

DESPERATE AGE

Written by

Charles Forsgren & Timothy Watkins

Inspired by true events

1215 N 88th St.
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 235-1808

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mid-morning in the outdated, funky living room of an elderly couple. VIRGINIA, a grandmotherly woman in her 70s, is tidying up when she finds some PAPERS and MAIL that she finds puzzling. She studies them curiously; perplexed, worried.

MARTIN, her husband, enters behind her wearing a robe.

MARTIN

Hey, Virginia. Take a look at this.

Virginia glances to look over her shoulder.

VIRGINIA

What is it, dear?

She turns around to face him. Martin has a raging hard-on.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Oh my goodness.

Martin smiles devilishly.

MARTIN

I took a Viagra.

He crosses over to her playfully and takes her in his arms, kissing her with passion. She's pleasantly surprised and drops the perplexing papers, forgetting about them.

They get themselves down onto the couch gently and Martin runs his hands over Virginia's body, unbuttoning her dress with excited, labored breathing. Virginia responds and reaches to touch his Viagra-assisted hard-on with a giggle.

Martin suddenly clutches at his chest and contorts in pain. He rolls over onto the couch, displacing Virginia.

Virginia frantically tries to process the situation. She begins to realize what must be happening.

VIRGINIA

Oh my god! Martin! What's wrong? Is it your heart?

Martin cannot respond, but desperately clutches at Virginia, as she weeps and clutches at him, not knowing what to do. She becomes almost incoherent.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Martin! What should I do?! Don't you dare leave me!

Martin starts to wane.

INT. DRUG STORE AISLE - DAY

DELORIS, a forceful woman in her 70's, tries to read the price on some vitamins and slips on her glasses to better see. She registers the price and makes a face. Too expensive.

She surreptitiously glances left and right before stealthily slipping the package into her handbag with her glasses and moves away as if just innocently browsing.

A ways down the aisle, her conscience gets the better of her and she reaches into her purse with a grimace and slips the package onto a passing shelf.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Virginia is sitting alone crying and clutches her handbag on her lap; she dabs her eyes with a lace handkerchief.

She looks up and sees her dear friend Deloris approaching. She stands as Deloris nears and steps in to embrace. Deloris is stiff but allows the hug, awkwardly patting her upset friend on the back.

VIRGINIA

Oh, Deloris...

Deloris extricates herself from the embrace and steps back some as Virginia continues to hold on to her arms, keeping them face to face.

Virginia looks as if she might break into tears.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

It doesn't look good.

Deloris looks at her friend and tries to be tender, with some effort.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Deloris is drinking a cup of coffee and working the crossword puzzle with a pen on a folded section of newspaper.

KATHERINE, a harried woman in her mid-40s in a convenience store smock, comes down the hallway pulling a 6 year old girl, CHARITY, by the hand. Trailing behind is ROGER, her mid-40s overweight husband, who'd rather be almost anywhere else.

Katherine pauses in the middle of the waiting area, looks around, and makes an exasperated sound. Deloris looks at her watch and then up at Katherine.

DELORIS
Glad you could make it.

Katherine almost fights back but then bites her tongue.

KATHERINE
Where's my mother?

DELORIS
She's in your father's room.

Deloris gestures.

DELORIS (CONT'D)
167. Down towards the end.

Katherine pushes Charity slightly towards her husband.

KATHERINE
Watch her while I go down there.

Roger protests. He throws up his hands.

ROGER
Maybe I want to go down there.

Katherine pauses briefly and gives him an irritated blank stare. She rolls her eyes and moves away.

KATHERINE
I don't care.

ROGER
Deloris, can you watch Charity?

Deloris nods, musters a half-smile for Charity, and pats the chair next to her. Charity climbs onto the chair while Roger heads down the hallway.

Charity kicks her feet nervously and stares down at the floor until she senses Deloris watching.

DELORIS
You don't drink coffee do you?

Charity crinkles her nose at the thought and shakes her head.

DELORIS (CONT'D)
Of course not. How about ice cream?

Charity's eyes brighten some and she nods tentatively. Deloris stands up and starts to walk off but pauses. Charity is still sitting.

DELORIS (CONT'D)
Well come on then.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Virginia is sitting next to her husband. He's connected to electrical monitoring and breathing machines.

Katherine enters the room, followed by Roger. Virginia is pleased to see her daughter and starts to stand up to meet an expected embrace, but Katherine approaches her father from the other side of the bed and leaves her mother hanging, so Virginia settles back into her chair.

Roger scrutinizes the medical equipment. Katherine regards her father.

KATHERINE
So he's not really dead, then?

Virginia is perplexed.

VIRGINIA
Well, yes... or no, rather. We need to decide what to do.

Katherine looks over at her mother annoyed by her weakness. She looks back at the myriad equipment.

KATHERINE
Well is he ever going to wake up?

She looks into her mother's eyes and Virginia gives a barely perceptible shake of the head.

Katherine looks at her father and has a brief moment of possible tenderness, but she resists it and steps back from the hospital bed. She refuses to allow herself to choke up and turns to leave.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
This stuff probably costs a fortune, Mother.

Roger shrugs noncommittally and follows.

Virginia regards her inert husband in the bed sadly. She has never known adult life without him.

INT. HOSPITAL BREAK ROOM - DAY

Deloris glances around cautiously as she refills her cup of coffee from the employee coffee machine. An ORDERLY enters.

