

Dream House
Cayden Orion Learey

CAST:

JANA: They/Them, trans Femme, Mid 20's,

CHILD JANA: male presenting, Around 8 or 9

LOIS: Mid 20's,

JEN: Jana's Mom

PAUL: Jana's Dad

ADULT JANA: Age anywhere from 30-40

SET:

The set is comprised of one haphazard poorly lit adult apartment bedroom and one bright child's bedroom. Light may indicate the boundaries between the worlds but the physical lines between them should be blurred so that they may shift in accordance with the scene. The Phone call and Booming voice scenes may take place in an in and around a less defined, in between space.

TRANSITIONS:

All scenes transition directly into one another with no blackouts unless specified. When traveling in and out of dreams or through memories, the light, the music and the movement of the actor imply the passage of time, floating, pulling as if in the is the search for memory,

SCENE ONE

Opening. Two bedrooms, one is full of morning light, the other is midnight. One is the bedroom of a child, the other of an adult. Jana is asleep in the dark room Child is asleep in the light room. Slowly, clearly sleepwalking, JANA throws the covers off themselves and steps out of the night room into the day room. When in the day room, they come to not realizing at first they are in a dream

CHILD JANA's bedroom. Early morning. CHILD JANA wakes up slowly, drowsily, and for no apparent reason. No alarm goes off, no phone call. It is quite early on a Saturday morning. The light fills the room, there is the sense of unwavering stillness as the house is holding its breath, CHILD JANA feels wonderfully warm and comfortable under the covers, completely rested and at peace. Everything is as it was last night, as it always is. the clock jumps back and forth between 7:33 and 7:34. JANA appears.

JANA: Oh hello- OH my goodness.

They see where they are for the first time

Oh my god yes yes! What are you doing here OH my god! You're... right you would be. Wait! hold on I don't know if- of course you'd be here too... whats the matter.

Child tries to speak but can not

You can't speak? Will you Show me what you love here, I forgot, this yes I forgot about that too. It's tiny. Wait, is that right? What? No I- do you want me to explain more? It's strange. I know this will be difficult. But I always dream about places I've been.

JANA walks around examining the room looking at objects

Can we just stay here for a moment? No, please- I want to look around. I can explain in a moment, you must be able to do this too? When you visit the memories in your dreams they're more whole somehow?

CHILD JANA shows discomfort

I guess you don't have so many to look back on now. And you have no idea how much more vivid it is here. Talking? I don't know. To be honest I'm usually alone in my dreams... Do you remember having other dreams like this? Then maybe this is the earliest I've gone.

Traces a line in the dust of a cabinet too tall for young to reach, there is dust on the finger

I wanna look in here, if that's ok.

Wait, just give me another moment. You want to know? I'm sorry, um, no I'm not sure, here.. write it down?

'Wy did you com hear?'

You are a terrible speller.. I get better at that. So, don't worry or anything.

I- oh man. It's nice looking, it's nice looking

'Do we luse are hows?'

No, we don't lose it...

No

'But you have not bin hear for a long time'

No

College is great. Don't kill yourself in middle school but it's- well don't kill yourself in college either, you know what never kill yourself no matter how much it might seem-

'But you ar me?'

What? Oh shit- I mean fuck- I mean- yes, I am so sorry I thought I made that clear, was that not obvious?

You know this is a dream right?

'No'

Oh... does it not feel like a dream to you?

'It feel real but sometimes life feels like a dream and a dream never feels like a dream'

I'm sorry. Are you scared?

Ok good, yeah.

'This house is the most important, don't ever let it go'

Ok. Ok, I won't, don't worry. The world is so much bigger than you can see.

'I see so much, and you know that'

I'm sorry I know... adults and unsolicited advice... probably.

Would you be ok? Without all this? If you knew you could come back to it in a dream?

'No'

Ok... would you be ok with it if you know you could build a new home with everything and everyone

CHILD: NO

The dream ends, the bed room and young disappear and JANA is awake in the dark of their new room. There is a digital clock, it glows until jana turns a light on.

SCENE TWO

In the new apartment the sounds of a thunderstorm, it is loud at first as JANA comes back into themself, then fades into the background. LOIS appears in a bathrobe.

LOIS: Were you sleeping?

JANA: Lois? What are you doing here?

LOIS: Ouch... have checked your weather app I think we might lose power.

They concentrate for a moment trying to recall the dream

JANA: Is this my room?

LOIS: Yeah dummy. Wait, you're serious?

Beat, they try to remember

JANA: No, I'm losing it.

LOIS: losing what?

JANA: the dream

LOIS: Do remember what we... I thought you invited me over- for sex? Then you passed out while I was making us tea.

JANA: Um yes! Obviously. I'm sorry, weird dream.

LOIS: Do you mind if I crash here tonight I didn't bring an umbrella- you ok?

JANA: Can you pinch my arm real quick?

beat

LOIS: yeah? You fell asleep in like a minute flat.

JANA: Yeah, that happens sometimes.

