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AS LONG AS WE LIVE

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Beta, a struggling mom in a stale marriage, longs for the thrills of her past life. When a young man enters her home, to help care for her toddler, he introduces her and her husband to flirtatious games, and the couple's relationship is rekindled.

But can their marriage survive?

As Long As We Live is created by Aníta Briem (The Tudors) who stars alongside Martin Wallström (Mr Robot, Beck)



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EPISODE ONE

Beta and Thomas are in a crisis in their marriage. Beta has put her once promising musical career on hold until a space opens up for their toddler at the government-run play school and Thomas' long term and risky investment in a new restaurant and club venture has put them under financial pressure. Beta's mum offers to pay for an au-pair, and after some colourful interviews they decide to hire Beta's "sort of cousin", the 22-year-old man Atli.

Atli moves in and the atmosphere in the home immediately lightens. Beta gets a message from an older man who she was in a questionable relationship with when she was younger. She goes to meet him. She nearly has a panic attack and runs out. She is terrified of this side of herself that just wants to let herself "fall into that dirty puddle" and be with someone else, cause it would make her feel good, relieve her gnawing loneliness, for a moment. But that would make her just like her dad and she is above all determined to do better than her parents. Be a better person.

Beta shares this experience with Atli who poses the question "Why can't couples experience this kind of an excitement without having affairs?" and tells her about a "flirt-assignment" he did once with his ex-girlfriend. Beta and Thomas decide to replicate this assignment. The assignment is that Beta and Thomas go out together, without appearing to be together and Thomas is supposed to flirt with a girl enough to get to touch her breast slightly, but absolutely no kissing or anything else.

And so, it begins...



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EPISODE TWO

Beta and Thomas execute the assignment, it goes well, and Beta starts to feel reawakened. The world literally takes on more colour. She starts to long for another assignment and finds it hard to focus on anything else.

Thomas' restaurant seems to be getting to the finishing line after years of work, but he still needs the last piece of investment. He drags Beta to yet another dinner with foreign investors, where her bitterness of being put into that situation surfaces, being asked to dress a certain way and say the "right things" to people she despises. She ends up launching into a big speech in front of everyone about how big dreams can destroy a person's life...

Thomas feels guilty for asking Beta to be someone she's not and starts to recognize what a bad place Beta is in. He saw how alive she became during the "assignment", so one night when Thomas, Beta and Atli are sitting around drinking beer, he starts asking Atli if there had been an assignment number 2...

Atli shares it and they decide to do it. Assignment 2 is similar in form to the first; Thomas leads again and Beta watches, but this time he is supposed to go further. Beta and Thomas go to a club where a big sequence ends with Thomas taking things pretty far with another girl. Beta steps in and drags him into the toilet where they have sex on top of the sink. For the first time, we see a real, raw animal connection between the two.

EPISODE THREE

Beta's world is taking on a new shape. She starts to play the piano again and writes a beautiful, haunting little song. She becomes convinced that the reason for this new opening in her life is Atli. She doesn't want to have an affair with him, but she becomes convinced that Atli being a unique part of the family is going to keep her alive. And as long as she can keep the dynamic exactly as it is, this could be her answer in life. A romance and family structure that may be unconventional but is perfect for her! But then, almost inevitably, Atli starts to develop real feelings for Beta...

After an outing to the zoo, and a fun dinner where the three share jokes and grow closer, Beta leaves the door slightly ajar as they are going to bed: not as an invitation for Atli to join them, but rather as a little gift for him. Atli catches glimpses of Beta and Thomas making love - and his heart breaks.

Beta receives the long-awaited letter from the play school - a place has finally opened up for their daughter. This is the worst news for Beta as she can't stand the idea of losing Atli. She hides the letter.

Beta's dad gets in touch, and after a heart to heart with her mum, the mother and daughter's wounds from the father's abandonment 20 years ago resurface.

Atli brings an old girlfriend from up north into the home. Beta's world collapses. The ultimate threat to her newfound happiness. Atli becomes distant. But Thomas feels relieved and welcomes the new arrival with a big dinner in the girlfriend's honour. Beta tries to recapture Atli's attention, but to no avail. She is convinced that her marriage to Thomas doesn't function without Atli. In a moment of desperation, Beta lies to Unnur, the girlfriend, that Atli has been seeing other girls. Unnur storms out, Atli goes after her and Beta spies on them breaking up through the kitchen window.