ORDERLY

Ma'am you're not supposed to be in here. This is for employees only.

Deloris starts to protest with an irritated gesture that it's just a cup of coffee, but then catches herself.

DELORIS

(faking confusion)

Oh my. I get so confused in this place. I hate hospitals. Sorry.

Deloris rushes past the orderly into:

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Deloris enters the busy emergency room and notices a VAGRANT in obvious agony lying on a gurney. She takes a step towards him in curiosity. He tries to reach to her and she avoids his touch with disgust.

Light is quickly fading from the man's eyes.

A NURSE rushes by and snaps Deloris out of her fascination.

DELORIS

Hey, just because this man is filthy, doesn't mean you can ignore him.

The nurse is startled by Deloris' abrupt nature and grabs the man's chart and takes a look at it. Someone calls for her and she puts the chart back.

NURSE

We'll try to get to him as soon as we can.

The nurse moves on. The man starts to gasp for air. Deloris is wide eyed as she witnesses the man's mortality.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Deloris and Virginia are sitting on a bench in silence. Virginia's sad. Deloris nihilistically glances over at a man smoking off to the side of the area and calls out to him.

DELORIS

Hey, can I have one of those cigarettes?

The man nods briefly and reaches into his pocket to bring out the pack as he crosses to Deloris. Virginia is shocked.

VIRGINIA

What are you doing? You quit
smoking 25 years ago.

Deloris shrugs as she takes the offered cigarette, puts it to her mouth and leans forward to the man's lighter. She takes a tentative draw and nods thanks to the man as he moves away silently. She speaks to Virginia rebelliously.

DELORIS

What? Is it going to kill me now?

Virginia grimaces disapprovingly. Deloris takes another draw on the cigarette and realizes she no longer enjoys it. She exhales and stubs it out distastefully. She glances over at Virginia and shrugs unapologetically.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

I could burst into flames right
here in front of this hospital and
no one could be bothered to put the
old lady out.

She gestures angrily at the hospital. They sit in silence for a few moments. The man leaves. Deloris contemplates.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

So what are you going to do,
Virginia? Aren't you just
prolonging the inevitable?

Virginia looks over at Deloris sadly, unsure.

VIRGINIA

I suppose you're right.

She starts to cry quietly.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

It wasn't supposed to be like this.
We were going to go to Florida. We
were going to be together.

Deloris puts her hand on Virginia's, but doesn't know how to be tender.

EXT. DELORIS' HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Deloris pulls her old lady car into the driveway. The lawn is overgrown and the once beautiful house is in need of some repair.

INT. DELORIS HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Deloris enters the house, picks up the MAIL off of the floor and glances through them as she crosses the room. Several are stamped "urgent reply requested" or "final notice."

A POSTCARD of FLORIDA with a picture of several seniors enjoying life on the beach catches her attention. She turns the card over and there is an (800) number printed with "Call us for information about your Florida Retirement."

Deloris absentmindedly drops the rest of the mail into the garbage as she studies the postcard for a moment.

She looks out the window at her YOUNG NEIGHBOR COUPLE doing yard work. As they work together the husband affectionately pats his wife's bottom and she playful swats at his hand.

Deloris is annoyed at their behavior and takes another glance at the postcard. She leans it up against a lamp on a side table as if on display and leaves the room.

INT. VIRGINIA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

There are several people gathered around in little groups in Virginia's modest front room. The dining table is spread with various casseroles and plates of food. Virginia is standing, people comforting her and offering condolences.

Deloris is moving in and out of the kitchen, carrying food out and returning with dirty dishes. She checks the coffee service and notices the sugar bowl is empty, so she takes it into the kitchen.

INT. VIRGINIA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Deloris opens a cupboard to check for sugar and finds it basically empty, except for a few cans of tuna. She's surprised to try a few more with the same result.

She goes to her purse and digs out a baggie with a collection of individual packets of sweeteners. She rips several open, dumps them into the sugar bowl, throws the packets away, and takes the bowl out to the living room.

INT. VIRGINIA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Deloris is washing some dishes in the sink when Virginia enters. She comes alongside Deloris and tries to straighten things.

DELORIS

Oh, don't worry about this,
Virginia. I'll take care of it.

VIRGINIA

Thank you, Deloris. I appreciate
it.

Katherine enters the kitchen and glances at her mother and Deloris briefly before going to the refrigerator to look inside. She digs around inside and brings out a beer.

KATHERINE

Is this all the beer you have?

VIRGINIA

I'm not sure. Whatever your father
has in there.

Virginia moves to the refrigerator and bends in to take a look.

Katherine pops the top on the can and leans back against the counter as her mother digs through the refrigerator. Deloris continues to wash the dishes in the sink.

KATHERINE

So, Mom, did uh, Dad have a will?

Virginia comes back up out of the refrigerator empty handed and shuts the door, turning to Katherine.

VIRGINIA

No, I don't think so. Why?

Katherine shrugs and takes a swig of the beer.

KATHERINE

Well did he leave me any sort of
inheritance or something? With
Charlotte dumping Charity on us and
all, we could really use some money
- so I'd like to get whatever he
left to me.

Deloris tenses at the sink and grimaces angrily as she rinses. Virginia is unsure what to say and turns up her hands some.

VIRGINIA

Oh, Honey, it's not like your
father and I ever really had a lot
of money. We pretty much just live
on his pension from the factory and
on Social Security.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

You know that the offer to help Roger get a job still stands. I'm sure I could...

