

SILVER FOXES

by

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WGAw

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FADE IN:

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Total chaos, soldiers run furiously back and forth burning stacks of papers in oil drums.

INT. BUNKER - OFFICE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A table filled with files all labeled Top Secret. Four men in white lab coats shuffle through the material. A hard as nails GENERAL bursts in the room.

GENERAL
Cartwright! Sanderson! Abrams!
Tidwell! It's time!

The General abruptly leaves. One of the men takes out a Zippo lighter, lights it throwing it on the table. The papers and table are immediately engulfed in flames.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The men in lab coats rush out of the smoke filled bunker.

GENERAL
That's everyone, seal it!

Soldiers push shut the massive fifty foot high, six foot thick steel blast door jutting out from the mountain.

GENERAL (CONT'D)
Burn 'em!

Straw huts are sprawled out next to the mountain. Soldiers run from hut to hut lighting them on fire. Inside mannequins burn wearing Chinese clothing.

It's all a giant diversion village.

GENERAL (CONT'D)
Enough! Load up!

A dirt runway runs alongside the huts, a B-24 starts it's engines. Men pile onboard; the General steps on shutting the door as the plane flies down the runway.

INT. B-24 - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The second hand on a watch strikes twelve the General looks out the window.

Below a series of explosions go off over the mountain causing a landslide of epic proportion. The bunker, huts and runway are all covered in seconds.

As the dust settles, the mountain appears like all the others surrounding it, as if no human has ever set foot there.

SUPER: "1948 CHINA."

The B-24 banks left ascending into the clouds.

FADE TO BLACK

RADIO (V.O.)

For all our listeners that remember
the good old days here's a tune for
you from forty-five.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - MAIN ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Next to the radio an elderly woman pets a curled up dog in her lap.

DOG WOMAN

Time to go Coco.

She gets up pulling it's leash dragging the stuffed dog off the chair bouncing it across the floor. Walking past a woman sitting next to a telephone, staring at it intently. She quickly picks it up placing it to her ear.

TELEPHONE WOMAN

Caroline is that you? How are --

A NURSE walks by grabbing the phone placing it back on the receiver.

NURSE

It has to ring first Miss Sharon.

TELEPHONE WOMAN

It did ring I heard it.

NURSE

No one's going to call if you keep
picking up the phone.

The woman carefully watches the Nurse walk away, and picks back up the phone.

TELEPHONE WOMAN

Hi Caroline sorry about that, what were you saying?

The assisted living home is rundown. Built in the 1980s, and that's the last time anything new was bought, fixed, or replaced. Paint peels off the dented worn walls.

The chairs that aren't plastic, have cuts and cracks in the cushions revealing the foam even trying to escape. The worst nursing home in New Jersey, really the worst in all of America. The last place anyone would ever want to live.

A nervous man stands next to the window, he carefully looks left then right. Flinging open the window, he starts climbing out.

ESCAPE MAN

Wait for me Steve McQueen!

The Nurse grabs him shoving him in a chair slamming shut the window.

NURSE

This isn't the Great Escape!

Two women knitting watch him.

KNITTING WOMAN 1

Jim's at it again.

KNITTING WOMAN 2

We needed some fresh air.

RUTH SANDERSON (80s) shows signs of dementia, mumbling to herself at times.

RUTH

(singing quietly)

March ... May ... June ...
November.

Alone by the window she assembles a puzzle, the box propped up in front of her. She closely examines a piece before snapping it in place.

ETHEL (O.S.)

Oy.

SCREECH of a chair dragging across the floor. Easy going foodie ETHEL ABRAMS (80s) riding an electric scooter takes a cane and pushes the stuck chair off her scooter. She reverses the scooter, it BEEPS methodically.

(NOTE: Ethel is always riding her scooter unless otherwise stated.)

Free of the chair she begins driving again, SCREECH hitting another chair not five feet from the last. She takes her cane and repeats the process of freeing herself.

Pessimistic sour BARBARA TIDWELL (80s) wearing a pink sweat suit uses an old desktop computer. Ethel rolls up next to her.

ETHEL (CONT'D)

Hey Barb, dig up any new relatives?

BARBARA

Yes! I just discovered one of my distant relatives twice removed is William Painter, the inventor of the bottle cap. Isn't that exciting?

ETHEL

... Very.

BARBARA

I'm sending it to my daughter now.

