Happy Anniversary

INT. VANCE HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

The curtains are drawn to a close. A slender ray of light squeezes through, illuminating the face of,

DOTTY VANCE (51) - Her curly black hair so bouncy it makes her face look thinner, when really it's not.

She swats at the light, burying her face in her pillow.

DOTTY Ahhh! What time is it?

Next to her a body writhes free of the blanket. Sitting up,

LARRY VANCE (49) - A weather-beaten man. His beaming smile contrasts the harshness of his face.

LARRY Still early. You've been tossing and turning all night. What's wrong?

She GROANS.

LARRY

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Dorothy?

It's too late to fight it, she's awake now.

DOTTY It's Ethan. I'm worried about him.

LARRY It's summer camp, not a concentration camp.

DOTTY I know but I feel bad forcing him to go.

LARRY

You think I don't? It'll do him the world of good though. I'm telling you.

He gazes down at his wife lovingly before leaving the room.

INT. VANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN Dotty lays a plate down in front Larry. Stacked high, a leaning tower of pancakes, about four or five of them.

Big sumptuous thick ones with the centres cut out and replaced by strawberries and cream.

LARRY

What's all this in aid of?

Dotty rolls her eyes playfully. She sets down a smaller plate with a few strips of crispy bacon on it.

LARRY Seriously, what gives?

Her smile fades.

DOTTY You really don't know?

She storms off out the door. Larry tucks into his pancakes without an ounce of hesitation.

LARRY (singing) Daddy... Daddy cool!

Interrupting him, there's PANTING coming from under the table. He looks under it at,

A caramel colored KING CHARLES PUP dangling a paw at him.

LARRY

Hey girl.

He picks her up. She sniffs at the bacon then looks at him as if to beg for some. Her big brown eyes captivate Larry's heart.

> LARRY Okay now. Don't tell.

He SNAPS a strip in half and feeds it to her.

INT. VANCE HOUSE - BATHROOM

Dotty's frazzled. On her old flip-phone.

DOTTY

(into phone) I know, I know. That's not the point Rita. An ordinary anniversary I can handle. Twentyfive years is supposed to special, right? Tell me I'm not being crazy.

RITA (from phone) I know it is. Let me tell you James misses everything. Anniversaries, birthdays... even dinner reservations. (beat) I've gotten used to it. When has Larry ever missed anything before? Huh? Dotty claws at the toilet paper. She prods under her eyes. RITA (CONT'D) (from phone) All these years. Give him a pass... or better yet, make him feel guilty. Dotty laughs. RITA (from phone) There it is. Get what you can from him. KNOCK KOCK! Dotty jumps. LARRY (O.S.) Dorothy? You okay? DOTTY Be out in a minute. DOTTY (whispering into phone) Gotta go. Bye. She flips her cell shut. INT. MALL - DAY Larry follows after Dotty, a sweaty mess. There are not enough hands in the world for the amount of BAGS he's carrying. Dotty stops. Her game face fades. A picture of guilt. DOTTY Okay, okay. I think you've made it up to me now.

LARRY Thank god! I thought I was going to have a heart attack.

He collapses on to a railing for support.

DOTTY

Come on lets get dinner. A drink too perhaps? You look like you could use one.

LARRY

Ya think?

Dotty smiles sarcastically.

DOTTY Gimme some of those bags.

Larry holds a few of them out.

Dotty eyes one of them, inside it an expensive looking china set.

DOTTY The lighter ones thank you very much!

LARRY

Yeah. Sorry.

EXT. MALL - NIGHT

Dotty and Larry scurry across a deserted parking lot as rain beats down. The lights flicker sporadically.

Larry presses his key. It BLEEPS. A car to his left blinks to life. Dotty notices.

DOTTY Here. C'mon, hurry up. It's freezing.

She leads the way, blabbering incessantly.

Larry struggles after her carrying all the shopping bags.

Dotty opens the passenger door and it THUDS against the car parked in the adjacent spot.

LARRY Jesus! Watch what your doing.

