

FAMILIAR TOUCH

27th
Year!

Autumn
Season
2026

Release: 2024
Cert (UK): 12A, F
Country: USA
Language: English
Runtime: 1 hour 32 mins
Director: Sarah Friedland
Written by: Sarah Friedland
Cinematographer: Gabe Elder
Cast: Kathleen Chalfant, Carolyn Mitchell,
Andy McQueen



Whilst films about sufferers from dementia have become more frequent, nearly all have shown the problems more from the point of view of the relations and friends rather than the sufferer. *'Familiar Touch'* lets us travel along with Ruth on the journey from respected professional to patient, from living in a lovely home to supported living, showing her ups and downs, losses and gains, along the way.

Ruth has been a famous chef when she starts 'forgetting things'. We join her on the day she has finally been forced to accept the new reality and move into an assisted-living facility, she herself has chosen, though she doesn't remember doing so. *'Ruth must gradually accommodate herself to the abrupt loss of her elegant home in Los Angeles, of independence and sense of self-worth – and to accept that her new, circumscribed life is more than the meagre sum of its parts. That it is still worth living'* - Ela Bittencourt, Sight and Sound.

Sarah Friedland, the writer/director, has worked in a similar facility, so it should be no surprise that she has got the details of life there down to a T, but it is her choices in choosing the right small details to show us the changes that mark the film as so watchable. *'Most observations are from Ruth's point of view. At her first communal meal, she's affronted when she's not presented a menu, and impatiently waves at the nurses gossiping with their backs turned to her. Their posture signals that she's not here to dictate her choices to others, but to follow routines – if not orders – instead'* - Ela Bittencourt again. It is this soft touch from the director, alongside the amazing acting from Kathleen Chalfant that allows this film to be so empathetic to the suffering here.