ETHEL

... She'll be thrilled.

Barbara opens an e-mail and begins typing. Ethel drives off we hear a loud SCREECH.

On the TV screen a soldier appears. Caring and optimistic MARY CARTWRIGHT (80s) stands like a veteran soldier holding a Wii gun controller aimed at a eighties wood paneled TV.

WOMAN (O.S.)

You're not James Bond, put on Price is Right.

MARY

Wait your turn Gladys.

Mary clicks the controller the TV flashes and strobes.

MARY (CONT'D)

Not again.

Mary bangs on the TV twice, the image zaps back then disappears. A loud pop sizzles from the TV. Ethel rams her scooter into the couch.

ETHEL

What happened to the TV?

MARY

The same thing that happens to everything here.

ETHEL

It was abandoned?

Baffled Mary stares at Ethel for a moment.

MARY

It died.

ETHEL

Quick maybe we can revive it.

Smoke pours out from the back of the TV.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - LOBBY - DAY

The RECEPTIONIST sleeps at her desk. BAM marching through the front door HOWARD WILKES (late 80s) in a suit and sunglasses. Followed by two men also in suits and sunglasses. AGENT 2 and AGENT 1, holding a briefcase.

The Receptionist jumps awake. Howard walks over removing his sunglasses.

HOWARD

I was wondering if you have a Cartwright, Sanderson, Abrams, and Tidwell living here?

RECEPTIONIST

Yes we do, are you a friend?

HOWARD

Something like that, could I see them?

RECEPTIONIST

Of course, please follow me.

She starts down the hall, Howard and the men follow.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

The receptionist leads the men down the hallway.

RECEPTIONIST

I think Arts and crafts is about to start. Do you want to --

HOWARD

Is there somewhere we could meet, in private?

The receptionist stops and turns around.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh, you're here about that. We'll put you in the Sunset Room, that's where we normally ... break this kind of news. People find it easier to take there.

She opens a door with a metal plaque reading: "SUNSET ROOM".

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

I'll go get your friends.

She continues down the hall. Howard and his men look at each other confused, unsure what she was talking about.

HOWARD

Start setting up.

Agent 1 steps in the room, lowering the blinds.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Once we begin don't let anyone inside.

AGENT 2

Understood.

Howard enters the room, Agent 2 stands at attention outside the door.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Mary pulls a rat nest of wires out from behind the TV.

ETHEL

And you thought it would be bad.

Mary checks the wires.

ETHEL (CONT'D)
Is the blue wire plugged in?

MARY
There isn't a blue wire.

ETHEL
It's always the blue wire.

MARY
When is it always the blue wire?

ETHEL
When they're diffusing a bomb on TV, it's always the blue wire.

MARY
This isn't a bomb.

ETHEL
That didn't stop it from blowing up.

(Ethel thinks)
Or is it the red wire? Check if there's a red one.

Mary pulls the wires further apart, accidently dragging the TV off the shelf. It falls crashing onto the floor.

ETHEL (CONT'D)
We tried.

The receptionist steps in, dreading having to break the bad news. Mary quickly jumps in front of the TV hiding it.

RECEPTIONIST
Mary, Ruth, Ethel, Barbara there's a friend of yours here to see you about ... an important matter. Please come with me.

The receptionist trembles hiding her face as she leaves. Mary sighs in relief, falling back onto the couch.

ETHEL
What's this about?

MARY
I don't know, did anyone die recently?

ETHEL

Not that I can think of.

BARBARA

Probably another one of those awful
cheer up get happy sing alongs.

Barbara clicks closed the screen on the computer and gets up.

ETHEL

Feh, I hope not.

BARBARA

Let's get this over with.

Barbara walks across the room, and WHACKS Mary in the head
with her arm as she passes.

MARY

Oww! What was that for?

BARBARA

Oh sorry I didn't see you there.
Have you shrunk since yesterday?

Barbara smiles and walks out the room. Mary rubs her head.

ETHEL

Barb's getting worse.

MARY

Tell me about it.

ETHEL

She needs to start wearing her
glasses.

MARY

Right, her glasses.

ETHEL

I'll go remind her.

Ethel speeds out of the room, Mary follows rubbing her head.
She stops gazing back at Ruth fiddling with her puzzle. Mary
rolls her eyes and walks over to the table.

MARY

Ruth?

