

"SENEX"

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Slow, labored footsteps are accompanied by a walking stick, its pointy end every now and then hitting on the floor.

The family's GRANDFATHER, 80 years old, hunched back, wobbling step, enters the room.

He heads towards the laid table, where son GREGORY, 40, slightly-built, apathetic, is absorbed in his newspaper.

The grandfather sits on a chair but accidentally knocks down an empty glass on the table.

ROSE, daughter-in-law, Gregory's wife, a stout woman of 39, who always wears a grim look on her face, comes in holding the salad bowl. She stops in her tracks, then whizzes into the room, thuds the bowl onto the table and snatches the glass. She reaches back as if to beat the grandfather with it. He raises his arm; a reflex response.

Gregory folds his newspaper.

Rose takes up her seat and puts the glass out of reach, her gloomy glance fixed on the grandfather.

INT. DINING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Gregory motions towards and sits down at the laid table, where Rose, the Grandfather and ANTHONY - grandson, Gregory and Rose's child, aged 5, cute - are seated.

Rose stirs in her soup.

Anthony plays with a toy car.

Gregory rubs his hands looking forward to his meal.

The grandfather takes a spoonful from his plate. He has a hand tremor. Soup drips on the tablecloth and his clothes. He swallows the rest. The liquid drools from his mouth.

Rose scowls in disgust. She abandons her spoon to her plate with a noisy clatter.

Gregory is taken aback, flicking a glance first at Rose, then at the grandfather.

GREGORY

Good God, dad!

INT. DINING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

A plate on the table filled with spaghetti. As we TILT UP to see the grandfather's face, we notice a baby bib around his neck already smudged with spaghetti sauce.

Opening up, revealed are Gregory, Rose, the grandfather and Anthony at dinner time.

Anthony grabs a napkin and springs up.

ROSE

You will sit there until you have eaten all your food!

ANTHONY

I'm full, mum.

The grandfather seems absorbed in cutting the spaghetti tubes into small pieces.

Gregory drinks from his glass, his eyes flipping to Anthony.

Anthony, already in his play corner: arranging a kids table and chair set, tucking the chairs under the table.

Rose eats quietly.

Anthony has placed an old man doll on a chair and a small plate in front of him on the table surface. He's busy sticking the napkin in the doll's clothes as a bib.

The grandfather makes an effort to eat his cut spaghetti pasta but the pieces slip off his fork, landing on the tablecloth and staining it.

ROSE

There we go again!

Gregory's attention is summoned back to his father.

GREGORY

Just... just be careful, will ya?

A guilty look on the grandfather's face. His shaky hands take the plate sluggishly close to him. It slips, falls on the floor and is smashed into pieces.

Rose darts up.

ROSE

That's it!

INT. DINING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Anthony places a plastic mat on his play table, on which he arranges his plastic play dish set all the while having an indistinct conversation with an imaginary person. On finishing, he turns to the old man doll on the chair, shaking his finger at him, as if it were a naughty child.

Gregory and Rose sit at the table eating.

ROSE

Would you like some more, Anthony?

ANTHONY

No.

Rose casts a dark look in the direction of a far corner in the room.

Another table has been placed in the corner. The grandfather sits there eating in isolation.

On closer inspection, we see his porcelain plate has been replaced by a plastic one, standing on a plastic sheet. His head turns towards them.

CLOSE UP-His eyes are flooded with tears.

Gregory directs an indifferent gaze at him and continues eating.

The grandfather lowers his head. He wipes a tear away.

GREGORY

What a nice dining table you've made,
Anthony! Who's gonna eat there?

ANTHONY

You and mum, when I grow up.

Rose leaves her fork on her plate, flabbergasted. Her eyes wander across the table, over to Gregory.

Gregory: His hand frozen in mid-motion to his mouth; he slowly lowers it.

They stare at each other in shock.

Anthony grins innocently. The grin acquires the sound of a GIGGLE and GROWN-UPS' LAUGHTER.

INT. DINING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Anthony giggles as he watches his grandfather.

The grandfather beams all over, even though he spills the soup that he spoons from his china soup bowl.

As a laughing Rose rises from her chair and rushes over to him at the head of the table, we catch glimpses of its elegant draping, the festive decoration, the flower vase, the fine dishware and silver cutlery. She hugs him and gives him a kiss on the cheek. The image of happiness!

A radiantly laughing Gregory, seated next to the old man, pats his arm and turns to watch his little son beside him.

We linger on Anthony's gleaming face. In his eyes everything is again as it should be.

FADE OUT

END