

## KATHLEEN'S CLOSET

### 1. EXT. A ROAD -- EVENING

SOUND UNDER of a woman's voice singing a German operetta. JANET EDMUNDS (24), rides a bike down a silent road. It's raining. Her attire is part Grunge, part Goth, and part Francaise and has obviously been assembled at Value Village. She wears a short skirt, multicolored tights, short jacket and tight t-shirt, black high-cropped army boots, two wrists full of bracelets, and many chains. She has several piercings and a few strategically placed tattoos. Her black hair is in a French bob, a la Amelie. The road leads to the bottom of some rickety stairs. She mounts them, lightning flashes. A huge, eerie home looms. Janet bolts for the door. The rain slashes down. She rings the doorbell. It doesn't work. She waits a moment and then enters silently through glass doors.

### 2. INT. FOYER OF THE WILSON HOME -- CONTINUOUS

She finds herself in an enormous front room. Two Victorian high-backed chairs and tiffany lamps sit regally in front of a crackling fire. Dead center is a giant four-poster bed with a canopy. On the bed, asleep, under a mountainous feather duvet, lies KATHLEEN WILSON (100). Her long white hair is spread out on the lace pillows. A closer look reveals how frail and withered she is. CHRIS MACDONALD (40ish), sits in one of the chairs, listening to the operetta through his CD walkman. He looks up, startled, and shuts off the music.

JANET

I'm sorry. The doorbell doesn't work.

CHRIS

(brusquely)

You're Janet?

Chris does not shake Janet's outstretched hand. He heads over to a giant antique cabinet and retrieves a towel, handing it to Janet.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Kathleen had a bad fall, there were complications, then pneumonia. She's been unconscious for days. Just a catheter and mouth care at this point. She's in the final stages.

JANET

Has her family been called?

CHRIS

I'm the closest thing to family she has. You do understand that she could die tonight?

Janet nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
How long have you been in  
palliative care?

JANET  
This is my first *real* gig.

CHRIS  
**Gig?**

Chris gathers up his belongings.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(ignoring her)  
If she does pass, telephone the  
physician and they'll make the  
pronouncement. Here is her number.

Chris hands Janet a business card and then leans over  
Kathleen, kissing her gently on the forehead.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Until tomorrow love.

Chris heads towards the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Do not let the fire go out. Empty  
the bag. And remove your jewelry.

Chris shuts the door, leaving Janet alone with Kathleen,  
and just the sound of her labored breathing. Janet stands  
frozen, looking at her patient. Then she gets to work.

She checks Kathleen's pulse, strokes her forehead, rubs  
her hands and tucks them under the blankets. She lifts  
the blankets down by her legs to check for any mottling.  
On a separate table lies a silver tray which holds all  
the medical supplies needed for Kathleen. Janet picks up  
some mouth swabs and the Vaseline.

JANET  
Hi Kathleen. I'm Janet. I just  
thought I should introduce myself  
before I stuck my fingers in your  
mouth.

She proceeds to gently swab the inside of Kathleen's mouth  
and to smear Vaseline on her cracked lips. She finds a  
brush on the bedside table beside a beautifully framed  
photo of Kathleen and her husband in their later years.

JANET (CONT'D)  
You like getting your hair brushed?  
I can't remember the last time  
anybody brushed my hair.

Janet leans over the sleeping Kathleen and starts to brush  
her hair. Unfortunately the wig gets stuck in Janet's  
bracelets. She tries to shake it off but ends up tangling  
the hair more.

She finally yanks the wig from the bracelets and tries to put it back on Kathleen. The wig is a mess and it won't go on straight. Eventually she gives up and plunks the wig down on the bed.

JANET (CONT'D)

I think you look better without it.

Janet grabs a small bucket by the bed and flicks the switch near the hanging bag of urine. As the bag is draining Janet notices the near-dead fire.

She runs over to it, throwing open the doors. She grabs two big logs from the hearth and places them on top of the dying embers. Then she remembers the urine bag.

She runs back to the bucket, where she sees that in her rush to get to the fire she has kicked the bucket and the urine from the bag has been draining on to the floor.

Suddenly the phone rings. Janet runs to the phone.

JANET (CONT'D)

Hello. Oh. Hi, Chris. Yes, everything is fine.

POV Janet: the urine streaming down on to the floor, a wigless Kathleen and a completely dead fire.

JANET (CONT'D)

Everything's great.

Lightening flashes.