Mary peers down at the puzzle. It's a disaster the pieces have been forced in place, half are upside down, there are even bits of hard candy shoved in. It looks nothing like the box.

MARY (CONT'D)
It's time to go.

RUTH
I don't have to go, I just went to the bathroom.

Mary reaches down taking Ruth's hand.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - SUNSET ROOM - DAY

SLAM Ethel's scooter rams the table, jammed between two chairs. She takes out her cane trying to free herself, but is wedged in tight. Howard and Agent 1 startled look up from the computer and projector they're setting up.

HOWARD
Give her a hand.

Agent 1 rushes over pulling the chairs aside, freeing Ethel.

ETHEL
Thank you young man.

BARBARA
I see you entered gracefully as ever.

ETHEL
At least I didn't have to make a pit stop.

Barbara scowls at Ethel as she sits on the opposite side of the table.

MARY
Are we late?

ETHEL
Just in time, I saved you seats.

Agent 1 holding the chairs arranges them for Mary and Ruth.

MARY
Oh thank you.

Howard looks at the women confused. The receptionist sticks her head in.

RECEPTIONIST

If you need anything else let me know.

HOWARD

Wait where is Cartwright, Sanderson, Abrams and Tidwell?

RECEPTIONIST

Right here, Mary Cartwright, Ruth Sanderson, Ethel Abrams and Barbara Tidwell. That's who you wanted isn't it?

HOWARD

... Oh yes, thank you.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

The receptionists walks out of the room. Agent 2 shuts the door, standing guard outside.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - SUNSET ROOM - DAY

Agent 1 locks the door.

ETHEL

If this is about burial plots you're wasting your time. I've already staked mine out --

BARBARA

Everyone's not trying to sell you burial plots Ethel.

Barbara looks at Howard and smiles.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

And it's not that often we have such a good looking man here --

MARY

Give it a rest he hasn't been here five minutes and you're already sizing him up --

BARBARA
Excuse me, I'm not all dried up
like some of us.

MARY
I'm not dried up, I still have some
decency.

Howard and Agent 1 share a look between them as the women
bicker. Howard coughs for attention, but no one notices.

BARBARA
Is that what you call putting your
hands all over Don yesterday.

MARY
I spilled paint on him, I was just
trying to help clean up.

BARBARA
In all the right places.

MARY
No it wasn't like that, I was --

HOWARD
Arthur Cartwright! Theodore
Sanderson! Norman Abrams! Walter
Tidwell! Do those names mean
anything to you!?

BARBARA
We're not deaf you don't need to
shout!

HOWARD
Do they?

MARY
Those were our husbands.

HOWARD
Where are they?

BARBARA
Dead.

HOWARD
(stunned)
I was afraid of that.

ETHEL
Were you a friend of theirs?

HOWARD
You could say that.

BARBARA
If you want I can tell you all
about Walter, say tonight at
dinner?

Barbara winks at Howard. SLAM. Mary kicks her hard under the
table.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Oww! What was that for?

MARY
Have some decency, what would your
husband think?

BARBARA
He's dead he shouldn't be thinking
anything.

MARY
Have some respect then.

BARBARA
It's been five years. Not all of us
want to be in mourning the rest of
our lives.

HOWARD
Ladies! Ladies. Now Mrs. Tidw --

BARBARA
Oh please! Miss.

Barbara smiles at Howard. Mary shakes her head in disgust.
Barbara gives Mary a look to stay out of it.

HOWARD
My name's Howard Wilkes.

BARBARA
Hi Howard.

HOWARD
I'm with the C.I.A.

ETHEL
The C.I.A? You're running so low on
funds you're selling burial plots
now?

HOWARD

... No, I'm here because we were looking for your husbands, but I think maybe you can still help us.

MARY

With what?

HOWARD

Stopping America's greatest enemy.

BARBARA

Russia?

HOWARD

China.

Howard motions to Agent 1 who starts the presentation. A map of China projects out onto the wall.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Following World War Two, your husbands were stationed in China on a top secret project. They were part of a strategy prepared in case a war ever broke out between the Soviet Union and China. Their mission was to find a way to deliver nuclear weapons into Russia without the use of Aircraft.

The slide changes to scientists developing the FAT MAN bomb.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

When your husbands had completed the weapon the Chinese civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists was at it's peak.

