

DEAR JANIE

FADE IN

EXT. CITY TRAIN STATION - DAY

A scattering of PEOPLE wait on wooden benches against the outside wall of the old-fashioned station.

Train WHISTLES.

A rush gathers by the platform, anxiously awaiting the train's arrival.

JANIE, early 30's, still sits. She rolls her ticket back and forth and taps her shoes on the wooden floor.

She flinches as the approaching train SCREAMS out.

Nearby a FATHER kneels down beside his daughter. The GIRL jumps around.

FATHER

Are you excited to ride the train
honey?

The girl violently nods her head 'yes'.

JANIE

(under her breath)
Until it derails.

The father turns to Janie.

FATHER

Excuse me?

JANIE

What? I didn't say anything.

The father takes his daughter's hand and moves away from Janie.

JANIE

Sorry.

The train halts, people rush up to the entrance. The ATTENDANT steps off. He places a small footstool in front of the steps to the doorway.

A YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN step off and rush quickly past the line of people forming beside the train.

ATTENDANT

Okay folks have your tickets ready.
Up and to the left.

He skillfully tears the tickets.

Janie stands up. She places her bag on her shoulder.

The line drizzles down to a single person.

ATTENDANT
Ma'am, is this your train?

Janie hands him her ticket and boards the train.

ATTENDANT
Up and to the left.

A second later Janie gets off. She takes a deep breathe.

JANIE
(to herself)
Okay.

She boards again. A second later she steps off again.

JANIE
(to herself)
Sure.

Janie boards, a second later she appears at the door, but the Attendant steps up in front of her, their noses are practically touching.

ATTENDANT
You know what I think? I think you should go. Whatta you say?

JANIE
Okay.

ATTENDANT
Yes? Final answer?

JANIE
Yes.

ATTENDANT
Fantastic. Now sit down please.

Janie takes a seat. The attendant picks up the footstool and continues to block the door eyeing Janie.

She peers out the window.

EXT. SMALL TOWN TRAIN STATION - DUSK

The train rolls to a halt. Janie hops off the train.

She zips up her jacket, shivering.

DAVE, early 30's, leans against his car. A YOUNG WOMAN comes up and hugs him. He takes her bags.

Janie and Dave see each other. Janie throws him a small wave. He ignores her, puts the bags in the trunk. The couple gets in the car and drives off.

Janie pulls up the handle on her wheeled suitcase.

JANIE

So far so good.

EXT. ROAD BY TRAIN STATION - DUSK

Janie strolls alongside the road clutching her jacket tight.

A police car pulls up. Janie peeks inside and stops.

CHUCK, 50's, rolls down the passenger's side window.

CHUCK

Evening. Where you headed miss?

Janie approaches the car and leans inside.

JANIE

Hi Chuck.

CHUCK

Well allbe Janie? I can't believe my eyes. Hop in let me give you a lift.

Janie throws her bags in the backseat. She jumps in the car.

They take off.

INT. CHUCK'S CAR - DUSK

Chuck drives.

CHUCK

My God good to see you.

JANIE

Yes, it has. You're looking good Chuck.

CHUCK

True love and cherry pie, best diet in the world.

JANIE

Duly noted.

CHUCK

I'm sorry to hear about your grandad. Everyone loved him around here, he was a good man. Is that why you're in town?

JANIE

Yep, I got a call from his lawyer saying he put me in charge of his estate. I guess my parents don't want to deal with it so here I am.

CHUCK

I don't think your dad and grandad talked much since you've been gone.

JANIE

Not surprised.

Janie looks out the window, examines her surroundings.

JANIE

So has anything changed around here?

CHUCK

Well, let's see there's a Dairy Queen, they moved the dump further away from town so there's less rats, the library burned down oh and because of a class action suit there's no more carcinogens in the water supply.

JANIE

Excellent.

EXT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Janie stands beside Chuck's car with her bags.

CHUCK

Let me know if you need anything okay?

JANIE

I appreciate that.

CHUCK

Come by the diner and see Helen
while you're here. She's gonna to
be excited to see you.

JANIE

Will do. Thanks for the ride.

Chuck drives off.

Janie looks down the street to a dark house, then back.

She marches up the sidewalk to the steps.

Three potted plants line each side of the steps. Janie lifts
the top plant revealing a key underneath, picks it up and
replaces the plant, smiling.

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Janie stumbles in the dark, hitting something with a THUD.

JANIE

Ouch!

She turns on a lamp. She holds her foot in pain.

She drops her bags, reading a sign by the door.

INSERT SIGN:

'SMILE IT CONFUSES PEOPLE'

BACK TO SCENE

JANIE

Good advice.

The room is small, sparse, not overly decorated but neat.

A thirteen inch television on top of a small wooden table in
the corner. The couch is in the middle of the room facing a
set of windows.

A huge desk lines a wall next to a large wooden bookshelf.

Janie plops down on the couch, exhausted.

She runs her hand across the arm of the couch feeling the
fabric. She curls up on one end pulling an old ratty blanket
over her.

JANIE

Hi grandpa, I'm home.

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

The early sun peeks through the thin window shades.

Janie wakes. She squints at the blinding light creeping in on her. She covers her face with the ratty blanket.

Peeking her head out she sniffs the air scrunching her forehead.

JANIE

What is that?

KITCHEN - MORNING

Janie opens the refrigerator and winces in disgust and instantly slams it shut.

JANIE

Oh my God! That's rancid.

She opens a window, frantically waving the fresh air in. Next to the window a very old key rack is mounted to the wall. She shuffles through the rows of keys, picks a set and takes it off the rack.

Janie turns to leave the room when she notices something of interest; notches carved into the door frame, one on top of the other with dates written above each of them.

She traces one of the notches with her finger.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

The rusted garage door opens to reveal an old pickup truck in mint condition.

Janie slides her index finger up the hood of the truck until she reaches the driver's side door handle.

Janie looks up holding the keys.

JANIE

I know you don't like anyone driving your truck grandpa, but a girl's got to get around. I knew you'd understand.

She gets inside and carefully closes the door. She starts the truck, excited. She revs the engine a few times.

JANIE

Sweet. Run baby run.

She goes to put it in gear when it shuts off.

INT. DINER - DAY

An old fashioned family owned style diner with booths lining the walls, a long counter and large, bright, welcoming windows.

Janie hurries past the other customers and sits in a booth at the very back facing away from everyone.

HELEN, late 50's, drops a menu down in front of Janie.

HELEN
(uncaring)
Do you want coffee, miss?

JANIE
Yes, but could you make it a lethal
dose please?

Helen finally looks up.

HELEN
Janie Granger!

JANIE
Hi aunt Helen.

Helen sits across from her. She reaches across the table to hold Janie's hands.

HELEN
Well, this is certainly a surprise.
How the hell are you kiddo?

JANIE
Pretty good, hanging in there.

HELEN
I heard you got yourself a good job
up there in the big city. Things
goin' real well for you.

JANIE
Not a millionaire yet, but there's
still time.

Helen smiles brightly.

HELEN

My, my. You have grown little girl.
I hardly recognized you.

JANIE

Still me, just add a few wrinkles.
How are you doing?

HELEN

Oh, same ol'. Guess I can't
complain much. Bought the place a
few years ago so I'm a business
woman now.

JANIE

That's great!

HELEN

I'm so sorry to hear about your
grandfather. We all loved him
around here. Came in every Sunday
for pot roast, even though my pot
roast is God awful.

JANIE

Thanks. That's why I'm here. I need
to get his house cleaned out and
papers in order yadda yadda.

HELEN

Have you talked to your parents
yet?

JANIE

And there it is.

Janie releases her hands from Helen's grip.

HELEN

Well missy?

JANIE

No, I have not talked to them.
Wasn't planning on it.

HELEN

Stubborn ass. You know for someone
who tries so hard not to be like
their parents you sure sound like
your momma.

Janie scowls.

JANIE

Why don't they come talk to me? Oh, wait, they haven't made any remotely close attempt to talk to me in...oh...years. I forgot.

They don't want to see me Helen, they don't want to talk to me. And you know what that's fine, really it's fine I accept that.

HELEN

I'm sure that's not true. You don't know everything, smart aleck.

JANIE

So I saw Chuck yesterday.

Helen leans closer following Janie's eyes.

HELEN

Don't change the subject missy.

Janie snickers. She leans back in the booth.

HELEN

I've known your mom my whole damn life, trust me, she's stubborn, a little mousy yes, but of course she wants to see you. You're her baby.

Janie lowers her gaze. A baby SCREAMS from across the diner.

HELEN

Okay, okay I'll let it be. It's great to see you hon. Let me get you that coffee.

Helen leaves. She stops SAM, early 20's, as she passes.

HELEN

Can you refill table 3 please?

SAM

Sure thing.

Sam refills a coffee cup at the next table over. She approaches Janie.

SAM

Excuse me I couldn't help overhearing you're Janie right?

JANIE

Yes?

Sam sits down.

SAM

Oh my gosh I thought I would like never get to meet you like ever and here you are.

JANIE

I'm sorry who are you?

SAM

Oh geez, I'm Sam I knew your grandfather. He talked about you like all the time. My Janie is out doing this or that. His like favorite topic.

JANIE

How did you know him?

SAM

I volunteered with the elderly buddies program, you know bringing meals, running errands, taking him to appointments, clean his house that sort of thing. He was one of my favorites. What a great guy.

JANIE

I didn't know he needed that. Well thanks for doing those things for him. I'm sure he liked the company.

Helen puts a coffee down in front of Janie.

HELEN

Sam honey we got some people waiting on their food.

Sam quickly jumps up.

SAM

Sure thing, sorry.

Sam rushes off, giddy.

HELEN

Do you remember what it was like to be that young and full of that kind of energy?

JANIE
Not really.

HELEN
Me either.

EXT. STREET/DINER - DAY

Janie strides toward the truck fiddling with her keys.

As she crosses the street she glances up and freezes in place. She places her arm high in the air, waving.

JANIE
(shouting)
Um...mom. Carol! Carol!

Janie frantically waves her arm.