LOIS: right...

JANA: It was like I was with someone. I think I was in my childhood bedroom?

LOIS: The dream you mean?

JANA: Not to be rude but why would I need your help?

LOIS: I have a masters degree in sleep science.

JANA: What what? Really? You have a masters degree?

LOIS: Yeah, why?

JANA: But you're like... a dyke.

LOIS: Dykes can't have masters degrees?

JANA: Not that- how did I not know that already?

LOIS: Actually I mentioned it the first night we hooked up but you had already fallen asleep... kidding.

JANA looks around in a bag and pulls out a juul, proceeds to hit it ravenously

JANA: It was like I was in my childhood bedroom and I've had that dream before but my younger self was there and I just look so. Like, major dysphoria trigger...

LOIS: But there was something else?

JANA: No- I don't know, are these kinds of dreams normal?

LOIS: Yeah, could be lots of things, a projection of present insecurities on your past self...

JANA: I just looked- my old self looked afraid of me now or like I don't know like- It's probably nothing to worry about right? Like it'll go away on its own.

LOIS: Recurring dreams usually mean something.

beat

JANA: But it's not real.

beat

LOIS: No...

JANA: Ok.

LOIS: Not realer than your subconscious.

JANA: Well, how real is my subconscious?!

LOIS: If you're not in the mood for sex that's ok, but just let me know so I can take the strap off.

JANA: maybe I'm still in funky headspace (*continues hitting juul*)

LOIS: HMMM I bet I can fuck you out of your funky head space.

JANA: well if your offering

They start to get freaky

LOIS: hmmm oh, yes fuck

JANA: oh my god oh my god

LOIS: you gonna do what I say now? You gonna be good?

JANA: yes I'm your good little slut

LOIS: Here get on top of me- that's an order

JANA: yes-daddy, Oh my god oh my god please don't stop please

LOIS tosses JANA a little too hard and they fly off the bed bang their head on the floor and pass out.

JANA: Oh shit! You Ok?!

Sleepwalking, JANA pops up and steps from the light of the apartment into the in-between dream space. LOIS remains frozen until they come too

SCENE THREE

JANA comes too in the in between dream space still partially naked, they are confused for a moment, then see the audience. BOOMING VOICE is the same as that of LOIS but distorted to be nearly unrecognizable until it slowly fades back into clarity.

JANA: Ahh!

Realizes they are partially naked

JANA: AAAHHHH! Give a girl some privacy!

BOOMING VOICE: DO YOU HAVE YOUR LECTURE PREPARED?

JANA: What lecture?

BOOMING VOICE: SURELY YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOUR PRESENTATION TO THE TENURE COMMITTEE?

JANA: Um shit I mean sorry. I think there might be some mistake?

BOOMING VOICE: NO! NO MISTAKE YOU ARE TO GIVE YOU PRESENTATION NOW!

JANA: But I'm part nude!

BOOMING VOICE: WE EXPECT ALL OUR FACULTY TO PREPARE ACCORDINGLY. YOU ARE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU ADVANCED STATE OF UNDRRESS.

JANA: Ok- dissertation-dissertation- disorientation. Ladies gentlemen and inbetweens of the comity. What is home? As queer people we are conditioned to see home as many things. Um- found family, but the found family necessary exists outside the hegemonic construct of-

BOOMING VOICE: GET TO THE POINT ALREADY WE DON'T HAVE ALL DAY.

JANA: RIGHT! Sorry- I guess what I'm really trying to say is that there is a fundamental internal paradox of queer familyhood as it relates to struggles for equality!

BOOMING VOICE: WHAT? THATS STUPID!

JANA: No! Hear me out! Our found families and their natures are fundimelty continent upon a denial of the born family, therefore if perfect equality is achieved that will render the found family obsolete thereby eliminating one of the most sacred aspects of LQBT culture. Therefore I propose it is in our best interest to mantail the fight for equality, not the gaining of equality as long as possible so as to prolong indefinitely the existence of the found family... Can I put some clothes on now?

BOOMING VOICE: LISTEN WE'VE BEEN THINKING AND WE DECIDED YOU'RE JUST TOO UGLY TO BE GIVEN TENURE!

JANA: What! But what about my thesis?!

BOOMING VOICE: YEAH IT'S JUST BORING, you should really wake up- Jana wake up seriously what going on!?

The dream breaks, the light goes back to that of the bedroom, the podium is gone, JANA stands in the same space now awake

SCENE FOUR

In the bedroom, the rain pounds harder on the window, LOIS has turned on more lights

JANA: AHHHHH! What happened?

LOIS: You fell off the bed, got knocked out but then popped right back up... you were definitely sleepwalking.

JANA: Shit not again.

LOIS: Stay there- I need to make sure you don't have a concussion.

LOIS shines their phone flashlight in JANA's eyes

LOIS: Do you have any history of sleep disorders?

JANA: I used to have Narcolepsy as a kid, but I outgrew it a while ago, you didn't hear anything I said, did you?

