

"BOOK OF MEMORIES"

FADE IN:

EXT. EULA'S PORCH - AFTERNOON

EULA, a woman between 60 and death, sits on bucket turned upside down in a garden that is dead or nearly so. As she sips sweet tea out of a jelly glass, she slowly flips the pages of a photo album with a grey marbled cover whose pages have faded to a brittle sepia color. Rivulets of sweat glide down her neck to where a delicate hanky is tucked in her bosom.

Down the dusty road, an old Pontiac is announced by the thunder and blubber of its worn muffler. Eula eyes the car. A look of recognition crosses her face and she sits back with a smug, suspicious look.

EULA

"Thus saith the Lord God; an evil,
a unmatched evil, behold is come.
An end is come, the end is come: it
watcheth for thee; behold, it is
come.

(Beat.)

Here we go again.

Eula closes the album. The car stops a little distance from the house, but as close as the dirt road allows it. NETTY, 40ish, Eula's daughter; CARL FLOYD, 24, Netty's son, a fidgety young man; and DEPUTY DONALD WAYNE, 40s, a loutish dullard of a man, get out of the car and head for Eula.

NETTY

(Whispering sharply to
Donald Wayne)

Donald Wayne, put that summons
away. She's liable to come
completely unhinged. Carl, don't
dawdle!

(Fake joy)

Mama!

EULA

Donald Wayne.

DONALD WAYNE

Miss Eula.

NETTY

Mama, do you know who this is?

EULA

I just said his name, di'n't I?

(To Donald Wayne)

I reckon you see this as your chance to get her to give you the time of day for once.

(To Netty)

What's brings you out here this time?

DONALD WAYNE

M'am, I need to serve you these...

NETTY

(Interrupting)

Mama, I just wanted to check in on you. I've been... I worry about you.

EULA

Netty, settle. You want some sweet tea, Donald Wayne?

DONALD WAYNE

No, Ma'am.

EULA

Carl Floyd, you still in school?

CARL

No, Mammaw, I graduated. Bachelors degree.

Eula looks Carl Floyd up and down, nodding slightly. Their eyes meet for a brief moment.

NETTY

I'd like some sweet tea, Mama. That sounds refreshing.

EULA

I don't recall asking.

NETTY

Mama!

EULA

Well, come on in. Let's get this crazy hunt over with.

Eula takes her album and glass and goes into the house letting the screen door slam behind her.

NETTY

This place must be worth something
to....somebody.

(To Donald Wayne)

See how she is? Now, you stay
close.

Netty, Donald Wayne and Carl follow behind her; single file
through the squeaky screen door.

INT. EULA'S KITCHEN

Eula puts the album on the Formica kitchen table. Netty sits
down at table. Netty takes a delicate hanky from her purse
and dabs herself with it. Donald Wayne stands near the door
with his thumbs tucked in his wide leather belt. Carl Floyd
slides himself to the other side of the kitchen and plunks on
a wood stool in the corner. Eula opens the fridge; she takes
off her wig and puts the wig in the fridge; she takes a jug
from the fridge, which she plops down on the table, in front
of Netty, causing Netty to jump slightly. Eula then opens
the oven and takes out a glass. She plunks this down in
front of Netty too and Netty jumps again.

EULA

Sump'n wrong?

NETTY

No.

Eula pours a glass of tea. Netty starts to reach for the
glass. Eula picks it up; crosses and gives the glass of tea
to Carl Floyd who accepts it reluctantly. In the meantime,
Netty, irritated, opens the oven and gets a glass for herself
while Eula puts the jug back in the fridge. When Netty turns
back around, she sees that the pitcher is gone.

Carl Floyd looks at the tea a moment and then pours it into a
plant in an old Christmas tree stand which sits in the top
opening of a lamp shade on a lamp on a table nearby.

NETTY

Why...What have you been up to,
Mama?

Eula looks at Netty. Donald Wayne studies the contents of
the kitchen. At first glance, things appear normal. On
closer inspection, some odd things reveal themselves; most
notably, several mason jars with human hair sitting on the
kitchen counter.

