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EPISODE 1 - Janet

EXT. APPALACHIAN TRAIL - DUSK

[Sounds of nature, wind, a vast distance.]

JANET

(VO)

Look at that view.

[Pause. She sighs in satisfaction, unscrews canteen, drinks, exhales after.]

JANET

(VO)

They call the Appalachian Trail the "Green Tunnel" because so much of it is covered with trees. But every so often, she'll surprise you. Like this. Must be a sixty, seventy foot drop nearly straight down to this tiny town. Kilruane. At least, I hope I read the map right.

[Wind picks up. Sound of JANET's footfalls on gravel. Pebbles skittering.]

JANET

(VO)

You ever get that urge to uh... move closer to the edge? Stare down at those ancient wood and stone buildings with the moss growing thick on their roofs. Feel your heart race as you inch closer to death? Imagine, for just a moment... The leap. Falling. Dropping like a stone, helpless all the way to the end. (pause) Not that you would. But maybe... maybe sometimes... you think about it. I guess I've been thinking a lot about that since hiking the trail.

JANET

(VO)

I'm not suicidal, though there were times I came close. I can't say that I like my life, because I don't know what it is, yet. But I can say that I like cheese fries and racing movies and watercolors. (pause) I think being out here in the wilderness changes you. (pause) God I hope so. (pause) It's strange. Everyone warns you about the dangers of cities like Richmond or Knoxville. But there's plenty of danger in little towns. There's evil in the living rooms of Saltville, too. (pause) But out here, it's different. Better, almost. It's honest. The danger is rotten trees ready to fall on you. The danger is loose gravel or a hidden root that breaks your ankle. The danger is food and water and time--gotta be off the trail by winter. I've been hiking two months now and I've never felt the kind of focus that I do. And I think that's why I'm out here. I need focus. I need a change. My birthday is next month, I'm turning 21 on the trail. Maybe coming out here will show me who I really am.

[Pause]

JANET

(VO)

There's evil in the world. I know that very well. But... do you think it must be everywhere? Can you get away from it if you walk far enough?

[Distant thunder.]

JANET

(VO)

Gray clouds have been moving in from the west for the past hour. Temperature

is dropping. Smell that rain in the air? The book said there's a hostel in Kilruane. From up here, looking at the little row of ancient shacks huddled around a church, I'm surprised there's even electricity. But it's better than camping in the wet again. I had to leave the trail to get here, but it's not so far. Plus, I just had to see this place for myself, after Ren told me about it. Which reminds me... better check my phone. Hey, I have bars! Barely enough signal. I have to tell her.

[Phone ringing. Ren's voicemail answers.]

REN

(prerecorded)

Leave me alone, unless I like you, then I'll call you back.

[Recorder beeps.]

JANET

Hey! You'll never guess where I am. Kilruane. You were right it really is the middle of nowhere. I can't believe you grew up here.

[Wind grows. Thunder.]

JANET

Okay, I'm going to try to find the hostel. Call me later! Hopefully I'll have enough signal and you can tell me all about the local hot spots. Bye!

[She hangs up.]

JANET

(VO)

I wish she had come with me. I worry about her. But I couldn't wait for her. Not a day longer.

[Pause. More Thunder. Footsteps as she walks.]

JANET

(VO)

My mom thinks this is a bad idea. She's worried about me being alone on the trail. Which is just... (hollow laugh). Now that I'm leaving, she cares. (pause) But the truth is, almost all the other hikers I've met have been friendly and helpful. Same with some of the mountain communities I've stopped at. Kind-hearted people who like to talk. The trail is hard and remote and empty, your average mugger isn't going to make the effort.

MIX

(Calling from a distance)

Hey there!

JANET

(VO)

Of course, you never know.

MIX

(getting closer)

Hi. How's it going?

JANET

(VO)

Looks like another hiker. What's that he's carrying... firewood?

JANET

It's okay, you?

MIX

It's great, it's great. Call me Mix.

JANET

Mix? That your trail name?

MIX

Yeah. You know, like Trail Mix!

JANET  
(VO) (sarcastic)  
Original.

JANET  
Call me Cuppa J. I like coffee.

MIX  
Cuppa, huh? Nice, nice, nice. You got a  
good look about you, Cups.