LOIS: No you were just mumbling. I'm not sure you can outgrow narcolepsy.

JANA: It was horrible: I was like on a stage with bright lights in my face and there were a ton of people but I was naked and then I also had to present a thesis to a tenure committee..

LOIS: You were only out for like twenty seconds.

JANA: I'm gonna see if I have any sleeping pills?

LOIS: Oh were we not gonna?

JANA: OH shit right we were having sex!

LOIS: No pressure it's just...

JANA: No I'm down, let's go.

LOIS: No its fine

LOIS lies down and after a moment looks up, JANA hasn't budged

LOIS: Are you gonna come to bed?

JANA: YEAH! I think I might just stay awake for the rest of the night. What time is it?

LOIS looks at the digital clock and gives the time

JANA: cool. Cool.

LOIS: alright well. You Mind if I go to sleep?

LOIS rolls over and snores, after a moment JANA checks to see if they are sleeping, then if they are breathing, then goes over to a mirror

JANA: *beat- loud aggressive whisper* [BLOODY MARY BLOODY MARY BLOODY MARY]...

Checks to see if is still LOIS is sleeping, very awkwardly as if they are very embarrassed, looks around one last time,

As if they haven't done this in a long time they get on their knees and pray

the mirror falls off the shelf and shatters

JANA: HOLY JESUS TITS

JOIS: what the fuck?! What is going on?

JANA: I'm cursed I'm totally cursed

beat

JOIS: 'Holy Jesus Tits'?

JANA: So back to sleep, I'll clean it up.

JANA gets a paper bag and beings cleaning up the broken glass, after a moment they take out their phone go into another room and gall JEN

SCENE FIVE

Split stage between JANA's apartment and JEN, in her home. JEN is doing some busy task with both hands and holding the phone in between her shoulder and ear. The phone is plugged into the wall and she may adjust it with one hand as needed.

JANA: Come on, pick up-

JEN: Hello?

JANA: Hey mama.

JEN: Is something the matter?

JANA: No, is something the matter with you?

JEN: No.

JANA: Ok that's/ good.

JEN: I'm worried about rusty. He hasn't been eating much.

JANA: Oh well, did you give him rice?

JEN: He hasnt pooped in four days either.

JANA: Hey-weird question: if you had to pinpoint a time when I started to seem not ok when would it be? Probably like 8 or 9 right?

JEN: Are we talking about the elephant in the room?

JANA: no/- yes I know

JEN: because that was later

JANA: Wait, which elephant are we talking about, the narcolepsy or the gender queerness stuff?

JEN: Oh- which of those things were you talking about?

JANA: Neither I just- do you ever have dreams that make you feel like you've been punched in the stomach?

JEN: I haven't been sleeping very well the past few years. So something is wrong?

JANA: I seem like the best version of myself right?

JEN: That's a very loaded question.

JANA: You won't offend me.

JEN: I don't know if I believe you...

JANA: But you think if my old me could see me now I'd be proud of myself right? Like definitely in favor of this draft?

JEN: Sorry sweetheart I missed that, I have to stay by the outlet, my phone dies if it isn't plugged in. I don't know what the point of having a smartphone is if it's just going to die when it's not connected to a power source.

JANA: Mom, there is no point, that's basically a landline.

JEN: I just don't understand why it dies so quickly.

JANA: You're still using an Iphone three!

JEN: Three is a lucky number.

JANA: Just upgrade.

JEN: Why should I upgrade? They should make better phones!

JANA: They do make better phones that's why- forget it.

JEN: What were you trying to tell me?

JANA: It's not important.

JEN: So listen I'm not sure if you heard this and I really wanna be supportive but there have been a spike in SDIs for young people and I just wanted to make sure you're using protection.

JANA: Ok! This is not the conversation I wanted to be having.

JEN: I don't know if you need the but I did mail you some dental damn- don't think that-

JANA aggressively hangs up, screams into a pillow then after a moment calls PAUL. He appears in a different part of the stage, not doing anything in particular

JANA: Hi papa? Hey, how are you?

PAUL: Jana? How are you doing?

JANA: I'm good, how are you?

PAUL: Well 66 can't complain. It was really sweet of you to call you know I think your older sister forgot it was my birthday today.

JANA: (mouthing 'shit' while covering the line) oh yeah happy birthday! And all that the big six six!

PAUL: How are you doing?

JANA: Um weird I've been having some weird dreams and I was hoping I could ask- what was I like as a child? Sorry actually how was your birthday?

PAUL: It was fine.

JANA: Just fine? Nothing else to say about it.

PAUL: Not particularly, really just another day you know?

JANA: Weird question, what would my younger self say to myself now if I could see me?

PAUL: Wouldn't you know better than me?

JANA: Do you believe in astral projection?

PAUL: Jana. I love you but I have no idea what you're talking about...

Awkward silence

JANA: Papa, are you depressed?

