

Grammy's Porch

by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. GRAMMY'S HOUSE - DAY

An early fall morning. An ordinary, green, two-story home sits in the middle of a beautifully landscaped oasis.

EXT. GRAMMY'S HOUSE - PORCH

QUEEN, 43, sits wearing yesterday's clothes with a bandana tied around her head as she stares at her phone. A wooden box sits on her lap.

A picture of her mother, LENA, 67, is the wallpaper on her cellphone.

A solitary tear rolls down her cheek.

She removes a cremation bracelet from the box and places it on her wrist.

SIRENS. She freezes. The sirens get louder and her breathing quickens.

QUICK FLASHBACK

Paramedics pull Lena from her running truck to the ground. Chest compressions fail to bring her back.

BACK TO SCENE

QUEEN

They're saving a life. They are saving someone's life. It's okay. We're going to be alright.

The sirens fade.

The front door opens. Joe Digs, 68, steps out onto the porch. His suit is a show stopper, complete with a matching fedora. A low-end, Cartier wrist watch completes the ensemble.

UNCLE JOE

What are you doing here?

QUEEN

We all have keys and this is still her house. Hasn't she done enough for you?

He sucks his teeth loudly.

Queen wrinkles her nose in disgust.

UNCLE JOE

How many times do I got to say I'm sorry, Queen? Every time I see you?

QUEEN

You stood there longer than I wanted you to. You could have just closed the door.

UNCLE JOE

That was years ago. You still harping on that? I didn't mean to walk in on you on the toilet, Queen. I was so high and drunk back then, I don't even know what I was doing.

QUEEN

(eyes water)

I'm over it...Every summer I used to sit here and dream about what would happen at school in the fall. I'd sit here and eat strawberry ice cream ...talk about the boys and she'd say to leave the pissy little boys alone. I think of the holiday dinners and lazy Sundays here... How can you give this up?

UNCLE JOE

I'm going to do what I feel is best, Queen. I don't care that she wants to come home. I can't wipe her ass and feed her. I'm not cut out for that.

INT. NURSING HOME - OUTSIDE GRAMMY'S ROOM - DAY

The room number reads 106. The name, Brenda "Grammy" Diggs graces the name plate.

INT. NURSING HOME - GRAMMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Grammy, 95, and still beautiful, sits in a wheelchair. A picture of Grammy and Grandpa sit on the dresser.

Queen sits next to her as the two of them watch television.

ON THE TV

Two flamboyantly dressed women fight over a scrawny man on stage as an audience looks on. One of the women snatches the wig off the other woman and throws it into the audience.

BACK TO SCENE

QUEEN

Grammy, you need a picture of Ma. I'll bring you one the next time I come.

GRAMMY

(stares out the window)

I miss my baby, but I can't look at that all day.

QUEEN

You love watching this mess.

GRAMMY

(looks back at the tv)

These fools are crazy! He ain't nothing to fight over!

QUEEN

They been getting you up walking grammy?

GRAMMY

Naw! I just lay here. They don't want to answer my light when I put it on.

Queen hangs her head and then looks out the window. She massages the back of her neck to relieve some tension.

QUEEN

You are supposed to be getting rehab. How do you get to the bathroom?

Grammy turns her attention away from the show and looks down at her hands.

GRAMMY

They tell me to go in my brief...I couldn't walk if I wanted to. My toenails are so long, it hurts to put socks on.

Queen smooths Grammy's hair, just as a WOMAN knocks and enters the room.

Queen squints to read the woman's name tag "PHYSICAL THERAPY".

The woman places a pamphlet on the over-the-bed table that reads, "AFTER STROKE CARE"

QUEEN

Thank God you're here. We've got to get my grammy better so she can get out of here.

Grammy's eyes brighten.

GRAMMY

Yes, hurry up! I've been here way too long.

EXT. GRAMMY'S HOUSE -DAY

Uncle Joe walks around the white truck parked in the driveway.

The tires are dry rotted. Tape holds the back window together, while rust lines the bottom of the truck.

Uncle Joe reaches in his pocket and pulls out a small whiskey bottle, takes a drink and pours some on the ground and downs the rest.

UNCLE JOE

Damn, Lena. Can't nobody take care of mama like you.

He walks back to his Cadillac and pulls a rag out of his pocket and begins to spot clean.

He reaches in the back seat and grabs two hanging baskets full of fresh flowers. He swaggers up to the porch to hang them.

INT. GRAMMY'S HOUSE -EVENING

Queen sits down to dinner. She looks at the places where grammy and Lena would normally sit.

