

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

FADE IN:

INT. NURSINGHOME BEDROOM - DAY

Some effort has been made to give this bedroom a homey and comfortable feel, but there is no mistake, this is not a home. This is a place where you come to wait for God.

MILDRED (70) dressed in a simple dress, thick brown pantyhose wrinkled at the ankles and out of style shoes, sits in a chair by a small table.

With repetitive motions she shreds a paper napkin into tiny pieces.

The door opens, VERNON (70) steps in. He wears a nice dark suit and tie, carries with him a bouquet of red roses, a Valentines card and a box of chocolates.

He closes the door behind him.

VERNON

Mildred...Happy Valentines Day.

He strolls up to Mildred, leans forward, kisses her on her cheek.

She slaps him across his face.

He smiles with sadness.

MILDRED

You do that again and I will tell mother.

He puts the flowers on the table.

VERNON

Mildred, it's me Vernon. I'm your husband... Remember?

MILDRED

Mary took my dolly.

He sits down in a chair across from her. His cheek is red.

MILDRED

She steals everything.

VERNON

Mary passed away fifteen years ago.

He holds out the card for her.

VERNON

Would you like me to read it to
you?

She takes the card, looks at it, starts to shred it.

A sad expression in his eyes.

VERNON

Valentines Day used to be our
favorite day...That's the day we
first met.

Mildred tries to get out of her chair, a belt holds her down.
She angrily pulls on the belt.

MILDRED

I don't like when you tie me to the
chair.

He gently touches her shoulder.

VERNON

Sit down dear. They just don't want
you to wander around.

MILDRED

I have to pick up David from
school.

He opens up the box of chocolates.

VERNON

Here, have one of these. They are
your favorites.

He shows her the chocolates.

She takes one, chews it for a bit, spits it out into her
hand, mixes it with the paper pieces.

He closes his eyes.

VERNON

We always did something special on
this day... Remember that time when
we went to New Orleans?

With his eyes still shut a smile grows on his face.

MILDRED

David is a good boy. He loves his
mommy.

VERNON

It was one of the best days of my
life.

His smile turns bitter sweet.

He gets up, walks over to the big window, watches the birds
perform their spring mating rituals on the well manicured
lawn.

Mildred smears the chocolate paper pieces on the table.

VERNON

David called yesterday. He says
they might come down and visit for
fourth of July...if they have the
time.

She fingers a catheter tube leading to a half full bag
hanging discreetly on the side of the chair.

VERNON

Everyone at the dance group sent us
a card...They all said they miss
us.

Her feet start to tap a little dance.

She tugs on the tube.

He stares out the window, blinks to hold back tears.

VERNON

I'm lonely Millie...I am so
lonely...I have no one --

He glances over at her, tears build up.

VERNON

I don't even have you anymore.

She pulls hard on the catheter, winces, pulls harder, drops
it on the floor.

A puddle builds under her chair.

He averts his eyes. His lower lip quivers.

With a vacant glance Mildred pulls petals off the roses.

Vernon struggles to keep from crying.

He peers over at her again as the rose petals fall down and floats in the puddle on the floor.

He can't fight it anymore, he cries, tears flow.

VERNON

I don't know what to do Millie.

She looks down at the petals in the puddle, picks them up.

He stares out the window, covers his face with his hands.

He lets his hands fall to his sides, looks up, closes his eyes, takes a deep breath.

He opens his eyes, looks at his wife picking up petals, mixing them with the chocolate-paper goo on the table.

He turns to the bed, picks up the pillow, holds it close to his chest.

VERNON

I don't want to do this.

He nervously fingers the pillow, turns towards her.

VERNON

You understand, don't you?

On shaky legs he steps closer to her.

She hums a tune, taps her feet.

With trembling hands he holds the pillow out in front of her face, steps closer.

She looks up at him. Looks him in the eye.

MILDRED

Vernon? What are you doing?

He looks shocked. He stops dead in his tracks.

He puts the pillow down.

VERNON

(excitedly)

Millie, you remember me?

She stares blankly at him.

MILDRED

Mary's turning six on Friday.
Mother and I are going to bake a
cake.

His hopes are crushed, his shoulders slump. He walks towards
the door, looks back once, continues. He opens the door.

VERNON

I love you...I always did and I
always will.

He leaves without looking back.

FADE OUT: