

Soothing Binds

By

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EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX- EARLY MORNING

Run down, low income housing.

Silence fills the air then suddenly a-

LOUD ALARM CLOCK SOUNDS.

INT. APARTMENT- JENINE'S BEDROOM

An ALARM continues to blast in a small, run down, nearly empty room.

JENINE, 13, tosses on her mattress, to the sound of the 6am wake-up call.

A BANGING on her thin wall as an ANNOYED NEIGHBOR screams.

ANNOYED NEIGHBOR

Turn that shit off!

Jenine's eyes open, and turn to the wall. She reaches her arm over to the alarm clock, pressing a button. The alarm gets LOUDER.

Jenine turns to the alarm and rolls her eyes.

The banging persists.

ANNOYED NEIGHBOR

Are you fucking deaf?!

Jenine keeps tapping the alarm but it won't shut off. She quickly sits up and starts banging the alarm clock on the nightstand.

ANNOYED NEIGHBOR

I'm gonna fucking kill you!

The banging gets LOUDER and FASTER as the Annoyed Neighbor continues shouting profanities.

The alarm finally breaks, and the RINGING stops, along with the shouting.

Jenine takes a breath before she rises out of bed.

INT. JENINE'S APARTMENT- BATHROOM

JENINE'S MOUTH full of toothpaste. A toothbrush scrubbing hard against her enamel.

SHOWER running.

Jenine spits mouthwash into the sink.

She grabs a towel off of the door, jumps in the shower, and quickly begins SINGING some modern pop song in a terribly out of tune voice.

INT. JENINE'S BEDROOM

Jenine stands in her towel, in front of a barren closet, staring at a pathetic display of worn down, second hand clothing.

She sighs, closes her eyes, and grabs a random item.

INT. HALLWAY

Jenine, now dressed, walks through the hallway brushing her hair. She pushes through a bunch of junk scattered all over the floor.

Jenine kicks a box out of the way. Toys fall out of the box onto the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Jenine tosses the hair brush onto the couch. She picks up the remote and turns the small television on.

*7th Heaven* plays.

Jenine disgusted, tries to change the channel. The remote button is broken. She tosses the remote.

Jenine walks out the front door.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX- CLUSTER MAILBOXES

Jenine shimmy's a key into a mailbox. JAMMED. Jenine BANGS hard on the metal. It swings open and mail pours out on to the ground. She bends down to pick it up.

(CONTINUED)

CHILD LAUGHTER. Jenine looks up to her neighbors balcony. A FATHER and his BABY DAUGHTER, as the Father tickles his Baby Daughter and she laughs uncontrollably.

Jenine stares. A WHISTLE.

Jenine whips her head around to the porch of-

BINNY, a creepy, balding loser, in his early 30s, exiting his apartment in his robe, holding a beer and a pack of cigarettes. He lights a cigarette and looks at Jenine like a piece of meat.

BINNY

Good morning Jenine!

Jenine slowly rises.

Binny looks her up and down. He smiles, revealing yellow coated teeth.

BINNY

Your momma around? I've got some  
*junk* lying around she might want to  
buy off me.

Binny checking out Jenine.

BINNY

You're just as pretty as your  
momma, you know that?

Jenine glares then spits on the ground in Binny's direction. She runs back towards her apartment.

Binny laughs.

BINNY

I'll stop by later doll!

Binny takes another swig of his beer and scratches his crotch.

INT. JENINE'S APARTMENT

Jenine shuts the door behind her and locks it.

7th heaven continues to play in the background. Eric Camden is kissing his daughter, Ruthie on the forehead.

Jenine still disgusted.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN

A plate of eggs on the counter. Bacon sizzling on the stove top. Two pieces of bread sticking out of the toaster.

Jenine sits at the table looking through the mail. Bills. Bills.

AN INVITATION to "Rosenauer's Father Daughter Dance." Jenine holds on this for a while then tosses it on the floor.

A SMALL BOX with "FRAGILE" plastered on it. A note taped on the box says "Happy Birthday Jenine." Jenine tears the box open and it's a beautiful PORCELAIN DOLL.

Jenine examines the box. Return address: "12 Soapplane Drive" A letter falls out into her lap.

Jenine opens it. Five hundred dollars cash.

INT. JENINE'S BEDROOM

Jenine has her hand in a slit in her mattress. Bill notices lay on her covers. She pulls out an envelope from the slit. In the envelope a wad of cash.

Jenine kneels next to the bed. She sorts out different piles of cash. She wraps each pile in black construction paper and puts them in each bill notice. She seals them up.

INT. HALLWAY

Jenine is standing outside of a door, holding a tray with two plates of breakfast, and cups of ice. She kneels down a little to look through a small hole in the door.

JENINE'S POV

Her MOTHER lies asleep, lost in a sea of sheets.

INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM

The door swings open. Jenine stares at her mother knocked out. She then looks at the needles, spoons, and heroin on the nightstand.

Jenine walks to the bed, places the tray on the edge. She picks up a plate and places it next to the needles.

Jenine looks at her mother.

(CONTINUED)

She opens the drawer under the nightstand and brushes the needles into it.

Jenine digs into her back pocket and pulls out forty dollars. She places it on top of the needles.

