

THE STEALTH TEST

written by

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**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

JANE (28) clenches her hand around the entrance door handle. White knuckled. Scattered breaths. Willing herself to open the door.

The door swings open as a pregnant woman exits the clinic, both hands on her 3-month-old bump like she's gonna lose it. Jane recoils back as the woman storms past her.

As if on instinct, Jane grazes her own baby bump with trembling hands.

**INT. CLINIC - DAY**

Jane stands in front of reception. Antsy yet static.

She's waiting for the dowdy woman behind the desk to notice her. Too busy typing on an outdated desktop.

JANE

Excuse me.

The receptionist pulls her glance away from the screen reluctantly. Staring up at Jane through her reading glasses.

JANE (cont'd)

I have an appointment. Jane Walsh.

The receptionist drags her finger along her computer mouse like it's a chore. Reading the screen before her.

She steals a glance at Jane's stomach.

RECEPTIONIST

Stealth test?

Jane nods.

The receptionist pauses like she's uncomfortable with what she's about to do.

She pulls a drawer open and props a small plastic cup in front of Jane.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)

Bathroom's down the hall. To the right. Sit in the waiting room when you're done.

Jane looks down at the cup with an anxious breath.

JANE  
Thank you.

**INT. HALLWAY - CLINIC - DAY**

Jane wanders down an overly bright hallway. Gazing through the glass walls that give way to different rooms as she passes them.

Within the rooms, pregnant people nurse plastic dolls. Others practice stretches with a sign on the wall reading 'MENSTRUAL YOGA'.

Jane stops outside a room with a doctor inside. Watching intently as he stabs a woman with a long needle...

The doctor looks up at Jane through the glass. She turns away on instinct --

Realizing she's right outside the bathroom.

**INT. BATHROOM STALL - CLINIC - DAY**

Jane sits on the toilet. Staring at a message engraved into the wall of the cubical: **'DON'T LET THEM MAKE YOUR CHOICES'**.

She lingers on another message engraved below it: **'OUR BODIES OUR CHOICES'**.

**INT. WAITING ROOM - CLINIC - DAY**

Jane holds the piss-filled cup in her hand. Staring ahead at the sea of pregnant people filling the seats before her.

She awkwardly places the pee cup on the floor next to her as she takes a seat.

A muttered conversation from two women nearby draws her attention...

HUSHED WOMAN #1  
*Supposedly maternal deaths have  
increased by 24%...*

HUSHED WOMAN #2  
*Horrible. At least it might help with  
the population crisis...*

A sullen-looking woman, MARIE (Late 30s), sits next to Jane. She's watching the news broadcast on the TV on the wall.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)  
*...Population has reached a  
 staggering 12.6 billion since March.*

MARIE  
 It must be the Americans. They never  
 listen.

Marie looks at Jane for a response. Jane merely forces a  
 smile back.

MARIE (cont'd)  
 All these precautions in place and  
 it's only getting worse. It's the  
 Americans, I'm sure of it.

Marie takes a good look at Jane.

MARIE (cont'd)  
 Jesus, didn't you take your time  
 getting here.

Jane looks down at her bump. Rubbing it self-consciously.

JANE  
 I needed the time to study.

MARIE  
 I've been studying the past two  
 years. Not taking any chances. Can't  
 even bare the thought of failing...

A claustrophobic silence hangs in the air.

JANE  
 It's not going to stop them.

MARIE  
 Sorry?

JANE  
 Those who fail. Those they deny.  
 They'll find other ways to go through  
 with it. Dangerous ways.

Jane holds Marie's gaze.

JANE (cont'd)  
 A friend of mine failed last May. She  
 was due in December. She wasn't well-  
 off. She couldn't afford safe ways  
 around the law.

Her eye contact dissipates.

JANE (cont'd)  
She died trying to have a home birth.

Their attention is caught by a nurse, NURSE BOWES (40s),  
calling a name--

NURSE BOWES  
Janet Rogers?

A pregnant woman makes her way towards the smiling nurse.  
Jane turns back in her seat. Heaving a deep sigh--

MARIE  
So how far due are you?