A slide of Mao Zedong and his army meeting with Soviet advisors is projected.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

With Communist forces winning, it was decided to hide the weapon. The U.S. believed the Nationalists would be able to take back China. But Mao's power grew only stronger.

Projected is a map showing the Nationalist retreat through China all the way to Taiwan.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

When they evacuated, all files on the project were destroyed. And all personnel were sent back to the states and told never to speak of what they had done.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT - NIGHT

A missile flies out from Earth, crashing into a satellite. On impact both explode into a million pieces.

HOWARD (V.O.)

Not long ago China launched a missile destroying one of it's defunct satellites. We have reason to believe they have been improving this technology.

INT. TAINGONG SPACE STATION - NIGHT

Chinese astronauts carefully close the door connecting their ship to the space station filled with explosives.

HOWARD (V.O.)

Their recent space station is actually a bomb. We gather they plan to fire missiles at the International Space Station and their dummy station.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT - NIGHT

Multiple Missiles fly out from Earth. One hits Taingong Space Station setting off a large explosion. Simultaneously a missile crashes into the International Space Station, exploding into a million pieces.

The debris shoots out like bullets destroying everything.

HOWARD (V.O.)

Once destroyed they would set off a chain reaction destroying every satellite in orbit forcing the world into a nineteen fifties style of communication.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT - NIGHT

A missile launches from Earth entering the sea of tiny metal debris in orbit and is instantly shredded apart.

HOWARD (V.O.)

Nothing would be able to fly out of the atmosphere for years. Most nuclear missiles need to launch into space before hitting a target. And those that don't, still require G.P.S. which would be gone making them useless.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A small missile launches, spinning wildly out of control into the sky, before crashing into the ground.

HOWARD (V.O.)

China would become the only nuclear power. Once that happens they'll begin pushing west enlarging the country for their ever growing population.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - SUNSET ROOM - DAY

An arrow on a map shows China pushing west into Vietnam, Burma, India and beyond.

HOWARD

Luckily they haven't found the mountain yet. But they are combing the country.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - DAY

Swarms of Chinese soldiers search the mountainside.

HOWARD (V.O.)

The mountain holds over half a dozen nuclear shells. It's only a matter of time before they find it.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - SUNSET ROOM - DAY

A picture of the aftermath of the Hiroshima bomb is projected.

HOWARD

All records of the bunker and it's location have been lost. The only ones that knew of it were your husbands.

Howard looks at the women.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

During all your time together, maybe they let you know in some way where it is. If you help us find the weapon, the government has prepared a deal for you. We will grant you the choice of living anywhere in the United States with a personal care giver until your final days. Will you help us?

The women sit in silence.

RUTH

Can I go home now?

Howard dumbfounded, did they hear any of that?

BARBARA

You are home you fruit loop!

Ruth extends her hand to Barbara.

RUTH

Hi I'm Ruth, I don't think we've met. What's your name --

BARBARA

I'm Barbara! We've been in this same Hell hole for five years!

Scared Ruth recoils in her chair, cowering next to Mary.

MARY

Take it easy Barbara.

BARBARA

Everyday the same thing, you'd think she'd remember for once.

MARY

Things are kind of going the other way for her.

(to Ruth)

It's fine everything's okay.

Mary turns to Howard.

MARY (CONT'D)

Don't you think we're a little old? Maybe there's someone else you --

HOWARD

No. Truth of the matter is, we need you. There is no one else. It's a long shot, but you are our only hope. Will you help us. Help your country?

The women turn and look at each other.

MARY

... I'll do it. I don't want my family growing up during a war too. How about you Ruth?

Ruth nods yes.

BARBARA

Miss forget it all. Just who we need.

Mary looks at Ethel.

ETHEL

I've always loved to travel, it will give me a chance to get out and stretch my legs.

All eyes in the room land on Barbara.

ETHEL (CONT'D)

Well?

BARBARA

Why not, anything's better then waiting to die in this big house.

Howard smiles, motions to Agent 1 who grabs the equipment.

HOWARD

Good. I'll see you bright and early tomorrow morning for training.

Howard and the agents march down the hall. The women look at each other confused.

RUTH, MARY, BARBARA, ETHEL
Training?

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The women emerge from a small building wearing frumpy ill fitting gray sweat suits with C.I.A. written on them.

BARBARA
These aren't very sexy.

HOWARD
I'll let the C.I.A. know. This is
Agent Davis, he'll be training you.

