

STAY THE NIGHT

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Episode 3

EXT. NEWMAN HOUSE - SUNSET

NARRATOR

The blood orange sun sets behind
the Newman house.

Birds chirp in the trees surrounding the house.

INT. FORMAL DINING ROOM - NIGHT

NARRATOR

The dinner guests sit around the
dinning room table. Dennis is at
the head of the table. Food is
displayed on tarnished silver
serving platters. Everyone joins
hands. Dennis joins hands with Ava
on one side. Ben reaches out to
join hands with Todd. Todd folds
his arms and Ben brings his hand
back. Dennis takes the lead bowing
his head. Everyone follows except
Ava and Todd.

DENNIS

May this food so fresh and
fragrant, call forth reverence for
you in our souls. As you give this
strength to our perishable limbs,
So give us grace for our immortal
lives. Amen.

TABLE

Amen.

AVA

(A little late very quiet)
Amen.

NARRATOR

Everyone opens their eyes and stops
holding hands. They start serving
food to each other.

Plates clink.

REGINA

Beautiful, Dennis. Really. We must
start saying grace more often.
Right honey?

NARRATOR

Richard grunts, Regina reaches for the corn casserole. Regina slops corn casserole onto Todd's plate. Martha gets up and starts passing around the biscuits.

TODD

Mom, is this vegan?

REGINA

Um, Martha? Is there any uh, butter in your corn? Todd is vegan.

NARRATOR

Martha is topping off Ben's sweet ice tea. Ava is serving herself and Ben meatloaf.

MARTHA

Veg-and? What's that?

NARRATOR

Richard already has a mouth full of meatloaf. He talks with his mouth open.

RICHARD

Todd won't eat animal products, He's done all kinds of research on it.

NARRATOR

Regina is putting salad on his plate.

REGINA

He is vegan for ethical reasons, and he has a gluten sensitivity. Isn't that right Todd?

TODD

Yeah, whatever.

NARRATOR

Martha walks to her seat, past Todd.

MARTHA

That must be why he has such beautiful hair.

NARRATOR

She almost touches his head. Dennis is pouring gravy on his mashed potatoes.

DENNIS

Does he play any sports?

NARRATOR

Richard finishes chewing and swallows his meatloaf.

RICHARD

I tried to get him signed up for soccer, but he wasn't interested.

NARRATOR

Ben cuts into his meatloaf, taking a bite.

BEN

Mrs. Newman, the meatloaf is delicious. Is it um, pork, or chicken?

NARRATOR

Ava pokes at her plate, trying to hide a look of disgust.

MARTHA

Oh thank ya Ben. It's an old family recipe. Top secret.

NARRATOR

Ava starts buttering a biscuit.

DENNIS

Martha here is an excellent cook. That's why I married her.

NARRATOR

Dennis takes another scoop of corn casserole. Ava's about to take a bite of food, and she pauses putting her fork down.

AVA

You married Martha because of the way she cooks?

DENNIS

Not just the way she cooks. She's also excellent at sewing, and laundry.

NARRATOR

Dennis takes a bite of corn
casserole. Ava glares for a second
and continues eating.

RICHARD

I like my women like I like my
beer. Domestic.

NARRATOR

Richard starts laughing. Ava
slouches in her chair. Regina
doesn't react.

MARTHA

We share similar values, dear.
Dennis and I are very traditional.

NARRATOR

Martha takes a sip of tea.

DENNIS

She knows her place and I know
mine. I've always been out workin',
and Martha knows when I come home,
dinner must be on the table. It's
the key to a successful marriage.
Everyone knowing their place.

NARRATOR

Dennis starts eating his mashed
potatoes. Ava gives Ben a small
look.

BEN

What do you do for a living?

DENNIS

Oh, I'm retired now.

MARTHA

He's a doctor.

DENNIS

A surgeon.

MARTHA

A top surgeon.

DENNIS

Well, she's just exaggerating.

REGINA

I'm also a doctor.

NARRATOR

Regina takes a sip of her sweet tea. Martha claps her hands together.

MARTHA

A doctor! Oh my. How fascinating two doctors at the table. What kind of medicine do you practice?

REGINA

Well I'm not a medicine doctor. I have a PHD in Computer Science.

NARRATOR

Martha's face wrinkles in confusion.

MARTHA

I'm not sure I've ever heard of such a thing. Dennis have you heard of a Computer doctor?