PAUL: Well I think depression is such an ugly word-

JANA: Right but I keep hearing about how men are experiencing a loneliness epidemic or something and not like I'm out here tryna feel sorry for *men*, just you really.

PAUL: Well the thing you have to understand about depression is that it's less of a state and more of a mindset that-

JANA: So are you ok? Did you get out of the house at all today?

PAUL: I went to get a colonoscopy.

JANA: Jesus ok uh. Great, I'm very glad you're being proactive about your health.

PAUL: Yeah they poked around in there for a while. I should get the results in a few days.

JANA: Have you ever heard the phrase TMI?

PAUL: Oh sorry I'm getting another call, it's your sister! she did remember! I can't wait to talk to her.

JANA: Sure dad. Happy birthday. I love you.

PAUL: Why don't you call your mom?

JANA: Ok. You know I think therapy might be really good for you.

PAUL: Yeah that's what my supervisor told me.

JANA: Anyway happy birthday and what not... I hope your colonoscopy went well?

PAUL: thanks!

JANA: And if you do therapy just know that thing BetterHelp- the online site is totally a scam!

JANA Calls mom again

JANA: Hey mom sorry my uh. The house lost service for a minute there.

JEN: What did you want to talk about?

JANA: I don't even remember. I think god broke my mirror.

JEN: seven years bad luck

Lightning strikes

JANA: Oh shit! Mom I need to go my phone is gonna die

Jana hangs up the phone and goes, stares at LOIS for a moment as they sleep. Thunder

JANA: AAAAAH! It got me it gets me everytime

LOIS stirs and then sits up

LOIS: You're still awake?

JANA: Yeah I'm just-

Jana collapses onto the bed

LOIS- Woah! Are you ok??

JANA; *(fighting back yawns)* yeah just the thunder scared me... narcolepsy episode I'm-

They are out cold and have take up by far the most inconvenient position on the bed, LOIS tries to move them to give herself more room but it is in vane

LOIS: right I'll just curl up on this one fifth of the bed!

SCENE SIX

Transition, JANA sleep walks back across the stage and into CHILD bedroom. Lights go down on the adult bedroom. CHILD JANA's room. Same time as before, the room is similar, young JANA is still on the bed but objects have faded, more light seeps through cracks on the wall, dust has settled

JANA: AH! Oh wait you were! And I was here- that's right. It's all coming back now god why couldn't I remember when I was awake. I wonder what Lois would say this means.

CHILD: Who's Lois?

JANA: Shit- I mean crap. I mean- you can talk now?

CHILD: DUH

JANA: Hey! Hello. Good to see you... hi. So I don't wanna offend you or anything but I did talk to a real sleep scientist and she told me that you are a- not quite a figment of my imagination but a projection of past anxiety and, well, the point is you aren't real. So I'd really appreciate it if you could do whatever insecurities do when I'm not insecure about them anymore. Poof away I assume? Did all that make sense? I tried not to use too many big words... I really wish you wouldnt look at me like that.

CHILD: you scare me

JANA: I'm sorry I'm not trying too.

CHILD: Do I scare you?

Beat, no reply

CHILD: why would we be afraid of each other?

JANA: I don't know...

CHILD: Why do you look different?

JANA: Well. ok this is me confronting it. For the record I still think you're just a projection of my subconscious but-

CHILD: I don't know what that means so just answer my question.

JANA: I really didn't want to have to explain this to you but here goes... and I'm telling you in advance that if you don't understand what I'm talking about then it's your own damn fault. OK... but like really try to listen, Like for real. There are some things you-Ok you know about puberty right? In Spite of our best efforts we grow up and then decide that being a boy is not good and so now we do whatever we want. Like sometimes one thing sometimes another thing. So I don't care if you dont like it. Does that make sense?

CHILD: I don't know.

JANA: Well ok.

CHILD: I mean why do you look like someone who ran away from home?

JANA: I'm not.

CHILD: Dont lie! I can see it all over you, it's like you haven't been here in this room for years which means you ran away from home.

JANA: Different can be good.

CHILD: So you admit it!

JANA: I didn't say that but you don't understand things

CHILD: Like what?

JANA: Well, like the 2008 financial crisis for one thing.

CHILD: And it's not just the house either I can feel you forgetting me.

JANA: If you're a projection, you're a really annoying one.

CHILD: I hate different.

JANA: I'm gonna wake up now!

CHILD: You can't just leave me!

JANA: Actually I can!

JANA Starts to pinch themselves

JANA: why isnt it working

CHILD hits JANA in the mouth

CHILD: OWW!

JANA: FUCKING SHIT FUCK YOU BITCH!

CHILD: I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to!

JANA: Stuck in dream ok..

Jana thinks for a moment then they feel their mouth

JANA: One of my teeth fell out.

CHILD: Can I see?

They look together, there is blood

CHILD: Cool- can I have it?

JANA: no-

CHILD: Why? You can't take it with you when you wake up.

JANA: fair enough- OH AHFFFH! (*two more teeth fall out*) You want these too?

