

SCRIPT TITLE

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INT. ELEANOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A hand reaches out to tap on a chipped wall.

ELEANOR (19) sits cross-legged on a twin bed, looking eagerly to her door. Her room is cramped and aged. The lights are off.

The door creaks open. MOTHER (20) stands in the doorway holding a glass of water, light seeping in from the kitchen. Shadows obscure her face.

MOTHER

Can't sleep?

Eleanor hangs her head. Mother takes a seat on the bed and hands her the glass.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(softly)

Drink.

Eleanor cups the glass with both hands and takes tiny sips. Mother pets her head.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

What did you see tonight?

ELEANOR

Grandmother.

Eleanor points behind the door.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

She was just staring at me.

Slowly, Mother stands and walks to the corner. She feigns inspection.

MOTHER

Well, I don't see her here anywhere. Maybe she left.

(pause)

You miss her, don't you?

Eleanor looks down. Mother walks over, takes the glass, and kisses her on the forehead.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Try and get some sleep, sweetie.

(pause)

I love you.

ELEANOR  
Love you too.

Mother heads out, gently closing the door behind her. Eleanor turns her head back to the corner.

The silhouette of an old lady faces her.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEANOR'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eleanor's eyes flutter open. She yawns and rubs her face, then freezes-- a beam of light on her blanket catches her eye.

She sits up and leans forward. Her hand swipes at the beam, trying to catch it.

Eleanor stands up and walks towards the source of light. On the floor beside the wall is a small chunk of wood.

Tentatively, she picks it up. Above her is a boarded-up window. The sliver of light escapes through one crack.

MOTHER (O.S.)  
Eleanor! 8:15! Breakfast!

Eleanor freezes. She hastily shoves the wood chip into the crack.

ELEANOR  
Coming!

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Eleanor walks into a lamp-lit kitchen. FATHER (20) sits at the kitchen table flipping through a aged newspaper. Mother is frying eggs.

MOTHER  
Did you make your bed, sweetheart?

ELEANOR  
I'll make it after breakfast.

FATHER  
Now, where have I heard that before?

MOTHER  
Billy, breakfast! It's 8:16!

Billy runs in, plowing the floor with a giant toy truck.

ELEANOR  
Eggs again?

Dad spreads out his newspaper. Billy pushes the truck in circles around them as they talk.

FATHER  
Quit it with that racket, Billy,  
I'm trying to read here.

MOTHER  
You should eat, honey. You don't  
wanna be late for work-- Billy, sit  
down!

Father looks over at a DIGITAL CLOCK in the corner.

BILLY  
I'm a truck!

MOTHER  
I didn't realize trucks were  
wearing sneakers these days.

All four hold for a moment after the joke, then resume movement.

Eleanor stares at the boarded up window in the kitchen.

FATHER  
Yeah, I should head out early.  
Traffic's gonna be terrible.

ELEANOR  
You'll still stay for *Family Now!*,  
right?

FATHER  
Of course.

MOTHER  
Of course he is.

Mom puts the eggs on the table.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Billy did you feed Cooper?

Billy bumps into Eleanor's chair as he stands up. She rolls her eyes.

BILLY  
Shoot I forgot. I'll be right back!

MOTHER

No. Eat first. I don't want your eggs getting cold.

Billy sits next to Eleanor.

BILLY

We're having eggs again?

FATHER

Enough about the eggs!

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY

The four characters sit, transfixed by a TV screen. Their faces are illuminated by flickering blue light.

TV DAUGHTER (O.S.)

Dad! It's, like, my room! You could've at least knocked.

TV FATHER (O.S.)

Oh it's your room!? I didn't realize you were paying the bills! I didn't realize you built those walls!

TV DAUGHTER (O.S.)

You didn't build those walls either. A contractor did.

Laugh track.

TV FATHER (O.S.)

But I'll tear 'em down if I ever see that boy in here again!

TV SON (O.S.)

Ew, gross! Were they kissing in there?

TV FATHER (O.S.)

Son, I *wish* they were just kissing.

There's an "oooooooooh" from the studio audience.

TV DAUGHTER (O.S.)

Oh my god. I can't live in this house anymore. I'm leaving.

TV FATHER (O.S.)

Great. Let's go. I'll drive you. Honey where are the keys?