AGENT DAVIS (40s) a hardened soldier, wears the same sweat suit. But his clings like a glove revealing his rippling muscles.

DAVIS
We'll begin with a short five K
run, follow me.

Davis sprints down a dirt path leading into the forest.

HOWARD
Better hurry, or you'll lose him.

Reluctantly Mary, Ruth and Barbara begin after him. Jogging, but their jogging is slow, more like most peoples walking.

Howard watches them go, then winces in pain. CRUNCH, his foot is run over by Ethel's scooter, as she chases them.

ETHEL
Not so fast. Wait for me!

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Exhausted Mary, Ruth and Barbara emerge out of the forest finding Davis performing push-ups like a machine.

DAVIS
Ninety-four ... ninety-five ...
ninety-six ...

WHIZZ, the women turn back to see Ethel driving her scooter at full speed bouncing down the dirt path. Skidding to a stop next to them.

ETHEL

I was afraid I missed all the fun.

Davis stands up wiping the sweat off his brow.

DAVIS

The fun's just about to start. Now that we're all here, lets begin the training.

BARBARA

What was that?

DAVIS

Warm up.

The women cringe hearing this.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

One hundred push-ups ladies!

Grudgingly Mary, Ruth and Barbara crouch down into position. Mary struggles with all her might to push up off the ground, falling back face first into the dirt. Barbara and Ruth strain as well unable to push themselves up.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

That means you too!

Ethel turns to see Davis looming over her.

ETHEL

My tokhes is a little sore anyway.

Ethel carefully steps off her scooter and crouches down. The women strive in vain unable to push up off the ground.

DAVIS

I haven't seen a sorrier bunch of maggots in all my life. Why don't you pull your panties out of your --

BARBARA

Excuse me! What did you say?

Davis looks down at the women glaring back at him.

ETHEL
 You should be ashamed of talking
 that way.

RUTH
 So naughty.

MARY
 Is that how you talk to your
 mother? What do you have to say for
 yourself?

Davis embarrassed steps back.

DAVIS
 ... I'm sorry ... Could you PLEASE
 do as many push-ups as you can?

BARBARA
 Was that so hard?

ETHEL
 Manners go a long way young man.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

Howard strides down the path, seeing Davis silent watching
 the women struggle. Howard confused looks at his watch.

HOWARD
 How many have they done forty?
 fifty?

DAVIS
 None.

HOWARD
 None?

The women lay on the ground spent, out of breath.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - DAY

The women stand in a dirt trench. Davis holds a box filled
 with pistols, he looks at Howard unsure if this is a good
 idea. Howard signals for Davis to continue.

DAVIS
 Here we will test your
 marksmanship.

Davis hands out pistols to the women.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

Each of your guns holds five rounds. You will be judged on how accurately you hit the target.

Barbara squints down the field at a wood dummy. Carefully aims her pistol and fires all five shots.

ETHEL

I think you missed.

Not one bullet hit remotely near the target.

BARBARA

Lets see you do any better.

Ethel on her scooter raises the gun and fires, but not high enough. The bullet ricochets off her side mirror flying back toward Howard and Davis, both hit the ground.

Ruth confused turns around and fires her gun toward Howard and Davis. Davis jumps into the pit grabbing her gun.

DAVIS

Give me that!

RUTH

Is it yours?

BANG, BANG Davis snaps toward Mary, and stops. She stands like a veteran soldier hitting the target's bull's-eye with all five shots. Howard looks down pleased.

INT. MAINFRAME ROOM - DAY

Howard stands before a large TV displaying China's vast internet network spread across the country.

HOWARD

China has one of the strongest computer firewalls in the world, commonly called The Great Firewall, keeping what information they want in and out of the country.

Each of the women sit at large computer terminal.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

If you get separated, the only way of contacting the C.I.A. is by breaking through this firewall.

Two clear plastic domes sit on top of each computer.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

These computers have been set up just like they would be in China. Your task is to bypass the firewall and connect to the C.I.A.'s website. You may begin.

Mary looks down at the computer, baffled as how to start it.

Howard notices Ethel typing away furiously. BUZZ the domed light on Ethel's computer flashes red.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

You failed. The authorities would be at your location in under five minutes.

BUZZ Mary's light flashes red, BUZZ Ruth's light flashes red. Ruth throws her hands up in the air.

