

HORSE HEART

Parts:

CARINA, 54, Stina's mother.

STINA, 20, Carina's daughter.

MARIELLE, 19.

On a farm in the country. In a stable. Not in the part of the building where the stalls are, in a more agricultural setting. Perhaps some sort of storage area for machinery. There is hay strewn across the floor, bales of hay, old machinery, tractors that are no longer in use, large items of metal equipment, harrows and harvesters, a lot of old things, not much that is new. The ceiling is high in here, with a ladder that can be climbed up to a loft where you can sit and swing your legs, and when there is hay on the floor you can jump down. The floor is concrete. There is a lot of dust, lying like a film on everything, dust that is thick with grease, and dust that swirls in the air. The stalls are next door, that's where the horses are, the sound of horses moving around in their stalls. The feeling of dirt in your pores. Darkness and lamps that don't work, light shining through cracks in the walls and perhaps from some fluorescent tubes, patches of light and darkness.

1.

Marielle atop a harvester.

MARIELLE

When there's a fire the horses often run back into the stable.

In the past they lived in the wild, and when the grass caught fire they could run through it and come out on the other side, and the fire only burned in the same place once, so when they were where it had already been, they were safe.

But if you run into a stable, into a building, you're trapped.

My body is a burning building.

There's something inside it. A living void.

Pulling everything in.

I run into it and into it.

Body, body, body. It swells in my mouth.

There are two hearts in my chest.

One of them is a horse heart.

It sits there.

I run towards it.

It is a wound, something open and exposed.

I can't stop touching it.

I love it with a violent passion.

It's so present yet entirely unfamiliar.

Who are you?

What do you want?

Stina enters.

STINA

What?

MARIELLE

Who are you?

STINA

Funny.

MARIELLE

I'm not joking.

STINA

Get down from there.

MARIELLE

I don't know you.

Anna Nygren

STINA

Stop it.

MARIELLE

How's about a pitchfork to the gut.

STINA

Marre.

MARIELLE

Darling.

STINA

What are you doing?

MARIELLE

Dying.

STINA

Stop it.

MARIELLE

Okay.

Marielle climbs down.

MARIELLE

So how does it feel to be back.

STINA

I wasn't away that long.

MARIELLE

Mhm.

STINA

Is Mum here?

MARIELLE

Are you okay now then.

STINA

Is she feeding the horses or something?

Anna Nygren

MARIELLE

She's in the paddock. I feed them now.

STINA

Oh.

2.

Stina, alone.

STINA

It's too much.

I needed to get away for a while.

The walls are closing in.

I can feel the greasy dust on my skin.

Enveloping me.

I'm never more scared than at times like this.

I can't do this. It has to die.

I needed to get away for a while because I couldn't cope.

Them over there. Made it so I became. Something more than this lump.

But now even that feels gone.

There's a lot I can't do. It's not about me.

God. Marre.

Make me sick. Please.

A blood-soaked hamster in my liver.

Sucking the life out of me.

But I love it so much.

With all my heart.

Stina in the paddock. Carina is moving steeplechase hurdles around.

STINA

Mum.

Carina doesn't react.

STINA

Mum.

Carina doesn't react.

STINA

Carina.

They look at each other.

STINA

Hi.

CARINA

Hi.

Anna Nygren

STINA

I'm.

Here.

CARINA

Yes.

STINA

I'm doing okay.

CARINA

I've moved Marengo. He wasn't getting on with Chloé. He's in the stall at the back now.

Next to Jupiter. They seem to get on. Gluttons, both of them. Marielle's been training him for the time being. He's doing well. Just like we wanted.

STINA

Yes.

CARINA

You look.

Good.

Good.

STINA

Mhm.

CARINA

Stina.

STINA

Yes.

CARINA

Take deep breaths.

Feed that wild heart.

STINA

I can't.

CARINA

Focus.

You'll be.

Okay.

Anna Nygren

You're okay, aren't you?

STINA

Mum.

CARINA

What are we to do with your heart.

Anna Nygren

3.

Marielle is eating a McDonald's hamburger. Stina enters.

STINA

You realise that's horse meat.

MARIELLE

Of course.

STINA

Dead.

MARIELLE

Yes.

I eat, you own. It's only fair.

STINA

Mum said.

That you've been riding Marengo.

I've.

Missed.

MARIELLE

He's doing well now.

STINA

Now?

MARIELLE

Now.

He's improving.

STINA

Okay.

They look at each other. Marielle offers Stina a bite of her hamburger. Stina declines.

MARIELLE

A hundred years ago.

STINA

We share everything with each other.

We smell each other's necks when we try her mum's perfume.

