

TITLE CARD: "MARCH 7, 2017"

INT. JOHNSON LIVING ROOM

A homey, middle-class living room has succumbed to the creep of technology. Understated furniture, soft lace curtains, a well-worn couch. Huge flatscreen TV in center of the room. More skinny flatscreens hung around the room, cycling through famous art like a bad screen saver. A cacophony of voices and mood music streaming in. Clangs of dinner being prepared.

MARVIN SIMPSON, 70s, a kind-faced, portly grandfather with a ready smile and a twinkle in his eye, sits in a rocking chair atop an old-fashioned rug, in the only corner of the room that has no tech.

EMMA JOHNSON, Marvin's grand-daughter, cute as a button and wearing a dress and party shoes, squirms and rests her weight on her wrists as only an 8-year-old can do.

EMMA

Grandpa Marvin, Grandpa Marvin?

MARVIN

Yes, dear?

EMMA

Can you tell me a story?

MARVIN

Emma, as long as I live I can tell you a story. Here, come sit on my lap.

She jumps to his lap.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Once upon a time there was a little princess, just about your age. She was the most beautiful princess in the whole world. In fact, she looked a little like you. She had everything a little girl could ask for.

Emma has pulled out her phone, a sophisticated and sleek iPhone-like device, and is fixated on it, touching it with the precision of a scientist. She snaps a photo of her grandpa and then begins texting, looking back and forth between him, engaging and then not with his story.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Until one day an evil witch came to her door. At first the witch pretended to be her friend, giving

(MORE)

MARVIN (CONT'D)
her treats, candy, and attention.
But soon--

EMMA
Grandpa, Mavery got a VRmask oh my
god thats so cool! Mommy! Mommy!

Emma runs across the room and CHARLOTTE, 40s, Marvin's daughter, comes out holding a spoon that is dripping split pea soup. Her dress is techno-trendy - blacks, silvers and bright colors in a chic patchwork. A device is hooked on her ear and another one appears to be sewed into her neck.

The rest of the action happens very quickly.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Mavery got a VRmask can I go over
and play with it c'mon Mommy can
I?!

MARVIN
Emma, what do you mean? What is a
VR-mask?

EMMA
(to Marvin)
So cool you see the network around
you like you're really in it
graaandpa virtual reality can I
have one please!

Charlotte has noticed the spilled split pea soup, raced back into the kitchen, and is wiping it off the floor.

COMPUTER VOICE
(barely audible..has been
repeating for a while)
--Windex will take it right off. A
spill has happened! Windex will
take it right off.

CHARLOTTE
(emphatically)
Emma, noo honey. I am setting a
limit. No VRmask until next month.
You need a limit.

EMMA
Unless I'm good?

CHARLOTTE
Yes, honey, unless you're very,
very good.

The door opens and WILLIAM JOHNSON, a businessman dressed like a professional hipster, in a vest made of patchwork

clothing and skinny tie, storms in talking on his cell phone.
He moves into

INT. JOHNSON KITCHEN

Where we can see Marvin in the background, looking more
forlorn.

COMPUTER VOICE
(there are many of these
throughout)
Try Morton salt with your
soup for the ultimate in
satisfaction. Your laundry is
ready.

WILLIAM
(to phone)
--get them on the phone with
me if you're having problems.
Be aggressive. Seriously Bill--
-you are lying on your back
and fellating them with your
tongue right now what is it
dear?

Emma has been tugging at his jacket.

EMMA
Mommy says I can have a VRmask if
I'm good.

WILLIAM
Of course you can sweetie.
(to phone)
I don't care if it's a bad
metaphor.

He gives Emma and Charlotte perfunctory kisses, missing
Charlotte as she bustles around cooking.

CHARLOTTE
(on phone apparently)
Oh HI Joan! Can I call you
back later tonight? Oh my god
untag it! No I have to go
love you.

EMMA
VRmask VRmask VRmask yaaay!

William continues to talk and runs back to Marvin. Emma
follows him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Marvin, can we talk for a minute?

MARVIN
Of course.

WILLIAM
(to phone)
Look I'll call ya later.
Emma get in the kitchen and
start some rice or something.

EMMA
Daddy can I have--

WILLIAM

Now!

She scurries into the kitchen.

INT. JOHNSON LIVING ROOM

Emma talks loudly to Mavery on the phone and clangs the pots and pans. Half a dozen other noises impinge.

EMMA

(in the background,
simultaneous)

O. M. G. Mavery that's so cool. Can
you fly in the AIR too? Wow!

William and Charlotte sit across from Marvin, concern on their faces.

CHARLOTTE

So between William's job, Emma,

MARVIN

Her grades have been so good
lately!

