

UNSEEN

"Midsummer, Highland Falls"

Written by
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INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

It *sounds* hot. CICADES WHIR. An OSCILATING FAN TILTS. MUSIC plays through a RADIO'S STATIC.

But there is a *muted quality* to everything. Like life is still happening, but very far away.

JANIE LYNNWOOD, 33, fidgets, tired and wired at once.

JANIE

You're *sure* you want to hear my story? It's a bit of a fairy tale.

A VOICE

(whispered)

Oh, Janie. I love fairy tales. Let us hear it. Please?

It's an odd sensation, listening to this voice. It's similar to Janie's - maybe even recognizable as a version of Janie's voice - but it's been twisted, made alien, in an uncanny way.

JANIE

Well... All right. If you insist.

She takes a DEEP BREATH, as if getting ready to start telling a long story.

And then there's a sound - a distinctive, transportive WOOSH, and when it's over, we're left in:

SILENCE.

ANNOUNCER

Part One: Janie.

(It's a MAN'S VOICE. We'll come back to it in due time.)

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHLAND FALLS, PARK - DAY

A city park blossoms around Janie as she speaks, filling with VOICES, CHILDREN in WATER, MUSIC playing, a COOKOUT, etc. It sounds fun and carefree.

JANIE

I didn't want to go to Highland Falls. That was Alice's idea. Alice was an ideas person. She introduced herself to me as such. "I'm Alice.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

I'm an ideas person." So Highland Falls was Alice's idea.

(BEAT)

But Highland Falls held my destiny. I just didn't know it then. That was six years ago. I was twenty-seven, and I was increasingly embarrassed when I said the words, "I'm Janie, and I'm a dancer" at parties. Tom once said, "Failure is the shadow cast by embarrassment." The shame always comes first, and then, bit by bit, you've failed.

Suddenly, abruptly, all the background sound DROPS OFF.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Tom.

(BEAT)

He said that to me our first Christmas. The house was drafty as hell and snow blew in through the cracks. But he lit a big fire in the back room and pushed all the furniture to the side, so I could do the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. I remembered every step from when I first did it at fourteen. He cheered, and... I...

A long moment, and then... the SOUND FILTERS BACK IN.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Where was I? Oh - *right*. Alice is from Highland Falls. It's just outside New York. Barely even a town. Her family has a big party on the summer solstice every year. Her mom calls it "reverse Christmas," because you were just about as far as you could get from the holidays in either direction.

(BEAT)

It turned out Alice had a *reason* to go home. She wanted to tell her parents she had gotten the lead in the gender-flipped Paul Bunyan musical. Yep. She's *that* Alice. She was my roommate. Wild, huh?

(BEAT)

She hadn't told *me* she had gotten the part. She knew how mad I'd be. And yeah, when I found out, I was that mad.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

But I was so happy for her, too. I loved her! Which pissed me off more. So I left the party.

A sound catches Janie's attention - LEAVES SHAKING and a BRANCH CREAKING. It's coming from a nearby TREE.

JANIE (CONT'D)

And that's when I met him. Tom Lynnwood, standing in a tree. He waved at me, like he knew I knew I was coming. Like he knew he'd meet his future wife standing in a tree. He reached into the branches and pulled out a kite. There were kids below him. He tossed the kite down, and they ran off with it. But he stayed in the tree. "Shouldn't you get down?" I said, and he replied, "Wanted to see if I could find anything else up here." "Any luck?" I said. "As a matter of fact... yes." He smiled at me. And I knew.

And as they smile at each other, we -

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT - DAY

A DOOR SWINGS OPEN and Janie enters a tiny shitbag apartment.

CLICK! She hits the light switch and TURNS ON the LIGHTS. There's a SKITTERING sound as an armada of Roaches scatters

JANIE

We talked on the phone every day when I got back to New York.

Underneath the following, we hear a PHONE DIALING.

JANIE (CONT'D)

He asked me lots of questions about my life and told me about his life in as few words as possible. He wouldn't come and stay with me. Said he'd feel cooped up. I got it. I lived in a cruddy apartment in Queens. I felt trapped too.

(BEAT)

That was when I realized he was scared of someone. Or something.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

That was when I started thinking about taking him to Summerwind.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

We hear the two-and-fro of a DANCE CLASS, in progress. Janie follows along with another dozen or so students.

JANIE

Summerwind was this mansion in northern Wisconsin I inherited after my grandfather died. It was a wreck. Grandpa had meant to fix it up but never had the time. You'd swear it was haunted. In his will, he said, "To Janie, I give Summerwind. May she have space for her dreams." My family is like that. Minnesotan to a fault -- realizing I needed space for my dreams but assuming a crappy haunted house would do.

Behind Janie, the studio DOOR OPENS.

A STRANGE WOMAN in a cloak enters. She is very tall.

JANIE (CONT'D)

When I told Tom about Summerwind, he wanted to fix it up. He said he felt safest with woods all around him and water at his back. And since Summerwind was right up against a lake, well...

(BEAT)

I was ready to leave New York, too. Twenty-seven isn't *too old* to be a dancer, but it's too old to hope you'll suddenly become a much *better* dancer. And I had fallen hard for Tom.

A VOICE

(a little louder)

That's when you started seeing me?

JANIE

Yes. That's when I started...