She has it in a bag, right at the bottom, and she says:

This is Mum's, it's all I have left.
Then we spray each other and become her mum.
Then we ride.
I can't do lateral movements, but we're not supposed to yet.
I stomp on her toes because she has toecaps.
She stomps on my toes even though I don't have toecaps.
We talk about grownup things.
We're the stars and the seas and the ponies and the maggots under the skin.
We live in each other's hearts.
This is when it begins.
This is when we grow up.
We'll never forget.
Not allowed. Always come back. Marre. Pull me in. I'm rooted in her heart.

4.

Stina, alone. Marielle enters. Stina doesn't see her. Marielle jumps on Stina, knocking her over.

MARIELLE

Oh, God.

STINA

Marre.

MARIELLE

You were so scared.

STINA

Not funny.

MARIELLE

Hysterical.

STINA

Not scared.

MARIELLE

So fucking scared.

STINA

Grow up.

MARIELLE

And.

STINA

It's not funny.

Marielle makes to leave.

STINA

Wait.

MARIELLE

Mhm?

STINA

I didn't mean that.

Anna Nygren

MARIELLE

Bitch.

STINA

Sorry.

MARIELLE

Love you.

STINA

What?

MARIELLE

Stinis. You heard. Don't be dense.

STINA

Sorry.

MARIELLE

I usually take Marengo out about now.

STINA

Not later?

MARIELLE

No, he's a lot better around this time. He's doing so well with his new routine.

STINA

Okay.

MARIELLE

So shall I take him or do you want to.

STINA

I don't know.

MARIELLE

I can teach you.

STINA

I don't know.

MARIELLE

Anna Nygren

I can make you sit with a plank under your jumper and a broom handle across your shoulders.
Then you'll sit up straight.
Bolt upright.
So good.

STINA
Mhm. Okay.

Marielle picks up a plank and pushes it under Stina's jumper.

STINA
Ouch. It's digging into me.

MARIELLE
What did you expect.

Marielle shoves a broom handle through the arms of Stina's jumper. Stina now looks as if she has been crucified.

MARIELLE
Do you feel.

STINA
What?

MARIELLE
Resurrected.

STINA
Dunno.

MARIELLE
I'll save you from the psych ward.
They've done enough.
It's time you got better.

STINA
Er. Thanks.

MARIELLE
Darling.

5.

Carina with the horses.

CARINA

My children.

I run my hands over your bodies. So strong and soft, smooth.

Your coats.

I'll take care of you.

Love and care for you.

After all, you're part of me.

Everything I own and have.

Everything I've achieved.

Stina enters.

STINA

Mum.

Marre crucified me.

CARINA

Stina, I can't.

STINA

I just need to learn.

Silence.

CARINA

What do you do when you're together.

What do you do with Marielle.

STINA

We're friends.

CARINA

Friends.

STINA

Mhm.

CARINA

Good.

STINA

Anna Nygren

Them over there. Said we should talk.

CARINA

Okay. Good.

STINA

I just feel.

I don't have the words.

CARINA

I just feel.

Nothing.

STINA

So empty.

CARINA

What was inside me.

Just let me throw it up.

Vomit in my hair.

Everywhere.

STINA

I could take care of you as well.

We could live in violent and tedious symbiosis.

There don't have to be feelings involved.

CARINA

Mhm.

I could run my hands over your coat and let you nuzzle my palm.

STINA

I could bite your fingers and you could punish me.

You have to be firm.

Show them who's in charge.

Horses need to know who's boss.

Violent trust.

I could put my life in your hands.

CARINA

I'm so sorry, Stina.

STINA

Mhm.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

I just.

Need her so much.

Just want to be with her.

Is this real love.

Or is it fantasy.

Am I.

Caught in a lie.

Blah blah.

6.

Carina is instructing Stina. Marielle as Stina's horse.

CARINA

Stina. Heavy seat. Heavy seat. Don't flap your legs.

Stina rides.

CARINA

Stina. He's cheating. Stay on the bit. Don't let him bend his neck. Come on.

Stina rides.

CARINA

Stina. Concentrate.

STINA

Fuck you.

CARINA

Stina.

STINA

I can't.

CARINA

Marielle can take over.

STINA

But. He's mine.

CARINA

Okay. Let's try again.

Stina. Soft hands.

Stina grips Marielle hard.

CARINA

Softly. Softly.

Stina grips Marielle's hair. Pulls.

CARINA

She's getting agitated. Nice and calm. Softly.

Anna Nygren

Careful, now. She's getting irate.
You're losing control.

Stina tries to hold Marielle. Marielle puts up a fight.

CARINA
Take control.

