

Gifts
Day 12

by
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1.

A crib. A baby sleeps. A man is asleep on the floor next to it. He didn't mean to fall asleep. Ken enters, kneels down, slightly shakes James. James wakes with a start, Ken calms him, making sure that James doesn't make a sound.

JAMES

I fell asleep.

KEN

Yeah.

JAMES

How long?

KEN

About 30 minutes.

JAMES

Is he asleep?

KEN

Yeah.

JAMES

30 minutes?

KEN

Yeah.

JAMES

Why didn't you wake me up?

KEN

I just did.

JAMES

Before.

KEN

You both were trying so hard. I felt bad to wake you.

JAMES

How long were we at it?

KEN

Hour and forty minutes.

JAMES

A new bedtime record. He's going to stop screaming like that someday, right?

KEN

Let's hope to God. You want to come to bed?

JAMES

I think I'm good on the floor. Hell, I'll just be getting up in an hour or so when he wakes up screaming.

Ken lifts him up. They exit to bed.

2.

A crib. A baby is crying. Carol sits on the floor next to the crib, almost in the fetal position.

From offstage, we hear yelling:

GREG

(Yelling)

Jesus Christ, if you can't shut the fucker up, what the hell good are you? I have to be up for work at fucking five in the morning! Too much to ask for two fucking hours of sleep? Get her to shut the fuck up and come to bed! Swear to Christ she knows when I have to be up early and decides to fuck me over! Jesus Christ, shut the fuck up!

3.

A crib. Sara and Micah watch a sleeping baby.

MICAH

He's not breathing.

SARA

He's breathing.

MICAH

He's not.

SARA

Shh. Calm down.

He puts his hand on the baby.

SARA

If you wake that baby up, I'm going to kick you so hard.

MICAH

I need to see if he's breathing.

SARA

Look at his shoulders. Watch the shoulders. Watch them. See?

MICAH

Yes.

SARA

He's breathing.

Beat, they watch the baby.

MICAH

Don't you think he's breathing kind of fast?

4.

A crib. Empty. We hear chatter from offstage.

RYAN

I'm going to try to put her down.

Ryan enters, crosses the stage, holding a baby bundle. Each step is dangerous; he's walking a tightrope. He reaches the crib and slowly, carefully lowers the baby into the crib. He gingerly removes his hands from the crib. Success! He celebrates slightly and starts to leave, but knocks his arm into the crib.

RYAN

Jesus, motherfucker!

The baby wakes. Ryan does a face palm.

5.

A crib. Empty. Margaret holds her baby to her chest. She sometimes whispers, sometimes sings parts of her dialogue as she sways and bounces the baby to sleep.

MARGARET

I think I'm going to miss this. Not the screaming. This. Us. You. Me. Daddy snoring in the other room. You're so warm. Beautiful. Yes you are. You're beautiful. Yes you are, yes you are. You're beautiful. Yes you are. I'm not anymore. You ruined my body. Yes you did, yes you did. That's awful, Margaret. I didn't mean that. It's delirium setting in. I'm going mad. Yes I am. Yes I am. I'm going mad. Yes I am. And you're not asleep. No you're not, no you're not.

6.

A crib. Empty. Brendan enters, on a cellphone.

BRENDAN

I'm heading back over there. I'm going back. They don't know. Stable. That's what they said. That's all they said. She's stable. It means she's stable. Stable is good. Tell them she's fine. Tell them don't worry. Santa will find them and deliver their gifts. But he's going to be late. He wants them to open them when their new sister comes home and can watch. Jesus, mom, then tell them that dad doesn't have time to take their presents to them between packing up shit at the house and getting back to the hospital. Tell them the gifts will come. Tell them... Not tonight. Soon.

7.

Carol is on the floor. She's now breastfeeding her baby. She hums slightly, smiling. She's exhausted, but happy. In this moment, she's happy.

Lights fade.