"The Final Loneliness"

Short Screenplay
by
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"The Final Loneliness"

SUPER: "The end comes when we no longer talk with ourselves. It is the end of genuine thinking and the beginning of the final loneliness." Edward Gibbon

FADE IN

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

FRED (68), old and tired, sits in his armchair watching TV. ON THE TV SCREEN we see that the presenter of the show is faceless, blurred beyond recognition.

We scan the room and see photographs; pictures of Fred and his wife through the ages. The place hasn't been dusted in a long time. Old paintings cover the walls and then in one corner we see it

DEATH stands watching, cavernous eye sockets staring intently at the back of Fred's head.

Fred hobbles to his feet and slowly grabs his coat, putting it on.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Fred walks slowly along the street, passing faceless people that pay him no attention. Death follows not far behind. Fred stops outside a DINER and walks inside.

INT. DINER - DAY

The diner has a few customers all faceless. Fred sits on a stool at the serving counter, opposite a faceless FEMALE who waits silently for him to order.

FRED
Coffee.

The female turns away and pours him a coffee, silently placing it down in front of him. Fred pays and carries his coffee to a table, sitting down. Death stands behind him.
Fred looks out of the window, at the faceless people passing by. He follows one faceless person, Jenny (20's) young and exuberant, as she walks inside the diner preoccupied on her mobile phone.

She sits at Fred's table and hangs up the phone; turns to look at Fred. As she does so her face becomes visible and we see that she is attractive, she smiles infectiously at Fred. Fred smiles back.

JENNY
Men, ugh!

FRED
Well I can't really agree.

JENNY
I suppose not. It's not all men... just the ones I meet.

Death takes a few steps back and fades slightly.

FRED
Well I hope you meet the right one soon.

JENNY
Such a thing exists?

FRED
I'm sure that it does.

JENNY
Wish I had your faith grandpa.

Fred sips from his coffee as Jenny watches.

FRED
Would you like a cup?

Death fades completely.

JENNY
No, I just come in here to think... and bother people.

FRED
You're not bothering me.

JENNY
Ah! So sweet. I'm sure that I am though. I'll leave you to your coffee.
Jenny stands up.

FRED
No, really. You're not...

Jenny becomes faceless again and moves to another table. Fred goes back to his coffee. Death reappears, standing behind him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Fred shuffles past a row of stores and he stops at a newsstand to buy a newspaper from a faceless STALLHOLDER. Death hangs back a few paces, growing more substantial with each passing minute.

Fred continues walking along the street, distracted by the back page of the newspaper he is reading when he accidentally knocks against MAUD (64), sprightly and full of life, splitting her shopping bag. Vegetables scatter across the floor.

FRED
I'm so sorry.

Maud has an open face and she smiles easily.

MAUD
It's OK it was an accident.

FRED
Let me help you.

Death takes a few steps back and begins to fade. Fred tries bending down but isn't very good at it.

MAUD
Don't worry, I can deal with it.

Maud finishes collecting her shopping.

FRED
I'm really sorry.

MAUD
Will you stop apologizing. There's no need.

Fred smiles, nods and makes to continue on his way.
MAUD
If a gentleman really wanted to apologize he would offer a lady dinner.

Fred stops.

FRED
Dinner?

MAUD
Yes.

Fred thinks about it for a while.

FRED
OK. That would be lovely.

MAUD
We don't have to go out. Is your place OK?

FRED
Yes it is.

Death fades completely as Maud takes a note of Fred's address.

MAUD
Right then, seven thirty it is.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

Several things cooking on the hob and a roast in the oven. Fred makes sure that everything is running smoothly and walks into the

LIVING ROOM/DINING AREA

He polishes each piece of cutlery making sure they are pristine before laying them neatly on the table. A clock on the wall shows the time is almost seven thirty.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Maude stands outside her house holding a mobile phone pressed to her ear in one hand and the piece of paper with Fred's address on it in another.
MAUDE
Oh my... no...

Maude drops Fred's address onto the ground and hurries back into her house. The piece of paper is caught up by the wind and blows away.

We follow the piece of paper for a while as it is thrown up into the air and eventually lands precariously at the edge of a drain cover. Another gust of wind sends it falling down.

INT. FRED'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Fred sits at the table eating alone. The only sound that can be heard is the ticking of the clock that now reads nine thirty.

Death reappears behind him.

FRED
Back again then.

Fred continues eating, not looking back.

FRED
I know you're there, waiting.

Death stands watching, expressionless.

FRED
Not like I have anybody else to talk to.

Fred finishes up his dinner and takes the plate into the

KITCHEN

where he rinses the plate under the sink. Death follows in behind him.

FRED
I see you're just like everybody else. No time for an old man like me. What could we possibly have in common?

Fred chuckles to himself as he walks back into the
LIVING ROOM

Fred sits in his chair and switches on the TV.

FRED
After all I'm only a human being
with a human being's thoughts and
feelings. What could I possibly
have to talk about?

Death stands expressionless behind him, growing
stronger, more substantial.

A tear falls down Fred's cheek and Death finally moves
to stand in front of him. Fred looks up into Death's
cavernous eyes. Death holds out its arms, asking for a
hug.

Fred breathes softly and considers Death's offer.
Finally he stands up and Death gives him a heartfelt
embrace. They walk away together, arm in arm, leaving
Fred's old body behind.

FADE TO BLACK