KATHERINE

Oh for the final time, mother, Roger is not going to waste his life at the factory. Will you please just drop it?

After an awkward moment, Virginia tries to gently offer some additional explanation.

VIRGINIA

Well, when we helped you and Roger with that loan for your house we had to take a second mortgage ourselves.

KATHERINE

(defensively)

Daddy said that you gave that money to us, mother. He said we didn't have to pay it back.

VIRGINIA

Well, I'm sorry dear, all we've really got is a little savings someplace and this house, and the bank mostly owns it.

Katherine looks at her mother suspiciously.

KATHERINE

Didn't Dad have insurance? You'll probably get a big pile of cash now.

Deloris can't hold her tongue any longer. She turns quickly on Katherine and shakes her wet finger at her.

DELORIS

Your mother doesn't owe you something, you spoiled brat. You need to show her a little gratitude!

Katherine's eyes grow wide with indignation. She swats Deloris's finger away and steps towards the angry old woman.

KATHERINE

Stay out of this, Deloris! Don't you wave your finger in my face, and don't speak to me like I'm some little girl! This doesn't have anything to do with you.

Virginia tries to intercede briefly, but is too timid.

DELORIS

Well you are being disrespectful to your mother, and she's my friend. And I won't stand for that.

Katherine holds her tongue in anger and stares down Deloris for a moment before shaking her head as if arguing weren't worth it. She takes her beer and leaves.

Virginia is upset and sits at the kitchen table. Deloris fumes and grabs the dish towel, drying the dishes with purpose.

INT. DRUG STORE PHARMACY COUNTER - DAY

The PHARMACIST returns to the counter with some bottles for Virginia.

PHARMACIST

I'm terribly sorry to hear about your loss. I've updated the system so this won't happen again.

Virginia nods.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

OK, that'll be \$115.

Virginia seems surprised and embarrassed.

VIRGINIA

How much did you say?

PHARMACIST

115.

Virginia looks in her wallet. She glances up at the pharmacist momentarily, opens the coin compartment and stirs with her finger while looking inside.

VIRGINIA

Maybe I can come back for the blood pressure one. I guess I'll just cut down on the salt. What's that make it?

The Pharmacist nods and turns to the cash register trying to cover his embarrassment for her with his professionalism.

INT. DRUG STORE FRONT - DAY

Deloris is browsing as Virginia approaches with her bag. Deloris joins her and they walk towards the door.

DELORIS

Were you able to get everything?

VIRGINIA

Yes, ah, of course. Thank you for waiting.

They walk out.

EXT. DRUG STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

Deloris and Virginia are walking toward Deloris' long old lady car in the drug store parking lot.

VIRGINIA

So shall we head over to the blood bank?

Deloris is staring at the homeless man in front of the grocery store.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Deloris?

Deloris realizes that she is lost in thought and returns her attention to Virginia.

DELORIS

I'm sorry?

VIRGINIA

What's wrong? Why are you making that face?

DELORIS

Nothing's wrong. I always see that man. How does a person allow themselves to become that? Just give up and become disgusting.

She shakes the thought off.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

It's nothing. What were you saying?

VIRGINIA

I was asking if we can go to the blood bank.

Deloris grimaces. Virginia tries to sound enticing.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

They give you cookies and juice after you donate.

Deloris shrugs and pulls out her keys as she walks around the car to the driver's side door.

DELORIS

OK, fine.

A drug store EMPLOYEE comes running up to them and awkwardly speaks to Deloris.

EMPLOYEE

Excuse me, ma'am, I think you forgot to pay for something.

Deloris looks surprised. A bit of indignation takes over her face.

DELORIS

I beg your pardon?

Deloris and the employee stare at each other for a moment. Virginia is perplexed. The employee points.

EMPLOYEE

Someone saw you put a candy bar in your purse.

VIRGINIA

What is he talking about, Deloris?

Deloris glances over at Virginia then puts on a look of embarrassment.

DELORIS

Oh dear, I forgot about that. Of course I was going to pay.

She digs into her purse innocently and pulls out a candy bar.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

I suppose I don't really want it now...

She hands the candy back to the employee carelessly and starts to get in the car.

DELORIS (CONT'D)
We're going to have cookies anyway.

INT. VIRGINIA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Deloris is in Virginia's kitchen, obviously irritated. Virginia is apologetic. Charity is sitting at the kitchen table coloring.

DELORIS
So we're just not going to go now?

VIRGINIA
Well, we can't take a child to bingo. He said he had an interview.

DELORIS
I don't believe it. And why can't we take her? She'll just sit there and color - whether it's here or it's there. We'll get her an ice cream. She likes ice cream.
(to Charity)
You want to get an ice cream?

VIRGINIA
Let's just go next week.

Deloris rolls her eyes and goes to the refrigerator.

DELORIS
Well do you have any wine then?

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Deloris walks towards the supermarket looking through her coupon book when she notices MICHAEL(45-55), the homeless man she saw earlier, sitting on the ground near the door, panhandling. He has a hastily scrawled CARDBOARD SIGN that says, "Anything helps, God Bless."

Deloris looks at Michael with disapproval as she approaches. He looks hopeful, like she might give him some money.

MICHAEL
Spare change, Ma'am?

Deloris shakes her head ever-so-slightly and makes a displeased little grunt as she walks past.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Deloris selects a very large bottle of cheap rose wine from the shelf of bargain wines and puts it into her basket.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

The cashier is ringing up Deloris' things. She is holding back the large bottle of wine.

