

I MISS THE TINY
CITIES INSIDE OUR TVS

A short film

by

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BLACK SCREEN

The sound of an old wall-clock pendulum.

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

INT. LOUNGEROOM - DAY

The pendulum of a small antique European wall-clock swings back and forth like a metronome.

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock...

Time is slipping away.

An old, wrinkled hand feeds a piece of white A4 paper into an old typewriter and winds it through. Wise eyes set in a withered face carefully inspect the empty page. POP is a dignified older gentleman in his 70s.

A warm, comfortable lounge room is filled with a lifetime of accumulated memories. Black and white photographs in garish frames. Doilies on almost every surface. Trinkets. Souvenirs. Shells and rocks and porcelain figurines. A life collected and stored like a museum exhibit.

Pop sits at a small desk in the corner, carefully set up for writing. There is a small stack of books, a newspaper, and a ream of white paper.

He fiddles with the settings and handles of the typewriter, enjoying the mechanics. Pop methodically puts on his reading glasses and starts typing. Hunting and pecking with two index fingers. Slowly. Carefully. Deliberately. Type hammers strike the ribbon and leave their mark on the paper.

Tack. Tack. Tack. Tack. Tack.

Pop stops. He sits back to admire his work and choose the next few words.

After careful consideration, he starts typing again. Tack. Tack. Tack...

NANNA comes in, carrying a tray with carefully arranged teacups, teapot, sugar pot and associated paraphernalia. She's a plump, frail, wise old woman moving with difficulty, but she's already been there, done that, and now just wants to relax.

The tray is carefully set on the table. Nanna proceeds to methodically pour a cup of tea.

She drops in two lumps of sugar, pours some milk from a small jug, stirs just enough, but not too much, and then removes the spoon, tapping it against the rim of the cup - tink tink tink - to return the last few drops. She adds a small cookie to the rim of the saucer, and positions it perfectly.

The details matter.

Nanna carefully brings Pop the tea and lays it on the table beside him. He looks to the cookie approvingly as Nanna returns to the coffee table.

Pop eats the cookie and then continues typing. Slowly. Carefully. Tack. Tack. Tack.

Nanna makes herself a cup of tea and sets it on a small side table beside a rocking chair. She eases herself carefully into the chair, then reaches to the other side to retrieve a pair of knitting needles, along with her current project - yet another doily - from a basket.

She begins to knit. Click. Clack. Click. Clack.

The clock continues to tick... Tock. Tick. Tock.

Pop types away, hammers striking the ink ribbon against paper. Tack. Tack. Tack.

He stops for a moment. Picks up his teacup and slurps.

As Pop continues to type again, Nanna begins to rock gently in her chair, the old wood squeaking and groaning with each rhythmic movement. Squeak. Squeak. Squeak.

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

Tack. Tack. Tack.

Click. Clack. Click. Clack.

Slurp.

Click. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack. Slurp. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack. Tock...

They both seem completely at ease.

Suddenly, Pop stops and looks around, suspiciously. As if he heard an intrusive sound.

He grunts. Listens.

It's nothing. He continues typing.

After a moment, Nanna stops. Now SHE'S heard something strange. She looks about, suspicious, but can't hear anything further.

She continues.

Click. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack.
Slurp. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack. Tock...

Agitated, Pop stops again, takes off his reading glasses and looks around. He grunts with annoyance.

Nanna stops her rocking and knitting, looking to Pop. What has he heard?

They both listen carefully. Only the clock continues.

There it is, a faint noise. An intruder!

BZZZZZZzzzzZZZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzz --

The mosquito flies close to Pop, circling around him. He tries to catch sight of it, following the sound.

BZZZZZZzzzzZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzz --

POV - MOSQUITO - LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

The intruder seems to evade the old man's searching gaze and then heads to Nanna.

INT. LOUNGEROOM - DAY

Nanna hears the intruder approach, looking around in a panic and waving her hand about to scare it away.

BZZZZZZzzzzZZZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzz --

She reels back in fright, as if being attacked by a vampire bat. Which is kind of true.

The blood-sucker takes the hint and returns to POP, who now takes his turn to wave his arms about, angrily. Go away!

BZZZZZZzzzzZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzz.

It stops. Pop scans the room, trying to locate where the mosquito has landed. His eyes narrow. He waits for movement.

Nanna looks terrified, as if there's a killer lurking in the shadows. Don't make a sound.

They sit in silence.

Pop goes to the desk and slowly and carefully picks up the newspaper. Nanna watches, worried.

Pop slowly rolls up the newspaper, as if the mosquito might hear him and realise what he's up to.

He scrunched the paper tighter and tighter, then wields it like a club.

Pop creeps closer to Nanna, who gets more and more nervous.

Pop raises the weapon, ready to strike the unsuspecting bug.

Nanna closes her eyes and braces for impact.

THWAP!

Pop strikes her on the shoulder. Nanna flinches.

Silence.

The clock continues. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

BZZZZZZZZzzzzzzZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzzz.

Pop grunts in anger and frustration. His eyes again scan the skies for German bombers. His fist tightens on the weapon. He's seething. You little mother fucker!

BZZZZZZZZzzzzzzZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzzz.

THWAP!

BZZZZZZZZzzzzzzZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzzz.

THWAP!

It's a full on attack. Pop flies into a rage, attacking wherever the beast seems to be. Knocking over picture frames. Vases. Trinkets.

Nanna watches on, fully invested in Pop's victory despite the carnage. Go get him!

THWAP! THWAP! On the coffee table, the porcelain tea-set rattling as the bombs fall. THWAP! THWAP!

BZZZZZZZZzzzzzzZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzzz.

SLAP!

Nanna sits with her hands flat together, as if in prayer.

Pop looks to her, both surprised and proud at the same time.

Nanna peels her hands open like a book.

A small grey splotch.

She holds out her hand for Pop to inspect. He smiles with a satisfied grunt.

Victory at last!

Nanna casually rubs her hands together to rid her skin of the enemy carcass.

Pop returns to his seat at the desk. He looks around, making sure there are no more intruders. Making sure they have, in fact, won.

Silence.

The clock continues. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

Pop hesitates, and then starts typing again.

Tack. Tack. Tack.

Nanna resumes rocking on her chair.

Squeak. Squeak. Squeak.

She resumes her knitting.

Click. Clack. Click. Clack.

Time is slipping away.

SLURP.

CUT TO BLACK.

The sounds continue over the end credits.

Click. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack.
Slurp. Tock. Squeak. Tick. Clack. Tock...

BZZZZZZzzzzZZZZZZzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzz...

END