Stina grips hard. She hits Marielle.

CARINA
Take control.

Stina keeps hitting her.

CARINA
Stina.

Stina keeps hitting until Marielle settles down.

CARINA
Christ. Concentrate.

Stina looks at Marielle. Marielle is calm.

Anna Nygren

7.

Stina, alone.

STINA

I just can't.

Channel.

No connection.

I remain human.

It's just the worst thing.

Marielle enters.

MARIELLE

Let me show you.

STINA

No, that's okay.

MARIELLE

Let me.

STINA

I don't want to.

MARIELLE

Let me.

STINA

Marielle moves in spasms. Her body jerks. Only slightly at first. Then more and more violently. Her skin starts to crack. Hair emerges from the cracks. Hair, a coat, covers her body. Her muscles become firmer and more defined. Her arms become legs. Her hands and feet become hooves. Her neck elongates. Her teeth grow longer and yellower. Her eyes roll until they stop, big and dark.

MARIELLE

You just have to become.

STINA

I can't.

MARIELLE

Entirely constant becoming.

Pet me.

Anna Nygren

Stina pets Marielle.

MARIELLE

I'm so strong. White and gleaming.

I'm loved by my owner.

I'm a warrior.

I accompany them into battle.

Win.

I save my empress.

I pull through.

They let me birth all the children.

I'm mother to all the world.

Feel.

STINA

Oh, Marre.

Is it true.

Is it Mum.

What is she doing to you.

MARIELLE

You know I love you.

STINA

Oh.

MARIELLE

All this, me, it's so material.

The bodies and the flesh.

The girls.

STINA

You know I love you.

Anna Nygren

8.

Marielle, alone.

Carina enters.

CARINA

Hi.

MARIELLE

Hi.

CARINA

She needs.

MARIELLE

I know. I know because I love her.

CARINA

Do you?

MARIELLE

Of course.

CARINA

You can take Storm out later.

MARIELLE

Of course.

CARINA

That's fine.

MARIELLE

Yes.

They look at each other.

MARIELLE

What do you think this is?

CARINA

What do you mean?

MARIELLE

This.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

This is... good.

MARIELLE

What do you think of this?

Marielle moves closer to Carina. Kisses one cheek softly and then the other.

MARIELLE

What do you think of this?

CARINA

I don't know.

Anna Nygren

9.

Stina in Marengo's stall. Marielle enters.

MARIELLE

Need help?

STINA

It's fine.

MARIELLE

You sure?

STINA

Mhm.

Fuck.

MARIELLE

Don't worry, I've got him.

STINA

Mm.

MARIELLE

What are you doing?

STINA

What?

MARIELLE

What have I done?

STINA

What do you mean? You've not done anything.

MARIELLE

Then why are you being like this?

STINA

Why are you being like this?

MARIELLE

Christ.

STINA

Anna Nygren

Fuck.

Silence.

MARIELLE

You know you're lucky.

STINA

Hooray.

MARIELLE

Do you think that's funny.

STINA

Yes.

MARIELLE

Ownership.

STINA

Mhm.

MARIELLE

You've never thought about this as ownership. The affection. You own him.

STINA

I know.

MARIELLE

You're so.

STINA

What.

MARIELLE

I just feel sorry for you.

STINA

A hundred years ago.

MARIELLE

Mhm. What happened.

STINA

Anna Nygren

What do we do when we're together.

MARIELLE

I know.

STINA

The affection.

Silence. Marielle moves closer to Stina. Stina meets her halfway. Their hands brush.

Sia's "Chandelier" plays.

A dance like caresses, like a horse's coat.

10.

Marielle and Stina. As children.

STINA

Marre.

MARIELLE

Yes.

STINA

What are you doing.

MARIELLE

Nothing.

STINA

Come here.

MARIELLE

Okay.

STINA

Look at this. It's a salt stone. It's good.

Lick it.

Marielle looks at the salt stone.

MARIELLE

But.

STINA

It's good.

Marielle licks.

STINA

You just made out with a horse.

MARIELLE

What.

STINA

It's horse food. You're a horse now.

Anna Nygren

Marielle and Stina as horses. A quadrille.

STINA

This has to be forever.

MARIELLE

How.

STINA

We have to get married.

MARIELLE

How.

STINA

Ritual. Rite. We're a cult.

MARIELLE

That's crazy.

STINA

We're going to be forever.

MARIELLE

Okay.

STINA

You need this.

MARIELLE

What?

STINA

Okay.

Stina makes two rings out of blue baling twine.

STINA

Do you, Marielle Darling, take me, Stina, God, I can't be called Stina.

MARIELLE

It's so corny.

