

INT. THE WADE HOUSE - NIGHT

MR. DAVE WADE and MRS. LINDA WADE, 60s, the kind of couple that has spent their efforts trying to make a little money give them the appearance of having a lot of money, waits patiently in their upper-middle-class suburban home. They've set a table, Mrs. Wade dresses a salad, and Mr. Wade puts a record on in the living room.

MRS. LINDA WADE

I don't know how to time the oven this well, sweetheart. If she doesn't get here on time, this brisket is either going to be cold or extra crispy.

MR. DAVE WADE

She said five minutes.

MRS. LINDA WADE

Okay. And we're doing no TV right?

The record starts to play and Mr. Wade comes back into the kitchen: grabbing a bottle of wine from the fridge and putting it on the table.

MR. DAVE WADE

I think it's fine if we talk about her time on the show, we just don't need to bring up how she's... portrayed. Or criticize her for how she acted. We can support her, and just let her deal with the rest of the emotional aspects on her own.

MRS. LINDA WADE

It makes me so angry that they made her seem so awful. You can tell those editors hated her. If I were her, I'd be distraught beyond belief.

At that moment, the door opens. JERRI WADE, 30, wearing athletic clothing (including glasses) under a hefty coat, opens the door. She has a number of suitcases with her and a small, wet dog on a leash.

JERRI

Hi Dad! Hi Mom!

MRS. LINDA WADE

Hi sweetheart!

MR. DAVE WADE

Hi Jerri!

They go in to give her a hug.

MRS. LINDA WADE

(gesturing to dog)
And who is *this*?!

JERRI
(like one would introduce a person)
This is Jodie... I found him on the way here...

She picks him up.

JERRI
(baby-talk, rhythmically)
He's a good little *boy*. He was *lost*, but then I found *him*.

MRS. LINDA WADE
Well don't you think you should call-

JERRI
(weirdly joyous)
Oh my gosh! It smells so... *much* in here!

MRS. LINDA WADE
We made your favorite!

JERRI
(cringing, sarcastic delight)
Hurray...! You mean brisket...

MRS. LINDA WADE
(sensing something is wrong)
Yes!

JERRI
To be honest... I've become more of a raw-fish kinda gal.
Eesh, sorry. The whole
living-comfortably-with-a-roof-over-your-head thing is just
so... cramped to me now. It's okay, I'm sure you tried your
best.

Hahah...

MRS. LINDA WADE

MR. DAVE WADE
HA!

JERRI
(confused)
What's funny?

MR. DAVE WADE
Pff... nothin... nothin, nothin.

Awkward silence.

MR. DAVE WADE (CONT.)
(to Jerri)
Come on in,
(to Mrs. Wade)
babe, why don't-

JERRI
(dragging her suitcases inside)
Since when was she "*babe*"? What are you, twenty?

MRS. LINDA WADE
(beginning to be offended)
Sometimes it's the little things that keep a relationship
refreshing.

Jerri turns to face "the camera" and speaks "into it".

JERRI
I think it's super weird that Dave and Linda are trying to act
all young. Linda says it's the little things that keep things
fresh, but I always say "If things are stale, throw them out.
Unless it's food."

She turns back to face them.

JERRI (CONT.)
Sorry, what were we doing?

Mr. and Mrs. Wade look at each other. Who is this person that used to be
their daughter? Jerri pulls out her phone, bored.

MR. DAVE WADE
(to Mrs. Wade)
Sweetheart, can I talk to you?

Mrs. Wade nods.

JERRI

(thinking he's talking to her)
No, we should eat or something...

Ignoring her, Mrs. and Mr. Wade turn around and whisper.

MR. DAVE WADE
T.V. stardom took our daughter away.

MRS. LINDA WADE
I can't tell who she is anymore.

MR. DAVE WADE
Maybe it's a good thing, maybe this is her coming into her own.

MRS. LINDA WADE
She's wearing sunglasses at night time...
(checking outside)
...in the rain...

MR. DAVE WADE
I know, I know. Let's just see how it goes. Okay, babe?

MRS. LINDA WADE
You know, I'm starting to think I don't like it.

MR. DAVE WADE
We can talk about that later.

They turn to face Jerri again, who's still texting. Mrs. Wade goes back to the kitchen to pull out the brisket.

MR. DAVE WADE (CONT.)
Alrighty! Can I help you get your bags up to your room?
Are you excited to see it? You're finally going to have a nice, cozy bed...

JERRI
Yeah, my bags are REALLY heavy, thank you.

She goes and sits down at the table. Mr. and Mrs. Wade look at each other, and Mrs. Wade shakes her head to signify that she doesn't think he should take the bags up for her, but he gives her the "It's okay, I don't mind" look back.

Mrs. Wade brings the brisket to the table as Mr. Wade lugs bags up the stairs.

MRS. LINDA WADE

So how was it?

JERRI

(putting her phone down)

Oh, my god, it was crazy. Pff, I don't even know where to start.

MRS. LINDA WADE

Anywhere! We watched you on the TV, but we want to hear about the behind-the-scenes action.

JERRI

I haven't gotten the chance to watch any of the episodes yet, actually.

