

New Leaf

written by

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INT. ANNA'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - EVENING

ANNA (24, a trans woman with bags under her eyes) watches the sun dip below the horizon.

She reaches into her coat and draws a PISTOL. She turns the gun to each side, watching the light glint off the steel.

KATHRINE (O.S)

Hello? Why is it so dark in here?

The room to Anna's bedroom creaks open, revealing KATHRINE (50-60, a woman whose collapsing marriage weighs heavily on her face).

Anna hurriedly tucks the PISTOL in her coat's inner pocket.

ANNA

I was working at my computer.

KATHRINE

You should stop working and come downstairs. The family is beginning to arrive.

Anna nods.

ANNA

I'll be down soon.

Beat.

KATHRINE

You know, it would make your father feel much better if you weren't always hiding away in your room.

Beat.

ANNA

I'll be down soon.

Kathrine rolls her eyes and shuts the door.

Anna turns on the lights to her room.

The walls are adorned with nerdy posters and pixel art.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anna stands in front of the bathroom mirror, she wears a dark blue dress and a brown overcoat.

Her phone buzzes.

The sender is Cassidy. The name in her contact list has a heart emoji next to it.

CASSIDY (TEXT)
Hey, Xmas dinner going okay?

ANNA (TEXT)
Hasn't started yet.

She puts her phone away and touches up her lipstick.

INT. ANNA'S PARENT'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Anna walks down the steps into the family living room.

FREDRICK (70s, Anna's uncle who married into the family) and GRACE (50s, Anna's Aunt and Fredrick's wife) watch Anna enter with visible discomfort.

HARRY (60s, Anna's father) visibly avoids looking at Anna.

LENARD (50s, Anna's uncle) glares at Anna from a distance while his wife, MIRANDA (late 20s, visibly pregnant) plays with her twin daughters SUSIE(10) and CHRISTINA(10).

Anna walks straight to a counter where a set of bottles rest. She pours herself a glass of cider.

GRACE
Oh... Anna you look... great. Marry Christmas.

Anna turns to face Grace.

ANNA
Merry Christmas. You look great too, Grace.

GRACE
Well, my skin isn't what it used to be...

FREDRICK
How you doing there... Anna?

Fredrick extends his hand for Anna to shake.

Anna shakes his hand.

ANNA
I'm fine Fredrick.

FREDRICK
Please, just Fred for family.

GRACE
So, how has school been?

Anna takes a long sip of her drink.

ANNA
It's been good. I've been very interested in web design lately and I'm hoping to do more in the near future. I actually got a part-time job for it recently too.

GRACE
Wow! Well you know what they say, all work and no play-

FREDRICK
Makes Jack a dull boy.

Anna shrugs.

ANNA
My personal life has been good too. I recently moved in with my girlfriend.

GRACE
Oh... A girlfriend...

Fredrick wraps his arm around Grace's shoulder and steers her away from Anna.

FREDRICK
I think I saw some Gouda on the appetizer platter.

Anna doesn't pay attention to their exit.

Her phone rings with a text

CASSIDY (TEXT)
Good luck, I love you <3

KATHRINE
No phones at the family get together!

ANNA (TEXT)
I love you too.

Anna looks up to see her mother staring at her with a plastered on smile.

KATHRINE

We haven't had you for Christmas dinner in years, we all want to spend as much time with you as possible!

Anna puts her phone away.

KATHRINE (CONT'D)

Don't you ever regret that decision?

ANNA

You'll need to be more specific.

Beat.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(calmly)

If you're not capable of being more specific, then I don't think you're looking for an answer. You're just trying to make me feel guilty.

Harry approaches. His movement is slouched and unstable.

HARRY

(slurring speech)

Don't raise your voice at your mother.

He takes a large drink out of the beer bottle he carries.

KATHRINE

Harry, she wasn't raising her voice-

HARRY

Yes he was!

Beat.

Anna finishes her drink. She begins to fill her glass again.

KATHRINE

Now Harold...

ANNA

Whatever Dad, I'm sorry.

HARRY

Don't "whatever" me, son.

KATHRINE

It's time for dinner!

Kathrine rushes Harry to the table. As she passes Anna she mouths "Sorry!"

Anna picks up her cup and turns towards the table. She almost runs into Miranda holding two small cups.

MIRANDA

Oh! Sorry dear!

ANNA

That's my bad.

MIRANDA

No worries! Well now that I got you here, I was wondering if there were any nonalcoholic drinks for the little one?

