

Heartbreak Anthems

written by

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DRAFT 2A

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE- HALLWAY-DAY

A quiet, small but lovely house, newly constructed, perfect for a young couple. Unopened Christmas cards lay on a pile by the front door. A garland of red ribbon hangs on half of the railing going upstairs, the other half left to fall to the floor.

INT. BEDROOM- DAY

Upstairs, in a minimalist bedroom, JANE, early 30's, pale with sharp cheekbones, sleeps in a bed meant for two, barley making a sound.

Her phone alarm goes off. She slowly opens her eyes, turns off the alarm, checks the date:

INSERT- PHONE:

In front of a background picture of sheet music, the date says "Thursday, December 24th"

Jane lets out a long sigh.

INT. BATHROOM- DAY

Jane brushes her teeth meticulously with an electric toothbrush. A timer goes off on her phone. She silences it, spits out into the sink.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Jane grabs a pre-made, Daily Harvest-esque nutritional shake. She chugs it, promptly tosses the carton in the trash.

INT. HOME OFFICE- DAY

Jane sits at her desk, computer in front of her, coffee by her side, ear piece in her ear. She types as she talks.

JANE

Okay, but was that a contribution that counted for last year or...and it was made out from the company's account...? See, I think that's going to be a problem, cause we're going to have to file it differently...No, no it's really fine...

INSERT-COMPUTER:

On the screen, a meticulously organized accounting spreadsheet stares back at her. The numbers and values change as she types.

JANE (CONT'D)
Don't worry about it, I've got
nothing else going on today.

She continues to write.

An alert pops up on her computer- Lunch, 12:00-12:15pm.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Jane grabs another nutritional shake, chugs it, tosses the carton away.

INT. HOME OFFICE- DAY

Jane pulls up an accounting software as she waits for the person on the other line to pick up.

JANE
Hi, Anthony, it's Jane at Armitage
Accounting, how are you...? Oh,
your office is closed today? I
thought-... Ah, yes, the
holidays...

She grits her teeth as she listens.

JANE (CONT'D)
Yes, they are...well, there's no
other time of the year quite like
it, is there?

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

A couch, coffee table and rug sit in the room in front of a fire place. A few family pictures, including one with JOEY, mid-late 30's, tall and sweetly handsome, hang on the wall.

Boxes- most of them reading "Xmas Things" with a few scattered ones labeled "Greg's Things" tower in the room.

Jane, lips pursed, a fancy seltzer can in hand, looks around the room.

JANE

Fuck it.

She plops the seltzer on a nearby flat surface, heads towards one of the "Xmas things" boxes.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Jane places a large, festive bowl on the island counter. She drops into it a handful of candy canes, some of them having seen better days.

INT. HALLWAY- DAY

She opens the first Christmas card on the pile- looks at it- an adorable family, the PARENTS, any ethnicity, either hetero or same sex couple, mid to late 20's, with their cherub faced BABIES, newborn, sit on a green blanket wearing matching shirts.

Jane stands it up on the entryway table.

She opens the next one- another FAMILY, any ethnicity, either a hetero or same sex couple, with a 5 YEAR OLD BOY and a 3 YEAR OLD GIRL, standing by their Christmas tree.

Jane does her best not to roll her eyes, places it next to the other card.

She opens the next one- a YOUNG COUPLE, late 20's-early 30's, both of their hands on the woman's very pregnant belly.

She grits her teeth, places it on the entryway table.

JANE

The next one better be a cute dog picture.

She rips the envelope open, pulls the card out to reveal:

INSERT- CARD:

An adorable dog with a Santa hat. On its side, a sweet looking 6 YEAR OLD BOY, leans against its side, smiling.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

It's sunset. Jane sits on the couch, a glass of wine in hand, stares into the fireless fire place. She takes a sip of wine, savors the bittersweet flavor.

OS: The slow, low meow of a cat.

Jane perks up, looks around. Silence. She shrugs it off, goes back to snuggling with her glass of wine.

OS: The meowing of two cats

Jane sits straight up. She gets off the couch, walks over to the window that faces outside.

She looks out- the one house nearby and her lawn are completely empty. The snow outside doesn't have any tracks on it.

Behind her, the tapetum of two cat eyes glow like fireflies in the fireplace. Jane continues to search outside, remains oblivious to them.

In the reflection of the window, FREYA, mid 40's, tall and strong, light grey skin, long blonde hair, her white weathered dress with feathers sewn into it, stands behind her. She reaches out slowly, places her hand on Jane's shoulder, attempts to pull her in her direction.

Jane gasps, turns around:

The fireplace is empty. Freya is nowhere to be seen.

JANE
(shaking her head)
Jesus, one glass of wine and...

She spots something on the floor, puts her wine glass down, kneels down:

A bird feather, the same on on Freya's dress, rest on the floor. Jane picks it up, observes it, feels the soft bristles.

INT. BLACK VOID- NA

Freya stands in a cold, vacuous space, her two cats standing at attention by her feet. She points, mouth saying something urgent, forceful.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

The doorbell rings. Jane snaps out of her daze, looks towards the front.

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane opens the front door. Joey, bundled and rosy cheeked from the cold, stands in the doorway. He holds up a present.

Jane quickly puts the feather in her pocket.

JANE
(playing along)
Is that for me?

JOEY
Yes, but you're only allowed to
open it if you come with me.

JANE
If you weren't my brother, that
would be an incredibly creepy thing
to say.

JOEY
Whatever it takes.

Jane smiles, steps aside.

JANE
You might as well come in, it'll
take a lot longer than you think.

Joey walks in, Jane walks back towards the living room, more importantly towards her glass of wine. Joey spots the pile of unopened Christmas cards, sees the ones that were opened.

JOEY
You didn't even open mine!