QUICK FLASHBACK

Queen, wearing scrubs, organizes Grammy's medication into a weekly pill box. Lena sits by the back door as Grammy sits inches away at the kitchen table.

BACK TO SCENE

Queen pushes her full plate away.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Grammy's name is no longer the only name on the name plate. Right above Grammy is EVELYN KNIGHT.

INT. NURSING HOME - GRAMMY'S ROOM - DAY

Grammy is in bed with a sheet over her head. Queen stands there paralyzed for a moment.

QUEEN

Grammy?

Grammy appears from underneath the covers.

A sigh of relief. She places her purse on Grammy's bedside table and gives Grammy a kiss.

GRAMMY

Thank you baby.

QUEEN

I see you have a new roommate. Where is she?

Grammy sits up a little to take a look around the room.

GRAMMY

They moved a bunch of her stuff in here, but I ain't seen her. I hope she never comes.

Buzzing from the purse.

QUEEN

Grammy you are something else!

GRAMMY

Uh-huh. You heard from Joe?

More buzzing from the purse.

QUEEN

We don't talk much Grammy.

GRAMMY

Well, your purse is saying something.

Queen reaches for her purse.

QUEEN

What's it saying Grammy?

GRAMMY

If I tell you what your purse is saying,  
I might not ever get out of here.

Queen looks at a text from Joe.

INSERT - TEXT MESSAGE THAT READS:

Move Lena's car out of mama driveway and I need the keys  
to the house.

BACK TO SCENE

Queen slams the phone down, along with her purse on the  
table.

GRAMMY

What in the hell?

QUEEN

It's Joe.

GRAMMY

That's Uncle Joe. Don't be disrespectful.  
...I baby him and Lord knows I've given  
him a lot...let him get away with too  
much. That's not an excuse for you to be  
dirty.

QUEEN

But, he used to steal out of your purse  
grammy and--

GRAMMY

--I know. I bought houses and cars for  
him...Let that stay in the past, ok? All  
I want to do is go home, water my  
flowers, straighten out my linen closet  
and cook in my kitchen.

Queen softens.

QUEEN

Don't forget to sit on the porch and  
watch all the fools go by.

GRAMMY

Sho'nuff!

Grammy turns a sharp and focused gaze on Queen.

Queen has never seen Grammy like this.

GRAMMY (CONT'D)

Look out for me Queen. Don't throw me away.

QUEEN

What I say doesn't matter. It never has.

Grammy grabs Queen by the arm.

GRAMMY

Make it matter!

EXT. GRAMMY'S HOUSE -EVENING

Uncle Joe and a MAN walk around the perimeter of the house.

The man takes notes and then walks over to his car and pulls out a yard sign and sticks it in the ground.

Tires screech as Queen pulls up.

The man runs to his car and waves as he pulls off.

Queen flings her door open and then slams it so hard the window breaks.

Uncle Joe can't believe his eyes.

UNCLE JOE

What's going on with you, girl?

He takes off his suit jacket and fedora and places them on the hood of his car. He rolls up his shirt sleeves.

Queen paces back and forth.

QUEEN

You're not a real man. You didn't come from Granddad! I hate you.

UNCLE JOE

I don't know what you want from me, Queen.

QUEEN



You didn't even help with mom's funeral bill. I don't think you care...

(stops pacing)

...unless it can benefit you.

UNCLE JOE

So, that's what it is. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I'm not good enough.

Queen takes a deep breath in and exhales slowly. Finally, an apology.

QUEEN

Please don't let Grammy down again.

Uncle Joe just looks at her in disbelief.

Queen opens her car door and gets in as the glass crunches beneath her.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Grammy's name is no longer listed on the name plate.

Queen pushes the door open as white sheets go over someone's head in the bed her Grammy occupied.

A NURSE pulls Queen out of the room and leads her away. The two have a quiet conversation as the nurse consoles Queen.

SUPER: "ONE WEEK LATER"

EXT. GRAMMY'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is no longer the bright green it used to be. It is a darker green with dark brown trim. Hand rails line both sides of the steps. The landscape is more beautiful than ever.

The same small sign, placed earlier, sits in the yard and reads, "EMPIRE HOME IMPROVEMENTS".

Queen pulls up into the empty driveway.

She knocks on the front door.

A WOMAN answers and motions for Queen to sit down in one of the chairs.

An ambulance speeds by. SIRENS BLARING.

Queen unbothered, takes in the beautiful scene of flowers around her.

A car drives over a speed bump way too fast.

Grammy shuffles out onto the porch using her walker.

Uncle Joe follows her out. He takes a seat on the steps as grandma sits in the other chair.

GRAMMY  
(to Queen)  
You see that fool?

FADE TO BLACK