

CRACK ONE EGG

Written by

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FADE IN:

1

EXT. SUPERMARKET - PARKING LOT - DAY

1

A woman wearing her wedding ring, HELEN LANDRY (33), is pushing a FAULTY SHOPPING CART. One of the wheels is wobbly. Annoyingly wobbly. She wears baby blue high heels and a daisy-patterned sheath dress.

She is not in a good mood, and has dark bags under her eyes.

She is determined to make that cart work.

A warm and soothing masculine voice follows Helen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ah, welcome. Today, we'll be baking a simple cake. Firstly, let's buy the ingredients.

It is a very sunny summer day. She makes her way through the automatic sliding doors. A CHIME.

The doors close behind her, revealing:

SUPER: **CRACK ONE EGG**

2

INT. SUPERMARKET - PRODUCE AISLE - DAY

2

Helen's cart already has *the following*:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We'll need vanilla extract, sugar, all-purpose flour, milk, a stick of butter, and--

She is browsing the produce aisle. Her cart gets STRUCK by another.

LEDA (30) is pushing the other cart. She wears white flats and a beige pantsuit. She has a bubbly personality. Helen turns to her.

LEDA

Oh, I'm sorry.

(looks at Helen)

Helen? Hi! How've you been holding up?

Helen smiles sheepishly, and Leda tries to hug her. Both carts are in the way, so it is just an awkward attempt. Instead, Leda snoops her neighbor's cart.

LEDA (CONT'D)  
What have you got there?

HELEN  
(alert)  
Ah, yes.  
(rushed)  
I- I mean, Paris and I are on  
dessert duty, so...

LEDA  
(excited)  
Oh, right! The neighborhood party.  
It'll be great to have you guys  
back.  
(savvily)  
But you know what? Save yourself  
the haste. They're just kids, they  
won't notice the difference between  
your homemade cake and a store-  
bought pie.

Helen brushes her off.

HELEN  
Oh, thank you, but I'm up for the  
challenge.

She takes a carton of eggs.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Eggs.

Puts it in the cart.

3 EXT./INT. LANDRY HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY

3

The wooden door is unlocked, and Helen pushes against it with her arm to enter her house. Her hands are busy carrying the groceries and keys. She leaves the bags on the floor.

The DOOR CLOSES behind her.

4 INT. LANDRY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

4

The kitchen has a curtained window; sunlight dims through it. Helen puts on a white apron, dusts it off and fixes her hair. She looks at her reflection on the door of her wall-glass oven. She smiles in an almost exaggerated way.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Get ready, and preheat the oven to  
three-fifty degrees Fahrenheit, or  
a hundred-seventy-five Celsius.

Helen turns on the oven and moves the dials. The light inside  
turns on. A CHIME is heard.

From a cabinet, Helen pulls out a set of bowls, a glass  
measuring cup and a set of measuring spoons.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Now, gather your kitchenware and  
ingredients 'cause this will be  
delicious.

The ingredients are placed on the countertop island next to  
the standing mixer.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
First step.

Helen's blond hair is messy, her forehead is a little red.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Crack.

The silver fridge holds a picture of Helen, a boy (CORY, 6)  
and a man (PARIS, 32).

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
One.

Helen cracks the egg on the side of the bowl.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Egg.

Helen raises the egg open and lets the liquid fall into a  
bowl-- there goes a shell.

We hear an echo of the LAUGHTER OF A BOY.

Helen picks the shell out of the bowl.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Great! Now, the other one.

She cracks the second egg.

CUT TO:

5 INT. LANDRY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 5

On top of the coffee table is a vase with wilted flowers.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Get the mixing bowl and--

The sound of a DOORBELL.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
--don't get distracted.

BACK TO:

6 INT. LANDRY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 6

Helen throws the eggshells into the sink and hurriedly wipes her hands on the apron.

HELEN  
Coming!