She hands the cashier her coupons.

DELORIS

Don't forget it's double coupon day
with my super saver senior card.

The cashier nods.

CASHIER

Yes, ma'am.

The cashier scans the coupons and the register beeps. He looks at the coupon.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry ma'am but this coupon is
expired.

DELORIS

Well I've never had a problem using
expired coupons here before.

The cashier pauses not knowing what to do.

The other people in line are annoyed by Deloris.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

Fine, let me speak to your manager.

The cashier gives in and punches in some numbers on the register until the discounted price comes up. He puts his best fake smile on and turns back to Deloris.

CASHIER

OK, you saved \$6.50 today.

Deloris smiles curtly and pushes the big jug of wine towards the cashier.

DELORIS

Great, then I've earned this.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Deloris comes out of the supermarket to find Michael still sitting on the ground, panhandling. He looks at her and seems to have forgotten that he already asked her for change.

MICHAEL

Can you spare some change, Ma'am?

Deloris pauses and starts to say something, catches herself, and starts again.

DELORIS

Why should I give you money? Do I look like I have too much of it?

MICHAEL

Hey, lady, I just want to get something to eat.

DELORIS

Yeah, I bet you do.

She looks him over critically, with distaste.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

I see you here panhandling all the time. Why don't you get a job?

Michael shrugs.

MICHAEL

Nobody wants to hire a dirty drunk, right?

DELORIS

Well, why don't you take a shower and put on some clean clothes?

MICHAEL

Easier said than done. I don't have my own place - I don't have a shower. And I'd rather eat than pay to wash my clothes at the laundromat, you know?

DELORIS

Well, you smell. You can't expect someone to give you a job if you stink to high heaven.

He shrugs again, shamefully. She regards him for a few moments.

DELORIS (CONT'D)
Are you incapacitated in some way?
Or just a drunk?

Michael looks up at Deloris.

MICHAEL
I'm not really a drunk. I just lost my job. After a while I couldn't pay my rent. One thing led to another, and, you know... Next thing I know I'm begging for change in front of a grocery store. Sometimes all you get is enough for a drink.

He shrugs and looks vacantly off into the distance.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Not much else to look forward to, you know?

DELORIS
So you're not mentally ill?

MICHAEL
Not that I know of.

DELORIS
Then I take it, you're off your crazy medication?

MICHAEL
I don't take any medication. I mean, I'm not supposed to take any.

DELORIS
Don't you have any family that can take care of you?

MICHAEL
No. My wife left me... about three years ago... Any other questions that are none of your business?

Michael pushing back at her gives Deloris a sly grin. She cups her face a bit as she looks down at him, trying to make a decision. Finally she takes another breath and grimaces with a shrug.

DELORIS
Well, come on then. I've got a bathroom down in my basement; you can get yourself cleaned up there.

She starts to take off toward her big old lady car. Michael is surprised and starts to move into action instinctively, but pauses, almost confused.

MICHAEL

Wait? What did you say?

Deloris pauses and turns back towards him, impatient now that she has made her decision.

DELORIS

I said, come on. I'll give you something to eat and we can get those smelly clothes washed up. But you better not be some kind of crazed lunatic, or I'll shoot you with the pistol I keep here in my handbag.

She raises her arm briefly to indicate the purse, and turns toward her car again.

Michael quickly gathers his sign and box of change. He moves after her rapidly but with stiffness.

EXT. DELORIS' HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Deloris' old lady car pulls into the driveway of her modest little house and parks. All the car windows are down.

She gets out of the car with purpose and starts towards the house with her grocery bag but pauses when she realizes Michael is still in the car. She turns towards him with impatience and tries to coax him out of the car.

DELORIS

Well, come on. You want to get cleaned up, don't you? No need to be shy, now. Let's go.

He hesitantly exits the car and follows her into the house looking at the unkempt yard.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE BASEMENT - DAY

Deloris is coming down the steps from the house into the basement. She calls back behind her towards Michael.

DELORIS

Now watch your step here, these stairs are steep.

Michael follows her down into the basement. There is a large basin and laundry machines, and a small restroom with toilet and shower to the side. Things are stacked neatly on shelves lining the walls.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

OK, the shower's in there. There's some soap and some shampoo in there, I reckon. I'll bring you an old towel. You go ahead and take off your things and leave them here, and I'll put them in the wash while you're in the shower. I can probably find something for you to wear in the meantime.

Michael looks around, checking out the space, perhaps a little embarrassed and bewildered at her kindness.

MICHAEL

Uh, thanks. I appreciate it.
You're, uh, being really kind.

He takes a breath to catch himself from suddenly being too emotional.

Deloris has a brief moment of tenderness in her eyes, but shakes it off.

DELORIS

Well, go ahead and get those things off. I'll go upstairs and fix you something to eat. Have you eaten anything today? Or just drank?

She looks at him matter-of-factly, but he is embarrassed and hangs his head a bit. She nods her head knowingly, but tries to go kind of easy on him.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

OK, go on. Get to it.

She leaves him standing there and walks with purpose up the stairs.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE BASEMENT BATHROOM - DAY

The shower is running inside the bathroom as Deloris knocks loudly on the door and opens it without waiting for a response. She leans into the steamy little bathroom and calls to Michael, in the shower.

DELORIS

Here's a towel for you. I'll just set it here on the seat of the toilet. And I brought you toothbrush and a razor, if you want to shave. It's pink, but it's new. It should work just fine for you.

