

ARI ' S CHOICE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SAN DIEGO, CA PARK - PRESENT DAY - DUSK

ARI ROSENTHAL, 80s, sparse hair, faded blue eyes, with a seriousness about him, sits on a bench. He wears a clean, pressed shirt. An ethereal fog mists the area.

He glances up at the deepening blue of the sky. He leans his head back and closes his eyes.

When he opens them. . .SHE's there, 30s, sitting quaint in her forties style dress, brunette hair piled on top of her head, signature hat perched a top it. She gives him a warm smile.

WOMAN

I didn't think you were coming,
Ari. But. . . here you are.

Ari gives her a grin that makes his blue eyes twinkle.

ARI

(slight Austrian accent)
I will always come to see you. It's
you I wonder about at times.

WOMAN

Me? There's no one else I'd rather
be with.

He gives her a wry look.

ARI

(flirting)
What about that young man I've seen
watching you?

WOMAN

(dimples)
Oh yes. . . blonde with twinkly
blue eyes, confident, very
handsome?

ARI

Hmmph. That's him.

WOMAN

Yes, he's quite the dashing
gentleman.

ARI

Are you going to marry him?

WOMAN
(shrugs)
I don't know.

ARI
Do you want him to marry you?

WOMAN
Shouldn't the question be. . . do I
want to marry him?

Ari smiles and does an exaggerated shrug.

She contemplates.

WOMAN
There's no need. We're connected in
so many ways. I'm confident we'll
be together someday.

ARI
A woman knows a man truly loves her
when he asks for her hand in
marriage, without any pressure from
her, of course.

WOMAN
Of course.
(smiles)
We'll see, Ari.

Ari closes his eyes. He nods and smiles. When he opens his
eyes, she's no longer beside him.

He sighs. He gives the park a last glance left to right, then
stands. He walks off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK - BENCH - THE NEXT DUSK

Ari sits upon the bench, dozing, in another clean, pressed
shirt. SHE walks up to him out of the fogginess, same
clothing, and caresses his cheek. He opens his eyes.

WOMAN
Hello, Ari.

ARI
I thought I'd missed you.

WOMAN
Never.

She sits down beside him.

WOMAN

So. . . did you decide where you'll go when the time comes?

ARI

I didn't know I had much of a choice.

WOMAN

Oh, yes. We always have a choice.

ARI

Did you make the choice to kick that young man to the curb if he doesn't marry you?

WOMAN

(laughs)

Oh, Ari. You're too funny. I would never do that. I'm sure when the time is right. . . he'll have a ring for me.

ARI

(frowns)

Don't wait too long.

WOMAN

You'd marry me, Ari, wouldn't you?

Ari looks at her, amused.

ARI

Well, if I had my choice in the matter I--

The woman perks up, cutting him off. She waves to a young MAN, 30s, blonde, fit, dressed in forties style clothing, sitting in a swing. The young man waves and tips his hat.

Ari follows her gaze to the young man. He frowns.

When he turns back to the woman, she's gone. He stands and walks off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK BENCH - THE NEXT DUSK

Ari, in another clean, pressed shirt, plops down on the bench, breathing heavily in the mist. He puts a hand to his temples massaging them. He closes his eyes.

He opens his eyes and she's there beside him, dressed in the same 40s garb. She touches his arm.

WOMAN

Ari, you really must decide.
There's not a lot of time.

Ari gives her a curt nod. He turns his head to see the young man standing under a tree a few yards away, watching them.

ARI

(frowns)
Did you decide to marry that young man?

She smiles mysteriously.

ARI

He never comes close. Is he shy?

WOMAN

I think at times. He used to be very shy when he was young.

Ari peers at her.

ARI

You remind me of someone I knew long ago.

WOMAN

I do? Who?

ARI

I'm not quite sure. But I think maybe I loved her.

WOMAN

That's nice, Ari.

He closes his eyes and relaxes against the bench.

ARI

Yes. It was nice. I remember it was . . . very nice.

He opens his eyes and she's gone yet again.

ARI
Why can't you ever just stay with
me?

WOMAN (O.S.)
That's up to you, Ari.

He sighs and stands. He walks off.

The young man watches him go. He smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK BENCH - THE NEXT DUSK

Ari stands in front of the bench. Waiting, wearing yet
another clean, pressed shirt.

He glances over at the playground. The young man is there,
leaning against a tree, eyes on Ari, neutral expression.