JANET  
... Cuppa J. And uh, yeah, thanks.

JANET  
(VO)  
You know what's coming. Hairs on the  
back of my neck. My stomach twisting.  
The leer of my mother's boyfriends,  
leaning their drugged out faces into my  
doorway.

JANET  
(VO)  
Breathe. Maybe not. (pause) But I know  
that look.

MIX  
Where you headed?

JANET  
There's supposed to be a hostel in this  
little town nearby. Trying to get there  
ahead of the rain.

MIX  
Oh is there? Man, I must have missed  
it, coming in from the north side of  
the ridge. Guess I got a little turned  
around. But you know, I found a shelter  
nearby! It's so cool, like, this old  
house. It's huge. Like a mansion or  
something but now it's abandoned. I was  
getting firewood when I saw you. You  
should check it out.

JANET

(VO)

See the way he looks at you? The way he flicks his eyes over you. Under that friendly smile, something a little hungry. A look that boxes you in, sizes you up. Categorizes you, with a confidence that he thinks he's got the right.

JANET

Nah, that's okay. Old buildings are dangerous and plus, no trespassing, right? I'm going to head on.

MIX

Well, listen, if this is the trail to the town, I'll walk with you. The house is just around that bend.

JANET

... yeah, sure, okay.

MIX

Cool, cool. Hey, you've got a pretty smile.

JANET

... thanks.

JANET

(VO)

Shit.

[They walk on.]

MIX

There it is!

JANET

(VO)

He isn't lying about the house. It's this collapsed stone mansion. What's left of it anyway. One of the walls has fallen in taking half the roof with it. The rough stones are crawling with

vines. The windows are all broken and nature is doing its best to take back what remains. Looks to be a hundred years old, maybe more. The forest is thicker here, darker. The vegetation is dense and green and the air smells of freshly turned soil. Fertile. Pregnant, even.

MIX

See? Pretty cool, huh? No one's been up here in years. Come on, check it out.

JANET

That's okay. I'm going to go. Good luck, Mix.

MIX

But the sun's going down. It'll be dark in a few minutes. And the rain, you know?

JANET

It's fine.

MIX

No, hang on, hang on. Hey, you got enough food and stuff? I got some I can share. We can get a fire going, cook something. Blaze up a little after if you want. Hate to see a pretty girl like you stuck in some hostel.

JANET

I'm good. Thanks. See you.

MIX

Wait. C'mon, stop.

[Rustle of fabric as he grabs her arm.]

JANET

Let go of my arm.

JANET

(VO)

Shit, shit, shit.

MIX

Why you gotta be like that? I'm just trying to be nice. I'm a nice guy. Just trying to make a nice time for both of us.

JANET

(VO)

I say what I couldn't all those years at home.

JANET

No. Let me go.

MIX

You gotta act all stuck up! What is wrong with you, huh? Think you're too good for me?

[They struggle, grunting and squealing. He drops the firewood. There's a hiss of an aerosol spray.]

MIX

AH! Jesus! My eyes! What the fuck?

JANET

(VO)

Pepper spray. Got him.

MIX

(howling in pain, coughing,  
wheezing)

Aaaagh!

JANET

(coughing)

Get off of me!

[They struggle.]

JANET

(VO)

He shoves me to the ground. Right on my pack. Get up. He's coming for me. My hand goes out, grabs one of the dropped branches.



[SFX: Branch impact on Mix's head.]

MIX

Hnnghf.

JANET

(VO)

Now run.

[She runs, breathing heavily. MIX howls in pain, getting further away. Thunder crashes. Rain begins to pour.]

JANET

(VO)

It got dark fast. I know, I know, I'm trying to put as much distance between me and "Mix" as I can, but I have to slow down. This isn't a clear trail. And now I'm soaked with rain. The ground has turned to mud.

[She pauses, unclips something from her pack. Click of flashlight.]

JANET

(VO)

This flashlight hardly helps. Jesus, my heart. Okay. Okay maybe this way.

[She resumes moving in a hurry.]

JANET

(VO)

I hate that guy. I hate that he made me do that. But I hate that he reminded me that that kind of danger is everywhere. At home, out here. I hate it.

