

Sundowners

by
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1 **EXT. VANCOUVER CITY STREET - AFTERNOON**

ANNA (34) walks across the street from her job at the animation studio GLOBAL Media. There are an unusual amount of pedestrians on the street even for Granville Street where dozens of people lie under soaking wet pieces of cardboard. People are lining the sidewalks in droves rushing for cabs and buses.

2 **INT. STABLE HOUSE BAR - AFTERNOON**

Anna rushes in the door of STABLE HOUSE BAR, catches her breath, just in time for the last of happy hour. She places her order with the WAITER, PHIL (38).

 ANNA
 (to the waiter)
 Brussel sprouts and red wine, please.
 (pause)
 Oh, and the tuna taco.

Anna catches the TV out of the corner of her eye, as she sees people dressed in white suits similar to Hazmat space outfits with full helmet masks. She fixates on the NEWS REPORT.

 ANNA (CONT'D)
 What's going on?

 PHIL
 They're testing people on site at
 the airport. It's the virus.
 Started with 4 cases but it's growing.
 People are being brought straight to
 hospital or told to stay inside for
 14 days.

 ANNA
 I saw some stuff on the news last
 night in the US. This is here?

 PHIL
 Yup. At the airport.

 ANNA
 That's *why* there's a long line up at
 the Drug Store. Hand sanitizers are
 rolling off the shelves.

 PHIL
 People are trying to get back home
 from all over the world. The airports
 are blocked.

ANNA
 (in shock)
 Only to arrive home and find your
 going straight to hospital.

3 **INT. SENIORS HOME COMMON ROOM - AFTERNOON**

ANNA (64) is sitting with a group of seniors around her as if it is story time for children. LEAH (76) and Margo (78) ask questions. ANNA is holding up a book with her own photo on the back cover, AUTHOR ANNA MANNING. *

ANNA
 The whole world was shut down. So many people died. Everyone had to wear masks.

LEAH
 Wasn't there medicine?

ANNA
 Yes, there was. A vaccination was given out. But it took a while to help everyone. Years.

ANNA knows they lived through this and she pauses, not to upset them, as their memory is gone.

MARGO
 Did you get sick?

ANNA
 No, but some of my family did.
 (pauses)
 Some died.

MARGO
 You were lucky ...

ANNA
 I certainly was. And you are lucky to be safe in this *home*.

LEAH
 It's not *my home*.

Anna wells up and tries to recover, tears filling her eyes.

ANNA
 But you are safe *here*.

Anna sees the other SENIORS, men and women in the home start to navigate from their chairs, and go towards the corner of the residence.

Three or four and then five and six patients huddle in one corner near the front of the TV lounge area, forming the shape of a pyramid. Leah is the first to notice the older people and seems shaken.

LEAH

Why are they doing that?

Anna explains gently as she knows Leah and Margo suffer dementia.

ANNA

It's called Sundowners. Some older people feel confused about where they are, and who they are with. Sometimes they think they are back in the home they grew up in. It usually happens late afternoon or evening when the sun goes down.

LEAH

Did the virus cause it?

ANNA

No. Sometimes they just feel like they are being summons to a corner of the room.

LEAH

(jeers)
Why?

ANNA

A deep longing for something, especially one's home.

MARGO

Do you have Sundowners?

ANNA

(laughs)
No.

Anna sees it may be too much on them.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Let's finish up now. It's almost time for lunch.

SENIORS finish up the session and go back to their rooms. Anna puts on her coat and packs up to leave. She passes PAM (42), nurse, in the hallway.

ANNA (CONT'D)

See you next week.

PAM
It's a great help. Sharing your book.

ANNA
Not the cheeriest of topics. I'm
afraid.

They both laugh as Anna leaves.

4 **EXT. VANCOUVER CITY STREET - AFTERNOON**

ANNA (34) climbs aboard the subway, it takes her right to the airport. She wears a N95 mask and sits as far away from others as she can. Wearing medical gloves, as well, she takes just a carry on and her purse.

5 **INT. VANCOUVER AIRPORT CHECK IN - AFTERNOON**

FLIGHT RESERVATIONS ATTENDANT, LOIS, checks ANNA in for her flight. She's intense and efficient using Covid protocol.

LOIS
You're traveling where?

ANNA
Newfoundland.

LOIS
Do you have any flu like symptoms?

ANNA
(gritting teeth under
her mask, afraid)
No.

LOIS
Have you travelled internationally?