They hold out the teeth but the lights change, the dream breaks, they are back in the adult bedroom.

SCENE SEVEN

JANA is standing in the middle of the room and has taken all of the blankest from the bed with them.

LOIS: DUDE this is actually shaping up to be the worst hook up of my life and I can assure you that after my undergrad that is a very high bar.

JANA: Do I have all my teeth?

LOIS: What?

The lights flicker, the power goes out.

JANA: SHIT! I'm sorry, sorry here's the blanket. Why don't I just sleep on the couch I've put you through enough

LOIS: No don't go- will you just hold onto me for a minute?

JANA: Oh are you sure?

LOIS: yeah I'm sure

beat

JANA: are you afraid of the dark

JANA turns on phone flashlight and hands it to LOIS to look

LOIS: Here, don't waste your phone battery. I hesitate to ask but?

JANA: Yeah recurring dream

LOIS: I'm giving you my expert opinion that you can't just outgrow narcolepsy.

JANA: Not even if you try really really hard?

LOIS: Any clarity in the dream?

JANA: My teeth fell out but it wasn't all bad.

LOIS: What was good about your teeth falling out?

JANA: I just need to make a call.

LOIS: Here I just remembered I have a power block. Charge your phone if you need to.

JANA: Why are you being so nice?

LOIS: You're cute when you apologize.

JANA: I'm serious.

LOIS: I don't know I'm too tired to be mad

JANA: You're like, really so sweet. Can I kiss you?

They kiss

JANA: I'm gonna call my mom and then it'll be done. I feel like I'm close to being over this.

LOIS: mmmmmm how about you just hold me till I fall asleep. Then you can go.

JANA: ok...

They hold each other for a moment, as they do the sound of rain and thunder grows until LOIS is asleep, JANA slips out and calls JEN.

JANA: Is rusty ok? Sorry I didn't wake you did I?

JEN: No. I still can't sleep,

JANA:, I feel like I didn't really get across what I wanted to earlier. Can you talk?

JEN: So how are you?

JANA: I guess I was really trying to ask... What was wrong with me as a child? That sounded bad.

JEN: Nothing was wrong, you were healthy, you ran and swam you put things in your mouth, you screamed if we fed you vegetables.

JANA: I think I was depressed

JEN: Children don't get depressed.

JANA: Come on

JEN: You get depressed when you realize, sometimes in your teens or twenties that the world is a cold unforgiving place and when you try to reach out and touch the light it all comes crashing down and you left naked and afraid in the cold wet dark

beat

JANA: Mom, are you depressed?

JEN: Moms don't get depressed.

JANA: So I've been having these dreams where I talk to my younger self and I don't think I was happy back then.

JEN: You were very well rounded, very round in general.

JANA: Stop evading the question.

JEN: Isn't it enough trouble asking if you're happy now?

JANA: I'm talking about *then*.

JEN: Are you happy now?

JANA: I'd be happy if you answered my questions!

JEN: I feel like our conversations are always in circles.

JANA: If you just got on the same page as me

JEN: Whatever page you're on is like a- you know- fuck, you know, the loop?

JANA: I have no idea what you're talking about.

JEN: You know the loop with the paper but it's all one long side?

JANA: You know what! I think you resent me for being gay.

JEN: Oh grow up! I love and aspect you for being gay, I just can't stand how naval gaze-y you are.

beat

JEN: A mobius strip that's it.

JANA: You know I think I'm an entirely different person than I used to be.

JAN: I've heard that before.

JANA: Well I mean it this time.

JEN: You always wanted to be a different person.

JANA: You must have some experience with trying to accept yourself.

JAN: I don't know, focus on the things you like about yourself as you are now.

JANA: No, I mean how do I accept myself from back then.

Silence

JANA: I'm worried about rusty, they haven't pooped in three days

JANA: Did you just they/them the dog?

JEN: I might try giving him Laxatives.

JANA: Mom, for the love of god dont give our dog human laxatives.

as the following speech unfolds mom gets laxatives wraps one in a piece of bacon

JANA: Mom I keep dreaming that I'm talking to my younger self and there's so much perfect detail it's like my room exactly as it was and as soon as I'm there I'm like OH! How could I forget!

JEN covers microphone and calls for dog, he doesn't come

JANA: when I wake up its all blurry like watercolor wet on the page but instead of drying into the image it's all just sucking into the void of the paper and my memory is a white sheet of paper- I remember remembering every detail but every detail is gone

JEN looks around part way through, sets phone down attached to cord and goes to find rusty

JANA: How do you remember who you are if who you were is like this pair of glowing red eyes in the back of your brain? Or what's worse, what if all you have to do to be a different person is forget who you were does that make sense?

JEN comes back

JEN: Sorry you were in and out there. You said you've taken up water colors? Did I hear that right? Good creative outlet water colors.

Beat

JANA: YEP that right.

JEN: NO! RUSTY-NO BAD DOG, sorry he just started shitting buckets (she drops the phone) FUCK!

JANA: Are you still there?