DENNIS

Things ain't as simple as they used to be Martha.

(To Richard)

No sports for your boy? A little sun never hurt no body.

NARRATOR

Dennis takes a big bite of food.

MARTHA

My Daddy taught me that. Sun is good for a son. Never used sun screen a day in my life.

NARRATOR

Martha takes a bite. Richard points at Todd with a wad of meatloaf on his fork.

RICHARD

Don't let Todd fool you. He's very accomplished for such a young man.

NARRATOR

Todd slouches down.

TODD

Dad stop.

NARRATOR

Todd pushes his food around on his plate.

RICHARD

He is! You know he started a club in school. Regina and I, we prayed, and prayed for a boy. Happiest day of my life when Todd was born.

NARRATOR

He cuts into his meatloaf. Ava can't take it anymore.

AVA

Why did you want a boy?

RICHARD

What do you mean?

AVA

I mean instead of girl? Why did you want a boy?

NARRATOR

Regina adjusts the napkin on Todd's lap as he takes a bite of corn casserole.

REGINA

I would have been happy with either, as long as the baby was healthy.

NARRATOR

Richard has a mouth full of meatloaf.

RICHARD

I wanted to carry on the family name.

NARRATOR

Todd lets a chunk of it slop off the fork onto the plate.

TODD

I think there's butter in the corn.

NARRATOR

Ava tightens her grip around her fork.

AVA

A girl can continue the family name.

NARRATOR

Richard picks up his glass of tea.

RICHARD

Such a smart kid this one. He won the science fair two years in a row.

MARTHA

Why, how impressive.

TODD

I was like six.

MARTHA

Having a boy just brings you so much happiness. Doesn't it Dennis?

NARRATOR

She puts a hand on her chest.

DENNIS

Changed my life.

MARTHA

Our boy Wyatt. He just means everything to us.

NARRATOR

Martha starts to tear up.

MARTHA

He's just such a special boy. In high school he was the tallest kid in class. Quarter back. Such a strapping young man. Such a bright future.

NARRATOR

Dennis gets up and puts his hand on Martha's shoulder while she wipes away tears.

DENNIS

Now Martha, he'll be all better real soon.

(To the guests)

Wyatt is just a little sick. Martha gets emotional sometimes. You know how women can be.

RICHARD
So emotional.

NARRATOR
Martha dabs a tear from the corner
of her eye.

MARTHA
I do hope y'all get to meet Wyatt.

BEN
Maybe he can join us for breakfast.

NARRATOR
Ava gives Ben a quick dirty look.

AVA
There's a chance we could miss
breakfast. We're behind on our road
trip.

BEN
We're not behind, we're actually
ahead.

NARRATOR
Ava kicks him under the table.

BEN
I mean, we're ahead by some. Well
yeah. We may need to leave before
breakfast tomorrow. We'll see how
we feel in the morning.

MARTHA
It sure is a shame you don't have
any kids. Especially since Ava here
is so beautiful.

BEN
Yes, um, we've thought it. Of
course.

NARRATOR
Richard points at Ben and Ava with
another pieces of meatloaf at the
end of his fork.

RICHARD
How long have you two been married?

NARRATOR

Richard pops the meatloaf in his mouth. Ava and Ben look at each other.

BEN

Three years?

NARRATOR

Martha pours more sweet tea in Dennis' glass.

MARTHA

And you don't have any kids? What a shame.

RICHARD

You guys better get on it. What are you two, thirty six?

NARRATOR

Ben shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

BEN

We're, a little younger than that.

NARRATOR

Richard cuts into his meatloaf. Ava is fighting back tears.

RICHARD

They say, women shouldn't get pregnant after 35, but I think it's 30. Fertility starts to decline then. You're not a real woman, until you've had a child.

AVA

I can't do this. I have to go.

NARRATOR

Ava stands up. She puts her napkin down on the table and walks out of the room.

BEN

I'm sorry. Um. Mrs. Newman, the food is lovely. Please, excuse us.

NARRATOR

Ben gets up and Rachel's cell phone falls from his pocket.

DENNIS

(In anger.)

Where did you get that?

BEN

Oh, sorry, it was left in our room.

I brought it down to give to you.

NARRATOR

Ben picks up the phone and hands it to Dennis. Dennis exchanges an uneasy look with Martha.

DENNIS

Ya best git after your wife.