CAROL, late 50's, briefly looks her way, but continues to walk briskly in the opposite direction as if she didn't notice.

Janie lowers her arm. She catches a glimpse from the disapproving strangers around her.

She continues to the truck and notices MARK, late 30's, writing her a ticket.

JANIE
Uh, excuse me officer, what did I do?

MARK
(not looking up)
This is not a parking space ma'am.

Mark continues to write the ticket. Janie looks confused. She glances around at the signs.

JANIE
It use to be a parking spot.

Mark looks up.

MARK
Janie?

JANIE
Mark?

MARK

Wow, what are you doing here? Not that I'm not happy to see you. It's just a surprise.

JANIE

My grandfather passed away.

MARK

That's right, that's right I knew that. I'm really sorry. Everyone liked him. Great guy. He worked on all the squad cars for us.

They both awkwardly survey each other.

MARK

Oh, don't worry about this.

He tears the ticket out, folds it, and puts it in his pocket. Janie politely laughs.

JANIE

Thanks. I'll try not to park here anymore.

MARK

How long are you in town for?

JANIE

Just until I get my grandpa's things settled. His house and stuff.

Janie looks Mark up and down.

JANIE

So, Mark you're a cop. Wooza!

MARK

Yes, crazy right? My dad moved away and there was an opening so I took it to stay here with my mom. Besides I thought I would look good in the uniform.

JANIE

Your dad moved huh?

MARK

My parents divorced shortly after... Well so they've been apart for awhile.

JANIE
 (uncomfortable)
 I didn't know that. How is your
 mom? I mean generally.

MARK
 She's okay, she's good fiery as
 ever. Really.

JANIE
 Good to hear. So how are you? Life
 and stuff?

MARK
 Pretty good. I have a little girl.

JANIE
 No?! Really?

Mark pulls his cell phone from his back pocket, pulls up a
 picture and shows Janie.

JANIE
 Oh my goodness. How is that
 possible?

MARK
 Her name's Isabel. Everyone calls
 her Izzy, she insists on it.

JANIE
 How old is she?

MARK
 6 going on 30. She's quite the
 firecracker.

JANIE
 She's beautiful.

Mark puts his phone away.

JANIE
 So you're married?

MARK
 Uh no, not for a long time. It was
 short lived.

They stare at each other not sure what to say next.

JANIE

I'd better get going. I have an entire refrigerator of rotten food to clean up.

MARK

Sounds like fun.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Officer Lawrence? Excuse me.

MARK

(to woman O.S.)

Yes ma'am be right there.

Janie opens her door to get inside.

MARK

Janie did you want to get dinner or some coffee after I get off work?

JANIE

Um...not today, I really need to get some stuff done.

MARK

Okay, I'm sure I'll see you around.

EXT. ED'S GARAGE - DAY

Janie creeps up on a decaying mechanic's garage. She stops across the street gripping the steering wheel, her knuckles turning white.

The cracked and peeling sign painted in huge red letters spells out "ED'S GARAGE".

A rugged man, JAKE, late 50's, staggers from around the building.

A truck drives by HONKING. Jake waves his soiled red handkerchief at the passing truck.

Janie savagely yanks the car into gear and makes a U-turn speeding off in the opposite direction.

Jake squints at the ball of dust rolling from behind the truck.

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Janie sits on the floor surrounded by a chaos of boxes, papers, and other such clutter.

She opens a bag taking out a large candle, sets it on the coffee table in front of her and lights it. She inhales the candle.

JANIE

Way better.

She pulls a box closer with her name written on the side of it. She takes out a handful of papers from it, school photos, and pictures she drew when she was a child. She tosses them aside.

JANIE

Ugg I hate that picture. So not a hat person.

Janie pulls another box toward her containing old worn out records. She flips through them removing one and turns it over.

She stands and crosses the room, removes the top of the record player, gently takes the record out of its discolored sleeve and puts it on the player.

She carefully places the needle down on the record. A slow chilled tempo echoes off the walls.

She returns to her place on the floor. The record skips a few times. She gathers up papers on the coffee table and puts them in a box.

She flips through newspaper clippings.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

-Janie, grade school age, posing in her baseball uniform.

-Janie, high school age, holding an award.

-Headline reading

"LOCAL TEENAGER KILLED IN CAR
CRASH, ONE OTHER INJURED"

BACK TO SCENE

She tosses them aside.

An envelope sticks out of the top of a stack of papers.

Janie pries them apart isolating the envelope. She flips it over to discover it has not been opened.

The record skips. She gets up, fixes the record.

She places the envelope on a shelf.

INSERT - ENVELOPE

Return address is filled out with the name ED GRANGER.
Addressed to JANIE GRANGER.

BACK TO SCENE

Janie carefully moves items around the envelope to keep it
secure and standing.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mark cuts up carrots as IZZY, 6, enters.

MARK
Hey sweetie.

IZZY
Hi daddy.

She tosses her backpack and jacket on the floor by the door
and sits at a chair across from Mark.

MARK
I can see your mom still doesn't
know how to tell time.

IZZY
Whatcha doing?

MARK
I am chopping carrots for your
salad my dear.

IZZY
I hate carrots.

MARK
Since when? You love carrots.

IZZY
Since always. I like celery not
carrots.

MARK
Now what kind of cocoo likes
boring old celery and not delicious
carrots?

IZZY
I do!

MARK
Okay, all right you win. Carrots it
is.

IZZY
(laughing)
No!

MARK
Right, right. Celery, celery. I got
it.

Mark gets celery from the fridge.

MARK
How was your day?

IZZY
Good.

MARK
What was the best part?

IZZY
Um...kickball.

MARK
Kickball huh? That's sounds like
fun.

IZZY
I'm really good too.

MARK
I bet you are.

IZZY
How was your day daddy?

MARK
Pretty good, pretty good. I ran
into an old friend today.

IZZY
That's nice.

MARK
It was nice.

EXT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - DAY

Janie peeks through the window as she holds a small box. A
figure crosses the room. Janie takes a deep breathe and
knocks very lightly.

INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - DAY

KITCHEN

Janie slithers inside. Her mother, Carol, stands across the room holding a wooden spoon reading a recipe. She is a short, pale woman; her hair tied up in a bun with bits of gray sticking out.

JANIE

Hi, mom.

Carol jumps, startled. She turns around to face Janie, gasping.

CAROL

Goodness, you scared the bejesus out of me.

JANIE

Sorry.

Carol smacks her on the arm with the wooden spoon.

CAROL

You shouldn't do that to people!

JANIE

Ow! Sorry, okay!

She holds her hand on her chest and lets out an exasperated breath. She grabs a dish towel off the counter.

They stand uncomfortably looking at each other. Finally, Carol goes to the stove where a boiling pot sits. She uses the towel to uncover the lid, stirs the contents.

CAROL

So, you came.

JANIE

In the flesh. How are you?

CAROL

I'm good. You?

JANIE

Good, great. I was wondering about grandpa's house, I have a few questions on what you want to do with it.

CAROL

I think you need to talk to Jake about that. He'll be at the shop most of the day.

JANIE

You know he won't talk to me.

Carol turns the flame down on the stove.

JANIE

I saw you in town yesterday.

CAROL

Oh, really, I didn't notice.

JANIE

I was waving and screaming your name.

CAROL

Maybe I didn't hear you.

JANIE

Maybe you were ignoring me.

Carol faces Janie.

CAROL

Maybe I didn't hear you. Look I've got a lot to do here, okay. So, did you need anything else?

JANIE

Alright, good talk. I guess I'll go see him. Does he still have his famous temper?

Carol's eyes burn into Janie's. Janie looks away.

Carol wipes the counter.

CAROL

You have no right to come in here and talk about him like that.

JANIE

Okay, fine. Forget it.

CAROL

You always were a busybody. Think you know everything about everything.

JANIE

Well one thing I know. I would never let any man speak to me the way he does to you.

CAROL

He speaks to me just fine. You can leave now.

Janie holds the box up for Carol to see.

JANIE

I got this candy, I know you like it.

Janie opens the door. She places the box of candy on the counter before she leaves.

EXT. ED'S GARAGE - DAY

Janie leans against the truck.

JANIE

Damn it.

She trudges toward the entrance. Jake around the side of the building watches her.

EDGAR, a very old man, in worn out clothing too big for him opens the door to greet her.

EDGAR

Janie? Is that you?

JANIE

Hi, Edgar. You still working here?

Edgar closes the door. He hunches over and painfully steps toward her.

EDGAR

Oh yes. Too stubborn and old to start anywhere new. Well, come here girl, let me have a look at you.

Janie comes closer to him and puts her hand on his shoulder.

EDGAR

My you all grown up and you shaped nicely.

JANIE

Thanks I guess.

EDGAR

Say do you know where your
grandfather's at? Haven't seen him
a long time now.

JANIE

Uh, Edgar my grandfather died.

EDGAR

No, you don't say?

JANIE

Yep, sorry I thought you would know
that.

EDGAR

But that bastard owes me \$13. He
said he'd pay me back.

JANIE

Okay, well not sure how that's
gonna happen.

Jake rounds the corner of the shop. He stiffens and his eyes
stern underneath the brim of an old dirty hat. Janie takes a
step back.

Jake crosses in front of Janie unconcerned about her
presence. He looks at Edgar.

JAKE

You get those orders ready yet, old
man?

Edgar waves him off as he goes back inside.

EDGAR

Hold your horses I'll get to it.

Jake grabs a rag off a railing and wipes his grease covered
hands. He boldly stares down Janie and shrugs his shoulders.

JANIE

Hi. Been awhile.

JAKE

Yep. So?

JANIE

I need to know what you want to do
with grandpa's house and his stuff.

He tosses the rag not caring where it lands.

JAKE

He put you in charge didn't he? I don't give a damn, do what you want.

JANIE

Boy that Edgar is something. It's great you kept him working here. He was telling me grandpa owed him \$13, good luck getting that back.

JAKE

You find all of this so amusing don't you? Just think everything is one big damn joke. Like my father dying.

JANIE

That's not what I meant and you know it.

