

Alma

written by

Emma Heal

Phone 07495 342879
E-mail up2102161@myport.ac.uk

1. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

An elderly woman named, ALMA (80), is walking slowly on a country path before entering through a large gate. She has got a basket in her hand. She tries to scrape mud off of her wellies with her other foot but after a moment of trying she decides to take them off and walk to the door in her socks instead. She huffs to herself in frustration.

2. INT. ALMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

The cottage is slightly cluttered and the lights are off. There are framed photos of Alma, her wife and her daughter around.

She quickly adds a pot of honey from her bag to the windowsill in the kitchen. It is accompanied by many unopened pots of the same honey.

3. INT. ALMA'S LIVING AREA - NIGHT

She is in the living area and reaches for her journal before sitting down in her chair.

She flicks through a few pages of this very thick and jam-packed journal filled with small bits of memorabilia from her activism days including lesbian stickers, pins as well as small photobooth photos of Alma and her friends. There are also some post-it-notes stuck on the front.

She finally finds a yellow envelope and a sheet of paper inside it. She picks up a pen and goes to write something but chooses not to.

Instead she picks up her phone and dials a number. She gets up and wanders into the kitchen as it rings.

4. INT. ALMA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ALMA

Hello.

SARAH

Hi Mum, all okay?

ALMA

Yes, everything's fine.

SARAH

Okay, good.

Silence falls quickly as Alma and Sarah, Alma's daughter, (32) don't see each other often.

ALMA
So, how's work?

SARAH
All good thank you. Always stressful but I'm getting by.

ALMA
Hm.

There's another silence.

SARAH
Are you sure everything's alright?

Pause

Shit, I said I'd come over today didn't I. You didn't prepare anything did you?

Alma looks in front of her at the laid kitchen table.

ALMA
No, no. I thought I would wait to call you before setting anything up. You're still coming for her birthday aren't you?

SARAH
(snappy)
Yes, of course I am.

ALMA
Okay, see you then. Bye.

SARAH
Bye.

Alma takes the plates off the laid kitchen side and places them back into the draws below.

5. INT. ALMA'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Alma lies on one side of her large bed with the other side untouched. She lifts up the duvet, gets out of bed and starts to do her exercises by the window.

6. INT. ALMA'S BATHROOM - LATER

Still in her pyjamas, Alma walks into her bathroom and goes to the toilet.

7. INT. ALMA'S LIVING AREA - LATER

Now dressed, Alma is sat on her armchair knitting. However, the knitting becomes tighter and tighter until it makes a screeching noise. Frustrated, she places her work on the table in front of her and leaves the chair. We see the knitting and how stitching was smooth but is now kinked.

8. EXT. ALMA'S COTTAGE - LATER

Alma shuts the front door behind her. Once again holding her basket.

9. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

Alma walks down a country road. The route is unconventional and there's not a proper path.

10. EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

Alma stops in front of a shop and uses the reflection to check her hair. She then unbuttons two buttons on her blouse, pauses, decides this is too much and does one of them up again.

11. INT. JUNIPERS (SHOP) - LATER

Alma walks into the shop, looking down at her shopping list. 'WALNUTS' and 'CAKE' are the two items her list, with others crossed off. She browses for a while before heading to the counter.

Alma points the two slices of cake on the counter. Behind the counter stands, Joan (76). Alma is quite closed off when speaking to others.

ALMA

Could I have 2 slices of carrot
cake please? Oh and these.

Alma places other items on the counter that she has picked up including some candles.

JOAN
Of course. What's the special occasion?

ALMA
Sorry?

JOAN
The cake and candles.

ALMA
It would've been my wife's birthday soon. I still celebrate it.

Joan smiles.

JOAN
Is there anything else I can get you?

ALMA
No, that's all.

JOAN
Can I interest you in some honey today?

Joan points to the pots of honey next to her which have a discount sticker next to them.

ALMA
Yes please.

Joan slides the honey across to Alma. Alma notices Joan's name badge and looks at it for a moment.

Thank you.

12. EXT. OUTSIDE JUNIPERS - MOMENTS LATER

We hear the bell above the door of the shop ring as Alma exits. She walks back in the direction of her home with the honey and cake in her basket.

