

MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER

by  
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1 INT. SCULLERY KITCHEN, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT 1

AILISH, 9, tubby, in a tight pink ballet tutu, sits in the semi-darkness staring at a glass of milk.

We flashback to...

2 INT. BATHROOM, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - DAY 2

CATHERINE, 40s, pretty but pear shaped, grimaces in dismay as she struggles to flatten out the bulges on a tight dress.

In the mirror, she notices AILISH, 9, tubby, skip past the door in her tight, pink, frilly tutu.

CATHERINE

Ailish!

Ailish enters. Catherine tries to cover Ailish's spare tire but it pops out again.

CATHERINE

What about your blue dress sweetie?  
It's a much prettier colour on you.

AILISH

I want to wear this one!

CATHERINE

Ailish love, daddy has important guests tonight...

AILISH

That's not fair!

CATHERINE

Ailish listen now...

On Ailish's scowl: a car pulls up outside. Ailish races out.

Catherine checks her reflection in the mirror, tugs her dress, tries her best to flatten out the awkward bulges.

3 INT. FOYER, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - DAY 3

DAVID, 40s, the Ambassador, lowers his suitcase, removes his coat, hands it to ISOBELLA, (25) the pretty, slender maid.

Catherine, now in a loose green dress, watches from the landing. Straightens her clothes, descends.

Ailish swamps David in hugs. He gives her a Barbie doll.

DAVID

Hey princess!

AILISH

Mummy won't let me wear my dress.

DAVID

Oh I'm sure mummy doesn't mind.

He sees Catherine arriving at the bottom of the stairs. David fails to read Catherine's uncomfortable glance. David strokes Ailish's cheek, peers into the dining room.

CATHERINE  
Good to see you.

DAVID  
What a bloody week!

CATHERINE  
Congrats on the award.

DAVID  
We all sorted for this evening?

Catherine, clearly hurt, nods.

David checks the dining room layout. Ailish watches as Catherine leaves, hurt.

4 INT. FOYER - NIGHT

4

A forest of slender women's bodies. The tinkle of expensive jewelry, clink of glasses, accented chatter. Languages, mostly German. A handful of wealthy, heavy set men and slim women chatter. All smiles.

Through the crowd, Catherine - lost, feeling out of place amongst the slender women. Fidgeting, flattening her dress.

Catherine watches as a super skinny SLAVIC MODEL wolfs down hors d'oeuvres. As the model reaches for another - her wrist is exposed revealing six small infected spots in a cluster. The area is red and she scratches it. Catherine spots it briefly before it disappears under the model's huge bracelet.

Across the room, David banter to a heavy set MOGUL and a thin WAG. The wag is also eating a lot. The Mogul guides the wag over.

Catherine sees Ailish lift a mini cream éclair off a tray. Ailish catches her mother's look, returns the éclair.

The wag and mogul arrive to Catherine. The wag is midway through eating an hors d'oeuvre. She extends her slim arm to shake hands.

Catherine shakes hands trying to conceal her upset. Catherine notices 3 of the same small infected spots on the wag's wrist. The wag sees her staring at it so she hides it with a smile.

MOGUL  
Have you met the ambassador's wife?

Catherine tries to hide her frustration at the introduction.

CATHERINE  
I'm sorry will you excuse me a moment.

As Catherine drags Ailish out, Ailish catches sight of a slim BLONDE GIRL (8) wearing a white ballet tutu.

5 EXT. VERANDAH, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

5

Catherine shivers on the steps, she wraps her arms around her shoulders. Ailish sits slumped at her feet. Unseen, she watches below where...

The wag smokes. The Slavic model approaches her.

SLAVIC MODEL

Hi. Sorry. Do you have a spare cigarette maybe?

The wag hands her one. The model notices the wag scratch the infected spots on her wrist. She smiles conspiratorially.

SLAVIC MODEL

How long have you been doing it?

WAG

Just four weeks.

The model slides up her cuff, showing her cluster of 6 spots.

WAG

6!

SLAVIC MODEL

I know I have to stop tomorrow.  
Had to fucking go to Bangkok.  
Where'd you get yours?

WAG

Berlin. You got a piece of paper?

The wag shakes her head. The Slavic model takes a drag of her cigarette, flicks it away, leads the wag back inside.

WAG

You look great.

SLAVIC MODEL

Should have seen me before, used to be huge.

She throws a glance in Catherine's direction. Catherine buttons her cardigan self-consciously.

Through the window, Ailish sees: the model. She checks no one is watching before she scribbles something into the guest book. She rips out the page, hands it to the wag. Ailish looks up. Catherine is watching too.