CHARLOTTE

and everything else we've got
going on, we're stretched to
the limit.

Her earpiece buzzes and lights up. She motions to answer it.

WILLIAM

Honey don't pick up.

A crash in the background.

CHARLOTTE

Emma be CAREFUL! You see dad,

WILLIAM

We found a great home for you. It's
right near here and it comes very
highly recommended.

MARVIN

A home? I see. I see.

CHARLOTTE

Dad I'm so sorry, you've got to
understand, it just--

MARVIN

It's just been a long time coming.

Match cut off Marvin's face to--

INT. JOHNSON DINING ROOM

Marvin is at the head of the table. Everyone is passing food around. Cellphones are out and people occasionally text. A TV or radio is on in the background.

EMMA

Please pass the mashed potatoes.

WILLIAM

Bill finally got those guys down from their starting bid but it's going to take a lot of work...

EMMA

Grandpa when I get a VRMask it's going to be so cool!

WILLIAM

Do you know how much those things cost Emma?

Emma takes a snapshot of her grandfather. William's phone has buzzed and he is responding to a text.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Emma no phones at the table!

]INT. MARVIN'S ROOM - DUSK

The silence of the night. Marvin's room is in a time warp - stuffy-looking with no technology. It's half bedroom half storage room - an old sewing machine on a table gathering dust. Neat, but it probably smells like old people. An open suitcase sits on the bed with a few picture frames in it. All of the same woman--VERONICA at different ages, posing with Marvin. Marvin sits and stares at the wall, unmoving.

Marvin's thoughtspace will be written semi-linearly but in the film will be overlapping, quiet, at times inaudible. A whirlwind of words and sounds that goes by quickly. The script is a basis for VO improv and play in the edit:

MARVIN (V.O.)

I remember you so sharp. So vivid.

VERONICA (V.O.)

And I feel you all the time.

MARVIN (V.O.)

We had the greatest sex.

VERONICA (V.O.)

We had the greatest sex.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
You're dying.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
You're old.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
We don't have the money.

VERONICA (V.O.)
I don't have the time.

MARVIN (V.O.)
Let me feel you again one more
time. I just want it to be real
again.

EMMA (V.O.)
Grandpa Marvin.

MARVIN (V.O.)
See you grow up.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
Weak. Money. I can't talk now
Marvin.

A low-volume scream by Marvin.

A real scream by Emma.

EMMA
NO MOMMY YOU CAN'T!

Footsteps racing toward the door.

Black.

INT. JOHNSON CAR

A sunny day - sky so blue we can taste it. William drives the car out into the countryside. Marvin sits in the back seat with his small suitcase.

The thoughtscape from before continues around Charlotte's words.

CHARLOTTE
Dad, I love you. You know that,
right? If this doesn't work, call
us and we'll be there right away to
pick you up.

William looks at her, annoyed, but thinks better of talking. Marvin nods.

EXT. SHADY ACRES

The car pulls into the driveway. It looks more like a cottage than a retirement home.

INT. SHADY ACRES LOBBY

The three of them enter the lobby. Charlotte checks Marvin in on a touchscreen while SUSANNE, 20s, very pretty, and bored, stands behind the desk, BlackBerry in front of her.

SUSANNE
Hello and welcome to Shady Acres!
You must be Marvin.

MARVIN
Yes, dear, and who are you?

SUSANNE
My name is Susanne. I'll take you
to your room.

Marvin turns to Charlotte.

MARVIN
(with a weak smile)
It's not the Ritz, but I suppose
it'll do. Do you want to stay for a
bit?

WILLIAM
We're really pressed for time, I've
got to be on a c-call. Sorry Marvin
but we'll visit.

CHARLOTTE
This weekend, we can come by this
weekend. How about Saturday?

MARVIN
That would be lovely. And you'll
bring Emma?

CHARLOTTE
Of course.
(privately)
Dad, are you sure this is okay?

MARVIN
It's fine. I'll see you then.

Father and daughter embrace. Charlotte is visibly affected by what she is doing to her father, tears welling in her eyes.

CHARLOTTE
If you need--anything. Call.

INT. SHADY ACRES LOBBY

Susanne walks him to his room, holding his bag and texting at the same time.

SUSANNE
Card room. Computer room.

MARVIN
You use those things too.

SUSANNE
Oh, a phone? Yeah they're pretty baller.

She notices his look of dread.

SUSANNE (CONT'D)
You'll learn tech here. Hopefully.
It's pretty cool.

MARVIN
Oh, not I. I prefer a solid
foundation. Holding things in my
hand.

They keep walking to

INT. SHADY ACRES MARVIN'S ROOM

MARVIN
And are you in school?

SUSANNE
Yeah.

