

Pacific Dreams
an original screenplay by
David James Strong

David James Strong
7 Valley Street
Island Bay,
Wellington 6023
New Zealand
+64 4 9772708
david.strong@paradise.net.nz

FADE IN:

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- DAY

A CHIME rings. JOAN, the HEAD NURSE, carries a CLIPBOARD as she walks with authority down a spartan, dim corridor of Pacific Dreams Rest Home. She moves in between old men and women, who all solemnly make their way in the same direction.

INT. TAXI -- DAY

A TAXI drives down a suburban road. Inside a sprightly old lady (GRACE), watches children playing outside the window. Vibrant RADIO plays in the background.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)

Anyways my wife was saying that it's not like we can do anything see, that it, like, on the one hand, she says, look at how our houses are built now, it's not like old houses with wood, is it? No, cos she says it's gotta be fixed, but how can it be, cos whose can afford it, what with the recession and kids, everything. You know? Anyway, like I said before, why would you, you know. There's better things to do with ya life than fix the home. I wanna go to Africa and see lions. So we've gotta think, but I can't wait either cos if I wait it'll only get worse see. So, waddya do... I don't know...

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Joan glances into a spartan bedroom. A genteel man, JOHN, is putting on a CARDIGAN. Un-noticed, Joan continues.

INT. TAXI -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace watches life passing her by as the taxi turns into a driveway. A SIGN reads PACIFIC DREAMS REST HOME.

TAXI DRIVER

So here we are Mrs, Pacific Dreams. That sounds nice doesn't it. A place to rest and dream. Pacific, like the ocean. I could go to the islands, never been hey. See the fish and the coconuts, hey hey. Anyway it's Africa or Tahiti, or fix the home...

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - RECEPTION -- CONTINUOUS

SHELLY works in the dim receptionist. A CLOCK shows 12.33pm.

Joan enters and hands Shelly the clipboard and walks off.

Shelly looks at it and hustles out.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Shelly walks into the corridor and against the flow of silent elderly who are entering a DINING ROOM. Remembering something, she turns back to the reception.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Quiet MUSIC plays as elderly slowly sit for lunch. Staff help. A familiar, ordered routine. There's many more women than men. All are dressed dully. Women sit together and the men sit at one TABLE. There's a few spare places. Staff serve LUNCH. People eat slowly and silently.

EXT. PACIFIC DREAMS - ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

The taxi parks. Grace gets out and observes the entrance with genteel consideration. She regards the TAXI DRIVER unloading her SUITCASE, then moves forward to smell some FLOWERS. She enters the home.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - RECEPTION -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace surveys the foyer, catching the bland PRINT on the wall. She pushes her WALKING STICK into the carpet as if summing it up. Shelly considers her and picks up the PHONE, pressing a BUTTON for the HEAD NURSE.

The taxi DRIVER brings in her suitcase.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The old people eat lunch silently.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace walks behind Joan. Grace stops at the entrance to the dining room, looking in. Joan glances at her. Grace smiles before continuing to walk down the corridor. She passes an external door with a sign "GARDEN. PLEASE DON'T PICK THE FLOWERS". Quizzically she considers.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- LATER

The elderly leave, some still eat. Staff clean up.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace considers her room as Joan leaves.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

JOHN walks past Grace's door, curiously looks in then continues.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- LATER

A CLOCK shows 1.30pm. Grace looks out the window at a FLOWER GARDEN. She opens the CRINOLINES, letting in more light. She turns back to her suitcase on the BED and unzips it.

She unpacks, a PHOTO of her in her youth, one of her WEDDING, an OLD HAT, a PHOTO ALBUM. She places them carefully around the room, then takes her TOILET BAG to the bathroom. She carefully hangs a well kept DRESS in her wardrobe.

Joan pops her head in, notices the dress and CURTAINS. Ignoring the dress she walks to the curtains and closes them slightly, fixing them. She glances at Grace then walks off. Grace observes, slightly perplexed.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- LATER

Grace sits in her chair reading a BOOK. Behind her the curtains are open again. A CHIME rings. She looks up at a CLOCK on the wall which shows 5.30pm.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- LATER

Elderly make their way along the corridor.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Grace gets up and looks at her wall reading a NOTICE on meal times, dinner at 5.30pm. She looks up at the clock again. She reaches for her stick and checks her face in a MIRROR. She walks out the door.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- LATER

Elderly take their seats. Joan oversees.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace walks to the dining room.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Everyone is seated in their same places. A few empty places around the room, one at the men's table.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Grace stands at the entrance, hand resting on her stick, summing up the routine and layout.

Some women look up from their meals, surprised at the new woman. The men don't notice. Staff ignore her.

Grace deliberately walks to the men's table and pauses beside the empty chair. The men don't notice, women do.

Quietly, Grace sits down, barely noticed by the men and eats. She catches John's eye and keeps eating.

Around the room normalcy returns, staff move about.