STINA

Anna Nygren

I know.

MARIELLE

It has to die.

STINA

I have to die.

MARIELLE

Change your name.

It's not even part of you.

STINA

Lizette.

MARIELLE

Lizette.

STINA

Me, Lizette Precious, to be your lawfully wedded wife, until death do us part.

MARIELLE

Yes.

STINA

Yes.

MARIELLE

Okay.

Stina ties the twine around Marielle's finger.

MARIELLE

Ouch.

STINA

It's supposed to hurt.

MARIELLE

Does yours hurt?

STINA

Yes.

Anna Nygren

Silence.

STINA

That's when I fall.

After the fall, I'm no longer safe.

I can't move anymore.

I lie with my face in the spiky grass of the stubble field. It pricks at my skin. I can't move. I lie completely still.

Marielle watches me from horseback.

Then she starts laughing.

Marielle laughs.

MARIELLE

Sorry. You just look so.

Are you hurt.

STINA

No.

I laugh because I don't know what else to do. My face burns.

After that I struggle to cope.

Something inside me has come undone and it shudders.

I feel like I'm always stumbling and falling.

The animals don't understand language. We talk to them using our bodies. They feel everything we feel.

They feel fear.

That's why they hate me.

My heart is so heavy.

11.

Marielle with the horses. Carina enters.

CARINA

I'm the one who made you.

MARIELLE

Excuse me.

CARINA

You should be my child. You are.

MARIELLE

Bullshit.

CARINA

I saved you.

MARIELLE

Right.

CARINA

You are.

The Golden Child.

MARIELLE

Mhm.

CARINA

I mean it.

MARIELLE

Of course.

CARINA

Care and affection.

MARIELLE

Yes.

CARINA

Civilisation and work.

MARIELLE

Anna Nygren

Well.

CARINA

You're everything.

Do you have any other mother?

MARIELLE

What do you mean?

CARINA

You have no one else.

MARIELLE

No. But.

CARINA

I'm all you have.

You're my everything.

MARIELLE

I've had enough.

Silence.

12.

Stina, alone.

STINA

No one here is drawn to me.

The horses.

They're drawn to Marre.

I just don't understand.

There's no body in me.

We can never meet.

I have no one else.

I only have this.

And Marre.

I only have what I love, but it feels nothing in return.

Maybe I should get myself committed again.

At least then there'll be some sense of coherence.

Antonovsky says:

Sense of Coherence.

Well-being.

Renowned for his studies of the link between social class, sickness and death.

I'm just a mistake.

I shouldn't have been born here, now.

I should be something else.

I should be sickness and death.

I don't deserve this.

I'm vulnerable, always open and weak.

13.

Carina, alone.

CARINA

You have to work hard through the generations.
Marengo carries that inside him.
Sired as if by Milton.
Foaled as if by Cassandra.
We've worked so hard and for so long.
Cultivating traits.
Merging genes.
Using generations to build.
It will always be there.
I gave birth to Stina.
I can't say I wasn't disappointed.
Those genetic codes.
I don't think she understands.
What's wrong in my environment.
Is there something I could have done.
I look at Marielle.
A dandelion leaf.
Perfect genes from nothing.
I can't explain it.
Because the choices are made with care.
Humans stand like gods on the backs of horses.
Don't let time scare you.
You work long and hard.
You love the work.

///

Horse breeding is reproduction in horses, and particularly the human-directed process of selective breeding of animals, particularly purebred horses of a given breed. Planned matings can be used to produce specifically desired characteristics in domesticated horses. Furthermore, modern breeding management and technologies can increase the rate of conception, a healthy pregnancy and successful foaling.

///

CARINA

I can't say I'm not disappointed.

Carina sticks her fingers down her throat and vomits into the manure barrow. Marielle enters.

Anna Nygren

MARIELLE

Oh.

Marielle holds Carina's hair back.

CARINA

I just want to take care of you.

14.

Stina and Marielle with the horses.

STINA

So you ride them all now.

MARIELLE

Yes.

STINA

Nice.

MARIELLE

Yes.

STINA

Marengo too.

MARIELLE

He's doing well now.

STINA

Okay.

MARIELLE

Really well.

STINA

Marre.

MARIELLE

Yes.

STINA

For.

Ever.

MARIELLE

What.

STINA

I need so much.

MARIELLE

Anna Nygren

Christ.

STINA

What.

MARIELLE

I don't get it.

What's going on with everyone.

STINA

I was just thinking.

MARIELLE

Stop it.

I've had enough.

15.

Marielle, alone, sitting and smoking. Carina unseen in the background.

MARIELLE

Take deep breaths.