3. INT. IN THE FRONT ROOM. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Lightening flashes. The mess has been cleaned up. Janet is rubbing Kathleen's hands.

JANET (CONT'D)

Kathleen? I'm going to go look for some blankets. Oh. And a toque.

4. INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Janet opens a few doors upstairs looking for a closet. No luck the first few times. Lightening flashes. Then she opens a third door. What's inside takes her breath away.

POV Janet:

It is virtually a shrine to the 1920's. A flapper's boudoir. There are opulent silk chiffon dinner dresses, ethereal and flowing, and day dresses of every colour. There are a dozen sequined flapper dresses, beaded dance purses, feather boas, cloche hats with ostrich feathers. And shoes, lots of shoes.

In the corner lies a gramophone and a stack of 78's. A red velvet divan stretches itself out, with silk scarves draping languidly. At the very end of the closet a vanity sits with perfume bottles of every colour, compacts, jewelry and cigarette holders.

Janet checks herself out in the vanity mirror. This is when she sees the reflection of an antique armoire at the other end of the closet. Janet tries the door. It's locked.

She notices an old quilt on a foot stool by the armoire. She grabs it, tries the door one more time and then leaves.

#### 5. KATHLEEN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Janet finishes putting the blanket on Kathleen. She looks at her watch, checks Kathleen's pulse and sits down in a chair rubbing her hands together. Then she suddenly bolts out of the room.

#### 6. THE CLOSET - CONTINUOUS.

Janet rummages around in the vanity drawers and eventually finds what she is looking for in the jewelry box: an antique key which looks like it should fit the key hole in the armoire. Janet places the key in the lock, and turns it, opening the ornate doors.

POV Janet:

There in front of her is a stunning, slinky, red sequined flapper dress, with matching shoes, dance purse and red feathered cloche hat. A few, very old books and a stack of letters and photos lie on a shelf beneath the dress.

Janet runs her hand down the length of the dress, then removes the dress from the armoire and stands in front of the mirror, holding the dress against her.

#### 7. INT. KATHLEEN'S CLOSET -- MOMENTS LATER

Janet's hand winds the Victrola and then places the needle on the 78. Paul Whiteman's "Three O'clock in the Morning" begins to play. Janet stands and stares at herself in the mirror. She is wearing the entire ensemble. She takes a drag on a long ivory cigarette holder and throws her head back seductively. Bending over and squishing her breasts together, she puckers and pouts in the mirror. She puts on some lipstick, then dances her way to the armoire.

Janet picks up an old book. It is lovely and thin and bound in black with gold letters. It is entitled "Renaissance", by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Janet opens the book.

POV Janet: a beautifully hand-written inscription on the inside cover.

JANET

O sweet, O heavy-lidded, O my  
love,

As Janet recites the poem we begin to slowly creep towards Kathleen, asleep in her bed, ending on a close-up of her face and then her gnarled hands.

JANET (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When morning strikes her spear  
upon the land, And we must rise  
and arm us and reprove The insolent  
daylight with a steady hand, Be  
not discountenanced if the knowing  
know. We rose from rapture but an  
hour ago.

Close-up of Janet's face, her lips, as she reads:

JANET (CONT'D)

To K all my love N.

Kathleen's finger twitches. A grandfather clock dongs. Janet shuts the book, and goes to her patient.

8. INT. THE BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Janet leans over Kathleen to swab the inside of her mouth, inches from her face. Suddenly Kathleen's eyes pop open! Janet screams. Kathleen's breath is ragged and irregular. She is completely disoriented and extremely frightened.

KATHLEEN

What are you doing here?

Kathleen looks around the room frantically.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Chris? Chris? Please don't take  
that dress. You can have anything  
else.

JANET

No, no. I don't want to take...

As suddenly as she has woken up, Kathleen passes out again. Janet thinks she has killed her. She runs to check Kathleen's pulse.

JANET (CONT'D)

Kathleen?! Kathleen?!

9. INT. THE BEDROOM -- MORNING

Janet sits in the high-backed chair, in her own clothes. The early morning light can not soften her anxiety. She is biting her nails. She does not take her eyes off Kathleen. Kathleen's wig is back on. It looks exactly the same as when we first saw her. SOUND UNDER of the glass doors opening. Chris is back.

CHRIS

How was she?

Janet hands him her report, and heads for the door.

JANET

She didn't move a muscle.

She bolts for the door. But Chris blocks her way out.