ANNA
No.

LOIS
There is a lot of Covid cases in
Newfoundland now, 300. The highest
in the country!

ANNA
It was at a funeral home. I know all
about it.

LOIS
People. And it's a small place, from
what *I'm* told.

ANNA
They didn't know. The virus just happened.

LOIS
Careful. That's all.

ANNA
I am. It's *my* home.

LOIS
Sit in the area assigned, 6 feet distance between you and the next passenger.

The AIRPORT is empty with the exception of maybe 8 people sitting in the area where Anna is meant to depart.

ANNA
Okay.

LOIS
Only come forward when your name is called to board and do not interact with others. Stick to your own seat while waiting.

ANNA
I will. I just want to get home.

6 **INT. SENIORS HOME HALLWAY - DAY**

CLOSE UP on SENIORS. They are settled in various corners of the home.

AGNES (84) is dressed in a full overcoat, gators and gloves on, clenching her cane. It is fall and not cold enough for outer clothes.

AGNES
They should be a long any moment now.

BARRY is leaning against the dining room door with a meal tray in his hand.

BARRY
You're always dressed to go.

AGNES
What's it to you. You're not going. Tray in your hand.
(sneers at him)

BARRY

Gators on in the middle of summer.
(jeers)

NURSE, PAM (42) scurries by them with a trolley of medications.

AGNES

They feed them better than us, you know.

PAM

(looking at her chart)
Feed who?

AGNES

The men. They get better food than us.

PAM

Is that why you're leaving, Agnes. You said you liked it here. Liked your meals.

AGNES

They're coming any moment now.

PAM

I know. They should be here soon. I'll do my rounds and see if you're still there after lunch.

7

INT. SENIORS HOME TV LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

LARRY and BEATRICE sit beside each other with hospital trays in front of each of them. Pam comes along with their medication. Laying a plastic cup of pills on their tray.

PAM

Meals will be here soon.
(to Larry)
You'll take those pills on your own, yes?

LARRY

(devilish nod)
Oh yes. This one just arrived.
(pointing to Beatrice)

Beatrice is clutching a plastic grocery bag worn down with her grip so tight on it.

PAM

Just arrived, Larry? I remember the day Beatrice got dropped off.

(MORE)

PAM (CONT'D)

She came in a taxi with little more than the plastic bag in her hand.

LARRY

Monday. That was Monday.

PAM

It may have been a Monday, my dear. But it was 11 years ago and you've been sitting side by side every since.

LARRY

(rattles the empty plastic cup)

Gone.

Pam looks at him with a warning.

BEATRICE

He's nothing but a shit disturber. I want to go home. Up over the bridge. House needs paint.

LARRY

You're never going home, Bea. This is where you're staying. That house is long gone.

BEATRICE

It's not.

LARRY

It is too.

Pam swings back after with her trolley of medicine, now with empty plastic cups.

PAM

Now you be nice, Larry. You know Beatrice misses where she grew up.

BEATRICE

Trouty, Trinity Bay.

LARRY

Who would miss a place named *Trouty*. Sounds foolish. You know most people move houses 11 times in their life.

BEATRICE

Not me. I was born in that house and I want to die there.

LARRY
Die there. You'll die here now,
you're foolish.

Pam pipes up to break them up.

PAM
Stop your tormenting, Larry.
If you're not nice, I'll move you
from her side.

8 **INT. SENIORS HOME HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON**

Pam walks on down to see Agnes still bundled up in her winter clothes.

PAM
Have they started yet, Agnes.

AGNES
(laughs)
That crowd. They're at it every
evening.

Pam glances over to the corner of the hall and 4 or 5 patients are starting to huddle in a pyramid shape.

PAM
It's something for sure. Although
they seem peaceful enough.

AGNES
Suppose.

PAM
Your ride come yet?

AGNES
Soon. Should be here shortly.

PAM
You can wait in your room. Take your
coat off. I'll get you, I promise.

AGNES
(defiant)
I said I'd wait here. And that is
where I'll stay. Thank you.

9 **INT. ST. JOHN'S AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Anna (34) walks off the plane and into St. John's airport. She takes a seat for her connecting flight to Gander.

ANNA
(to another passenger
lying down)
Your flight is tonight?

PASSENGER, JUDY (42), is lying down, crumpled over with a mask on and a plastic shield that looks like a welders mask over her face, as well.

JUDY
I've been here 3 days waiting to fly
to Gander.