Feed that wild heart.

Stina Carina Stina Carina Stina Carina.

My darlings.

I love them dearly, like horses, with all my heart.

They're killing me.

I'm getting so.

Oh.

I have no other home.

I just need it to stop.

I'm like an exposed, bleeding body they're trying to civilise.

I feel so much.

My heart.

Is killing me.

It just needs to go.

I need.

To go.

I just need.

To do something.

The flame from Marielle's lighter.

ACT 2

Aftermath of fire. Charred remains of a stable, stalls, machinery. A thick layer of ash.

1.

Carina, alone.

CARINA

This has happened.

It was everything. It is everything.

When a stable catches fire, you get all the horses out as fast as you can, but they want to run back inside. You have to tie them up and fight to keep them outside.

It's as if they want to burn.

I can still feel the fire.

It comes at night. I'm trying to sleep, but it's too warm.

I live on the farm. I saw the fire from the house.

It could have been here.

I feel like I should be dead.

The stable is burning and all the horses have to be saved.

It's nature burning in civilisation.

It's already too late, but what else can you do.

We run into the stable to get them all out.

I feel the fire against my skin.

This is everything I own, everything I have.

The horses emerge with the odour of singed hair. I gulp it down. I want it to poison me. I deserve it.

Everyone's out now and they arrive to put out the fire.

A barrage of water rains down.

A white foam.

I can't think.

This is everything.

This has happened.

Anna Nygren

2.

Carina and Stina with Marengo. Carina is carrying a shotgun.

STINA

Is he going to make it.

CARINA

No.

I know that much.

There's nothing they can do.

He's in so much pain.

STINA

God.

I.

CARINA

What.

STINA

Don't know.

CARINA

I'd rather do it myself.

STINA

Mum.

Carina gets ready to shoot.

STINA

Mum.

Carina aims.

STINA

Carina.

CARINA

Yes.

STINA

Can I.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

You don't know how.

STINA

Yes, I do.

CARINA

No, you don't.

STINA

I've done it a hundred times.

CARINA

Not this.

STINA

But I can handle it.

CARINA

Oh, sweetheart.

STINA

Mum.

Carina embraces Stina. It's stiff and awkward.

CARINA

But you can't.

STINA

He's my horse.

CARINA

It's all I have.

STINA

But.

CARINA

Do you even love him.

STINA

Of course.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

Do you even know what love is.

STINA

Mum.

CARINA

Shh, I need to concentrate.

Silence.

Carina gets ready to shoot.

Carina shoots.

Marengo falls dead.

3.

Marielle by Marengo's body.

MARIELLE

You.

Run through the fire. To get out.

I.

Knew that, but.

I'd saddled and bridled you. To keep.

Keep you away.

I just needed to get it out my system.

You just needed to get out of the building.

The metal I put on you.

We were going away. Together. We were going to be.

Wild. Free.

Metal conducts heat like nothing else.

The corners of your mouth and your coat burned.

Like the jewellery on the girls.

Earrings burning earlobes.

Hair goes up in a flash. The mane and the tail.

And you run back inside.

I can't keep you.

Away.

God.

I didn't mean.

Forgive me.

Stina enters.

STINA

What do you mean, forgive me.

MARIELLE

I want to die.

STINA

What have you done.

MARIELLE

Nothing, I just feel so awful.

He should be alive.

STINA

Yes.

Anna Nygren

MARIELLE

We need to bury him.

STINA

Yes.

MARIELLE

All flesh is grass.

The flower fades.

Surely something could have saved him.

STINA

Something.

I'm so scared.

MARIELLE

Mhm.

STINA

I'm scared I.

MARIELLE

What have you done.

STINA

Am I completely unlovable.

MARIELLE

You need to take responsibility for your actions.

STINA

I feel nothing.

MARIELLE

You need to take responsibility for your feelings.

STINA

It's just cold and empty.

MARIELLE

Come here and dig.

They dig a hole for Marengo's body.

Anna Nygren

STINA

I don't see the point in being here anymore.

MARIELLE

Just dig.

STINA

I can't work out how they think.

MARIELLE

You just need to feel.

STINA

I feel nothing.

MARIELLE

You feel the exertion.

STINA

I can't do this anymore.

MARIELLE

Yes, you can. We need to get ready.

STINA

I could just lie down and die.

MARIELLE

I'll die if you die.

STINA

I feel nothing.

*They move Marengo's body into the hole and fill it with earth.
They lie down on the ground.*

STINA

We're the stars and the seas and the maggots under the skin.

MARIELLE

Mhm.

4.

Carina and Marielle by Marengo's grave.

