

THE QUARRY

Fallibility

By

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1. INT. PRESENT DAY ROGER'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

The living room is dark with intermittent light from the old CRT television showing THE TIME MACHINE.

Dust covers old family PHOTOS that line the walls. They feature a young man with his wife by his side and daughter on his shoulders. Another photo is of the young man by himself holding an award for an innovative invention. A framed degree and awards from the scientific community, such as a WOLF PRIZE, hang askew and neglected.

Empty bottles are strewn around the room.

A bottle of Jack Daniels drops to the floor spilling its contents.

A limp hand follows the bottle to dangle over the edge of the RED ARMCHAIR. ROGER (senile old man, with dirty stubble and wearing yesterdays lunch on his sweat stained shirt) is asleep in the armchair beginning to dream.

2. DREAM SEQUENCE INT. 70'S ROGER'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Roger sits in the red armchair. The living room is the same but well lit, homely, and tidy but some of the awards aren't present. No dust or bottles clutter the room.

From the kitchen banging and clattering noises issue. Roger goes to investigate.

3. INT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS

Roger steps into the light of the kitchen. Old food is scattered over the bench top with plates piling high in the sink. Roger runs his hand over a DRAWING on the fridge of a man and a child holding hands in front of a rocket ship, an arrow singling them out as Daddy and Ella.

More banging from a staircase leading down into the basement draws Roger downstairs.

4. INT. BASEMENT. CONTINUOUS

The basement is crowded with paraphernalia. Scientific experiments abandoned lay haphazardly about: beakers and test tubes bubble idly away emitting green gases, a headless robot intermittently flashes and sparks, half concealed under a dusty cloth is a big contraption surrounding a red armchair.

Sheryl raises a frying pan.

SHERYL
You left her...

Young-Roger rushes at Sheryl.

YOUNG-ROGER
Put that down!

Young-Roger wrestles the frying pan out of Sheryl's hand and sets it on the bench.

Sheryl recoils from Roger's touch.

SHERYL
She's a child Roger! A child!

YOUNG-ROGER
I lost track of time Sheryl I'm
sorry but I discovered something...
Huge. The Big...

SHERYL
I don't care what you think you
discovered Roger, I had to pick
her up from the police again. One
more time and we could lose her
Roger!

The argument between Sheryl and Young-Roger continues but Roger tunes it out.

Roger slowly moves through the kitchen in a dream-like trance, passing right through the arguing couple as if they weren't even there.

He stops at the door to the kitchen staring at something...

6. INT. ENTRANCE WAY / STAIRCASE. CONTINUOUS

ELLA (all goodness and innocence), Roger's 6 year old daughter, holds a teddy bear while she sits on the stairs in her school uniform and listens to her parents argue.

She looks right at Roger almost as if she can see him. He is frozen by her stare, silent tears rolling down his cheeks.

A long silence in the argument breaks Roger's reverie of his daughter. He tunes in again.

SHERYL (O.S.)
I'm done Roger. I can't do it
anymore.

A second later Sheryl walks right through Roger into frame and sees Ella. Roger just watches on knowing full well what happens next.

SHERYL
Oh Ella baby, I'm sorry you had to
hear that.

ELLA
Why are you angry at daddy mommy?
I'm all right.

Sheryl kneels in front of Ella.

SHERYL
I know you're all right sweetie,
you always are. We're gonna go
visit grandma for a little while.

Sheryl picks up Ella, grabs her keys and coat.

Roger rushes to Sheryl and Ella trying to get their attention.

ROGER
Don't go! Please don't go!

Roger's head is whipping back and forth between stopping them and getting Young-Roger.

He runs to the kitchen door...

7. INT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS

Young-Roger has his head down clutching the edge of the tabletop.

ROGER
What are you doing! Go after them!

Young-Roger doesn't respond.

8. INT. ENTRANCE WAY / STAIRCASE. CONTINUOUS

Sheryl has Ella in her arms. She opens the front door.

Ella stretches her arms out towards Roger, her eyes big as saucers.