ANNA
3 days on that bench? I'm headed to
Gander. And then driving to Salvage.

JUDY
Yeah. I don't see another flight
going to Gander anytime soon. They
say it's weather.

ANNA sits and stares into space.

ANNA
So, wherever I go when I leave this
airport I have to stay for 14 days?

Anna is still talking to Judy, oblivious to her lying on a row of chairs and trying to sleep. Judy groggily responds, giving up on privacy after trying to sleep in an airport for the past 3 days.

JUDY
(yawning)
Yup, when you leave you're in
quarantine. I expect them to give
me the boot from here soon.

ANNA
I guess I can try Pal Airline, or a
rental.

JUDY
All rentals are shut down.

ANNA
Taxis?

JUDY
There's about 6 cars left on the
road. There're still a few cars on
the road in Gander. But you know
we're not landing there.

ANNA looks straight ahead thinking about her home.

ANNA
I'm 3 hours away from Salvage.

JUDY
Were you born there?

ANNA
No. Moved there 10 years ago. I'm
a townie.

JUDY
Sure, you're in town. This is your
city.

ANNA
I know but that's my *home*. Salvage.

JUDY
Ahhhh.
(too tired to ask
more)

10 **INT. ST. JOHN'S AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Anna stands up, starts pacing, and calls a taxi station on her cell phone. She sees it makes others nervous who are standing more than 10 feet away, so she keeps close to her chair.

BUGDENS DISPATCH
Bugdens ...

ANNA
Hi, my names is Anna. I've just
flown all the way from Vancouver and
I'm in St. John's Airport and I
have an odd question.

BUGDENS DISPATCH
Hard to get odder here tonight, fire
away.

ANNA
My home is 3 hours outside of town
and there are no flights going to
Gander.
(looks to Judy)
Would any of your drivers take me to
Salvage? I'll pay whatever it takes.

BUGDEN'S driver calls out over the radio on DISPATCH to find
a driver.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 (whispers to Judy)
 Do you need a ride?

JUDY
 (barely raises her
 head)
 I can't. They won't take two. I'm
 hoping to get to Deer Lake.

Anna looks towards Judy with concern.

ANNA
 Ahhh.

BUGDENS DISPATCH
 It's just yourself?

ANNA
 It is.
 (still looking towards
 Judy)

BUGDENS DISPATCH
 Do you have a N95 mask?

ANNA
 I do. A N95 mask, hand sanitizer,
 surgical gloves, one carry on. I
 haven't been near anyone without a
 mask on. I will sit right at the
 back and barely breath.

BUGDENS DISPATCH
 Micah's down by the door. \$400.

ANNA
 By what door?

BUGDENS DISPATCH
 Airport departure door.

ANNA
 On my way. I'll give Micah a big
 tip.

Anna walks away giving a wave to Judy.

11 **INT. SENIORS HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT**

DORIS (58) and AGNES(84) share a room. It's not very large.

DORIS
 I want to be left alone. Stop
 bothering me.

AGNES

You're fine my love. I know you have pain.

DORIS

Car crashed right on top of me.
(screams at Agnes)
Get her out. Get her out.

Pam comes rushing to the room.

PAM

Doris. What's going on?

DORIS

I'm in pain. And I want her gone.

PAM

Who gone? Agnes? Sure, you like Agnes. She's the first roommate you allowed to stay.

DORIS

She opens the window at night. I'm freezing.

AGNES

Go on. It's not open. Not for long anyway. *She* doesn't know.

PAM

Doris. You've got to get along. It's good for you. I know you're in pain.

DORIS

What do you know. You weren't there. I was a nurse you know. Better than you.

PAM

Your family said. You're lucky to be alive.

DORIS

Some luck. You call this luck. If this is luck you can give it away.
(laughs)

AGNES

Go on Doris. You're full of prunes. I prayed for you last night you know.

DORIS

Yes, I heard you. Praying and the wind blowing a gale in this room, I hardly slept. I'm still stuck here, with you.

AGNES

We're all here. You don't just go. You have to give out. I'm staying as long as I can.

DORIS

What for? What do you want to stay for?

AGNES

Well, I like breakfast. I really like breakfast.

DORIS

So, you're staying alive for a cup of tea and toast.
(snickers)
If you had a car fall from the sky on top of you. Tea and toast wouldn't keep you alive.

AGNES

Wish a car would fall from the sky to pick me up. I've been waiting for one all day ...

Agnes is oddly the *most* aware, although quite senior.