CHRIS

Wait a moment! If Ms. Wilson makes it through the day, they are going to need you to return this evening. The regular nurse is still very ill.

Janet looks like *she* is going to be ill.

10. INT. THE WILSON FOYER -- THE NEXT NIGHT.

Janet stands outside the glass doors looking in, stunned. Kathleen is awake. She has been propped up in bed, and her pillows have been fluffed. She looks like an aged Queen. Chris and Kathleen turn to see Janet standing there. She has no choice but to go in.

CHRIS

Well, I believe you two have already met so I won't make any formal introductions. Wonderful to have you back Kathleen. Until tomorrow love.

Chris pats Kathleen's hands. As he breezes past Janet he thrusts Kathleen's chart in her hands.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Didn't move a muscle hmmm?

Chris is gone. Janet and Kathleen just stare at one another.

JANET

I'm sorry about last night. I..

KATHLEEN

I should say so. You damn near killed me!

When Kathleen sees Janet's face she dissolves into laughter, barely audible hiccups rattling from her cracked lips. The laughter turns into a nasty cough.

JANET

Can I get you anything?

KATHLEEN

A bourbon and a cigarette and you  
in the red dress. I believe you  
already know where it is.

11. INT. KATHLEEN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

The gramophone is now in the bedroom. "Farewell Blues", by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings is playing. The book of poetry "Renascence" lies on the bed. Janet sits on the edge of the bed in the dress, she takes a drag on a cigarette in an ivory holder and blows the smoke away from Kathleen's face.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I thought **I** asked for the  
cigarette!

Janet takes a long drag and blows it directly at Kathleen's mouth this time. She then places her finger into the glass of bourbon and rubs it on Kathleen's lips. She repeats the process, while Kathleen stares at her intently.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Why are you here?

JANET

Ummm. To make sure... to be here  
when... to help you....

Janet can not say it.

KATHLEEN

Die. Tell me how does one do  
that exactly?

Janet responds by placing some more bourbon on Kathleen's lips. Kathleen pushes her hand away. Silence. Janet picks up the book of poetry.

JANET

Kathleen? Who is "N"?

Kathleen feebly snatches the book away from Janet.

KATHLEEN

Who do you think you are? Get  
out! And take off that dress.  
You can't have it!

Janet can't move or speak.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Why are you doing this to me?

Kathleen is beginning to hyperventilate. Her breathing is very labored and fast. Janet matches her breath to Kathleen's. She then strokes Kathleen's arm to match the tempo of their quick breathing. Then Janet slows her breathing, and the stroking of Kathleen's arm, until eventually Kathleen's breathing slows down too.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I'm dying...

JANET

Yes, I know I ...

KATHLEEN

(cutting her off)

... for a Fluffernutter! There's a jar of the fluff in the cupboard above the stove.

Janet is stunned.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Well, hurry up. I haven't got all night!

Kathleen's tiny cackle follows Janet out of the room.

12. INT. THE BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Kathleen picks up the plate with shaking hands, brings it to her nose and inhales. This only lasts a moment because the plate is too heavy.

JANET

A peanut butter and marshmallow sandwich. It's revolting!

KATHLEEN

This, my dear, is not mere marshmallow - it is Marshmallow Fluff! There are some who say that you haven't really lived until you've tried a Fluffernutter.

JANET

You couldn't pay me enough!

Kathleen looks around the lavish room, the chandelier, the four-poster bed, and then back at Janet, eyebrows raised.

JANET (CONT'D)

You got a point there.

Janet clearly has no choice but to try it.

JANET (CONT'D)

Oh my God! This is amazing!

Kathleen starts to sing, gasping for breath after each line, and moving her frail arms back and forth along with the jingle, until she can't lift them anymore.

KATHLEEN

"For something delicious, you know well enough. You will get your wishes with Marshmallow Fluff.

(MORE)

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

And each and every serving, of  
this tempting fluff, will bring  
great deserving of Marshmallow  
Fluff!

JANET

You've got to be kidding.

KATHLEEN

They were called the Flufferettes.  
And they aired every week on the  
Yankee network with Hal Miller.

Kathleen shuts her eyes for a moment. Then she opens up the book of poetry to a certain page where she finds a photograph. It is of two women in their early twenties, their arms slung over each other's shoulders. They are laughing. Janet can not believe what she is seeing. A closer look of the photograph reveals that Janet is the spitting image of one of the women.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

"N" is for Nancy.