ELLA

But I want to stay with daddy.

ROGER

ELLA!

The front door SLAMS.

Roger slides to the ground, head in his hands staring at the door.

An ENGINE STARTS.

There's a CRACK of a bottle lid been twisted open from the kitchen.

Head-lights shine through the glass of the front door as the car backs out of the driveway.

ROGER

10..9..8..7..6..5..4..3..2....1

When Roger reaches zero a horrible sound of SCREECHING TYRES followed by a huge COLLISION shatters the silence.

Young-Roger bolts for the door right past his older self.

9. EXT. FRONT YARD. CONTINUOUS

Young-Roger hares onto the street and disappears out of sight. NEIGHBOURS dressed like middle-class suburbia in their dressing gowns emerge from their neatly manicured houses.

Smoke rises over the suburban landscape in the direction Young-Roger ran towards.

Roger lags behind, dragging his feet.

10. EXT. STREET. CONTINUOUS

The street is crowded with a blur of faces rushing towards a flaming wreckage at the end. A small crowd has already gathered there.

Roger walks down the middle of the road, stepping in and out of pools of light cast by street lights. Ahead of him Young-Roger reaches the crash and pushes through to the front.

SIRENS wail in the distance.

The fire is reflected in Roger's eyes.

Roger walks through the crowd to stand behind Young-Roger who is on his knees clutching Ella's teddy bear. Two cars are a flaming mess ahead of them.

ROGER
You stupid fool.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

11. INT. ROGER'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Roger wakes from his dream to his living room illuminated by the TV.

He licks his lips and searches for a drop of alcohol.

He upends a Jameson bottle into his mouth, draining it. He stares at the bottle in his hands.

Visions of cars on fire and screams haunt Roger in flashes.

He hurls the bottle across the room.

Roger focuses upon the television that's playing THE TIME MACHINE. Guy Pearce is hopping into a time machine made out of a RED ARMCHAIR identical looking to the one he sits in now. Roger watches transfixed, slightly swaying and squinting, by the idea and the resemblance to his own RED ARMCHAIR.

ROGER
You can change it!

Roger picks up an old picture of Sheryl and Ella.

ROGER

I'm gonna make this right, I
promise.

Roger rifles through a draw and withdraws a pen and paper. He moves like a man possessed, feverishly drawing his own design of the Time Machine.

Equations and numbers cover the page, but are ripped up and thrown away in frustration.

Roger seems to hit a wall, gets up and exits frame through the kitchen.

MOVEMENT, GRUNTING and REARRANGING noises can be heard from the basement. Roger emerges dragging a drawing board with bottles of whiskey under each arm.

MONTAGE

Roger unscrews the whiskey, takes a pull, and begins drawing his own TIME MACHINE, pinning pieces to the board as he goes.

The only indicator of time is how much whiskey he drinks.

The living room is cleared of furniture except for the photos, he leaves them. Then it is turned into a workshop with tools and scrap metal everywhere.

Three quarters of the bottle of whiskey is gone. Roger looks old and frail but somehow he is building this massive contraption. His eyes are bloodshot and feverish.

Sparks flash across the living-room as Roger welds.

Roger's time machine takes shape around his red armchair.

Screams of frustration and howls of joy punctuate the hammering and welding.

END MONTAGE

Roger picks up the bottle and steps back to admire his work, taking a gratuitous swig and swaying heavily.

Roger's TIME MACHINE is an exact replica of Guy Pearce's. Shiny metal wraps around the Red Armchair with two giant fans at the front and back.

ROGER

No time like the present, to change
the past.

Roger slips his watch off his wrist and puts it on a stand in front of the Red Armchair. Taking one last pull of the whiskey he slumps into the Time Machine.

He reaches for the watch but checks himself and leans out to grab the PHOTO of himself, Sheryl and Ella.

He winds back the date on his WATCH, to this exact day, SEPTEMBER 14TH, only forty years earlier.

At first nothing happens...

Roger clutches the photo, his knuckles turning white, and screws his eyes tight shut.