6 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

6

Ailish brushes her teeth vigorously. She hears footsteps.

7 INT. FOYER STAIRS, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

7

Catherine tears off her jewelry as she climbs the stairs, relieved the torture is over. David descends the stairs with papers under his arm.

DAVID  
Well that seemed like a success!  
Hardly saw you all night though -  
you get on ok?

Catherine nods, concealing her hurt.

DAVID  
Listen I have a few e-mails to sort  
before bed but I'll be up shortly.

David descends the stairs. Catherine enters the bedroom.

Ailish emerges from the bathroom. She hears sobbing emanating from her mother's bedroom. She listens at the door. Upset, she moves away.

8 INT. AILISH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 8

Ailish lies awake in bed, staring at the ceiling.

9 INT. FOYER, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - MORNING 9

Ailish descends the stairs engrossed in her Nintendo DS.

CATHERINE (O.S.)  
Ails? Where're your crayons?

Ailish sees Catherine through a doorway frantically rummaging through a cabinet. She clutches a piece of paper.

AILISH  
Bottom drawer.

Catherine finds them. She frantically colours the piece of paper, then heads out the front door. Ailish glances at the guest book on the bureau. A second page has been torn out. She hears an engine starting outside.

10 EXT. DRIVEWAY, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - DAY 10

Ailish runs up to the moving SUV and bangs on the window.

AILISH  
Mum, mum - I want to come!

CATHERINE  
I'll be ages. I've loads of stuff  
to get.

Ailish stares at Catherine, determined. She tries the handle - locked. Annoyed, Catherine unlocks the door.

11 INT. NEWSAGENTS - DAY 11

Ailish stands dwarfed by a huge rack of women and girly magazines- hundreds of images of skinny women stare at her.

CATHERINE (O.S.)  
Ails? You pick something yet?

12 INT. SUV, DRIVING - EVENING 12

Ailish plays Nintendo DS, surrounded by bags. She peeps up from her game to see Catherine checking the street name off the paper in hand. The crayon has made an address legible.

13 INT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT 13

Catherine gets out of the SUV.

CATHERINE  
Ok now, just wait here - I'll only  
be a minute. Ok? Good girl.

She wanders down the dank alleyway, Ailish gets out.

Ailish peers down the alleyway, sees Catherine disappear down a dark metal stairway.

She hears voices from a low, barred window. Through the dirty glass she sees Catherine talking to a strangely thin WOMAN SHOPKEEPER. As Catherine glances around, Ailish ducks.

The shopkeeper hands Catherine a small brown envelope. She tips the envelope. A little glass vial falls into her palm. Catherine is disgusted by what she sees.

Catherine nods.

The shopkeeper hands Catherine a small blue tablet and explains something, pointing to her wrist. The shopkeeper holds up 6 fingers with a gesture of warning. Catherine nods.

14 EXT. REAR, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT 14

Ailish descends the steps. Ahead of her she sees Catherine bin the envelope. They enter the house.

15 INT. AILISH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 15

Ailish lies awake stroking her new Barbie's hair. She rises.

16 INT. BEDROOM, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT 16

David reads official papers in bed, his back to Catherine.

CATHERINE (O.S.)  
I thought we might go to the  
concerto together. Tomorrow night.

DAVID (O.S.)  
Can't love, I've got that bloody  
press thing with the Belgians.

Catherine picks up her book from the bedside locker, hides her disappointment behind it. David, his back to her, flicks off his bedside light. Catherine sits still in the darkness.

17 EXT. REAR, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT 17

Ailish rummages in the bin. She pulls out the envelope, tips out the vial - grimaces. Inside, in a sickly yellow fluid a long, thin tapeworm writhes. It's pasty-fleshed.

She hears the back door open, bins the envelope. Hides.

Catherine emerges. She's been crying. She rummages in the bin, pulls out the envelope, goes inside. Ailish pops up.

18 INT. SCULLERY KITCHEN - NIGHT 18

Catherine tips the worm into a glass of milk, stares at it in disgust. She knocks it back, shudders. Nauseous, she leans on the sink. Ailish watches through the window. Catherine exits.

19 INT. DINING ROOM, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - DAY 19

Ailish eats breakfast. At the other side of the table Catherine scratches her wrist and wolfs down her last spoons of muesli. She rises. Her stomach rumbles. She stares at the bag of muesli.

She plops back down, pours another bowl. Shovels several spoonfuls into her mouth, pours more. Notices Ailish - staring at her. Ailish resumes eating uncomfortably.

DISSOLVE TO:

20 INT. CLOTHES BOUTIQUE - DAY 20

Ailish stares at the slender shop mannequins as Catherine - now thinner - selects items off the rails.

