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# T11 Incomplete



Reviewed by: **Jennie Kermode**



Past mistakes haunt the present and threaten a new love affair between an older woman and her patient.

**Director:** [Suzanne Guacci](#)  
**Writer:** Suzanne Guacci  
**Year:** 2019  
**Country:** US  
**Festivals:**  
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*"Sillas is impressive as a woman whose sometimes very formal, sometimes brittle demeanour hides a lot of pain, uncertainty and ongoing effort."*

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Being a carer is tough. Even those who do it professionally and receive a wage are obliged, in most parts of the world, to scrape by on low incomes with low social status. Often people take it because it's the only work they can get. Kate (Karen Sillas) has led a troubled life, experiencing problems with alcohol and family breakdown, but she does, at least, enjoy her work, and she seems to be good at it. She bonds quickly with new patient Laura (Kristen Renton) who has a mobility impairment caused by the spinal damage referred to in the title and now compounded by a shoulder injury. But she's not good at following rules and when Laura starts flirting with her, boundaries quickly become blurred.

Suzanne Guacci's multi-layered drama is a bit of a mixed bag. There's an unfortunate shortage of chemistry between the leads which means that the film's rushed approach to their courtship doesn't really convince, but it's spot on in its handling of disability-related experiences, probably because Guacci herself is disabled. It also benefits from complex characters with lives that seem to extend beyond what we see onscreen, and from its willingness to acknowledge and explore several different intersecting issues in their lives.

Relationships between disabled people and their professional carers are not all that unusual, despite being ethically contentious. Guacci is careful to show us that Laura is neither helpless nor desperate, waylaid any concern that she's being exploited, whilst Kate's disregard for the ethical requirements of her job is positioned as part of a broader set of character flaws which are, ultimately, a lot of what makes her interesting. Laura's brother is keen to help her return to the kind of social life that she enjoyed before her spinal injury but is clueless about how to do it, routinely overriding her, failing to listen, and at one point trying to fix her up with a friend who "doesn't care about the chair," as if that were the primary concern, not whether or not Laura is actually attracted to her.



Alongside all this, Kate is dealing with the loss of a cat she has had for 20 years, the only source of affection for her during the darkest times in her life. She's trying to mend a fractured relationship with her son if only so that she can continue to share a loving bond with her grandson, whilst her son seems perpetually on the verge of screwing up his relationship with his partner, the only character who consistently makes an effort to think of others' needs before her own.

Focused as it is on difficult people, T11 Incomplete is in many ways a difficult film, asking viewers to be patient in managing their own relationships to what they see onscreen. It's a film about failure and loss and as such, it can at times be quite dispiriting, but there's another message here about redemption and the need for human connection to make that possible. Sillas is impressive as a woman whose sometimes very formal, sometimes brittle demeanour hides a lot of pain, uncertainty and ongoing effort. The positioning of Laura as a character whose ability to provide support is ultimately more important than her need for it makes a pleasing change and enables Guacci to deliver a story that is driven by character rather than by circumstance.

T11 Incomplete may not be the most accessible of this year's [Outfest](#) selections, but it has something different to say and, in the end, stands out in a good way.

Reviewed on: 29 Aug 2020