7 INT. LANDRY HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY 7

Helen opens the door to her husband, middle school teacher, PARIS LANDRY (36). He wears a basic T-shirt and a plain olive long-sleeve shirt, both sweaty. A black lanyard with an orange awareness ribbon is around his neck. He has a backpack on.

HELEN  
Hi?

PARIS  
(accelerated)  
Hey.

HELEN  
(surprised)  
Why did you ring the doorbell?

PARIS  
(accelerated)  
Well, I saw your car and--  
(looking at Helen)  
--Ooh. I hope the apron means  
dinner's almost ready. What are we  
having tonight?

Paris makes his way in, hugs Helen from a side and shuts the door.

HELEN

I-- um. Remember the party for the neighborhood kids?

He leaves the lanyard and backpack on the floor, takes the coat off and hangs it behind the door.

PARIS

I thought we weren't going to do it anymore. When did we agree to that?

HELEN

I did. Last week.

She turns around going back into the kitchen.

PARIS

(points at the kitchen)  
So this is...?

He follows.

HELEN

Dessert duty, like in the old days.

PARIS

(murmurs)  
"Like the old days".  
(to Helen, sarcastically)  
Like when we used to decide things together? When we talked to each other?

8

INT. LANDRY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

8

Helen stands across the countertop from her husband.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Careful with mismeasurement.

Helen measures 1 1/2 cups of flour.

PARIS

Or like the old days, when--

She adds the flour into a second bowl. Breathes deep.

HELEN

Fine, I don't know what we're having for dinner. I'm making the cake for tomorrow.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Add the dry ingredie--

She scoops two teaspoons of baking powder and--

PARIS  
C'mon, honey, I've been working the  
whole day and--

-- aggressively adds it in with the flour.

HELEN  
And I have not?

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
And mix it.

She is mixing with a whisk and does not look at her husband.  
Paris only manages to follow her hands with his eyes.

PARIS  
Well... yes, but you arrived  
earlier.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Add half a cup of milk.

Helen measures 1 cup of milk.

HELEN  
'Cause I stayed in the office until  
well past midnight last night.

She pours the milk into the mixing bowl.

PARIS  
But you're cooking right now.

Helen measures 1 cup of sugar and incorporates it into the  
wet mix.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Yes, add the melted butter and  
sugar.

With a knife, Helen cuts the block of butter to where the  
wrapper indicates the 1/2 cup measure.

HELEN  
No, *I'm making* the cake for a party  
we--

She scrapes the knife against the bowl. Dropping the butter  
in.

PARIS  
(pointing)  
You.

HELEN  
--I'm helping with.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Mix on high.

She turns the STANDING MIXER on in a high setting and it is loud.

PARIS  
(loudly)  
For you is easy. It's only "baking a cake for the kids", kids I have to put up with EVERY SINGLE DAY.

She turns the MIXER OFF.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Take the eggs and add them slowly.

With her left hand, Helen takes the bowl with the eggs; with the right, she turns the MIXER onto a low setting. She pours them quickly.

HELEN  
(calmly)  
That's not fair.  
(looks at him)  
Try dealing with my job and my responsibilities.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Add a tablespoon of vanilla.

Helen opens the bottle of vanilla extract and adds a SPLASH. She closes it again.

PARIS  
Seriously? Is it that hard for you to do something for US these days?

She turns the mixer off and adjusts the beater's height.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Now, remove the beater.

She takes the flat beater off and starts scraping it with a spatula.

HELEN

These days? These days, I've been doing it all-- always have. The only thing I don't do for you is your fucking job!

Paris breathes deep. He will not lose it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And in the bowl, incorporate the dry ingre--

She finishes it and throws the BEATER INTO THE SINK.

PARIS

Do you know how hard it is to teach middle schoolers? And aside from that. You can't imagine what it's like to stand in front of those kids and their nosy-ass parents.

Helen dumps the dry ingredients into the wet mixture. Her eyes are turning red.