Marielle is making horse sculptures out of ash-saturated clay.

MARIELLE

Stina didn't love him.

CARINA

No, I know.

MARIELLE

I loved him.

CARINA

I know.

MARIELLE

I have so much love.

CARINA

Marre.

MARIELLE

I'm just so messed up.

CARINA

But loved.

MARIELLE

I'm just completely out of it.

Carina caresses Marielle's hair and face.

MARIELLE

Oh, stop it.

Silence.

CARINA

Hey. Look at me.

What has she done.

Who else could have done it.

I just want to take care of you.

5.

Stina. After Marengo's death.

STINA

I'm sickness and death.
Marengo is in the ground now.
He's running through the fire.
He's survived all this war.
He's saved so many from death.
But now it has claimed him.
He's running through the fire.
His hair curling.
His flesh splits open. His skin is burned to plastic.
He's trapped in the building.
A building like a home, like a prison.
I am sickness and death.
They'll need to have me committed again soon.
I see Marengo lying on the ground.
I kneel down next to his body.
Run my hands over it.
Peel away the torn skin.
Grip the flesh.
Tear it from his belly.
The blood pumping.
So fresh.
I take it into my mouth.
So give me strength, so give me courage.
Horse flesh.
So utterly free.
Eat, own, eat, own.
Because you're worth it.

6.

Marielle is making up a bed. A mattress and blanket on the floor. Stina enters.

STINA

Are you going to sleep here.

MARIELLE

Mm, just a bit chaotic.

STINA

But there's nothing left of it.

MARIELLE

I know.

I have no other home.

STINA

Are you.

MARIELLE

Lizette.

STINA

Oh, Marre.

MARIELLE

Fuck you.

STINA

Love you.

MARIELLE

Love you too.

STINA

I'll sleep here with you.

MARIELLE

No, you can't.

STINA

Why not.

MARIELLE

Anna Nygren

You just can't.

STINA

But I want to be with him too.

I have feelings too.

MARIELLE

You feel nothing.

Silence.

MARIELLE

Come here.

Marielle hugs Stina.

STINA

I just want to help.

MARIELLE

It's fine.

STINA

Why are you sleeping here.

MARIELLE

I told you.

STINA

Mm.

MARIELLE

I just want to sleep.

STINA

Right.

MARIELLE

I just need to take care of them.

Of what's left.

Under all this.

It might still be dangerous.

STINA

Anna Nygren

I could help.

MARIELLE

Is that what you really want.

STINA

Yes.

MARIELLE

Think carefully.

STINA

I am.

MARIELLE

Stina. Honestly.

I can tell, you know.

This isn't working.

The cracks are showing. There's something unnerving about it. It's no good.

It's obvious whenever you're here. This isn't the place for you.

STINA

Marre.

MARIELLE

I'm sorry, but it's true.

What are you doing here.

STINA

Marre.

MARIELLE

Why did you come back.

STINA

Christ.

What are you doing.

MARIELLE

What.

STINA

This isn't normal.

Anna Nygren

MARIELLE

What.

STINA

There's something inside you.

Something bad.

MARIELLE

Excuse me.

STINA

It's true.

MARIELLE

God.

STINA

There's something inside you. Your body's a temple of flesh, and there's something bad inside.

MARIELLE

Psych ward. Now.

STINA

Not funny.

MARIELLE

I'm not joking.

STINA

Funny.

Stina starts laughing. It is forced at first.

STINA

Damn.

Stina's laugh becomes even more derisive.

MARIELLE

Psycho.

STINA

Exactly.

Anna Nygren

Marielle starts laughing. They both laugh, clutching at each other.

7.

Carina in the ash with the horses.

CARINA

I'm completely ruined.

It's all gone.

My sense of self, my everything, my horses, my heart.

This is punishment.

Bad karma.

My tainted, rotten aura.

It's because I can't be with her.

She makes me a bad person.

I gave birth to her.

Now I'm being punished.

I only love you, can only love those with a coat and no words.

What has she done.

What have I done.

Stina enters.

STINA

What have you done.

CARINA

Come here.

Stina and Carina stand facing each other. Carina bends down and dips her hand in the ash. She paints ash tears on Stina's cheeks. Then on her own.

STINA

Who's the sick one here.

CARINA

Sweetie.

STINA

Mhm.

CARINA

What have you done.

STINA

What have I done.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

I'm sure it was an accident.

STINA

What.

CARINA

But this.

STINA

Such an unfortunate, fortunate thing.

CARINA

Stina.

STINA

What are you trying to say.

CARINA

I know you didn't mean to.

It's my fault.

STINA

Mhm.

CARINA

I'm just wondering what you did.

