

Finally! A Title That Matches its Film!

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Encroaching Alzheimer's provides poignant storytelling in Marco Grandia's Unforgettable.

You ask me, there is nothing more horrible or terrifying than Alzheimer's. To completely forget who you are, who your friends are, who your loved ones are and every moment you shared with them. To see it slip away like it never happened and all the while knowing that it will bring pain and uncertainty to those around you. The thought of such torment makes you cherish the day today and understand that it will not last forever. Memories are beautiful and Unforgettable reminds us of that.

In Unforgettable, Hank Botwinik plays a man suffering from early on set dementia and is recounting, or trying to recount, his daughter's wedding day to his young granddaughter, played wonderfully by Clara Hill. We don't know his name and he may not even know his name. All we are given is his memory of his daughter's wedding day and we wonder how much of it is true or fantasy. People go from warning to clapping, brides become birds, a veil is removed to reveal a face without a face and it all culminates in a battle royal at the altar. Watch out for the groomsman swinging the sock! Regardless of its accuracy, the man's story is majestic. It is beautiful and sorrowful. I'll stop now because I don't want to give too much away. All I'll say is that this film is magical!

UNFORGETTABLE Short Film

Unforgettable is credited with seven screenwriters and they all deserve an award in their honor. They deftly tackle a difficult subject and sublimely balance the comedy and tragedy that comes with the territory. The use of the fantastical, such as bridesmaids dressed as birds, could be distracting in a lesser film, but here it is invigorating to the story. This is complimented by Paul Ozgor's cinematography, which makes wonderful use of lighting and is brilliantly displayed when the glow of the fireplace crackles on half of the grandfather's face as he struggles to tell the story (the other half is covered in shadow, as if the creeping darkness of memory loss is spreading), but his memories are wonderfully soaked in bright, beautiful white daylight. Under Grandia's direction it all comes together magnificently. No matter how flashy the visuals get, he remembers that the story comes first and to deliver this script effectively you need great actors and Unforgettable has just that. Hank Botwinik is superb. There is a sense of awe and wide-eyed wonder on his face during the flashbacks like that of a newborn child. He is as amazed as we are with his memories. They're as new to him as they are to us. Amelie Onzon perfectly captures the grief as his daughter. Whether it is pain from his (possible) actions on her wedding day or just from seeing her father slip away, she delivers her few lines with a vulnerability that only true actresses can. Her final exchange with her father, the both of them trading close-ups, is filmmaking and film acting at its best. Finally, as his granddaughter, Clara Hill is, well ... just watch that ending.

There are so many words I could use to describe this gem, but at the end of the day it would just turn into a list of superlative adjectives and this film deserves better. This film is a masterpiece. It deserves a word I don't know, a word that is not in my vocabulary. Maybe it's best served with a line from the film. By the fireplace, the granddaughter asks her grandfather, "Grandpa, do you know who I am?"

"I don't always remember the name," he answers. "But I never forget a face. You're so beautiful. You're name is ... beautiful."

You're beautiful, Unforgettable, and don't you worry, we'll never forget you.