HELEN

Then do it! Quit your job this time.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Fold gently with a spatula.

With the whisk, she beats the ingredients aggressively.

HELEN

'Cause let me remind you, I was the one dealing with the corporate job, our kid, his friends, their parents, the doctors, and YOU.

She is now crying. Her mascara is starting to run down.

PARIS

No, Helen, *that's* not fair. You know I had to work.

Paris is now crying too.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Add the liquid and stir until smooth.

Helen leaves the spatula in the bowl.

HELEN

No. You thought you needed to work.  
You were more afraid of them taking  
your spot than you were of--

She takes the milk gallon and starts pouring and stirring.

PARIS

No, Helen. Don't start.

HELEN

"Don't start" with what?

From a drawer underneath, Helen pulls out a square cake pan.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Endure a little more. We're almost--

PARIS

With making me feel like shit. Like  
I'm the one to blame for  
everything.

Helen pulls the wrapper off what's left of the stick of  
butter. And greases the cake pan.

HELEN

I don't blame you, and that is the  
worst part because I know very well  
that you can't stand having only ME  
in your life.

Paris covers his mouth with one hand. Muffles a sob.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Grease and flour your pan.

She leaves the butter and accidentally pours some sugar into  
the pan, then taps and tilts, creating a shortening.

PARIS

No, Helen, that's not true.

HELEN

I can hear you and I know that you  
loathe me, but I'd always brushed  
it off.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Pour the batter into the cake pan.

She starts pouring, helping herself with the spatula.

HELEN

Do you know why? because I never  
thought I could be more miserable,  
until Cory died.

Paris sniffles.

PARIS

No, Helen! Don't you dare bring  
Cory into this!

She drops the utensils and opens the oven door.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's time to bake the cake.

HELEN

No? No, Helen?! Everything is "No,  
Helen" for you!

(imitating Paris)

No, Helen, that's not true. No,  
Helen, don't go to the party. No,  
Helen, you should make me dinner.

Helen SLAMS the oven door closed.

HELEN (CONT'D)

No, Helen, DON'T TALK ABOUT YOUR  
DEAD SON.

She turns to Paris.

PARIS

(hesitant)

Fuck you, Helen.

Paris starts gathering his belongings from the day: Coat,  
backpack and lanyard.

Helen smiles and sobs into her hands as Paris walks out.

Silence.

The front door SLAMS SHUT.

MATCH CUT TO:

9

INT. LANDRY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

9

It is almost pitch-dark.

The oven lights up, and a CHIME is heard. The cake is ready.

FOOTSTEPS and the CREAKING of a staircase is heard.

Helen enters the room wearing a robe. She turns on dimming lights. You can see from her face that she cried all afternoon. The mascara runs down to her cheeks.

She takes a pair of mitts, opens the oven and takes the cake out. Smoke obscures the light.

She puts the cake on the island countertop in front of a seat. Takes off the mitts, opens a drawer, puts them away and takes out a fork.

She sits in front of the cake. It is ugly: sort of burned but still edible. It is almost flat.

Helen looks down and STABS it with the fork. It has a crust of crystalized sugar at the bottom.

She takes a bite. It is bitter.

Starts CRYING.

Takes another one.

SOBBING.

Again.

And again.

On what feels like forever.

Or until there is no more cake.

10

EXT. NEIGHBOUR'S BACKYARD - DAY

10

It is a sunny summer day. The skies are blue, and the grass is green. Around a DOZEN KIDS are playing, and their PARENTS are nearby, either seated, helping with the grill or running behind them.

A woman is standing on a low-rise deck in front of the sliding glass door; she wears white sneakers, high-waisted jeans, a basic tee and a cardigan. It is Helen WHITMAN. She wears her hair down. She is carrying something.

She holds up a sealed store-bought apple pie. On her fingers, there is nothing. No ring.

A small but sincere smile.

A step forward.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
And that's how you make cake.

FADE TO BLACK.

**AND ENJOY!**