JAKE

Like I said do what you want. Is that it?

Not waiting for an answer he walks back around the corner of the shop.

JANIE

I guess so.

EXT. STREET/BAR - EVENING

Janie trudges down the sidewalk lost in her own world. She comes across a small park.

She reads a plaque near the entrance.

INSERT PLAQUE:

"IN LOVING MEMORY OF WARREN LAWRENCE"

BACK TO SCENE

HELEN (O.S.)

Janie!

Janie sees Helen across the street waving. She jogs over.

HELEN

Hey, I was just going to grab a drink with Sam, join us.

JANIE

Um, no it's been a crappy day I don't feel like it.

HELEN

Even more reason to drink, hon. Let's go.

Helen pulls her inside.

INT. BAR - EVENING

The place is full of people drinking, laughing, and talking loudly with a thin fog of smoke filling the room.

The BAND finishes playing a song. Everyone CLAPS.

Helen, Janie and Sam laugh.

Janie coughs.

HELEN

Smoke getting to you?

JANIE

I thought they were supposed to outlaw smoking inside businesses.

HELEN

Not everywhere, unfortunately.

SAM

I know it sounds like a little insane, but it helps if you smoke yourself like even just once in awhile.

Sam lights up a cigarette. She smokes in one hand and downs a shot with the other.

JANIE

Jesus how old are you?

SAM

I'm old enough.

HELEN

Old enough to know better.

Sam coughs.

HELEN

Give me that. Clearly an amateur.

Helen takes the cigarette away from Sam and puts it out.

SAM

So I heard you were in a bad car accident.

HELEN

Sam. Really?

SAM

What? I didn't like mean anything by it I was just curious. That must have been horrible.

HELEN

Still. Learn some manners.

Mark enters. Helen waves and goes to greet him.

HELEN

Be right back. No more shots for you.

SAM

Did you get really hurt?

JANIE

Yeah I was hurt pretty bad. I was in the hospital for a few months, had to have surgery. Fun stuff like that.

SAM

Geez. Helen told me your boyfriend died in the accident.

JANIE

Yes, he did.

SAM

Is that why you left? Like I would leave if I were you, I would probably do that, I like couldn't take the memories and stuff.

JANIE

Something like that.

SAM

I'm sorry I shouldn't have like brought it up. I don't think too much before I speak sometimes. You probably don't want to talk about it.

Dave plays pool nearby and overhears the conversation.

He can't take it anymore and turns to face them.

DAVE

Why don't you tell her who was driving?

JANIE

Hi Dave. How've you been?

DAVE

Tell her who was driving.

JANIE

That's good Dave, great to hear it. Me? Oh I'm okay too.

Janie puts her drink down. She grabs her jacket.

JANIE

Bye Dave.

DAVE

I know you were drinking that night weren't you? Drugs? Whatever trash like you do.

Janie puts her jacket on and takes a step to leave, but Dave blocks her.

JANIE

No, actually I wasn't drinking or on drugs you were thinking of your mother when she was pregnant with you. Can I go now?

DAVE

Fucking bitch.

JANIE

Excuse me?

Mark rushes up, stepping in between them.

MARK

That's enough Dave.

DAVE

You have some nerve showing your face here like nothing ever happened, laughing and drinking.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

Warren doesn't get to do that why the hell do you? You should be in jail for what you did.

MARK

I said cool it Dave!

Janie storms off.

DAVE

How can you defend her Mark it's because of her your brother is dead? My best friend is dead because of that bitch.

MARK

Dave that was a long time ago so cool it.

Janie struggles through the crowd.

DAVE

She should be in jail. You should be in jail!

Mark continues to calm Dave down as Janie walks out.

EXT. STREET/BAR - EVENING

Janie composes herself. She hustles to get away from the bar.

She struggles to retrieve her keys from her jacket pocket. They fly out hitting the ground.

JANIE

Shit. Shit.

Mark exits the bar. He races to catch up to her.

MARK

Janie wait!

Mark reaches Janie. She's bent over searching.

JANIE

(frantic)
I lost my keys.

MARK

Okay, okay we'll find them.

Mark joins her in the search.

MARK

Dave is an asshole I hope you aren't listening to him.

JANIE

I don't give a damn what he thinks.

Mark finds the keys.

MARK

Found them.

JANIE

You don't hate me do you?

MARK

No, of course I don't.

JANIE

Why not?

MARK

What?

JANIE

Why don't you hate me?

MARK

Janie, it was an accident.

JANIE

Yeah. Can I have my keys please?

MARK

Go have pie with me.

JANIE

I don't want any pie.

Janie goes for her keys. Mark holds them just out of her reach.

MARK

Then you can watch me eat pie.

JANIE

Seriously?!

MARK

See here's the thing I refuse to eat pie alone and I get really grouchy when I'm craving pie.

Janie lunges to grab her keys, but Mark quickly pulls them away.

INT. DINER - EVENING

Chuck places two pieces of pie on the table.

Janie and Mark sit across from each other.

JANIE
Are you ever not working?

CHUCK
Not if Helen can help it.

Chuck walks away.

MARK
Thanks man.

Janie and Mark dive into their pie.

JANIE
It's so weird being back here.

MARK
How so?

JANIE
It's like everything is just a little bit different then what I remember. Like a Twilight Zone episode. Some things feel the same some things feel out of place.

MARK
What did you do when you left?

JANIE
Roamed around a lot. Got into a little bit of trouble, nothing serious. But don't look up my police record.

MARK
Oh I already have.

JANIE
Great. Then I went to college after much persuasion from my grandfather. Moved to the city.

MARK
What kind of work are you doing?

JANIE

I'm a social worker.

MARK

Wow, that's a tough job.

JANIE

Indeed. Day in and day out trying to find homes for lost forgotten kids. Then parents trying to convince me they deserve their kids back after they've done God knows what.

MARK

You don't think they deserve a second chance?

JANIE

I think most people don't deserve to be parents in the first place. Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should.

MARK

I guess you've got a point there.

JANIE

I still can't believe you're a cop, figured you'd be the big corporate type working for the man.

MARK

Is that right?

JANIE

And from all that weed you smoked in high school.

MARK

Hey keep it down. I deny everything.

JANIE

I mean how many times did your dad ground you?

They laugh.

JANIE

You were like the town dealer for awhile. Is that something they missed on the background check?

MARK

I guess they weren't very thorough.

JANIE

Tell me about Izzy. I bet you're a great dad.

MARK

Oh my that kid is just everything, she's the light that makes the worst day shine. She's strong willed, we're trying not to call it bossy. She's never met a stranger, loves to talk and comes up with the most off the wall jokes you've ever heard.

JANIE

You like being a dad?

MARK

I love it. Best thing that ever happened to me.

JANIE

How about her mother?

MARK

Oh lets not go down that road.

JANIE

Hey you were asking about my life.

MARK

She was a teacher from a few towns over and I was giving my Mr. Friendly cop lecture to the kids. We quickly got pregnant, had Izzy. Got married, then realized pretty fast it was a big mistake as we noticed that we don't really like each other very much. That's the story.

JANIE

Wow how romantic.

MARK

Yep that's me. Mr. Romance.

I imagine being a social worker is like being a parent. You must help some of them.

JANIE

Sometimes. Most of the time it feels like being the guardian to the lost souls department of the world.

MARK

Still you should be proud you got out of here and are doing something meaningful.

JANIE

I guess.

(pause)

I saw the little park with the plaque for Warren. It's nice.

MARK

It is. My mom likes to go there a lot, she takes Izzy.

JANIE

I loved your mom. She was more of a parent to me than my own were.

MARK

She had it rough for awhile after. My dad left her, but she's never one to stay down for long. Too feisty. People do move on you know.

JANIE

Do they?

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Janie fills out paperwork. She throws a pencil down on the table and leans back in her chair in frustration. She twirls and rubs her eyes.

She notices something sticking out of a corner of the desk. She grabs it. She holds up a picture-

INSERT - PICTURE

a young boy and an older, middle aged man standing next to him

BACK TO SCENE

She places it on top of the pile of paperwork.

EXT. REALITY OFFICE - DAY

Dave loads his car with signs and boxes. Mark strolls up, grabs a box.

MARK
Long day ahead?

Mark hands Dave the box.

DAVE
Something you want officer?

MARK
Come on Dave, cut the crap.

DAVE
I'm not apologizing to her.

MARK
I wasn't expecting you to. I do however need to know we're not going to have anymore problems.

DAVE
Always sticking up for her. Not surprising, Warren knew you wanted her yourself. Then again you always wanted to be him. Didn't you?

MARK
I'm doing my job here Dave. Maybe if you didn't take your own shit out on everyone else we wouldn't need to have these little chats so often.

DAVE
Do you ever think that if you could change one thing, one moment that your life would be completely different? That's what I think about when I look at her.

Dave slams the trunk. He gets in his car, drives off.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

SYLVIA, 60's, stands by a table sorting through her mail.

Mark enters carrying bags of groceries. He puts them on the counter and begins putting them away.

SYLVIA

Damn it, they're raising the cable again. I may have to get rid of it all together.

MARK

You hardly watch television anyway.

SYLVIA

Yes, but it's turning into some type of monopoly. Isn't that illegal?

MARK

Well, I'll go arrest them mom.

Sylvia watches him put the groceries away.

SYLVIA

I can buy my own damn groceries you know.

MARK

I know.

SYLVIA

I'm not an old feeble hag yet.

MARK

I'm aware.

SYLVIA

So stop treating me like one.

MARK

Yes ma'am.

SYLVIA

For your information old ladies don't like to be called that.

MARK

I'll keep that in mind.

SYLVIA

How's my little angel?

MARK

She's great. Would you mind picking her up from school?

SYLVIA

Of course not.

MARK

Janie is in town for awhile taking care of her grandfather's estate.

SYLVIA

I heard that.

Sylvia opens an envelope. Mark leans against the counter studying his mother's demeanor.

MARK

She'd like to see you mom.

SYLVIA

Oh, is that right?

Why the hell do I keep getting this in the mail? I never sent away for it, but it keeps coming.