JANE
I saw yours already.

JOEY
Technically yes, but that was
before Michael and I decided on the
final design. Really, you're
missing out on the whole
experience.

JANE
(honest)
I'll open it later, I promise.
(beat)
Is he there with the kids already?

JOEY

Yes, he's there with those lovely nieces of yours that keep wondering where Auntie Jane is.

JANE

She is very busy tonight. Lots of important boss girl work to do.

JOEY

On Christmas Eve? Everything is closed.

JANE

The quicker I finish my work, the earlier I'll be able to go home tomorrow! See, everyone wins.

JOEY

Is it really?

In Jane's pocket, her phone buzzes. She pulls it out, looks at the message:

INSERT- PHONE:

A message from Ingrid, reading "Just left, bringing some surprises ;) be there soon!"

JOEY (CONT'D)

Look, I know you're gonna get mad and defensive, but I'm gonna say it anyway- I'm worried about leaving you alone.

JANE

Are you serious?

JOEY

Yes! There's supposed to be some hundred year noreaster, blizzard, big snow thing blowing through, you might get snowed in!

JANE

I've got plenty of food and water, just checked the flashlights, got firewood and Greg very conveniently still hasn't picked up half of his shit, including his snow blower.

JOEY

That too. Between Greg and... everything else.

JANE
You mean the miscarriage?

JOEY
Yes, between those two things, I
just think you should be around
people that love you.

Jane moves towards the kitchen as she talks.

JANE
I will be, I've got Ingrid coming
over.

JOEY
Ingrid? I thought she basically
doesn't leave the house unless its
to go to the fertility clinic.

JANE
She and Grayson are taking a break
from trying to conceive.

INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

Jane walks towards the fridge, looks up and down the shelves.
Joey trails behind.

JOEY
Really? That sounds unlike her.

JANE
I mean, I get it. Sometimes you
just need to give things a rest.
And besides, Grayson isn't back
from San Antonio till tomorrow, so
we'll be keeping each other company
and pretending it's just any other
night.

Jane finds what she was looking for- a pre-made cheese plate.

JOEY
Are you sure she's the best person
to be spending Christmas Eve with?
She's kinda....

JANE
What?

JOEY

Okay, I know this is a bitchy thing to say, but she gives off, like, HGTV blonde vibes.

JANE

(flummoxed)

And that's...what is that?

JOEY

It's like, they're not a Fox blonde that survives off of vodka tonics and internalized misogyny, but they all have the same sandy blonde hair, the same uniform of cute H&M tee with Seven jeans and a plaid tee around their waist, and they definitely vote Republican but are one of "the good ones". I feel like that's not great energy to be around.

Jane shakes her head as she pulls out a box of fancy crackers.

JANE

I don't care if she or anyone else is Republican. She's my friend, and we'll be spending Christmas together, and I'll see you tomorrow morning, promise.

Joey crosses his arms. He looks her dead in the eyes.

JOEY

If you leave me alone tomorrow with Aunt Aileen, I swear to God-.

JANE

I won't, I promise!

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane holds the front door open while Joey walks towards the car. He turns on his heels.

JOEY

(one last attempt)

What do I tell Mom and Dad?

JANE

That it's a little hard for me to be around kids right now.

Joey looks at her- she's not making it up. He puts his arms around her.

JOEY
Call or text me later, okay?

JANE
(nodding)
I'll see you tomorrow.

Joey smiles, turns, heads down to his car. Jane shuts the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Jane sets up the cheese and crackers as the news plays on the TV, discussing the upcoming storm.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
And now, for all those last minute
Christmas shoppers, here's some
quick gift ideas for those special
people in your life.

Jane rolls her eyes, turns off the TV.

In the reflection of the screen, Freya stands with her two cats, staring right at Jane.

Jane gasps, whips her body around, almost tumbles to the floor. She looks towards where Freya was standing- nothing and no one there.

JANE
Jesus Christ.

She walks towards the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY- LINEN CLOSET- NIGHT

Jane picks out a set of sheets, closes the cupboard.

INT. GUEST ROOM- NIGHT

Jane makes the guest bed up, aggressively tugging the sheets so they fit perfectly.

INT. BLACK VOID- NA

Freya holds her hand up, shouting something, as blood drips out of her palm.

EXT. SNOW- DAY

In a non specific part of the woods, bloods drips on to the snow, glowing bright red.

In sync with two of the drops, the doorbell rings.

INT. GUEST ROOM- NIGHT

Jane, now lying on the floor, comes back to the present, gets her bearings. She scrambles to her feet, shakes it off as if nothing happened.

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane opens the door. INGRID, early 30's, petite and exactly as Joey described her, stands in the doorway wearing a festive yet stylish sweater, a bottle of wine in hand, a large purse on her shoulder.

INGRID
Happy Festive Ladies Night!

She throws her arms around Jane, Jane smiles, hugs back.

INGRID (CONT'D)
I didn't know what else to call it.

JANE
It's perfect.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Ingrid unscrews the top of the wine bottle she bought, pours two glasses.

JANE
Screw cap, living on the edge here
aren't we?

INGRID
They just did an article in Wine
Spectator about it, don't judge a
book by its cover my lady.

She hands Jane a glass, raises her glass.

INGRID (CONT'D)

To a lovely night with my lovely friend, and...and sharing a really special night with each other.

Jane smiles, they toast, take a sip of their wine.

JANE

Ooo, this is very, I don't know, it's not meaty, but it kind of tastes, savory?

INGRID

It's good, right?

JANE

Yeah, it's really good. So have you talked to Grayson today?

INGRID

Yeah, they're still finishing the last round of wiring on the building, so he may have to get a later flight tomorrow.

JANE

How late?

