

Motherly love

By

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INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is small and old, with overused furniture. JANE is a pale, sickly woman in her early thirties. She is wearing an old and worn sweater and her breath is fogging. She is using a pair of crooked crutches to stand in front of the rusty and battered refrigerator.

Jane opens the freezer. Its completely empty, except for a see-through bag with a small quantity of frozen minced meat, no more than 200 grams. Jane takes it and closes the door.

She approaches an old microwave oven. She's a bit clumsy with the crutches, hasn't been using them for long. The glass on the oven's door is cracked and barely holding. Jane puts the meat inside and activates the "Thaw" setting.

A very thin 7 year old boy, BILLY, enters the kitchen. He is wearing a wool sweater a couple of sizes too large.

BILLY

Mom! When will we eat? I 'm hungry!

JANE

Five minutes. Come set the table.

Billy opens a cupboard, takes out a couple of mismatching plates, puts them on the table, one for each of them.

JANE

Just for you, hun. I 'll eat later.

Jane takes one of the plates. As she approaches the cupboard, her left crutch slips and she stumbles, dropping the plate, which shatters on the floor. Intense pain shoots across her face, she shuts her eyes and stifles a scream.

BILLY

Mom! Are you okay?!

Jane breathes deeply, regains her composition.

JANE

Don't worry, baby. I 'm fine...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jane is in front of the stove. In a frying pan, some olive oil is being heated, covering just one fifth of the surface. Jane covers the rest of the stove with old newspapers.

Jane has shaped the minced meat in meatballs, starts frying them. Oil splashes on the newspapers. The front page titles read: "Greece defaults", "Farewell Euro", "Record unemployment", "Famine ravages Greece".

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jane is cutting up Billy's meatballs.

BILLY

Mom, I know why you 're not eating.

Jane looks at him inquisitively. Billy points on the wall, at the calendar reading "February 14th".

BILLY

Dad will return from his trip and take you to dinner for Valentine's day. Isn't he?

Jane gives him a bitter smile.

JANE

That's right, my love. Lunch is ready. Will you get some lemon?

Billy gets up, opens the fridge. The only thing inside is half a used lemon in a small bowl. Billy takes it, returns to the table. Something near the floor catches his eye.

BILLY

Mom! Your leg! It's bleeding!

Jane looks at her left leg, surgically severed just above the ankle. A growing red spot stains the yellowish gauze.

JANE

Don't worry, honey. I must have pulled a stitch, when I stumbled.

BILLY

Will you be alright?

Jane cuts the last of the meatballs. Inside she finds a small part of a toe, with the toenail still attached. She removes it, puts it in a napkin and throws it in the trash.

JANE

Yes, Billy. We 'll both be alright.

She serves Billy and kisses him on the top of his head. He smiles and starts eating.