

EXT. BACKYARD - EARLY MORNING

A middle-aged woman - ELLA - is hard at work on her hands and knees in her backyard. She piles the last of the zucchinis from her garden into an overflowing basket. She is exhausted, covered in dust and grime, but satisfied with a job well done.

She dusts herself off and carries the basket of zucchini inside.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

We hear WATER RUNNING as Ella scrubs off the zucchinis in the sink. It's a methodical moment of zen. Clearly, she's done this before.

She pats them dry and goes to put them away. We now see that her entire kitchen is packed full of beautifully ripe zucchinis on every available surface.

She puts the last one in its spot and finally stops to observe her surroundings, completely overtaken by zucchinis. She begins to ponder the situation - then an idea hits her.

MORNING MONTAGE:

A series of short scenes that take Ella around her neighbourhood as she hands out zucchinis to anyone that will take them. This MORNING MONTAGE is bouncy and upbeat and happy - Ella is just happy to share what she's reaped.

EXT. PORCH - MORNING

Ella carries an armful of zucchinis up the stairs to somebody's front door. The door swings open before Ella rings the doorbell and reveals her FRIEND, an aptly friendly woman around Ella's age who is excited to see her. Ella hands off the zucchinis to her. They engage in friendly conversation.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Another unannounced zucchini delivery. Ella knocks on her neighbour's door and offloads several more zucchinis.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MORNING

While out on a walk, Ella runs into SOME GUY she knows as he's walking his dog. They get to chatting. Ella politely extracts two zucchinis from her bag and hands them over.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Ella walks towards a neighbourhood potluck in the park, bustling with hyperactive kids and their laid-back parents. In the background are some of the neighbourhood folks we've seen before: the neighbour and some guy she knows.

She holds several zucchini-based offerings: sliced planks and disks of zucchini for grilling, a casserole bake, fritters. It's zucchini all the way down.

The JOLLY GRILL DAD, your stereotypical self-proclaimed grill master and smoky meat extraordinaire, is surprised as Ella reveals tray after tray of zucchini for him to grill, but he's just happy to spend more time standing around with tongs in hand. He CLICK-CLICKS his tongs like a crab and gets to work.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Ella leans against the kitchen counter and stares at the still-high piles of zucchini. They have been somewhat reduced, but there is too much for one woman to deal with. She becomes more concerned. Serious action is in order.

AFTERNOON MONTAGE:

Like the morning montage, but with more desperation; the mood is changing to something more sinister, but cartoonishly so. Ella is upping her game with more unannounced, and increasingly unwanted, deliveries. Should be pushing the sense of time forward from morning -> afternoon -> late afternoon as the mood sours.

EXT. PORCH - AFTERNOON

Ella hops up the steps to the front door of her friend's house and deposits a hefty paper bag bulging with zucchinis. A

handwritten note taped to the bag bears a smiley face, a zucchini, and a heart.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ella pokes her head into her generic and unremarkable corporate office lunchroom and scopes out the room like some kind of heist movie. There's nobody there. She goes over to a communal sharing-table, decked out with half-empty boxes of granola bars, loose fruits, opened multi-packs of mini muffins, La Croix, the works. She places a box full of zucchini beside the fruits and walks away briskly.

INT./EXT. CAR - NEARBY PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

Ella sits in her car, parked inconspicuously across the street from the park. She has a pen and clipboard in hand as she squints at something outside the window, across the green space. She references something on her paper. We see the paper; it is some sort of timetable. We gather Ella knows where and when she can find people.

Ella finds what she's looking for in the park and crosses something off on her paper. She grabs several zucchinis from the box in the passenger seat, puts them in her bag, and exits her car.

The PARK VICTIM that Ella is after is now clearly noticeable in the distance. Ella takes the long way round to greet the park victim with canned enthusiasm. They get to talking. She reaches for her bag.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON

Ella marches up the sidewalk. She tucks her stalking clipboard under her arm and prepares to engage as we see Some Guy, who's walking his dog and heading her way. Their paths are clearly going to cross...

...Until he suddenly detours from his normal, established route. The dog is confused and BARKS, but he walks them both onto a side street and does not acknowledge Ella. Ella is disappointed and starting to feel conflicted.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Ella hurries up her neighbour's driveway with a small pail full of zucchinis and places it quietly on the doorstep. She turns to make her quiet leave. The door CREAKS OPEN - Ella's NEIGHBOUR is not pleased to receive so many more zucchinis. Ella sheepishly acknowledges her neighbour and retreats under their glare.

