

ROSS

I thought you were going grocery shopping? They're going to be here in a few hours.

Mary with no reply. Ross annoyed at her lack of response, heads back up the basement stairs.

97 INT. MILNER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

97

SLOWLY MOVING CLOSER TO A FRAMED PHOTO ON A WALL: A MAN WITH SLICKED BACK HAIR WEARING A PAPER MACHE MASKED, draped in a white sheet, standing in a barren open field. It's unsettling.

A WOMAN GUEST admires the LINE OF PHOTOS (*the rest we don't see*) on the wall. HER HUSBAND, DAMON, puts his arm around her waist. This is his wife, EFFIE.

EFFIE

They're amazing, they really are.

98 INT. MILNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

98

Mary sets the table for guests. She stops and subtly cracks her neck and shoulders -- an odd, but common habit for her.

ROSS (O.C.)

Mary's been taking pictures since she was a kid.

EFFIE (O.C.)

They're all so... sad.

Mary catches this and stops for a moment, then continues.

A DOORBELL RINGS. FRIENDLY EXCHANGES HEARD BETWEEN ROSS AND NEW GUESTS HEARD.

Start

INT. MILNER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

99

The dinner guests seated, dinner in progress. CONVERSING. Mary, Ross, Damon and Effie are joined here by KIRK and HARLEY, husband and wife.

Mary sits still, observing them as they laugh and talk. Everything EERILY MUFFLED/SILENT as they converse. Shared laughter. Ross notices Mary 'drifting'. He reassuringly puts his hand on hers. SOUND GOES BACK TO NORMAL.

EFFIE

Harley, both kids in college?

HARLEY
Dartmouth and Seton Hall.

DAMON
Could they pick schools further
away?

KIRK
Oh, it's killing her.

HARLEY
It really is. I don't care how old
they are, I need that mommy fix.

EFFIE
I hear you.
(to Ross/Mary)
Oh, how are things going with
everything? Any updates?
(to Harley/Kirk)
Ross and Mary are trying to adopt.

The comment blurted causes Ross and Damon to go quiet. It also draws Mary's attention. Mary looks to Ross, betrayed. Ross attempts to address it.

ROSS
We're in the process.

HARLEY
I think it's wonderful.

Kirk smiles and nods, everyone can see Mary's reaction and Kirk looks to change the subject.

KIRK
I suppose we shouldn't talk
business at dinner, but--

MARY
(to Harley)
--What's wonderful about it?

Ross again places his hand on Mary's, but she pulls her hand away.

HARLEY
I just meant you'll make lovely
parents.

A beat.

MARY
You don't know me.

The room becomes increasingly uncomfortable, tense.

ROSS

Mary...

KIRK

I don't think she meant anything by it.

~~EFFIE~~

~~It's my fault. I shouldn't have said anything.~~

~~ROSS~~

~~It's no one's fault. It's not a big deal, really.~~

~~MARY~~

~~I want to know why it's wonderful?~~

~~ROSS~~

~~Mary, it's fine...~~

Mary concentrates on Harley.

MARY

This is the first time we've met, the first time you've been to our home. How would you know what kind of parents we'd be?

KIRK

I'm sorry, but I think maybe you just misunderstood what she--

HARLEY

--No, it's fine. I was being polite. But you're right, Mary. I don't know a damn thing about you.

End

The answer satisfies Mary. She picks at her dinner. The others sit in awkward silence, the evening ruined.

100

OMITTED

100**101**

INT. MILNER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

101

Ross heard letting guests out. Eventually he enters to Mary still seated at the table.

MARY

I'm sorry.

Ross perturbed, but doesn't say what he wants to.