MRS. LINDA WADE

(going back to prepping the table)

Well, there's no need to when you've already lived it. Besides, the editing's really crazy and just warps *everything*.

JERRI

Like what?

Mrs. Wade continues to bring food to the table.

MRS. LINDA WADE

Oh, it just exaggerates and blows little things out of proportion. Your dad and I were just noticing that it seems like the producers made you guys- or manipulated you guys into acting a certain way or doing certain things.

At that moment, Mr. Wade peeks his head around the corner, having come back down the stairs, and makes a "stop-talking-about-it-gesture" at Mrs. Wade. He's behind Jerri, so Jerri doesn't notice.

JERRI

(putting phone away)

Nope! All of that was me fueled with the need to *survive*.

MRS. LINDA WADE

Oh. Even the... you know...

JERRI

Shitting into my hands and using it to sabotage the rest of the contestants?

Mr. Wade makes his presence known.

MR. DAVE WADE

Wow, I'm hungry. Aren't you guys just dying to fill your mouth with some good food and stop talking for a while?

JERRI

(turning to "camera")

I think it's a little rude that Dave just invited me to come live in my childhood home after not seeing me for *months* and seems to care more about the food than he does me.

MR. DAVE WADE

No, sweetheart, that's not at all the case.

He puts his hands on her shoulders. The food is ready and Mrs. Wade takes her seat.

MRS. LINDA WADE

What's this *thing* you just did, Jerri?

JERRI

It's from the show, I found it to be very therapeutic to have the whole world to talk to whenever I felt like speaking my mind. So now I do it all the time! Why does there need to be an audience?

Mr. Wade goes to take a seat.

MRS. LINDA WADE

Oh.

(putting on a forced smile)

Great, I guess you're right.

More eye contact between the couple. Mr. Wade shakes his head at Mrs. Wade before she decides to speak.

MRS. LINDA WADE (CONT.)

Jerri, have you read the news? Or social media? Or any coverage of the show?

JERRI

(serving herself salad)

Are you talking about the whole “Most Hated Person in America” thing? Or is this about the rumor that I stole someone’s dog?

MR. DAVE WADE

Well, I’m sure that rumor is *not* true. Jerri, I’m so sorry that people can be so cruel...

JERRI

Hater’s gonna hate.

MRS. LINDA WADE

But, hold on, are you telling me that you did all those things they said you did on the show? You were *awful*. We thought for sure this would ruin your life, you spread rumors on purpose, and destroyed relationships, you... pooped into your hands and contaminated the whole food supply-

MR. DAVE WADE

No, that part wasn’t real-

JERRI

It was real.

MRS. LINDA WADE

(whispering to her husband)

She already said that.

Her dad frowns but doesn’t respond.

JERRI

(in a “What did I do wrong?” tone)

What?!

(after getting no response through pursed lips)

Mom, Dad, I’m a new woman now. I do what I can to be the best; to be at the top. And if people hate me for that,

then they can continue to. I'm going to make sure the world knows my name, one way or another.

She pours herself a glass of wine.

MRS. LINDA WADE

You may be okay with it, Jerri, but you're no longer acting like the daughter we raised-

MR. DAVE WADE

Linda!

Jerri rolls her eyes.

MR. DAVE WADE (CONT.)

(turning to Jerri)

There... is a lot of hate in this world. Whatever you're doing to protect yourself from it-

MRS. LINDA WADE

Are you serious?! She *is* the hate in this world!

Jerri's hand tensely grips the tablecloth.

MR. DAVE WADE

You know what? Let's forget it. Let's just eat.

He goes in to slice some brisket. Jerri looks at both of them like they just don't get it, like they're dead to her.

JERRI

(turning to the "camera")

Dave and Linda have *no* idea what's about to hit them.

(turning to her parents)

You know what, mom and dad? I don't think this is going to work out.

MRS. LINDA WADE

(almost laughing from discomfort)

What do you mean?

JERRI

(leaning up out of her seat, getting in their faces but whispering)

I'm the fucking *queen* of television. I don't like to abuse my power, but I don't think this is something I need to put up with.

MR. DAVE WADE
(putting a hand on her shoulder)
Sweetheart...

Jerri takes her time looking around the table and her eyes settle on the brisket. She takes it, stands up, walks over to the trash, looks at her parents as she lets it slide off the plate and into the can, drops the plate so that it explodes on the floor, walks out of the kitchen with porcelain crunching under her shoes, and to the front door.

Looking back at them, she puts on her sunglasses.

JERRI
Thanks for nothing, I guess.
(turning to the "camera")
That's that!
(flaunting, still to "camera")
Gah, I fucking *love* myself.

She walks out into the rain and closes the door behind her.

MRS. LINDA WADE
(reaching for Mr. Wade's hand)
She has none of her stuff.

MR. DAVE WADE
Or Jodie... come here, buddy.

The dog is under the table, begging for some food. Mr. Wade picks it up and checks it's collar.

MR. DAVE WADE
This is a stolen dog.

MRS. LINDA WADE
Is there a number?

MR. DAVE WADE
Yeah.

Their emptiness is dreadful.