Mark goes back to unpacking the groceries.

SYLVIA

And shut the cabinet doors for pete's sake.

Mark slams one of the doors shut.

EXT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Janie exits the house to see Dave in the yard hammering in a for sale sign.

JANIE

(to herself)

Fuck.

Janie walks up to Dave.

JANIE

So real estate huh? Didn't peg you as a people person.

DAVE

Not everyone gets to go to a big fancy college do they?

JANIE

Right.

Dave picks up a notebook and folder.

DAVE

Carol already got the paperwork started so I have all the info I need. I already had the inspector come by to look the place over, it shouldn't take long to sell.

JANIE

Perfect. Anything I need to do?

DAVE

Get everything cleaned out asap, get me the deed to the house and sign this.

He shoves a piece of paper and pen in her face. She signs quickly. He snatches the paper away.

DAVE

Here's your copy.

Dave holds out a folder. Just before she grabs it he drops it.

JANIE

Your pen.

Janie holds out the pen. Dave goes to grab it, she drops it.

They both lean over to pick up their items.

Janie rushes to the truck.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Janie enters. She browses a shelf. Jake appears across from her.

JANIE

Hi.

JAKE

Have you started cleaning out the garage yet?

JANIE

No.

JAKE

Don't just throw everything out. There's some good tools and fishing gear in there, let the auction house take a look first before you do anything.

JANIE

Okay, I will. Maybe you could...

He walks away to check out. Janie watches as he exits.

Janie picks up her things and heads to the check out. She notices outside Sam and Jake chatting. Sam hugs him; he walks away.

Sam sees Janie and waves. Janie finishes checking out and exits.

EXT. STREET/HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Janie goes up to Sam.

JANIE

Hey.

SAM

Hey. I'm sorry about what happened at the bar last night.

JANIE

That wasn't your fault.

SAM

I mean I shouldn't have brought up all that stuff. I like don't know when to shut up. Anyway I'm sorry.

JANIE

That's okay.

SAM

Oh, I just saw your dad, I'm trying to work out a deal with him about a car; maybe work at the shop to help pay for it. He's been so nice about it. What a great guy.

JANIE

Really. Sam you dropped by my grandfather's house everyday right?

SAM

Well most days, I delivered his food and stuff.

JANIE

Uh huh, and why did you do that?

SAM

What do you mean? He needed food.

JANIE

Exactly, but why did you bring it to him?

SAM

I don't understand.

JANIE

Did you ever see my father do anything for my grandfather? Was he ever at the house? Did you ever see him there?

SAM

I don't know.

JANIE

(sarcastic)

Hmm, you're right, what a great guy!

Janie turns to walk away.

SAM

How would you know? It's not like you were here either.

She turns back around.

JANIE

You have no idea what you're talking about. You know nothing about my family and consider yourself lucky.

Janie rushes off.

INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - DAY

Carol holds a photo of Janie as a little girl in a frilly dress.

She looks out the window, startled, she quickly returns the photo to a drawer, slams it shut and rushes to the next room.

KITCHEN

Carol chops vegetables beside the sink. Jake enters. He leans against the door frame, watching her.

CAROL

Hey there, didn't see you last night or hear you leave this morning.

JAKE
I've been busy at the shop.

CAROL
Well, that's good.

JAKE
What are you making?

CAROL
Beef stew.

JAKE
Smells good. I always loved your
beef stew.

He comes in closer to her. Carol places some of the
vegetables into a huge pot.

JAKE
Did you know she was coming?

CAROL
No, I did not.

JAKE
I don't see why she did.

CAROL
She wanted to say goodbye to your
father. And maybe she wanted to see
us too.

JAKE
Maybe she came for an inheritance,
one that she's not entitled to.
Jesus, I don't know why that batty
old man put her in charge anyway.
He already gave her enough money
when he was alive. Hell he never
gave me a damn thing.

CAROL
I know, I know.

JAKE
I work damn hard at that shop all
my life and I still don't own it. I
suppose I won't get that either. He
never gave me anything I didn't
work for.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

Meantime the old bastard was sending her money. Money she didn't earn.

Carol keeps her head down and chops vegetables.

JAKE

That girl has been nothing but a burden and a curse.

Carol, unable to control her emotions, leaves the room.

EXT. STREET/POLICE STATION - DAY

Chuck leans against a car, chats with Mark.

CHUCK

Mark I think you need to reconsider this.

MARK

Come on Chuck please.

CHUCK

You don't want to go down this road, trust me.

MARK

I want to know what really happened.

CHUCK

We know what happened Mark. Let it be.

MARK

I don't think she was at fault Chuck.

CHUCK

She was young, she made a mistake like many of us have behind the wheel, but this time it ended tragically.

MARK

I don't know if I believe that.

CHUCK

I'll have to interview her again you know that.

MARK

I know.

CHUCK
And your mother too.

MARK
I understand.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Sylvia waits just outside the playground.

JANIE (O.S.)
Sylvia.

She turns to see Janie.

SYLVIA
Janie? My look at you. I'm so sorry
to hear about your grandfather.

JANIE
Thank you. I appreciate that. I
just--

SYLVIA
--I'm here to pick up Izzy from
school.

JANIE
Oh yes, I'm sorry I didn't mean to
interrupt.

Izzy comes skipping up to Sylvia.

IZZY
Hey granny!

SYLVIA
Hello my angel. Ready to go?

IZZY
Yep, lets blow this joint.

Janie chuckles.

JANIE
Hi there you must be Izzy.

IZZY
That's me. Who are you?

JANIE
My name is Janie I'm a friend of
your dad's. I was just chatting
with your granny here.

Janie shakes Izzy's hand.

IZZY
Nice to meet you.

JANIE
It's very nice to meet you.

SYLVIA
Well we should get along now. Bye
Janie.

IZZY
Take it easy.

JANIE
Bye Izzy.

Sylvia takes Izzy's hand and walks away.

SYLVIA
Who taught you to talk that way
your mother?

INT. CHUCK AND HELEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Helen and Carol sit across from each other at a small kitchen table. Magazines and newspapers fill every inch of it. They both flip through them. Helen stops on a page. She starts cutting.

Helen occasionally glances up at Carol. Her glasses slide down to the tip of her nose, she doesn't bother adjusting them.

HELEN
I saw Janie at the diner.

Carol looks down at her page.

CAROL
Oh, really. I figured she would
stop by.

HELEN
She mentioned she was staying at
her grandfather's house.

CAROL
I know she is.

Helen stops cutting and puts her hand on top of Carol to keep her from flipping another page.

HELEN

Why don't you go talk to her?

CAROL

I don't think Jake would like that.

HELEN

You wouldn't have to tell him.

CAROL

Helen, let it be.

Helen takes her hand away and picks up her scissors.

EXT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Janie slouches on the porch swing. Mark strolls up with a six-pack in his hands. He flops down next to her on the swing.

MARK

Evening ma'am. Fancy a brew?

Janie holds out her hand. Mark sets the beer on the floor, takes one out, opens it, and hands it to her.

JANIE

Aren't you going to check my id officer?

MARK

Na I'm off duty, therefore I approve of under age drinking.

Mark opens one for himself. He rocks them in a slow steady rhythm. The swing CREAKS with each passing.

MARK

What's shakin?

JANIE

Just wondering why I came back to the hell that was my childhood.

MARK

Nostalgia.

JANIE

More like psychological torture.

MARK

Oh come on it's not all bad. You get to see me. I'm pretty groovy.

JANIE

And that's a perk? I met Izzy today.

MARK

You don't say.

JANIE

Your mom was picking her up from school I ran into them. You're going to have your hands full with that little cutie.

MARK

Don't I know it.

JANIE

Want to make some dinner?

MARK

You cook?

JANIE

No, I was hoping you knew how.

MARK

I think we're screwed.

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mark and Janie hover over a dish on the counter and read a recipe from a large book. The fluorescent light flickers, they both quizzically look up.

JANIE

Stir and pour. Maybe we should add more seasoning or vegetables or something. Are you doing this right?

MARK

Back off okay, master at work.

JANIE

I'm a take out kinda girl myself.

Mark places the baking dish in the oven.

Janie grabs a bottle of wine from the fridge and proceeds to open it with great difficulty. Mark opens a cabinet, retrieves two glasses and pours.

Janie takes a glass from him.

MARK

What's this?

Mark picks up the letter from the shelf.

JANIE

I found it with some of his papers.
I don't know why he didn't mail it.
He wrote me letters all the time.

MARK

Are you going to open it?

JANIE

I'm waiting.

MARK

For what?

JANIE

I don't know. For a good time when
I really need it. This letter makes
it feel so final.

The lights continue to flicker. Mark puts the letter back.

JANIE

Boy, that's annoying. He still
hasn't changed that light bulb.

MARK

What are those notches on the door
frame from?

JANIE

My grandfather use to measure how
tall I was getting. He would mark
it every year.

They both go over to the door frame.

MARK

Wait a minute.

He positions her against the door frame.

MARK

Just what I thought.

JANIE

What?

MARK
You haven't grown at all.

JANIE
Shut up.

She stands up straight against the door frame and puts her hand over the top of her.

JANIE
That can't be right.

MARK
Actually wait...I think you're
might be shrinking.

She playfully punches him.

He takes a step towards her like he may try to kiss her, but she backs away.

JANIE
I think there's some red wine here
somewhere.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MORNING

Mark and Izzy walk together.

MARK
So I heard you met my friend Janie.

IZZY
Yep with granny.

MARK
What did you think of her?

IZZY
I liked her, she shook my hand. I
think she's nice.

MARK
Me too.

Mark stops to zip up Izzy's jacket.

MARK
Okay squirt your mom's going to
pick you up after school remember
the donuts are our secret.

IZZY
Got it. Bye dad.

Izzy runs off.

Mark pulls his phone out and dials a number.

MARK

Janie hi, it's Mark. I was wondering if you wanted to come over to my place tonight for dinner. It's 3842 Pine Ave. Um 7pm? Hope to see you then.

EXT./INT. CHUCK AND HELEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Janie knocks on the door carefully holding a big glass bowl.
Helen answers.