A BEAT. And then another. And another. *Finally...*

JANIE (CONT'D)

Seeing her. The *Queen*. I first saw her at rehearsal, my last July in the city. She was standing against the far wall, wearing a dark blue cloak, and she had a hood up around her face. And I... I just knew she was watching *me*.

Janie stares at the woman, unsure of how to approach her.

JANIE (CONT'D)

I saw her at rehearsal. I saw her on the subway. At a hot dog cart. In the middle of Times Square. Nobody else seemed to see her, but they knew how to move around her all the same. She was always looking at me. I knew that.

(BEAT)

I should have told Tom. But how do you say you think you've invented a mystery woman?

THE QUEEN

You're a mystery, too, Janie.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

We are back inside that initial summer night. Janie looks away from her conversation partner, chewing on her lip.

JANIE

So I moved to Summerwind.

EXT. SUMMERWIND - DAY

Even though we can't see the building, we can *kind of* see it. Big and crumbling. It looks deeply haunted and even more deeply cursed. It sounds grand and imposing and intimidating.

JANIE

What happened to Tom is a matter of debate, but everyone agrees on one thing: It happened at Summerwind.

We hear the sound of a U-HAUL TRUCK PULLING UP to the front door, followed by TWO PEOPLE GETTING OFF and STARTING TO UNLOAD IT.

JANIE (CONT'D)

We moved in at the end of that summer. It took a while, but it started to feel like a home. We got married there a year after we moved in. Just us and Reverend Wendy and some friends from town. But we lived there for nearly five years and never quite *made* it a home. When I say it started to feel like one, I mean it started to feel familiar. We got used to the rotting floorboards on the third floor, and the trash that piled up, and the draft we could never find the source of in the basement.

As they go through the FRONT DOORS, we -

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERWIND - SITTING ROOM - MORNING (DAYS LATER)

Janie walks through a cavernous sitting room, doing CHORES as the place slowly becomes *better* but not precisely *livable*.

JANIE

Some railroad tycoon built it back in the 1890s. *Summerwind*. It has turrets and everything. When I was little, I loved exploring it, because I half expected to open a door and tumble through into another world. When I *lived* there... I started to fear that. I started to fear I'd open a door, and poof, magic. I'd be back in my life before, but emptier somehow. I had a vague sense it was all too good to be true.

A VOICE

(still louder)

And it was.

JANIE

It was. It *was* too good to be true.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LAKE - DAWN

We're on the shore. WAVES LAP quietly. In the distance, A WOMAN CRIES OUT.

JANIE

There are only three known facts about Tom's disappearance.

A POLICE SIREN BLARES.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Fact one: On June 21 one year ago, Tom and Janie Lynnwood rowed to the middle of West Bay Lake for unexplained reasons. When morning came, only Janie returned to shore.

Some of the POLICE DOGS BARK, having picked up a scent.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Fact two: The dogs found evidence someone else had been there. Who that someone was, no one could say.

Slowly, the sounds FADE OUT.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Fact three: All that anyone found of Tom was his arm. Detached right at the shoulder. It washed up on the shore later that morning.

(BEAT)

And I know what you're thinking. I was on the boat. I should know. But I don't. I have no idea.

As she looks out across the water, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

Outside, a STORM is starting to build.

JANIE

Both stories I'm about to tell you are true.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

Neither story I'm about to tell is true. There's only one thing that's certain: One moment Tom was there. The next, he wasn't.

She takes a deep breath, looks out the window.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Story one.

And off of that, there's another of those distinctive WOOSHING SOUNDS, and then -

SILENCE.

ANNOUNCER

Part Two: The U.F.O.

FADE IN:

INT. SUMMERWIND - TOM'S LAB - NIGHT

A dark, creepy, creaky space. A FURNANCE RUMBLES somewhere in the background.

JANIE

If anywhere in Summerwind is haunted, it's the basement. The furnace was down there. Big, old, scary-looking thing. When I visited my grandfather as a girl, we would look into the furnace, see it glowing orange. He would sneak away, and I would pretend not to notice, and then he would switch off the lights and ask me if I saw any monsters in the fire.

(BEAT)

I did. Who wouldn't?

CLANK! CLANK! CLANK! It's Tom - he's pounding something metallic at his WORKBENCH.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Tom's lab was down there. He spent weeks working on a machine. An advance detection system, he said.

(BEAT)

I sometimes kept him company while he worked. We talked about my past, about our plans, about the kids we wanted to have.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

We talked about everything *but* what he was working on.

There's a BURST OF STEAM and FLAME from the FURNACE.

JANIE (CONT'D)

I would catch myself looking at the furnace sometimes, trying to find monsters. Reality would go fuzzy, like I wasn't quite inside my body anymore, and then I'd hear Tom's voice. "Eyes on me, Janey-Jane," he'd say with a smile. I'd be right back. God, that smile.

(BEAT)

Not every day at Summerwind was good. That last year, especially, was hard. I stopped leaving, and then he stopped leaving, and I worried we were haunting the house.

(beat)

Wherever you live, you have to leave space for what's broken inside of you. In a studio apartment, there's very little room for those broken things. In a house like Summerwind, though...

Another BURST OF HEAT from the furnace and we -

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERWIND - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Janie does CHORES -- CLEANING and WASHING and so on.