RUTH

Yeah we won! What did we win?

Howard sighs, BUZZ, he looks over at Barbara's computer flashing green.

ETHEL

How did you do that? Is that from researching your family tree?

BARBARA

No, I used to work at I.B.M. remember? This firewalls not that hard to break, by using a simple remote binary command ...

The women listen in disbelief to Barbara.

INT. FAUX CHINESE CLASSROOM - DAY

A perfect rendition of a Chinese classroom. Standing before the black board are a TEACHER and Howard.

TEACHER
 Mandarin is the official language
 of China. Now repeat after me.
 (in Mandarin)
 Hello How are you?

The women sit at desks. Ruth daydreams staring out the window. Mary tense, stands up.

MARY
 (in Mandarin)
 Hawoo hu er duu?

Ethel sits up on her scooter.

ETHEL
 (in Mandarin)
 Haruu kuw ur nuu?

Barbara stands proud, sure of herself being the best.

BARBARA
 (in Mandarin)
 Bawoo ju ver bluu?

The Teacher looks at Howard Mortified.

MARY
 Ruth come on it's your turn.

Mary pushes Ruth to her feet, Ruth stands frigid.

RUTH
 (in Spanish)
 Where is the bathroom?

The room shocked, Ruth sits back down.

TEACHER
 (whispers to Howard)
 No one will doubt they're tourists.

EXT. OBSTACLE COURSE - DAY

Davis runs up to Howard holding a Stopwatch.

HOWARD
 Fifty-four seconds.

Davis takes the stopwatch wiping the sweat off his brow.

DAVIS

We aim to get new recruits through here in under two minutes. Barbara, Mary you're up first.

CUT TO:

Barbara and Mary stand side by side. Davis blows a whistle, Barbara shoves Mary in the dirt and takes off.

MARY

What the --

Barbara in the lead runs through sets of tires on the ground, Mary close on her heels. Barbara exits the tires and starts up a steep wood bridge, stopping to catch her breath.

MARY (CONT'D)

Your age catching up with you?

Mary darts past.

BARBARA

I'm younger than you!

Mary off the bridge comes to a rope wall and begins to climb. Barbara grabs Mary's feet dragging her back down.

MARY

What are you doing?

BARBARA

Getting a leg up.

Barbara climbs up past her. Mary grabs Barbara's feet pulling her off the ropes.

MARY

Two can play at that game.

BARBARA

Let go.

Barbara and Mary struggle, each pulling the other down. Ruth runs up and tries to squeeze in between them.

MARY

Not now!

BARBARA

Stay out!

Ruth backs up trying to figure a way through. Howard and Davis approach the spectacle. Davis looks at his stopwatch.

HOWARD
What do you have?

DAVIS
... Five minutes.

A faint WHIZZING, grows louder and louder, everyone stops and turns. Seeing Ethel determined bursts down the course on her scooter past them at full speed.

INT. BUS - DAY

Howard turns around in the driver's seat.

HOWARD
I'll pick you up same time
tomorrow.

Back in their normal clothes the women drained disembark.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - LOBBY - DAY

Ragged the women shuffle through the door.

ETHEL
I'm so tired I could just plotz.

BARBARA
Parts of me hurt, I swear I didn't
have when I was younger.

RUTH
I don't think I want to be a
cheerleader.

MARY
It even hurts to walk, I just want
to di --

STEPHANIE (O.S.)
Grandma?

Mary exhausted glances over, seeing her granddaughter
STEPHANIE (late 20s), sitting on a bench.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - SUNSET ROOM - DAY

Anxious Stephanie sits across from Mary at the table. The first time Mary has sat comfortably all day, she is relaxed perhaps a little too much.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry I haven't visited sooner -- it's just things at home -- when they settle down, I promise once a week I'll come visit. And we can go out; go to dinner, see a show, spend some real time together.

Mary's eyes begin to drift closed.

MARY

Uh huh.

Stephanie reaches into her bag.

STEPHANIE

I got you this. That way if I can't stop by we can still keep in touch. You can call me whenever you want. If you feel like you need someone to talk to.

Placing a cell phone on the table.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

With Mom gone it's just you and me. And sometimes When you're here all alone, I worry about you ... You like it here right?

Mary sits sound asleep.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Grandma? ... Grandma!?

Mary jolts awake.

MARY

Oh Stephanie. When did you get here? How are you?