MICHAEL

(calling from under the shower)

Uh, thanks.

She steps in and puts the items on the toilet seat while trying to avert her eyes, but takes a cautious look at the shower, where she can see Michael's figure vaguely through the semi-opaque glass. She watches him curiously. He's just in the middle of washing his hair and pauses to listen, hands full of soapy lather on his head, having not heard her leave.

Deloris realizes she's being nosy and backs out of the bathroom quietly; gently pulling the door shut.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

Deloris is cooking when Michael comes in cautiously, a little embarrassed, wearing a small old lady robe tied around the middle and exposing most of his bare chest. He is clean shaven with wet hair. Deloris turns to greet him and is surprised that he has cleaned up so well.

DELORIS

Oh my! Look at you.

Michael strokes his chin self-consciously.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

OK, you can have a seat right there. I'm just fixing you a plate.

He sits carefully where she indicated and looks around briefly. She finishes assembling a big plate of food and sets it in front of him.

He nods at her slightly with humility and digs in. She leans back against the counter and regards him, but turns her back on him briefly to take a big swig from her water glass half full of rose.

Michael finishes chewing the food in his mouth and speaks without looking up from his plate.

MICHAEL

You mind if I have some of that?

She looks at him as if to scold him, but instead shrugs before getting him a glass, setting it before him, and filling it mostly full. She tops her own glass off and leans back against the counter, watching him eat.

DELORIS

What's your name?

MICHAEL

Michael. How about you?

DELORIS

Deloris.

Michael regards her briefly and tries to be friendly.

MICHAEL

Your friends call you Didi?

She screws up her face.

DELORIS

No, of course not.

Michael is mildly chastised and returns to his food. He steals a glance at her face to make sure she isn't mad, and takes a big swig of the rose wine.

He continues to eat as she studies him curiously.

MICHAEL

This is really good.

He gestures at the plate and tries to make small talk.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I like how you put the beans in the corn like this... it's different.

Deloris nods briefly but doesn't answer. She turns to busy herself with the dishes. Eventually she speaks without facing him, trying to be matter-of-fact.

DELORIS

It's called succotash. My late husband was from the south - he liked it that way.

Michael nods thoughtfully as he chews and looks around casually, as if to discern any evidence of her late husband in the kitchen.

Nothing indicates his recent presence, and he quietly tries to take another deep drink from his glass of wine as she has her back turned.

Deloris has a brief moment of reverie and finishes off her own glass of wine before turning back around.

DELORIS (CONT'D)
I don't suppose you have someplace
to sleep, do you?

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE BASEMENT

Deloris has an armful of blankets and old quilts and is making up a bed on a cot off to the side in the basement. Michael is standing nearby awkwardly.

DELORIS
It's just an old camping cot...
it's pretty sturdy... You should be
fine -

She shrugs a bit uncomfortably.

DELORIS (CONT'D)
It's just for one night, of course.

MICHAEL
No, I really appreciate it. You're
really being very kind...

She glances at him briefly.

DELORIS
We used to go camping with these
years and years ago. My late
husband loved the outdoors...

Michael is silent and doesn't know really what to say. He moves closer and awkwardly puts his hand on her shoulder in an effort to be comforting, but ends up uncomfortably patting her a few times.

MICHAEL
I guess you must miss him...

Deloris is surprised at the contact, but realizes halfway through her slight recoil that he's being gentle, and she allows herself to take a bit of enjoyment from his touch. She closes her eyes and ever-so-slightly leans into him.

DELORIS
I think maybe I've had a little too
much rose...

Deloris takes a deep breath and moves into Michael's arms with awkwardness that is overcome by the tenderness of the moment. Michael is uncomfortable, but he too is a bit drunk.

They kiss awkwardly but passionately in an unpracticed manner. He tries to be tender with her as they move down to the half-made cot.

She initiates more intimate contact by rubbing her hand over his body and to his crotch. They become eager, and he begins to open her blouse but then pauses to make sure she's okay with it. As he looks questioningly into her face, Deloris abandons all remaining reserve and nods her head definitively and helps him out of his clothes as well.

Soon they are having intercourse; he is on top of her, she is lying on the cot. Their movements have become more urgent and practical. It is not romantic, it is no longer really passionate. Their faces are near each other, but they have each retreated into their own experience, and do not look at each other or kiss.

It is over pretty quickly, and Michael is spent. He collapses onto her exhausted. Deloris is also out of breath from the uncommon exertion and blinks heavily as reality begins to creep back into existence.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

I, uh... Oh, my...

She works her way free of him and gathers most of her clothes in haste and embarrassment. Michael is still slightly out of breath and in a pleasant state of post-coital satisfaction. He doesn't attempt to keep her there or watch her go. He pulls a blanket over himself and settles himself to sleep.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Deloris pours Virginia some coffee. She puts it down in front of her friend and then gets a quart of cream from the refrigerator and sets it on the table.

VIRGINIA

Well I think it's a lovely idea,
Deloris. A truly generous gesture.

Deloris conceals an uncomfortable look from Virginia as she fills her own coffee cup.

Virginia brightens suddenly as she has an idea.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

We should help him get a job!
Don't you think that would be the
most charitable thing?

Deloris grimaces.

DELORIS

We don't even know if he can work.
He's probably a hopeless alcoholic.