JANIE

So you build a place for those broken things to stay, and you find someone broken in a compatible way. I had the place, and I had the person. I just had to make them feel like my own. So I cooked, and I cleaned, and I tried to brute force that crumbling house into a home. Tom and I found ways to go on dates, even as our radius grew ever smaller. A weekend in Green Bay became too much for me, so instead we'd have dinner at the bar in town.

As she WRINGS OUT the WATER in a RAG, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERWIND - GARDEN - NIGHT

The sounds of the great outdoors. CRICKETS. WIND. It's beautiful, peaceful.

Tom and Janie lay on their backs to stargaze.

JANIE

And when that was too much, we'd lay in the backyard and look at stars.

(BEAT)

We made love almost every night, and even though we didn't talk about it much, we both knew we were trying to get pregnant. We wanted a child so badly, because then Summerwind would be our baby's first home, instead of a wreck two messed-up people were trying to will into somewhere livable. It would be where someone grew up and took their first steps, where Tom and Janie Lynnwood made something better than what they were given.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

The STORM's gotten worse. RAIN POURS.

JANIE

We didn't get pregnant. It was silly, but I started to resent the machine. Like that was Tom's real child somehow. Silly, right?

Janie LAUGHS, shaking her head.

A VOICE

I don't think it's silly.

JANIE

Oh of course it's silly. I was
jealous of a piece of junk.

She shakes her head again, and we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERWIND - GROUNDS - DAY

A beautiful day, outside. WIND goes through the grass. A few
BIRDS SING.

Tom places the MACHINE on a pole, angling it to the sky. It
makes a LOW HUM, rotating. Janie watches him, skeptical.

JANIE

The machine was just a car hubcap
he had burnished until it shined.
He had attached electronic sensors
to it, as well as a thermometer and
a barometer. Solar panels lined the
sides, and it stored enough energy
to turn of its own volition twenty-
four-seven.

(BEAT)

He put it on a pole and pointed it
to the sky. He said it was an
alarm, a warning for when the
people who raised him returned.

The HUM FLUCTUATES A BIT. As Tom makes adjustments, we -

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERWIND - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom and Janie sit on opposite ends of a table, eating dinner.

A TV plays unintelligibly somewhere in the room, softly
filling the space between them with insipid nothing.

JANIE

He had never told me about the
people who raised him. Just offhand
mentions here and there. So one
night at dinner, I tried to get him
to tell me. He looked at me for a
long time, then finally said, "If
you hear the alarm, I want you to
run. Don't worry about me.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

I'll be fine." I said, "I didn't ask you about the alarm. I asked you who your family is." He didn't answer that time either. "The alarm is an old music box," he said. "I hooked it up to play really loud." I shook my head. "Who's coming, Tom?" He stared at me a long time. "Who's coming, Tom? Who?" "Are you watching closely? You'll see," he said.

(BEAT)

He was right. I did.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERWIND - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Janie SCRAPES the contents off a PLATE into a TRASH COMPACTOR.

Through the window, in the distance, we hear a bit of the HUM from the MACHINE.

JANIE

I was tempted to stop the machine as it rotated. I felt a little like it was mocking me. "I'm built to go in circles, lady. What's your excuse?" But I never did. And then one night, it went off.

Through the window, we hear it. A CLATTER, like TIN CANS KNOCKING TOGETHER. And a MUSIC BOX, playing a song.

JANIE (CONT'D)

I didn't know what I was hearing. The machine went *nuts*. Every sensor beeped and clattered and clanged. Tom ran upstairs and started herding me toward the front door. "I love you so much," he said. "But we're out of time." I planted my feet and said, "We have time."

(beat)

He pointed to the door and told me to run. "WE HAVE TIME!" He looked at me, looked at the door, looked at the machine, which was somehow even louder. And then he said the craziest thing.

As the sound from the MUSIC BOX gets LOUDER, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERWIND - GROUNDS/LAKE - LATER THAT NIGHT

We hear FEET RUNNING on GRASS as Tom and Janie RACE to a small boat on the shores of the lake.

JANIE

He said he had escaped. From space aliens. He was born in 1765 outside New York City. One night when he was little, the sky opened up and dragged him back into its mouth.

They've gotten to the BOAT. With great effort, TOM STARTS ROWING. WATER LAPS against the BOAT.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Tom didn't lie. About *anything*. It was honestly annoying. Who doesn't lie? So I believed him, even though most people might not have. Besides, *something* was making the machine go nuts like that. So I said, "I'm not letting you go without a fight." He started to say something, but I cut him off. "The boat. We'll take it across the lake and hide in the woods." He frowned, saying it was worth a shot.

(BEAT)

That was his first lie.

(BEAT)

On the boat, he told me the rest. The aliens were unearthly tall beings, with what looked like long cloaks covering their bodies. He called one of them -

A VOICE

The Queen.

JANIE

... yeah. That. At some point he slipped onto a ship traveling back to Earth. It was nearly 250 years since his disappearance, and everything was different. He climbed into a tree to get his bearings and saw... me.

The ROWING STOPS. Tom is PANTING by now, exhausted.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Imagine that. You get back to Earth, and the first person you see is me. That has to be kind of a disappointment, huh?

A VOICE

I wouldn't say that.

JANIE

Thanks. That's what he said, too. That the second he saw me, it was love at first sight. They'd have to drag him back off this planet, kicking and screaming.