INGRID

Pretty late. Like, not morning or afternoon.

JANE

Oh, Ingrid.

INGRID

Don't be. Once the baby comes, we'll be glad he got that holiday overtime money.

JANE

It'll happen, Ingrid. I know it's tough.

INGRID

(smiling through it)

Don't worry, I know it will.

(beat)

Oh my God, I almost forgot! I have the first round of surprises for you.

She reaches into her bag, pulls out a small box, rests it on the table. Jane watches with intrigue.

Ingrid opens it up, an array of mini bottles filled with oils, lotions and sprays sit on a bed of fake green grass.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Ta da!

JANE

What is it?

INGRID

It's my new, all organic, ethically sourced skin care line!

JANE

Oh, right, you told me about that a while ago!

INGRID

Yeah, I put it on hold during all the IV and hormone stuff, but now I finally had some time to focus on it.

She gingerly sets out the bottles.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Everything is grown at home, either in my garden or in my little herb thingy, sustainably made in my kitchen, and will leave you feeling like the star on top of a Christmas tree.

Jane looks at the bottle of lotion, opens it up.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Here, let me.

She reaches into her purse, takes out a bag of face sponges. She dips it in the lotion.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Close your eyes.

Jane closes them tight. Ingrid starts spreading the lotion purposefully on her face.

(Director's note: under her breath, Jane starts mumbling something inaudible, the audience barely sees her lips move)

JANE

It feels great. How much are you selling these for?

INGRID

Not sure yet. I want to price it so everyone could afford it. Not just rich white ladies with corporate jobs.

JANE

But aren't those rich corporate ladies how you make a profit?

INGRID

It's not always about profit. Sometimes it's about giving folks have something if you're in the position to.

JANE

That would not sit well with investors.

INGRID

Well, those wealthy libtards could use a little humility, maybe even a wake up call.

A slightly uncomfortable silence as

JANE

Sorry, my accountant was showing.

INGRID

Don't even! It's not you whose neck I want to ring.

(beat)

Okay, open.

Jane opens her eyes, feels her skin.

JANE

Wow, this feels amazing.

INGRID

It has red clover extract, good for inflammation and a lot of other things. I'm thinking of bulk making a bunch of product now and then launching in late spring, when people want to start looking good for the beach.

JANE

This is really impressive. You should be very proud of yourself, especially after the year you had.

INGRID

(pointing to the boxes)
What about the year you had?

JANE

It's fine, really.

INGRID

Have the pregnancy symptoms gone away?

JANE

Yes, thank God. I can finally wear my old clothes again.

INGRID

And wait, I'm sorry, Greg has not called once to check on you? Just to, like, see how you're doing?

JANE

Of course not.

INGRID

Ugh, men are so useless sometimes.

She takes another sip of wine.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Time to break the seal. That glass better be empty by the time I get back.

Jane laughs as she gets to her feet, walks out. She takes a sip of her wine.

She grabs her plate, starts sweeping some of the crumbs and wrappers onto it. She gets up.

INT. BLACK VOID- NA

One of Freya's cats stares into the camera, hisses.

Freya reaches out of frame, eyes angry, she pulls her hand back to reveal.

A mass of blood and flesh, maybe a face somewhere in there but hard to tell. It bleeds, pulsates.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Ingrid comes back from the bathroom, spots Jane, freezes.

INGRID

Oh my God!!

She runs over to Jane, on the floor, her eyes in the back of her head, grabbing at her lower torso. She starts to shake.

Ingrid quickly grabs a spoon, puts it in Jane's mouth to keep her from biting down.

She grabs the bottle of wine, opens it up, holds it under her nose.

Jane stops shaking, takes a deep quick breath in, comes to. She catches her breath, Ingrid takes the spoon out of her mouth.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

JANE

Yeah, I'm fine.

Ingrid gives her a look.

JANE (CONT'D)

Okay, I don't know if it's me being tired or, something, but I keep thinking I'm seeing something.

INGRID

Something?

JANE

Yeah, it's this woman, she keeps trying to tell me something, but I can't hear her.

OS: The wind starts blowing hard outside.

INGRID

A woman?

JANE

Yeah, I think. I don't know, maybe I saw her in a movie and it's my subconscious acting up. Holidays and all that.

INGRID

Maybe I should take you to the doctor?

JANE

No, it's fine, really. It's probably-.

OS: The wind suddenly bursts at full strength.

A gust of soot from the fireplace blows out, Ingrid and Jane move backwards, cough from the particles that got in their mouth. They fan away the lingering clouds.

As the dust clears, a small burlap sack with with mistletoe tie around it reveals itself.

Ingrid and Jane stare at it.

INGRID

What is that?

JANE

I,I, I don't know.

Jane walks over to the fireplace, bracing herself more and more with each step. Ingrid's eyes dart between the bag and Jane.

Jane bends down, looks at the bag, as if it might reveal itself. She finally reaches over, picks it up, opens it slowly to reveal:

Tiny white objects, caked with something dark red. Jane reaches in, pushes them around to get a better look, they rattle with each movement.

A set of baby teeth reveal themselves under the other baby bones.

Jane drops the bag, backs away as quickly as she can, stumbling over and around the furniture.

INGRID

What is it??

Jane tries to formulate words, but no luck.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Jane, what's wrong?

JANE

Don't look in the bag.

INGRID

I won't.

JANE

No, seriously, don't fucking look in it.

INGRID

(calmly)

Okay, I won't. I'll just back up, and grab it, and throw it in the trash.

Ingrid walks towards the fireplace, carefully bends down and picks up the bag while looking the other way. Jane tries to calm her body.

Ingrid closes the bag.

INGRID (CONT'D)

I've got this. Don't worry.

She walks out of the living room towards the kitchen.