13. INT. ALMA'S LIVING AREA - LATER

Alma grabs the same journal, flicks through to find the yellow envelope again and writes something on the front. It reads: 'JOAN'.

A framed picture of her and her wife catches her eye and Alma stays still for a while. She closes the journal again quickly and finds there is a post - it note stuck on the front.

It reads 'Alma - enjoy work. I'll pick you up at 6 - M x'.

She keeps staring at this and we can see Alma start to get upset and dissociate.

The doorbell rings abruptly and Alma places the journal on the coffee table in the living area, wide open with the envelope on show.

14. INT. ALMA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Alma opens the door to her daughter, Sarah. The pair hug and walk through to the kitchen.

ALMA
Good train journey?

SARAH
Yes, thank you.

They get to the kitchen area. Stood apart from one another as Alma potters around in the kitchen and Sarah stands by watching. They stand in silence for a moment, there's a sense of awkwardness.

ALMA
Have you eaten?

SARAH
Not since breakfast.

ALMA
Okay, I'll start on dinner.

SARAH
I'll help.

ALMA
No, no. I don't like the way you cook.

SARAH
Brilliant. Thanks, mum.

They both smile after this. Sarah walks over to the cupboard to start getting out ingredients.

Do we not have any walnuts?

ALMA
They should be in there.

SARAH
Nope. It's fine, we don't really
need them anyway.

ALMA
Let's go to Junipers quickly.

SARAH
What's wrong with the shop down the
road?

ALMA
A walk would do us both good.

Alma walks out of the kitchen.

SARAH
Where are you going?

Alma has already rushed up the stairs before hearing Sarah's
question.

15. INT. ALMA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alma is stood in front of her mirror and is shakily putting
on some lipstick while smiling to herself. However she messes
it up a bit and tries to fix it.

16. INT. ALMA'S KITCHEN - LATER

Sarah is now sat in the living area and watches as Alma comes
down the stairs.

SARAH
Have you put make-up on?

Alma becomes embarrassed and looks at the floor, visibly
uncomfortable by the confrontation.

Sarah sees Alma is upset and tries to make her feel a bit
better.

ALMA
(under her breath)
Let's just go.

Alma heads for the front door and Sarah follows behind her.

Alma drops Sarah's arm and her smile quickly fades.

ALMA
Don't say that.

Alma walks ahead to the front door.

19. INT. ALMA'S COTTAGE - LATER

Alma slams her bedroom door. Not extremely hard but enough to make it clear that she would like to be left alone.

20. INT. ALMA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sarah lights candles in the two slices of cake in the kitchen and starts to walk upstairs.

We see stills of Alma's cottage, silent as night has fallen. A grandfather clock is ticking. There are also two birthday cards addressed to Mabel in the living area.

21. INT. ALMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah is stood in the doorway of Alma's bedroom holding two slices of cake with candles in.

SARAH
I'm sorry I upset you. Especially today.

Alma doesn't respond.

ALMA
You know she would write me little messages on post-it notes every single day. Even if it was just to tell me to not eat her chocolate in the fridge or to tell me how beautiful I was. I never paid much attention to to them at the time. She told me just before she died that she kept every single one. I'm not sure where most of them have gone now. She must've started to throw them away when she realised I didn't care for them in the same way she did.

Alma becomes upset when she recounts this part of the story.

ALMA (CONT'D)
She loved me so much.

SARAH
I know she did, she still does. All
she would want is to see you happy.
She would want you to move on.

Alma pauses and looks at Sarah.

ALMA
Would she?

Sarah looks at Alma, but doesn't respond.

ALMA (CONT'D)
I've been on my own for 7 years,
I've not got much longer to go.

SARAH
But what about Joan?

Alma smiles. The smile quickly drops again and she shakes her head.

ALMA
I just can't believe we are even
having this conversation. I was
always so sure I'd be first to go.
Your mum would never even share a
cigarette with me - always telling
me I'd dig myself an early grave if
I kept smoking.

Pause

I wish she hasn't worried so much.
About everything.

SARAH
Which is why you shouldn't either.

Pause. Alma and Sarah reflecting on what they've been speaking about for a bit longer.

ALMA
On the day she died; I remember
waiting to feel her leave, you
know, her spirit or something.
Instead, it feels like she's here,
with me, all the time.

