

PROLOGUE

*Night. MAYA's place. Jars of all sizes line the walls and shelves. There are hanging poultices and drying herbs strung from exposed ceiling beams. Hawk moths circle a bare light bulb above the sink. The smell of dill pickles and sandalwood.*

*MARY CLARE sits on the back steps, smoking.*

*Inside, MAYA tends the woodstove. She hums. The shadows stir and twitch.*

MARY CLARE: Always  
There's a light on  
Spilling out onto the mowed lawn, over the garden, a square patch of tamed  
ground hemmed in by wilderness.  
Cold white soup fog pressing up against the windows.  
Roots drying over the woodstove

MAYA: Once...

MARY CLARE: You, in the night  
The screen door, looking out  
  
Your hair is a wild tangle of wind, thistle.  
A rash of small mushrooms grow through your skin  
  
The woman at the end of the world

MAYA: Once. After there was nothing left...

*The sound of wind, and the creaking of the giant pines as they bend low to listen.*

MAYA: After the cities had burned and the streets washed into the  
oceans and roots grew thick enough to swallow skyscrapers. After the food  
was gone, she followed the river valley upstream and inland through the  
mountains, deeper into the north, to the roof of the continents, uninhabited  
forest, where you could still drink the water and feel the warmth of starlight  
on your face.

MARY CLARE: Where the trees have stood for centuries and the mist hides  
prehistoric monsters. Where the road runs out.

MAYA & MARY CLARE: After there was nothing left.

MARY CLARE: The woman alone at the end of the world has a daughter with her own  
heartache. Loneliness.

MAYA: Conceived on the longest night of the year.

MARY CLARE: Which, in the North is longer. Which, in the North is a month. A decade. A lifetime.

MAYA: A daughter that is half cold air, half midnight sun.

MARY CLARE: Chilly and alien and uncomfortable in her own warm skin.

*The shadows around the woodstove rise and sniff the air, MAYA stops tending it and listens.*

*LUPER enters, loping slowly down the edge of the tree line to his campsite.*

*MARY CLARE looks out in his direction and stands, pulling her jacket snug and her hood up. She walks down the rest of the back steps and out into the night.*

MAYA: At night, wrapped snug, and rocked by firelight the woman would sing her daughter stories of drinking straight from garden hoses and playing outside after dark.

*Night. LUPER's makeshift campsite. Led Zeppelin blares from a portable radio. There's the glow of a fire. On both sides, the forest looms. LUPER's truck is parked, shielding the fire mostly from view of the road. He sits on an empty metal drum, singing along and rolling a joint between his legs. MARY CLARE appears out of the black of the woods. She hangs back at the edges of the firelight, watching him.*

MARY CLARE: I thought you weren't coming back.

LUPER: Haaaaay, freak! Where'd you come from? Pull up a log.

*She does.*

LUPER: Hahaha. Jesus. Don't you got a bedtime or something?

MARY CLARE: Fuck you. I'm not a kid.

LUPER: Nah. I'm just playing.

*He finishes his joint and lights it. He takes a drag and offers it to MARY CLARE.*

LUPER: Yeah?

*She takes a drag and passes it back. Taking out her own pack of cigarettes, she lights one.*

LUPER: Where'd you get those?

MARY CLARE: Friend.

LUPER: You don't have friends.

MARY CLARE: Fuck you.

LUPER: Swearing don't make you more of a grownup, just less of a lady.

MARY CLARE: Suck my dick, asshole.

LUPER: Maya hear you talk like that?

MARY CLARE: Sure.

*Pause.*

MARY CLARE: Thought you were set up in Prince George.

LUPER: Job went bust.

MARY CLARE: You get hung up for dealing again?

LUPER: Nah, man. I just gotta lay low for a bit.

*They smoke.*

LUPER: You look good.

MARY CLARE: I gotta get home.

LUPER: Bullshit.

MARY CLARE: It's late.

LUPER: It's not even ten.

MARY CLARE: It's dark. I might get lost.

LUPER: Yea, right. Girl Guide. You ever been lost out here?

MARY CLARE: I was never a girl guide.

LUPER: Really?

MARY CLARE: No.

LUPER: I remember the uniform.

MARY CLARE: ...

LUPER: The socks and beret at least?  
No?  
Maybe I'm thinking of someone else.