Jane stares at the fireplace, waits for it to do anything.

She looks out towards the nearby window, tries to search for anything in the pitch black night.

She marches over to the fireplace, grabs a fire poker, starts slamming it around the fireplace.

INGRID (O.S.) (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

She turns around- Ingrid, the bag now gone, stands behind her watching Jane cautiously.

JANE

Trying to scare away whatever is up there.

INGRID

I'm sure it's gone by now.

INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

The wind continues to howl outside, a thick flurry of snow falls.

Jane sits at the kitchen island, cheese plate and wine bottle now on it. Ingrid hands her a glass of tea.

JANE

Thanks.

INGRID

I always made peppermint tea for Joelle. I'd steal the bags from the wait station when no one was looking.

JANE

Ooo, you wild child.

She takes a sip of tea. Ingrid finds the right entryway.

INGRID

Are you sure you're okay?

JANE

Yeah. Why wouldn't I be?

INGRID

You just seem, I don't know, off.

JANE

You know I don't like the holidays.

INGRID

It's not just that.

Jane looks at her.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Do you think you've processed what happened to you? With the baby?

JANE

What do you mean process?

INGRID

Like, actually healed from it, you know? That can do a number on the brain, and the body.

JANE

(insistent)

I'm fine. I don't need help.

INGRID

You know you can tell me anything.

JANE

I know, and I'm telling you, I'm fine.

Ingrid opens her mouth to say something, decides not to die on that hill.

INGRID

Okay, my bad. My pushy is showing.

JANE

It's fine. You know, I've been busting my ass the last year to get a promotion at the firm, maybe it's my immune system weakening cause-.

As she speaks, the lights suddenly shut off.

JANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(groaning)

Noooooo.

Jane fumbles around in the dark, grabs her phone.

INGRID (O.S.)

Oh shit. I'll go check if the circuits blew. You have a voltmeter right?

JANE

A what?

Ingrid's phone flashlight turns on, Jane's right after.

INGRID

Never mind, the panel is down in the basement?

JANE

Yeah, towards the back. I'll grab the candles and lanterns.

Ingrid turns her phone flashlight around, walks towards the basement.

Jane gets up, lets out a long, frustrated groan.

INT. GARAGE- NIGHT

Jane turns on one of the battery powered lanterns, it emits a warm glow. She pulls out her phone:

INSERT- PHONE:

2 missed calls from Joey. She presses call back.

On the other line, the phone rings twice, then:

JOEY (O.S.)

Hey, we just lost power, are you guys okay??

JANE

Yeah, we're fine. Jane's checking downstairs to make sure the circuit breaker didn't fry.

JOEY

Wow, she really is the HGTV blonde.

JANE

You guys hanging in?

JOEY

We're fine.

(beat)

Maybe it'd be better if you come over tonight. Who knows what else this storm will bring, and we might get power before you do-.

JANE

Joey, stop it.

JOEY

Stop what.

JANE

Making me feel guilty for my choice.

JOEY

I'm not trying to.

JANE

Well, it feels a lot like it.

INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

Ingrid scans the kitchen, spots an iPad on the counter nearby. She turns the flashlight on, turns it and her phone facedown to light the room up.

She bends down, rummages through the sink to find any flashlights. She shakes her head, no luck.

She gets up. In the reflection of the windows, Freya stands watching her with disapproval.

Ingrid pauses, sensing a presence in the room. She slowly turns towards the window- nothing.

Ingrid turns back. Freya stands in front of her, reaches out, grabs her neck.

Ingrid chokes, tries to grasp whatever bits of air she can. She tries to fight Freya off, throws punches and scratches- her skin remains unbruised and uncut.

INT. GARAGE- NIGHT

Jane paces back and forth, phone to her ear.

JOEY (O.S.)

Look, I just don't get why you want to be around us, that's all.

JANE

It's not that. I just don't want to be around people!

JOEY

Why? What's so wrong about actually letting yourself be taken care of.

JANE

Because I don't want to put up with any more lies!

JOEY (O.S.)

What lies?!

She struggles with the truth, tries to force it out of her.

JOEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Jane, what haven't you told me?

JANE

You won't understand. It's not even worth it.

JOEY

You're my little sister, of course it is.

Jane shakes her head, tries to fight the tears of shame.

JANE

Look, I'll talk to you about it some other time. And Mom too. Tonight, I just can't.

OS: On the other line, a little girl calls for Daddy

JOEY (O.S.)
Look, I gotta go, Maddie's scared
of the dark. I'll call you later,
okay?

Jane shakes her head, hangs up.

INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

Jane sighs as she walks back into the kitchen, looks up to
see:

Ingrid, choking herself, blue in the face.

Jane runs over, grabs her arms, tries to pry her fingers away
from her throat. Her fingers let up an inch, Ingrid quickly
grabs a fleeting breath.

Jane grimaces as she tries to free Ingrid, the strain
becoming more intense.

Finally, Ingrid lets go. She breathes a sharp, desperate
breath in. Jane goes tumbling backwards, falling onto the
floor on her back. She pulls herself back up on to her feet.

JANE
Are you- I mean what were...what
the fuck is happening?

Ingrid stays silent, in shock. She looks at Jane, shakes her
head as her breath steadies.

INGRID
I was looking for candles, and
thought I saw something, then...
everything went black.

JANE
We need to call the police.

INGRID
It's no use. All the emergency
lines are probably clogged up for-.

JANE
Don't say the fucking holidays!!

Ingrid goes silent, stares at Jane.

INGRID
I was going to say the storm.

JANE
Shit, you're right.
(beat)
I'm sorry.

INGRID
Is there, something going on?

JANE
(resolute)
No.

INGRID
Jane, we're best friends.

