

HOME SWEET HOME

Written by

"Jacq"

A text message reads: Fane, you need to come home. There's been an accident. -Bobby

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Inside the party is in full swing. Noise and drunk people funnel in and out adding to the litter in the front yard.

On a curb sits FANE who looks like she should be having the time of her life. The downcast look on her face tell a different story.

Tears leak down her face taking her make up with it.

For whatever reason the party spills out into the yard. The drunken many sing the same song; the power of it is deafening.

A young man joins her. KNOX pulls her body up and into a hug. Her mouth moves rapidly next to his ear. His face morphs from concern to subtle horror. The patrons are too loud to understand what he says back but Fane nods all the same.

His sweaty skin ashes. They face each other in a peaceful stand-off. Around them the world doesn't know its ending for someone. Instead it dances around them.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Fane no longer in party garb slowly packs a bag. Knox hastily paces the length of the room. The confliction wears his face down.

KNOX

I get that your terrified and as much as I want to protect you, maybe this is a good thing.

FANE

I'm not going back to that house.

KNOX

You can't stay at a hotel.

FANE

Yes I can.

KNOX

Have you talked to your sister yet?
How do you know what he meant?
Maybe we should try calling again—

Fane shoves away from her bag.

FANE

What do you expect me to do? I can't keep calling. She won't pick up. I'm trying to be a good sister.

KNOX

You can't be a good sister from the Holiday Inn.

Fane drops down on the bed in distress. Knox follows soon after.

FANE

I can't go back into that house. I really can't. What am I going to do?

KNOX

Finish packing. My bag's by the door. We can leave when you're ready.

FANE

You're coming with me?

KNOX

I can't let you go alone.

Fane throws herself at Knox, he catches her.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Fane sits shotgun with Knox at the wheel. The silence is heavy. A voice breaks through. A calming voice negotiates:

RADIO VOICE

Sit still. Breathe deep. Ask the universe for protection. You don't need guidance. You know what needs to be done.

(pause)

Repeat after me: I am not a victim. I am here to solve a problem. I am here to take back my life.

FANE

I am not a victim. I am here to solve a problem. I am here to take back my life.

RADIO VOICE
 Good keep breathing. Count slowly
 back from ten.

FANE
 Ten...

RADIO VOICE
 Remember you have control.

FANE
 Nine...

RADIO VOICE
 You are the master of your fate.

FANE
 Eight...

RADIO VOICE
 Be the captain, weather the storm.

FANE
 Seven...

RADIO VOICE
 Fear can't hurt you. It is an
 inanimate object—

Fane jams the volume and the voice ceases mid-sentence.
 Silence turns into a mantra.

EXT. GAS STATION

The sky reeks of grey clouds choking out the sun. The wind
 beats against Fane but she doesn't pitch under the abuse. The
 station is old; care abandoned that place a long time ago.

Fane fills up the tank. Knox sleeps against the window. Her
 phone rings. She pulls it out and sees her sister's name. She
 is frantic to answer.

FANE
 Where the hell have you been? Bobby
 said I needed to come you and you
 didn't pick up. Jesus Sage!

SAGE (O.S.)
 Hello to you too. Calm down, I was
 just out the house last week
 everything was fine. Bobby texted
 you? Did you party a little too
 hard last night?

FANE

Do you think I'm lying?

SAGE (O.S.)

I never called you a liar calm
down.

FANE

We're on our way to the house—but
I can't Sage. I can't go in. I need
you to go. I need you. Please.

SAGE (O.S.)

I was just there.

FANE

No, I feel it. Something's wrong,
just go check.

A BEAT.

Sages heavy breathing keeps Fane in suspension.

SAGE (O.S.)

Fine.

Fane sags against the car in relief.

FANE

Thank you.

SAGE (O.S.)

I'm gonna head over now. I have to
pick up Carter from day-care and
take him to Taylor's so I can't
stay. I know how you feel—

FANE

No you don't Sage. You really don't
get it.

SAGE (O.S.)

You're right. But eventually you're
gonna have to face it.

FANE

I know. Thanks. Please be careful.

SAGE (O.S.)

It's probably nothing.

(pause)

Are you listening to your tapes?

