

GOODNIGHT, PAPA

Written by

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Based on, 'Buona Notte, Papa'
by Mark Brandi

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TITLE.

EXT. VARIOUS DAYS

Footage of ROBERTO BARESI - throughout his life to present day - he is the quintessential family man, loved by all. Beloved husband, father and grandfather.

MARCO (V.O.)

We console ourselves with memories,
embracing what has gone before. We cling
to the old, embellished stories. We fear,
but do not mention, what is to come.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Roberto, 70, is in a busy hospital, confused about his surroundings and not sure who anyone is. A nearby window is open and he can hear car horns honking and the noise of traffic. It bothers him. His family sit beside him, his wife of fifty years and his three children - worried, helpless.

Various doctors approach him and we hear indistinct chatter of a busy hospital.

MARCO (V.O.)

It was subtle at first - forgetting which
street to turn, the twist of an oft-told tale,
the birthday of his first granddaughter.
Three years ago, my father was diagnosed
with dementia. Alzheimer's disease. But
they were just words back then - a
measured opinion in a clinical
environment. It wasn't really a shock -
we'd all noticed the changes.

INT. HALLWAY/CORRIDOR - NO WINDOWS, JUST DOORS.

Roberto is alone in an empty corridor with several doors either side of him and ahead of him. He seems lost, unsure of where he is and frightened.

We hear the noise of traffic, car horns honking, loud murmur of indistinct chatter. Roberto calls out for his family.

ROBERTO
Maria?...Anthony?...Luca?...Marco?

Roberto approaches a door and tries to twist the door handle, but struggles with it. He then uses two hands to open it. He enters.

INT. ROOM - DAY

The room is bright. The light bulb fizzles infrequently. Books line each of the four walls. There is a table and chair in the middle of the room, with a crossword puzzle and pen on the table.

Roberto sits in the chair and with the light bulb fizzing away above him, he fills in all but three of the answers in the crossword.

The remaining clues are: Eight letters: 'Scientific investigation' - the answer is 'Research'. Roberto fills the answer in. Next clue: Four letters- 'To Heal' - the answer is 'Cure'. Roberto fills it in. He ponders the final clue. The bulb fizzing more frequently above him as he thinks. 'The thing with feathers/That perches in the soul'. Roberto enters the word 'Hope'.

Roberto finishes the crossword and makes his way to the door, before he opens it, he looks back and savours the memories, then turns out the light and closes the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - BED - NIGHT

Roberto lies awake in a hospital bed. A nearby tap is dripping and nurses walk along the corridor beside the bed.

INT. HALLWAY/CORRIDOR - NO WINDOWS, JUST DOORS.

Back in the corridor, Roberto hears more noises. This time it is a tap dripping and footsteps.

Roberto finds a nearby door which is slightly ajar. He enters.

INT. ROOM - DAY

The room is bright and warm. To the side of the room is a table with two glasses of wine and a bottle of red wine. Beautiful, romantic, classical music plays and Roberto is calm. It is a familiar song, one he remembers well. Roberto approaches the table and picks up a glass of red wine and pauses at the second glass. He feels a hand gently touch his shoulder.

It is his wife of fifty years, her wedding ring sparkles as she touches his shoulder. Roberto smiles for the first time. MARIA picks up both glasses of wine and hands one to Roberto, they clink glasses as a form of 'cheers' and both take a sip. Maria takes Roberto's glass and she puts both of them down on the table and takes his hand and leads him into the middle of the room, where they dance.

They both smile and look adoringly into each other's eyes. Slowly they glide across the room, Roberto's physical movement still in-tact. When the music stops they share a moment together in silence, looking longingly into each other's eyes and they both smile.

MARIA
(Smiling lovingly, warmly)
It's okay my love. Go.

Roberto leaves his wife in the middle of the room, and heads towards the door. When he reaches the door, he opens it and turns, looking at his wife. He savours the memories. The light in the room fizzles lightly, he smiles and turns off the light and closes the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Roberto is walking at a snail's pace around the hospital corridors with a portable drip. People walk past him talking loudly in conversation.

INT. CORRIDOR/HALLWAY - DAY

Back in the corridor and there is loud indistinct chatter. Roberto begins to walk slower than before, shuffling. He finds another room and enters.

INT. ROOM - DAY

The room has poor, dull lighting with a lone light bulb in the centre of the room hanging loosely from the ceiling and fizzing randomly. The room is a mess of photographs scattered all over the place. Pictures on the wall are off-centre and it seems like a bomb site - an explosion of photographs and memories at every turn.

Roberto nervously looks around, and struggles to remember the images. His face frowns, trying to remember. He makes his way through the room, and towards the back of the room is a projector which is playing Super8 films on loop.

He sits in the nearby chair and winces and frowns as he tries to remember the images he sees. Like a wash across his face, his expression changes to one of vague familiarity.

The film features a young MARCO running around the family home, being filmed by his brother. Marco slows down before he enters the next room. He begins to tip-toe and motions “shh” to the camera, pressing his index finger to his mouth. The room is full of books. Roberto, in his early fifties, is sitting reading the newspaper. As Marco tip-toes towards Roberto, we see a glimpse of the front page of the newspaper. The main headline is ‘David v Goliath’ and the sub heading reads ‘Landmark Legal Victory’. Roberto smiles to himself before turning the paper to do the crossword. The camera gets close to Roberto as he concentrates. Marco then jumps out and surprises Roberto, who in kind laughs brightly and whisks Marco up into his lap. Roberto’s barrister’s wig is on the table next to Roberto, who then reaches for it and puts it on Marco’s head. They both smile together as Marco poses with the wig and smiles at the camera. Present day Roberto smiles brightly at this memory.

The light in the room begins to sizzle more frequently as the next videos play on the screen. Roberto frowns in vagueness as he watches. The videos feature his granddaughter’s wedding day and his grandson’s university graduation.

The film stops and cuts to black. Roberto gets up and makes his way towards the door, walking over images on the floor and past images on the wall. The light sizzles more frequently and is slowly dying. As Roberto opens the door he takes one last look around the room, savouring the images, then turns off the light.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Roberto's family wait in the last room. (The voice over person is Roberto's son, he shares memories with his other family members in the room).

MARCO (V.O.)

I remember how the doctor described the brain as like a hotel with many rooms, each with connected functions. In one room, the ability to problem-solve is kept. Adjoining this, our physical coordination. In another - surely the most untidy - our memories.

(MORE)

MARCO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

“As the dementia progresses the light in each room is turned off.”

The family sit under a fizzing, dying bulb and reminisce about old, forgotten times. In a moment, they all stop talking and listen intently and hear footsteps in the hallway.

And then a knock at the door. The door opens and Roberto looks at each of his family members, one by one.

Short montage of Roberto throughout his life to present day with Marco's voice over.

MARCO (V.O.)

But this is not an obituary. My father is happy, healthy and he is loved. So he must never be allowed to grieve for what is lost, or what is remembered...

INT. ROOM - DAY

Roberto pauses for a moment before he speaks.

ROBERTO

Good night

The family watch and stare with pensive sadness.

MARCO (V.O.)

That is left to us.

Roberto turns off the light and closes the door.

The End.