He sees FLASHES of light through his closed eyes. There's a cacophony of birds chirping, cars honking, hammers and saws as if time is passing. Over it all the thrum of fans punctuates until its the only thing that can be heard.

12. INT. 70'S ROGER'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Roger's eyes open to a fan spinning away on the ceiling. He checks his surroundings.

He's in his living room, sitting in the red armchair with no Time Machine around him. Everything appears the same but there is no dust on the family photos or bottles strewn around. He reaches out for a photo and stops mid reach to stare at his HAND, a hand of a man in his prime.

Roger runs over to the sideboard and stares at himself in the mirror, pinching his skin in disbelief.

He is in the body of Young-Roger. He has a mustache and skin that sticks to his skull, sunken eyes, but the same blue eyes.

He jumps in the air, punching and kicking with excitement. He stops and grabs his wrist pulling the sleeve down to check his WATCH: The time is 3:35.

ROGER

Shit! Ella.

He races from the living room.

13. INT. ENTRANCE WAY / STAIRCASE. DAY

Roger enters frame from the living room door, and begins frantically searching for the car keys. Upending the contents of the draw and throwing coats out of the closet in his search.

ROGER

Where are the keys!

He opens the door that leads to the garage.

14. INT. GARAGE. DAY

Roger bursts into the garage. It is cluttered, the sides piled high with junk but it is empty and open to the street. He kicks at a box.

ROGER

Dammit Sheryl, I'm trying to save you!

With a roar Roger bolts out of the open garage door into the brilliantly sunny afternoon and turns down the street.

15. EXT. SUBURB STREETS. DAY

The streets are average Sydney suburb streets, quiet in some places with lots of traffic as Roger gets closer to the school.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

-Roger checks his watch: 3:59

-His legs pump hard along the pavement

-A gang of school kids come round the corner and Roger has to leap to the side to avoid them, tripping over his feet and then falling.

-He pulls himself up and keeps running, checking the TIME: 4:06

-Roger doesn't check for cars as he emerges from bushes onto the pedestrian crossing. He gets blindsided by a slowly moving car and slams up onto their bonnet. He rolls off the hood. The DRIVER (average male citizen) hops out of the car to help him but Roger has already pulled himself up. The Driver is about to speak before Roger cuts him off.

ROGER
Can't stop mate, got history to
write.

Roger hobbles off, limping into a run leaving the driver
bewildered

-Roger checks his watch: 4:25. Straightening his shirt and
flattening his hair Roger strides into the grounds of ST.
MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

END SERIES OF SHOTS

16. INT. OFFICE ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL. DAY

Roger knocks on the office door and enters. There's an
OFFICE LADY (late 50's, officious looking) busy at work with
her back to Roger. She doesn't hear the knock. As he steps
in Ella spots him.

ELLA
Daddy!

She leaps from her seat behind the Office Lady's desk and
throws herself at Roger.

ELLA
I told them you'd be here.

Ella's shout and sudden movement gets the Office Lady's
attention.

ROGER
Of course I'd be here baby girl.

OFFICE LADY
Mr. Pen rose, we were about to call
the police to pick up Ella.

Roger puts down Ella and motions her out the door with a
smile.

ROGER
Wait outside baby girl, I'll just
be a minute.

Roger squints at her NAME BADGE and attempts to pronounce
her name

ROGER
Miss Gretzka? Greezker?

OFFICE LADY

Mrs. Greeska, Mr. Pen rose. The very same lady who looked after your daughter last week and the week before when you failed to pick her up.

ROGER

Three weeks in a row?

OFFICE LADY

Five weeks if you count the two your wife had to pick her up from the station.

ROGER

Wow, I was a terrible father. If it's any consolation I will make some game-changing discoveries. Did make... Am going to--

The Office Lady curtly cuts him off.

OFFICE LADY

It's not. This is your daughter Mr. Pen rose. She is six years old.

ROGER

I know Mrs. Grezka...

The Office Lady stares disapprovingly at him messing up her name again.