HELEN

Hey honey come on in.

Janie steps inside.

She holds out the big glass bowl.

JANIE

I remember all those punches you liked to make so I thought you might like this.

Helen takes it from her.

HELEN

Well that's sweet thank you darling. That will come in handy for sure.

Chuck enters in uniform.

CHUCK

Hey Janie thanks for coming over.

JANIE

Absolutely, what do you need?

Helen and Chuck share a knowing glance.

HELEN

Actually I need to run off to the diner, but there's coffee already made and banana bread so help yourself.

JANIE

Thanks.

Helen grabs a jacket and leaves.

CHUCK

Let's sit in the kitchen. I need to chat with you.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Sylvia sits at a table. She drops an old file folder down with different sized scraps of paper sticking out unorganized, disheveled.

She places her hand on the folder, unable to open it. Grabs her coffee mug instead.

She meticulously lines up several bottles of pills, takes a bottle, opens it, pours out 1 pill into her hand. Puts the lid on. Opens it again, pours out another pill. Closes the lid and tosses the bottle aside.

She tosses back the pills.

SYLVIA

Damn it, damn it!

Sylvia opens the folder, it's filled with sheet music, little scraps of paper with notes scribbled on them. She begins to organize them. She stops on one of them, places her hand on the edge of the counter and plays it like a piano.

INT./EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - EVENING

Janie bursts in to Mark standing at the kitchen counter.

JANIE

What the hell...wait where's Izzy?

Janie looks around the room.

MARK

At her mom's house.

Janie focuses back to Mark.

JANIE

What the hell do you think you're doing?!

MARK

Uh, sorry what are we talking about?

JANIE

I had a chat with Chuck today or rather an interrogation.

MARK

Shit.

JANIE

Yeah right shit.

MARK

I was going to tell you.

JANIE

If you have something say, then say it to me.

MARK

Okay, I don't think you were at fault for the crash.

Janie pauses to compose herself.

JANIE

I know that's what you want to think, but yes I was. Please just let it go and give me some peace.

Janie storms out of the house. Mark quickly follows her.

MARK

You were going only 8 miles over the speed limit in perfect weather and swerved at full speed off the road without braking. When you first arrived at the hospital one of the nurses asked you what happened and you said Warren grabbed the steering wheel violently, causing the crash.

Later on when you were questioned by police you changed your story saying you were distracted, not paying attention. Which one is true Janie? If he grabbed the steering wheel he intended to kill the both of you. Why would he do that?

JANIE

It was my fault. Mark I'm begging you to let this go.

MARK

The last time I saw you two you were fighting about something.

JANIE

Yes, okay we were fighting, but that has nothing to do with the crash, it was my fault. The crash was my fault!

MARK

About what?

JANIE

Mark!

MARK

What were you fighting about?!

JANIE

I told him that I had feelings for you.

Janie turns away embarrassed.

Mark pauses to think for a moment and absorb what he just heard before lunging forward to grab Janie's face in his hands and kiss her hard.

Janie hesitates at first, then kisses him back.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BEDROOM

The moon radiates through the window illuminating the lovers in bed.

Mark lays on his back peering out the window, content. He gazes over at Janie sleeping on her side facing away from him.

She has a large scar on her back and shoulder.

Mark rolls over to her. He gently glides his fingertips along her scar. He kisses it then throws his arm around her holding her tight.

EXT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Carol, carrying a box, trudges up the steps to the door. She stands at the door, hesitating.

She brings her hand up to knock on the door, but doesn't. After a moment she sets the box on the ground by the door and leaves.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - MORNING

KITCHEN

Mark stands at the counter sipping coffee.

Janie enters groggy and rubbing her shoulder.

MARK
Morning sunshine.

JANIE
Please don't tell me you're a
morning person?

MARK
Breakfast?

Janie scoots into the kitchen. Mark rubs her shoulder.

JANIE
It gets stiff in the morning.

MARK
How's that?

JANIE
Good.

Janie glances at Mark and quickly looks away.

MARK
What?

JANIE
This is weird.

MARK
No, it's not. It's only weird if
you make it weird.

They giggle.

JANIE
Definitely weird. I should not be
here with you. What am I doing
here?

Mark embraces her and whispers in her ear.

MARK

Do you want a play by play or just the highlights?

JANIE

That's it I'm outta here.

MARK

Not so fast. I'm not done with you yet.

He kisses her neck.

EXT./INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Janie gets up the steps before noticing the box by the door. She picks it up and goes inside.

Janie sets the box on the table, throws her keys on the counter and takes her jacket off.

She takes the lid off the box revealing a high school year book on top.

KNOCK at the door. Janie peeks out the window.

JANIE

Oh boy.

Janie opens the door to Sam clumsily holding two coffee cups.

SAM

Good morning!

JANIE

Morning.

SAM

I brought you some coffee and wanted to see if you needed any help with sorting through your grandpa's stuff or anything.

JANIE

Seriously? That's nice of you. Don't be nice to me. Why are you being nice to me? What kind of crazy person are you?

SAM

The overly optimistic kind who thinks you were just angry at your parents and took it out of on me.

JANIE
Come in, but stop being so
reasonable and understanding.

SAM
I'll do my best.

Janie steps aside to let Sam in.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Chuck, at the counter, drinks coffee. Helen waits on a table nearby.

Mark enters in uniform, confident and fresh. He parks at the seat next to Chuck.

MARK
Morning!

Mark slaps Chuck on the back just as he's about to take a sip of coffee causing him to spill a few drops.

CHUCK
Morning.

Helen puts a cup down in front of Mark and fills it with coffee.

HELEN
Morning doll.

MARK
Morning Helen. Thank you much my
lady.

HELEN
(to Chuck)
See look at that, manners.

Chuck rolls his eyes. Helen goes back to work.

CHUCK
What the hell are you so chipper
about?

MARK
Nothing in particular.

Chuck and Mark drink their coffee.

CHUCK
I talked to Janie yesterday.

MARK

I know.

CHUCK

Let's just say she wasn't too pleased about it. I didn't get much out of our conversation, thought I would let her calm down before I try again. I was going to chat with your mom today.

MARK

No, please don't. You were right, just leave it be.

CHUCK

Okay.

A POLICE OFFICER enters, quickly scans the room and approaches Chuck and Mark.

POLICE OFFICER

Hey guys there's been a big wreck out by 33.

Chuck puts his cup down.

CHUCK

So much for a calm morning. Let's hit it.

The Police Officer and Chuck leave. Mark lags behind somberly making his way to the door.

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Sam sits on the counter flipping through the yearbook.

Janie stands picking out items from the box. She takes out a very old, dirty, worn stuffed animal.

JANIE

Awww Mr. Puddles.

SAM

Mr. Puddles?

JANIE

I refused to go anywhere without him. My mom had to pry it out of my hands to wash him.

Janie sets Mr. Puddles aside and searches the box. Sam puts the yearbook down and looks inside too.

JANIE

I'm still in shock my mother left this for me. I didn't think she kept any of it. Do you get along with your mother?

SAM

She died when I was 14.

JANIE

Jesus, I'm sorry.

SAM

And no we most definitely did not get along. I spent most of my time with my very amazing grandmother. Guess that's why I like the old folks so much.

JANIE

Why don't you leave, get out of here and do something with your life?

SAM

I thought I was doing something.

JANIE

I didn't mean anything by that.

SAM

This is my home. I belong here, I like it here.

Sam takes out a collection of small spoons.

SAM

What's with all the spoons?

JANIE

They're collector's items.

Sam puts them back.

SAM

I know this is like a sore subject, but your dad has always been super nice to me. It's hard for me to believe you don't get along with him.

JANIE

The only things I ever got from my father growing up were silence or anger.

SAM

Makes you wonder if anyone ever got along with their parents. Wait a second.

Sam retrieves a photo from the box.

SAM

This is crazy! What's with your hair?

JANIE

Hey everyone had big hair.

SAM

Yes but what about the sweater?

JANIE

So I wasn't the fashion queen of my generation.

Janie grabs the photo and throws it back in the box. She stops in her tracks. Sam looks inside and pulls a picture out.

SAM

Is this him?

Janie takes the photo from her.

JANIE

Warren. That's him.

SAM

He was cute.

JANIE

That he was. Cute, popular and I had no idea what he wanted with me. I was an absolute nobody.

SAM

Must have been something he liked. Maybe it was your charming personality.

Janie puts the photo back.

JANIE

You know what I have a bunch of stuff I need to load in the truck to get rid of. Can you help me with that?

SAM

Yeah lets do it.

EXT. STREET/POLICE STATION - DAY

Mark and the Police Officer exit a parked car.

MARK

Hey good job today.

The Police Officer walks off. Mark approaches Chuck smoking outside.

MARK

I thought you quit?

CHUCK

That's what Helen thinks so keep it to yourself.

Mark takes a deep breathe.

CHUCK

You alright? That was a tough one.

MARK

I'm fine. Not something anyone should have to go through.

CHUCK

One of the worst parts of the job.

Janie pulls up. Mark waves to her. Chuck quickly throws his cigarette away.

Mark opens the door for Sam to hop out.

JANIE

Thanks for your help Sam.

SAM

No problem anytime.

Sam rushes off down the street.

SAM

I saw that cigarette Chuck. I'm telling Helen.

CHUCK

Snitch!

MARK

Hey there, what've you been up to?

JANIE

Lots of cleaning. How bout you?

MARK

Lots of police work.

JANIE

Bad day?

MARK

Yeah, pretty bad.

JANIE

Get in I want to take you
somewhere.

MARK

I can't I got a pile of paperwork
to do.

Chuck overhears.

CHUCK

I got it Mark go ahead.

Mark turns to Chuck.

MARK

Are you sure?

CHUCK

Get the hell outta here already.

JANIE

He is the boss.

MARK

True he is the boss.

Mark hops in the truck, they take off.

Chuck, now alone, pulls out another cigarette.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Mark and Janie roam around the rows of rusted old cars.

MARK

Okay, I give up what are we doing here?