She gestures towards Susie and Christina.

ANNA

Yeah, my mom got some apple juice for them.

She reaches in the fridge and pulls out a bottle of unopened apple juice. She cracks the lid and hands it to Miranda.

MIRANDA

Thank you dear! Say, how has your life been?

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

It's been pretty good: working through school and living with my girlfriend.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Oh that's great news! I'm glad you found someone special. I felt really lucky when I found Leonard-

Leonard is still glowering at Anna.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

But I'll tell you what, it's a lot of work to keep a relationship going! A lot of work.

Miranda finishes pouring the drinks and sets the jug of juice on the counter.

ANNA

It is, we spend a lot of time talking about how to split up the chores around the house and who will cook and when. Luckily we didn't get into any bad spats while we were moving.

MIRANDA

(genuine)

Gosh, I'm so happy for you! You should've heard the ruckus Leonard and I made when we couldn't agree on what dish towels to buy.

Miranda is lost in thought.

Anna lifts up the glasses of juice and hands them to Miranda.

She flinches before realizes what Anna is doing.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Oh thank you dear.

ANNA

Sorry, just looks like my mom is cutting the turkey. It was nice talking with you Miranda.

MOMENTS LATER:

Miranda takes her seat next to Leonard and her children.

There is only one seat left for Miranda. To it's left is Grace, to it's right is Harry, across the table is Leonard.

Anna takes her seat.

Leonard is glowering at her, Grace is staring at her. Harry can't look at her.

LEONARD

You know, I don't want you handling my kid's orange juice.

Anna takes a sip of her drink and doesn't bother to answer.

Miranda looks afraid.

Anna scoops a bowl of mashed potatoes.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

I made some ham, have that too.

ANNA

I'm a vegetarian.

Leonard laughs, slowly and drily.

Everyone at the table looks nervous.

Anna scoops up some stuffing. She begins to eat.

LEONARD

I always thought you were a sissy
but I thought you'd always have the
balls to eat my cooking.

Miranda slams her fist against the table.

GRACE

(to Fredrick)

I knew Anna was going to get
offended.

ANNA

Don't talk to me like that.

LEONARD

Boy, I can talk to you however I
want. Especially seeing as your a
woke liberal arts brat now. I had a
time and a half when Harry told me
you were pretending to be a girl
now.

Anna shoots Harry a dirty look.

ANNA

Are those your words or his?

HARRY

I said you were having gender
issues.

Anna snorts.

ANNA

Gender issues. That's rich.

Anna looks to Kathrine for help. She is quietly eating her
dinner.

LEONARD

Rich. Rich. Rich.

Leonard laughs.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

You know, our governor did us a big favor. You might not have heard about this at "Head in the Sand University" but people like you have a bounty on their heads... Five thousand for reporting you to the police.

ANNA

For public performance, Leo. I am neither in public nor performing.

LEONARD

No but you are what you are, and people here in Texas don't appreciate seeing people like you around.

Miranda grabs Leonard's arm.

MIRANDA

Leonard, please stop.

Leonard pulls a PISTOL out of a concealed holster and brandishes it as a club.

LEONARD

Shut-

Anna draws her GUN and points it at Leonard's head.

ANNA

Put the gun down.

Grace screams and runs from the table.

FREDRICK

My god!

The kids scream and hide under the table.

KATHRINE

Anna stop!

Leonard changes his grip on the gun so he can fire it.

Harry grabs Anna's gun.

She fires, the shot goes wild and embeds itself in the wall behind Leonard.

Screaming.

FREDRICK
Get that gun away from him!

Kathrine stands up. She is holding the turkey carving knife.

Leonard points his GUN at Anna as she struggles with her father for the PISTOL.

The knife flashes.

There's blood.

Leonard screams, the turkey knife is sticking through his left hand. Kathrine stands behind him with a dark look on her face.

His right hand still holds the gun.

BANG!

Harry collapses, dead.

Leonard, his brother, stares at the corpse in shock. His gun is still smoking.

Anna takes the gun from her father's lifeless body.

BANG!

Leonard falls out of his chair, dead.

The dinner table is silent.

Anna collapses.

Anna's phone buzzes with a text.

CASSIDY (TEXT)
I hope you're family turned over a
new leaf!

Anna sets the gun on the table, puts her head in her hands, and weeps.

The sound of her cries continue as we:

FADE TO BLACK.