(BEAT)

Which, of course, they did. He stopped rowing in the middle of the lake. "We're too late," he said. I took the oars but he stopped me, and pointed up. At *it*.

Above them, a LOW HUM... a HAZY WOBBLE over the sky.

JANIE (CONT'D)

I expected lights or a shadow, like you'd see in a movie. But what I saw was like a lazy mirror spread across the sky. It was reflecting what was below, but... also... not?

(BEAT)

What was right above us when I looked up was... Summerwind. Seen from above, like the house had followed us somehow. And even though I had the sense that whatever *it* was had stopped directly above us, the reflection across its bottom slowly continued to move, past Summerwind, through the yard, over the machine, out over the water, like a single strip of the Earth suddenly started rotating more slowly.

Whatever is above them, we hear a MASSIVE METAL HATCH OPEN: KA-THUNK. And then a strange, unnerving ALAM BLARES.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Something in the underbelly of the reflection slid open, and there was this awful *noise*. I screamed.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

When I looked back up, Tom was clinging to the boat with both hands, his legs floating up into the air.

Around them, the LAKE is getting more and more disturbed. We hear LOUDER and LOUDER WAVES over all of the following:

JANIE (CONT'D)

He was frantic, eyes bulging, sweat pouring. The light didn't touch me. It didn't care about me. It only cared about him, and I knew if I grabbed for him, that light might start to care about me, too.

(BEAT)

Then Tom lost his grip. He shook his head, trying to stop me grabbing for him. But I didn't see that. I saw a boy in a tree, producing a kite like a rabbit out of a hat. I saw a girl too scared to try but also too scared to give up. I saw him, and I saw me, and I saw what I had to lose. So I jumped.

Janie LUNGES UPWARDS and GRABS TOM'S HAND with a GRUNT OF EFFORT. *She's got him!*

JANIE (CONT'D)

And I caught him. He laughed. "Eyes on me, Janey-Jane." So we stared into each other's eyes. The pull from the ship was so strong, but I wasn't going to let him go. They couldn't take him just because they wanted him.

The noise is getting LOUDER - both its HUM and its ALARM.

JANIE (CONT'D)

He looked down and saw my feet slipping clear of the boat. He shook his head, and he whispered to me. And even though I couldn't hear anything else over the endless noise of that endless ship, I heard this: "I ran across a whole galaxy to find you once. I can do it again." And he pulled away.

There's a HORRIBLE, FLESH-Y RIPPING SOUND.

JANIE (CONT'D)
 His *whole arm* came loose. He
 pinwheeled away from me, streaming
 blood.

There's a DULL WOODEN IMPACT, along with the CRASHING WAVES
 of the LAKE reaching a crescendo - !

JANIE (CONT'D)
 I crashed back onto the boat and
 hit my head. I passed out.

And suddenly all the sound CUTS OUT -

And a moment later...

It RETURNS.

Although now the lake is peaceful again. Still waters. We
 were gone for some time.

JANIE (CONT'D)
 When I woke up, he was gone. His
 arm was laying next to me, so I
 pushed it into the lake.

A SPLASH as the ARM LANDS in the WATER and SINKS.

JANIE (CONT'D)
 When I got back to shore, it was
 too quiet. The birds were gone, the
 insects. The machine was stock
 still. I was deeply offended by how
 it had abandoned me. I sat down,
 and I stared at it, waiting for it
 to call him back.

We hear another BLARE OF POLICE SIRENS, and then we -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

The STORM is still RAGING.

JANIE
 I was still staring when the police
 arrived to ask their questions.

There's a LONG SILENCE after that. Finally...

JANIE (CONT'D)

Of course... that's just one way it might have happened.

A crack of thunder.

JANIE (CONT'D)

There's a whole other story.

And again, the same DISTINCTIVE WOOSHING SOUND, followed by SILENCE and...

ANNOUNCER

Part Three: The Wild Hunt.

FADE IN:

INT. SUMMERWIND - TOM'S LAB - DAWN

We're right back in the lab. Tom SHOVES BOXES around the room, no longer as empty as it was the last time through.

JANIE

The morning he vanished, Tom woke up before the sun. He woke me up, too. Our bedroom was on the second floor, and he was in the basement, but I heard him cursing up a storm in my sleep. When I got to his lab, he was covered in dirt, shoving around the stuff down there.

A VOICE

Wait. I thought it was empty.

JANIE

Right. You're right. It was. It was empty. I just mean that my family stored some junk down there. That was what Tom was shoving around. Old boxes full of crap nobody had looked at in years.

SOFT FOOTSTEPS as Janie APPROACHES Tom.

She STOPS, noticing something. There's a soft, small MEOW.

JANIE (CONT'D)

"Look what the cat dragged in," he said. There was a kitten on his workbench, pitch black, purring happily next to a little saucer.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

Tom tried to move an old piano aside. I went to help him, and he waved me off, said I shouldn't. I asked why he was up so early, he pointed at the kitten. "She got in somehow," he said. "She was just sitting on my workbench." I asked him how she managed to wake him but he went back to moving the piano.

With a GRUNT OF EFFORT, Tom SHOVES THE PIANO ASIDE. A BLAST OF WILD WIND rushes through the room.

