

REMEMBERING ME

A woman, hoping to connect with her Alzheimer's-afflicted father, realizes that she must change her expectations of the parent-child dynamic.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - STREET - DAY

An airport shuttle pulls up in front of the middle class, lovely, Johnson home. CYNDI, mid 40's, steps out of the sliding van door with her bag and luggage. She slides the door closed behind her and walks up to the front door and lets herself in.

INT. JOHNSON HOME - CONTINUOUS

A loved home, family pictures on every shelf, mementos and love are everywhere. Cyndi walks into the

LIVING ROOM

CYNDI
(calling out)
Hello...

KRISTINA, 52, Cyndi's older sister comes rushing over to her, arms wide.

KRISTINA
Hello!!

Kristina wraps her arms around Cyndi and quickly whispers in her ear.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
Dad doesn't know who we are.

They part and look at each other. Cyndi nods.

The girls's mom SHARON, 79, comes up and hugs her too.

SHARON
Hello baby. Did you have a good flight?

CYNDI
I did! Five hours seem to fly by...
When you're flying!

Sharon laughs at Cyndi's silly joke. They walk toward WALTER, 81. Walter stands away from everyone, hands in pockets, with a furrowed brow. Cyndi walks up to him.

CYNDI (CONT'D)
Hi Dad! It's me Cyndi. Your daughter!

She wraps her arms around him. He doesn't really hug her back.

WALTER

Oh. Okay.

KRISTINA

Hey Dad! Mike is getting some wine for all of us, do you want some wine?

WALTER

Okay.

Kristina comes over to Cyndi.

KRISTINA

Let me show you where your room is.

They grab the bags that Cyndi dropped walking in.

HALLWAY

From the garage door, carrying a bottle of wine come MIKE, 57, Kristina's husband.

MIKE

Merlot okay?

He sees Cyndi.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Cyn! I didn't hear you come in!

They hug.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Didja bring the?...

CYNDI

I got your cookies.

Mike walks away from them, calling over his shoulder.

MIKE

Man! I love having a baker in the family!

They come up to some doors in the hall. The one in front of them has a hand written sign, in bold letters, 'Cyndi's Room'. Cyndi looks down the hall at the rest of the doors - they all have signs on them. Kristina opens the door to Cyndi's room.

KRISTINA

It's for Dad. He gets lost sometimes.

INT. CYNDI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cyndi's room is a typical guest room. Landscape paintings on the wall and regular bedroom furniture. Cyndi plops the luggage on the bed and opens it.

KRISTINA

Dad's having a bad day. It seems to happen more frequently now.

CYNDI

Is this the next stages of Alzheimers?

KRISTINA

Typically yeah. More bad days than good.

After some digging in her luggage, Cyndi finds one of the things she was looking for, a Tupperware of cookies. Kristina takes it and immediately opens it up. She grabs a cookie.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)

Infamous cookies!

She shoves the whole thing in her mouth, but doesn't stop talking.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)

Mike loves your cookies.

CYNDI

Mike?

Kristina shrugs her shoulders.

KRISTINA

I'm really glad you were able to make it out.

CYNDI

I'm sorry it couldn't be longer.

Cyndi begins to look through her stuff again.

CYNDI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry it couldn't be sooner.

KRISTINA

I understand. Successful New York pastry chef, I don't know how you got away this time.

CYNDI

I just hope it isn't too late and
he hasn't completely forgotten me.
I miss his hugs and just talking to
him.

Kristina grabs another cookie.

KRISTINA

Prepare yourself that it may not
happen. (She takes a beat) We all
need to talk about next steps.

CYNDI

A home? They won't take Mom. Only
Dad.

KRISTINA

I know. But they both need someone
here all the time now. And we can't
afford a full-time nurse.

CYNDI

The kids become the parents.

KRISTINA

It sucks.

Cyndi pulls out the rest of what she was looking for - a
photo album, a scarf, and an old cookbook. Kristina grabs the
cookbook from Cyndi.

CYNDI

Be careful!

KRISTINA

Is this Gramma's cookbook?

They gather themselves and head out the door.

CYNDI

Yes. She gave it to me right before
she died.

KRISTINA

Oh, that's what happened to it.
Mmmm, this musty smell always
reminds me of Christmas.

