

'A HEART GLADLY GIVEN'

By

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INT. CARD SHOP. VALENTINES DAY. DUSK. CONTINUOUS

An elderly man stands at the 'Valentines Card' display. He is smartly dressed in a sports jacket, shirt and tie and a checked flat cap. His fingers hover over the cards as he studies them intently. He bypasses the 'Girlfriend' section with a smile, lingers wistfully over the 'Wife' cards, then plucks out a card that reads, 'To the one I love.'

TITLE: 'A HEART GLADLY GIVEN'

The elderly man opens the card, pulls it close to his face, adjusts his glasses and reads the verse, silently moving his lips as he does so.

A group of teenage boys join him at the card display, laughing and teasing each other. They ignore the elderly man, he is of little consequence to them.

The elderly man shakes his head at the card, and places it back in the display. He tips his cap at the young boys who burst out laughing, then he leaves the shop, winking at the female sales assistant on the way out.

EXT. TOWN CENTRE STREET.

The elderly man is walking down the street surrounded by shoppers. As he passes a chocolate shop he pauses by the window, admiring the display of Valentines gifts; chocolate hearts piped with white icing; ribbons and bows and small heart shaped chocolates wrapped in tinfoil.

He rifles through the pocket of his jacket and pulls out a toffee, carefully unwraps the golden cellophane and pops the toffee in his mouth, chewing it thoughtfully.

A group of young girls leave the shop, clutching bags of hearts and ribbons. The elderly man nods to the girls, and they walk off laughing to each other.

The elderly man smiles, and carries on his journey.

EXT. TOWN CENTRE STREET. FLOWER SHOP.

The elderly man stops outside a flower shop and surveys the display of flowers in buckets on the pavement. He pulls a long stemmed pink rose from one of the buckets, holds it to his nose and inhales deeply. He nods to himself and takes the flower into the shop where the assistant wraps it in tissue paper. Whilst he is paying, he notices a red, heart shaped, helium balloon. He points to the balloon and pays for that as well.

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He leaves the flower shop with the rose in one hand and the balloon in the other. As he is leaving, a middle aged man rushes by him into the shop. The middle aged man looks stressed, he has his mobile phone to his ear and he glances irritably at his watch as the two men pass. The elderly man smiles to himself and continues his journey.

He walks confidently through the crowds of shoppers with the bright heart balloon bobbing behind him.

EXT. TOWN CENTRE STREET. CEMETERY.

The elderly man passes through the gates of the cemetery. He walks with purpose, it is a route he has traveled many times. He stops beside a small arched head-stone that is engraved: *'Elsie. My Girlfriend, My Wife, My Love'*.

He kneels, places the pink rose on the grave and removes his cap. Slowly he runs his index finger over the engraved letters then stands, replaces his cap, and balloon in hand walks slowly back the way he came.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSE. VALENTINES DAY. EVENING

The elderly man stands on the doorstep outside the house holding the balloon. He tucks his cap into his jacket pocket and rings the doorbell. The door is opened by a young man who shakes him warmly by the hand and invites him inside, patting his back as he passes.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. VALENTINES DAY. EVENING

A young woman stands from the sofa and hugs the elderly man then strokes his face tenderly.

She takes his hand and leads him to the side of the sofa, where a baby lies in a white crib edged with pale pink lace. The elderly man's eyes brim with tears and he ties the balloon onto the handle of the crib.

He looks to the young woman for permission, and she nods her approval. He carefully lifts the new baby from her crib and cradles her gently in his arms. The tears brim over and ooze onto his delighted face as he plants a tender kiss on the baby's head and mouths the words, *'My Valentine'*.