DONALD WAYNE

Miss Eula, Netty's concerned about
some peculiar behavior....

EULA

Peculiar?
(To Netty)
Pot, kettle.

Eula snorts slightly; she hums a little tune to herself as she turns to the sink and begins to rinse her eyeglasses off.

NETTY

Mama! I heard about what happened
in town the other day.

DONALD WAYNE

Netty thinks that, perhaps you need
to be put in Brailsford. I brought
this summons for a hearing....

Eula turns to face them she takes the hem of her skirt and lifts it up to dry her glasses off. Donald Wayne turns and looks out the door to avoid seeing what's under Eula's dress. Carl Floyd laughs to himself and shakes his head a bit.

NETTY

Mother! Snowing down south!
Snowing down south!

Eula sighs heavily as she looks at Netty. Eula drops her skirt slowly. Eula takes a large knife from the sink. As she wheels around with it, it barely misses Netty's face. Eula starts chopping some potatoes.

EULA

So. Donald Wayne. You still a
drunk?

DONALD WAYNE

(Getting twitchy.)
Now, Miss Eula...

EULA

(Looks at Netty as she
says this to Donald
Wayne)
No sane woman would ever run around
with you.

DONALD WAYNE

You are a mean ol' buzzard.

NETTY

Donald Wayne! Mama! Stop it.

Eula returns to chopping the potatoes. She cuts her finger slightly.

EULA

Stars and garters! "And when I
passed by thee and saw thee
polluted in thine own blood, I said
unto thee when thou wast in thy
blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee
when thou wast in thy blood, Live."

Silence as Netty, Donald Wayne and Carl Floyd eye each other. Carl Floyd looks at Eula as if she is a space alien. Eula's eyes begin to water; she lowers her head. Carl Floyd's expression turns to one of sympathy, out of nervousness and for something to do, he holds the opening of the glass to his eye and takes turns looking at the warped image of Netty and Eula through the end of the glass.

NETTY

What in the Sam Hill is that?

EULA

Hush. OOOOoooo...
(She continues muttering
the verse under her
breath.)

". . .I said unto thee when thou
wast in they blood, Live; yea, I
said unto thee when thou wast in
thy blood, Live. Live; yea, I
said..."

Carl Floyd turns and catches a distorted image of his grandmother in a shiny silver pitcher. He stares at it as if he were discovering a strange new life form. Netty eyes at her mother for a moment, then gives a look to Donald Wayne. He nods in agreement. Netty turns her attention to the photo album. She starts to open it.

NETTY

Are these family pic...

EULA

(Suddenly hysterical)
You leave that alone! That's none
of your business. That's mine.
That's private!

Startled, Netty jerks her hand back. Donald Wayne flicks his eyes toward Eula; he steps in a bit. Eula snatches the book and puts it in an old toolbox sitting on the top of the stove.

DONALD WAYNE

Can you explain...?

EULA

I've got no secrets. Ask her why her husband run off. Ask her what she carries in her purse.

NETTY

(Flummoxed. Clutching at her purse.)

I heard tell about Sunday. We're not talking about me. Why did you...

Carl Floyd notices something white peaking out of the top of the silver pitcher. He leans over and discovers a small stuffed bunny toy. He takes it and stares at it quizzically before surreptitiously putting in his pants pocket. He looks to see if his grandmother has seen.

DONALD WAYNE

If you're not crazy, why do you have a jars o' hair in your kitchen?

EULA

I got my reasons.

NETTY

It's craz...It's plumb odd, Mama. People, ordinary people, don't have hair in their kitchen. In a Mason jar! Of all things.

EULA

(To Donald Wayne)

You've always been a mean sumbitch. You still whipping dogs?

DONALD WAYNE

Dadjimmit, I outta stuff this summons....

Eula grabs her wig from the fridge and heads toward the door.

NETTY

Mama!!

Netty stops the charging Donald Wayne.

EULA
 (Staring out the
 door;muttering)
 Too squirrely 'round here.
 Squirrels. Squirrels. Squirrels.
 Squirrels. Squirrels. Squirrels.

Netty and Donald Wayne look at each other baffled. Carl Floyd tries to keep from laughing.