Beta, in a state of confusion and disgust with herself, not sure what to expect, awaits her sentence...

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EPISODE FOUR

We pick Beta and Atli back up in the kitchen where we left them. Before anything is said between them, Thomas enters. He asks where Unnur is, and Atli lies and covers for Beta. Underlying competition starts to escalate between the boys. Beta is completely unaware of it but feels terrible about what she has done to Atli.

In an attempt to re-unify her weird little family, Beta forces a game between the three of them where everyone has to say a few kind words about the others. Thomas reluctantly participates. When he tries to go to bed, Beta insists on another game. Then, Atli unexpectedly proposes assignment three, trying to find and assert his place in the family. Thomas fears he's losing Beta and doesn't feel he can say no, especially in the light of the looming failure of his business. Beta is thrilled. Until she's told what the assignment is... Now it's her turn. The assignment is, that they go to a party and Beta flirts with someone enough to make them want to sleep with her. Then she leaves the conversation and moves on to the next. Repeat five times.

Assignment three takes place. Atli offers up a house party his friend is hosting. Beta loves the idea so the three of them go together. Beta goes from being thrilled about another assignment to being riddled with anxiety about having to lead. She doesn't trust herself and doesn't want the responsibility.

After a very clumsy start where Beta's awkwardness and social anxieties have her nearly vomiting, she escapes upstairs to the bathroom, planning to take a break from the game. Instead, she encounters an unassuming Dutch photographer. They begin to talk and before Beta knows it, she falls back into her head, and has a full fantasy about him. She experiences a weirdly rounded love story in her mind during the span of the evening and is devastated when Thomas wants to leave. Thomas' frustrations and jealousies are coming to a head, and he's had enough. Of the whole thing.

Beta and Thomas have a blowout argument at home where he puts his foot down and says that Atli has got to go. He lies about having arranged private day care. Atli moves out. Beta's dream dies...



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EPISODE FIVE

Thomas quickly arranges an 11-year-old daughter of a friend as the “day care” he’d promised Beta. Beta discovers this when they go and meet her. Beta grins and bears the interview with the 11-year-old and then tears Thomas a new one as soon as they come out. She picks up Atli and brings him back home. Pressure mounts for Thomas’s restaurant and a pending second meeting with the Dutch financiers is going to decide its fate.

Thomas discovers that Beta hid the letter from the play school. Instead of confronting her, he uses it as leverage to get her to come to the big business dinner, as per his colleague’s request. Beta being ridden with guilt agrees to go.

The dinner is a disaster. The main investor makes Beta model a geisha robe as he demonstrates a ridiculous new idea. Beta’s utter humiliation and Thomas’ inability to stand up for her is the last straw. She flees to her mother’s. She locks herself away and considers divorce seriously for the first time. As she’s listening to a horrifying podcast about divorce, she gets a sleazy message from Daniel. This enrages the already unstable Beta, and she storms over to Daniel’s house and explodes on the street, telling him everything she’s been bottling up, that “when you meet 15 year olds, you’re supposed to support and guide them, not fuck them and make them into... THIS!”, referring to herself.

She’s sitting in front of Daniel’s apartment building, when she gets a message from her father that moves her deeply and makes her think she should conclude this fiasco with Daniel properly. Beta and Daniel sit by the dark sea and Beta confronts her fears and inadequacies. As if she is talking to her own dark and shameful side, and not Daniel. Resigned that she has failed at the one thing she was determined to succeed in - Beta decides she will ask for a divorce...

EPISODE SIX

Beta and Thomas are at the divorce attorney's office. We don't hear what's said, just Beta's devastating thoughts of the prospect of having her daughter only 50% of the time. 50% of life. To her, that's like being half dead. So, is she just trading one half-dead life for another? Which is better/worse? On the way out, Beta spots a tiny, old flower store for sale. The tulip backdrop is just like out of her fantasies with the Dutch photographer.

Beta meets her mother at her grandmother's grave, and as they futz around planting new flowers, Beta explains that Thomas is still living in the apartment but has moved into Atli's old room as they can't afford two places. Beta is at a breaking point, but her mother is harshly adamant that Beta should divorce.

Beta and Thomas try to co-exist in the home but it's stiff and awkward.

The financing for Thomas' restaurant comes through and the opening is planned. But now, what was once their dream, is just his dream.