[A strange noise in the rain, somewhere. Something like a scream and howl, far away. Gradually the sound of rain on old roofs becomes louder.]

JANET

(VO)

Do you see that? Is that... yeah,  
through the trees. It's a street lamp.  
That must be the town.

[More thunder. JANET emerges onto the gravel road in front of  
the Kilruane general store.]

JANET

(VO)

There's a handful of buildings along a  
gravel road. They're old. Really old.  
Stacked stone pillars, log cabin walls.  
Heavy shutters on the windows. Heavy  
doors closed against the outside. I  
don't see anyone, not even on their  
porches. There's just the one street  
lamp, out in front of a newer-looking  
building. I mean, comparatively. Still  
looks decades old. A single ancient gas  
pump sits outside. Hand-carved tables  
and chairs arranged out front shrug off  
the rain. General store, maybe.

[A strange scream from the woods, like shrieking violins and  
twisting metal.]

JANET

(VO)

What was that?

[A door slams. Distant footsteps running through the rain,  
getting farther away.]

JANET

(VO)

Someone just ran out of the general  
store like death was chasing him. He's  
not looking back. All I can see of him  
is a dark outline. Homespun clothes,  
maybe. Long hair. I think... I think  
he's afraid of something. Of what?

JANET

Hey! Excuse me!

JANET

(VO)

But he runs on, into a house at the end  
of the track, slams the door behind  
him.

[Distant door slam. Bolts and locks close closer by.]

JANET

(VO)

At the general store, the shutters  
close. Bolts slide into place.  
What's...

[She knocks against the door.]

JANET

(calling)

Hello? (pause) Hey hello? I'm looking  
for the hostel! I just want to get out  
of the rain. Can you help me, please?

[Silence. She knocks some more.]

JANET

I know you're in there! C'mon, just  
tell me where hostel is, I'll go!

JANET

(VO)

But they don't answer. Through the  
crack around the door, I watch the  
lights inside go out.

[She kicks the door.]

JANET

(VO)

But then... the doors of the  
church swing open. It's still a  
ways away, but I can see someone  
there, crouching down by a big  
candle at the front door. She  
strikes a match and for a moment I  
can see her face. Old. Like rock  
carved by dull chisels. Hard,  
intense eyes, alive with a kind of

slow simmering anger. A mouth that hasn't smiled. Ever. She stares at me a moment, then lights the candle and leaves it under the eaves of the church, out of the rain. Without a word she goes inside, leaving the doors open. (pause) The candle is pink. It glows like a tiny hearth in the heart of the storm. But the inside of the church is dark.

[Thunder. She approaches the church, footsteps on wet gravel. The rain takes on a different quality as she approaches the church.]

JANET

(VO)

Churches are supposed to be sanctuary, right? There's a clearing around the church, a low stone wall surrounding it. Ancient grave markers. (pause) Feels like this has always been here, that the town sprung up around it. Old stone, stacked and rising just shy of the tree canopy. There's a bunch more of those pink candles on either side of the front door, unlit.

[Pause.]

JANET

(VO)

She left the door open.

[Pause. Church door creaks a little, in the wind.]

JANET

(VO)

Anything to get out of the rain.

[She goes inside. Sounds of the rain outside. Occasional muffled thunder. JANET is dripping. Rustling as she moves, trying to find some place to dry off.]

JANET

(VO)

It's dark.

JANET

(calling)

Hello?

[Her voice echoes in the big, bare room.]

JANET

(VO)

No sign of the old woman.

JANET

Hello? I hope it's okay to come inside. (pause) Hello?

JANET

(VO)

Even with just the flashlight, you can see the bare stones of the floor are ancient, worn smooth with shuffling feet and time. There's a smell of... what is that, incense? It's baked into the walls, sweet and a little musky. They must burn it every day. (pause) It's... spotlessly clean, a whiff of antiseptic there just below the incense. Plaster walls washed, thick windows of leaded glass scrubbed to their very edges. And yet... doesn't it feel like despite the incense and care the place is unused? There are exactly four pews of hard, creaking wood, facing the front of the church, leaving much of the floor empty and open. But there's

no pulpit. No cross. No icons or  
images or symbols.

[Thunder rumbles. Just behind it, we hear a faint moan from  
somewhere deep in the church building. JANET doesn't hear  
it.]