She slams the drawer closed.

JENINE

Mom!

Jenine nudges her mother.

JENINE

Mom! Breakfast.

Jenine grabs a pillow and slams her mom in the face.

A GRUNT from mother.

Jenine waves bacon under her mother's nose. No response.

She shakes her Mother more viciously.

JENINE

Mom! Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!

Another GRUNT from her Mother.

Jenine climbs on the bed and starts jumping up and down. No response.

Jenine grabs the cup of ice and dumps the ice into her mom's pants. Still nothing.

Jenine plops down. She grabs her plate.

Jenine starts eating by herself.

JENINE

Happy fucking birthday to me.

INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM- MINUTES LATER

Jenine is putting a rag under her mother's head. Using her feet, Jenine flips her mother on her side.

She jumps off of the bed and places a post-it on the plate of food on the nightstand: "Eat."

Jenine looks down at her mother. She flips her the bird.

INT. ROSENAUR MIDDLE SCHOOL- CLASSROOM

Students sit quietly writing. MISS MACKENZIE, late 20s, a well put together, typical language arts and reading teacher walks around the classroom handing out papers to students.

Miss Mackenzie stops in front of Jenine's desk.

MISS MACKENZIE

Jenine.

Jenine looks up.

JENINE

Cheryl.

Miss Mackenzie shoots Jenine a look of disapproval.

Jenine corrects herself.

JENINE

*Miss Cheryl Mackenzie.*

Miss Mackenzie hands Jenine a paper back with a big "A+" on it.

MISS MACKENZIE

Jenine Parker... Good job.

Miss Mackenzie continues down the aisle. Jenine stares at her paper then crumbles it up.

INT. SCHOOL- HALLWAY- LATER

Students exit the classroom. Jenine walks out in the mix.

LARRY, wearing a school soccer jersey walks up to Jenine.

LARRY

B+.

JENINE

B+ is seventy five.

LARRY

I thought it was fifty.

JENINE

It was fifty last week when you asked me. It jumped to seventy five when you gave me the prompt for the paper the night before it was due.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JENINE (cont'd)  
Late notice is a fifteen dollar up  
charge.

LARRY  
You didn't tell me that.

JENINE  
I didn't tell you to be an idiot  
either.

Jenine takes a step closer to Larry.

JENINE  
Seventy five. That's the price. And  
don't act like you don't have it.  
You're mom picks up from school in  
a Porsche.

Larry is quiet.

Jenine smiles and puts her hand out.

Larry takes the money out of his pocket and places it in  
Jenine's palm.

He walks away.

LARRY  
(under his breath)  
Bitch.

Jenine catches it.

JENINE  
I think what you meant to say is  
"Thank you, Jenine, for all of your  
hard work." Dickhead!

Jenine walks further down the hallway and arrives at her  
locker.

SARAH, 12, a vibrant red head opens the locker next to  
Jenine.

JENINE  
Hershey's chocolate bar or peanut  
M&M's?

Sarah gives Jenine a friendly smile.



SARAH  
Peanut M&Ms.

Jenine opens her locker wider to reveal a stash of candy, chips, and other snacks. She hands Sarah a bag of peanut M&M's. Sarah exchanges the bag with money.

SARAH  
Did your mom remember?

JENINE  
She always remembers, she's just never conscious for it.

Jenine is getting ready to leave.

SARAH  
Well we could celebrate tonight if you want. At my place?

Jenine is obviously not used to being asked to hang out and retracts.

JENINE  
I should stay home. Spend a little time with my mom.

The BELL RINGS.

Jenine rushes away.

SARAH  
(shouting)  
Another time!

Sarah looks on as Jenine rushes away.

EXT. BANK

Jenine walks up to a blue mailing box and drops bill notices inside.

Jenine continues on to the ATM. She pulls out her mother's card and inserts it.

She unzips her backpack and removes disability checks made out to her Mother from the bag. She deposit's them.

Cash dispenses from the ATM. Jenine adds the money to her previous school profits.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX

Jenine is walking towards the apartment complex, eating a candy bar.

She turns a corner towards her building.

Jenine is walking up the sidewalk.

LOUD ARGUING. Binny is on the phone pacing on his porch.

BINNY

(into phone)

You stupid fucking bitch! I'm gonna  
come over there and whoop your  
fucking ass! You use my shit again  
and I will kill you!

Jenine watches as Binny slams the door. It pops back open. He doesn't notice as he rushes towards the parking lot, fumbling with his keys.

Jenine's gaze on the door as she walks up her stoop.

INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM

Jenine is kneeling on the floor next to the bed.

The food on the nightstand has not been touched.

The drawer below the nightstand is open. The money is gone.

Jenine's Mother lies on the bed. A rubber hose tied around her arm. The needle on the sheets next to her. Her eyes wide open.

Beat.

Jenine stands. She places her hand over her Mother's face then closes her Mother's eyelids.

Jenine takes the rubber hose off of her Mother's arm. She picks up the needle. She throws them in the trash can.

Jenine takes the plate from the nightstand and exits the room.

INT. KITCHEN

Jenine is washing the plate. When finished, she dries it and places it in the cabinet above the sink.

Jenine turns around and sees the porcelain doll on the table.