DORIS

(speaks low and then bellows to a SCREAM)
And you'll wait, and wait, WAIT, WAIT, WAAAAAIIIIIT. That's all we DO, is wait.

Pam runs to the ROOM in a PANIC, used to Doris's outbursts.

PAM

(out of breath)
Doris, Doris. I have your medication.

Doris turns in towards the wall in silence, as if she didn't utter a word.

12 **INT. TAXI ON HIGHWAY ST. JOHN'S TO SALVAGE - NIGHT**

Anna (34) sits way at the back of the van perfectly still with surgical gloves on and a N95 mask, as requested by MICAH (28), the TAXI DRIVER.

Both of them are shaken by the virus, but can't resist to chat. He's fully covered in a mask and gloves, as well. There are containers of wipes in the front seat.

MICAH

You just got in?

ANNA

Yeah, I just came back from Vancouver. I didn't go near anyone though and I had 5 masks to wear home.

MICAH

We had quite the scare here. The first cluster in the country.

ANNA

I hear. At the funeral home.

MICAH

Yes, an odd place to pick up a virus that could kill you. Guess you never know.

ANNA

You never know. I was working in Vancouver. Within hours everything was shut down.

MICAH

What's it like?

ANNA

Vancouver? Vancouver is busy. Nice. A lot of people living on the street. Sad really.

(gets distracted)

You ever been? To Vancouver?

MICAH

Newfoundland was my first stop in Canada.

(laughs)

I'm from a big city in Nigeria. Lagos, over 15 million people.

ANNA

Almost half the size of Canada.

MICAH

My country has 200 million.

ANNA

(gasps)

Is your family still in Lagos?

MICAH

Yeah. I'm worried. There is no protection from - Covid. I'm here for school.

ANNA

What are you studying?

MICAH

Masters in Engineering. Mechanical.

ANNA

Smart man.

MICAH

I have to go out west to get a job. Hate to leave, though.

ANNA

Here?

MICAH

Yeah. It's been good. Like everywhere, *some* people are good.

ANNA

Glad to hear. It can go either way in a small place.

Micah seems to be jarred back into the reality that anyone can get *this* illness. He swings into the GAS STATION.

MICAH

I'm going to *fill her up*, here. You go to sleep. Guess we should be careful about chatting. They say it comes from your breath.

ANNA

Yes, water droplets.

Anna puts her head back on the head rest. Taxi Driver, Micah, gets back in the van and changes his surgical gloves again. He uses Lysol wipes to clean the steering wheel.

MICAH

You good?

ANNA

Yes perfect. Thanks so much for doing this.

MICAH

Sleep now.

CLOSE UP on Anna asleep with her head leaning against the window and CLOSE UP of Micah driving straight ahead through the DARK NIGHT in the TAXI van.

CUT TO:

13 **INT. SENIORS HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT**

CLOSE UP of Agnes (84) sound asleep and then Doris (58) blares out from her bed scaring the life out of Agnes and waking her up. Their beds are set up like in a hospital with a window to the outside in between them.

DORIS
(blares out loud)
Close the window.

AGNES
(shaken awake)
What. Doris. What!!! It's closed.
It's closed. I'm asleep.

DORIS
You're not asleep. You're talking
to me.

AGNES
(hush)
Rest. Sleep now.

DORIS
You rest. I'm wide awake.

Agnes starts to drift off asleep but can hear Doris's voice in the background.

DORIS (CONT'D)
The highway was pitch black, rain
pouring down. Sideways. We got as far
as Whitbourne and just like that a
car screeches across our path ... I
held my breath and our car toppled
into the ditch with that fuckhead's
car landing on top of us.

Doris can hear Agnes's breath go in and out. Agnes is taking in Doris's story although half asleep.

14 **INT. TAXI ON HIGHWAY TO SALVAGE, NL - NIGHT**

Anna wakes to the sound of torrential rain and screeching tires on pavement. Micah stops suddenly, a bit shaken.

MICAH
I got it. I got it. We're okay.

ANNA
 (groggily)
 What happened?

MICAH
 Roads are *slick* that's all. It's
 March. A man said to me it can snow
 in June!

Anna, more alert, has flashes of images go through her mind;
 happy hour in Vancouver, the city streets and work shut down.
 CLOSE UP of Micah, tired, driving her 3 hours outside of town.

ANNA
 It *can* snow in June! It's true.
 Black ice on the highway. That's the
 worst. The worst that is, until we're
 living in a pandemic.