Stephanie concerned, did her Grandma hear any of that?

STEPHANIE

... Fine.

MARY

And how's little Peter? I don't see my Great-Grandson enough.

STEPHANIE

He's good, I'll bring him next time. Grandma are you okay?

MARY
Oh yes, just a little tired from
exercises today.

The Nurse sticks her head in.

NURSE
Dinner is served miss Mary.

Mary suddenly bursts full of energy.

MARY
Sorry honey I have to go, before
Ethel eats it all.

Mary quickly grabs the phone and kisses Stephanie's cheek.

MARY (CONT'D)
It was nice to see you. Come back
soon, Love you.

She bolts out the door, the Nurse turns to follow.

STEPHANIE
My Grandmother ... does she seem
alright?

NURSE
Miss Mary, of course? I'm glad all
the residents don't have as much
energy as her.

STEPHANIE
It's just ... she seemed a little
tired. And said something about
exercises --

NURSE
The muscle strengthening class?

Shocked Stephanie thought the classes were just for fun.

STEPHANIE
Yes, and is it normal to be tired
after these classes?

NURSE
No, most have more energy after.

STEPHANIE
(growing worried)
Oh ...

NURSE

I'm sorry I have to go, dinner is our busiest time.

STEPHANIE

... Yes thank you.

Stephanie sits alone comatose with worry.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - DINNING ROOM - DAY

A name plaque on the table reads MRS.DEWITT, bewildered Mary checks all the name plaques.

Noticing Ruth at a table alone. Curious Mary walks over spotting a MRS.CARTWRIGHT name plaque. Ethel slams her scooter into the table shaking the dishes.

ETHEL

So this is where we're eating?

MARY

I wish we could pick where we sit.

BARBARA

You're kidding me.

Mary looks up, face to face with Barbara.

MARY

What are you doing here?

Barbara picks up her name plaque showing it to Mary.

BARBARA

I'm just as thrilled as you are.

ETHEL

Isn't this great, all of us eating together?

Soggy pale turkey, overcooked rubbery carrots, opaque white mashed potatoes covered in thin gravy fill the plate.

The tables are filled with residents shoveling in their food, as does Ethel. You'd think it was everyone's last meal. Mary unenthusiastically pokes her fork in the potatoes.

MARY

Barbara? I think this is the first time you've ever sat wit --

BARBARA
Shut up Mary.

Mary shocked.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I've been thinking.

MARY
That must have been hard.

They lock eyes across the table, tension fills the air.

ETHEL
Oh stop it you two, let her talk.

BARBARA
Thank you Ethel, have I ever told
you you're my favorite person here.

Pleased Ethel fidgets happily on her scooter.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
As I was saying, I don't know about
this whole thing.

Mary drops her silverware on the table.

MARY
Thank God someone else said it.
I've been thinking the same thing.

BARBARA
There's no point in doing this if
we die in the process.

MARY
Which might happen on that obstacle
course tomorrow.

ETHEL
It wasn't that bad.

They eye Ethel sitting on her scooter like a queen.

BARBARA
You can go back, but I'm out.

MARY
Me too. What about you Ruth?

Ruth plays with her food, molding the potatoes with her fork.

RUTH
When's dinner?

MARY
This is dinner.

RUTH
Oh.

Ruth looks down at her plate bewildered. Mary and Barbara look at Ethel.

ETHEL
You heard what he said, without us
they can't stop China.

BARBARA
At this rate we'll never make it to
China.

Ethel thinks this over.

ETHEL
You're my only friends here. I
don't know what I'd do without you.

MARY
So you're with us?

ETHEL
All the way.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - LOBBY - DAY

The women walk down the hallway.

MANAGER
Excuse me! Can you come here?

The stern, everything by the book, MANAGER (40s) stands behind the desk. She runs the home like a prison warden. Confused the women walk over.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
We found this in your rooms.

She holds up a zip lock bag filled with green herb.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
We have a strict no drug pol --

Barbara snatches the bag out of her hand.

BARBARA
Who's been holding out this whole
time, and not sharing?

She quickly taste the herb, throwing it back at the Manager.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
This is oregano.

MANAGER
... This is just for demonstration
purposes. The substance has already
been destroyed.

BARBARA
I bet it has.

MARY
I swear I didn't have grass. I've
never even smoked it before.

MANAGER
It's too late. Your things have
already been moved out.