JANIE

I like this place. You can get away from everyone. It's peaceful.

MARK

Wait. Isn't there that deranged dog around here somewhere?

JANIE

You mean the one that tries to bite your balls off?

MARK

What?!

JANIE

Didn't you ever see Stand By Me? Nevermind.

Mark cautiously scans his surroundings.

JANIE

Don't worry I'll protect you.

MARK

Very comforting.

Janie looks around, picks up a piece of pipe and stands by a car.

JANIE

Here's how its done.

Janie smashes the side window.

MARK

What the...what are you doing crazy?!

JANIE

It's therapeutic. I used to do this as a kid.

MARK

Destruction of property is therapeutic? Well your honor she seemed so normal at first.

Janie smashes another window.

JANIE
Come on try it.

BUSTER, 50's, the junkyard attendant comes rushing up.

BUSTER
What the hell are you doing?

JANIE
Letting out some pent up angry.
Want to join us?

BUSTER
Well you can't do that?

JANIE
Why not?

BUSTER
I don't think the owner would like
it very much.

JANIE
I'm the owner.

BUSTER
Say what?

JANIE
I'm Ed's granddaughter. He left
this place to me so I'm the owner.

BUSTER
Oh well okay then.

Buster trudges off.

JANIE
You're doing a great job sir,
thanks a lot.

Mark and Janie laugh.

MARK
You own this place?

JANIE
Yep this sweet paradise is all mine
now. Pick up a pipe and let's get
that anger out.

Mark hesitates.

MARK

I shouldn't I'm in uniform.

JANIE

Well you can take it off if you like.

MARK

Hmm, I'm not that easy you have to buy me dinner first.

Janie looks around, grabs another pipe and tosses it to Mark. He catches it.

JANIE

Come on Marky lets see what kind of damage you can do.

MARK

I hate it when you call me Marky.

Mark carefully grips the pipe and takes his place next to a car window. He checks his form like a baseball player does and swings busting the window.

JANIE

Woo hoo! See. Feel better?

MARK

I do. Maybe vandalism is my true calling in life.

Janie and Mark line up for another hit. They go nuts.

JUNKYARD - LATER

Mark and Janie sit on top of an old rusted car watching the sun set. They share a beer.

JANIE

Why don't you have a girlfriend?

MARK

I've had my fair share. Okay maybe not. I don't know I can't seem to get it right. Some don't like that I have a kid and that's a deal breaker for me. And...I don't know. What about you?

JANIE

I think I'm a little too intense and honest for most men. They can't handle my abrasive style.

MARK

Really?

JANIE

Especially on the dance floor,
blows their minds.

MARK

Are you glad you came back?

JANIE

A little, I just...I guess I was
hoping some things would have
changed.

MARK

With your parents?

JANIE

I wish I knew why he hated me so
much.

MARK

I'm sure it has nothing to do with
you. He probably hates himself and
he takes it out on you.

JANIE

Maybe. Do you ever talk to your
dad?

MARK

Once in awhile. He lives in Iowa
with a flight attendant. Very
fitting as he can cheat on her as
much as he likes.

JANIE

Lovely.

MARK

Growing up I swore I would never be
like him, now look at me in the
same town doing the same job.

JANIE

You're nothing like him.

MARK

Warren was always his favorite
anyway, thought he was the one
who'd be the cop. Hey I didn't mean
to.

JANIE

No, he's your brother you should be able to talk about him.

Mark hops off the car and pulls Janie close to him.

MARK

Thanks for this. You want to get out of here?

JANIE

With you?

MARK

Yes.

Janie makes a disgusted face.

JANIE

I really don't like you though.

MARK

Is that right?

JANIE

Yes, your face disgusts me.

MARK

I guess that's why you had sex with me last night then huh.

She laughs and punches his arm, then kisses him.

JANIE

Actually there's something I've always wanted to do.

MARK

What's that?

EXT. TRUCK - EVENING

Janie is on top of Mark thrusting up and down holding him tight.

He gropes and kisses her, eagerly.

They're making up for lost time.

EXT. STREET/BAR - EVENING

Janie and Mark pull up, hop out.

Chuck waves and shouts from across the street.

CHUCK

Hey, you owe me a drink.

Janie and Mark glance at each other. He shrugs.

They jog across the street to join Chuck.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Chuck, Helen, Mark and Janie share a tall table and a pitcher of beer.

The BAND finishes up a song. EVERYONE CLAPS.

CHUCK

So anything interesting you found at your grandad's place?

JANIE

About a thousand old beer cans and lots of porn.

They all make a disgusted look.

CHUCK

Well alright go grandpa huh?

JANIE

You know how horrifying it is to find old man porn?

MARK

I think it's kinda great he was keeping himself young and vigor.

JANIE

Who wants to think about their grandparents having sex or masturbating? I'm traumatized.

HELEN

Exactly!

MARK

Well I for one hope to be still able to raise the troops at his age.

CHUCK

Amen to that.

HELEN

We'll see about that mister.

JANIE
Good band tonight.

HELEN
I remember you having a pretty good
voice missy.

JANIE
Me, no definitely not.

MARK
Come on all those years of choir
practice with my mom.
(holds up a finger)
Hold that thought.

Mark steps away. Janie attempts to grab his arm, but fails.

JANIE
Mark, no.

Mark quickly chats with the SINGER and comes back.

MARK
Your stage my dear.

JANIE
I hate you.

The BAND starts playing a soft folk song. The SINGER waves
for Janie to join them.

HELEN
Get up there.

Janie, hesitant, gets on stage. The Singer starts the song,
Janie joins in. Chuck and Helen clap.

After a few lines the Singer steps away leaving Janie to sing
alone.

Helen looks over at Mark smiling, lovingly gazing at Janie
singing. She drops her sunny disposition.

EXT. STREET/BAR - EVENING

Janie leans against the truck.

MARK
I'm sorry I have to pick up Izzy,
get her dinner, help her with her
homework, fun parenting stuff.

JANIE

It's okay. Do what you gotta do.

MARK

I'll get my mom to watch her tomorrow night so we can be together. Dinner my place?

JANIE

Sounds nice. I'll see you tomorrow then.

Mark kisses her.

MARK

Good night.

JANIE

Good night.

Mark walks to his car. He takes out his cell phone and dials.

MARK

Hey, I'm on my way. I'll be there soon. Have I ever been late before? Give me a break okay. How's Izzy? Hello?

He puts his phone away.

MARK

Great, love being hung up on.

Meanwhile Helen exits the bar and rushes up to Janie.

JANIE

Hey Helen.

HELEN

Janie...what are doing?

JANIE

Meaning?

HELEN

With Mark?

JANIE

Well, I don't believe that's any of your business.

HELEN

Mark is a friend of mine and he has to live in this town.

JANIE

So?

HELEN

So you don't.

JANIE

What you're saying is it would be bad for people to see us together. For him. Why is that, because I'm the whore who used to date his brother or that I'm responsible for his brother's death?

HELEN

Quit being so overdramatic. I'm simply saying that you are going to be leaving soon and he still has to be here.

Chuck exits the bar.

CHUCK

Helen! You ready?

HELEN

Anyway, I'll see you later. Have a good night honey.

Helen jogs over to Chuck.

Janie watches them leave.

INT. DINER - EVENING

Janie enters and strolls up to the counter. Next to her sits a MOTHER and SON. The mother digs in her purse to pay the check.

MOTHER

(to her son)

Hurry up we have to get home.

The mother stares at Janie, recognizing her. Janie, uncomfortable, glances with a quick smile.

The mother puts money down on the counter.

MOTHER

Thanks Sam.

Mother and Son leave.

Sam waves and greets Janie.

JANIE
Hey Sam how are you?

SAM
Doing great! Slow night. Want some dinner?

JANIE
Yes, I think I'll get something to go.

SAM
Sure thing.

Sam grabs a menu and hands it to Janie.

SAM
Be right back.

Sam leaves. Janie glances over the menu.

SYLVIA (O.S.)
Janie.

Janie looks over to see Sylvia at a table sitting alone.

JANIE
Hi.

SYLVIA
Join me.

JANIE
I don't want to disturb you.

SYLVIA
Quit being so damn polite and come sit your little behind down. I don't feel like being alone right now.

Janie sits across from her. Sylvia scans the menu.

SYLVIA
My doctor says I have to watch my salt intake, which eliminates 99% of the menu. I don't know if I trust her anyway, she always looks like she's high on something.

Janie notices a file folder next to Sylvia.

SYLVIA

That Helen sure knows her sauces too. I think she just bought this place to give the town a heart attack one bowl of soup at a time.

Sam comes up to the table pen and paper in hand.

SAM

So staying in for dinner then?

SYLVIA

Yes. Sam dear what's the soups today?

SAM

Split pea with big chunks of ham and tomato bisque.

SYLVIA

Which one has more salt do you think?

SAM

Definitely split pea.

SYLVIA

Fantastic we'll take a bowl each.

Sam writes on the pad of paper.

SAM

You got it!

She takes the menus and leaves.

SYLVIA

They're songs Warren wrote.

Sylvia neatly gathers the papers in the folder.

SYLVIA

He was always so creative. Even more than me.

JANIE

He wrote me a song once.

SYLVIA

Really? I didn't know he did that.

Janie, I want to apologize about the other day. I just--

JANIE

--No really it's okay.

SYLVIA

Don't interrupt dear. I'm not one to apologize so when I feel the need to it helps to not be interrupted.

JANIE

Of course.

SYLVIA

My behavior was terrible. I wasn't expecting to see you and to be honest I wasn't quite sure how I was going to handle it. I've always been quite fond of you, you know this. You remind me of myself when I was young, maybe that's why I like you so much.

JANIE

You look great Sylvia.

SYLVIA

I'm starting to look like my mother it's terrifying.

JANIE

Tell me about it.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mark and Izzy eat dinner.

MARK

Sorry I was late tonight sweetpea.

Izzy scowls at him.

MARK

Wow, that's harsh.

IZZY

I had to hang out with mom's boyfriend. He's lame.

MARK

Hey, come on.

IZZY

(under her breath)
He is.

