

DINNER WITH MUM

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INT. HALLWAY - EARLY EVENING

We see ELLEN (60s) in the kitchen, frantically disappearing and reappearing right and left of the doorway. She is dressed in smart, summer-type, comfortable daywear. ELLEN is preparing dinner.

The door bell rings.

ELLEN
(to herself)
Oh!

The door bell rings again.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
(calling)
Hold on! I'm coming.

We hear ELLEN close the fridge door and hurry into the hallway. ELLEN abruptly opens the front door.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Hello! It's so good to see you!

RUBY, ELLEN's daughter, comes bearing gifts - a small bouquet of flowers, and a supermarket bag. They hug tightly.

RUBY hands over the flowers.

RUBY
You took your time.

ELLEN
Sod off! Come in, come in! I've got enough pots simmering on the gas to warm up the dead.

ELLEN ushers RUBY into the house, and then immediately marches past her and into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ELLEN places the flowers into a vase, and then her attention is immediately back on the boiling pots - she turns the heat down on a couple, and starts drizzling some olive oil on the flat breads she prepared earlier.

RUBY appears in the doorway.

RUBY
Oh Mum, it smells lovely.

ELLEN

Everything is teetering on the edge
of timed perfection. Your arrival
almost ruined the whole thing.

RUBY pulls out a four-pint of milk and opens the fridge door.

RUBY

I got the stuff you asked for.
Should I put it-

ELLEN

No-no, give it here. I need it for
the, erm...

RUBY stares at the near empty fridge - which she finds odd,
before ELLEN rushes over and snatches the milk.

RUBY waits for a response, but ELLEN seems to have forgotten.

RUBY

The what?

ELLEN

(flustered)
...Yes! Thank you.

RUBY looks over ELLEN's shoulder and sees several jacket
potatoes sat resting on the side and wonders what they're
for, but doesn't say anything.

ELLEN takes the milk and places it on the side.

RUBY

...It's unlike you to forget the
milk. I thought you wrote lists?
Lists for lists, and-

RUBY walks over to stand next to ELLEN, and looks down at the
pots.

RUBY (CONT'D)

You're not making risotto?

It's equally a surprise for ELLEN not to see risotto in the
pan, but a curry type dish instead.

ELLEN

(stuttering)
Oh, well you know. I thought we'd
try something new.

RUBY picks up a wooden spoon and stirs it through the curry.

RUBY
Is that chicken?

ELLEN
Erm, yeah.

RUBY
Mum, you know I don't eat meat.

ELLEN
Really? Since when?

RUBY
Since forever.

ELLEN picks up two plates and starts to prepare the jacket potatoes.

ELLEN
(frustrated)
...You'll have to eat around it then, won't you?! Instead of complaining, just-

ELLEN looks around quickly at RUBY, but JOSH (Ruby's boyfriend) is now standing there watching her as well.

ELLEN jumps with surprise.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
(to JOSH)
Christ! How long have you been there?!

JOSH
(laughing)
Since about the time we arrived.

RUBY
(to ELLEN)
Are you feeling okay?

RUBY rests a hand on ELLEN's shoulder. ELLEN looks at RUBY up and down and realises she is wearing different clothes, and her hair has slightly changed - she's also wearing a bit of make up.

ELLEN
Of course. I mean, I would...
erm... app... a... oh!

JOSH
Appreciate?

ELLEN

*Appreciate, thank you, someone
setting the table for me so I can
concentrate on...*

ELLEN turns around and all the pots are gone.

RUBY

...Josh has already taken it in.

RUBY and JOSH leave the kitchen and walk into the dining room. ELLEN takes a moment to compose herself - unsure of what is going on.

RUBY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Come on, before JOSH eats it all!

ELLEN

I'm just getting the, erm...

ELLEN doesn't know what to say or do next, so joins them in the DINING ROOM.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ELLEN walks past the living room door.

RUBY (O.S.)

Mum?

ELLEN stops and comes back - she immediately looks down at a large bump protruding around RUBY's stomach - her hair now tied back in a bun.

ELLEN is shocked.

ELLEN

I- I erm.

RUBY looks back up at her - holding her back for support.

RUBY

What?

ELLEN

(confused)

...You're pregnant.

RUBY

I wondered what this thing was!

ELLEN

Where's that guy?

RUBY

Josh?

ELLEN

That's the one!

RUBY

He had to work. I just told you.
Where's dinner? Are you not
bringing it in? Come on, I'm
starving!

RUBY struggles to sit down.

ELLEN

(flustered)

Of course, I'll go get it now.

ELLEN walks out of view.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ELLEN appears back into the kitchen and to her surprise, sees a couple of plates of food sat on the side. She picks them up and quickly takes them back into the dining room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ELLEN stops at the dining room door. The house is now littered with Christmas decorations, and RUBY is nowhere to be seen.

ELLEN

Ruby?

RUBY (O.S.)

I'm in here.

ELLEN follows her voice into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ELLEN is now wearing her coat and holding two Christmas puddings.

She looks down at RUBY who is slouched on the sofa - no longer pregnant. RUBY takes a large gulp of her wine.

ELLEN

Do you really think you should be-

RUBY looks up.

RUBY
(concerned)
Why do you have your coat on?

ELLEN looks down at herself and realises she is wearing a coat.

ELLEN
...I was going to nip outside for something.

ELLEN places down two mugs of tea on a side cabinet, and then tries to get the coat off - but she really struggles, as though she has forgotten how to do it.

RUBY watches for a moment, but eventually gets up off the sofa to help.

RUBY
Let me...

ELLEN
I'm just tired. That's all this is.
It always happens as this time of year. Right?

RUBY knows it's just an excuse, and leaves the living room to hang her coat back up.

ELLEN follows her into the hallway.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
We put so much effort into the run up, and then we're just too tired to- ARGH!

ELLEN lets out a sharp scream as she sees a completely different woman hanging up the coat.

RUBY 2
What?

ELLEN
What are you doing?!

RUBY 2
I'm just hanging your coat up.

ELLEN
(aggressive)
Leave my coat alone!

ELLEN marches over to RUBY 2 and snatches the coat off her.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

How dare you! Stealing my coat! I
need it, it's mine... (calling)
Ruby! Ruby...

RUBY 2 looks distraught.

RUBY 2

Mum...

ELLEN

(aggressive)

I want you to leave! Now! Or I'll
phone... phone...

RUBY 2

Who?

ELLEN doesn't know who. The train of thought completely disappears.

In a childish strop, ELLEN leaves RUBY 2 standing in the hallway and she tries to escape back through the living room and into the garden.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

ELLEN struggles to open the patio door, but once she eventually does she runs into the garden and starts looking for an immediate escape - she is now dressed in a shabby looking cardigan and dressing gown. Her face has noticeably aged, and her hair is unkept.

ELLEN searches around the garden, but there is nowhere to go.

CARER

Mrs Bridge, can you come back
inside please? Your dinner is going
cold.

ELLEN slowly turns around and sees a strange woman standing inside her house.

ELLEN is almost frozen with fear. The CARER walks out into the garden and gestures for ELLEN to follow her inside.

ELLEN is now barely able to walk, and the CARER knows to take her time, and almost carries her back into the house.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The CARER sits ELLEN down at the table where there is bowl of soup waiting for her.

ELLEN looks down at the bowl, but doesn't know what to do. She doesn't remember how to use the utensil either.

She looks up and sees a vase of dead flowers at the end of the table.

THE END.