INT. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - LATER

Cyndi and Kristina stand in the kitchen leaning down on a
half counter.

On the other side of the counter, sitting, is Sharon and Walter. They all have wine and snacks and are looking through the photo album. Mike is standing in the living room flipping channels with one hand, cookies in the other.

Kristina points at a picture of a young Sharon and Walter from the early 80's. Standing at a landing of a cruise ship.

KRISTINA

Look at that young couple! When was that?

SHARON

That was the cruise we took for our 25th anniversary. You remember that, don't you Walter?

Walter looks down at the photo, adjusts his glasses and squints a bit.

WALTER

That's me. Isn't that me?

SHARON

Yes that's you, dear.

WALTER

And that. That looks like you. Is that you?

KRISTINA

Yes that's you and Mom.

SHARON

That was our 25th anniversary.

WALTER

We're married 25 years?

CYNDI

You two are married 59 years!

WALTER

We've been married 59 years?? How about that. I must really like you.

SHARON

I supposed you do.

They lean in close to each other. It's sweet. There's a look of bittersweetness in Cyndi's eyes.

Sharon turns the pages of the photo album.

WALTER
When are we going home?

Kristina puts her hand on Walter's shoulder.

KRISTINA
Dad, you are home. You live here
with me and Mike.

WALTER
Oh, okay.

Cyndi takes the cook book and saddles up beside Walter. She
puts the cook book down on the counter.

CYNDI
I thought I'd make some dessert
tonight from Gramma's cook book.
Remember this, Dad?

Cyndi opens the cover and written in pencil along the top in
cursive says 'Ruby Finley'.

Walter turns to Sharon.

WALTER
We need to call mom and let her
know where we are.

SHARON
We can't, dear. Your mother died 20
years ago.

WALTER
Why would you say that?

SHARON
Because it's true, dear.

Walter looks at her and is very upset. He gets up and walks
into the next room.

SHARON (CONT'D)
(To the girls)
I'll go.

Sharon walks after him. Mike comes into the kitchen.

CYNDI
How often does that happen?

KRISTINA

Everyday. He asks about her, we tell him Gramma is gone and he takes it like he's hearing it for the first time.

MIKE

We really should start telling him what he wants to hear.

Kristina doesn't like it.

KRISTINA

Lie to him.

CYNDI

Really? Lie to Dad?

MIKE

Look, in that caregiver class I took they say it's something we should consider. The arguing stops and he doesn't get as upset.

The three of them look at each other for a moment. Cyndi breaks the silence.

CYNDI

I need to start on this cake if we're going to have it tonight.

KRISTINA

Okay, go ahead. Do you remember where everything is?

CYNDI

Unless you moved everything, I think I'm good.

Kristina and Mike walk out of the kitchen. Cyndi finds some bowls and opens up the cook book to applesauce cake. It has a pencilled star beside it and the words 'Walter's favorite'. Cyndi grabs her scarf from the counter and throws her hair up in it as she walks into the pantry.

While she's in the pantry Walter walks into the kitchen. He looks at the cook book opened on the counter. Just then, Cyndi walks out of the pantry, carrying sugar, flour and other essentials. Cyndi sees her dad.

CYNDI (CONT'D)

Well hello there.

Walter sees her and joy comes into his eyes. She sets the things on the counter.

WALTER

Mom?

A brief moment of panic washes over Cyndi. Then she decides what to do.

CYNDI

Hey there, Walter.

Walter comes up and gives her the hug Cyndi's been wanting since she arrived. Tears well up in her eyes.

WALTER

Where were you?

They separate and Cyndi wipes her tears so Walter doesn't see.

CYNDI

Well, I've been busy, haven't I?

Walter nods and stands there.

CYNDI (CONT'D)

Here, young man, you sit here while I bake you a cake!

WALTER

Applesauce cake?

CYNDI

You betcha.

Walter sits at the counter and Cyndi slides the photo album over to him. She opens up to the first pages where all the pictures are black and white. There's a picture of Ruby Finley, around Cyndi's age, with her hair up in a scarf. She looks just like Cyndi. Next to Ruby in the picture is a 10 year old boy.

CYNDI (CONT'D)

Why don't you tell me who some of those people in the pictures are?

WALTER

That's you right there. And that's me!... There's Uncle Bud and Aunt Kathy...

FADE TO BLACK.