JANET

(VO)

There's a door leading into the  
back half of the church, but if  
the woman wanted me to come all  
the way in, she'd have left it  
open, wouldn't she? I just want a  
place to get dry and wait for  
morning.

[Janet drops her pack, begins to rummage, gets a towel.]

JANET

(VO)

Better check my phone.

JANET

(sighs)

Dammit.

JANET

(VO)

No bars. Well. Let's get out of  
these wet socks. Maybe they'll dry  
out by morning.

[Sounds of her boots coming off. She sighs in relief.]

JANET

(VO)

That's weird. Look there. There's  
something scratched into the  
floor, deep into the ancient  
stones. A circle, about six feet  
across. And there's a design  
inside, a seven pointed star. And  
a heart. With little fishhook  
horns.

[More rumbling thunder]

JANET

(VO)

Okay. More than a little creepy.  
But there's hex signs on houses,  
good luck charms carved into  
doorways all over these mountains.  
And dry is dry. I've slept on  
worse places than old wooden pews.  
Just make the best of it.

[Another faint groan. Insect wings, briefly, then soft padding footsteps.]

LT

Hello, there.

JANET

(startled, on edge)

Jesus! Stay back! I ... I have a  
knife and pepper spray and I will  
mess you up!

[Pause.]

LT

I'm sorry I startled you.

JANET

What do you want?

LT

I'm looking for a place to get out  
of the rain.

JANET

Are you a hiker, too?

[Pause.]

LT

Yes. It's okay. Don't be afraid.

JANET

(VO)

And strangely enough, I'm not.  
He's standing there in the  
doorway, lit from behind by the  
single distant streetlight. He has  
a strong silhouette. Broad. Fit.  
Hair a little long, like he'd  
missed his last haircut by a  
couple of weeks. The kind of guy  
you often see on the Trail, but it  
wasn't the jerk from earlier. I  
couldn't see his face, though.

JANET

... yeah. Uh. Okay. Just... look  
I'm kind of jumpy right now so  
don't get too close, alright?

LT

I think I saw you, earlier, near  
Heartsore Drop.

JANET

Is that the steep cliff that  
overlooks this town?

LT

Yes.

JANET

Then you saw that jerk, too.

LT

I did, but at a distance. Still,  
you seemed to handle him alright  
all by yourself.

JANET

Yeah, well. I still have that mace  
on me, so...

LT

I'm just looking for a place to  
rest. May I come in?



JANET

(hesitates)

... okay. Sure. (pause) I guess you couldn't get into the hostel, either, huh?

JANET

(VO)

He picks up one of the pink candles placed in front of the church and carries it with him inside.

[Church door groans closed, fastens with a clunk. Rain is muffled.]

JANET

(VO)

I can smell the rain on him as he gets closer. Still can't really see his face, but I don't want to be rude and shine my light in his eyes.

LT

The people of Kilruane are not the most welcoming, no. But sometimes they can surprise you.

JANET

They slammed the doors right in my face. Can you believe that?

LT

Yes.

JANET

(VO)

He places the candle on the floor at our feet. He's tall. His movements are calm and easy. To be perfectly honest, I feel a little safer just having him here with me. Which is... odd. I don't... I don't do well around strange men,

most of the time. The fact that I'm not tensing up is ... I don't know.

JANET

What's the candle for?

LT

I thought we could use a little light. You can light it, can't you?

JANET

What? ... oh. Uh. Yeah. Sure. Here.

[She rummages in her pack. Lighter flicks. Candle lights.]

JANET

(VO)

The candle sputters until the wick catches. Warm light grows in the room. There's an instant herbal scent. Thyme oil in the wax. I look up at him. He's... quite handsome. He seems a little older than I thought, especially in his eyes, which are this... breathtaking gray. Tanned skin. Strong jaw. Stubble. And bright red hair, hanging a little into his face. (pause - she's confused about her own reactions) Um.

LT

That's better, isn't it? What's your name?

JANET

... J-Janet. Well, my trail name is Cuppa J. Because I like coffee. (laughs) What's your name?

LT

You know, I've never found one that sticks.

JANET

You sound like you know this part of the trail pretty well.

