

A Film in Black & White

ONE NIGHT OR DAY

Script by Akemi Horie

PRELUDE

EXT: FIELD NEAR LAKE — LATE AFTERNOON

[Sound of ticking clock, barely audible.  
Sound of wind in the trees.]

1. Slow White-In to a sunny lake, trees, branches swaying in the wind.
2. Camera moves to survey the scene and in a field nearby finds an old man lying face down. A huge tree towers above him. His massive white hair flutters gently
3. Camera pans and in the distance spots a figure in black approaching the field.
4. Cut to closer look. It is an old woman; she is picking flowers as she walks the field.
5. Cut to her flowers.  
  
Is she heading towards the lying man?
6. Camera cut back to the old man lying face down.  
  
White-Out to Title Card.

## One Night or Day

One night as he sat at his table head on hands  
he saw himself rise and go.

One night or day. For when his own light went out  
he was not left in the dark -

EXT: INNER CITY STREET — LATE AFTERNOON

7. Derelict industrial buildings and deserted back street.
8. Camera moves down a dark alley leading to a door almost invisible in the darkness. Fade-Out.

INT: SMALL ROOM — LATE AFTERNOON

9. Fade-In. In a dim light OLD MAN sits at his table head on hands, buried in entangled film strips.
10. After a while, he raises his head to resume his task. He is rewinding the film strips onto a reel, with difficulty. He curses.
11. Camera surveys the room. A bare cell-like room. A small high window casting a shaft of dim light. In the corner a door and a hat stand. The floor is strewn with loose film strips and empty reels. A bookcase of a sort jammed with files and cans of film. A large working table and a table lamp against which he looks at a strip from time to time to reminisce.
12. In fact, it transpires, he is trying to rewind fragments of his recorded life onto the reel but this proves difficult. Film strips fly out of his hand. He lunges forward to grab hold of them, freezed in this clutching position for a moment. As he relaxes, he randomly pulls out a film strip and holds it up against the light.
13. Image of a young woman in a boat on the sunny lake.
14. Startled, he ponders. Then memories flood back to OLD MAN. He looks at it again.
15. Closer shot of YOUNG WOMAN in a boat now looking straight at him. She breaks into a faint smile.
16. And his response?

[Sound of wind in the trees.]

17. He rummages into the pile and takes out another strip -
17. The sound of wind in the tree brings up an image of the sunny lake and trees, branches swaying in the wind (same as Shot1). 4 Sec. OLD MAN'S eyes, looking out, doubles with the image of the lake.

[Sound of wind still heard.]

OLD MAN/VOICE OVER (almost inaudible)  
Lake...the upper lake...

18. OLD MAN is now seen at the hat stan. He puts on his coat, bag and hat, ready to go. No. He turns, faces camera and sings:

OLD MAN  
Now the day is over,  
Night is drawing nigh,  
Shadows of the evening  
Steal across the sky.

He goes to the door.

EXT: DARK ALLEY WAY - EARLY EVENING

[Faint ticking of clock.]

19. OLD MAN comes out into the alley and, as if driven, goes out onto the street. Camera behind him.

EXT: DESERTED INNER CITY STREET - EARLY EVENING

20. Wide shot of a woman in black standing still on a deserted street corner. She seems to be looking at the direction of camera. She turns away and moves on.

21. OLD MAN runs into the empty street. Is he chasing the woman in black?

EXT: STREET LEADING TO A TUNNEL - EARLY EVENING

22. The young woman in black is spotted on another deserted street, waiting. Cut to closer shot. She is the young woman in the boat, only now dressed in black. Faint alluring smile; she turns away and moves on.
23. OLD MAN enters the street, camera behind him. Now both figures are seen in the same frame. The chase is on.

[Ticking clock. Hard breathing. His?]

EXT: STREET NEAR AND IN THE TUNNEL – EARLY EVENING

24. YOUNG WOMAN IN BLACK appears to be leading OLD MAN on – but where to?  
A sense of increasing urgency.

Intersecting images of:  
YOUNG WOMAN's footsteps  
Her swirling hair, flowing black skirt and shawl

OLD MAN's faltering footsteps  
His weather-beaten boots  
His hand clutching his bag, etc.