MARVIN
Do you study a humanities or a
science?

SUSANNE
Computational biotechnology. My
emphasis is on AI and nanotech.
Just low-level stuff...pushing a
button to run experiments, you
know.

Marvin lets out a sigh and a confused-smile.

Thoughtspace returns:

VERONICA (V.O.)
We will have so many children.
We'll move to the city.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
Oh daddy I love you.

EMMA (V.O.)
Grandpa tell me a story. TELL ME A
STORY!

MAN (V.O.)
And what do you want to be when you
grow up?

MARVIN (V.O.)
I want to be a fireman. Or a boxer!

EMMA (V.O.)
Grandpa can you make me some
popcorn?

INT. SHADY ACRES DINING ROOM

6 plastic tables with paper tablecloths. The humming of a refrigerator. Marvin enters the unfamiliar scene and figures out that he has to grab a prepackaged tray of food. He holds his tray and uncertainly looks around the room, settling on a table with two women and a man. LINDA is talkative, crotchety, and to top it off has a Long Island accent. After a few seconds of silent chewing of grotesque-looking macaroni:

LINDA
You're new here? Didja get in
today?

MARVIN
Yes, hello. My name is Marvin.

LINDA
Linda. It's Linda. This is Pat, and
Fran, the hottest couple you'll
ever meet.

PAT and FRAN laugh.

PAT
Nice to meet ya.

LINDA
He's in Steven's old room. You're
in Steven's old room, right? He
died last week, poor think.

LINDA (CONT'D)
They oughta be shot for the food
they give us. Oughta be shot.
Tastes like plastic, it's awful.
You got family near here?

MARVIN
Yes, close by.

LINDA
You single?

The elderly folk have been replaced by his family, including the his ex-wife Verronica, silently munching on mac and cheese.

MARVIN
Yeah.

INT. SHADY ACRES MARVIN'S ROOM / INT. JOHNSON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marvin wears PJs and is on the telephone, one of those ancient ones with a cord.

MARVIN
Everything is fine, dear. Yes, I met some of the folks over dinner and they've been very friendly.

Emma is wearing a VRmask, holding her hands out and spinning.

CHARLOTTE
(so relieved)
Oh, good, I'm so glad! Listen dad we're going to have to cancel for this Saturday, I forgot about William's company picnic, but how about the next Saturday? It's my fault and I swear it won't happen again.

MARVIN
(sad)
Okay, that would be fine.

EMMA
Mommy look I'm a helicopter over London!

She almost hits a vase on the table.

CHARLOTTE
Emma take that VRmask off this instant you're going to break something!

She grabs the mask off of a stunned Emma, who blinks in confusion. Marvin is smiling, imagining the scene.

MARVIN
Can I speak to Emma?

CHARLOTTE

Not now Emma's in trouble got to
run. Call us any time dad love you.

A click and silence of a dead phone.

MARVIN

Love you too, dear.

INT. SHADY ACRES MARVIN'S ROOM - LATER

Marvin sits reading Kundera's "The Joke," slowly sets a
bookmark into it, puts it down, and turns out his light.

INT. SHADY ACRES CARD ROOM

Marvin sits at the table playing solitaire. He is losing. His
thoughtscape whispers - Charlotte's birth, his wedding, a
trip to the ocean - in the background and faint flickers of
his family appear.

A knock on the door. Linda enters.

LINDA

Marvin.

MARVIN

Oh hi Linda.

LINDA

You've been sitting in this damned
card room day after day. Get out a
little!

MARVIN

Out where? I take walks.

LINDA

I want to show you something.

INT. COMPUTER CLUSTER

On top of the peeling yellow paint and creaky wooden tables
is a living, breathing, and creepy organism - the COMPUTER
CLUSTER. Colored cables snake every direction, and plastic
chairs are dwarfed by giant blue monitors. The room is abuzz
with old people talking into headpieces, typing, etc.

Linda leads Marvin to an empty computer, whose huge black
screen has only two icons: "The Network" and "Shut Down."

MARVIN

I don't think I can do this.

LINDA
Try it. Touch it.

He puts his thumb to the screen and it gets bright and colorful.

She guides his hand to touch "The Network." An archival photo of Marvin, from perhaps 10 years ago, pops up in the center of the screen. Around it appear links to his family, and faint links coming off each of their icons representing their connections.

His thoughtscape is audible again, seeming to rise up from the screen.

MARVIN
My wife isn't on here.

LINDA
Your wife?

MARVIN
She's..gone now.

LINDA
She hasn't been digitized. Give it a try.

He touches Emma's face, which moves to the upper left panel as a hyper-graphical version of Facebook appears. Maps, data, links, options, and a feed of photographs.