JANIE (CONT'D)

And then he figured it out. After he moved the family piano aside, he opened up just enough of a gap to see behind the furnace. "There's a space back here," he said. "She must have gotten in that way" He wedged his arm in, up to his shoulder, and...

(BEAT)

I don't really remember what he found. It must not be important.

We can almost hear her shrug as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERWIND - GARDEN - MORNING

The MACHINE ROTATES lazily, letting off a LOW HUM. Janie, HANGING LAUNDRY on a line, pauses to watch it.

JANIE

He was going to try to cover up the hole until our handyman Dorothy could help with a permanent fix. He didn't want my help, so I did my chores, hung the laundry.

It was a gorgeous day. I had half a mind to go for a swim, when I saw the machine. It seemed it was spinning more quickly than usual. How I knew that, I couldn't have told you. It creeped me out.

(BEAT)

Suddenly Tom was there, moving the machine, pointing it in another direction. The kitten followed him, pouncing on something in the grass.

(BEAT)

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

I asked him what he was doing, and he said that if they could get in through the tunnels - and they could - then he had always been looking in the wrong place.

(BEAT)

What the hell? He shook his head and said I wouldn't understand. "I want to understand," I said. He just went back to working on the machine. He wasn't listening.

As Janie stares at the machine, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

KRA-KOW! A blast of THUNDER. Janie massages where the kitten climbed her leg.

JANIE

That last year at Summerwind, I would be talking to my mom and she would say, "Janie girl, are you okay?" "Of course I am," I said.

Another BOOM OF THUNDER. Janie looks up, momentarily spooked.

JANIE (CONT'D)

When I was in college, my troupe went on a tour of Europe. We stopped in Amsterdam, and I went to this old church to explore. An artist had shattered a bunch of mirrors and laid them on the floor. They looked up at the ceiling in bits and pieces, like there was another world where everything was built of jagged edges.

(BEAT)

Ever since I was a little girl, I've hated mirrors. I don't like the person I see there. She feels like an impostor. The real me has always been elsewhere.

(BEAT)

But when I looked in those mirrors, I felt like I finally saw myself - split into pieces and not in a hurry to come back together.

(BEAT)

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

That was what I couldn't tell my mom that last year in Summerwind. I knew things were coming apart, but it made sense that they were. I felt like I was finally back inside that mirror, waiting for someone to sweep up my pieces so no one would stab themselves on me.

RAIN blows against the windows - then the sound of the ALARM going off again. And as it gets stronger and stronger, we -

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERWIND - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Janie's at the trash compactor, listening to the ALARM that's going off.

We go through the motions of the scene from earlier, although something about it sounds slightly DISTORTED.

JANIE

Everything else I told you was true. Tom wouldn't tell me who was coming. The machine started going off. He tried to get me to go. I didn't want to go. And then he told me the craziest thing.

(BEAT)

He said the cat was a spy.

Creepy, distorted, we hear the cat one last time: *ME-OWW*. And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERWIND - THE LAKE - MINUTES LATER

They're on the boat. Tom is ROWING yet again.

JANIE

He was a mess, and the alarm kept *blaring*, so I suggested the lake. Going across to the forest. I scooped up the kitten, because whatever was about to happen shouldn't happen to *her*. But he put her in the bathroom and closed the door. Her little paw poked out from underneath.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

"She's watching us for *her*." he said. "Who's *her*?" I said. And he said, "The Queen."

The OARS STOP. In the distance, we hear the sound of a HUNTING HORN.

JANIE (CONT'D)

"The Queen of *what*, Tom?" I barely hear him when he says "The Queen of the Fairies."

(BEAT)

Yup. The queen of the *fairies*. He said he was her most trusted knight. She had fallen in love with him, and it wasn't mutual. She was married to the king anyway. Real Lancelot and Guinevere B.S. He would escape, and she would use her wild hunt to track him down and take him back.

We hear the HORN AGAIN. It sounds LOUDER. *CLOSER*.

JANIE (CONT'D)

But then... enter Janie. He said he loved me. That he could only stay bound to the human world through the bonds of true love. So I was his escape. I said that was an awful thing to say about the woman carrying his child - yes, I was pregnant at the time, it's not relevant - he said when he saw me from that tree, he *knew* I was his true love. That's a lot to put on a girl, you know?" "You are the one and only person who can save me." Flattering maybe, but I don't like anybody who tries to make me anything more than Janie Lynnwood. I'm just... me.

Another BLAST FROM THE HORN. MUCH CLOSER. *And are those APPROACHING HOOVES...!?*

JANIE (CONT'D)

He saw I was lost in that thought, so he said, "Eyes on me, Janey-Jane." It was like I saw him for the first time. He glowed a little in the moonlight, and I remembered that first night in Highland Falls. We went for ice cream.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

On the way out of the shop, I dropped mine. A lot of guys would have bought me more or given me their cone, but Tom... dropped his too. "Now we're equally unhappy," he said. For some reason, I liked that.

(BEAT)

And just as I'm remembering that, I see the look of terror in his eyes.

The AIR around them TINGLES, CRYSTALLINE.

JANIE (CONT'D)

I turned to look, and the kitten was standing on the shore of the lake. At least until she... unfurled.

However far the kitten may be, we hear it: the SNAPPING, RENDING SOUND of a BODY UNFOLDING ITSELF as it grows bigger.