Kathleen and Janet stare at it for some time. When Kathleen finally speaks her voice is low in volume and comes in short bursts - inhaling air, exhaling words.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I first saw her at a Speakeasy.  
She was surrounded by men, but to  
my astonishment she came over and  
spoke to me. We were mad about  
bourbon, smoking, dancing, the  
poetry of Vincent and each other.  
Not necessarily in that order.

JANET

What happened?

Kathleen looks around her opulent bedroom, and then at the photograph on her bedside table.

KATHLEEN

I chose security.

Kathleen is crying now; a soft and quiet cry with tiny tears as if squeezed from a dropper. Janet tenderly wraps Kathleen in her arms and gently rocks her back and forth.

19. INT. THE BEDROOM -- LATER

The Charleston plays on the gramophone. The sky is starting to lighten outside the bedroom window. Pale pink shafts of early morning light illuminate Kathleen's visibly tired face. Her skin is pale and tight against her cheekbones. A beautiful 1920's scarf is now wrapped around Kathleen's head. Janet is painting Kathleen's nails - bright red.

JANET

You're my first.

Kathleen raises her eyebrows. She is having an extremely hard time with her breathing. It is now too hard for her to speak and keep her eyes open at the same time.

KATHLEEN

Really? How... am I... doing?

JANET

You'll be hard to top. How am I doing?

Kathleen pats Janet's hand and then holds on to it. She gasps out her next words.

KATHLEEN

You're not... off the ... hook yet. Please... dance.. for me?

JANET

Dance? The Charleston? I don't know I...

Kathleen is crestfallen.

JANET (CONT'D)

I'd be honoured.

She walks over to the middle of the floor and begins to dance. Shyly at first, but as she closes her eyes and gets into the music, her feet start to fly. Kathleen watches, delight lighting up the crevices of every wrinkle.

POV Kathleen: The edges blur, the music fades, smoke fills the screen and recedes to reveal a smoky Speakeasy. The red dress flashes past to reveal an old man standing at the bar drying a glass. He looks up. It is her husband, whom we have seen in the photo on the bedside table. Their eyes lock and then he smiles. A dancing couple passes between them. When they are gone we see that so is the old man. The couple passes again to reveal three men talking to a woman at the bar. One of the men moves and then we see her. The young woman from the photograph. She is in the red flapper dress. She locks eyes with Kathleen and then begins to dance, a spotlight beaming down on her. She dances toward Kathleen. Kathleen reaches out and grabs her hand. It requires an almost Herculean effort.

KATHLEEN

Nancy. I'm sorry, Nancy. I'm so sorry.

The Speakeasy is gone. Janet leans over Kathleen, and strokes her face.

JANET

It's okay, Kathleen.  
(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

I'm here now. We're together again. It's time to rest sweetheart.

Janet leans down and kisses Kathleen tenderly on the lips. Their lips part. They stare into each other's eyes, drinking each other in.

KATHLEEN

Thank you. Janet.

Suddenly Kathleen's breath catches in her throat, her lungs rattle as she fights for air, there is a final brief moment of struggle, then her eyes roll back and she is gone.

13. INT. THE BEDROOM -- LATER

Kathleen lies in the bed under the covers looking as we first saw her; as if she were sleeping peacefully. Janet lies on her side, on the bed beside Kathleen, looking at her friend. The photograph of Nancy and Kathleen is positioned prominently between them. Janet still wears the red flapper dress. As Janet recites this Millay poem we slowly creep into the couple until only the photograph fills the screen.

JANET (V.O.)

Give away her gowns, give away  
her shoes, She has no more use  
for her fragrant gowns; Take  
them all down, blue, green, blue,  
lilac, pink, blue, From their  
padded hangers; She will dance  
no more. In her narrow shoes;  
Sweep her narrow shoes. From the  
closet door.

14. EXT. THE WILSON HOUSE - DAY

Janet leaves the house, walking towards her bicycle. It is a bright, crisp fall day. Chris runs out the front door, across the lawn, intercepting her. He carries a garment bag.

CHRIS

Janet! Wait, please.

Janet waits. Chris hands her the garment bag.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

She wanted you to have this.

Janet looks inside and smiles.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I received a lifetime's supply of  
Marshmallow Fluff.

They share a moment full of memories.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(straining with  
emotion)  
God awful stuff!

Janet hops on her bike and cycles away. She takes one last look at Chris and Kathleen's home. When we cut back to her, she is cycling in the red dress, cycling down an empty road, dress flying!

THE END.