TV MOTHER (O.S.)  
 Alright, that's enough! Both of you  
 stop fighting. George, that was  
 Cindy's room and you should've  
 given her privacy.

TV FATHER (O.S.)  
 But--

TV MOTHER (O.S.)  
 Cindy, you should've respected your  
 father's rules.

TV DAUGHTER (O.S.)  
 But--

TV MOTHER (O.S.)  
 And Jimmy, I thought I told you to  
 stop eating those brownies.

TV SON (O.S.)  
 (mouth full)  
 Mom, I only had seven!

TV MOTHER (O.S.)  
 We are family. And family knows no  
 bounds. You wanna know why? Because  
 we have each other's backs, no  
 matter what.

Sentimental music plays.

TV DAUGHTER (O.S.)  
 Oh... come here, dad.

Cue studio audience: "Awwwwwwwww."

TV SON (O.S.)  
 Hey, I want a hug too!

TV DAD (O.S.)  
 I love you, Cindy. Let's never  
 fight over this stupid boy stuff  
 again.

The door creaks open.

TV BOYFRIEND (O.S.)  
 Uh, I think I left my guitar here.

TV FATHER (O.S.)  
 Out!!

Sitcom applause. Cheesy end credit music. The actual family claps along, their eyes glued to the screen.

MOTHER  
It's 8:55, dear.

FATHER  
Yep. Time to head to work.

Father stands and grabs his briefcase. Eleanor stands as well.

ELEANOR  
Can I spend some time in my room?

Mother looks at her inquisitively.

MOTHER  
You're excused.

Father steps into the closet.

INT. CLOSET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Father closes the door behind him. The space is bare, save for some child's artwork taped on the walls. A small chair and table take up the floorspace.

Father sits and picks up a handheld calculator. He punches in a few equations and records them on a legal pad.

INT. ELEANOR'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eleanor sits cross-legged on her bed. She lazily flips through a 90s teen gossip magazine. It is worn and well-read.

Her eyes drift back to the boarded window.

Aged hands reach for Eleanor's hair. They tug on it. She jumps--

BILLY (O.S.)  
Ellie! Ellie!

Billy's standing in Eleanor's doorway.

ELEANOR  
Hey! Can you knock?

Billy jumps onto Eleanor's bed and spreads his body out.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
 What are you doing? What did I tell  
 you about jumping on my bed?

MOTHER (O.S.)  
 (from a distance)  
 No fighting.

BILLY  
 I'm bored.

ELEANOR  
 I was--

BILLY  
 Can you play with me? Please?  
 Please, Ellie? Please please  
 please?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mom presses an iron into a stack of clothes. Her wrist  
 tenses.

Her eyes are staring straight ahead at the clock.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Eleanor and Billy sit huddled around a faded *Mystery Date*  
 board. Billy is zooming his truck back and forth with one  
 hand.

BILLY  
 --And I really want to teach him  
 how to fetch, but every time I  
 throw something for him to fetch he  
 just sits there. Can you help me  
 next time? To teach him to fetch?

ELEANOR  
 You keep banging the truck into the  
 table. It's shaking the board.

BILLY  
 Next, I'm gonna teach him to roll  
 over.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

Father rubs his eyes. He slowly types a few more numbers into  
 the calculator. His legal pad is full of notes.

There's a soft knock on the door. Mother pokes her head in.

MOTHER  
It's 6pm, dear.

Father shoots up, stretches, and lets out a loud moan.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Father, Eleanor and Billy sit around the table. Billy is quietly sniffing. Mother places a bowl of eggs down and takes a seat.

ELEANOR  
Why are we having eggs again?

MOTHER  
Billy, why are you crying?

BILLY  
My truck broke.

Billy wipes away a tear and places his truck on the table. It's missing a wheel.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
I was pushing it into the wall  
really gently and the wheel fell  
off.

ELEANOR  
Do we not have any other food?

FATHER  
Billy, how many times has your  
mother told you not to run your  
truck into the wall?

BILLY  
I'm sorry. Please don't be mad.

FATHER  
Is there another dent in the wall?

BILLY  
No!  
(pause)  
Not a huge dent, no.

Father stands up abruptly.

FATHER  
How many times have I told you not  
to--

MOTHER  
Honey, honey please. It was an  
accident.

Mother places an arm on Father.

FATHER  
But he-- I just--

Father sighs. He sits back down.

MOTHER  
I know you're both upset. But we  
can't forget that we are family.  
And family knows no bounds.