NETTY
 What? What are you babbling about?

Eula pushes Donald Wayne aside on her way out. Eula starts exit.

NETTY (CONT'D)
 Have you completely lost your mind?
 Where you going? We're talking.

Eula stops suddenly as if stopped by an invisible wall.

EULA
 You're talking.

She looks down at her finger wrapped in a strip of cloth; the red dot of dried blood on the cloth looks back at her.

EULA (CONT'D)
 (Absently.)
 They have healed also the hurt of
 the daughter of my people slightly,
 saying Peace, peace; when there is
 no peace.

Eula stares vacantly outside. Carl Floyd looks at Eula fascinated.

NETTY
 Mama?

EULA
 Jeremiah. The Weeping Prophet.

Eula exits to the porch. Netty stares in disbelief at the now empty door.

NETTY

Hair in jars. Bible gobbledygook.
Jars in ovens. Everything here is
at sixes and sevens.

She clutches at her purse. Her eyes fall on Carl. He looks
a little hurt; a little stunned.

NETTY (CONT'D)

Carl Floyd, I hate you had to see
that. But you don't come home that
often. I thought it best you see
your mammaw before she's put
in...so you can remember her in a
good way. Now, quit fidgeting and
go watch her. Make sure she don't
do....hurt herself.

Carl Floyd sighs follows Eula outside.

NETTY

Well? She needs to be in
Brailsford; you and I both know it.
(Flirtatious)
Now what are you going to do?

DONALD WAYNE

You give the word, and I'll serve
the summons.

Netty moves around the kitchen inspecting various odd things
to be found. She opens the bread box but slams it shut in
horror.

NETTY

We have to be careful about how we
do that. We don't want to set her
off. You see how she is.

Netty picks up a decorative spoon laying on the stove. She
glances quickly to see if Donald Wayne is looking. She puts
the spoon in her purse.

DONALD WAYNE

Netty, she's an odd bird. Mean and
odd. I'll do what I can to help
you.

(A beat. He tucks in his
shirt.)

You wanna have supper sometime....

NETTY

This house ain't worth spit. But the land. That's the ticket...Not for me, mind you. But to help take care of her.

Netty comes to the toolbox. She retrieves the album; sits at the table and opens it. There are no photographs; only empty pages. She turns page after empty page.

NETTY

There are no pictures in this book! Donald Wayne...

DONALD WAYNE

I'll be.

NETTY

It's faded in spots -- like pictures used to be in it. But empty.

(Looking toward the door)

I hope crazy doesn't run in the family.

EXT. EULA'S PORCH

Carl Floyd stands, with his hands shoved in his pockets staring out to the distance from where he came. Eula sits on a bucket turned upside down, weeding in a pitiful patch of garden.

EULA

You just home from school?

CARL

I graduated. Remember? You just asked.... I was the first kid in the family to graduate college.

EULA

Oh. Yeah. Sump'in' with writing. Live up north some place.

He looks out again sighs heavily toward a place he wishes he could be instead of here.

CARL

Yes.

She eyes him a moment. He turns to find her staring at him.

EULA
(Suddenly)
You never quite took on with the
girls, did you?

Carl, startled and caught with his secret, struggles to figure out how to answer this question. His twitching is now in full force.

CARL
Uh...well. No, Mammaw, I didn't.

Eula nods slightly. A small smile comes to her face. She turns and looks out to the place where Carl Floyd seemed to be searching for something.

EULA
Hm. When you were a baby, I used to look after you...Right after your daddy ran... I'd rock you for hours and sing "Go Tell Aunt Rodie."

She stares vacantly into some far off place. Carl swallows hard. He stares at his grandmother intently.

CARL
How did you know...?

EULA
(Focused on her weeding.)
"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

A slow, sly smile crosses Carl's face. He studies his grandmother for a moment -- like it is the first time he has truly seen her. He reaches into his pocket to retrieve the stuffed bunny. He turns his attention back to the countryside; his body and face calm and content. He returns the stuffed bunny to his pocket.

CARL
Mammaw, are you...crazy?

EULA
What do you think?