

We enter a world veiled in darkness, framed by a narrow keyhole perspective offering a glimpse of the intimate moment that lies ahead. Slowly, a faint, dimly lit living room comes into view. It appears empty at first, but then a female silhouette materializes within the room. We see the figure for a fleeting moment, but we will soon come to know her as GRETA.

The camera, as if drawn by an invisible force, inches its way into the room, revealing more details. It brings us closer to Greta, our enigmatic protagonist. She observes her father, MATHEW, in front of a TV, attempting a modest bout of cardio with a deliberate, aching slow bend of his knee.

The soft glow of a TV illuminates the agony etched onto Mathew's face. Every strained movement tells a story of a man pushing his body to its physical limits. Upon seeing his daughter, Mathew gives Greta a faint smile and then he eases onto the couch. Greta, familiar with the routine, places a tray before him. On it rests a glass of water and a small assortment of pills. This ritual, performed night after night, is a quiet testament to the unspoken bond that sustains father and daughter.

As the TV plays an infomercial, its intrusive commercial chatter fills the room, momentarily drowning out the unspoken pain that usually lingers. Greta can't help but roll her eyes at the outrageous, unfounded claims pouring from the screen — promises of a foot pad that can miraculously expel all toxins, even lead and mercury, from the body. Mathew on the other hand is a believer. He has already placed an order and now eagerly awaits the arrival of the promised solution. It's his last tether of hope in the face of his terminal diagnosis — ALS.

A lump forms in Greta's throat. She's acutely aware of the cruel truth — there is no cure for her father's ailment. But she won't rob him of this fragile lifeline of hope.

The table lamp beside them flickers, momentarily shattering the silence. Mathew reassures her that he will get a new bulb first thing in the morning, but Greta senses the weight of this seemingly small task being placed on her shoulders. She sighs and begins to rest her head on her father's shoulder, finding solace in their shared moment...

...We then witness Greta's seamless transition from resting on her father's shoulder to lying on the couch—a familiar scene, but a different moment in time. As she opens her eyes and gradually peels herself away from the couch, the camera traces a vertical semi-circle, revealing her surroundings. It's the present day, and Greta finds herself engulfed by dirty dishes, a towering heap of clothes, and piles of disorganized mail. She gazes at the clutter; the sight of her mess brings her to near exhaustion. A decision crystallizes—she will get these cleaned.

We find Greta in the middle of her second load at the laundromat. The space is alive with a symphony of sounds, infusing it with a palpable kinetic energy. A TV blares the latest local news, and it competes with the rhythmic buzz of washing machines, forming a steady

background beat while the occasional thuds emanating from the tumbling dryers, provide a percussive counterpoint to the chorus.

Amid this cacophony, the laundromat owner meticulously folds business wear into a crisp, plastic bag; the sharp, measured clicks of his hand add another verse to the composition. Overhead, a fluorescent light flicker intermittently, contributing its staccato rhythm to the lively ensemble.

There is a stark contrast between the bustling activity that surrounds Greta and her own solitary stillness. She remains fixed in front of a dryer, either entranced by her spinning sheets or perhaps so bored that she has dissociated from the world. She's so far removed that she doesn't hear the loud argument happening at the front between the Owner and an angry customer. It's as if she exists in a separate realm, shielded by the hum of the machines and by her own thoughts.

The jarring ring of her phone cuts through Greta's dissociation. She glances at the caller ID and reads "EMOTIONAL VAMPIRE", taking a moment before she musters the strength to invite the caller into her space.

The Emotional Vampire is none other than Greta's sister, seeking solace through her own grief. It's only upon hearing the words 'Father's Day' that Greta fully registers her surroundings. She finally notices a promotional flyer on the wall that celebrates the occasion, its bright colors in stark contrast to the dingy muted atmosphere of the laundromat. Beyond its glass doors, Greta spots a family of four strolling by, bearing gifts and to-go boxes, another poignant reminder of the day's significance.

Finally, the raised voice of the irate customer reaches Greta's ears, breaking through her detachment and grounding her in the present. While her sister sobs uncontrollably as she feels the pain of their father's absence, Greta takes on the role of both consoler and multitasker. While offering comfort and solace, she attempts to wrestle a fitted sheet into submission, determined to achieve the elusive crisp fold. The role of therapist comes naturally to Greta, but her linens seem determined to defy her efforts.

With each sheet, a surge of pent-up emotion finds release as Greta tosses them into her basket with a force fueled by anger and frustration. The crescendo builds until Greta rips into a fitted sheet. Yet, her sister remains unaware of the silent turmoil on the other end of the line. Greta, a master at masking her own pain, continues to prioritize the needs of others, seamlessly concealing the storm within, even as she navigates the tempest of her own grief.

After the call, she is left to deal with the memories of her father and the uncooperative sheets crumpled into balls. As the last remaining customer leaves the laundromat, Greta hurries to fold her sheets.

Slowly, a gentle hand reaches across her basket and plucks out one of Greta's crumpled fitted sheets. It belongs to the laundromat Owner, who handles it with care, relieving her of the source of her frustration. With a patient smile, he holds up another sheet, demonstrating the art of folding it into submission with practiced ease. Together, Greta and The Owner fold the rest of the sheets in a quiet moment of sublime connectivity.

With a polite smile, The Owner leaves her be and tends to his nightly routines. Greta watches him go about his job, appreciating the unexpected connection they had just shared. As she watches him go about his tasks, she feels a swell of emotion. Tears well up and cascade down her cheeks, prompting her to turn away, seeking a moment of privacy. Just as The Owner reaches the remote to turn off the TV, Greta hears the familiar voice of the detox footpad infomercial pierce the air. Its dubious promises have remained unchanged over the years. Above her, the fluorescent beam flickers and buzzes for a fleeting moment.

At this moment, Greta finds herself smiling, unsure if it's a simple coincidence or a sign from her father. Yet, the distinction doesn't matter. What's important is that in this laundromat, amidst the hum of machines and the flickering light, she doesn't feel alone.

THE END.