MARY CLARE: ...

LUPER: C'mon. I'm kidding. It was a joke.

MARY CLARE: I can't stay. I'll get in shit.

LUPER: You sure? It's a party out here. I got tunes. Whatever you want. Beastie Boys? Cause I'll "Fight For Your Right" ALL up in this bitch, you KNOW I will...

*He cranks the radio. Fight For Your Right blares. He sings along louder, drumming on the metal drum.*

*She stands.*

*He turns the music off.*

LUPER: You're making me sad.

MARY CLARE: Yeah?

LUPER: I'm sad now.

MARY CLARE: I don't care.

LUPER: You got mean.

MARY CLARE: I got smart.

LUPER: Hang with me a bit. I'll walk you home.

MARY CLARE: Last time you said that you left me at a Chapters.

LUPER: I was young and foolish.

MARY CLARE: And high.

LUPER: SO high. You want a beer?

MARY CLARE: If you walk and drink.

LUPER: Haha. Yaaaaaaas.

*He gets a couple beers from out of a cooler he's dug into the ground.*

MARY CLARE: You're not staying with your dad?

LUPER: Man, fuck that guy.  
Alcoholic shitbag.

MARY CLARE: He kick you out again?

LUPER: He stole from me.

MARY CLARE: You stole from him first.

LUPER: I got nothing to say to that asshole.  
*They reach the tree line. To LUPER it looks like a solid wall, but as MARY CLARE approaches the woods seem to open. He waits a moment before following her.*

*MAYA's kitchen. The house is silent as a crypt, nothing breathes except for the contents of the jars, quietly putrefying.*

*MAYA - sleepwalking - pushes through the curtain of glass beads dividing the kitchen from her bedroom. She wears a robe that shimmers with galaxies twisting in on themselves.*

*She methodically turns on every light in the house. She goes to MARY CLARE's bed, then to the screen door. She opens it and turns on the porch light. Waits. The moths dance around her like a blizzard.*

*She wakes, standing alone in the doorway. The lights blaze.*

*She goes back to bed, leaving the lights on.*

*LUPER and MARY CLARE come into the kitchen from the porch. MARY CLARE kicks off her shoes. LUPER leans against the kitchen counter, boots still on. MARY CLARE begins turning lights off, all except the one above the sink.*

MARY CLARE: She sleepwalks. Turns on lights. Hungry?

*She opens a jar of pickled carrots.*

LUPER: So...this guy...

MARY CLARE: Shhh.

LUPER (*whispered*): This guy's like ... I get to the site and, first night, this guy, next to me at the bar, VLT bar, guy looks like he knows what he's talking about, you know? Like, he's been out there fucking WORKING. Tough as shit, these dudes. Dirt under his nails and a beard like Treasure of the Sierra Madre. Bogart. Real fucking dirty.

*She opens a second jar of pickled carrots.*

LUPER: So I ask - 'cause if anyone's going to know - I ask if there's still gold. He looks at me like, like, fuck yeah there's gold man, like what the FUCK we be doing out here if there weren't no fucking money, dumb fuck city asshole. And he goes, for real, like, leans over and takes out this vial of dust, says, "Hell yeah we got gold, boy. Got so much gold, we SNORT it." AND THEN HE DOES. Cuts it on the bar (*he demonstrates*) and snorts, like, a gram of gold dust. Like, WHAT? FUUUUUUUUCK. You *is crazy*, motherfucka...

*He eats a carrot from her jar.*

LUPER: You grow these?

MARY CLARE: Yeah.

LUPER: They're good.

MARY CLARE: Yeah?

LUPER: You grow some fiiiiiiiiine carrots... Miss Mary Mary...

*She pushes him.*

MARY CLARE: Don't.

LUPER: ...Quite Contrary...

*She pushes him harder.*

MARY CLARE: Fuck off. I hate that.

LUPER: Why?

MARY CLARE: Makes me feel eleven.

LUPER: And you're what, like, thirteen now?

MARY CLARE: Asshole.

*Pause.*

*(uneasy)* I'm in grade twelve.

LUPER: Good.

MARY CLARE: Why?

LUPER: I want to kiss you.

*He kisses her.*

LUPER *(grinning)*: ...and I don't want to go to jail.

