

FRACTURE

Written by
Alan Smithee

Copyright (c) 2024

OVER BLACK:

"Trauma fractures comprehension as a pebble shatters a windshield. The wound at the site of impact spreads across the field of vision." - Jane Leavy

FADE IN:

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - SUNSET

The sky burns red behind the weathered house. It's walls and grounds slowly reclaimed by nature.

JANICE (32) whose appearance matches the neglect of the house, stands and stares at it. Leather briefcase in hand.

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - SITTING ROOM

Empty. Unloved.

Fresh footprints in the thick dust lead to Janice, who sits in the middle of the room. She creaks open the briefcase.

She pulls a tape recorder, presses play. The GIGGLES of two young girls ring out.

JANICE (RECORDER)
Mia, I think it's recording.

MIA (RECORDER)
Okay, ready, one, two, three...

Janice opens a photo album full of family pictures. A MOM, DAD, and two girls, JANICE (7) and MIA (10). Happy.

JANICE (RECORDER)	MIA (RECORDER)
<i>We're going on a bear hunt.</i>	<i>We're going on a bear hunt.</i>
<i>We're gonna catch a big one.</i>	<i>We're gonna catch a big one.</i>

CLOSE ON: A PICTURE OF JANICE AND MIA HUGGING.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL--

INT. FAMILY HOME - SITTING ROOM

The picture, now in a frame, hangs on a clean wall.

MIA (RECORDER)
I'm not scared!

The house is now a home. Nice furniture, pictures, houseplants.

JANICE (RECORDER)
...I'm a little scared.

Janice jumps to her feet, recorder in hand, taking in her new surroundings.

MIA (RECORDER)
Don't worry little sis, I'll keep you safe.

Mia appears in the doorway.

JANICE
Mia!

Mia's eyes widen as she spots Janice, she turns and flees.

JANICE
Mia, wait!

Janice gives chase into--

DILAPIDATED HOUSE - HALLWAY

Janice stops in her tracks. Surveys. Fresh child-size footprints in the dust lead up a staircase.

Janice follows them into--

DILAPIDATED HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

--and to a closed, pink door at the end of the hall.

MAN (O.C.)
You're fucking pathetic! Do you know that?

WOMAN (O.C.)
Be quiet, the girls will hear you.

The shouting comes from behind a different door to Janice's right, its paint heavily chipped.

The sound of a SLAP, followed by a pained cry.

MAN (O.C.)
I don't give a shit about the girls!

Janice reaches for the door handle.

MIA (RECORDER)
No! Don't go in there!

Startled, Janice stares at the recorder. She reaches for the handle again when Mia appears at the top of the stairs.

JANICE
Mia!

Mia runs down the stairs. Janice gives chase.

INT. FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN

Beautifully presented though shattered glass and crockery litter the floor.

The footprints become bloody as they extend through the broken glass and towards the backdoor.

Janice follows them--

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - GARDEN

An overgrown jungle. The remains of old police tape tangled on brambles flaps in the wind.

MIA (RECORDER)
He's coming. Run.

Janice looks from the recorder to the garden. A SHADOW FIGURE has appeared 20 feet away. It runs towards her.

Panicked, Janice runs back into the house--

DILAPIDATED UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

--and up the stairs but stops at the chipped door.

She reaches for the handle--

MIA
Stop!

Mia peers around the pink door, quickly beckoning Janice to enter as loud FOOTSTEPS approach from the stairs.

Janice rushes into--

INT. FAMILY HOME - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM

Full of color, toys, and joy.

Mia quickly gestures for Janice to hide under one of the immaculate single beds.

Janice doesn't hesitate, crawling underneath.

Mia gets to her knees, peering under the bed to make sure Janice is secure.

JANICE

I'm scared.

MIA

Don't worry, I'll keep you safe.

Something GRABS Mia. She SCREAMS as she is dragged out of the room.

Janice squeezes her eyes shut, the sound of her breath her only company.

JANICE

(frantic)

We're going on a bear hunt, we're gonna catch a big one.

Janice calms her breathing Tentatively opening her eyes.

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM.

No color, no joy, and no bed. Just Janice, curled up in the dust. She gets to her feet. Warily steps out into--

DILAPIDATED HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

She reaches for the chipped door handle. Grasping it, she looks to her recorder, it remains silent.

She turns the handle and opens the door into--

FAMILY HOME - MASTER BEDROOM

As well-kept as the rest of the house. On the floor, the lifeless body of a WOMAN.

Shadow Figure has Mia, his hands around her neck, squeezing. Mia's face bulges as she stares at Janice.

The recorder crackles.

MIA (RECORDER)

Run!

Mia's body falls to the ground limp. Shadow Figure quickly turns to Janice. She flees, racing--

DILAPIDATED HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

--Down the stairs two or three at a time into--

DILAPIDATED HOUSE - HALLWAY

And straight out of the front door--

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE

She stops, hands on knees trying to catch her breath. She looks back at the house as tears trickle down her cheeks.

Her gaze darts from the house and the road. Undecided, fear or freedom?

Janice takes two long, drawn out breaths before drying her wet cheeks.

She shakes her head with determination, shakes off her limbs and marches back into the house.

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM

Janice storms in. It's almost empty. In the corner, an old, dusty mirror leans against the wall. Janice walks up to it.

The reflection shimmers, showing her as a child with a smiling Mia standing next to her. Janice smiles back.

The reflection flickers menacingly. When it stabilizes, Shadow Figure is standing behind her.

Mia looks terrified but Janice smiles. She doesn't turn around, she doesn't run.

JANICE

I'm not leaving you again.

She reaches her hand to her side. Her child reflection does the same; Mia takes her hand.

The Shadow Figure steps closer, closer still. It LURCHES forward enveloping Janice in its darkness.

SMASH TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - SUNRISE

The sky a soft blue. Early morning sun rays land on the house. Birds TWEET and flutter between the overgrowth.

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - SITTING ROOM

Quiet. Calm. Peaceful. Tyndall beams spread from the windows.

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM

Nearly empty. The old mirror reflects the old, dusty room.

At it's base rests the recorder. It CRACKLES to life.

The GIGGLES of two young girls ring out.

MIA (RECORDER)
*We're going on a bear hunt,
 we're gonna catch a big one.*

JANICE (RECORDER)
*We're going on a bear hunt,
 we're gonna catch a big one.*

JANICE (RECORDER)
 I'm not scared.

FADE OUT