JANE
I know. And there's nothing going
on.

Ingrid thinks of a counterargument, decides to nod in agreement instead.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

All the candles and flashlights are illuminating the house as much as possible. Ingrid and Jane sit curled up on the couch, a second bottle of wine in front of them, a bag of Christmas poppers between them.

Ingrid picks one out of a bag.

JANE
Did your family ever do these
growing up?

INGRID
We were lucky if we got presents.
My Dad used to say "the love we
have in our hearts, and the roof
over our head is the best gift we
could ask for." It was cute until
we were old enough to really know
why Santa never showed up.

Ingrid pulls it apart. It makes a loud crack, she jumps back a bit.

Jane reaches in, grabs one.

JANE
I never thought they were fun. They
were calming.
(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

The way that, you knew what was going to happen, the pop, but you still jumped. And after the initial shock, you feel really calm.

(beat)

Joey used to tease me with them, so I tried to get used to them. Can't beat 'em, join em, right?

She pulls it apart, a loud crack. She smiles as her shoulders jump at the sound.

Ingrid reaches in, pops another one.

INGRID

You know, if something is wrong, you can tell me.

JANE

I know. Thanks.

Jane reaches in, grabs another popper, pulls it like she's beheading a chicken.

OS: a loud thud, from somewhere above.

JANE (CONT'D)

What was that?

INGRID

What was what?

Ingrid and Jane pause, listen carefully.

INGRID (CONT'D)

(cautiously)

I don't think I heard anything.

She reaches in, grabs another popper. She starts to pull when:

OS: A tap tap tap on the roof.

Jane brings her hand to Ingrid's, lowers the popper.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Jane, what do you hear?

JANE

You don't hear it?

INGRID

No.

She pulls the popper apart.

OS: A series of thuds, like something or someone, crawling on the roof.

JANE
(hushed)
Shut the fuck up, I hear something.

Ingrid freezes, looks between the ceiling and Jane.

INGRID
Whatever you're hearing is probably
just a...raccoon, or branches, or-

JANE
No, it's definitely not that.

INGRID
Jane, you're-.

JANE
How are you not losing your shit
right now? After the kitchen?

INGRID
Look, when I've had some wine I've
had bad reactions, hence the not
driving back till tomorrow morning
thing.

JANE
This is different. This feels
different.

INGRID
Look, you're under a lot of stress
at work, at with losing the-.

Jane gets up, snatches the flashlight off of the coffee table, marches over to the stairs.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Jane, wait.

Ingrid throws her hands in the air, grabs a candle off of the table.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane marches over to the drawstring for the attic stairs.
Ingrid follows behind, trying not to get candle wax
everywhere.

INGRID

Jane, don't, it could be dangerous
up there.

JANE

I need to see it for myself. We
need to see it.

She reaches up, pulls the draw string down. The ladder stairs
drop down right at Jane's feet.

INT. ATTIC- NIGHT

Jane's flashlight peers over the edge, followed by her hand,
then body. She plants her feet on the floor, starts scanning
the room.

Ingrid follows behind, more slowly with her flame.

INGRID

Can you see anything?

JANE

No, not yet.

They continue to tiptoe through the attic, scanning the room
with the little light they have. Odd shapes and outlines
surround them in the darkness.

OS: A louder, clearer crawling on four limbs.

Jane whips around, points her flashlight towards the noise.

Ingrid holds her hands up, points below to:

A game box, the marbles inside it scattering everywhere.

INGRID

(whispering)

Sorry!

Jane sighs, nods. She turns back, scans the room.

Ingrid's candle flame flickers, then blows out.

INGRID (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Shit.

Jane turns the flashlight, holds her hand out to the light.

JANE

Here, take my hand.

Freya's whether, grey hand reaches out, grabs Jane, pulls her toward her. Jane frantically tries to pull away, but Freya's pull is smooth and strong.

Jane holds her flashlight up towards Freya- there's nothing there.

Jane starts to panic.

The flashlight begins to fade.

JANE (CONT'D)
No, no, no. Fuck! Ingrid?!

She waits- nothing.

Behind her, Freya's eyes glow in the darkness.

Jane turns her flashlight around. Just grey nothing in front of her.

The flashlight fades. It all goes dark.

JANE (CONT'D)
Fuck, fuck, fuck!

Note: Until stated, the rest of the scene is in total darkness.

She tries to calm her panicked breath.

She lowers to her knees, taps around for anything. She stumbles, falls to her stomach, winces in discomfort.

She feels something, gives it a shake. It sounds like a box of matches.

She carefully opens it, grasps a match, strikes it against the flint.

The light of the match illuminates enough to reveal Jane's

INT. COFFIN- TIME NA

Jane, on her stomach, holds the match in front of her. She looks around, screams in panic.

She turns around, tries to find a loose piece of wood, an unscrewed hinge, anything.

She starts punching the top of the coffin with her free hand with all of her might. She hits, and hits, and hits. Then, she freezes, looks down to her legs to see:

Blood, coming from inside her, starting to fill the coffin.
Jane bangs harder and harder against the top of the coffin.

JANE
(hoarse)
Help, help, somebody!!

The coffin continues to fill. Jane starts to choke on the blood. She drops the match.

JANE (CONT'D)
No!!

It goes dark, silent.

INGRID (O.S.)
(faded)
Jane?? Jane??

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane, on the floor, beads of sweat dripping down her face, her hair matted, her body shaking, opens her eyes.

Ingrid crouches above her, holding a spoon.

INGRID
Holy shit.

Jane looks around her.

JANE
(disoriented)
What, wait, where am I?

INGRID
You're at home, with me, your friend Ingrid.

JANE
Wait, but the noise, the attic.

INGRID
What attic? You have an attic?

JANE
(searching)
How long have I been out?