JANIE (CONT'D)

That's the only word for it. She began to open up toward the sky, like a plant. And from her emerged a woman, tall and regal and dressed in a cloak. And I knew her at once for who she was. She was The Queen, and she had come to take him back. And I wasn't going to let her.

Suddenly, next to Janie, there's a KNOCKING, THRASHING SOUND.

Tom has started to WRITHE and SHIMMER, transforming.

JANIE (CONT'D)

The Queen raised her hands and brought them together. They rolled like thunder. Tom clutched at his skin. Short, bristly hairs were sprouting from it. He said, "Hold me tight, for I may change." So I did. I put my arms around him, and I held him tight as he changed.

(BEAT)

I didn't have a great line of sight, but The Queen seemed like she was rocking back and forth and humming to herself, and Tom began to unfurl too.

In quick SUCCESSION, we hear the SNARLS and GROWLS of ANIMALS as Janie describes them.

JANIE (CONT'D)

First, he became a bear, and he raged against me to let him go, but I held on. Then a mountain lion, snarling and biting. But I redoubled my efforts. I could see how furious The Queen was getting. But I had held him as he changed, time and again. That's all a marriage is, really. Then he turned into a wolf, and he kicked right at my abdomen, and I...

And abruptly, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

The STORMS continues, though it's abate somewhat.

JANIE

I...

She trails off, looking outside. It's a long silence.

A VOICE

And you lost the baby.

JANIE

In some version yes, and in others... no. I have no baby in my arms, but maybe she's sleeping upstairs.

(BEAT)

The next morning, I returned to shore and saw the tracks of a large dog disappearing into the nearby woods. He had gone with The Queen... with *you*... back home.

Ahhh! So *that's* who this other voice is!

THE QUEEN

I was not the one who took him.

JANIE

I don't see anybody else who's six feet tall and dressed in a cloak.

THE QUEEN

There must be several women who match that description.

JANIE

You'd be surprised.

There's a moment of SILENCE between them. Then...

THE QUEEN

You've told me two stories now, both of which contradict each other, but both of which address one of the mysterious facts of your husband's disappearance. He lost his arm when the aliens took him. A woman like me was the mysterious presence on the shore.

JANIE

Both stories are true. Neither of them is.

THE QUEEN

I see. Quite the puzzle. Okay then. What *didn't* happen?

Janie regards her for a long moment, then nods.

JANIE

You know, you're the first person that's asked.

Slowly, all the sounds fade out.

ANNOUNCER

Part Four: What Didn't Happen.

FADE IN:

INT. SUMMERWIND - TOM'S LAB - MORNING

Back in the now familiar space. The FURNACE ROARS. Over it, we barely hear the KITTEN'S MEWL.

JANIE

Grandpa called the furnace in the basement of Summerwind an "octopus." It had arms reaching up to different vents, spreading heat through the whole house. It wasn't scary, but I was scared of it. I don't know why I'm saying this. It's not relevant. It's -

THE QUEEN

We're talking about what didn't happen. Tell me about the furnace.

Janie stops. She swallows. Wavers.

JANIE

There was a room behind it.

She stops, shakes her head. *What am I saying?*

JANIE (CONT'D)

No. That's crazy. I'd know about a *whole room* behind the furnace!

THE QUEEN

This didn't happen. You're making it all up. So tell me about the room.

(BEAT)

Tell me, Janie.

JANIE

Tom squeezed behind the furnace to find the source of the draft. He found a door, open a tiny crack. Tiny cat paw tracks moved through the soot. Tom threw his shoulder into the door to open it more.

We hear Tom GRUNTING with EFFORT as he DISLODGES the DOOR. Finally, it gives, and we follow Tom as we walks into...

INT. SUMMER WIND - BASEMENT - THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small, furnished space, the FURNACE'S HUM a sinister soundtrack to its every corner. It sounds desolate.

JANIE

It was a small, square room with a twin bed and a writing desk. A rusty bucket in the corner laid tipped over, and the closet door stood open. There were clothes inside. I could have sworn I wore the dress with the red flowers on it in my first grade picture.

(BEAT)

Someone had boarded over the windows, but a storm the night before had jarred one just loose enough that the kitten had squeezed her way in and found her way to us.

A LONG PAUSE.

THE QUEEN

Go on.

JANIE

Tom found a stack of drawings on the desk. Done in crayon. A little girl in a dress covered in red flowers was in all of them. As was a woman. A tall woman in a long cloak, with regal bearing. Almost a queen.

(BEAT)

Sometimes they held hands. Sometimes the queen chased the girl. Sometimes she cradled her. But the two of them - *only* the two of them - were in the drawings.

THE QUEEN

Had someone signed the drawings?

JANIE

I had. I mean, my younger self had.

(BEAT)

But I don't remember making those drawings. I don't remember being in that room. I don't remember...

She trails off, clearly in distress.

THE QUEEN

I remember being in that room.

JANIE

You do?

THE QUEEN

Yes.

(matter-of-factly)

I told Tom all about it.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERWIND - GARDEN - DAY

We're outside. The MACHINE SPINS, FRANTICALLY FAST.

THE QUEEN

It was a beautiful night, and the kitten followed us outdoors.

A soft MEOW from somewhere below her.

