ONE MAN'S TRASH

by

René Claveau

#708-1328 Homer St.
Vancouver, BC V6B 6A7
Canada
Ph: (604)612-6705
E-mail: rclaveau@gmail.com
FADE IN:

INT. STORAGE UNIT

Darkness. Keys jingle. A lock clicks open and is removed.

The steel door rolls up, spilling florescent light onto stacks of boxes, plastic bins, and household goods.

JAMES (40s), dour, dressed comfortably in jeans, t-shirt and boots, scrutinizes the contents of the storage unit, unfamiliar with them.

He opens the nearest plastic bin. Inside are stacks of home and garden magazines.

He opens a box next to it full of crossword and sudoku books.

A clothes rack against the wall catches his attention. He opens the doors to find it full of men’s clothes and shoes in plastic wrap.

James looks over the contents, sizing everything up. He pulls out his cell phone and makes a call.

JAMES
Hi. Are you busy right now?

James pulls the lid off another plastic bin full of kitchen utensils and appliances.

JAMES
I won an auction. Yeah, storage unit, finally got one. There’s more here than I thought.

James listens for a moment, letting his eyes wander. He spots an older gaming console.

JAMES
You’re the best. Unit two twelve.

James hangs up as he makes his way to the gaming console. He starts flipping through a box of games next to it.

LATER

James has cleared a space on the floor to sit. He looks through a photo album. The pictures have a few selfies of a MAN (50s) in various outdoor settings: a remote beach, a hiking trail, camping, in an RV.

Heeled boots echo towards the storage unit.
James continues through the photos as SUE (40s) strides into view, comfortable but stylish in jeans, a light jacket, boots, leather purse, hair tied back and little make up. She crosses her arms as she surveys the unit.

SUE
I can see why you bought this.
It’s kind of like ordered chaos.
Very you.

James tosses the photos into a box.

SUE
Not even a chuckle? Tough crowd.

James looks at Sue, distraught, pained.

JAMES
This guy...

His voice catches.

Sue sets her purse down and sits on the floor in front of him.

SUE
Talk to me.

James points to the box of photos.

JAMES
Travel photos and selfies.

James points to the clothes rack.

JAMES
Men’s clothes and shoes.

He gets up to show her the video games.

JAMES
Good games. Single player.

He pulls open the box of puzzle books.

JAMES
Crosswords. Sudokus.

SUE
I’m not following you...

JAMES
I do puzzles. I play games. I cook. I go places. There’s a box over there full of home and garden magazines. I have some of them.
James tries to regain control of himself as despair overtakes him.

JAMES
This is me, Sue. I’m looking at my future. Alone.

Understanding dawns on Sue.

SUE
The last couple of years have been rough for you since Carol left. You haven’t even tried dating, have you?

JAMES
I’m not ready.

SUE
You’re afraid to. Of being rejected.

James nods, embarrassed.

SUE
I get it. I really do.

JAMES
I need some air.

James leaves the unit. Sue listens to his footfalls in the corridor fade away. She looks around the unit. She spots an accordion file folder between boxes. Inside, she finds folded utility bills and starts reading.

EXT. STORAGE FACILITY – LATER

James paces around the parking lot.

He pulls out his cell phone and taps on Contacts.

He taps on CAROL, bringing up her number. His thumb hovers over the call button. And then--

Furious with himself, James jabs the back button, closing his contacts. The cell phone background is a picture of James and Sue laughing.

He looks at the picture and breathes, regaining his composure. He smiles faintly and looks in the direction of the storage unit.
INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

James walks up the corridor, tossing the keys in his hand as he walks.

He comes up to the door of the...

STORAGE UNIT

...and sees Sue waiting for him.

JAMES
Sorry about that.

SUE
Feeling better?

James nods.

SUE
Good. Let me show you something.

Sue takes out a crossword book and a sudoku book. She hands one to James and opens the other.

SUE
Look at the writing.

JAMES
What about it?

SUE
They aren’t the same.

JAMES
One is letters, one is numbers. How can you tell?

SUE
The sudokus are written left-handed.

James sees ink smudges that aren’t present in the crossword book.

SUE
Those single player games? Some of them have multiplayer modes. I even kicked your ass at a couple of them.

Sue moves to the clothes rack and does her best Vanna White impression.

James fumbles through the clothes, not sure what to look for.
SUE
Check the tags, dummy.

JAMES
Medium and large...

He checks the shoes, surprised by what he finds.

JAMES
Eight and ten.

SUE
I’m not finished yet!

Sue hands him two photos. One of the Man on a hiking trail. The other is a SECOND MAN (50s), same hair style, slightly slimmer.

SUE
You must have flipped through these pretty quickly to miss they’re of two different men.

James compares the pictures. He shakes his head, bewildered.

SUE
And then there’s this.

She holds out a cable bill. James’s eyebrows rise as he reads.

SUE
Twinkerbell and the Lust Boys of Naughtyland! I am so renting that.

JAMES
Twinkerbell?

SUE
You’re clearly not up on your gay porn.

James looks around the storage unit, stunned.

JAMES
They were a couple. How could I have gotten it so wrong?

SUE
I think you saw what you needed to see. Maybe this is your wake up call, Twinkerbell.

Sue pokes him in the ribs playfully. He smiles, but it’s quickly replaced by pain.
JAMES
Maybe it is. I didn’t realize how lonely I’ve been.

SUE
Maybe it means you’re ready to try again. And you will never be alone. I’m not going anywhere.

James turns to face her as her words sink in. It’s like he’s seeing her for the first time. He stares at her in surprise and wonder.

Sue meets his gaze, squirming as he keeps staring at her, but she maintains his gaze. She’s almost afraid to ask--

SUE
What?

James opens his mouth to speak...and backs down. He looks anywhere but at her.

JAMES
We’d better get this stuff cleared out.

Sue can’t quite hide her disappointment, but she tries.

SUE
That’s what I’m here for.

LATER

The storage unit is almost empty. Sue grabs a Monet water lilies print and her purse. James picks up the last box.

Sue walks to the corridor. James hasn’t moved.

SUE
Coming?

JAMES
You’re right. I haven’t been alone. You’ve always been there. You were there when I met Carol. You were there to pick up the pieces when it fell apart. You’ve been there for the best times and you’ve seen me through the worst. You’re the first person I think of to call when I need someone. You’ve been at the center of my world for as long as I can remember, and I think I’ve loved you for just as long.
Sue’s excitement grows as he talks. She savors the words she has longed to hear before responding.

SUE
I love you. I’ve always loved you.

JAMES
Why didn’t you say something?

SUE
I was afraid.

JAMES
I don’t want to be afraid any more.

James lets the box drop. He kisses Sue, deliberate and purposeful at first, and then they are kissing with passion and years of unfulfilled love.

They slowly come apart. Their eyes meet.

JAMES
Let’s go get rid of this crap.

SUE
How much did you pay for it?

JAMES
Four hundred.

Sue cringes playfully. She kisses him again.

SUE
Worth it.

James picks up the box and follows her out, pulling the storage unit door closed behind them.

FADE OUT.