

The Other Side of Night

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INT. FAMILY HOME - DUSK

We are in the throes of an ancient nightly ritual. Making dinner.

The rangehood WHIRLS, boiling water POPS and SPLATTERS. The NIGHTLY NEWS and a BLUES RECORD play in the other room, competing for volume supremacy in the bustling home. Well worn winter coats hang on the backs of chairs. Small pairs of boots lay viciously abandoned at the front door.

LAURA MADDEN, mid 30s, pulls pieces of boiling pasta from a pot on the stove. JOSHUA BROWN, mid 30s, looks on disapprovingly as his wife splashes pasta water on the clean kitchen bench.

Laura puts the pasta in her mouth. She puffs out air and chews with her mouth open.

LAURA

It's hot.

JOSHUA

I know.

Laura continues her open mouth chewing.

LAURA

It's not done yet. Few more minutes.

JOSHUA

I know.

Laura finishes chewing.

LAURA

Well why do you need me around if you already know everything?

JOSHUA

I don't need you around when I'm cooking. In fact, this would all go a lot smoother if you got your two left feet and two left hands, and shuffled off to some other part of the house.

They share a smile. This conversation is part of the nightly ritual. Laura puts her arms on Joshua's shoulders.

LAURA

But the kitchen is the only place I'm safe from the little beasts that live here.

JOSHUA
 You gave birth to those little
 beasts, you know.

LAURA
 That is a ludicrous accusation, sir!

Joshua laughs.

LAURA (cont'd)
 You'll be hearing from my attorney.

Joshua shuts her up with a kiss. They get back to their
 nightly dinner ritual.

We hear THUNDEROUS STOMPING from upstairs. The little beasts
 are running wild.

LAURA (cont'd)
 (yelling up)
 Stop running!

We hear the VOICES of Laura and Joshua's three children.
 LEO, 5, EVIE, 7, ANNA, 9.

EVIE (O.S.)
 It wasn't me!

ANNA (O.S.)
 It was Leo!

LEO (O.S.)
 Sorry!

Laura looks warm and flush. She casually flicks the collar
 of her shirt up and down to create a light breeze.

The BLUES RECORD ends and starts CRACKLING. A MURMUR from
 the NIGHTLY NEWS can be heard: "ECLIPSE"... "ONCE IN A
 LIFETIME"...

Joshua freezes. He begins patting his pockets. He paces
 around the kitchen frantically.

JOSHUA
 Where's your phone?

LAURA
 I don't know.

JOSHUA
 Whose phone is closer? I need to
 check something.

Joshua begins patting down the pockets of the coats hanging
 near by.

LAURA

What is it?

He finds a phone and takes it out. He begins furiously typing, then scrolling.

LAURA (cont'd)

Hello? What is it?

Through the windows, the dusk sun begins getting dimmer.

JOSHUA

There's a lunar eclipse tonight.

Laura is confused. She thoughtlessly flicks her shirt up and down to create a cool breeze.

JOSHUA (cont'd)

(gesturing to her)

And you're sweating bullets.

Laura looks down, as if she has caught herself in a scandalous act. She is warm. She is sweating. She is no longer confused. She is terrified.

The sweat begins to bead on her face and show through her clothing.

LAURA

This has never happened before. This can't be happening.

JOSHUA

We couldn't have known.

Laura runs her hands through her hair and breathes heavily. Joshua notices blood on her teeth.

Laura notices Joshua noticing. She puts a finger to her tooth and pulls it away. She looks at the little bloody spot.

LAURA

(anguished)

The kids.

Joshua freezes. They stare at each other. The weight of the knowledge of what they're about to experience is clear on their faces.

Joshua bolts. He throws himself across the room and around the corner so quickly he is almost parallel to the floor. He launches upstairs to save his children from their mother.