LT

I do. The man on the trail. Did you know him?

JANET

Oh god, no. Just some creepy dude. You know, almost everyone I've met on the trail has been really nice. I love how people look out for each other. But like everything, there's always men you have to watch out for. Uh, no offense.

LT

None taken. Why do you walk the trail?

JANET

(VO)

He moves away from the candle a little, as if looking around the church, studying it. His steps carry him across the horned heart circle etched in the floor. He's wearing... (hesitates, as if for a moment she isn't sure) ... uh, he's wearing tight jeans. And a flannel shirt, tucked in, open to his waist, white tee-shirt underneath. The sleeves are rolled up to mid-forearms. He has big, rough hands. But bare feet. (pause. uncertain) He must have left his boots outside.

JANET

I don't know. I had a cousin who did it years ago. It sounded fun. I figured do it now or I might

never do it. You know. Because of a job or whatever.

LT

No.

JANET

No what?

LT

That's not why.

JANET

Oh, yeah, smart guy? Why then?

[Pause. JANET takes an uncertain breath.]

JANET

I uh. I had to go. I couldn't stay at home anymore and I didn't know where to go so... I came here.

LT

That's quite unusual.

JANET

Is it?

LT

Most live their lives standing still. Transfixed by the world you believe you've made. A world of metal and lights, of plastic and meaningless vibrations in the air. Most don't even realize it. You're different. You feel your connection to the earth. To the cycle of day and night. Birth and food and death and rebirth, not many feel that call, lift their heads out of the numbing cloud of mere existence and turn with open eyes towards the truth.

JANET

... that's pretty deep. Deeper than I really am, I think. (laughs)

LT

I don't think so. How many of your friends even notice the mountains, let alone say to themselves, "I want to go there. I want to walk in the silences between the rocks and trees, to feel where I belong in the order of things?"

JANET

I mean, you're not wrong.

JANET

(VO)

... He's intense, for sure. Really into the trail life, I guess. But I like the way he talks to me. (pause) I haven't felt this relaxed around a strange man in... forever. I ... don't really understand why.

JANET

A lot people thought I was crazy.

LT

Of course they did. Tell me, what have you learned on your walk?

JANET

Dry socks are a must. (laughs)

JANET

(VO)

He smiles, but doesn't laugh. He doesn't say anything, just keeps looking at me. It's like he's waiting for something.

JANET

But I guess you meant more like a ... personal discovery. I don't know. There are times when it

feels like I'm the only human  
being for miles and miles. I'm  
there in the morning mists,  
looking out over the valleys of  
treetops, and the nearest towns  
are so far away they might as well  
not exist. And...

LT

Go on.

JANET

... I wonder how things used to  
be. Before civilization, you know?  
How mysterious everything is. How  
unforgiving the natural world can  
be. I mean, I remember seeing  
these plants growing out of cracks  
in boulders. I don't know how,  
there's hardly any soil. And they  
had these tiny yellow flowers.  
Somehow beauty managed to grow  
where it had no business to be.  
(pause) Maybe something good can  
come from the sharp, barren places  
in the world. (pause) But at the  
same time, I've seen hawks take  
squirrels. I've slipped on a loose  
rock more than a few times and  
thought, if I fell into a ravine  
or broke my leg... nowadays  
someone might find me. But back  
then? It would be a death  
sentence.

LT

Yes. The danger. Life and death.  
Predator and prey. People forget  
that is the nature of existence.

JANET

Yeah! I don't know, maybe you feel  
more alive when you realize how  
fragile you are.

LT

And you sought that out on the trail. Don't you think that makes you special?

JANET

Crazy, maybe! (laughs)

LT

No. No, I don't think so, Janet. It means you're willing to see the world as it really is.

[SFX: Insect wings. Rain continues.]

JANET

(VO)

Oh my god, I'm blushing. Why? I mean, he is really handsome. But... but I haven't... I haven't felt turned on in ... the thought of it makes me nauseous... (shaky breath) Something feels off about this. Okay. Okay. Deep breath.

JANET

(deflecting)

Is that why you are out here? To see the world as it really is?