INGRID

You came back from the garage, we were setting up the candles, and then you just... I don't know what the fuck you did, but you did something.

Jane sits herself up, wipes her brow, neatens her hair.

INGRID (CONT'D)

I'm going to ask you one last time.
Are you all right?

Jane tries everything she can to nod- no luck. She ends up nodding, tears forming in her eyes.

Ingrid sighs, wraps her arms around her, pats her back.

Jane continues to shake her head as tears flow.

INGRID (CONT'D)

It's okay, I've got you now.
Everything's going to be okay.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT

Ingrid places a cup of tea on the bedside table next to Jane's phone. She sits on the edge of the bed next to Jane, pale and curled up under the blankets.

Ingrid tries to find the right words, gives up, puts her hand on Jane's shoulder.

JANE

I'm sorry.

INGRID

For what?

JANE

For tonight.

INGRID

Please, don't even.

JANE

I just, thought I could get through it without dealing with it, you know?

INGRID
(carefully)
Have you...have you thought of
talking to anyone?

JANE
I don't have the time.

INGRID
Jane.

JANE
I haven't really been able to talk
about it.

INGRID
Losing a baby, and then a break up,
is really tough.

Jane shifts, leans on her side, faces away from Ingrid.

JANE
I didn't lose it.

INGRID
Oh, I know it's not your fault, or
anything like that-.

JANE
No, I mean, I didn't lose it. I
gave it up.

Jane's body releases, finally letting go of the act. A tense
silence grows between them. Ingrid just nods her head.

JANE (CONT'D)
Please. Say something.

INGRID
We can talk about it later. Right
now, you should rest up.

She leans down, gives her a quick hug, gets up and leaves.

Jane breathes deeply, her eyes flutter closed.

OS: From outside, carolers can be heard signing a tune.

Jane turns over, grabs a pillow, puts it over her ear.

OS: The caroling continues, morphing into hushed whispers in
an ancient language.

Jane grips the pillow tighter, presses it harder against her skin.

The whispering continues, gets louder, more fervent.

Jane groans, sits up in bed.

JANE
I swear to-.

She turns towards the side of the bed, tries to stifle a scream that comes out as a gasp.

Freya stands by her bed, her eyes glowing white. She holds a finger to her lips.

Jane freezes, clutches her blanket close to her.

Freya slowly lowers her finger, glides it towards the door, points to it.

Jane looks to the door, then to Freya, waits for an answer.

Freya glares at her, points again.

Jane works against her will to move her body, turns to the edge of the bed.

She puts her feet on the floor, slowly gets up, stands face to face with Freya, she nods.

Jane heads towards the door.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane quietly walks down the hallway, towards the whispering that gets louder with each step.

Jane cranes her head around the corner, tries to see who's there.

POV SHOT:

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

The baby bones from before, laid out in an upside down triangle shape. A small sprig of mistletoe sits in the middle of it.

A woman's hand takes a knife, cuts her finger, brings it to the bones and mistletoe.

Jane keeps as still and quiet as possible as she moves a few inches forward, gets a clearer scene of the living room:

POV SHOT:

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

The hand goes towards the face it belongs to to reveal:

Ingrid, sitting in front of the baby bones and mistletoe, her eye full and body alert with purpose. She continues her incantation.

INGRID

Freya, hear my plea, use my vessel,
bring me life.

She lowers herself, bows to the baby bones and mistletoe.

Jane immediately covers her mouth, suppresses her cry. She steadies herself against the wall, tries to walk backwards to her bedroom.

INGRID (CONT'D)

(to Jane)

It's not there.

Jane freezes.

JANE

What's not there?

Ingrid brings herself up, turns towards Jane at the top of the stairs.

INGRID

Your phone, it's not there. So
don't bother trying to call
anybody.

Jane nods, collapses to the floor.

JANE

What's going on?

INGRID

A simple and painless process. You
really won't feel anything until-.

JANE

(angry)

What is going on?

INGRID

What's going on is that I'm getting what I want, and you're going to help me with it.

Ingrid gets up, walks over towards the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane's body is completely still, her face sallowed. Ingrid climbs up the stairs.

JANE

You lied to me.

INGRID

And you lied to me. I knew, Jane, I knew this whole time about the child you killed.

JANE

What? How?

INGRID

My friend from work. She was there, heckling the women that went in to that horrid place-which don't get me wrong, it is not right at all to make those women feel like criminals for giving into societal pressure- but anyway, she was there, and she saw you. She recognized you from my block party and asked me about it. And then the next day, you looked me in the eyes and told me you "lost the baby".

Jane avoids her gaze.

JANE

I did what I had to do.

INGRID

You did what you wanted to do. Look at you, you have a house, a great job, no fucking debts or loans to pay off, a supportive family. I don't have half of those things, and if I was finally able to conceive, I still would do the right thing.

JANE

The right thing for you.

Ingrid slaps her across the face, Jane recoils. She turns back, sees the tears stinging Ingrid's eyes.

INGRID

How could you? We're best friends.

JANE

I wouldn't use that phrase to describe us right now.

Ingrid shoots up, walks back downstairs.

INGRID

I can't wait anymore time explaining this to you. I have to finish the ritual so it'll take hold.

JANE

Take hold?

Ingrid turns to her.

INGRID

The baby. It's almost done, you drank my blood in the wine, you drank the potion I put in the tea. We're more than halfway there.

She picks up the mistletoe, holds it up in praise.

INGRID (CONT'D)

In the name of Freya, I invoke this new spirit, and offer it a home in this vessel called Jane-.

Jane pulls herself up, hobbles down the stairs.

INGRID (CONT'D)

So that on this night, we bring-.

From behind her, Jane pushes Ingrid to the ground. She collapses, the bloody mistletoe goes across the room.