JEN: Yes just dropped the phone, I'm gonna be cleaning doggie diarrhea for a while now- make me a watercolor won't you? BYE!

Jana goes to the window and watches the rain fall, lighting flashes. Beat, they count the seconds on their fingers, then thunder.

JANA: ok- divide by five- whats six divided by five- little more than one mile away.

Another flash of lightning, this time it fills the whole room when its fate JANA is passed out on the floor. Thunder another flash of lightning only this time the light stays and becomes the morning light of the childhood bedroom

SCENE EIGHT

The bedroom seems to have expanded, it is brighter, light shines through the cracks in the walls

JANA: Hi Me. how are you

CHILD: Good. I made your teeth into a bracelet

JANA: Oh that's terrifying.. Did you think any more about what I said last time? About the gender changes and stuff like that.

CHILD: Yeah.

JANA: Yeah? And...

CHILD: I like it. I decided I feel the same way.

JANA: Wait, you what?

CHILD: Most of the boys I know at school are dumb but so are the girls so I'll just be like you and not be one thing or the other.

JANA: I'm sorry what?

CHILD: It doesn't seem like that big a deal to me.

JANA: *(they find this just beautiful but also a tad infuriating)* That's- wows- amazing. I mean it took me like six years to get there but. Yeah that's great? I'm sorry, how did you just decide that, like it didn't matter?

CHILD: You're the one who told me about it.

They sit awkwardly for a moment in the sunlight

JANA: Do you have any questions about our future life? No spoilers, I can't tell you who dies or anything.

CHILD: Then what's there left to ask about?

JANA: I'm just playing by the time travel rules

CHILD: thats fucking stupid!

JANA: woah! Who taught you the F-word?

CHILD: you did

JANA gets up and walks around, not sure what they are looking for

CHILD curls up and hide under blankets, old goes closser

CHILD: I hate different.

JANA: Different can be good? Why do you want everything to be the same all the time

CHILD I don't know

JANA: Do you wanna think about it?

CHILD: I don't know. Why don't you go wake up?

JANA: I'll try...

They try

JANA: No, I think I'm stuck here. Listen while I'm here, can you make a list of things I want you to do differently. Can you make dad get a colonoscopy sooner? And also make time to just enjoy being young and free.

CHILD: You let the house die.

Long beat

JANA: The house isn't a living thing

CHILD: I can hear it- I can hear our house breathing at night. No one else can and no other house can do it.

JANA: I don't remember this.

CHILD: Do you remember remembering?

JANA: I don't know.

CHILD: When I close my eyes and hold my breath I can hear the house breathing and sometimes it whispers.

JANA: What does it say?

CHILD: It's too quiet to hear.

JANA: I- I'm trying to say this in a way you'll accept. Things don't go well, I mean they go great at some points but less great at others.

CHILD: Are we dreaming the same dream?

JANA: I don't know

CHILD: I mean how am I supposed to know you're really real and not some shadow monster that came into my room.

JANA: Do you feel safe in here?

CHILD: Not with you

JANA: But when I'm not here do you feel safe

Nods

JANA: You need to- I mean you get to have that in other places too. Not just in here. Does that make sense? Like in here nothing can hurt you because the house is alive and it would never let anything bad happen right? So imagine you can step out and it's like the whole world is breathing around you and it's holding you too.

CHILD: So the world is safe for me?

JANA: Well no... not really. Some of it. Not florida. You can make that safe feeling is what I'm trying to say. Do you believe me?... I did it.

CHILD looks long and hard into JANA'S face looking for something

JANA: I mean look, the roof is leaking, there's saran wrap on the windows because it's too cold to keep the heat in. I bet you've tripped on that pot and spilled water at least once. What's wrong?

CHILD places hands on JANA face, at one point pinching their nose

JANA: OW. Can I ask you for something?

CHILD: If I get to ask you for something

JANA: Can you show me around the rest of the house? I don't think I can- imagine the dream all by myself. You have to be there in it too. That seems to be one of the rules

CHILD: Ok. It won't be hard, I'm used to walking around. Will anyone be here?

JANA: No- probably not.

CHILD: Ok.

JANA: What's your ask.

CHILD: I haven't decided yet.

JANA: Ok.

JANA tries to open the door but can't

CHILD gets up and opens it into a hallway they wander

In the apartment Lois wakes up, the bed is empty

LOIS: Oh shit. Not again? Hey babe? Stuff is still here- JANA! Are you sleepwalking?

They walk around stumbling, as they search we see jana and child walking around eventually

LOIS: JANA

JANA: AHHHH the kitchen- our kitchen, My kitchen?

Notices they have the blanket wrapped around them

JANA: OH- there was a lego castle right there- it was so much cooler then I remember it had like a dragon but it was a bunch of jedi fighting-

LOIS: I'd usually charge a consultation fee but since we know each other I'm gonna refer you to someone who can give you some good narcolepsy medications.

JANA take a confused moment to process what LOIS has said

JANA: I don't know- you don't need to do anything for me. I'm sorry I'm really sorry.