LT

I'm here for the same reason we're all here, even if some have forgotten what that is. You know people have lived in these mountains for thousands of years. They huddled together, they hunted from the land, they quaked in terror at the darkness and what inevitably would come for them, and they mated, to solace their aching hearts and ensure they would live on. To replace the ones who were lost. Because that is the way of things. You said it yourself: nature is unforgiving. But it is honest about it.

JANET

So, what, you're like a doomsday prepper? You live off-grid? Just wandering the trail?

JANET

(VO)

He goes quiet and walks slowly to one of the old windows. Occasionally, lightning will light up the glass with its abstract patterns of red and frosted white. As he walks away, I feel... I don't know, cold. Empty. I want to see his face. (puzzled) I don't want him to leave. Why?

LT

When you were walking the trail, did you ever feel like you could just ... hear something? Perhaps felt more than heard. A call. A voice. The pull of another soul somewhere far away. A voice that sounds familiar but you cannot remember, because it has been so long since you saw them last?

JANET

I... I don't know. Have you lost someone?

LT

Yes. She was ... surprising. But nature is unforgiving and honest.

JANET

I'm sorry.

LT

Thank you. (pause) May I look at your face?

JANET

Wh-what?



LT

I want to see your face. Really see it. May I?

JANET

(VO)

He comes back to me. With a smooth gesture he picks up the candle and our shadows dance madly over the walls and pews.

JANET

Why?

JANET

(VO)

But I don't pull away. I feel the heat rise in my cheeks again as he lifts the pink candle and holds it near. The smell of thyme oil and incense seems so heavy in my nose, but I swear I can smell him, too. Something musky. And there's the scent of turned earth. His eyes stay locked on mine. (pause) I'm holding my breath.

LT

You're very pretty.

JANET

You're very handsome. Oh my god, I can't believe I said that.

JANET

(VO) (puzzled)

That's... that's not me... no, why did I say that?

LT

It's okay. We can be pretty and handsome together.

JANET

Well, uh. Thank you. But ... maybe  
we should just get some sleep,  
huh?

JANET

(VO)

I don't want to sleep. I want to  
talk to him more. I want him to  
tell me more stories about these  
mountains and the primitive earth.  
But this feels strange. I'm  
feeling flushed, light-headed. I  
should be safe.

LT

I'm not tired.

JANET

... I'm not either, but...

[Another moan from somewhere in the church. JANET finally  
hears it, this time.]

JANET

What was that?

LT

Janet.

JANET

Did you hear something? Sounded  
like ... I don't know someone in  
pain?

LT

You're hearing things in the rain.

JANET

No, I swear. From another part of  
the church? Like through that  
door...

LT

(sharply)

Janet.

JANET

(VO)

He says my name and it's like a hand around my heart. I turn back to him instantly, my skin suddenly flushed, hairs standing on end. The candle is once again at his feet and his shadow fills the whole wall of the church behind him, spreading over the scrubbed white walls like great black wings.

LT

Relax. I won't let anything hurt you. We're safe in here.

JANET

(breathless)

Are we?

LT

As safe as anywhere. Tell me, do you have a boyfriend?

JANET

(VO)

A sudden knot in my stomach.

[As if from a dream: Breaking beer bottle. Drunk men laughing.]

JANET

(VO)

My heart races for a different reason.

JANET

That's... kind of personal.

LT

Tell me.

JANET

I... no. No I haven't really... ever... had a boyfriend.

LT

You're a virgin.

[From the dream: More men's laughter, making suggestive comments.]

JANET

(pause)

... no.

[Pause. Rain patters.]

LT

Is that why you're really out here?

[Pause.]

JANET

(struggling)

My... mother is addicted to painkillers. And starting when I was a girl, she would sell me to men to feed her habit. She called them her boyfriends.

JANET

(VO)

Why am I telling him this?

LT

So you really do understand the struggle. (pause) Hmm.

JANET

... what?

LT

You shouldn't think about that past. You weren't meant for that life. That is why you are here. There are places no hiker has seen in these hills. Places rich with flowers, pure water, and a song in the air. I could take you there, the two of us. To a true and unspoiled place. Do not let the

base brutes in your past make you afraid.

JANET

(VO)

It's... so warm, now. My skin is tingling. The scents in the air make my head swim. His voice is so uh. Comforting. (pause) I don't feel like myself.