During the night.

STINA

Ask Marre.

CARINA

Were you with Marre.

What.

What do you do when you're together.

STINA

Do you really want to know.

CARINA

What.

STINA

Anna Nygren

Ah, fuck it.
We're so good together.

CARINA
Have you.

STINA
God, yes.
I've been fucking Marre for a hundred years.

CARINA
Stina.

STINA
Yes.

CARINA
That's not true.

STINA
What else would we do.

CARINA
But.

STINA
No men.
Well, Marre tries with them. But they bore her.
Slut. Darling.
I love it when she's been with them.
It's so tender and violent.
You know what's inside her.

CARINA
Stina.
Stop it.

STINA
What do you mean. What am I doing.

CARINA
It's not funny.

STINA

Anna Nygren

Love you too, Mum.

8.

Marielle and Stina.

MARIELLE

I have a little horse heart.

STINA

Marre.

Do you feel.

Love.

MARIELLE

Mhm.

STINA

We could.

We could move.

Together.

Our own place.

We could.

Have a family.

I'd be a good mum.

MARIELLE

You'd be the worst mum in the world.

We'd kill each other.

STINA

No, no.

MARIELLE

It's fine.

It's not your fault.

It's just karma.

STINA

Do you not want.

To be with me.

MARIELLE

You know I love you.

I love you and I give you your freedom. Now.

STINA

Anna Nygren

Mhm.

MARIELLE

Kiss kiss.

Marielle kisses Stina's forehead and exits.

ACT 3

1.

Stina with the horses.

STINA

This has happened.

Marielle has disappeared.

All alone now.

With all this freedom.

With no personal responsibility.

There, there.

This is going well

This is going very well.

It's going well.

Fuck.

Shit.

Shit shit shit.

They're moving and I can't be here.

What is wrong with me.

It's always been this way.

I put everything I have into this, but I just can't.

I'm so scared of what they might do.

I fall. Lie with my face in the wood shavings in the paddock.

They trample me with their hooves and claws.

Everything falls.

Blood pours from me.

Everything pours from me.

There is no love in me.

They can tell by the smell.

I can't really love.

There's a hole in me.

Something broken.

Something in my body is wrong. It's just a lump.

It sits there, all slimy.

I could cut it away.

I just need to know.

Please, please.

Stina holds out her hands to the horses.

STINA

I just want to feel the wind in my coat.

I just want to feel the muscles in my legs and chest.

Anna Nygren

The freedom and the field.
I need.

Carina enters.

CARINA

There are lots of reasons why people disappear.
Small children go out on their bikes.
They cycle around in small towns and then just don't come home again.
Sometimes they're found dead after a few days.
Perhaps because someone was out for revenge.
People aren't always what they seem.
There are people who steal other people's identities.
They do it for revenge.
They do it to get back at someone who did them wrong.
Some people are incapable of forgiveness.

STINA

Some people are incapable of forgiveness.

CARINA

Yes.

STINA

Some things cannot be forgiven.

CARINA

It's not the things' fault.

STINA

Okay.

CARINA

Sometimes things just happen.

STINA

Most people run away because of someone close to them.
Most violence takes place at home.

CARINA

Yes.

STINA

I wanted you to say.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

You know.

I love you.

STINA

Most violence takes place between people who know each other.

CARINA

When the girls are with violent men, the horses are in danger too.

They might threaten to break their legs with iron bars.

Bones shattered.

Marrow seeping out.

There's so much pain.

You can feel an animal's suffering in its skin.

I can't breathe.

STINA

I just want you.

To pet me.

Carina moves closer.

CARINA

I smell your neck.

I smell vanilla and coconut.

I feel.

STINA

I feel safe.

CARINA

Fear.

STINA

Mum.

CARINA

Yes.

2.

Carina with the horses.

CARINA

There, there.

You miss her.

There's always been something about her.

She should have been my daughter.

People disappear in lots of ways.

You miss her, yes, you do.

She had nice hands.

She's taken them with her.

Imagine a child travelling with their parents in a truck loaded with corrosive acid in big tanks.

They're driving along a mountain road. Then the truck is found, overturned, the parents injured and killed by the acid. The child has disappeared without a trace.

You can miss someone until you think your heart might break.

Stina.

What's missing is between us.

There's nothing binding us together.

Only pushing us apart.

You want some oats.

I just want to take care of.

Why is love impossible.

Marielle.

I'll die if you die.

3.

Stina is cleaning bridles and saddles.

STINA

You need to take care of the equipment.

Look after it.

I feel more for this leather than for the animals and their bodies.

Things don't despise me.

This can be bought for money.

And when there's been a fire.