Beta decides to finally confront her father. They sit in the tiny, old flower store she spotted before, and have a hard conversation about fallibility and forgiveness. He agrees to help her with financing the cafe.

Beta and Thomas are having a hard time working together in their parenting roles and have a blowout argument where resentments and old wounds come out. It's all laid out there. And it's ugly.

EPISODE SIX *(continued)*

Thomas's restaurant opens. He asks Beta to please come. She does, reluctantly. It's glorious, and beautiful. Just as he had envisioned it. Beta takes it in. This has cost them so much. Was it all worth it? Beta and Thomas have a tender moment but it is shortlived, and she leaves the restaurant early.

She goes to meet Atli, who responds by trying to kiss her. Beta - not before coming so close to giving in to temptation - stops it and tries hard to explain to him that how she behaved toward him was wrong. She should have protected and supported him instead of inadvertently bullying him into this situation. Atli is cold, says it's all cool, but it'll probably take him a while before her words can really sink in.

Beta's father invites Beta and her mother to dinner. Beta convinces her mom to come. They sit around the table and have civil communication for the first time in 20 years. Beta looks at the empty chair where Thomas would have sat. Beta's father brings out Chinese "sky lanterns", and after he clumsily nearly sets the house on fire, they go outside. They light the lanterns and watch them fly away as the family members release their decades long anger, bitterness, fear and guilt.

We find Beta in her little coffee/flower shop. She's gutted everything (sans the tulip backdrop) and is rebuilding. Thomas enters, takes it in and tells her he's proud of her. "Little dreams though Thomas, very little dreams..." she replies. Then Thomas grabs a piece of paper, writes on it, and slams it down in front of Beta. It says, "assignment #4". Beta is completely taken by surprise. She grabs the paper and her own pencil and writes. Then slams it in front of Thomas. This they repeat a few times with all the colors of emotion in their eyes, as they now re-write the rules of their future. A new beginning? Maybe... because you know...

BETA

Beta (38) is a musician who had a hit song in Europe a few years ago, but whose career is now in a lull. She's deeply shaped by her parents difficult divorce 20 years ago and is determined to make her own marriage a success. She's the main caregiver for her and Thomas' 18-month-old daughter and is exhausted. Mentally and physically. Tired of carrying the bulk of the family's financial responsibilities with her dwindling song residuals. And weighed down by the quiet bitterness she carries towards her husband's risky business ventures, which put a great pressure on the household. In the beginning she never expresses to anyone what really goes on in her mind, but we get to hear it in her thoughts. Mostly it contradicts what she says out loud. She longs for closeness with another human being and feels a ton of shame for her thoughts and impulses which she views as perverse and unfitting (and ok, some definitely are, but hey...). After Atli comes into the home, Beta's world opens up and she frequently falls into these little fantasies/daydreams, often of sexual nature but always about closeness. Trying to live the life she desires, inside her own head. Through the events of these "flirt assignments" that come from Atli, she is unwittingly forced to take risks re-enter the real world...

ANÍTA BRIEM

The Evidence (2006)

Journey to the Center of the Earth (2008)

The Tudors (2007 -2010)

Doctor Who (2005)

Elizabeth Dylan Dog (2010)

The Minister (2020)

IMDb

THOMAS

Beta's husband. Has been setting up an ambitious Cuban restaurant/club for the past few years and put all their savings into it. He is smart and very social. Loyal. He is charismatic but tends to set his goals too high and get suckered into working with unreliable people, perhaps because of his robust optimism which sometimes doesn't take reality into account. He is a good man and loves Beta to pieces, but in his desperation to have this Cuban place succeed, he's become quite egocentric and although he's aware Beta is down these days, he has no understanding of just what a dark place she is in. As the story progresses, he is prepared to let Beta push some boundaries well into a grey area with these assignments and with Atli, because he can see her coming to life again. He puts his insecurities in the back seat in this weird dynamic with Atli, until he bursts. He is a romantic and believes they can find their way out of this valley and be stronger for it.

MARTIN WALLSTRÖM

Mr Robot (2015-2019)

Beck (2020-2023)

Headhunters (2022)



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6 X 45 MIN

CREATED BY
ANÍTA BRIEM

DIRECTED BY
KATRÍN BJÖRGVINSDÓTTIR

STARRING
ANÍTA BRIEM & MARTIN WALLSTRÖM

PRODUCED BY
GLASSRIVER

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