THE QUEEN (CONT'D)

I picked her up, and I told him how when you were a little girl, your grandfather had... we'll call it a religious awakening. He became convinced magic was real and that if he could speak the right words, open the right door, it would make itself known to him. He spent his waning years on this. He failed.

(BEAT)

Until his granddaughter started telling him about a woman she had met out in the woods. A queen. Who would protect her from monsters.

JANIE

Wait. Wait, wait, wait -

THE QUEEN

He would have this little girl - we'll call her Janie - stare into the fire until she saw the monsters hiding there, until she said the queen had arrived to protect her. Then he would close her in the room with paper, so she might draw this queen and with her the secret knowledge that would hold the doors of magic open for him. He sometimes left Janie in there for *days*.

JANIE

That was supposed to be a *secret*.

THE QUEEN

Why?

JANIE

It was *safer* that way.

THE QUEEN

He boarded the room up. He left the house to his granddaughter. Out of guilt, I assume. I've never much understood what and why humans do.

JANIE

So you told all of that to *Tom*?
What did he say?

THE QUEEN

He took your hand, he hugged you,
and he told you his story.

(BEAT)

Would you like to hear it?

There's a LONG PAUSE, and then Janie SWALLOWS.

JANIE

Yes.

There's a WOOSH, and the sounds around us change. The air
around us becomes brighter and more pleasant. A warm summer's
night.

And then we hear him.

TOM

When she was twenty-five and living
in Chicago, my mother saw a
miracle.

(And sharp-eared listeners might realize, yes, this is the
voice we've heard as the ANNOUNCER through the episode.)

TOM (CONT'D)

She was walking out on Navy Pier
when she happened to look down into
the water. And she saw... she saw a
woman swimming there, just beneath
the surface of Lake Michigan, never
coming up for air. My mother leaned
down to look more closely, and the
woman shook her finger -- naughty,
naughty -- then disappeared into
the depths. Of course, my mother
thought. Some people live
underwater. How did I forget about
that? A switch had flipped. She
would never see the world the same
way again. She would see *more*.

(BEAT)

So she said. My whole childhood - I
don't know if I can do this. Sorry.

THE QUEEN

Hey. Eyes on me. I love you, Tom.
You don't have to carry this alone.

TOM

Okay. My whole childhood, she would see things. A fairy or a dragon or, I don't know, a balrog, and none of us kids would see it, and she would drag us off further into the middle of nowhere, because magic, would you believe it, congregates in cities? Who'd have thunk! My dad had enough when I was 11 and split. Well, if you believe *her*, my dad was a fairy prince who seduced her in the Krasberg rose garden, then left her with a kid. So obviously I'm a special prince.

(BEAT)

I'm not a special prince. She was lying. She was a dangerously unstable woman, who was terrified of magical creatures but also trying to get them to accept her as one of them, living with six kids out in the woods, in a house that was cold, cramped, and dirty.

(BEAT)

I was the oldest, so I had to protect the others from her. When my sister died -

(BEAT, he snuffles)

When *Robin* died, mom made me go dig a grave for her out among the trees. It was winter, and there I was, 13 years old, digging a grave. I don't remember where *Robin's* buried. Upstate somewhere.

THE QUEEN

That's awful.

Tom gives a SHARP LITTLE LAUGH.

TOM

Yeah. My mom left one day and never came back. A few weeks later, she mailed me the schematics for a machine that was supposed to detect magical beings. She said when I got settled, to build one and wait for her to come calling. Which implies she got what she wanted, and traded us in for that. Good for her?

(BEAT)

Joke's on her.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

If that thing goes off, I'm not sticking around to find out who's come calling. I'll kill her before I let her near you.

A long silence. The cicadas whir.

THE QUEEN

This stuff *breaks* people, Tom. They turn into beasts out in the woods. They chase and they chase and they chase, and they never get any closer to it. It was magic for your mom and my grandpa, but it could be money or God or love or having a baby or *anything*. People will give themselves away if they think something will *solve* them.

(sounding slightly more like Janie)

But look at what they tried to do to us, and we survived. We lived, Tom. We goddamn lived. And we found each other. *That's* -

JANIE

- the miracle. The odds were against us, but we -

She takes a LONG BREATH of the evening air off the lake.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Tom?

TOM

Yeah?

JANIE

I'm pregnant.

TOM

(finally some good news!)
Wait. Really? Oh my God! Janie--

And that's when the ALARM goes off. As it builds and builds, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERWIND - THE LAKE - EVENING

The familiar sounds of ROWING. Each oar pull is an eternity. Everything stretches out as you get pulled into a black hole.

JANIE

He tried to get me to go. He said I still had a shot at escaping before she arrived. But I wouldn't go. I said we should take the boat.

(BEAT)

Out in the middle of the lake, he just stopped and stood up, looking back toward the shore. I didn't see anything when I turned to look.

"Eyes on me, Janey-Jane," he said. He looked scared. Sweaty. He looked *small*. I could see the parts of him that would make a good dad and the parts that wouldn't. I could see the parts of him that would keep us together forever and the parts that would make me leave.

(BEAT)

Then he took my head and turned it to look back to shore. He pointed *exactly* where I was supposed to look, and he said, "Do you see her?" He started yelling at her, telling her to come and get him. I wanted to see something. I tried to see something. I strained so hard I made the air go fuzzy. But I never saw anything. The shore was empty.