Mother scans the table.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
*You wanna know why?*

FATHER  
Because we have each other's  
backs, no matter what.

BROTHER  
Because we have each other's  
backs, no matter what.

MOTHER  
No matter what.

Father glances at Eleanor. She didn't say it along.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Is everyone ready?

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Mother places a needle on a record.

Slowly, she dances her way to the center of the room, where the other three are awkwardly grooving to the rhythm. Nobody is dancing in time with the other. It's an uncomfortable display.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The room is empty. The lights are off.

INT. MOTHER & FATHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mother and Father lie in separate twin beds. Father's eyes are closed; Mother is wide awake.

MOTHER

Dearest?

Father grumbles.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Do you know when Grandmother's bringing more food?

Silence.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Dear?

FATHER

I have work tomorrow. I'd like to get some sleep.

(pause)

I'm sure she'll come tomorrow. She's been late before.

MOTHER

Never this late.

The two stare at each other.

FATHER

Can I ask you something?

(pause)

What do you think Cindy and her boyfriend were doing that was worse than kissing?

MOTHER

I think they were kissing naked.

Father nods his head slowly.

FATHER

Should... I be kissing you naked?

MOTHER

No.

Mother rolls over.

INT. ELEANOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Eleanor's ear is pressed up against her wall. She stares at the ground, uncomfortable. She looks up.

Grandma is standing in the hallway, the shadows distorting her face.

Eleanor shakes her head a little. She walks to the door and shuts it.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

INSERT: Clock reads 8:04 am.

Mother wipes down the faucet with a dishrag hurriedly. A door opens in the distance.

MOTHER  
Good morning, dear.

She turns around and freezes.

Eleanor's standing across from her.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Honey, it's 8:04. You shouldn't be up yet.

ELEANOR  
How many eggs do we have left?

This catches Mother off-guard. She inhales.

MOTHER  
We have thirteen. I just counted.

ELEANOR  
Please be honest.

Mother shifts her stance.

MOTHER  
You don't have to worry about food. That's not your job. You should be in bed.

ELEANOR  
(quietly)  
Lucy.

Father pushes his way out of his bedroom, yawning loudly.

FATHER  
Ellie-belly, what are you doing out  
of your room already?

Slowly, Eleanor turns from Mother's gaze to Father.

ELEANOR  
Dad, I think we need to have a  
serious conversation about eggs.

FATHER  
Serious conversations are about  
grownups, kiddo.

Father laughs.

FATHER (CONT'D)  
Shouldn't you be worried about  
boys?

ELEANOR  
When's the last time you saw  
Grandmother?

FATHER  
Where's Billy?  
(shouting)  
Billy! Come feed the dog!

MOTHER  
(quietly)  
Billy's still in bed. It's 8:07.

ELEANOR  
She's supposed to bring food every  
Saturday. It's Tuesday now.

FATHER  
Ellie--

ELEANOR  
It doesn't work if she doesn't  
bring food. We can't-- we need to  
get food.

FATHER  
(sternly)  
We have food. She'll come back. She  
always has.

ELEANOR  
What if this time she doesn't? How  
long are we going to wait?

Father stares daggers into Eleanor.

FATHER  
You're too young to understand.

Eleanor glances at Mother.

She dashes for the fridge and throws open the door. It's  
completely empty.

FATHER (CONT'D)  
Hey!

Father jumps up and slams the door shut. He pushes Eleanor  
out of the way. Her arm knocks the clock off the counter.

It shatters on the floor. Nobody moves.

BILLY (O.S.)  
What's going on?

Billy is standing in his doorway.

MOTHER  
(to Father)  
Dear, what do we do?

ELEANOR  
Dad. Look at us.

Father sputters for a moment. He shakes his head and grabs  
his paper off the counter.

FATHER  
I can't deal with this right now. I  
have work to do.

Father storms into the closet.

Eleanor and Billy turn to Mother.

MOTHER  
Go play. I'll fix the clock.

Eleanor and Mother lock eyes. Mother nods.

INT. MOTHER & FATHER'S BEDROOM - ????

Mother rests her head against the door.

She sits on the floor beside her bed, clock in hand. She runs her fingers over the screen; it's completely shattered.

She places the clock on the floor and rubs her head. With one hand, she pulls open the drawer next to her.