JANET

I... thank you. I think. But... I'm... I'm on this hike to ... you know, clear my head about stuff like that. Maybe one day I'll ... I'll feel whole enough to try a relationship, but ... not now. Not for a while.

LT

Love comes from the heart, not the head.

JANET

(getting woozy)

Love. I don't ... I don't think I even know what that is.

LT

I can tell you what is.

JANET

I um. Let's just... let's just... sleep.

LT

Your clothes are wet, Janet.

JANET

I... wh... they are...

LT

You should take them off. Let them dry.

JANET

(VO)

You know what's coming. So do I.  
This is not right. This is not  
what I want. Tell me to run. Tell  
me to get away. It's my mother's  
boyfriends pinning me down...  
only he's not even touching me.  
There's a tickle of fear in my  
belly. But there's warmth  
everywhere else. He's got such a  
pretty voice. He's like a fire: I  
want to bask near him. But the  
warmth isn't mine. Only his. Our  
clothes are off now. (pause) Wait,  
when did his clothes come off? I  
don't... I don't remember seeing  
him undress and...

LT

I need something from you, Janet.

JANET

(breathless, confused)

Okay. Yes. Yes, okay. What is it?

[SFX: Janet's heartbeat. Steady. Slowly growing faster.]

LT

I need to listen to your heart  
beat.

JANET

(confused)

... wait, what was your name  
again?

LT

*Let me listen to your heart,  
Janet.*

JANET

(vo)

I let him. This man seems to glow  
in the candlelight and unbidden,  
my mind hums with thoughts of him.

How amazing and strange he is. How  
I want him. How I want to please  
him. I lift my chest to him,  
invite him closer. He leans in,  
and his hands close on my bare  
arms. His fingers are rough.  
(pause) Why are they so rough? He  
tilts his head, brings his ear  
close to my chest. I smell his  
scent: musk and soil and blood.

[SFX: Janet's heart racing.]

JANET

(VO)

There's a breeze. Somehow there's  
a breeze in the church.

JANET

(pause)

Well?

LT

... nothing special. But perhaps  
you'll do.

JANET

Do... for what?

LT

Quiet now. You want me, yes?

JANET

W-wait... I ... I can't. I have  
... scar tissue down there.  
They... ruined me.

[Pause.]

LT

... ruined?

JANET

Yeah. Inside it's... it hurts. I  
can't even have kids. I... I'm  
sorry.

[Pause.]

LT

What did you say?

[Pause. JANET panting. Then, sudden fury and buzzing of insect wings. Sounds of violence, tearing, biting.]

JANET

(VO)

He falls on me, crushing me to the ground. I'm drowning in his scent, He is heavy on me, his teeth are closing down on my skin, sharp, tearing... I want to let him.

JANET

(VO - Speaking over herself.)

No. I don't.

JANET

(VO)

Even as my blood is running over my body, I let him.

JANET

(VO - Speaking over herself)

Make him stop. Because I can't. I can't. Oh god. Oh god. I didn't know it would follow me. You can't escape it. You can't run far enough. You run and run and run... and... run... and run...  
(whispering) run... run... run...

[JANET's heartbeat slows, and slows, and stops. Time passes. JANET's phone rings and we hear her voicemail.]



JANET

(prerecorded voicemail)

Hey, it's Janet and you should know that I'm hiking the Appalachian Trail! Which means there's a good chance I won't get this for a while. But leave a message anyway and I'll get back to you when I can!

[Message beep.]

REN

(on phone)

Hey Janet, it's Ren. Just got your message. Sorry, Tyler was being ... nevermind. I can't believe you actually ended up in Kilruane. I barely remember it, but what I do remember I wish I didn't. Anyway, call me in the morning, okay? The world is weird, here, without you. Bye.

[Hangup. Pause. JANET's phone rings, voicemail picks up.]

REN

(on phone)

Janet, hey, haven't heard from you, starting to wonder. Call me.

[Hangup. Pause. Rings again, voicemail picks up.]

REN

(on phone)

Okay, these are going straight to voicemail now. You have to call me back. Ty is worried about you. (pause) Everyone is. (pause) C'mon Janet. Don't make me come find you. (pause) Please.

[Hangup.]

[Credits.]