*She laughs. He kisses her again.*

LUPER: You taste like...mmm... I don't know.

*They kiss.*

*One by one, all of the moths die.*

MARY CLARE *(against his mouth)*:...pickles.

LUPER: Mmm...sexy pickles...

*MAYA comes through the beaded curtain.*

MARY CLARE: Mom.

*Pause.*

MARY CLARE: Sorry.

*Pause.*

MARY CLARE: We'll keep it down.

*MAYA looks at the floor, littered with dead moths.*

MARY CLARE: He's going. He was just...hungry.

*Pause.*

LUPER: I was hungry ma'am.

*Pause.*

LUPER: Thanks for the... thank you.

*LUPER crunches his way over the dead moths to the door. He turns and nods to MARY CLARE before going. The screen door bangs shut behind him.*

*MAYA looks at MARY CLARE for a while, fading back through the beaded curtain.*

*MARY CLARE cleans up kitchen, wipes the counter, turns out the light.*

*MORNING. The sun stripes the kitchen floor. MAYA cooks. She beams.*

MAYA: I love this.  
Cooking for the two of us.  
It's natural, I think  
Feeding each other  
Nurturing each other  
It's instinct. Very, very primal, you know?

You want raisins?  
I think I've got some, or oh -  
Blueberries.  
Mmmmmm.  
Here.  
Taste this.

*She hands MARY CLARE a bowl of oatmeal. MARY CLARE leans against the counter and eats it.*

Can't you feel that?  
All those vitamins, sunlight, NOURISHING you.  
I think I've got some seeds, too.  
I like putting seeds in MY oatmeal.  
So much energy. Life force.  
Raw potential.  
Because you can turn it into anything, you know?  
That energy. That LIFE.  
Your body can LITERALLY turn that energy into anything it needs.

MARY CLARE: Not 'literally'.

MAYA: Pardon?

MARY CLARE: That's not what that word means.

MAYA: Oh. Well, I just mean -

MARY CLARE: I get it.

MAYA: Seeds. Whole universes inside seeds.  
It's right.  
All of this.  
All part of it.  
Feels right, like, being on track.  
I think we're on track.  
Eating together

We're going to work in the garden today, I think.

I always feel better. More connected, after.  
Hands in the soil.  
I think that's what's missing, in the world.  
Connection to earth, ground, to the ground, to the...seeds.

We don't connect anymore, with our food. With what feeds us. NOURISHES  
us.

MARY CLARE: Most people - LITERALLY - most people, most of the people  
who are alive in the world today dig in the mud for their food.

MAYA: Right. Well...  
The beans then... I was thinking they're ready to plant -

MARY CLARE: I'm going to school.

MAYA: Tomorrow then. Or the day after: your birthday.

MARY CLARE: I still have to go to school, mum.

MAYA: Sit.

MARY CLARE: No. I'm late.

MAYA: Mary Clare.

MARY CLARE: I have to go.

MAYA: I want to talk.

MARY CLARE: I have to GO, mum.

MAYA: We'll talk.

MARY CLARE: Sure.

MAYA: What would you like to do? To celebrate.

MARY CLARE: I want a cake.

MAYA: Of course.

MARY CLARE: A real one.

MAYA: When have we not had a real cake?

MARY CLARE: One from a store.

MAYA: That's not a real cake. That's food dye and plastic.

MARY CLARE: That's what I want.

MAYA: No. It isn't. Believe me, Mary Clare—

MARY CLARE: You asked what I want and then you dismiss it and just do whatever the fuck *you* want anyway. I don't want whatever shitty health loaf you'd make, I want a real birthday cake. One that comes in a plastic box and has clowns or flowers. A normal cake.

MAYA: No.

MARY CLARE: What?

MAYA: I said: no. I won't be bullied.

MARY CLARE: You ASKED.

I'll get it.

MAYA: No.

MARY CLARE: You don't have to go in to town.

I'll go.

I'll get it.

It freaks you out. I know.

It's okay, I'll get it.

MAYA: I said: no.

MARY CLARE: It's my birthday.

MAYA: I've got a recipe for date frosting.

You'll love it.

You'll see.

MARY CLARE: Right. Sure.

*MARY CLARE leaves.*

*The broom falls with a clatter to the kitchen floor. MAYA looks at it – an omen – company is coming.*