DOTTY (whispering) Sorry. LARRY Is there anyone inside?

MAN (O.S.)

No!

Larry spins around, startled.

LARRY

Is this you?

He points at the car.

MAN Yes. I'll need your insurance details.

LARRY What for? You don't know if there's any damage yet.

It's a matter of principle now. Larry lets go of the bags he's carrying and darts around the side of the car.

He examine's the man's car door, rubbing his fingers over it.

The other man approaches.

LARRY I don't see anything here.

MAN

(agitated) How would you? It's dark and raining.

LARRY There's no damage. Probably sounded worse.

The Man's incensed. Circling around wondering what to do.

He gets in his car SLAMMING the door shut.

EXT. VANCE HOUSE - NIGHT

There's an overwhelming sereneness radiating off their house. It's unsettling and silent.

Larry makes his way to the trunk. Dotty follows.

LARRY It's okay I'll get these. Go you on inside.

He hands her the house keys.

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Dotty gets to the door, fumbles a bit but gets in eventually.

Larry unearths something from his pocket. A small square box.

He flicks it open to reveal a beautiful topaz ring.

He eyes HIS WATCH. It reads "19.59".

LARRY

Daddy cool.

INT. VANCE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Dotty feels around for a light switch. She gets it. The LIGHTS BEAM ON --

SURPRISE!

Dotty jumps back in terror.

In front of her are dozens of people, party hats on and drinks in hand. A "Happy Anniversary" banner hangs overhead.

Dotty's pinned to the door in shock. Larry makes his way in the door behind her.

Dotty spins to him. She slaps his arm.

DOTTY You son of a bitch, I thought you forgot!

Larry giggles, before presenting her with the ring. Dotty's taken for six. Welling up a little.

DOTTY

It's beautiful.

She kisses him passionately.

CHEERS and WOLF WHISTLES ring out.

INT. VANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN

Party's over. Dotty kicks off her heels whilst Larry clears away a few glasses and paper plates.

DOTTY Oh, do that tomorrow honey.

LARRY

Two seconds.

Larry grabs at the back door. It opens. The little pup rushes in, dripping wet and shivering. She shakes spraying Larry with water.

> LARRY I'm sorry sweetie. I forgot about you.

He grabs a towel and wraps the pup in it. He lifts her up.

DOTTY You leave that poor dog outside all night?

LARRY I forgot all about her. (to the pup) Yes I did. Get you a treat in a minute.

The doorbell RINGS!

Dotty looks at HER WATCH. It reads "01.38".

DOTTY Someone must have forgotten a bag or a phone.

Larry shrugs.

Dotty goes to the door and opens it to reveal --

Nothing. Not one bit of life in the still night air. Dotty shivers and closes the door.

LARRY (O.S.) There's no bag in he--

SMASH!

LARRY (O.S.) What the fuck!

THUD! YELP!

Dotty bolts for the kitchen.

Larry?

DOTTY

She arrives at the doorway that adjoins Living Room and Kitchen. She SCREAMS bloody murder.

DOTTY'S POV: Larry lays face down in a puddle of crimson.

The pup has taken a bad spill and WHIMPERS beside Larry, barely able to move.

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Towering over them the man from the parking lot. His left hand dangling a blood-stained butcher knife.

It's flight or fight time.

Dotty takes off towards the front door but before she can exit a hand clasps her mouth, yanking her back.

She hits the floor with a sickening THUD! Her eyes dart around uncontrollably as her head swims.

FLASH OF SILVER!

Dotty's eyes widen. Between them the butcher knife finds it's mark.

The knife is pulled from her head and blood etches its way down her face slowly.

The man checks her pulse to be sure. Dead.

He makes his way into the kitchen. He kneels down to Larry and does the same. Dead.

He reaches down for the pup, caked in Larry's blood. She YELPS in pain as he lifts her up.

MAN There, there. Let's get you all dried up.

THE MAN'S POV: A microwave oven, he opens the door and places the pup inside and slams the door shut.

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END