LOIS: If you aren't gonna sleep well at least one of us should, there I texted you her email address, she's great.

JANA: You're right, you're right. Why are you doing this?

LOIS: If I make your sleep disorder someone else's problem we can just focus on the sex and the hanging out and all the stuff that's not my job.

JANA: So you wanna keep doing this? Even though I..

LOIS: I love you.

JANA: WOW. Really?

LOIS: Yes I love you I really do. I've been thinking about it and I mean it.

JANA: I love you too.

LOIS: Please go to a sleep psychologist.

LOIS exits

JANA checks their phones battery then decides not to call PAUL, then they think better of it and do call him

JANA: Dad! Hi sorry to call you again. I know it's late.

PAUL: Jana hi.

JANA: Did I wake you?

PAUL: No. I couldn't sleep. It's going to not be my birthday in a few minutes. I'll be 66 and one day old.

JANA: Do you always do that? Stay up till the day changes?

PAUL: No. Did you figure out your dream problem?

JANA: This question is gonna sound really loaded but I swear I don't mean it to. How did you know it was ethical to bring a child into the world?

PAUL: I didn't think much about that.

JANA: Ok great.

PAUL: You're too young to think about stuff like that.

JANA: Well it's such a serious question right? If I do wanna have kids I better start thinking now so that I know by then? How long did you think about having me?

PAUL: I mean it took us like five years for your mom to get pregnant and she was pretty serious about trying every night.

JANA: Oh my god. Ok anything else that won't make your child visceral uncomfortable?

PAUL: Just Medical issues you don't wanna hear about.

JANA: Oh *now* you think I might not wanna hear about your personal medical stuff. Nothing else gave you pause? Made you reconsitter?

PAUL: What was I supposed to say? Your mother wanted children.

JANA: And you...

PAUL: I trusted a higher power.

JANA: Moms an atheist

PAUL: I know.

JANA: What did the higher power think I might have to say about my own birth?

PAUL: I dont know thats what makes him the higher power...

JANA: Why are you still awake?

PAUL: I can't sleep.

JANA: What do you do when you can't sleep?

PAUL: I watch the news?

JANA: How do you watch the news? It's so depressing.

PAUL: I watch local tv not the big national channels. It's nice the other day they ran a story about how someone abandoned an ice cream truck in a church parking lot, so they let all the kids out of Sunday school to get free ice cream. Then the weather and stuff.

JANA: I wouldn't just trust random abandoned ice cream, it could have razor blades or fentanyl in it.

PAUL: Well, everyone was fine. All the kids got to be on the news with their faces covered in ice cream and they were smiling so big.

JANA: Do you feel well rested?

PAUL: No not really... why?

JANA: I don't. I'm asleep all the time and I wake up more tired than before.

PAUL: Do you have cable?

JANA: No.

PAUL: I think I have some baby photos on my phone of you. I'll text them... you see the resemblance right?

JANA: To who you or mom,

PAUL: To you.

JANA: You mean now?

PAUL: You don't see it?

JANA: I'm just a pudgy blob

PAUL: I think it looks just like you

JANA: Yeah I guess. Yeah.

PAUL: You were so cute! I can't believe it. I need to look at these photos more.

JANA: I look elderly... Is this how I'm gonna look when I'm old?

PAUL: *(he shrugs)* Oh you cant see me, I shrugged.

JANA: Ok... my phones gonna die. I love you. I'll call again soon.

Jana goes to the window and watches the rain fall, they are holding back tears, lighting flashes. JANA takes a deep breath and without even falling asleep walks into CHILD'S room

SCENE NINE

JANA is in CHILD's bedroom for the last time. The has shifted from morning light to golden hour

CHILD: It's brighter.

JANA: I noticed, what does that mean?

CHILD: You tell me, I'm the subconscious protection.

JANA: I'm sorry I called you that. You still get to ask me a question, that's what we agreed.

CHILD: I don't know... Why couldn't- what're you...

JANA: I needed you to tell me it's ok to grow up and leave.

CHILD: That's why you're here?

JANA: As far as I can tell.

CHILD: It doesn't matter. You won't remember.

JANA: And you won't either, what's the problem?

CHILD: I'll be dead.

JANA: You won't die. You just keep getting older

CHILD: But what if I forget about me now?

JANA: Well... Here *I* am. Here I am not forgetting about you. Isn't that good enough?

CHILD: But when I wake up I won't remember. This house is the only thing that has stayed the same.

JANA: I know.

CHILD: how did you become ok with it?

JANA: I never really did. Are you still mad at me?

CHILD: Yes.

JANA: That's ok. You get to be mad at me.

CHILD: Are you disappointed in me?

JANA: No god no.

CHILD: Ok. Ok you'll- I can grow up. It's ok. Are you gonna remember I even said that?

JANA: Let me know now. Atleast.

CHILD: How do you pray?

JANA: You just do it? What do you mean, how do you pray?

