

MARTHA'S PARAKEET

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SCENE ONE

EXT. MARTHA'S HOUSE.

Victorian. In decay. It looks like it used to hold rowdy parties before its owners decided upkeep was too much of a hassle. Two pink plastic flamingos stand at attention near the door.

GEORGE (13, MALE) goes up the steps and knocks on the door with a brass handle in the shape of a woodpecker.

MARTHA (FROM INSIDE)

Slide your search warrant under the door, or I cannot, *WILL NOT* open the door for anyone! Speak to my lawyer! For the last time I do not have any illegal birds--

GEORGE

What?

The heavy door swings open.

MARTHA, (70s, FEMALE) a short and stout woman with long gray hair and glasses answers the door. She doesn't say anything. George tries to fill up the awkward silence.

MARTHA

Oh. You're not a cop, right? You know you have to tell me if you are--

GEORGE

Um. No, I'm not.

MARTHA

(She smiles) Wonderful. Proceed.

GEORGE

I was playing with my friends, and my soccer ball landed in your backyard... can I get it back?

Martha starts to laugh.

MARTHA

Oh! I was in the middle of training my new parakeet, Jasmine, to sing, that I didn't see it land! Of course you can come in. A bit of warning, however-- do *not* make eye contact with the birds.

(MORE)

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
 They don't like strangers.  
 Especially *males*, for some reason.  
 They don't like their energy. But  
 do come in!

George steps into the home, uneasy.

SCENE TWO

EXT. MARTHA'S HOUSE.

GEORGE (now 18, MALE) goes up the steps of the house with a bag of birdseed in his hand. He knocks on the door with the same woodpecker brass handle.

MARTHA (FROM INSIDE)  
 Password?

GEORGE  
 Semiplumes.

The door swings open vigorously. Martha (early 80s, FEMALE) seems even smaller, thinner, older. Soft jazz music plays in the background: *I'll Be Seeing You- Billie Holiday*.

MARTHA  
 George! Look at you, all grown up!  
 How was your graduation? I'm  
 getting ahead of myself-- come in,  
 come in!

George and Martha sit in her living room.

GEORGE  
 I brought you birdseed, thought  
 it'd be more useful than some cheap  
 college merch. I learned in class  
 that birds need certain, uh,  
 nutrients so i also brought some  
 oranges--

MARTHA  
 How lovely, George. Thank you. Ever  
 since the surgery i've been scared  
 of leaving the house. You know,  
 don't wanna break my *other* knee.  
 (She coughs, clearly sick).

Martha tries to lighten the mood by laughing it off, but George's face drops in worry. They hug, a silent understanding. Martha's eyes well up. George is like the grandson she never had.

## SCENE THREE

EXT. MARTHA'S HOUSE.

Furniture is sprawled out on the lawn. A moving van is parked on the curb. Empty bird cages sit open on the grass. GEORGE (28) goes to use the woodpecker knocker and is found with a bare door, painted white. George knocks. We can see a wedding ring on his left hand.

A few seconds pass without a sound until a REAL ESTATE AGENT (40s, FEMALE) opens the door.

REAL ESTATE AGENT  
Can I help you?

GEORGE  
Thank you. Um, I'm looking for  
Martha? Old? Short? Has weird  
birds?

REAL ESTATE AGENT  
If you're looking for her stuff,  
it's all outside. We tried reaching  
out to her family but--

George pushes past the agent and enters the house in a daze. It all hits him like a truck barreling at him at 100 miles per hour.

Cardboard boxes sit on the floor. Green floral wallpaper covers the walls, now peeling.

George's eyes begin to water, seeing the place so empty. He runs his hand along the upholstered couches and chairs, now covered in plastic. A half-used bag of birdseed (same brand he brought) sits on the ground. He half chuckles, half cries. He opens one of the boxes and takes out the record player and an album: *Billie Holiday*. A post-it note is stuck on the front that reads: GIVE TO GEORGE. He places the stylus on the record. *I'll Be Seeing You* begins to play. One of Martha's parakeets flies in from the front door and begins to whistle the tune. George smiles.

CUT TO: BLACK.

Credits roll while the song continues to play, along with the whistling.