

And worth every penny.

HENRY DUMAS, (40's) the friendly proprietor of Eternal Memories, enters the showroom to greet Charles.

HENRY

Chamfer edging. Italian  
granite. Not to mention the 720p  
hi-def LCD and engraving  
illustration of your choice.

CHARLES

It's nice.

HENRY

That it is, my friend.

CHARLES  
You called and said--

HENRY  
Yes. Where are my manners? You must be itching to see your mother's tribute and here I am trying to get you to upgrade. C'mon back to my office.

CHARLES  
Thank you.

Henry leads Charles down the hall.

HENRY  
It really is a great monument though. Very classy.

INT. ETERNAL MEMORIES - OFFICE - DAY

Henry ushers him into his office, fully decorated in the finest mahogany.

CHARLES  
You have a wonderful office, Mr. Dumas.

HENRY  
Thank you, Charlie.

He offers him a seat in a oxblood leather chair then takes his place at his massive desk.

CHARLES  
Charles.

HENRY  
Come again?

CHARLES  
Charles. Most folks call me Charles. Only my mother called me Charlie.

HENRY  
Charles it is. While we're at it, call me Henry. Everyone does. Anyway, I think you will be pleased with the final result.

CHARLES

I hope so. The cemetery is starting to inquire about when the monument will be installed.

HENRY

I must apologize for that. See most people visit me before their loved ones pass. That way, when the day comes, we're able to set up the tribute with minimal delay. I assure you though, not a minute has been wasted.

CHARLES

I have to admit, I did get a little anxious when I couldn't reach you.

HENRY

Research. Did you know your mother spent quite a bit of time in Tennessee?

This obviously is news to Charles.

CHARLES

I wasn't aware of that. Hmmm. Mother never talked much about her childhood.

HENRY

See? That's what Eternal Memories is all about. Some people think that it's just a slide show in a gravestone. It's about showing the world who this person was that you loved so intensely. Showing the relatives they never got to meet where they came from. It's about... Look at me. Blabbing again. Why don't I just show you?

Henry dims the lights via remote. A partition in the wall opens revealing a large television.

ON THE TELEVISION

Fading in to various candid images in black and white and sepia images of a beautiful woman. Henry narrates on the audio track.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She was a free spirit. A tireless adventurer. A loving wife. A devoted mother. Margaret Louise Torale will forever live in our hearts.

Charles immediately tears up.

CHARLES

I've never seen those pictures of her when she was younger. Where did--

HENRY

Research, Charles.

ON THE TELEVISION

Charles gives a testimonial.

CHARLES (SCREEN)

My mother was the strongest, bravest woman I've ever known.

As the symphonic music swells, superimposed: GRETA TORALE.  
WE REMEMBER YOU.

HENRY

Don't worried. I used a lot of the photos you supplied as well.

Henry slides a decorative photo box towards Charles, who is too transfixed to notice.

ON THE TELEVISION

Stock footage of 1920's New York City give way to a grainy photo of husband, wife, and little girl.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Greta Torale, born Margaret Louise Beltrano on June 3rd, 1919, was the only daughter to Italian immigrants, Leon and Maria.

CHARLES

That's the only picture I've seen of her as a kid. She treasured it.

ON THE TELEVISION

A death certificate, filled out by hand, appears in frame.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Life was blissful until the age of ten. On Black Tuesday, Leon lost everything. He stole a pistol with the intent of killing himself and family. As luck would have it, the pistol only had two bullets leaving Greta the odd man out.

Confused, Charles turns to Henry.

CHARLES

Mr. Dumas, what is this?

HENRY

What I turned up in my research. A little much? Don't worry. The client gets final cut. Oh, you're gonna wanna watch this part.

ON THE TELEVISION

A newspaper headline: ORPHANAGE FIRE KILLS 10.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She would then spend the next four years at Tender Heart Orphanage until a suspicious fire ended her stay.

An old lady gives her testimonial.

OLD LADY (SCREEN)

I'll always remember when we got out she was standing there. No soot. Just staring at the flames. Smiling. A smile I'll never forget.

The screen slowly zooms on the flame-obsessed girl in the newspaper picture

CHARLES

Mr. Dumas. I don't what you're insinuating but--

HENRY

Shhh. It gets better.

ON THE TELEVISION

A red line makes its way from NYC to the Volunteer state.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So our little fire starter hauled it south, eventually to Carver, Tennessee where she was taken in by the kindly Tuckers. That was hunky doory, until Mr. Tucker could no longer turn down Greta's sexual advances.

Charles turns, furious, scrambling for the remote. Henry pulls it away.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

Constant advances. Who could blame him? Apparently Mrs. Tucker could. She was soon poisoned by the tart, along with her adulterating man.

CHARLES

Turn it off. Turn it off, now.

Charles is almost climbing the desk.

HENRY

But we haven't even got to when she falsely accused two black boys of raping her. That didn't end pretty.

CHARLES

I said turn it off!

HENRY

Or when she impersonated a war widow for the survivor's benefit.

Charles clutches Henry by the lapel.

CHARLES

Turn it off now, you sunnava bitch!

Casually he does. Smiling, Henry looks down at Charles' hands.

HENRY

You're ruining my suit.

Charles lets go. His adrenaline keeps him shaking.

CHARLES  
What the hell was that?

HENRY  
What you ordered.

CHARLES  
I didn't order that.

HENRY  
Yes you did. You ordered the full package which includes my thorough background checks. I worked tirelessly on that.

CHARLES  
You're the devil.

HENRY  
I'm not the devil. I'm not an animal. I'm a mirror. All of these things I've found are true.

CHARLES  
Liar!

HENRY  
Truth!

Henry pulls a folder out of his desk drawer and flings it at Charles. It's all the clippings, evidence, and more.

HENRY (cont'd)  
Just 'cause you didn't know about it doesn't mean it ain't true.

Charles lets the folder dump its contents to the floor. He sobs in his hands.

HENRY (cont'd)  
Now, as I said you have final cut.

CHARLES  
I'm not paying you.

Henry gets up and ejects a disc from the DVD player below the television.

HENRY  
Fine. I can just take what I found here and alert the authorities. It'll be too late to do anything but at least everyone will know  
(MORE)



HENRY (cont'd)  
that your mother was a lying,  
murderous whore. Or--

CHARLES  
Fuck you.

HENRY  
Or you can purchase this, the only  
copy, and then commission a more  
selective, family friendly version  
for, let's say a hundred thousand  
dollars. What do you say?

Charles can't speak. Henry walks up beside him.

CHARLES  
C'mon Charlie. Isn't your mother  
worth it?

Charles nods. Henry puts his hand on Charles' shoulder.

HENRY  
Good. Now while I got you here, you  
sure I can't interest you in the  
Serenity model?