

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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And it came to pass in those days...

by Kitt Lavoie

Lights rise on Ted's apartment – an unimpressive box of a one bedroom in a small American city. TED, a restless soul in his mid-20s, sits in his grease-stained work shirt, his snow-caked boots and socks strewn around his feet, mindlessly sipping a mug of hot chocolate while watching “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer” on TV, an open and half-eaten blue tin of Danish cookies in front of him on the coffee table. On the wall hangs a lone stocking. A scrubby, foot-tall evergreen festooned with too many Christmas lights sits on the endtable next to him. A knock on the door. Slightly puzzled, Ted goes to the door. He opens it, revealing CASSIE, a pretty if decidedly unexceptional girl in her early 20s. It's hard to tell if the redness of her cheeks is from tears or the wind or both. Ted could not be more surprised to see her.

Ted Cassie.

Cassie Ted.

A long, uncomfortable pause. Ted looks at her. Cassie can't quite look at him. Finally...

Cassie *(cont'd)* I'm sorry. I shouldn't have–

Ted No. Come in. Please.

Ted steps out of the doorway. Cassie steps inside. Ted scampers to the couch, muting the television and stuffing his wet socks inside his boots, then placing them neatly under the coffee table. Behind him, Cassie removes her snow-topped hat, unwinds her long scarf, and unzips her heavy coat – revealing a large pregnant belly. She slides out of her coat as Ted turns around, seeing her unzipped for the first time. He stops cold. He looks from her belly up to Cassie's eyes. She gives him an awkward, shrugging grin.

Ted *(cont'd)* Can I get you...? I have cocoa. Or, here – *(offering the tin of cookies)*. They have the little pretzel kind. I know you–

Cassie I'm alright. Thanks.

They look at each other in the glow of the television, Cassie hovering by the door. Ted gestures for Cassie to sit. She makes her way to the couch and sits. He sits next to her on the far end of the two-seat sofa. A long moment. Then...

Ted How's Mark?

Cassie Gone.

Ted Where?

Cassie I don't know. "West" he said.

Ted There's a lot of west.

Cassie Yeah. We went to the doctor. He took one look at the sonogram and said, "That doesn't look a goddamned thing like me, Cass. How do I even know it's mine?" Right there in front of the technician he said that. And then he dropped me off. And wished me a Merry Christmas. And a Happy New Year. And he left.

Ted Maybe he's coming back.

Cassie I don't think so.

Cassie reaches into her pocket and pulls out a neatly creased sheet of paper. She offers it out to Ted. He unfolds the sonogram.

Cassie *(cont'd, with a smile she can't suppress)* It's a girl.

Cassie's smile melts away to tears. She turns and studiously watches the muted television. Ted studies the sonogram. Then Cassie. A long silence. Then...

Ted Is it--?

Cassie It's his, Ted.

Ted Okay.

Ted turns to the television. The silence of the room is heavy as they both watch the flickering light of the television for a long, long time.

Cassie I'm sorry, I shouldn't have come here....

Cassie hastily rises and shambles her way towards her snowy coat.

Cassie *(cont'd)* I just didn't know where else to go.

She grabs her scarf and begins winding it around her neck.

Ted Wait.

Cassie No, I should go.

Ted Sit. I have something for you. A present.

Ted heads into his bedroom. Cassie stays where she is. Ted can be heard rummaging in the other room. He emerges with a small box wrapped in colorful but well-worn balloon wrapping paper. He offers it out to her.

Cassie How did you know—?

Ted It was for your birthday. Before...

Cassie looks at him a moment, then turns her attention to the box. She tears away the paper and opens the box. She looks inside, then up at Ted.

Ted *(cont'd)* You can always come here.

Ted takes a breath and walks to the couch. He sits, watching the silent television. Cassie reaches into the little box and lifts out a key.

She looks at Ted a moment, then walks around the couch, unwinding her scarf as she does. She sits next to him. He picks up the remote from the cushion next to them and un-mutes the television. The sounds of Rudolph, Santa, and Burl Ives fill the silence between them. Cassie lays her head on Ted's shoulder – and they watch together as the lights fade to black.

END OF PLAY.