ETHEL
Since Dinner?

MARY
Please, can't you reconsider?

MANAGER
Everythings been processed. The
rooms have new residents moving in
this evening.

MARY
This has to be some kind of a
mistake.

MANAGER
If you don't leave I'll have to
call the police.

BARBARA
This is bullshit!

MANAGER
I'm just following the rules.

ETHEL
That's what they all say. Come on
girls you can't argue with morons.

The women huff out the door.

EXT. ASSISTED LIVING HOME - DAY

The curb littered with suitcases, lamps, picture frames, every possession of the women's lives. They sit lost next it.

MARY

What are we going to do? We're homeless. We'll become bag ladies

BARBARA

I'm not going to be a bag lady.

MARY

This is the only home I could afford. Where will we go?

ETHEL

You could move in with Stephanie?

MARY

She's teetering on the brink of divorce. If I move in, her marriage is over. What about you?

ETHEL

My son in Chicago is always pestering me to move out there. But I can't stand his shikse wife.

A chill runs down Ethel's spine.

BARBARA

I guess It'll just be me and Ruth with nowhere to go.

ETHEL

What about your daughter? You write to her almost everyday.

BARBARA

That's because I don't know where she is, or what she's doing. She hasn't called or visited in months.

Barbara lost looks at the ground.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Know what would make this better. Some grass, now who has it?

MARY
I thought it was yours?

BARBARA
Mine? It's Ethel's.

ETHEL
I've never had grass.

They gaze over at Ruth playing with a flower.

MARY
It wasn't hers.

BARBARA
So no one had it? We just got
screwed by the system?

HONK, the women look over to see Howard smiling sticking his head out of the driver's side window of the faded blue bus.

HOWARD
Looks like you're all packed.

The women look at each other, then storm over.

BARBARA
You!

HOWARD
Sorry I couldn't risk you changing
your minds. I would have liked to
train you longer, but the Chinese
are on the move.

BARBARA
What makes you think we're coming
with you?

HOWARD
Doesn't look like you have much of
a choice. Load up we've got a plane
to catch.

ETHEL
Where are we going?

HOWARD
Beijing, Don't worry we'll be
sneaking you in the most undercover
way possible.

INT. BEIJING AIRPORT - DAY

A hot pot of tourists from around the world. A group of four women dressed in black suits, large hats and big sunglasses walk by. As they pass revealing Ethel, Barbara, Mary and Ruth.

BARBARA

This is so embarrassing, is everybody staring?

All four of them wear obnoxious oversized tacky clothes with large funky hats. Barbara's shirt has "HOT GRANNY" written on it in pink. If anything, the women stick out like a sore thumb, and because of that no one gives them a second look.

ETHEL

I'll tell you if I see anyone.

A digital camera hangs from Ethel's neck. Howard steps up in a Hawaiian shirt and baseball cap.

HOWARD

Let's get a move on.

Peering from behind a book of Chairman Mao, SHUO XU (late 20s) cunning and persistent dressed in a suit carefully watches them pass. He pulls out a phone and dials.

SHUO XU

(in Mandarin)
They're here.

EXT. BEIJING AIRPORT - DAY

Howard and the women wait in the busy taxi line. Howard takes a note and hands it to Mary.

HOWARD

I'll meet you at the hotel at five.

ETHEL

What are we supposed to do till then?

HOWARD

Be tourists, see the sights, that's your cover.

BARBARA

What about our clothes?

HOWARD
Don't you like the ones I picked
out?

BARBARA
No.

HOWARD
All your things will be at the
hotel when you arrive.

A taxi pulls up, Howard opens the door.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Oh I almost forgot.

Howard takes out his wallet and gives Mary a wad of money.

MARY
Oh wow I don't know what to say,
this is so much.

HOWARD
Don't get to excited, it's six yuan
to a dollar.

Barbara snatches the money quickly counting it.

BARBARA
That's only twenty dollars each.

HOWARD
It'll be enough. The bus should be
in your price range. I'll see you
tonight.

Howard slams the door, the taxi drives off.

BARBARA
Cheap ass.

They turn around seeing the bus already packed with people.

EXT. TIANANMEN SQUARE - DAY

The women stand smack dab in the middle of the vast square,
in the scorching summer sun. The Forbidden City looms behind.

For the full page script of SILVER FOXES please contact Greg
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