Ari frowns at him and glances away.

Ari looks at the young man again, who raises his eyebrows at
him, in a questioning expression.

Ari glances away.

Ari looks at the young man, who smiles a soft smile at him.
Ari gives him a small smile in return, nods, then looks away.

He contemplates, glances up at the sky, shakes his head, (as
if talking to himself) then shrugs in resignation. He smiles.

Ari turns back to the young man, but he's gone.

WOMAN
Hello, Ari.

He turns around. The woman stands there, fog all around her,
dressed in the same outfit.

ARI
Hello.

WOMAN
(worried)
You're about out of time, Ari.

ARI
 (soft smile)
 Don't worry. I've decided. And it
 wasn't as hard as I thought it
 would be. Even a stubborn old guy
 like me can change his mind.

She beams. He looks at her lovingly.

ARI
 I recall now who you remind me of.

WOMAN
 Really? Who?

ARI
 A woman I made a promise to long
 ago. The same promise your young
 man should make to you.

She smiles and joins him. She puts her arm through his.

WOMAN
 He already did, Ari. A long time
 ago.

She leads him over to the bench. They sit down. She leans her
 head on his shoulder.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

A DOCTOR, early 40s, slender, interesting face, stands over
 the still man in the bed. He writes in a notebook.

He closes the notebook and turns a sad gaze upon MOLLY,
 dressed modern day, hatless, long dark hair. She stands
 across from the Doctor on the other side of the bed.

DOCTOR
 I'm sorry, Molly.

She sits down on the bed.

MOLLY
 (nods)
 He never got out of bed the last
 month. In and out of consciousness.
 Muttering to himself. I often
 wondered who he was talking to.

DOCTOR
They tend to do that with the
disease. Did you ever get any help?

MOLLY
(shakes head)
I was the only one he'd let near
him.

She smooths her father's brow.

MOLLY
I always made sure he had a clean,
pressed shirt on.
(beat)
It's all for the best now. But
thank you for your concern.

The Doctor notices a picture on the night stand. He picks it
up.

DOCTOR
This is you and?

MOLLY
(shakes head)
No. That's my mother and father on
their wedding day in 1945.

Close up on the picture. The WOMAN from the park, dressed in
the same 40s style outfit, stands next to the young blonde
MAN from the park. She holds up her ring finger next to her
face, proudly displaying a beautiful, large diamond ring.
They look ecstatically happy.

DOCTOR
Wow.
(glances at her)
You look just like your mother.
(studies picture)
They were a handsome couple.

MOLLY
Yes, they were.

Molly joins him. She takes the picture from him and studies
it.

MOLLY
My mother loved that ring. She
opted not to get a wedding dress if
she could have it.

My father spent every hard earned penny he had on it. He loved her very much.

(sighs)

We lost her ten years ago. Cancer. The sad thing is. . . I don't think he remembered her at the end.

DOCTOR

Maybe, maybe not. We don't know all there is to know about Alzheimers.

Molly places the photo back on the night stand.

DOCTOR

I like to think we go on after death. Take heart that your mother and father are together again.

She looks at Ari in the bed.

MOLLY

My father didn't believe that way. He believed when we die, we just go into the ground, back to the Earth, and that's it. Nothing more. I'd always try to reason with him. . . tell him this can't be all there is, there's got to be more. But he was. . . stubborn.

She sits down on the bed.

MOLLY

He always said it was his decision to believe the way he wanted. His choice. Sometimes I think our decisions in life determine our fate in the end.

DOCTOR

(sad smile)

I'll call for an ambulance.

She nods. He leaves the room.

MOLLY

Would you like to see the ring? I just had it cleaned last week. It's never looked more brilliant.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

Of course.

Molly goes over and takes a key out of a jewelry box on the dresser. She opens up a drawer and takes out a lock box from underneath several folded up pairs of socks. She puts the key in, opens it up, and lifts out a ring box.

She opens it up. . . and gives a small GASP! It's empty. She turns curious eyes on her father.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK - BENCH - DUSK

The woman and blonde young man, dressed like they were on their wedding day, sit on the park bench. It's a nice day out. Clear now.

Her head is on his shoulder. She holds out her ring hand. He kisses her forehead and squeezes her tight.

She turns to him. They kiss.

Then both go back to admiring the lovely brilliant wedding ring upon her finger.

FADE OUT:

CREDITS ROLL

THE END