They both have a faint smile.

MICAH
 Straight down this road?

ANNA
 Yeah, drive right past Eastport beach
 and into Salvage. It's about 15
 minutes away. I can't believe you
 drove me *all* the way home.

MICAH
 I can't believe you *live* here?

ANNA
 You have to get creative, to own a
 home at *our* age.

MICAH
 If I am lucky, work hard, I will
make it happen.

They both smile.

ANNA
 You'll be okay going back?

MICAH
 The suns starting to come up, *sure*.
 And the roads are starting to clear.

Anna takes in her small community as if she's never seen it
 before.

ANNA

Just on up ahead. Past the fish plant. Well it's not a fish plant now. A wine bar and restaurant.
(slight smile)

MICAH

Nice town. Overlooking the ocean.

ANNA

Yeah, it seems like an odd idea. But it kind of makes sense now. It's *home*.

MICAH

Nothing like it.

ANNA

You must miss Lagos?

MICAH

I do. Especially now.

ANNA

Guess I'll be inside for a couple of weeks. Scared to death for this virus to hit a small town. I'm the youngest here.

MICAH

You'll be alright on your own, then?

ANNA

I'll be fine. Safe. But, yes, alone.
(starts to pay)
I hope your family is safe.

ANNA looks up ahead to her idyllic saltbox house overlooking the ocean in Salvage. She pays with her credit card.

MICAH

(taken back by the tip)
Thank you. Well, you made it.

ANNA

Sure did. You're one of a kind, Micah. Maybe we can go out when I come to town. Or maybe I'll have to make you a cake.

MICAH

I will keep *my* eye out for you. And the cake.
(laughs)

ANNA
Careful going back.

Anna waves good-bye from the end of the hill of her driveway with a dust of snow over the grass in the field. The sun is coming up over the ocean.

15 **INT. SENIORS HOME COMMON ROOM - DAY**

Agnes is still sitting by the front entrance. Beatrice and Larry are squabbling over what to watch on TV. Doris is blaring out that she wants to watch Jeopardy.

FLASH FORWARD-10 YEARS:

16 **INT. SENIORS HOME COMMON ROOM - DAY**

Anna (74) is in the library. She is looking down at a book and it has her name on the front. *Solitude, written by Anna Manning.*

She sees a man out of the corner of her eye, he's familiar to Anna but she doesn't really know him. It's the taxi driver MICAH (68) from years ago.

He stands over her as she glances at the book with her own photo on the back cover as the author.

Anna glances up over her shoulder towards Micah.

ANNA
(to Micah)
Have you read this book?

MICAH
Yes. I have. There's a great story about a taxi driver in it. It's during the pandemic.

ANNA
I've never read this one. Perhaps I should.

MICAH
I think you'd like it.

Micah thumbs through the pages of the book. On the front inside page it is dedicated to Micah *with love.*

ANNA
Do you live *here*?

MICAH
I lived with *you.*

ANNA

With *me*?

MICAH

You remember? I drove you home. We fell in love.

ANNA

We are in love?

MICAH

We *are in love*.

Micah is a little sad, as if Anna is slipping away.

INTERCOM: 'Dinner is served in the dining hall', is announced.

MICAH (CONT'D)

You had to come here. I ... I had to *bring* you here.

They look at each other in love.

MICAH (CONT'D)

Should we go to dinner?

ANNA

That'd be nice.

17 **INT. SENIORS HOME HALLWAY - EVENING**

Anna (74) and Micah (68) go down the hallway.

ANNA

Did I bring *you* a cake?

MICAH

Not that I know of. No, I don't believe you did.

They pass Agnes (94) along the way still in her overcoat.

AGNES

They feed them better than us, you know.

ANNA

Yes, you said. The men you mean.

AGNES

Oh, yes.

ANNA

(to Micah)

She doesn't know who she is ... poor thing.

Micah smiles. To the side of the door in the hallway the group of SENIORS, men and women navigate in the shape of a pyramid. As the sun goes down they form a group, sundowners, brought on by their dementia.

ANNA (CONT'D)

They're at it again.

AGNES

Like clockwork. As soon as the sun starts to set.

Pam (52) walks by with the trolley of medicine. Agnes looks at her watch.

AGNES (CONT'D)

(looks at her watch again, and then to Pam)

I won't be gone long. I'll be home before the sun goes down.

PAM

That you will.

AGNES

Yes. Yes. You can count on it.

The End.