Jane starts patting down Ingrid's body, feeling for her pulse.

Ingrid kicks her from behind, sends Jane backwards.

Ingrid shoots up, red in the face, hell in her eyes, holds her hand towards Jane's womb.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Place this new life in this vessel
and grant me the gift of-!!

OS: A phone vibrates from upstairs.

Jane and Ingrid both freeze. They wait for the other's move.

OS: The phone upstairs vibrates again, and again.

Jane scrambles, starts to quickly crawl up the stairs.

Ingrid growls, runs after her.

INT. STAIRS- NIGHT

Jane begins to get up, pulling herself up with the railing.

A shooting pain hits her, she crumbles, grabs her lower abdomen.

Ingrid catches up to her. She grabs the back of Jane's shirt, starts to pull her downstairs.

Jane elbows Ingrid in the ribs. Ingrid wretches, stumbles down the stairs. Jane scrambles, makes a dash for the:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY- NIGHT

Jane gets to the top landing, pauses.

OS: The buzzing, coming from behind the door of the bathroom.

Ingrid's hands slap down on the top stair, pulls her body up.

Jane throws the door open, runs into the:

INT. BATHROOM- NIGHT

Jane runs in, slams the door shut, locks it.

OS: On the other side, Ingrid's fists slam against the door.

Jane frantically looks around the bathroom, hears the buzzing from under her feet.

She looks down at the bathmat, sees the outline of the phone.

She tosses the bathmat aside, her phone rests in its place.

She snatches the phone, checks the Caller ID:

INT. DINING ROOM- NIGHT

Joey leans against the entry way. Behind him, the FAMILY, male and female, 8-65, sit at the plentiful dinner table.

VOICEMAIL (V.O.)

If you'd like to leave a message-.

Joey sighs, hangs up. From behind him, MOM, late 60's, calls out:

MOM

Everything all right honey?

JOEY

Yep, just trying to check on Jane, again.

MOM

Oh, I'm sure she's fine, she always is.

Joey tries to convince himself that true, shakes his head, turns to the dining room.

INT. BATHROOM- NIGHT

Jane looks at her battery life- 2%.

JANE

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

She goes through her contacts, presses Joey, her phone goes towards the Call button as:

The phone goes dark.

Jane crumbles, drops it as she goes into fetal on the ground.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY- NIGHT

Ingrid stands on the other side of the door.

INGRID

Jane, come on, please, do this for me.

JANE (O.S.)

No.

INGRID
Please, for once think of somebody
other than yourself.

JANE (O.S.)
You think I'm selfish for not
wanting to be a Mom.

INGRID
(hurt)
I think you're selfish, period.

INT. BATHROOM- NIGHT

Jane nods, either shocked or numb from the remark. She looks around the room, spots a pair of nail scissors on the sink.

She pulls herself up, leans against the sink. Her fingers reach for the scissors.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY- NIGHT

Ingrid taps her foot.

INGRID
Okay, look, I'm sorry. That's not
entirely true, but I just...
(beat)
I want this so bad. And I just feel
like, this is a wonderful
experience that we can share
together. We're always looking for
that, right? Ways to feel more
connected with each other?

She waits for an answer. Silence.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Jane? Jane??

A thud, possibly onto the floor.

INGRID (CONT'D)
(genuine worry)
Jane!

She tries to pull the door open again, no luck. She reaches into her hair, pulls out a hair pin.

INT. BATHROOM- NIGHT

The lock jiggles and jiggles, finally clicks. The door flies open.

Ingrid looks around the bathroom, her eyes go wide when she sees:

The bathroom window open, cold air blowing in.

She runs over, looks out and all over, spots something in the distance.

INGRID

Fuck!!

EXT. BACKYARD- NIGHT

Jane limps around the side of the house, looks out to:

The woods, dark, ominous, unsafe.

She looks around for a place to hide, looks towards the front of the house.

The light from inside pours out as the front door opens. Ingrid's shadow appears.

INGRID (O.S.)

Jane, where are you?

Jane frantically runs towards the back porch, disappears into the darkness.

A few moments later, Ingrid, in a jacket, comes around, the knife from before in one hand, flashlight in the other. She scans the darkness.

INGRID (CONT'D)

(acting)

Jane, you should really come in,
it's freezing out here.

She looks for footprints, pieces of clothing, anything to hint at her location.

She around the porch, missing a small opening under the wooden side paneling:

EXT. PORCH- NIGHT

Jane, hidden underneath the porch, cowers in the corner, barely breathing.

From the sliver of opening between the ground and wood, she sees Ingrid's flashlight scanning back and forth.

The footsteps get closer, the light brighter.

Jane shrinks herself towards the back as much as possible.

The light pauses.

Jane holds her breath.

The light moves away, fades, it goes black.

Jane releases her held breath.

FADE TO BLACK

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PORCH- DAY

Jane, cuts and bruises from the night before, sleeps against a plastic storage bin. Her eyes flutter open, she shifts up and awake.

She looks around, gets a sense of her surroundings. Then, something is off. She looks down to her stomach.

It's protruding, as if she was already entering her second trimester.

Jane hyperventilates. Starts to crawl towards the opening.

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

Jane hobbles through the opening, grunting and heavily breathing.

She catches her breath, looks towards the car, starts to clumsily crawl over there.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

POV SHOT

Jane, a tiny dot in a sea of white, makes her way towards the driveway.

Ingrid, cup of tea in hand, watches Jane through the window, taps the side in thought.

OS: From the kitchen counter, Jane's phone vibrates.

INT. CAR- DAY

Joey sits in his family sedan, his brow furrowed, the phone ringing on the other line.

JANE (V.O.)
Hi, you've reached Jane-.