EXT. PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Back at her friend's porch, Ella KNOCKS on the front door. She waits a short while. When her friend finally opens the door, Ella is not greeted with the same enthusiasm as the first time we saw them interact.

Ella begins to offer her friend a handful of zucchinis. Her friend tries to reject the offering. She gives in to Ella's insistence and takes the zucchinis - but makes it clear that she isn't taking them willingly. Ella is a little hurt and very conflicted.

INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - EVENING

Ella evaluates the zucchini stock of her kitchen. It's down to half of what she started with, but it's still significant. She looks displeased.

SERIES OF SHOTS (DINNER)

--Ella chops and preps reluctantly, moves slowly.

--Ella boils water, tosses something in. Half of it misses the pot. She goes to clean it up, more irritated now.

--Ella hovers over the stove, clearly checked out of it.

--Ella pulls dishes out of the oven, puts new ones in to cook. She deflates a little and sets the oven timer anew.

(INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT)

Ella sets the cooked food down at the table: it's all zucchini. It'd look pretty damn good if it wasn't so monotonous. She scoops from the nearest dish onto her plate. She pauses before she takes a bite.

It is an effort to eat. She chews slowly, then puts her fork down, then puts her head in her hands. She glares at the remaining zucchini in the kitchen... and loses the mental battle. She flicks off the lights in a huff and goes to bed.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ella comes downstairs in the morning, disgruntled and still in PJs. She looks *disgusted* at the sight of zucchini in her kitchen. She makes her way to the coffee maker, then stops. The cocoa powder catches her eye. She hurls herself into action.

SERIES OF SHOTS (BAKING)

--Ella ties up her hair.

--Tosses on her apron and knots it tightly.

--Puts on her fuzzy worn slippers.

--Grabs ingredients: cocoa powder, flour, eggs, chocolate chips. Zucchini.

--Ella does a cool butterfly-knife kind of trick but with a whisk. It looks really, really cool, and a little terrifying.

--She completely obliterates several zucchinis in a food processor. This is very cathartic for her.

--(TL;DR Lots of Ella baking and mixing maniacally. It gets faster and more intense and crescendos to a monstrous pace...)

--The oven timer BEEPS, and the chaos comes to an abrupt stop.

Ella opens the oven, and pulls out a gorgeous chocolate loaf cake. And then several more cakes. She sticks a toothpick in to test if it's done - she pulls it out and it comes out clean. A small piece of baked-in grated zucchini pops out of the hole. Ella pokes it back inside the cake, satisfied with her work.

PUBLIC APOLOGY MONTAGE:

Revisiting the same places as the afternoon series of events, except people respond more positively to Ella's presence.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ella's neighbour watches her walk up the driveway from their window. Ella notices them, waves, and holds up a plastic-wrapped chocolate loaf. The neighbour disappears momentarily; then the front door opens, and they beckon for the chocolate cake.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Ella approaches Some Guy and his dog, and he begins to look for an exit strategy. Ella brandishes a chocolate loaf from her bag. He is relieved. He approaches willingly to claim the loaf and strikes up a conversation with Ella.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Ella walks up familiar steps, cake in hand. She RINGS THE DOORBELL and KNOCKS shortly after. It takes a similar amount of waiting as last time, but her friend eventually answers the door.

Initially her friend is wary. Upon seeing the chocolate loaf, her eyes light up. She grabs it, sniffs it, unwraps it. She takes a huge bite and swoons. Ella smiles and pulls another one from behind her back.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Another neighbourhood potluck/BBQ, like the first one. Ella beelines for the table and sets down the heavy bag in her hands. People take notice that it's chocolate cake - especially the kids - and it's not long before people are lining up with paper plates and forks at the ready. The cake is a hit.

Ella packs away the now empty box that once held her cakes. She leans back and chills out for the first time since the first scene. As the children spray water guns at each other, play tag, and overall HOLLER and SCREECH, amid the dissonant chaos she closes her eyes and relaxes with a big smile on her face.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is quiet and serene, no zucchinis in sight. A recipe for *Chocolate Zucchini Cake* rests on the otherwise empty countertop.