

THE OLD LADY AND THE URGENT PHONE CALL

by

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INT. - JESSIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jessie, an old white-haired woman, sits back in a comfortable old recliner chair. A bright Sun shines on her through a big picture window. Jessie is dozing quietly. She shakes her head and opens her eyes. She glances at her reflection in a mirror on the wall, then closes them again and settles down in the chair.

The phone rings, startling Jessie into full wakefulness. She sits upright and looks at the phone. After a few seconds, she leans over, picks up the handset and holds it up to her ear.

JESSIE

Hello?

DYLAN

(a young woman's perky
voice over the phone)

Hey there!

Jessie looks confused.

JESSIE

(slowly)

Hello?

DYLAN

How's your day going?

Jessie acts more confused.

JESSIE

Um. OK.

DYLAN

Great to hear.

JESSIE

(her voice takes on a
more authoritative tone)

I'm sorry, but I'm having trouble
recognizing your voice.

(pause)

I'm afraid that I'm getting
forgetful in my old age.

DYLAN

I'm someone that you love dearly.

JESSIE

Oh my. That is so many people. Let
me think for a moment.

Jessie looks around the room at several family photos on the
walls and hums to herself.

JESSIE
(mumbling quietly as her
glance moves from one
photo to another)
No. No. No.

Jessie eyes stop at a photo of a young child of ambiguous
gender looking at the cover of a Bob Dylan LP.

JESSIE
(tentative)
Are you Dylan, my granddaughter?

DYLAN
(excited)
YES!

JESSIE
That explains why I didn't
recognize your voice.
(pause)
The operation went well then?

DYLAN
(a bit uncertain)
Oh, Yes. It did.
(pause)
I feel like a new person.

JESSIE
I imagine so. That was the whole
idea wasn't it?
(pause)
I'm a bit surprised it changed your
voice so much.

DYLAN
It was expensive though. I'm very
tight for money. If you could-

JESSIE
(breaking in)
I know you didn't think I would be
so open to the operation. You must
remember that I grew up in a
different era. It was something
that none of us would ever think to
talk about.

DYLAN

I don't judge you. But I really need some money-

JESSIE

(interrupting again)

After all. You are family. We must not judge.

(pause)

You were my little Jason.

(pause)

I'm sorry I didn't mean to demean you by using your dead name. I'm still getting used to the change. Please forgive me.

DYLAN

I forgive you. You were very special to me too.

(pause)

I was hoping you could spare some cash-

JESSIE

(another interruption)

Money. I have money of course. I gave some to your parent to help with the operation. Did they mention that?

DYLAN

Yes they did. Thank you so much. It meant a lot to me. I hate to come to you for help, but I do need more-

JESSIE

How are you adjusting to being a girl now? I imagine it is a big change for you.

The phone was silent for a few moments.

DYLAN

(sounding confused)

It is just the way I hoped it would be. But, life is so expensive now.

JESSIE

(sounding a little harsh)

Yes. I know. We need to be very careful with our money these days.

DYLAN

I agree.
 (pause)
But, I still need money.

JESSIE
I am sure you do. But...

I never had a granddaughter named
Dylan, or a grandson named Jason.
And my transgender grandchild just
left here a few minutes ago.

I was testing you, and you failed.
My advice to you is to give up your
grifting ways and find a job that
will make the world a better place.

Jessie abruptly, but gently, hangs up the phone, she leans
back in her chair and relaxes.

JESSIE
 (whispering)
What a waste. What a waste.