

Do Not Go Gentle

By

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INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

LESTER (83) enters wearing ABOVE THE WAIST SHORTS and SUSPENDERS. He is carrying the MAIL into the room. He stands over the TRASHCAN throwing pieces of mail away one by one, until he gets to a COLORFUL PAMPHLET with a FERRIS WHEEL on the cover. He smiles, looks up, and chuckles to himself. He has an impish look on his face.

LESTER
Aaaaaalice! Oh, Alice!

Enter ALICE (80), walking with determination. She is wearing GARDENING GLOVES. She stops abruptly, looks at Lester, and rolls her eyes.

ALICE
Is the shouting really necessary?

LESTER
You're old, woman. I have to get through those hearing aids somehow!

ALICE
You scared me half to death!

LESTER
Well I'm still closer than you-

Alice's face washes over with anger, then grief. Lester's smile slowly leaves his face.

LESTER
-wrong audience. Anyway, look what came in the mail!

ALICE
How many times have I told you not to go through the mail?

LESTER
In the 57 years we've been married, probably once every day, and twice a day on holidays...

Alice glares at him.

ALICE
Let's review. You can't go through the mail because-

LESTER

-because every time I see something cool I order it online without telling you and then forget about it after a week and leave it in the garage. Okay, I get it. But in my defense how crazy is it that you are just three clicks away from the very thing you see in the picture?

ALICE

Not as crazy as I'll be if my flowers die of dehydration while we're standing here.

LESTER

Just look, sassypants!

Lester hands Alice the pamphlet. He is beaming. Alice looks at it cautiously for a few seconds.

ALICE

A carnival! How...fun! I'll let the kids know, seeing as how THEIR kids are more age appropriate, NOT ours.

LESTER

Not just any carnival, THE carnival! Remember? Car-nih-valle!

Alice tries to fight a smile. She giggles while trying to speak confidently.

ALICE

I don't know what you're talking about!

LESTER

Really? Well, let's review.

Lester takes TWO FLOWERS out of the VASE, walks up to Alice, and holds it out to her.

LESTER

(in a fake, heavily
Americanized Italian accent)
Ciao, Principessa! Tu sei una
bellissima donna! Piu bella di
questi fiori. Per te!

Alice can no longer fight her smile. She blushes and takes the flowers.

ALICE

Okay, okay, you shameful Italian man. Had I known you weren't really Italian, that NEVER would have worked!

LESTER

Hey, when a handsome stranger hands you flowers on a ferris wheel, you take them! You can translate later.

ALICE

Duly noted. If I'm ever on a ferris wheel with a handsome stranger, I'll take your advice.

LESTER

I'm going to let that one slide because we are about to go on the best second first-date ever! I can't believe they're coming! I mean, can you believe the timing? We HAVE to get on that ferris wheel!

Alice's smile becomes forced. She slowly turns away from Lester, and begins to take off her gloves.

ALICE

It's great that they're coming. I'll tell the kids. They'll be thrilled.

LESTER

Forget the kids, Al! We're going back 57 years to when it all started. You asked me what I wanted. Well, this is it! I want to be on top of the world with the woman I've loved since I first saw her on that ferris wheel.

ALICE

I have a lot of gardening to do, Lester. I wish we could go, but I've got to tend to the vegetables this weekend. It's supposed to storm on Sunday, and I have to make sure they're grounded and stable...

LESTER

We can do that today! And tomorrow! We didn't retire for nothing! Come

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)
 on, Al, wouldn't it be fun? For old
 time sake?

ALICE
 We don't need to go to old times.
 We have new times to look forward
 to. I was just thinking, would you
 prefer our Annual Adventure to take
 place in the Spring or around
 October? I was thinking Thailand,
 too, because I know how much you
 love elephants...

LESTER
 I think this weekend, at the ferris
 wheel, is all the time I have to
 look forward to.

ALICE
 Or maybe Greece, I hear the people
 are sweet...

LESTER
 I hear the cotton candy is sweet at
 the carnival...

Alice throws the pamphlet into the trash.

ALICE
 We're not going! We don't have
 time. I'm sorry Les. There's just
 not enough time.

Alice dries her hands furiously, and walks out of the room.
 Lester painfully watches her leave. He reaches into the
 trash to retrieve the pamphlet. He smooths it out on the
 counter top, and opens it again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lester is on the COMPUTER, typing slowly. A couple of clicks
 later, an AMUSEMENT PARK THEME SONG begins to play. Lester
 jumps out of his chair. He is beaming.

LESTER
 Aaaaaalice! Oh, Alice!

Alice rushes in breathlessly. Her expression quickly changes
 from flustered to angry.

ALICE
What is wrong with you?

LESTER
Nothing! Those hearing aids, on the other hand-

ALICE
-I'm going to turn down the volume on my hearing aids to drown you out. Then maybe you'll see the fault in your ways.

LESTER
You can drown me out, but you can't drown out the music!

Lester turns up the volume on the computer.

ALICE
Try me.

LESTER
Dance with me.

ALICE
No.

LESTER
Aw, come on, Al. I figured out how to work The Youtube just to play this song! That Youtube is a tricky little bastard, but I've finally figured it out! One more thing to knock off my bucket list. Speaking of, my list is growing increasingly time constricting-

Alice interjects desperately.

ALICE
-because you keep adding to it!

Lester smiles half-heartedly.

LESTER
Yeah, that's right.

ALICE
You know, as impressive as your accomplishment is...and trust me, I'm so proud, I have to finish planting the vegetables. If you

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)
 want your garden to be as
 extravagant as it was last year,
 it's going to take a lot of care
 for the next couple of months...