(BEAT)

He was broken. He was always broken, but I was broken, too. I thought it was enough. It should-

She trails off, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

Janie tries to find what comes next. She stammers. Finally...

THE QUEEN

Go on.

As Janie says the next bit, the sounds from the LAKE play out as dim ECHOES in the background, half-remembered dreams.

JANIE

He backed away from me suddenly, clearly terrified. He very nearly tripped over the edge of the boat, but I caught him in time.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

His grip felt loose in my hand, like some part of him was already going away. "Stay away from us," he said, and "I told you never to talk to me again," and "If you think you'll get to see our baby..."

(BEAT)

I was watching him change. Before my very eyes. Into someone I could no longer hold onto.

(BEAT)

And then he shook off my hand, and he shouted, "I see it too!" He dove into the water, swimming away from the boat as fast as he could.

(BEAT)

I thought about following. I did. But it suddenly got very dark, like something was in the sky, blocking out the moon and stars. So I thought I should stay with the boat. I heard him splashing further and further away from the boat. And then I heard nothing at all. Just the wind on the water and the barking of a dog in the distance.

THE QUEEN

You don't have to finish the story, Janie. I know how it ends.

JANIE

A half-hour later, I heard him again. "Janie, I don't know where I am." I called to him, trying to guide him. But I had no light to shine, and West Bay Lake is huge. They never found a body. Just an arm.

(BEAT)

I heard him one last time, that night out on the boat. "Janie. I've found us a home at the bottom of the lake. It's so beautiful." And then he was silent.

(BEAT)

I half thought I hallucinated those last words. But I think he might be there, in the lake, waiting for me to move in.

(BEAT)

Wherever he went, I couldn't follow.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

And then you showed up in the boat,
urging me to keep going, for the
baby, if nothing else.

(BEAT)

I rowed back to shore. I stopped
the alarm. I waited for him to come
back. Three whole days. Your
standard miracle unit. When he
didn't, I finally left Summerwind.

The sounds of the lake slowly FADE to nothing.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Alice said I could move into her
family's house in Highland Falls. I
needed to be away from all magic
real or imaginary, and Highland
Falls fit that bill.

(beat)

The last morning I was there, the
landline phone I kept forgetting we
had rang abruptly. I felt *such*
dread, but I picked up anyway.
"Where's Tom?" said a voice I'd
never heard. "Where's my son?" I
hung up immediately, and I got in
my car, and I'm never going back.

(beat)

But that's what didn't happen.

And finally, slowly, all the sounds fade away to SILENCE.

ANNOUNCER

Part Five: The Queen.

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER (**PRESENT**)

As they finish their conversation, the RAIN SLOWLY LETS UP.

JANIE

Can I ask you a question?

THE QUEEN

Of course.

JANIE

Why are you here? I mean, I can
guess. Maybe I'm losing it, and I
hallucinated someone to talk to.

(MORE)

JANIE (CONT'D)

Or maybe you're some sort of supernatural something I'm able to see for some reason. Maybe you're like a brain worm that Tom or my grandfather or someone passed on. Maybe I'm just making you up.

THE QUEEN

Janie. I only ever show up for one reason. I was never chasing Tom. I was never chasing you either. I was trying to protect you. To warn you.

(BEAT)

You do this, Janie. You take things you don't want to think about and build stories on top of them. You have since you were a small girl. It's a gift. It's part of why I love you so fiercely and why I will protect you until the ends of the earth. But it's also keeping you from seeing things as they are.

Somewhere, a BABY STARTS TO CRY. It might be in this house. It might not. But after a few moments... it STOPS.

JANIE

If you're here to protect me, you can go. I'm safe in Highland Falls. Blessed solstice to you. Please leave.

THE QUEEN

Your husband disappeared one year ago and here you sit, staring out the window as though you expect him to arrive imminently.

JANIE

Maybe he will!

(BEAT)

If he comes back, he will tonight.

THE QUEEN

Do you believe that?

A PAUSE. *Shit. Janie definitely believes he might be back.*

JANIE

He's dead. Whatever magic there is in the world, it's not bringing him back. And that I turned to you, my oldest companion, to keep vigil with me doesn't bode well, huh?

THE QUEEN

I wouldn't say that.

(BEAT)

I was never trying to warn you about him. I was trying to tell you that sometimes, two people who have each suffered greatly are drawn together for reasons they don't quite understand. That bond can feel more powerful than life or death. But it is a house built upon a rotten foundation. Secrets eat away at the wood until everything you've built splinters.

(beat)

I worried about you returning to the heart of your secrets. I wasn't protecting you from each other. I was protecting you both from the past. This is a fairy tale, after all. The monsters in it are real.

JANIE

I know this story. I wrote it.

And the BABY STARTS TO CRY AGAIN. Both women look upstairs.

THE QUEEN

Go. I'll keep the watch.

Janie turns toward the stairs, then hesitates.

JANIE

If you see him...

THE QUEEN

I will call.

We hear FOOTSTEPS as Janie HEADS UPSTAIRS. We follow Janie into -

INT. NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

Janie approaches the SQUALLING CHILD, and LIFTS HER UP.

JANIE

Hey, hey, hey... shh, shh, it's okay. It's okay. Mommy's here, my love. Eyes on me. Eyes on me.

And as she cradles the child, we -

FADE OUT.