Inside are several large candy bars.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - ????

Billy pets and scratches COOPER-- an old roller skate covered in a layer of chopped human hair. A severed braid has been fashioned into a dog tail. Ellie sits on the couch.

Her eyes are glued on the staircase leading upstairs.

BILLY

(to Cooper)

Do you want a treat? Yes, you do!

Yes, you *do* want a treat.

(to Eleanor)

Ellie, do you wanna play fetch with Cooper?

ELEANOR

Not right now.

(pause)

Do you think she would hear us if we went upstairs?

Billy's taken aback.

BILLY

Why would we do that?

ELEANOR

I was just thinking-- one of us could go up at a time each night. Like in shifts. That way we can sneak meals and check to see if the sun or the moon is out. And maybe-- maybe if we're able to find another clock--

BILLY

Mom will fix the clock. We'll be fine. We've... we've never not been fine.

ELEANOR

Billy. I'm scared. Are you not scared?

This sits for a moment. Billy briefly searches for a response-- a human response-- but he recomposes.

BILLY

Look at that. My big sister is a bigger scaredy-cat than I am!

Billy laughs coldly.

INT. CLOSET - ????

Father types away on his calculator. His rhythm is slower, more erratic than yesterday.

He steals a glance at a SHOEBOX on the floor in the corner.

He reaches for the box and opens it. Inside is a stack of Polaroids, with the topmost featuring a young girl holding hands with Grandmother.

Father smiles.

MOTHER (O.S.)

(trembling slightly)

Kids! Dinner!

Father turns to the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ???? (CONTINUOUS)

Father passes through the living room. Eleanor and Billy peer over the edge of the couch, looking at Mother.

INT. KITCHEN - ???? (CONTINUOUS)

Mother lays chocolate bars on the kitchen table.

She looks up at father, and feigns a smile.

MOTHER

Hello dear.

FATHER

Put those back.

BILLY

Where'd you get chocolate from?

MOTHER

Your father and I have been saving these for a special occasion, and we'd figured today would be a good time.

ELEANOR

No but where did you get it from? Grandmother hasn't given us chocolate in months.

FATHER

That's because it was *for you*. It was for me.

(to Mother)

Please put that back.

MOTHER

Families should share.

ELEANOR

You asshole.

BILLY

Don't say that!

ELEANOR

That's why you're not worried, you knew you would be fine! How much candy do you have in your room? A month's worth? How long were you planning to let us starve?

MOTHER

I wasn't plan--

FATHER

Candy is for parents. That's final--

ELEANOR

You're not my parents!

Everyone freezes.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

You're not my parents!

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

You're not.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

And she's not our grandmother.

BILLY

When was she giving you candy bars?

FATHER

That's enough. Eleanor go to your room.

MOTHER

Well if no-one's gonna eat I'll just go put on the music.

ELEANOR

You know I might be older than you right.

Needle drops on a record.

FATHER

You're looking at a hefty timeout right now young lady. Go to your room.

ELEANOR

One of the boards broke in my room. I can see outside now. How long's it been since you've seen outside?

Mom looks over from the record player.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I can see a tree and a little patch of grass. I think it's a backyard. And in the morning at a certain time the sun shines into my room.

(to Billy)

Christina I'm serious go look.

Billy looks frantically at Eleanor, then the room, then at Father.

FATHER

Son she's lying to you.

ELEANOR

There are dogs out there. Real dogs. He just wants to keep us down here.

Father storms toward her.

FATHER

I will bolt that door shut.

BILLY

Dad!

FATHER

There are no dogs out there!

Eleanor pushes dad into the cabinets. The room starts to shake.

ELEANOR

Stay away from me!

Glass shatters. Eleanor glances at her hands. Mother falls to the ground. Billy looks up from the floor.

BILLY

Fuck!

The shaking is immense. Eleanor looks at father. He hides his head, curled up in a ball.

Suddenly, the shaking stops.

FATHER

I hit my head!

Everyone glances around to survey the damage.

MOTHER

Is everyone alright?

FATHER

(sniffling)

I hit my head it really hurts!

Billy crawls over to him and grabs his head. Father winces.

BILLY

Where does it hurt?

FATHER

I don't know everywhere!

Billy looks to mother.

BILLY

Do we have any ice?

Mother's eyes dart to Eleanor. The two stare at each other for a moment.

INT. ELEANOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT? ????