Fane pulls the phone away from her ear. She leans on the car, her body: tight muscles, sweaty skin and clenched fist.

Sage's voice fades out. She puts the phone back to her ear completely ignoring her sister.

FANE

You go to the house. We'll pick up Carter, I'm still on the list right?

SAGE (O.S.)

You don't have to Fane. I can just call Taylor. He can drag his ass to go get him once in a while.

FANE

It's fine. I'll take him to his dad's.

SAGE (O.S.)

(chuckles)

Don't pretend like you're doing me any favors.

Fane's dark chuckle lacks comedic wherewithal.

FANE

Don't worry about Carter. Just go to the house and call me when you get there.

SAGE (O.S.)

I'm leaving from yoga so I'll just go now.

FANE

Okay.

Fane exits the call with a smile.

INT. CAR - LATER

Fane still smiles as she drives. Knox wakes, confusion is evident.

KNOX

Aren't we almost to the house?

FANE

(smiles)

Sage finally called me back, she's headed there now.

(MORE)

FANE (CONT'D)

We just have to pick up Carter and drop him at his dad's.

KNOX

Lucky you.

FANE

Don't sound so happy.

KNOX

Eventually you have to go. You can't keep avoiding this forever.

Fane stops at blocked off train tracks. The red lights blinking.

FANE

I'm not avoiding anything. I can't go to that house. I wish I could, I really do.

KNOX

I want to understand Fay. It's just a house. Four walls and a fucking roof, it can't hurt you. You have to forgive the bad shit. This is a perfect way for you to face your fears, take control. Baby, a place can't hurt you.

Fane stares ahead blankly. She turns slowly toward Knox, tears in her eyes. Her voice hauntingly chilling.

FANE

You don't know that house. When we moved there I could feel it, the worst feeling you could ever imagine. My dad started to believe me, he really did. Then he left, and my mom. So many weekends and school nights I spent with friends just so I wouldn't have to be home. I joined every club and activity just so I wouldn't have to go home. The doors and windows kept it inside, kept us inside. This is not in my head. I'm not crazy I can't go back there.

KNOX

Hey, hey, hey. No one said you were crazy but you can't live like this. You have to go home.

FANE

But—

KNOX

Fane! Enough of this—

The roar of an incoming train cuts his speech. He still talks throughout. His lips move calmly. He takes her into his arms and continues to talk. Fane just breaks.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

The smoky gray clouds intensify.

Sage stands in front of a massive TUTOR HOUSE. The cream and wood panels plays well against the dark red brick. The gray roof adds a larger than life feel. A place like this right out of SOUTHERN LIVING magazine.

She continues on the walkway. With each step the house loses it's family friendly disposition. Sage doesn't seem to notice. The door opens, revealing the pitch black inside. Sage continues, shutting the door behind her.

EXT. PARK

Fane sits on the hood. Knox plays with CARTER, a golden retriever in the grass. Fane looks at her watch.

KNOX

They treat their dog like a kid.
Doggie daycare?

FANE

(shrugs)
Where is Taylor? He was supposed to be here by now.

KNOX

I thought you would be ecstatic.
You don't have to meet your sister.
She'll go to the house, you're off the hook.

FANE

She hasn't called and when Sage says she gonna do something she does it. What if something happened?

KNOX

I think you're overreacting.

Fane doesn't argue. She pushes off the car and goes to the driver side door.

KNOX (CONT'D)

We leaving? Taylor's not here yet.

FANE

No, I am. You stay and wait I'll come back after I meet up with Sage.

Knox stops playing with the dog. He goes to stand in front of her.

KNOX

By yourself? That doesn't sound like a good idea. Let's give him ten more minutes then we'll go together.

Fane shakes her head. A deep breath inserts strength; she looks convincing.

FANE

I have to go. What you said in the car, makes a lot of sense. You're right, I have to. And it has to be just me. It takes everything from me. I don't want alone. Stay with Carter.

Fane doesn't wait for an argument. She kisses him and gets in the car. Seconds later, she pulls off without Knox or Carter.

INT. HOUSE

It stinks of organized normality and attempts of making lasting family memories. With each light Sage cuts on reveals another clue inside the all that terrifies Fane.