Grace finishes, puts her KNIFE and FORK together, gets up and walks out, barely noticed.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Grace walks back to her room. Looking in on other rooms she notices the curtains are closed.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace notices her curtains are closed, turns on the light and stops in front of her wedding picture, considering it. She opens her curtains, letting in daylight and looks out the window. The clock reads 6.30. She sits and reads.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- DAY

A clock reads 12.20. Grace walks down the corridor.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - TV ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

She passes a bland TV ROOM. Inside elderly are watching TV and reading, together yet alone.

Unnoticed Grace enters and looks at the BOOKSHELF. She takes down a picture BOOK ON FLOWER GARDENS.

She moves to sit just as the lunch CHIME rings out. Everyone gets up and files out as Grace watches.

Grace places the book on a TABLE, flicks through pages and leaves it open on a large picture of a bright flower.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace observes from the entrance. Once everyone is seated she walks slowly to the men's table, women eyeing her.

She pauses, at the seat, sits down and begins to eat.

Grace finishes, puts her KNIFE and FORK together, gets up and walks out, catching a hint of a smile from John.

Joan watches with interest from a distance.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- LATER

Grace stares out the window at the garden. She walks into the bathroom, returning with a pair of SCISSORS which she tucks into her HANDBAG. She walks out.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- LATER

Grace walks past John's Room, he's asleep in his CHAIR. She walks to the garden door, opens it and exits.

EXT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GARDEN -- DAY

Grace strolls through the bright flower garden, pausing to smell FLOWERS. Birds SING. She glances around then takes the scissors out of her handbag, cuts several FLOWERS and tucks them into her handbag. She sits and takes a deep breath of air.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace walks down the corridor, flowers in hand.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - TV ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Grace arranges the flowers in a jug on the table. She considers them for a moment, takes out two for herself and leaves.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- LATER

A flower sits on her table. Grace reads her BOOK.

Joan looks in.

Grace looks up at her smiling.

Joan spots the flower, out of place, eyes Grace and leaves.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- LATER

Grace closes her book, takes the flower and leaves.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Grace walks to John's room. He's asleep. She quietly enters and puts the flower on his CHEST OF DRAWERS.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace walks to the TV room, looking in it's empty. The flowers are gone from the table. She pauses surprised, briefly annoyed, then turns and walks back.

Grace looks in on John's room. He's still asleep and she sees the flower is gone. She's upset.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Grace enters to see the curtains are partly closed again, and immediately opens them.

She sits down, uncertain of what to do. She spies her photo album and reaches out to it. She begins to turn the pages of her life, photos telling the story. A little girl, a ballet dancer, a graduate, an archeologist in Africa, receiving a DAMEHOOD from SIR PAUL REEVES. She closes the album and walks over to the window, opening it and smelling the scent of the flowers.

She turns and leaves her room with determination.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

She walks to the door to the garden. She stops beside it, glances around, then with determination, places her hand on the DOOR HANDLE and turns. It's locked. She tries again but it's no use. Forlornly, she stares out the door into the bright garden.

Slowly, she turns and is about to walk back down the corridor when Joan approaches and smiles directly at Grace (Victory). Grace looks curiously at Joan, unnerving her. Defeated, Grace walks past. Joan's eyes follow her. Around the corner, Grace suddenly pauses, smiles, then continues.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

The clock reads 5.20pm. Grace stands looking at herself in the mirror, her well kept dress laid out on her bed.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Grace turns to look out the window then back to the mirror. She is now wearing her dress. She puts on final touches of makeup, a RING and NECKLACE. The clock reads 5.30pm.

The CHIME rings. She walks to the bathroom and returns with the last flower - a ROSE.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The people gather for dinner, the same routine.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - GRACE'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace takes a final look at her wedding photo, then takes her stick and the rose, and enters the corridor.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace walks elegantly, chin up, down the corridor.

INT. PACIFIC DREAMS - DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Grace stands at the entrance. Women notice her and the rose in her hand, she has authority. The men don't notice.

Joan stares at her and the rose she blatantly carries.

Ignoring Joan, Grace takes a breath and walks to the men's table, eyes follow intently. She pauses then leans over and places the rose in a glass of water in the middle of the table. She stands with poise beside her chair.

GRACE

(quiet but with
force)

Gentlemen.

They stop and look up in shock. Silence. A woman gasps, someone coughs. The staff and Joan notice and pause, uncertain. Grace fixes each man in turn with a firm, warm look, including John. They look away, awkward, except John who sums her up.

Then, slowly, John smiles inwardly and stands, the others watch. He opens his jacket and takes out the other flower and puts it on the table. He looks around and fixes the other men with a stare. As if remembering a distant past they stand, one by one, some with great effort.

Smiling politely, Grace sits.

With equal effort, the men sit.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Thank you. Shall we dine?

The men murmur acknowledgment. The women are in a state of shock, some admire Grace. Staff chortle.

Joan looks at the staff around her and then inperceptively, nods her head once, as if a spark has been reignited.

John turns to Grace.

JOHN

Mrs...?

GRACE

Leeky, Grace Leeky... Pleased to meet you, Mr?

JOHN

John, John Houston.

Across the room a lady turns to another and begins to talk. The men begin to talk as they eat, one smiles.

FADE OUT