JANE  
24 weeks.

MARIE  
My God, you're practically in labour.  
I wouldn't have the courage to leave  
it that long. 11 weeks myself.

JANE  
Are you going to drink that?

Marie pauses. Then realizes the water bottle tucked into her  
seat. She hands it to Jane.

MARIE  
All yours.

Jane unscrews the cap and downs the water.

Marie pulls out a small box of pills. Offers one to Marie.

MARIE (cont'd)  
It'll help with the nerves.

Jane hesitates. Deep in thought.

JANE  
Is it safe for the baby?

Marie stares at Jane as if she's offended by the question.

JANE (cont'd)  
Never mind. I'm OK. Thank you.

Marie drops the pill box into her handbag. The pack of  
cigarettes sneaking out of it catching Jane's eye...

Marie notices. Kicks the bag under her chair.

MARIE  
It took me so long to get pregnant.  
I've been trying for over a year.

Jane nods her head in appreciation.

MARIE (cont'd)  
What about you?

JANE  
Sorry?

MARIE  
How long have you been planning?

Jane rubs her bump. Losing eye contact again.

JANE  
I'm not sure.

MARIE  
You're not sure? How can you not be  
sure?

Jane chokes on the answer like it's stuck down her throat.

JANE  
It wasn't planned.

The look on Jane's face suggests a hidden trauma she's not overcome. It gnaws at her skin and staggers her breathing.

MARIE  
Do you have any idea what women like  
you do to us?

Jane doesn't reply.

MARIE (cont'd)  
I've done everything right. I  
followed all the rules. It's people  
like you who think they can do  
whatever they want. People like you  
are the reason we have to do this  
fucking exam in the first place--

NURSE BOWES  
Jane Walsh?

Jane dives up from her seat.

She makes her way towards the nurse.

**INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - CLINIC - DAY**

Jane sits across from Nurse Bowes.

Antsy. Jittery. She's waiting for the nurse to stop scribbling into a form.

The pee cup sits on the table. Plastic strip floating in its contents. A drug test.

Nurse Bowes looks up at Jane with a warm smile.

NURSE BOWES

Alright, Jane. Thank you for coming in this morning. I know this can be a stressful process and I want you to feel as relaxed as possible.

Jane nods.

NURSE BOWES (cont'd)

Now I'm just going to ask you a few questions as mandatory... First off, your name is Jane Walsh and you live in 10 Woodrow Drive?

JANE

Yes. That's correct.

NURSE BOWES

Is that a permanent residence?

JANE

Yes.

Nurse Bowes scribbles into her form.

NURSE BOWES

Now, what is the highest level of education you have completed?

JANE

Third level. Trinity College.

NURSE BOWES

My sister went there. She was a food science graduate, would you believe.

Nurse Bowes smiles at Jane. Jane smiles back.

NURSE BOWES (cont'd)  
Do you work?

JANE  
Yes. I'm a telemarketer.

NURSE BOWES  
And are you the chief income earner  
in your home?

JANE  
Yes, I--

NURSE BOWES  
And what about your husband?

Jane freezes. Caught off guard.

JANE  
Excuse me?

NURSE BOWES  
Does your husband work?

JANE  
I don't... there is no husband.

NURSE BOWES  
Oh, excuse me. My sister is gay, too.  
You two have a lot in common.

JANE  
No, I'm not-- I'm... it's just me.

Nurse Bowes' face falls. Her temperament shifts.

NURSE BOWES  
Oh. I see.

She scribbles into her form. Jane looks around self-consciously.

NURSE BOWES (cont'd)  
And do you have a history of smoking?

JANE  
No.

NURSE BOWES  
Have you been taking any prescription  
drugs during the pregnancy?

Jane shakes her head no.

NURSE BOWES (cont'd)  
Any medical issues that run in your family?

JANE  
...My mother was bipolar.

Nurse Bowes writes that down.

JANE (cont'd)  
I'm not. Though.

Nurse Bowes smiles at her weakly. Like she doesn't really care.