SARAH
Moving on doesn't mean forgetting
her, mum.

Alma looks at Sarah and they hold onto each other. Alma's eyes tell us she wants another chance at love, she just can't shift the guilt.

They lie down beside each other.

They close their eyes and drift off to sleep.

22. INT. ALMA'S KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Alma and Sarah are sat at the kitchen table eating breakfast. Sarah is eating slightly quicker as if she is in a rush.

SARAH
This is really good, mum, thank
you. That honey is lovely. You
should definitely keep it stocked
up.

Sarah gets up to leave and Alma looks at her somewhat concerned as if to wonder why she's leaving so soon.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I've got a meeting, I'm sorry. It's
been so lovely to see you though.

Alma smiles to Sarah who walks back out of the kitchen space to get her things. When she leaves, Alma's smile slowly fades again.

23. INT. ALMA'S LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS

ALMA
(shouting)
Sarah, could you drop off the pile
of letters to the post office on
your way back?

SARAH
(shouts back)
Yes!

Sarah walks into the living room where she picks up all the letters, as she walks out of the room a yellow envelope on top of Alma's journal catches her eye.

The envelope has 'JOAN' written on it, so Sarah assumes it needs to be delivered too.

24. INT. ALMA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sarah walks over to Alma, comes behind where she is sat at the table, hugs her and gives her a kiss on the head to say goodbye.

Sarah leaves the cottage.

Alma starts to clear the breakfast table, leaving the pot of honey till last. She takes it back to the stack on the window sill which now has nearly 10 jars in front of it. She gets some honey on her fingers which licks off.

Alma looks at this jar of honey for a while.

25. INT. ALMA'S LIVING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Alma sits in her chair and picks up the journal. She has a smile on her face as if she is excited to add to her letter to Joan. However, when she can't find the letter. She starts to panic.

She checks the sofas and tips her journal upside down but she can't find it.

26. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Alma takes her same route to the shop, except this time she is moving much quicker.

27. INT. JUNIPERS - LATER

Alma walks straight up to the counter.

ALMA

Hello, did my daughter come in earlier?

JOAN

Yes! She dropped me off a letter.

Alma's eyes widen at the thought of Joan reading this personal letter.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I'll read it after work, I've forgotten my reading glasses.

ALMA

Actually, I was going to ask for it back. It's for someone else called Joan.

Joan's demeanour changes from sweet and outgoing to more closed-off.

JOAN

Oh, okay.

Joan hands Alma's letter back to her. In the process of quickly putting the letter in her journal and back into her bag, one of Alma's beloved post-it notes from Mabel falls on the floor. She doesn't notice.

ALMA

Sorry.

Alma leaves the shop and starts to walk away.

28. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Alma is making her way away from the shop when Joan comes rushing behind her.

JOAN

Wow, you are a fast walker.

Joan hands over the post-it note.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I couldn't let you leave without it.

ALMA

Thank you.

JOAN

Did she write that?

Alma nods. She pauses for a second and realizes she's made a mistake. Joan has shown a glimpse of how she isn't planning to forget Mabel either.

ALMA

Would you like to go and sit somewhere with me? I'm not ready to go home yet.

29. EXT. BENCH ON A HILL - LATER

We see Joan and Alma sat next to each other on a bench with a scenic backdrop.

JOAN

Do you tell everyone about your wife when you meet them?

ALMA

Not everyone. I just try to figure out whether it feels right to tell someone or not. Sometimes I get it right and sometimes I don't.

Pause

It does make it easier when people have kind eyes.

Joan smiles. Alma smiles back. There's a long pause here as music builds.

JOAN

When you come into the shop, I feel, for a short moment, like I'm not completely alone. Especially living somewhere like this.

Alma is looking down, smiling softly to herself.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Your wife was so lucky to have you.

Alma smiles again. There's a long pause here. Alma decides to hand Joan the letter. Joan stops her.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Whatever is in that envelope, my answer is yes. Definitely yes.

Joan holds on to Alma's hand. Alma smiles softly and closes her eyes as if she feels a sense of freedom, she can feel the breeze on her face. Alma puts her second hand on Joan's and they both smile. Music builds here. Focus on Alma here.

We see the pair from behind, carrying on their conversation on the bench.