She looks around at the clock and gestures.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

Well, it's 8:45 already and he's
still asleep down there. Probably
terribly lazy.

Virginia considers this for a moment. Deloris allows herself
to feel contempt for Michael and some disgust at herself.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

I think he should probably be going
as soon as possible.

VIRGINIA

Well I'm not going to let you off
the hook for doing such a lovely
thing for another human being who
is in need.

She takes a sip of her coffee and winks at Deloris good
naturedly.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

You really are sweet, even though
you try so hard to hide it.

Deloris gets up to put the cream away.

DELORIS

He's just a disgusting vagrant. We
can congratulate ourselves for
being ethical later, after he's
gone. Who knows what kind of mess
he's made down there in the
bathroom.

She starts to move about the kitchen; removing pans and
pulling food out of the refrigerator.

VIRGINIA

Well what are you doing now?

DELORIS
I'm going to cook him some
breakfast. We can't expect him to
leave hungry.

Virginia nods thoughtfully.

VIRGINIA
Can I use your telephone, Dear?

Deloris gestures affirmatively.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE BASEMENT - DAY

Michael is fully dressed and pacing the basement nervously.
The bedding is folded neatly and the cot is folded up and set
aside.

The door opens above and Deloris calls down.

DELORIS (O.S.)
Michael?

MICHAEL
Yes?

DELORIS (O.S.)
It's about time you woke up.

MICHAEL
I am... Should I come upstairs?

DELORIS (O.S.)
I made some breakfast. You can eat
before you go.

Michael nods to himself, a bit relieved. He gathers his
stuff and heads up the stairs.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Deloris is at the stove when Michael comes tentatively
through the door. He notices Virginia and pause as if he
might be intruding.

MICHAEL
Uh, good morning.

Virginia is pleased to see him and stands to greet him,
offering her hand.

VIRGINIA

Good morning, how are you? I'm Virginia, Deloris' friend.

MICHAEL

Nice to meet you. Michael.

He looks around uncomfortably. Deloris doesn't look him in the eye. She tries to remain busy.

DELORIS

Have a seat.

She brings a plate loaded with food to the table and sets it down in front of a chair. Michael nods thankfully and sits down. He glances at Virginia and then at Deloris as if trying to judge how much has been shared about the night before.

MICHAEL

Thanks...

DELORIS

Coffee?

MICHAEL

Yes, please. Thank you.

Michael digs in hungrily while Deloris gets him a cup of coffee. Virginia is excited to engage him in conversation.

VIRGINIA

So what kind of work do you do?

Michael's mouth is full, and he is embarrassed.

MICHAEL

Well, actually, I don't have a job or anything...

Virginia regrets her indelicacy.

VIRGINIA

Oh, yes, of course. That's not what I really meant. I'm sorry. I suppose I meant to ask what type of work have you done. Do you have any type of skills?

Michael is shamed a bit, and tries to take another bite to provide an excuse for not answering.

Virginia is good natured, though, and doesn't allow the conversation to go sour. Deloris tries to keep herself busy.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Well, nevermind, that's fine. My late husband... he died a few months ago, you see... he was a superintendant at the Haley plant, here in town. Now I just gave them a call a little bit ago, and I'm sure if you let us, we could help you get a job over at the plant.

Michael brings his head up from his plate and looks at her with some surprise as he chews.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

It might not be anything too glamorous, but they have benefits, at least some basic ones, you know, and in no time at all you could be back on your feet.

She smiles at him encouragingly.

He is momentarily overcome with some emotion that he damps down with some effort, and then swallows with some difficulty. He tries to get her to talk some more about it.

MICHAEL

What kind of work?

Virginia shrugs.

VIRGINIA

Oh, maybe just a janitor or something. But you could handle that, couldn't you?

He nods.

Virginia looks at Deloris inquisitively.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

We could probably give Michael a ride over to the plant after he's eaten his breakfast, now, couldn't we, Deloris?

Michael tries to keep his head down in his food as Deloris shoots Virginia a discouraging look and a subtle shake of her head. Virginia isn't dissuaded though, and presses her friend further.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

And if he gets a job, it'll probably be until next week before he gets his first paycheck.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I reckon he could probably sleep down in the basement a few more days, until he can get on his feet again, don't you think, Deloris?

Deloris turns full around in surprise at her friend, but Virginia doesn't see her and smiles at Michael benevolently. Michael is embarrassed and tries to wave Virginia off.

MICHAEL

Oh, I couldn't intrude.

VIRGINIA

Oh, nonsense. It's the Christian thing to do.

Deloris glares at Virginia with indignant, wide eyes, but locks eyes with Michael briefly and turns back towards the dishes in the sink, grumbling. Virginia is pleased with herself and pats Michael on the arm magnanimously.

INT. DELORIS' OLD LADY CAR - DAY

Deloris is driving with a dour look on her face. Virginia is in the passenger's seat, very pleased with herself. Michael is sitting in the center of the back seat looking at the stack of paperwork, from his new job, in his lap.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Virginia and Michael are seated on the couch, paperwork is spread all over the coffee table. Michael has a pen, but seems disoriented at all of the forms. Virginia has on her reading glasses and is trying to assist. Deloris is trying to keep busy dusting the other furniture in the room.

VIRGINIA

Here, you have to put an address. You might as well put this one down for now.

Deloris turns to them, shaking her head.

DELORIS

He doesn't live here. You said a few days. He can't live here forever.

VIRGINIA

Well he just needs a mailing address.