CHILD: Aren't you supposed to feel something?

JANA: That's a good question, I'm not very good at it myself. Let me try.

CHILD: Did you feel something?

JANA: I think so. I guess you just put your hands together and wait for something to come to you.

They try

CHILD: Am I doing it right?

JANA: Do you feel anything?

Child clenches their face trying hart

CHILD: No.

JANA: You have to do more than think about it like go really deep into yourself.

CHILD: I don't know how to do that.

JANA: Try holding your breath it's like for just a moment hold your breath and then imagine that god is in you.

CHILD: That doesn't make any sense.

JANA: Did you want me to teach you?

CHILD: Not if I can't do it and I can't because that doesn't make any sense!

JANA: Well I know how to do it so it's possible like it or not!

CHILD: Fine... no it still isn't working.

JANA: Did you really try?

CHILD: Yes.

JANA: I don't think you did.

CHILD: You never believe me! I tried ok? Like really hard.

JANA: Ok I'm sorry it'll come to you.

CHILD: Show me.

JANA gets down on their knees, closes their eyes and prays. CHILD watches them. After a moment the lights shift. When JANA opens their eyes they are awake back in the apartment

They go over to LOIS who is asleep and adjust the blankets and kiss them on the forehead

They check their phone, the screen light glows on their face, the phone dies

SCENE TEN

Morning light in JANAs apartment, they are alone in the bed, they wake up, stretch and look around, do a double take when they realize LOIS isn't there, then JANA sees ADULT JANA from ten or twenty years in the future.

ADULT: OH- shit I didn't see you there- woah... Hi... Can you talk?

Beat

JANA: AAAAAAAAAAH!

ADULT: Guess you can talk

beat

JANA: I'm sorry AAAAAH!

ADULT: I haven't aged that badly have I?

JANA really looks at them

JANA: Tonight of all night. Was all this related?

ADULT: All what?

JANA: You forget. I'm asleep now, But I'll forget when I wake up and then I'll. This is so confusing.

ADULT: Hey it's ok? I don't really remember what you're talking about, Ok breathe, it's ok, that's it.

JANA: How do I know you're real now, shit how do I know I'm not a projection of your subconscious?

ADULT: Here pinch my arm.

They do

JANA: feels real.

ADULT: shouldn't Lois be here? Right, just me, us. I guess.

JANA: Lois, are we still together?

ADULT: I didn't say that. No spoilers

JANA: Thats fucking stupid. Does dad get colon cancer?

beat

JANA: Does rusty die? Oh my god. I'm actually alive and time is actually passing isn't it.

ADULT: Terrifying isn't it, and this apartment but It's so vivid now.

JANA: Can I go see where you live in the future?

ADULT: I dont think thats how it works.

JANA: Sorry, can I ask you one more thing?

ADULT: Yeah go for it

JANA: I don't know why but I never imagine growing old. I always think I'm gonna be killed off by fascist or a car crash or something.

ADULT: Well. Here I am? I look good don't I?

The lights swell and then black out

SCENE ELEVEN

JANA steps into the dream space, it is now dark, the light has shifted with that of the waking world, CHILD JANA is asleep in their bed, JANA, goes and pulls the covers closer around them. Then return to their bedroom. LOIS is there.

JANA: Good morning

LOIS: Good morning? Do you sleep well?

beat

LOIS: Kidding. How you doing

JANA: Terrible. But also amazing?

LOIS: you look great

JANA: really? I'm fucking exhausted.

LOIS: how much of last night do you remember.

JANA: I remember waking up. Alot, and someone was in the room. Not you.

LOIS: I was asking about the younger you more.

JANA: right. Give me a sec. I might like...

LOIS: Go to sleep?

Yeah

LOIS: it's sunday I won't hold it against you

JANA: How do you deal with this shit as a profession?

LOIS: Very patiently.

JANA: Yeah I know, but I think I'm gonna take your advice.

LOIS: I'm glad to hear it. I am always right. You know you actually do look well rested

JANA: Really? I feel like it.

LOIS: More dreams?

JANA: I think so. It's still fuzzy. The longer I wait the fuzzier it gets and then harder it is to remember.

LOIS: You ever have that thing where you're going about your day and you see something completely random and suddenly it's all there right in your head again?

JANA: You think that'll happen?

LOIS: You never know, you don't know what to look for to trigger it because you don't remember until it happens. Just leave it up to chance. Might be a silly question but do you feel better?

JANA: Yeah. I have no idea why though.

LOIS: Don't question it.

SCENE TWELVE

Final scene, full black out, it is deep and remains until all the sets are gone at which point, all the dream and waking spaces have blended, the lights come up, they are bright and full as if all the light pouring in from the windows in earlier scenes has enveloped everything. light all colors blinking slowly in and out of themselves and harmonious tones of music with no particular melody, JANA holding herself as a baby, they look confused slightly they don't know how to hold a baby, they don't remember being handed the baby and don't know who to hand them off to but in their own time they they look deeper and see something.

Black out.