LESTER
 Screw the next couple of months!
 Dance with me now, woman!

ALICE
 (sarcastically)
 As difficult as it is to resist
 your charm...

LESTER
 Just as difficult as the day we
 met. You could not get enough of
 me.

ALICE
 My date begged to differ.

LESTER
 Well, where is he now, huh? Come
 on, dance with me!

Alice smirks bashfully.

ALICE
 You're not supposed to move too
 much with your arthritis.

LESTER
 Why do you love reminding me how
 old I am?

Although Lester was clearly joking, Alice's face softens.

ALICE
 You're forever young in my eyes,
 Lester.

LESTER
 Prove it.

Lester spins Alice, pulls her in, and dances with her. She giggles and blushes. He pulls her closer, until his lips are up to her ear.

LESTER
 Sei bellissima! Mia principessa! Si
 sente odore del suolo...

ALICE
If you think dirty talking in
Italian is going to get me...

LESTER
I told you you smell like soil.

ALICE
It doesn't get much dirtier than
that!

LESTER
Ah, that's what you think! Just
wait until we're on the love
machine...

ALICE
If you're referring to the ferris
wheel-

LESTER
-obviously.

Lester rolls his eyes at his last comment and smiles. Alice
is still flushed.

ALICE
We are not going! And we are
certainly not going act like this
if we go! There are children
everywhere!

LESTER
They won't hear us! We'll be on top
of the world.

ALICE
You want to feel like you're on top
of the world? Because I've been
reading about the mountains in
Switzerland, and they look
beautiful. I was thinking this
Christmas, our Vacation Destination
could be...

LESTER
Our Vacation Destination should be
the top of that ferris wheel!

ALICE
Where is the adventure in that?

LESTER

We can take an adventure back in time. Scare kids. Be the people we are in our souls. Everything is an adventure with you.

ALICE

(sarcastically)

Then adventure with me to the garden, where the mysterious carrots will one day sprout!

LESTER

Don't be sarcastic towards a dying man. It's bad karma.

Alice pulls away from Lester. Her eyes fill with tears.

ALICE

You're not dying. Turn off that damn music, and get that ferris wheel out of your head.

LESTER

(apologetically)

Okay. Honey?

ALICE

What.

LESTER

You're forever young in my eyes, too.

ALICE

I'll be in the garden.

Lester walks dejectedly toward the computer, and turns the music off. Alice exits the room, and Lester moves to sit on the couch. He is holding his back in pain. He lays down slowly, and begins to hum the same amusement park theme song that was just playing. He closes his eyes.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON

Lester and Alice are sitting at a table. Alice is looking at the menu. Lester is looking at Alice. He is beaming.

LESTER

Aaal-

ALICE

What?

LESTER

You look beautiful tonight.

ALICE

You already told me that. I've always been good at accepting compliments, but the same one over and over again is a bit suspicious.

LESTER

Can't a guy let his wife know he's still attracted to her?

Enter WAITER.

WAITER

Are you guys ready to order?

ALICE

I'll have the pasta, thank you.

LESTER

(seductively)

I'll have what she's having.

The waiter smiles and collects their menus. Alice smiles at Lester.

ALICE

You dirty old man.

LESTER

Hey, I'm not dead yet.

Alice sinks into her chair. Tears rush to her eyes. She fights to stop them.

ALICE

Would you stop joking about that?
It's not funny.

LESTER

I think it's pretty funny.

ALICE

It's not. Your sense of humor was always over the top. Remember the first time you met my mother, you-

LESTER
-Alice, I wanted to ask-

ALICE
(continuous)
-were so nervous about making a
good impression-

LESTER
(continuous)
-I know you keep saying no-

ALICE
(continuous)
-you thought it would be funny to-

LESTER
(continuous)
-But we should go to-

ALICE
-ENOUGH WITH THE CARNIVAL. You
can't go. And you can't get on the
ferris wheel. Because the second we
get off, that's it. You let go. You
may be ready to leave me, but I'm
not ready to let you leave. So stop
being so selfish, and leave the
carnival alone.

Lester takes Alice's hand from across the table. She is
crying.

LESTER
Alice, I'm going to die soon. In no
way does that mean I'm ready, nor
would I ever want to leave you. But
it's going to happen, and I want it
to happen on my terms. The timing
is tragic, because we have so much
life left to live. But until that
day comes I want to take you in as
much as possible, so all I'll have
left when I go is your smile, not
sadness. All you'll have left is
your memory, which can be so much
stronger if we go out and adventure
now, in our own way, while we still
can. I want you to remember a
happy, loving man, who stole your
heart that night fifty years ago on
the ferris wheel. And I want to do
it again one last time.

Alice wipes the tears from her eyes. She looks around, blushes, and then composes herself.

ALICE
Remember that one time we
dine-and-dashed?

LESTER
We did what?

ALICE
DASH!

Alice runs out of the restaurant. Lester runs after her, laughing.

EXT. CARNIVAL - SUNDOWN

Lester is holding open the gate to one of the ferris wheel cars. He takes Alice's hand and helps her climb in.

LESTER
Step right up, mia principessa, for
the adventure of a lifetime! It
will cost you one ki-

Alice kisses Lester as the ride begins to carry them up.

LESTER
You can't resist the charm!
Couldn't then, couldn't now.

Alice blushes.

ALICE
Shut up.

They reach the top of the ride. Lester leans in close to Alice.

LESTER
Welcome, Alice, to the top of the
world.

FADE TO BLACK