DELORIS

Well use your address. I don't want a bunch of junk mail clogging up my mailbox.

Virginia shrugs.

VIRGINIA

That's fine. Here, I'll just write down my address for you.

She takes his pen and enters the address.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

What about a beneficiary? Do you have any family?

Michael hangs his head in shame.

MICHAEL

No... Not anymore...

Virginia pats his knee compassionately.

VIRGINIA

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that, Dear. But you have to put someone down. Is there really no one?

Deloris softens a little without letting the others see.

MICHAEL

Well, how about if I just put you down, Virginia?

VIRGINIA

Oh, sure, I suppose. If you have no one else - that's fine. You can always change it later.

Deloris flushes with jealousy. She keeps her back to them, feigning busyness with the dusting.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

A few days later, Deloris is finishing making breakfast. Michael comes into the kitchen tentatively.

DELORIS

Good morning.

MICHAEL

Good morning.

DELORIS

I thought you could use a good breakfast for your first day of work.

She puts his plate down and he sits.

MICHAEL

Thank you. You've been so kind.

DELORIS

It's nothing.

There is an awkward silence as Michael begins to eat.

MICHAEL

Deloris, about the other night.

She studies his face and realizes painfully that he regrets it. She tries to play it off.

DELORIS

Oh, no, I don't think we need to discuss it. It wasn't...

Michael has a look of relief.

MICHAEL

Okay. Good. Uh I mean, I think that's for the best. That's, uh... for the best...

She shrugs and gestures dismissively.

DELORIS

Of course.

She smiles at him as best she can. Michael holds her eyes for a moment and then looks back at his plate and keeps eating.

Deloris' smile fades as she turns to the sink.

DELORIS (CONT'D)

Now hurry and finish or else you'll be late.

EXT. DELORIS' HOUSE LAWN - DAY

Michael is on a ladder painting the trim of the house. He has become a changed man. The lawn and planters are flourishing under his care.

Deloris comes out with some water and Michael climbs down the ladder.

DELORIS

Wow, having a man around suits the place.

MICHAEL

It's the least I can do. You've been so great.

She hands him the water and sees her neighbors working in the yard together. They notice her and she acknowledges them with a smile of pride. Michael looks and nods at them.

Deloris looks at Michael surreptitiously as he drinks and enjoys the moment.

EXT. DELORIS' HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Michael is washing the car as Deloris sits on the porch. She steals glances at Michael when he's not looking.

After a moment Virginia walks up.

VIRGINIA

Wow, the place looks great.

MICHAEL

Thanks. Do you need anything over at your place, Virginia?

VIRGINIA

Well, ...

Deloris cuts her off.

DELORIS

No Virginia, we can't take advantage. Come on, let's go inside.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

Deloris is preparing some food. She dumps the last bit of rose from a large bottle into her wine glass. Michael comes in, looking around curiously.

MICHAEL

Smells good. What are you cooking?

He looks at the preparations. Deloris is a bit tipsy. She regards him for a moment and is impressed by what she sees. She wants him.

DELORIS
Would you like a glass of wine?
I'm just opening another bottle...

She starts toward the refrigerator.

Michael feels something in the air that makes him uncomfortable.

MICHAEL
Uh, no, I'm fine. Maybe I'll just
go downstairs until dinner.

He turns to leave. Deloris blinks heavily. She starts after him.

DELORIS
Why don't you sit down a minute?
We could talk...

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael has the door to the basement open and is starting to go downstairs when Deloris catches up with him. He pauses and turns to her, a bit uncomfortably.

DELORIS
Why don't you stay up here a while?
We can visit while I make some
supper.

She is close to him and reaches out to put her hand on his arm. He recoils at her touch, but stays put as he tries to make an excuse.

MICHAEL
No, I'd rather just wait
downstairs. I'm reading
something...

Deloris is lonely and the wine makes her a bit more urgent than she intended.

DELORIS
What? You don't want to spend any
time with me now? Now that you're
cleaned up and have got a job,
you...

Michael tries to shrug and shake his head innocently to discourage her, but she tries to embrace him and he blocks her arms.

MICHAEL

No, I don't think we should...

Deloris starts to weep.

DELORIS

You don't want me to touch you?
You think I'm dried up and
worthless... I can still make you
feel good... I'm still a woman...

She tries lamely to hold his arms as he squirms to resist.
He shakes his head with a little more purpose.

MICHAEL

No, it's not that.

DELORIS

You don't understand what it's like
to be alone, Michael. I'm all
alone. Can't you just hold me?

He tries to allow her to come closer into his arms, as if to
embrace. She is drunk, and crying - he is repelled.

MICHAEL

Deloris. Deloris. I can't. I
just can't... I'm sorry. Maybe
it's time for me to move out.

She stops and looks up into his face. Her sadness and
loneliness quickly evolve into self-loathing, and then into
anger and hate. Her eyes flare at him briefly and she lets
out a little cry of anguish and shoves him away.

Michael starts to lose his balance and steps back to steady
his stance as his foot finds only the air above the steep
stairs behind him. He grabs desperately for the jam of the
door but misses as he falls back and violently down the
stairs.

Deloris is frozen with shock as her angry shove evolves into
a tragic fall into the basement. She stands at the top of
the stairs in disbelief - her eyes red and wet from crying,
her breath severe in shock, her hands dangling lame in front
of her, unmoving from their last unfortunate act.