Joey hangs up. Starts writing a text:

"Hey, coming to check on you, should be there in an hour."

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

Jane gets closer and closer to the driveway, the car not so close but not so far.

From behind, Ingrid's hand grabs Jane's hair. Jane tries to pry her hand off, but Ingrid's grip-and will power-is stronger.

She falls back, gets dragged by Ingrid to the:

EXT. WOODS- DAY

Ingrid brings her to a clearing, drops her like a sack of potatoes.

Jane looks up, pleading.

INGRID
What?

JANE
Please, just...please.

INGRID
There's, there's no other way.

She pulls a small burlap sack from her pocket, pulls out a handful of dried milk thistle.

She sprinkles them in a circle.

JANE
Was it supposed to have gone this
fast?

INGRID
Nom, but I'm sure it's fine.

JANE
Ingrid I'm-.

INGRID
I said it's fine!! I've got it!

Jane closes her mouth, Ingrid continues to stare daggers at her as she completes the circle.

Ingrid holds her hands above her belly, closes her eyes.

INGRID (CONT'D)
In the name of Freya, I invoke
thee...

She brings her hands slowly, smoothly to Jane.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Bring me the life which cannot come
from me. Relieve the vessel I have
chosen of her fecund duties.

A contraction. Jane gasps.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Bring forth new life, so that I may
praise thee. In the name of Freya,
I invoke thee-.

Another harder, sharper contraction. Jane cries out.

INGRID (CONT'D)
(louder)
Bring me the life which cannot come
from me-.

Jane's stomach starts to undulate. She tries to control the pain to no avail.

Blood starts flowing onto the snow. Jane screams out.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Bring forth new life, so that I-.

She opens her eyes, sees the blood.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Oh my God, shit.

EXT. ROAD- DAY

Joey's sedan drives down the snowy, completely empty road.

EXT. WOODS- DAY

Jane continues to bleed an unnatural amount of blood. Ingrid searches for something, anything.

JANE
What are you doing?

INGRID
You're bleeding, what do you think
I'm doing.

She kneels down, holds her hands towards her wound.

JANE
(resigned)
Ingrid.

INGRID
In the name of Freya, I harness the
Earth to repair and restore. Repair
and restore, repair and restore!

The bleeding continues.

From behind them, Freya watches through the trees,
disapprovingly.

JANE
(pointing behind)
Ingrid!

Ingrid looks over, gasps.

Freya silently stares, holds up her index finger.

Ingrid starts to tear up, shakes her head.

INGRID
No, no I can't.

JANE
What is it.

INGRID
I have to pick. You or the baby.
She can't save both.

Jane goes silent, nods her head.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Let me think for a second, I can
figure this out.

JANE
Ingrid, save-.

INGRID
Um, tree of life, eternal sun, give
thee-.

JANE
Ingrid.

She brings Ingrid's hand to her belly.

JANE (CONT'D)
Save the baby.

INGRID
(tearful)
No, if I knew, I mean, if I
realized-.

JANE
It's fine. Really.

She leans back, takes a deep breath.

Ingrid nods, wipes her tears. Holds her hands above Jane,
concentrates.

Freya shakes her head, turns, walks away.

INGRID
In the name of Freya, I invoke
thee. Bring me the life which
cannot come from me. Relieve the
vessel I have chosen of her fecund
duties.

Jane lets out one last cry of pain, starts to go pale.

EXT. DRIVEWAY- DAY

Joey's sedan pulls up to the driveway, slows, stops.

Ingrid incants faster and faster, eyes closed, tears streaming.

FREYA

In the name of Freya I invoke thee!
Bring me the life which cannot come
from me. Relieve the vessel I have
chosen of her fecund duties. Bring
forth new life, so that I may
praise thee. In the name of Freya,
I invoke thee-.

She opens her eyes, looks down, gasps in horror.

No baby. No afterbirth. Just blood, and Jane's dead body.

INGRID

I, I'm so sorry.

Ingrid crumbles down to the ground, sobs.

JOEY (O.S.)

Jane? Jane you in there?

Ingrid turns, wobbles back to her feet, makes her way to the house.

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

Joey walks towards the back entrance, looks around, spots Ingrid.

JOEY

Oh, hey, Ingrid-.

INGRID

S-s-something happened.

CUT TO BLACK

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADOPTION AGENCY- DAY

Ingrid sits in an austere, official looking office across from an ADOPTION AGENT, mid 40's, grey hair, clothes from 30 years ago, scribbling notes.

ADOPTION AGENT

And how long have you and your
husband been married, Ms. DeSantis?

INGRID
10 years.

ADOPTION AGENT
And where is he today?

INGRID
Oh, he, uh, couldn't make it, but I
have our proof of income.

She takes a folder out of her bag, hands it to the adoption agent.

ADOPTION AGENT
And, lastly, what makes you and
your husband think that you'll make
good parents?

Ingrid opens her mouth, tries to find an answer.

INT. CAR- DAY

Ingrid pulls into her driveway, sullen faced. Her phone dings from her pocket, she reaches in and checks the screen- a message from "Hubby :)", reading:

Hey babe, staying out with the guys from work for a drink tonight- just landed a big account, gonna celebrate. Love ya.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Ingrid sits on the couch, glass of wine in hand, mindlessly watching TV.

INSERT-TV

A commercial for diapers comes on. A SMILING MOTHER, late 20's, and an ADORABLE BABY, a little under 1 year old, snuggle each other, the picture of happiness.

Ingrid takes a long, slow drink of her wine.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT

Ingrid gets under the covers, turns off the lights, goes to sleep.

In the darkness, a figure that looks almost exactly like Jane, wearing tattered white, stands at the edge of the bed, watches her, waiting.

CUT TO BLACK