

The Man Upstairs

A short film script by:

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Based on a concept by
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INT. PARLOR - DAY

ANTHONY, 8, sits at the DINING ROOM table of his AUNT LINDA'S aging, two-story Victorian duplex. He draws a picture of his mom and himself.

Across the room, the bedroom door is half-open revealing a HOSPITAL BED and a DIALYSIS MACHINE and other medical paraphernalia. Anthony puts his colored pencil down on the table and walks cautiously toward the door. Aunt Linda's voice gets louder with each step closer. He peeks through the doorway.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

AUNT LINDA sits on a reclining chair next to the bed. GLORIA, late 30s, fragile looking, sits propped up in the bed looking out the window.

AUNT LINDA

Well, I could ask if anyone at church could be an organ donor.

GLORIA

Thank you Aunt Linda, but you've done enough. You heard the doctor. He said, it's only a matter of time before my other kidney gives out on me too.

Aunt Linda reaches over to the bed and grabs Gloria's hand.

AUNT LINDA

We're going to find you a kidney, you hear me? Even if I have to pray to the man upstairs all day and all night.

Gloria and Aunt Linda share a smile.

INT. AUNT LINDA'S PARLOR - DAY

Anthony is just outside the door and overhears their conversation. He jumps when there is a LOUD KNOCK at the front door. Anthony cautiously walks to the door.

ANTHONY

Who is it?

Aunt Linda comes out of the room and gently pushes Anthony out of the way as she walks up to the door.

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AUNT LINDA

Settle down, I only got two legs...

Aunt Linda opens the door. MR. WILLIAMS, 72, dressed like a Vietnam veteran, stands tall outside the door and looks down at Aunt Linda.

AUNT LINDA

May I help you, Mr. Williams?

Aunt Linda waits for an answer. Mr. Williams looks over at Anthony with an angry glance and then back at Aunt Linda.

MR. WILLIAMS

You can do more than help me. I keep telling you the sink is leaking in my apartment and you still haven't done anything about it. Now, I pay you my rent on time every month don't I?

AUNT LINDA

Yes you do Mr. Williams, but could you could please watch your tone in front of my nephew.

Aunt Linda turns around to Anthony.

AUNT LINDA

Go check on your mama, baby.

Anthony walks to the other room.

MR. WILLIAMS

I don't think it's too much to ask for you to get it fixed... Maybe I should find another place to live!

AUNT LINDA

No need for that, Mr. Williams. My son was supposed to come last week to do a few things around the place. I'll give him another call.

MR. WILLIAMS

See that you do that...

He stomps upstairs and SLAMS his door.

AUNT LINDA

I swear, that man gets meaner every day.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Anthony cautiously enters the room. Gloria still gazes out of the window, until she notices Anthony.

GLORIA
Come here, my brave boy.

Anthony walks to his mom and climbs up beside her.

ANTHONY
Mama, what happens when your
kidneys give up on you?

Gloria looks out the window, deciding how to answer the question. She looks back at Anthony.

GLORIA
Oh honey, mama's gonna be just
fine... I got this machine here to
help me out.

ANTHONY
But I heard you tell Aunt Linda
it's only a matter of time.

GLORIA
Anthony, the good Lord has a plan
for all of us, and I'm sure he will
want to keep me around for a nice
long time.

ANTHONY
But Mama, I'm worried.

Gloria starts to cough uncontrollably. Aunt Linda rushes back in the room as Anthony looks on with a concerned expression.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Anthony looks nervously up the stairs. He slowly climbs the stairs, treading quietly. He gets to Mr. Williams door and knocks lightly.

MR. WILLIAMS
(gruffly)
Who is it?

ANTHONY
Excuse me sir? It's Anthony...

(CONTINUED)

MR. WILLIAMS
Anthony?

ANTHONY
From downstairs...

Mr. Williams yanks the door open and looks down at Anthony.

MR. WILLIAMS
Well, what do you want, boy? I hope
you're not here to fix the sink...

ANTHONY
No sir...

He hesitates, unsure of what to say.

MR. WILLIAMS
Well, speak up. I was in the middle
of something.

ANTHONY
Can I please come in?

MR. WILLIAMS
(hesitates)
I guess so.

INT. MR. WILLIAMS ROOM - DAY

Mr. Williams swings the door wide, but leaves it open.
Anthony cautiously walks into the room. There are Army
achievement MEDALS and Vietnam MEMORABILIA all around the
room.

Anthony stops in front of a PICTURE on the wall and looks up
at it. The picture is of a young Mr. Williams and a young
woman. They look very much in love.

MR. WILLIAMS
What's so important that your aunt
sent you up here to bother me?

Mr. Williams stands with his arms crossed waiting for a
reply.

ANTHONY
(hesitates)
She didn't send me, sir... I just
wanted... I just wanted...

Mr. Williams bends over and looks Anthony in the eye as if
trying to intimidate him.

(CONTINUED)

MR. WILLIAMS
Well?! Speak up son!

ANTHONY
Aren't you the man upstairs?

MR. WILLIAMS
What does it look like to you, kid?

ANTHONY
My mom is really sick and needs a kidney. I thought you might be able to help her get better. Aunt Linda said to ask the man upstairs.

Mr. Williams looks confused and then his expression softens. He even manages a smile. Then lets out a low chuckle and Anthony looks confused.

MR. WILLIAMS
I don't think she was talking about me, kid. I'm no one special...

Mr. Williams walks to the picture of he and his wife, then he looks back down at Anthony.

MR. WILLIAMS
She was the love of my life. I lost her ten years ago.

ANTHONY
Please, mister... please help my mama. I don't want her to die!

Mr. Williams looks down at Anthony with kindness in his eyes.

MR. WILLIAMS
Sorry kid, I can't help you. It's time for you to go!

Anthony runs downstairs, crying. Mr. Williams sits back down on his bed, visibly moved by the encounter.

INT. AUNT LINDA'S PARLOR - DAY

Gloria and Anthony are sitting in the living room. Gloria is attached to the dialysis machine as Anthony draws a PICTURE of he and his mom holding hands. Aunt Linda walks through the door smiling and crying at the same time.

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GLORIA
What's wrong?

AUNT LINDA
They found one. They found a match.

Gloria's jaw drops and she stares at Aunt Linda.

GLORIA
They found a match? For me?

Aunt Linda sits down beside Gloria and wraps her in a big hug. Anthony runs out the door and runs upstairs to Mr. Williams apartment.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Anthony knocks at the door, but no one answers.

INT. PARLOR KITCHEN - DAY

Gloria cooks at the stove in the kitchen. She looks lively and healthy. MUSIC plays in the background and she dances and fools around with Anthony.

Aunt Linda sits at the kitchen table, opening mail. She comes across a letter addressed to Anthony. Aunt Linda looks at Anthony suspiciously, and then slices open the envelope.

AUNT LINDA
This is for you, Anthony, and it's from Mr. Williams.
(she reads)
"Kid, You remind me of myself when I was young; strong and kind. I don't know how I lost track of that. Anyone who has the guts to face me and ask for help is brave in my eyes. Your story touched me, kid. It touched me because my wife Antoinette died because we couldn't find her a kidney donor. If only I was a match for her, she would still be alive. I'm an old man... If I survive this operation, I probably only have a couple of years left... But you have a lifetime ahead of you, and you need your mom. Take care, kid." And it's signed, Mr. Williams, "The Man Upstairs".

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Aunt Linda puts a hand over her mouth as her eyes fill with tears. She quickly goes to the door, opens it and looks upstairs as Gloria sweeps Anthony into her arms.

FADE TO BLACK