Mark enjoys this comment.

MARK

Well you're here now. I'm going to have your grandma pick you up from school tomorrow and you're going to hang with her. Is that cool?

IZZY

That's cool.

MARK

You know what I was thinking about today? I was thinking we could take a trip to the big city real soon. How does that sound?

IZZY

Can we go to the zoo?

MARK

Yes, we can certainly go to the zoo. It will be fun, Janie can show us around.

Izzy slurps her spaghetti and licks her fingers.

MARK

Good stuff?

IZZY

Yep.

INT. CHUCK AND HELEN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Helen puts water in the kettle, places it on the stove.

Chuck enters.

HELEN

Want some tea?

CHUCK

No, thanks. What was that about with Janie tonight?

HELEN

Nothing.

CHUCK

Helen honey we've been married over 20 years and I'm a cop. What's going on?

Helen retrieves a mug and a tea bag.

HELEN

I just think they seem to be getting a little close is all.

CHUCK

Yes, they do seem to be getting close. Is there something wrong with that?

HELEN

She's leaving soon. I just don't think that it's a good idea for Mark to get attached is all.

CHUCK

That may be, but it's really none of our business.

HELEN

I know it's not, but I don't want to see him get hurt.

Chuck examines her demeanor.

CHUCK

Is that all?

HELEN

Yes, that's all. What?

Chuck shrugs complying, but unsatisfied.

CHUCK

Okay.

Helen turns around to continue making tea.

INT. DINER - EVENING

Sylvia and Janie sit in front of empty dishes, chatting.

SYLVIA

You've done good girl you know that?

Janie scowls.

SYLVIA

I know you don't believe it, but I'm an old lady I know better. You should listen to me.

JANIE

Yes ma'am.

Sylvia winces.

SYLVIA

Don't ma'am me young lady.

JANIE

Sorry.

SYLVIA

Some people never get out of the place they don't belong. You've managed a hell of a lot more than that. You should be proud.

JANIE

Doesn't exactly feel that way.

SYLVIA

Of course it doesn't, nothing worthwhile ever does.

JANIE

Why haven't you left?

SYLVIA

Why should I? My family is here.

JANIE

Yeah well sometimes I think family is just a word.

SYLVIA

Some families are more work than others. You have to meet people half way, learn to see things from their perspective, you owe them that at least.

JANIE

What if I can't understand their perspective?

SYLVIA

Then you learn to let go of them. With whatever kind of closure you can get.

JANIE

Don't suppose you have a crystal ball or something?

SYLVIA

What would be the fun in that? Life
is an adventure in sanity my dear,
I say sit back and enjoy the ride.

Janie laughs.

EXT./INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Janie clutches a wrapped box and a folder of paperwork, she
knocks. Carol opens the door.

CAROL

Janie?

Jake enters the room behind Carol.

JAKE

Something you want?

Janie slips inside. Carol closes the door and steps in
between the two of them, lowering her head.

Janie holds up the folder.

JANIE

This is just some paperwork I
thought you might need copies.
There will be more coming, but I
think I have everything pretty much
taken care of. I'll call them to
check up though.

Janie sets the folder down nearby.

JAKE

Okay. You do that.

JANIE

This is just, well it's for you. I
found it at grandpa's house. I
thought you might like it.

Janie holds out the box to him. Jake stares at a wall to the
side of Janie. Janie lowers her eyes and pulls the box toward
her.

JAKE

I don't need that.

JANIE

But, it's just--

JAKE

--I said I don't need it.

Janie opens it, takes out the contents and drops the box. She holds up the picture frame.

JANIE

It's you when you were little and grandpa. It's a nice photograph of the two of you, don't you think?

Jake looks at the picture.

JAKE

I don't want any damn picture of him.

JANIE

Take it!

Jake maintains his position and stares her down. Janie holds the frame up to him.

She throws it on the floor in front of her smashing it into pieces. Carol jumps.

Janie steps toward the door and puts her hand on the doorknob, but turns back around.

JANIE

What the hell is wrong with you?
I'm your daughter for God's sake.
What did I ever do to you?

Jake glances at an emotional Carol.

Janie opens the door, slamming it shut behind her.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Mark and Sylvia sit at the counter eating.

SYLVIA

The flowers are blooming nicely.
Don't you think? They're going to
be good this year.

MARK

Uh huh.

SYLVIA

You could fake a little interest, I
did just make you breakfast you
know.

MARK

You're the green thumb master mom.

SYLVIA

Thank you.

MARK

Would you mind--

SYLVIA

--here it is.

MARK

Mom would you mind watching Izzy tonight? Please.

SYLVIA

There it is, the favor. Took you long enough.

Mark finishes eating. He takes both plates to the sink to wash.

SYLVIA

What are you up to anyway? Date?

MARK

I am going to make dinner for Janie. She's coming over.

SYLVIA

Oh. Why don't I make dinner for all of us here.

MARK

That's nice of you mom, but I'd rather have some grown up conversation for a change if you don't mind. So you're good with watching Izzy?

SYLVIA

Of course I would love to spend time with my little munchkin.

MARK

Great, thank you.

SYLVIA

By the way I talked to Claudia. She said they sold the house and just need to finalize the details.

MARK
What house?

SYLVIA
Janie's grandfather's house.

MARK
Really. That was quick.

SYLVIA
Yep, I guess someone wanted to make
a good investment. Anyway I imagine
she'll be leaving soon.

Mark stops washing the dishes.

EXT. STREET/POLICE STATION - DAY

Police Officer approaches Chuck.

POLICE OFFICER
Hey Chuck we've got a noise
complaint.

CHUCK
And?

POLICE OFFICER
And it's from Jake and Carol
Granger's house. Want me to go?

CHUCK
No, thanks I'll take it.

POLICE OFFICER
Sure.

INT. REALITY OFFICE - DAY

Janie enters. Dave, at his desk, barely glances up at her.

She waits at a counter staring daggers at Dave, tapping her
nails.

She reaches across the counter, rings a little bell once.
Nothing from Dave. She again reaches over and rings the bell
over and over.

Dave finally gets up and addresses her.

DAVE
What?

JANIE

I'm supposed to pick up the final agreement.

Dave goes to his desk, searches a moment, retrieves a folder, goes back to the counter. He opens the folder and signs a page. He closes the folder and tosses to her.

DAVE

There, done.

JANIE

Fuck you.

DAVE

What was that?

JANIE

I think you heard me. You think my life turned out the way I wanted because I left here? You go ahead and believe what you want. But one way or another we are all fucked. At least I had enough balls to try to do something about it.

DAVE

At least you had the chance to.

She takes out a piece of paper and throws it at him.

JANIE

The deed. Enjoy your misery asshole.

She storms out.

INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - DAY

Carol and Chuck stand by the door, Jake enters from the next room.

JAKE

(shaking Chuck's hand)
Chuck how you doing? Great to see you.

CHUCK

Pretty good. How 'bout yourself? Haven't seen you at the diner in awhile.

JAKE

I picked up a couple of contracts from Sinclair's company so the garage has been busy.

CHUCK

That's good news.

CAROL

He works too hard. Can I get you a cup of coffee?

CHUCK

I'd love one, thanks.

Carol leaves.

JAKE

What brings you by?

CHUCK

Well unfortunately it's business. There was a noise complaint.

JAKE

Shit. Mrs. Hastens I guess.

CHUCK

Everything ok?

JAKE

Yeah, fine it's just...

Chuck notices the broken picture frame nearby.

CHUCK

Janie?

JAKE

She was here this morning we had a conversation and she left.

CHUCK

That's it?

JAKE

That's it. She won't be back.

CHUCK

Alright, if that's all. You know Janie was telling Helen and I about her job. She's a social worker did you know that?

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Takes a strong person to do that job, dealing with children who are abused or that people just plain don't want them. Pretty sad.

Chuck and Jake stare at each other.

Helen enters with two mugs. Chuck happily takes one.

CHUCK

Thank you.

Carol holds one out to Jake.

JAKE

I need to get going. Be home late.

He quickly leaves.

CAROL

Okay.

(to Chuck)

Sorry about that.

CHUCK

You know why I'm here?

CAROL

It won't happen again.

CHUCK

Carol I don't like bringing up the past, but I have to ask you about something. I had a chat with Janie recently about the car accident and she remembers that you had a conversation with Warren a few days before.

Carol looks away, busying herself with folding a dish rag.

CAROL

If you're here to make me feel worse you can save your breathe. I have enough guilt to last two lifetimes.

CHUCK

Did you talk to Warren before the accident?

CAROL

Yes. I told him.

CHUCK
(already knowing)
You told him what?

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

The room is bare. Janie opens the closet door. She places a box beside her and begins taking clothes off their hangers and placing them violently inside the box.

After a few items, she reaches a huge red flannel shirt. She holds it up in front of her and turns it around. The color is faded. Janie takes the shirt off the hanger and puts it on. Her arms do not quite reach out of the sleeves.

She smells the shirt and hugs herself.

EXT./INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Chuck knocks. Janie opens the door.

JANIE
Oh boy. What now?

CHUCK
Hey Janie.

JANIE
We're not going to have another chat are we because I'm really not in the mood?

CHUCK
No, no more talks, case closed.

JANIE
Really? That's good. What's up?

CHUCK
There was a noise complaint at your parents' house this morning. One of the neighbors said there was shouting going on.

JANIE
Perfect. Just perfect. Mrs. Hastens?

CHUCK
Who else? I talked to your dad, he said it was just a little heated conversation and that you were not going to be dropping by anymore. So that's the end of it. Right?

JANIE

Yes.

CHUCK

Have you been drinking?

JANIE

No!

Chuck holds up a bottle of alcohol.

CHUCK

Did you want to?

Janie takes the bottle from him.

JANIE

Yes! Very much yes. Come in.

CHUCK

No thanks, I'm on duty. You almost finished with everything?

JANIE

Yeah I guess so.

CHUCK

Suppose you're ready to get out of here back to your life. Anyway, better get back to it. Let me know if you need anything alright. Enjoy.

JANIE

Thanks Chuck.