A family portrait near the base of the stairs shows them all. Sage stops to look at it. A man: the pillar of strength, a woman: a brazen smile with eyes full of hope, two girls close in age but the younger one much sadder than the older one.

CRASH! From upstairs the sound of something falling alerts Sage. She pulls away from the picture and focuses on the dark ascension.

EXT. PARK

Knox and Carter play when a car pulls up. Carter immediately begins barking when the person reveals himself to be Taylor.

TAYLOR

Sorry I'm late got held up. Knox right? Nice to meet you.

(pause)

Hey boy! How are you? I missed you!

Knox shakes his hand only after he's done with the dog.

KNOX

It's cool.

TAYLOR

Where's Fane?

KNOX

She went to the house.

Taylor freezes.

TAYLOR

What?

Knox nods in affirmation.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Well good for her. Thought that would take an act of God.

KNOX

I'm glad she's dealing with this shit but Jesus. How long is it gonna be like this?

TAYLOR

Between you and me back in high school even through college Sage had me driving around looking for Fane because she didn't want to go home. I just surprised she didn't pick a college further away.

KNOX

Didn't want to be too far from her parents.

TAYLOR

I don't blame her. Shit, I wouldn't either.

KNOX

Parents die, that's what happens,
its just shitty that she's so
focused on the house I want her to
get help.

TAYLOR

I might feel the same way too if I
was her.

Knox looks questionable but Taylor doesn't allow it much
longer.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

She watched her dad blow his brains
out. Sage said he was cleaning his
gun; a fucked up accident. Took
them a while to recover but Fane
never really did. She started to
think the house was out to get
them. Sage helped as much as she
could. The summer before college
Fane found her mother in the
kitchen, gas stove was on. Sage had
her move in until school started
but she wasn't ever gonna be the
same.

KNOX

She told me they were accidents.

TAYLOR

They were.

KNOX

Jesus.

TAYLOR

I know. Sweet house they left them.
What brings you guys here though?
Did something happen to the house?

KNOX

Bobby texted her about coming home.
He said there was an accident. She
thought something happened to Sage
so I rushed her.

Taylor's staring at Knox like he's grown another head.

TAYLOR

Bobby? Why would Bobby text about
the house?

KNOX
He's checking in right, keeping up
with the place?

TAYLOR
Bobby hasn't been to the house in
three months. He's back packing
somewhere in Europe.

KNOX
What?

TAYLOR
Yeah, he's taking in the sights.

KNOX
We need to get to the house.

TAYLOR
What's wrong?

KNOX
He texted her to come home but why
would he do that if he's in Europe.
Sage is already at the house and
Fane is on her way there. We need
to leave.

Taylor's face drops in realization. He calls Carter into the car and tire screeching and exhaust fumes are all that's left of the men and a dog.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

Fane stands outside the house. She shifts from one foot to the other. Her body bargaining with her mind to make a choice. Will she stay there or go inside?

FANE
I'm not a victim.

Slow calculating steps ease her closer. Her body a museum of overactive stirs. Yet she stalks forward. Each action more tentative than the last.

FANE (CONT'D)
I'm solving a problem.

Just as soon as she starts, she's at the door. Her hand shakes, hovering above the knob long enough to pay rent. Her hand is barely around it before the door opens.

FANE (CONT'D)
I'm taking my life back.

Her voice isn't strong but it sounds like she believes it. The gray natural light doesn't penetrate too much of the darkness. Several deep breaths later she steps inside.

The sound of her movements and breathing echo in the foyer. There isn't another sign of life. Fane's hands tremble into fist.

She searches the darkness with her eyes. She looks up the stairs, still nothing.

FANE (CONT'D)
Sage?

The shadows don't betray the dark. A creak from above sends Fane into a panic. She charges pass the family portrait. Her voice crying out into the darkness.

FANE (CONT'D)
Sage! Sage! Where are you? Answer me!

An airy voice calls out to her:

VOICE
She needs to rest.
(pause)
Rest in Peace.

Her silhouette disappears into the abyss.

EXT. HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Taylor's car screech to an abrupt stop. The two men and Carter exit. They pitch across the yard just in time to hear an agonizing SCREAM.

From there, they race inside. The outside a perfect exhibit of the modern family, distracting the world from the chaos within.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.