21 INT. CHANGING ROOM - DAY 21

Catherine stares at herself in the mirror. A smile creeps onto her face. She pulls on the waistline of the trousers she's trying on - it's loose. She stares at her reflection in delight. The smile grows. She removes the trousers, holds them out through the curtain to Ailish.

CATHERINE

Darling would you mind getting me a size smaller?

Ailish notices her mum's wrist - there are three small infected spots. She takes the trousers.

DISSOLVE TO:

22 INT. SCULLERY KITCHEN - DAY 22

Catherine reaches for a can beyond her grasp. There are 5 infected spots on her wrist.

Ailish colours in a drawing at the table. David stumbles sleepily in. He notices that Catherine is perched on a chair reaching into a high press struggling to get the can.

She is wearing the tight red evening dress. Her figure is now thin and svelte. David stares at her, glides his hand around her narrow waist.

DAVID  
Here. Let me.

He climbs up, helps her reach the can of oysters. Catherine tucks in.

23 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY 23

Ailish reads her magazine leaning against a wall as children pour out past her. She notices Catherine waiting for her beside the SUV.

As she walks towards the SUV she notices a YOUNG BUSINESSMAN glancing at Catherine admiringly. He smiles. Catherine smiles back uncomfortably, then looks away - sees Ailish approach.

As Catherine guides Ailish into the SUV, Ailish she sees that the man is still staring at her mum. Catherine glances over. He smiles again. Embarrassed, Catherine gets into the car.

24 INT. SUV, OUTSIDE SCHOOL - DAY 24

Catherine straps on her belt. She smiles to herself. In the mirror she catches Ailish staring at her. Embarrassed, Catherine starts the engine.

25 INT. BATHROOM - DAY 25

Catherine opens a small jewelry chest. There are six infected spots on her wrist. She takes out the envelope and tips out the blue tablet. She raises it to her lips. Catherine pauses as she sees her reflection in the mirror.

She tugs on a small amount of flesh sagging from the underside of her arm. She stares at it, disgusted.

The blue pill lands into the toilet.

DISSOLVE TO:

26 INT. SCULLERY KITCHEN - NIGHT 26

Ailish enters. She sees Catherine, in loose, baggy clothes, eating straight from the fridge. She looks gaunt and drawn.

Catherine looks over - dark rings beneath her sunken eyes as she shoves meat into her mouth. Ailish sees that the mark on Catherine's wrist is now a cluster of 12 swollen and infected spots. Catherine covers them resumes eating. Ailish leaves.

27 INT. AILISH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 27

Ailish is getting into bed when sees her pink frilly tutu poking out from beneath it. Delighted, she yanks it out.

28 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 28

Ailish walks along in her tutu. Suddenly she stops, takes a few steps back. She stares at her reflection in the mirror.

29 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 29

Catherine is asleep in bed. Her face is gaunt. Beside her face, the marks on her wrist are now swollen, weeping and infected.

As she dozes, mouth agape, the long pale, hairless tapeworm, grown thicker, reaches out of her mouth to feed on the flesh. She awakens with a start. Muffles her mouth in fright.

30 INT. EN SUITE - NIGHT 30

Catherine bursts into the bathroom, she shoves her fingers down her throat over the sink. She splashes water on her face. She stares at her reflection. Beneath her loose top - her rib cage is visible, skin on bones showing. A knock.

31 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 31

Ailish knocks on the door to the en-suite bathroom. She has been crying. She snuffles.

AILISH  
Mum?

32 INT. EN SUITE BATHROOM - NIGHT 32

Catherine straightens her hair - a clump falls out. Nausea grips her. She struggles to hold it down but can't - vomits into the sink. Sickly yellow fluid, in it - live baby worms. She vomits again - more worms.

33 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 33

Confused, Ailish listens to the splashes as Catherine vomits violently. Ailish tries the door. Locked.

AILISH  
Mum! You ok?

Catherine frantically struggles to wash the worms down the sink. Using toilet paper she scoops some out and flushes them down the toilet - rushing to hide the evidence.

Catherine composes herself, opens the door.

Catherine smiles, touches her gently, leaves.

Ailish watches her disappear down the corridor.

She glances into the bathroom curiously.

She steps in. She notices something small moving on the bathroom floor. She bends down, picks it up - a baby worm. She stares at it.

And we flash forward to...

34 INT. SCULLERY KITCHEN, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT 34

Ailish sits in the semi darkness, staring at a glass of milk.

FADE OUT.

SUPER: The "Tapeworm Diet" is not fictional. While the sale of tapeworms is illegal in most countries they are available on the black market as a diet option.