Chuck winks and walks away. Janie closes the door as she reviews the bottle.

JANIE

The man has good taste.

INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Carol takes the lid off a shoebox and sets it down. She opens drawers, taking out pictures, letters and other memorabilia. She puts them all in the shoebox.

EXT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - DAY

Carol walks up next to the trash cans. She opens a trash can lid. She puts the shoebox inside.

She places her hand briefly on the shoebox before replacing the lid.

She stands, staring at the bins. A dog BARKS snapping her out of her trance.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mark enters with grocery bags. He puts them on the counter.

He takes his jacket off, throws it aside, picks up a remote and turns on MUSIC.

MARK

Now if I can only learn how to cook.

Excited, he begins unpacking the groceries.

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Janie retrieves the envelope from the empty shelf. She sits on the floor in the now empty room. A full glass of scotch next to her. She carefully opens the letter, placing the envelope next to her.

Janie holds the letter in her hands, reading.

She finishes.

She lets go of the letter; it falls to the ground.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mark paces. The table is beautifully set for a romantic dinner, candles lit. Music plays.

Mark grabs his cell phone and dials.

MARK

Janie. It's Mark, just wondering where you're at...um...give me a call let me know. Okay...bye.

Mark ends the call and tosses the phone, frustrated.

EXT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Helen exits the house and walks to her car across the street.

JANIE (O.S.)

You know what I hate most about this town?

Helen, startled, turns to face Janie sitting on the tailgate of the truck.

HELEN
Janie, you startled me.

JANIE
All the fucking secrets.

Helen approaches her.

HELEN
What's wrong honey?

JANIE
Did you know about mom's affair?

HELEN
Yes.

JANIE
(angry)
Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't
anyone tell me?

She stares at Carol's shadow in the kitchen moving around.

Helen looks around to ensure no one hears them.

HELEN
She only told me everything a few
years ago. I didn't think it was my
place.

Janie fights back tears.

JANIE
I had a right to know.

HELEN
What good would it have done?

Helen tries to touch her, but Janie won't let her.

HELEN
She didn't want to hurt you. She
wanted to tell you after the
accident, but you left and she
decided to just let it be. You were
gone, off living your own life,
away from here. So what did it
matter?

JANIE

As if I wasn't fucked up enough.

HELEN

I don't know about that I think you
turned out pretty well.

Janie continues to watch her mother moving around inside the house.

HELEN

What are you going to do?

Janie hops off the truck.

JANIE

Go home Helen.

HELEN

Janie--

JANIE

--you can leave now. It's not your
place, remember.

Janie stares her down.

HELEN

Okay.

Janie watches Helen go to her car and leave.

She leers at the house, deciding. Finally she trudges up the driveway and KNOCKS.

Carol opens.

INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Carol steps back.

CAROL

Come in.

Janie enters.

CAROL

I'm not sure when Jake will be
back. I do want to talk to you.

JANIE

Is Don Lawrence my real father?

Carol steadies herself against the counter.

CAROL

You were never supposed to know.

Janie tries to maintain her composure.

JANIE

At least now I know why my dad...why he hates me. All this time I thought it was my fault, that I wasn't good enough to be his daughter. And you let me believe that.

CAROL

I know you won't understand Janie, but I did the best I could, I did.

JANIE

Seriously mom?! That's what you have to say to me?

CAROL

I know what I did. And I wish to God things were different. I prayed for it every day. I made a lot of mistakes. And I'm sorry Janie, my girl, I really am.

There is no way to make you understand, but I love him. I love him more than myself, more than you.

I can't cause him anymore pain, I just can't. I need you to go away and never contact us again.

Janie absorbs what she just heard.

JANIE

Thank you, for finally saying it.

Janie opens the door.

JANIE

(sincerely)

Bye mom.

She leaves.

Carol shuts the door behind her. She picks up a rag and wipes the counter, puts dishes away, anything to distract herself.

She pauses, twisting the rag tight, unable to keep it in any longer.

Carol pushes all the items on the counter onto the floor. She throws a glass, then a plate. She sobs.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mark, at the dinner table, fidgets with one of the candles, which is now burned down near it's end.

He picks up cell phone, reviewing it again, hoping for a text or call.

In defeat, he blows out the candle.

INT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is now empty of items.

Janie tosses her suitcase next to the door. She throws her backpack over her shoulder and takes one last look around.

JANIE

Bye grandpa. Love you.

She turns the light off and exits.

EXT. JANIE'S GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Janie throws her bags in the back of the truck and gets inside.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Janie starts the truck, goes to change the gear shift, but stops.

She shuts the truck off and sits, thinking.

EXT. STREET - EARLY MORNING

The hazy, fog filled street lay barren. The streetlight blinks red.

A church bell RINGS out echoing through the emptiness.

EXT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Sylvia, in her pajamas, yawns walking through her house. She peeks out the front window, grabs a blanket and comes outside.

Janie sits on the porch steps, shivering.

SYLVIA

Janie dear?

Sylvia closes the door behind her. She puts the blanket around Janie and sits next to her.

SYLVIA

What's wrong?

Janie pulls the envelope from her pocket and hesitantly hands it over.

Sylvia takes the envelope and opens it, reading the letter.

Janie examines Sylvia's reaction.

JANIE

You knew!

Sylvia puts the letter back in the envelope and sets it down.

SYLVIA

I thought maybe. I didn't want to believe it so I didn't.

JANIE

How can you do that?

SYLVIA

It's easier than you think. You convince yourself into thinking that it's best for everyone. Sometimes it's better not to know the truth.

JANIE

Do you think Warren knew?

SYLVIA

I believe he did. He was fighting with his father a lot a few days before, he was withdrawn, angry, so angry. I knew something was going on, but he wouldn't talk to me. I should have done something, but I didn't.

JANIE

It's not your fault.

SYLVIA

It's not your fault either. Janie, did Warren grab the steering wheel? Did he mean to cause the crash?

Janie bravely looks her in the eyes.

JANIE
(softly)
Yes.

Sylvia takes a deep breathe, fighting back tears.

SYLVIA
Well...look at that we both know
the truth now. Feel better?

JANIE
Not at all.

SYLVIA
(chuckles)
Me either.

JANIE
You know what I can't remember
saying, I'm sorry. I thought I did.
But I don't know or I don't
remember. Did I? Sylvia, I'm so
sorry.

Janie cries uncontrollably. Sylvia grabs her and cradles
Janie in her arms.

SYLVIA
I know honey, I know.

INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Carol sits at a table drinking coffee. Jake enters. She hides
her left hand under the table.

JAKE
Morning. Is there coffee?

CAROL
Morning. Just made some.

JAKE
Thanks.

Jake grabs a mug. He sees the broken pieces of dishes in the
trash bin.

He picks up a piece of paper on the counter.

JAKE
What's this?

CAROL

It's the deed to the garage, in
your name. Found it in the mailbox.

JAKE

Well look at that.

Jake gets his coffee.

He sits next to her, takes her hand from under the table. Her
hand has a small bandage on it.

JAKE

Let me look at this; don't want it
getting infected.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Janie sits alone at a booth, waiting, nervous. She slowly
dips a sugar cube in the coffee watching it dissolve.

Mark enters. Janie rises to greet him.

He walks over. He leans in to kiss her hello, but she turns
away and sits.

Mark sits across from her.

MARK

What happened to you last night?

JANIE

I'm sorry about that, I had some
things come up.

Janie fidgets, unable to make eye contact.

MARK

Janie what is it?

Under the table she pulls out the envelope from her pocket.

JANIE

I'm leaving today. Now actually,
Sam's going to take me to the train
station.

MARK

Oh. You're done with the house and
everything?

JANIE

Yes.

MARK

Were you planning on telling me or
were you just going to leave?

JANIE

I was going to...

MARK

Sure.

Janie puts the envelope away.

MARK

Okay, okay. Maybe I can come to see
you, bring Izzy.

JANIE

(stifling tears)
Mark, don't.

MARK

Alright. Did I do something?

JANIE

No, no it's nothing you did. You
didn't do anything. It's just...I
can't be here.

MARK

You can't be here?

JANIE

I don't belong here.

MARK

And *I* do.

Mark takes her hand.

JANIE

I just want to tell you that this
really did mean something to me.
You always made me feel like I
wasn't so alone.

Janie gets up, standing next to Mark. She pauses as Mark
reluctantly lets go of her hand.

She walks out.

Outside the diner she takes one last look at Mark sitting
alone. She runs her fingers across the glass and goes out of
view.

Mark remains, stoic, not watching her leave.

INT. SMALL TOWN TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Janie, bags in hand, ready to go waits with Sam by the truck.

SAM

I think it's coming.

Janie pulls out a piece of paper.

JANIE

By the way, here.

Janie hands the paper to Sam.

SAM

What's this?

JANIE

The title to the truck. It's yours.

SAM

No, like really?

JANIE

Yes, take it. My grandfather would want you to have it.

SAM

Janie, this is too much, thanks!

Sam hugs Janie.

JANIE

You're welcome. Take good care of it.

SAM

You know I will.

JANIE

Sam thank you for being there for my grandfather. He was lucky to have you around.

SAM

Thank you.

JANIE

Take care okay.

SAM

You too.

JANIE

And don't stop being you, like
ever.

Janie walks outside to the train.

EXT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Mark trudges up the steps to Sylvia and Izzy coloring at a small table.

He sits next to Izzy. He kisses her forehead.

Sylvia lightly touches Mark's cheek, sensing his pain.

She hands him her coffee mug. He looks at her and takes the mug.

INT. JAKE AND CAROL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jake and Carol sit at the dining room table eating breakfast in silence. Jake briefly places a hand on top of hers.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Helen stands behind the counter, hands Chuck a coffee. She places her hand on top of his; he quickly pulls it away and takes the mug.

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

Sam drives with the windows down. She sings to the radio.

EXT. SMALL TOWN TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Janie waits her turn. She pulls out the envelope.

Janie tosses the envelope in a nearby trash bin and quickly boards the train.

The train slowly takes off.

FADE OUT

THE END