You need to save what you can.

Silence.

STINA

Marre in severe pain. She'll die soon.

She'll die being reborn

Her stomach will be torn open as she clambers out.

A child with a coat and hooves.

Flailing for a moment before getting to her feet.

A strong, healthy foal.

She'll run.

Bounding over her human body as if across a field.

Leaving it behind.

And oh, Mother Nature.

Please take care of.

Be well taken care of.

I'm really going to miss her. This freedom will kill me.

Silence.

Now.

She's free.

Perhaps not safe. But free.

She's not alone.

She's running with the herd.

Her eyes above the grass, able to see in almost every direction.

A circle, broken, open.

If she can be free, I can be.

The child with its adult legs.

Running with the herd.

Free from.

Free to.

Oh, God, how I love.

Anna Nygren

Forever.
A hundred years ago.
Time collapses in on itself.
The fire we're burning in.
Back inside.
Never going to forget.
The fire.
The fire is also the force. The power.
Carry me.
A burning heart.

Carina enters.

CARINA
Do you really think that's necessary.

STINA
What else is there for me to do.

CARINA
True. What have you done.

STINA
What do you mean.

CARINA
First the fire.

STINA
What.

CARINA
Then.
Marielle.

STINA
Christ.

CARINA
Just tell me.

STINA
I haven't set fire to anything, if that's what you're thinking.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

Then who did it.

STINA

Where is this coming from.

Before.

I thought we.

That there was something that.

CARINA

I'm serious.

STINA

So am I.

CARINA

Did you even feel the fire.

Marre helped save the horses.

I couldn't have done it without her.

STINA

How nice for you.

CARINA

Stina.

STINA

Do you harden your heart against those who love you most.

CARINA

What did you say.

STINA

I felt love.

CARINA

Do you know where she is.

STINA

No.

CARINA

I just want it to end.

Anna Nygren

STINA

Mum.

Carina sticks her fingers down her throat.

STINA

Mum.

Carina vomits.

Stina walks over to her, rubs her back.

STINA (*fondly*)

That was fucking gross.

Mum.

CARINA

Where is she.

STINA

Gone.

CARINA

Stina.

STINA

Mhm.

CARINA

I.

I've carried you in my chest.

I felt you in me.

I.

I didn't mean to.

It was just so painful.

I couldn't.

Cope.

With it. With you.

STINA

Mhm.

CARINA

Stina.

Anna Nygren

STINA

What.

CARINA

I was supposed to give up my body.

I don't know what I was supposed to feel.

I just want.

STINA

I just want.

CARINA

I'm not mother material.

STINA

Mhm.

CARINA

I just want to be close.

STINA

What do you want.

CARINA

My heart is so tender and vulnerable.

It's so full of fear.

STINA

So fucking scared.

CARINA

Yes.

I want us to.

I don't know.

STINA

You can't imagine.

I can't.

CARINA

Everything is in ruins.

STINA

The world around us is broken.

Anna Nygren

CARINA

The horses need.
Respect and love.

STINA

It's just a warm body.

CARINA

Can we.

STINA

Can we.

CARINA

Something growing out of the cracks.

STINA

When the stable burns.
I run straight into the fire.
Into a burning building.
Things don't hate me.
I just want to be where it's warm.

CARINA

I still think.

STINA

I'll lie down here.
In the warm.

Stina lies down on the ground.

STINA

Light her up.
Isn't that what you want.

CARINA

Stina.

STINA

Just do it.

CARINA

Anna Nygren

I'm sorry.
Forgive me.

STINA
Well.
Light my fire.

CARINA
Burn, baby.
Burn.

STINA
Come here.

*Stina pulls Carina down onto the ground.
They lie next to each other.
Stina takes Carina's hand and puts it over her heart.*

STINA
You feel it.

CARINA
Yes.

The sound of a heartbeat.

MARIELLE (*offstage*)
When the fields burned. Back when horses were wild.
Then they would run straight through the fire.
The fire was the limit.
They would run through it and out on the other side.
Where the fire had already burned, it wouldn't burn again.
My wild heart is pounding.
You might call it love.
Everyone loves me.
That's what fuels the bad in me.
I just happen, something inside me just makes it happen.
I can't be forgiven anymore.
I just give and take.
Freedom.
When the fields are burning.
You run straight through the fire.
You come out on the other side.
You sing.

Anna Nygren

You let your heart pound.
We breathe with one and the same lung.
This is the fire.
Feel the heat.
Stay close.
When it burns.
The heart.

Heartbeat.

The heartbeat becomes music: Robyn's "Indestructible".

Dance, like caresses, like animals, like freedom.