

Ms. Newman

A short screenplay

by

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<EXCERPT>

INT. LIVINGROOM

As "I Love Lucy" ends, the clock chimes 3:00 p.m. Standing up slowly, she turns to pick up the coffee cake wrapped in plastic wrap and a pink ribbon.

EXT. PORCH

Ms. Newton waits and waits, holding the coffee cake. Inside the house, she hears the Cuckoo chime 4:00 p.m. Always calm, her disappointment mingles with concern. Then she sees CAITLYN walking with a new group of TEENAGE FRIENDS.

Crossing to the porch steps, she waves to Caitlyn and holds out the saucer of cake. Caitlyn's new friends snicker immaturely as Caitlyn hesitates at the picket fence, embarrassed.

MS. NEWTON

Caitlyn. Haven't seen you in a while. I've missed you.

CAITLYN

Um, hi, Ms. Newton...I'm really busy, you know, with school and sports.

MS. NEWTON

I made coffee cake. I know it's your favorite.

Caitlyn's friends giggle again as she reluctantly opens the picket gate and walks up the sidewalk to receive the cake.

MS. NEWTON (CONT.)

How's your mama? Better now?

CAITLYN

Yes, ma'am. The doctor put her on some new meds. They seem to be working... except when she sees my father with a new girlfriend.

MS. NEWTON

So you live with your mama now?

CAITLYN
I go wherever the judge tells me I
have to that week.

Caitlyn accepts the cake and begins to move hastily toward
the gate to rejoin her friends.

CAITLYN (CONT.)
Well, I've gotta go. Thanks.

MS. NEWTON
Come back anytime, dear. Love
seeing you.

CAITLYN
Uh, okay. Bye.

Ms. Newton watches as Caitlyn and her friends meander down
the sidewalk, giggling and snatching off bits of her cake.

INT. SUNROOM

Ms. Newton prunes her tropical plants.

INT. BREAKFAST NOOK - EVENING

Ms. Newton places her fork, knife, and spoon on her now empty
dinner plate and sips the last of her iced tea with a straw.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ms. Newton stares at the ceiling as the moonlight shines in.

INT. BREAKFAST NOOK - MORNING

Ms. Newton replaces the dying roses with fresh ones.

INT. LIVINGROOM

Ms. Newton finishes her vacuuming as "Little House on the
Prairie" begins.

INT. KITCHEN

The buzzer goes off. Ms. Newton removes a fresh pan of fragrant coffee cake from the oven.

INT. LIVINGROOM - AFTERNOON

Ms. Newton sits in her chair. She smoothes her light green dress and checks the time on the Cuckoo clock. Wrapped coffee cake waits on an end-table beside the front door.

A few moments later, the sudden sound of a car pulling up in the drive signals her Granddaughter's arrival. Ms. Newton stands slowly, using her cane.

EXT. FRONT YARD & PORCH

The GRANDDAUGHTER unbuckles her TODDLER from the carseat while she admonishes her TWO BOYS who are fighting over the front seat and pulling each other's hair.

GRANDDAUGHTER

Get out of the car NOW! Stop-
Stop it! Listen to me!

Ms. Newton opens the front door, leaning on her cane. She bends to pick up the wrapped coffee cake. The Granddaughter holds the toddler in one arm and pulls one of the boys out of the car. The other boy follows as she hurries to the porch.

Ms. Newton hugs her. As the Granddaughter balances the toddler on her hip, Ms. Newton motions them inside. The Granddaughter rambles as she fights for control of her boys.

GRANDDAUGHTER

Sorry, Grandma--We can't stay.
Their class ran late...Stop it!...
I should never have put them in
Karate. And I don't know if we can
come on Sunday. Church fundraiser--
and the big bosses are coming in at
work, so I'll have to get ready for
that--Boys! And we're painting the
boys' room--I don't know *why* David
just HAD to do it this week. And
his sister's getting married in two
weeks, and he's the "Maid of Honor"

so we have a 13-hour drive ahead of us with all three kids in the car to get there and the rehearsal dinner and everything-- I mean it! Stop it! And I haven't even found a dress so I have no idea what color I need to dye my shoes-- and they can take at least a week to get back--If it's not one thing, it's a dozen others--Calm down!

Ms. Newton smiles and hugs her Granddaughter again.

Ms. Newton
Slow down.

GRANDDAUGHTER
If only...Boys! Come here! Get over here now!

Ms. Newton holds out the wrapped coffee cake to the toddler who giggles. The Granddaughter absentmindedly grabs the cake and hands it to the two boys who immediately start fighting over it on the way down the steps to the car.

GRANDDAUGHTER (CONT.)
You WILL eat your supper, do you hear me!--Bye, Grandma.

Ms. Newton leans on her cane and waves as her Granddaughter and great-grandsons continue the ruckus while pulling out of the driveway.

Silence returns. The Cuckoo chimes 4:00 p.m. Ms. Newton sits on the Deacon's bench on the porch, looking out, sitting, waiting.

<END EXCERPT>