

THE FOXES

Written by

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INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

LEONARD and AVA FOX, both in their 80s or 90s, sit side by side for a documentary-style interview. They are the loving, adorable grandparents you always wanted. After nearly sixty years of marriage, they've got a chemistry like twins in the womb -- they finish one another's sentences, know one another's peccadilloes, and cannot live apart.

AVA

(showing off her wedding ring)

You can see...this is the ring he bought me.

LEONARD

That had belonged to my mother.

AVA

No. That isn't right. You told me you had to save for six months to buy this.

Leonard sits quietly, as if thinking it over.

LEONARD

I bought it off my mother.

TITLE: THE FOXES

AVA

We met at a diner in Stockton, just after the war. I was working as a waitress and Leonard came in to ask about the "Help Wanted" sign in the window.

LEONARD

It was a little roadside place with a few tables and a gas pump out front. I was just drifting through, but I saw that sign and then I saw her.

AVA

It was love at first sight.

LEONARD

I don't know about love, but boy oh boy, it was something.

AVA

There was one little hitch.

LEONARD

She was married to this fella
Calvin who owned the place.

AVA

He was a member of the Rotary Club.

LEONARD

Nowadays you can just get on the
computer if you want a divorce, but
it was a lot harder back then.

AVA

We had to be together.

LEONARD

So I come up with this plan.

AVA

It was my plan.

LEONARD

I tweaked it a bit. We'd be able to
run off and be in a pretty good way
when we did.

AVA

Calvin had an insurance policy that
would pay out fifty thousand
dollars in the event of his death.

LEONARD

But it had to be an accident.

AVA

It had to look like an accident.

LEONARD

It was a lot easier back then to
make it look like an accident.

AVA

Those days, I'd go into town every
Sunday after church to pick up a
few things for the diner.

LEONARD

I'd go with her because she
couldn't drive.

AVA

I couldn't drive.

LEONARD

That's what the old man thought,
anyway. He didn't know I'd been
giving her lessons.

AVA

He taught me a lot.

LEONARD

(smirking)
Yes, I did.

AVA

So one Sunday, I went alone.

LEONARD

She let me out down the road a
stretch and I walked on back.

AVA

I drove into town and I wore this
beautiful cartwheel hat, with a
tremendous brim, so all the women
would notice me. You should have
seen it. Yellow velvet with a white
ribbon and a veil. It was a very
nice hat.

LEONARD

I opened up the pump and let the
gas flow into a good-sized pool.

AVA

And I wore a very short dress, so
all the men would notice me, too. I
had very nice legs.

(to Leonard)

Do we have any pictures?

LEONARD

I stood way back on the other side
of the garage, a real sturdy brick
building, lit the gas and watched
the whole place go up like
fireworks.

AVA

You forgot Manuel.

LEONARD

I didn't forget Manuel. You forgot
him.

AVA

No. You forgot to mention him in the story.

LEONARD

Oh. Right. So there was this Filipino kid who worked in the kitchen.

AVA

Manuel.

LEONARD

And he'd been hanging around when the place blew up. She said it would be empty.

AVA

No. I told you it might be empty. You should have taken the time to check, but you're always in a hurry.

LEONARD

How in the world was I supposed to take the time to check if I was in town with you?! I was being discrete.

AVA

You couldn't have been that discrete if Manuel saw you.

LEONARD

I said I think he saw me. I couldn't be sure.

AVA

Manuel saw him. He had gotten out, but he was very badly burned. Calvin didn't make it.

LEONARD

Calvin was dead. And if Manuel could finger me, she and I were both pretty much done for.

AVA

I'm not the one who blew up the diner.

LEONARD

Like hell. If I was going to the gas chamber, I was taking her with me.

AVA

So I came up with another plan.

LEONARD

Some plan. She wanted me to kill Manuel, too.

AVA

Don't mind him. Leonard gets cranky when he doesn't get a snack after lunch. It was a good plan. Very simple.

LEONARD

I had had enough of her and her damned plans. I went to the hospital to see Manuel, and he's all wrapped up like a mummy. Except his eyes. I could see his eyes. And I pull out this twenty-two -- just a pea shooter, really, but a nice little gun -- and I lean in close and say, "Manuel, smart kid like you, you're gonna live a long, long time". And I left. He never said a word, and he's still alive today.

AVA

We send him a Christmas card every year. Very sweet boy.

LEONARD

Six months later, we were married.

AVA

And we've been together ever since.

LEONARD

Fifty-five years.

AVA

Fifty-five years.

LEONARD

But I can tell you this, I haven't had any life insurance in all that time!

Leonard lets out a big laugh.

AVA
(confidentially, to
camera)
He thinks he doesn't have
insurance.

LEONARD
I'm Leonard and this is my wife,
Ava. We're the Foxes.