The rhythm of the action intensifies.

[Sound of ticking clock.]

25. For a moment the black figure seems to have disappeared. Then camera/OLDMAN spots her black shawl fluttering in the distance. Camera (hand-held) zooms in. She turns to look straight at camera. [Ticking stops.] Stern enigmatic face. She turns away and moves on.

Agonised face of OLD MAN.

26. Into the tunnel. Impatient with his slow progress, camera overtakes OLD MAN. They are almost at the end of the tunnel. Angry at this move, he raves at camera, swipes at it.
27. Recoiling, camera swings up to the sky out of the tunnel (white-out) and down to the sunny lake,

white-in to the image of YOUNG WOMAN in boat shading her face. The image lingers for 5".

[Sound of wind in the trees.]

EXT: GRASSY FIELD NEAR LAKE – EARLY EVENING

28. OLD MAN runs into the field. At the far end of the field stands the black figure waiting. As he comes closer, however, the figure turns and goes further away. He chases her. Both disappear into the wood and beyond -
29. Image of the sunny lake, trees, branches swaying in the wind (same as 1<sup>st</sup> shot).

EXT: ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD NEAR LAKE – EARLY EVENING

30. A wide shot of OLD WOMAN picking flowers in the field, as seen in the opening scene. She is coming down the field to the lake.
31. Cut to an image of an empty boat floating on the lake.
32. Closer shot of OLD WOMAN and her flowers.

Ext: LAKE WATERFRONT – EARLY EVENING

33. Lake, water's edge and swaying branches.

[Sound of wind in the trees.]

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

- upper lake, with the punt, bathed off the bank, then pushed out into the stream and drifted.

34. OLD WOMAN is approaching the water's edge.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

She lay stretched out on the floorboards with her hands under her head and her eyes closed.

35. OLD WOMAN reaches the water's edge. Camera behind her.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

Sun blazing down, bit of a breeze, water nice and lively.

She kneels. Sound of wind. Swaying trees. The water glimmering in the early evening sun. After a moment,

36. Image of empty boat floating on the lake.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

I noticed a scratch on her thigh and asked her how she came by it. Picking gooseberries, she said.

37. Cut to OLD WOMAN gazing at the water. Camera now at her side. She begins to throw her flowers into the water, one by one.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on and she agreed, without opening her eyes. (Pause.) I asked her to look at me

38. Close shot of OLD WOMAN'S hand and flowers.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

and after a few moments -(Pause.)- after a few moments she did,

39. Camera tilts up the arm, to find it is YOUNG WOMAN IN BLACK holding flowers. Her dark stern eyes are wide open.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

but the eyes just slits, because of the glare.

40. Cut to YOUNG WOMAN in the boat shading her eyes. (same as Shot 27.) She removes her hand.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

I bent over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. (Pause.)

41. Cut to her stern enigmatic look, closer shot.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

Let me in. (Pause.)

She stares at him/camera. But after a moment breaks into a faint smile.

42. Water reflecting the evening sun. Flowers drifting in the water.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem!  
(Pause.)

OLDMAN/VOICE-OVER

I lay across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.<sup>1</sup>

[Long pause. Faint sound of wind.]

43. Cut back to OLD WOMAN gazing at the water. She resumes her ritual, throwing the few remaining flowers into the water, save one for herself.
44. Flowers drifting in the water. After a moment.

OLD MAN/VOICE-OVER

.... But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.

45. Water moving and reflecting. 5" and White-Out.

[All sounds cease.]

#### EPILOGUE

EXT. GRASSY FIELD NEAR LAKE — EARLY EVENING

46. White-In: OLD MAN lying in the field face down, as in Prelude.
47. OLD WOMAN, coming back from the lake, stumbles on his body. May she have seen him somewhere before? Somewhere on his feet before?

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<sup>1</sup> Voice-over passage from *Krapp's Last tape* in *Collected Shorter Plays of Samuel Beckett*, Faber and Faber, London, 1984, p.61

She remains at his side for a while, and moves on, still clutching her last sprig of flowers. She disappears into the distant trees.

48. OLD MAN left lying face down in the field. Camera cranes up placing his body in an overview and her receding figure into the distance.

Slow white-out.

End Card.