Jane gazes around the room anxiously. Eyes glued to the maternity poster on the wall. Image of a smiling woman plastered on it. A picture of perfect health. Large writing below her face, reading:

**YOU CAN BE THE PERFECT CHILD-BEARER.**

**INT. X-RAY ROOM - CLINIC - DAY**

Jane, stripped bare, is observed by Nurse Bowes and a doctor as she moves through a full-body X-ray. Scanned head to toe.

Her face is lined with tension. Sweat forms at the root of her hot scalp. Her skin is green and pale.

**INT. WAITING ROOM - CLINIC - DAY**

Jane sits at the center of a different waiting room. Much smaller. Surrounded by similarly anxious pregnant people.

Marie catches her eye from across the room. Giving her an uncomfortable stare...

A young, bubbly receptionist pops into the room.

YOUNG RECEPTIONIST  
Sorry about the wait, everyone. We're ready for you!

The crowd stand to their feet. Shuffling towards the exit.

**INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY**

A room filled with desks. Pregnant people hunched in them. Writing into sheets of paper. Like a school exam.

Jane sits at the very center of the room. Staring down at the page before her. Lined with questions about motherhood. Eyes flicking down the page.

The sounds of pencils against paper ring through her head. Every cough BLARES like an alarm. She can barely take it--

She grabs her pencil. Starts writing.

**EXT. EXAM ROOM - DAY**

The women trudge out of the room. Jane ambles out like a ghost with a haunting expression.

She overhears a conversation between two women as they pass:

WOMAN #1  
I heard only 25% pass.

WOMAN #2  
I heard it's down to 20%

**INT. LIVING ROOM - JANE'S HOUSE - DAY**

An overcast morning. Jane stares out the large window of her dark house. Rain trickling down the glass pane. Giving way to the grey sky.

**INT. KITCHEN - JANE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Jane sits by the table. Sipping a cup of tea. Staring ahead vacantly. Eyeing the pram against the wall.

**INT. BABY ROOM - JANE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Jane pushes through a door. Standing against the frame. Gazing in at the array of baby products lying around. Clothes, toys, nappies. Empty cot in the corner.

**INT. FRONT DOOR - JANE'S HOUSE - DAY**

An envelope slips through the letterbox in the door. Falling to the floor.

A moment passes. Jane rushes to the door. Reaching down to pick up the envelope. Staring at it in her hand.

**INT. KITCHEN - JANE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Jane sits at the table. Envelope in hand.

She takes a deep, shaky breath. Ripping the envelope open.  
Sent from the clinic.

She doesn't even get past the first sentence before breaking  
down on the floor.

Jane lies on the hard, cold marble. An inconsolable mess.

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

A cold afternoon. A pregnant woman exits the door.

**INT. CLINIC - DAY**

The frumpy receptionist sits behind the desk. Typing away as  
Jane bursts through the door.

She doesn't even catch Jane's eye.

RECEPTIONIST

Name please.

JANE

I need to retake the test.

The receptionist slowly looks up at Jane. Eyes her baby  
bump.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm afraid that's not possible.

JANE

Please.

RECEPTIONIST

Miss--

JANE

I am 5 months pregnant!

The receptionist stares at Jane. At a loss for words.

JANE (cont'd)

This is... There is no one way to be  
a mother. I know I'm not perfect but  
neither are you. Or anyone out there.  
(MORE)

JANE (cont'd)  
And I shouldn't have to prove to  
anyone why I deserve it!

Sympathy riddles the receptionist's face. But it's not  
enough.

JANE (cont'd)  
It's my child! It's my body!

RECEPTIONIST  
I'm sorry. There is nothing I can do.  
This is why we use protection. The  
government have been very  
accommodating, contraception is  
widely accessible.

Jane stares ahead. Glossy eyed. In disbelief.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)  
I truly am sorry.

The receptionist gets back to work. Jane practically turns  
invisible. Almost fading away...

# **EXT. CLINIC - NIGHT**

Jane steps out onto the street. A shell of her former self.  
She reaches a hand to her stomach. Feeling her empty bump...

**THE END.**