A picture pops up of Emma's finger and a worm.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Who's that?

MARVIN
(in wonder)
It's my grand-daughter. She's right here on the screen.

LINDA
That's right.

The text "me and mavery found a worm" appears in bold type, and a photo of her and MAVERY, 9, appears - it's off-center. A second one pops up that's framed a bit better.

LINDA (CONT'D)
She took those pictures, see, 30 seconds ago.

MARVIN
You mean she's playing with that worm right now??

LINDA
 These kids are onto something,
 these computers.

Marvin's face is agape in amazement.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 I'll leave you alone.

Marvin nods and she walks away. He runs his finger across his granddaughter's face in disbelief, which activates a highlight and the text "text Emma?" He touches it again. He selects from a side-menu of prewritten options "Hello Emma."

A moment of waiting.

"GRANDPA!!!" Pops up. He squeals in delight. "Vchat tonight?" pops up.

MARVIN
 (surprised by his own
 savvy, chuckles to
 himself)
 Vchat? Well why not?

FADE TO:

INT. COMPUTER CLUSTER - LATER

The cluster is almost empty and the digital clock shows it is 11pm. Marvin is on some kind of chat room with older people. Another old man is on a screen in the corner, surreptitiously masturbating. Marvin looks at his watch.

MARVIN
 Good god, 11:00..

He hits the shut down button.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SHADY ACRES

It is winter. Snow falls. A soundscape that includes clangs, beeps.

INT. COMPUTER CLUSTER

Marvin is tapping away at a chat room. The door opens and sounds of voices, a party. Linda walks in, tipsy.

LINDA
 Marvin, come outside and enjoy the party! We've got some eggnog. I like mine with a little seltzer.

He lets her drag him.

INT. SHADY ACRES DINING ROOM

The party is mostly music - Five seniors sit around, two with visitos. It's very sad.

LINDA
 Pat died last night.

MARVIN
 Pat?

LINDA
 Fran's husband. You met them a few months ago.

MARVIN
 Oh my.

LINDA
 He's been sick all week. He's greiving.

MARVIN
 I didn't know.

LINDA
 Do you want me? Do you feel for me? Tell me Marvin before we both die.

MARVIN
 Linda, I can't abandon my wife. I'd be lost.

EMMA
 Grandpa!

She enters with the family, wearing another pretty party dress. He jumps up to receive her hug.

INT. MARVIN'S ROOM

The usual hubbub - texting and phones buzzing. In the light Marvin looks terrible - haggard, red eyes, ten years older.

WILLIAM
 We're so glad to see you happy here.

CHARLOTTE

Are they treating you well? Do you get your meds?

MARVIN

Everything is fine, yes dear.

EMMA

Grandpa look with my VRmask I'm in Chile! (said like "chyle")

WILLIAM

It's "chee-lay", sweetheart.

She takes off the mask.

EMMA

Grandpa when are you coming home?

The adults look at each other.

CHARLOTTE

Grandpa's...

MARVIN

I'm going to be here for a long time, honey. But you can always come visit.

CHARLOTTE

Since Grandpa's on The Network we see him more than ever before, don't we dear?

EMMA

Yeah I TOLD you The Network is awesome!

MARVIN

I had no idea what I was missing. I'm learning things, I'm reconnecting with my past. Finally connected...

CHARLOTTE

(arm around William)

It's how we stay together as a family.

WILLIAM

We're glad you finally decided to join the 21st century, pa.

INT. SHADY ACRES LOBBY

Marvin doesn't move as the family says goodbye.

CHARLOTTE

I'll text you soon. And next
Saturday, expect a visit!

WILLIAM

It'll have to be Sunday. Goodbye
Marvin great to see you.

EMMA

(whispered)
Grandpa, remember your story about
the princess you used to tell me?
What happened to her?

MARVIN

I don't remember.

EMMA

Grand-PAAAAAH dont you rememBER?

MARVIN

She found happiness. Everything she
ever wanted and more, it was all
there for her. And she didn't even
know it.

CHARLOTTE

Emma, you coming?

She steps back from her grandfather, stares at him, and quickly turns around and darts off, texting as she runs. Marvin turns back, and races to the cluster with barely suppressed relief.

INT. COMPUTER CLUSTER

Marvin sinks into his chair with a satisfied sigh and smiles for the first time since his family came to visit. Back to the familiar startup screen, but now the icons are bigger. His family is closely connected, and the further connections more solid.

Marvin touches Emma's face and her screen pops up. A picture of the retirement home from the back seat of a car appears.

Then the text, highlighted red and in bold: "Emma misses her granddady hes so far away."

A look of surprise comes over Marvin's face and a tear wells in his eye.