ROGER

I know now what's at stake and I know I'm never going to let them go again.

Roger chokes up at the thought of losing his family again.

The Office Lady softens at the sincerity displayed by Roger.

OFFICE LADY

It's all well and good to say that here and now but it's your wife you have to convince not me. She's desperately unhappy surely you must know that.

ROGER

You can't tell her about this--

Roger grabs hold of her shoulders in desperation.

ROGER

Please, her life is relying on that.

OFFICE LADY

I'm sorry but it's policy to inform both caregivers after half an hour.

Roger's head slumps to his chest and he slowly releases his hold on her.

ROGER

Thank you.

Roger turns his back on the confused Office Lady and leaves the room.

17. EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND. DAY

Ella sees her dad looking sad as he exits the office and runs into his arms. His face briefly lights up.

ELLA

What's wrong daddy?

ROGER

Nothing for you to worry about baby girl. What do you want to do? Ice-cream?

ELLA

Yeahhhh!

ROGER

All right.

18. EXT. ROGER'S HOUSE FRONT YARD. DAY

Ella and Roger enter the front yard laughing and playing together. There is a car parked on the front lawn but they don't notice it. Ella jumps at Roger who swoops her up and spins her around. He hears the front door open, and on their next spin sees his wife emerging from the house.

SHERYL

WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU ROGER!

The laughter and spinning dies and Roger puts Ella down, and bends down to kiss her on the forehead.

ROGER
Go inside now sweetie.

She whispers to him:

ELLA
Good luck daddy.

And then hugs her mother as she passes her. This takes some of the steam out of Sheryl but not much.

SHERYL
You didn't pick her up.

Roger walks to Sheryl and embraces her in a hug that says more than words how sorry he is.

ROGER
I'm sorry honey. For everything.

Sheryl is taken aback by the tenderness of her distant partner. She gently pushes him away.

SHERYL
I can't do this anymore Roger. I just can't.

ROGER
Wait, just let me explain--

SHERYL
It's too late Roger.

Sheryl turns to the car but Roger spins her around.

ROGER
You can't leave, you can't. You're gonna die if you do. You and Ella, in a car crash I've lived it before. Please I can change.

SHERYL
(sobbing)
Roger please just let me go.

Sheryl tries to wriggle out of his clutch.

ROGER
NO! I won't let you go again.

He grabs hold of her and tries to wrestle her inside kicking and screaming.

SHERYL

Let go of me! Get off me! Let me go.

As Roger pulls her onto the doorstep Sheryl grabs a pot plant and smashes it over Roger's head.

He lets go of her as he collapses to the ground. His vision blacks in and out and as he struggles to get up he sees Sheryl jump in the car and shoot out the driveway.

ROGER

NOOOOO! Sheryl come back.

Roger's eyes shudder closed and a cacophony of noise assaults his ears, loud screeches and sirens and over the top a steady BEAT pounds, low at first until it becomes unbearably loud.

19. INT. PRESENT DAY ROGER'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Roger wakes up as an old man once more, thrashing in his Time Machine. It is dark in his living room but with rays of morning light breaking through the covered windows.

Someone is incessantly pounding on the door and a muffled voice can be heard but Roger doesn't answer it.

Roger unleashes a tortured howl. He sets about destroying his Time Machine.

The banging on the door becomes a massive thudding after Roger's outburst.

Roger is yelling and crying, throwing parts of his time machine across the room, destroying whatever he can lay his hands on.

The door busts open. Light from outside floods the room. Into the chaos steps a NURSE (late 20's, female, RED HAIR).

Roger's Time Machine is revealed to be just pillows and blankets around a Red Armchair with two giant fans behind it whirring away. The pillows are mostly all torn up now.

Roger picks up a PHOTO of Sheryl, Ella and himself and goes to smash it but stops himself, clutching it to his chest instead as he drops to his knees.

The nurse rushes to Roger's side. As she bends down to pick him up there is a glimpse of her NAME BADGE. Her name is Ella.