Michael finally comes to a broken, crumpled stop at the
bottom of the stairs. Instantly dead from a broken neck.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE KITCHEN

Deloris and Virginia are standing in the kitchen talking secretly. Deloris is agitated. Two coroners guide a gurney with a black body bag through the kitchen and out the door.

DELORIS

It was an accident... He was drunk... and tried to grab me... I pushed him away... How could I know he'd slip... You believe me, don't you?

VIRGINIA

Yes, of course, it was an accident.

Deloris nods morosely.

A POLICE OFFICER approaches.

POLICE OFFICER

(to Deloris)

And when you found him, he was already gone?

VIRGINIA

Yes, absolutely. Such a tragic accident.

Deloris holds her tongue and nods affirmatively.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE BASEMENT - DAY

Deloris soberly puts away Michael's things and folds up the camping cot in the basement. She's sad and reflective.

INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Virginia is upset and sitting at her kitchen table with a stack of mail. She has an insurance check in her hand for five thousand dollars. Deloris is leaning back against the counter having a cup of coffee.

DELORIS

It's just how it is. Nobody cared about him - anymore than they care about us. We got him cleaned up, got him a job, a warm bed to sleep in.

VIRGINIA

It was a camping cot.

DELORIS

Virginia! You are missing the point. So he got drunk and fell down my stairs...

VIRGINIA

Well I believe you had a little something to do with it!

DELORIS

It was an accident! You told the police so yourself.

VIRGINIA

I did that so you wouldn't get into trouble.

DELORIS

He was probably happier than he had ever been.

VIRGINIA

I just feel terrible though. How can I take this insurance money?

DELORIS

He wanted you to have it! That's why he put your name down as the beneficiary. Don't you need it?

Virginia nods sadly, conceding.

VIRGINIA

I still haven't found all of Martin's bank accounts so the extra money would be helpful.

DELORIS

You can pay down that damn second mortgage and maybe stop eating macaroni and cheese six times a week.

Virginia contemplates the check.

VIRGINIA

I suppose it is a sort of blessing. ...I just feel so badly for poor Michael - right when he was getting his life back on track...

Deloris puts down her coffee cup with purpose and grabs the check from Virginia as she walks out of the kitchen.

DELORIS

You're right. It's tragic. Now
come on, get your handbag. I'll
drive you to the bank.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Virginia stands by Martin's grave.

VIRGINIA

I finally just went down to the
bank. They said the savings account
had been closed. They couldn't find
any safe deposit box.

She gets choked up.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I thought I had a little extra with
that insurance money Martin. But
they took most of it to cover your
debt. Why couldn't you tell me?
Didn't you trust me?

She can't help but cry. She grows angry.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I could see them all whispering
about me. Foolish old lady... What
will I do now, Martin? It wasn't
supposed to be like this.

She hits the grave stone with a bunch of FLOWERS over and
over until they are destroyed and crumples to the ground in
defeat.

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Deloris is shopping at the drug store. Virginia comes
soberly from the pharmacy with a bag. Charity is tagging
along after her touching interesting things she passes.

DELORIS

Are you ready to go?

Virginia waves the bag at her slightly and nods.

Just then an elderly couple, FRANK and HARRIET (70s) approach
and greet them.

HARRIET

Virginia, Deloris, how are you?

Harriet smiles broadly and warmly touches Deloris on the shoulder. Deloris grimaces. Frank smiles and nods his head constantly. Virginia is pleased to see them.

VIRGINIA

Well, hello Harriet, Frank. How are you?

HARRIET

We're doing great! We just popped in to buy a few items for our cruise, you know. We leave next Saturday for Florida. You know Frank gets so motion sick. He won't be able to eat the whole time if he doesn't take Dramamine every day while we're at sea.

Frank nods agreeably.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Well, it's lovely to see you ladies. We better get to our shopping.

VIRGINIA

Enjoy your trip!

HARRIET

Bon Voyage!

Deloris shakes her head slightly in thinly masked irritation as they move towards the exit.

DELORIS

(sarcastically)
Bon Voyage!
(almost a whisper)
Hope you get food poisoning.

VIRGINIA

Oh Deloris, be nice.

DELORIS

Why should I? We should be going to Florida, not that bitch.

CHARITY

What's bitch?

Virginia shoots Deloris a scolding look. Deloris is lost in thought.

DELORIS
We should move there.

VIRGINIA
I still don't even know if I'm
going to be able to pay my mortgage
note. It's getting quite
desperate, actually.

Deloris turns to her in surprise.

DELORIS
Even after the insurance money?

Virginia shakes her head sadly.

INT. DELORIS' HOUSE - DAY

Deloris enters the house and slams the door. She kicks the
mail out of her way and drops her purse on the table.

She rushes over to the postcard for Florida. She looks at
the happy seniors on the front. She turns over the card and
picks up the phone. She quickly dials the number on back.

As she waits on the phone, Deloris glances out the window and
sees her neighbors, just the sight of them annoys her and she
closes the curtain.

Someone answers on the other end of the call.

OPERATOR
It's a great day at Sunny Keys.
How may I direct your call?

DELORIS
Save the sales pitch and just tell
me how much it costs to move in
there.

INT. DELORIS' OLD LADY CAR - DAY

A few days later, Deloris is driving her car thoughtfully.
Working herself up to suggest something, she glances over at
Virginia.

DELORIS
I've been thinking...

VIRGINIA
About what?

DELORIS

I think we need to help out another
homeless person...

*