

LOW

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The sun beams down on soft sand. Waves hush as they spill back and forth. It's beautiful. But this image contains an anomaly.

AINE, a woman in her forties, sits on an office chair, hands in lap, staring out to sea.

Behind her a DOOR stands alone in the sand. She looks at the world, eyes steady. She feels at peace.

The door SWINGS OPEN, and a MAN ENTERS, circling around and in front of Aine.

MAN

Sorry for the wait.

TITLES FLASH FOR JUST A SECOND.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

We are in a shiny, modern work office; bright and airy, fancy computer, a steel desk plate emblazoned EDITOR.

The man, MCKINLEY, sits at his desk, opposite Aine. Behind Aine through the GLASS PARTITION, we see BUSY, CHATTY WORKERS.

McKinley holds a half eaten BACON BUTTY. Aine is no longer peaceful. HER EYES look down at the desk, at the walls, anywhere but at the figure looking at her.

AINE

Fine.

MCKINLEY

No, no, I don't want to keep you.  
Ten minute queue for a roll, mad,  
isn't it?

Aine has no retort. McKinley suddenly notices his paperwork neatly piled besides his computer. He frowns - not how he left it.

AINE

Sorry. Was that rude? I don't like clutter, other people seem okay with it.

MCKINLEY

No, not at all, I mean, thanks, I guess... so how are you Aine, you good?

AINE

So I requested a chance to chat.

MCKINLEY

Yep, here we are. What can I do for you?

AINE

I want to present my argument for working as a columnist.

MCKINLEY

Well, I wouldn't assume an argument was necessary but okay, shoot.

AINE

I think it would better play to my strengths than my existing function here.

MCKINLEY

You're a very good reporter, Aine, I have no prob--

AINE

In my opinion I'm the best writer you employ, I have good sense of structure, an excellent vocabulary.

MCKINLEY

You're very good--

AINE

If I wrote as your columnist I could continue to provide this value while negating my weak-sorry, my less developed strengths.

MCKINLEY

Okay... well, here's my view. Columnists are, as you say, different from straight up reporters. They don't simply recount the facts of a story - a column... is your opinions.

AINE

Yes.

MCKINLEY

Well, the thing is, your opinions. You tend to present them rather... bluntly. You don't really... judge how they might affect oth--

McKinley notices that AINE is not paying full attention. She is playing with a LOOSE THREAD on her jumper.

AINE

Can I have some scissors please?

He slides his chair back, scanning his desk.

AINE (CONT'D)

Top left drawer.

McKinley looks at her, but she is still focused on the damn thread. He hands her the scissors.

The DOOR OPENS again. HANNAH, early thirties, pops her head in.

HANNAH

Oh, sorry.

MCKINLEY

Come in Hannah, you don't mind do you Aine?

Aine holds up the thread up by her thumb and forefinger.

AINE

Do you have a bin?

MCKINLEY

It's fine, just leave it on the desk.

Aine looks around the room for a bin.

MCKINLEY (CONT'D)

(to Hannah)

Something wrong?

HANNAH

They said no.

AINE

Who?

McKinley puts his scissors back in the drawer, slapping it shut in exasperation.

MCKINLEY

The orphanage.

A phone buzzes. Aine takes it out of her pocket. The name LEWIS has popped up. Aine puts it back in her pocket, where it rings out.

HANNAH

They don't want any coverage, no attention at all. Hardly surprising considering the circumstances.

Aine plays with the thread, wrapping it round her finger. We see the white lines of OLD SCARS spiraling up her LEFT HAND to her wrist. They look like bite marks.

AINE

I'll talk to them.

MCKINLEY

(worried)

No, no that's fine, Aine do *not* call the orphanage.

AINE

I'm not calling them, I'm going there tomorrow.

McKinley and Aine look at her.

HANNAH

How'd you sweet talk them into allowing that?

AINE

Sweet talk... It's extra-curricular. Not work stuff.

HANNAH

Oh, wow, god listen Aine, if you could put in a good word, say we're not looking to fuck them over-

AINE

Yep. Fine.

HANNAH

That's great! Thank you, this is a big help, I owe you. If you ever need a favour, help with an article--

AINE

Nah. I mean no, that's fine thanks.

Hannah looks at her, affronted. McKinley mimes a "what can you do" gesture at Hannah as Aine straightens out her thread on the desk.

HANNAH

Right. Thanks again.

Hannah leaves.

MCKINLEY

Aine that was--

AINE

I won't have to be here.

MCKINLEY

Sorry?

AINE

Writing opinion pieces wouldn't require the same resources as a reporter. I wouldn't have to conduct interviews, I wouldn't deal with people generally. It would ease the strain on office resources.

MCKINLEY

Right but, as I say--

AINE

I could work from home.

At the glass window behind Aine, Hannah mimes a gun in her mouth at McKinley, and pulls the trigger.

MCKINLEY

Look... I won't make any promises... a trial column?

AINE

Okay.

MCKINLEY

Great, so if you can have something here by Friday?

AINE

That's too soon, I can have it by Monday.

MCKINLEY

Aine, come on, you can't dictate--

AINE

I want to write about my mother. That's why I'm going, tomorrow. It's where she grew up. I need time to learn about her.

MCKINLEY

You never said.

AINE

It wasn't relevant

MCKINLEY

You're a strange one... Monday.

Aine gets up and extends her hand. A brief handshake. Aine tries to smile. It looks like she's out of practice. Her eyes remain downcast.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

A sleepy Scottish town in late Autumn. That means if the sun isn't hiding behind a wall of gray clouds, it's already gone again. Right now its just gray. A few people trudge grimly about their day.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A BLUE CAR trundles along the road leading out of town.

EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - DAY

A small two floor cottage stands alone in the countryside. It's quite a nice cottage; DORMER WINDOWS adorn the roof, the sea lies in the distance.

In the driveway is a DIRTY WHITE CAR. A tall man strides back and forth outside it. Waiting.

INT. AINE'S CAR - DAY

Aine sits at the wheel as the cold country view slides by her window. An audiobook plays in the speaker: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Alfred Adler, the famous Viennese psychologist, wrote a book entitled *What Life Should Mean To You*. In that book he says: "It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from such individuals that all human failures spring." You may read scores of erudite tomes on psychology without--

She approaches her home.

Having noticed the guest in her driveway, turns the audiobook off and parks at the side of the road.

Her HANDS tighten around the steering wheel.

LEWIS, mid-forties, lopes her way. Preparing herself, Aine lowers her window.

LEWIS

Why don't you answer your phone?

Aine gets out and follows him around her car away from the house.



EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - DAY

AINE

(beat)

How are you?

LEWIS

Not good. I've had it. I'm really done.

AINE

What d'you mean?

Lewis jerks his head toward the house. Aine follows his gaze.

In the back seat of the white car SONNY, thirteen, sits very still, looking down at his PUFFY ORANGE JACKET. A frown seems etched into his face.

LEWIS

He's fucking worse and worse, every day is a fucking new bizarre fucking ordeal. He's in trouble at school or answering back, pranging out. He doesn't sleep. Ever. I come down at three in the morning for a smoke or a piss and he's still there, it's messing with him. It's fucking messing with me anyway, she's snapped, she's said she's moving out.

AINE

Um, Tonya?

LEWIS

Ton- no, fuck no, Marley, it's... it's Marley now.

Aine looks back at the car. Sonny has not moved.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Listen, she sounds like she means it and I can't - I love her so much, I can't lose her. I need you to actually be a mother for once, at least till I sort this out.

AINE

I mean... there's the custody deal.

LEWIS

Don't worry about that it's fine, I've spoken to the school too so they have the details.

AINE

Got it all planned out.

LEWIS

Oh yeah great, fuck does that mean? Have I tricked you into seeing your son, have I inconvenienced you? Christ Aine, thirteen fucking years, the exact same response to every tiny--

AINE

Okay, stop. Just don't, don't shout. Get him, get his bags. Then get out of my driveway please. When you're ready to take him email me.

LEWIS

I'll call you shall I? Like a normal person?

Lewis turns his back on Aine and walks back to his car. Aine is visibly shaken by the reunion.

EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The white car screeches off. Mother and son stand in the driveway, a few small bags between them, unsure how to proceed.

Eventually Aine thinks to pick up one of the bags and turns to the house. After a moment Sonny follows suit. Aine pulls a heavy ring of keys from her pocket, attached to a FUZZY YELLOW KEYRING.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Aine leads Sonny up the stairs to the narrow hallway.

AINE  
Door on the left.

Sonny walks up and puts his hand on the door.

AINE (CONT'D)  
Oh, wait.

She moves past him, keys in hand. She selects the correct key first time.

INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

Aine's guest room consists of a three quarter bed frame and mattress, a chest of drawers by the door and a wardrobe at the far wall. There are no lamps, decorations or bedding. The roof slopes around the window.

Aine and Sonny look around. Their eyes haven't locked once.

AINE  
I have spare sheets in my room, I think.

SONNY  
Okay.

AINE  
I don't really host a lot. Was going to turn this into a study or something.

SONNY  
Sorry.

AINE  
No, no I wasn't saying... like that.

Sonny plonks a bag on the bed, unzips it.

AINE (CONT'D)  
Want help unpacking?

SONNY  
I'm fine.

But Aine is already unzipping the big hold-all. She pulls out a SKETCHPAD. Before she realizes what it is Sonny snatches it out of her hand.

AINE

(beat)

You like drawing?

(he nods)

You good?

SONNY

Yes, very.

He chucks it in his schoolbag with a THUD.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sonny and Aine have dinner on the couch in the centre of the room. To the right by the widow is a desk LADEN WITH PAPERWORK and a laptop.

Sonny looks at his plain chicken, brown rice and avocado.

SONNY

You don't watch TV.

AINE

Nope.

Aine finishes her plate, and exits. We hear RUNNING WATER as she washes up. Sonny shifts his food around the plate without eating it.

Aine returns and sits at her desk with her back to Sonny, sifting through her notes. Sonny's CLINKING CUTLERY breaks her concentration. Her frustration rises.

AINE

Come here.

Sonny trudges over, holding his plate.

AINE (CONT'D)

This is my work.

On top of the pile of paper, bound by a TANGLE OF PAPERCLIPS, we see a printout of a FAMILY TREE.

SONNY

What is it?

AINE

It's where you come from. I'm putting together our family tree for the paper.

SONNY

Does the paper care?

AINE

Well it's for a column, it's different from news, it's more personal.

SONNY

Where are all the names?

AINE

I didn't know them, but I'm going to find out about your grandmother tomorrow. I'm going to the orphanage where she was raised.

SONNY

That's your job?

AINE

Yeah. I mean, if they like what I write they'll ask me to write more. They usually like what I write.

SONNY

Why did she grow up in an orphanage?

AINE

What?

SONNY

Did her parents, like, die? Or did they just not want her?

AINE

Dunno.

SONNY

Have you got a key for every room?

AINE

Yes. They came with the house. I've never needed to use that one before so--

SONNY

Do you have a spare set? In case  
I need it?

AINE

Why would you need it? No the  
spare set stays in my car.

SONNY

I'm not hungry.

Aine hides a sigh as she takes his plate from him.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Aine dumps the untouched food. She washes and dries the  
plate.

As she returns it to the cupboard, Aine hears FEET THUDDING  
up the stairs followed by a DOOR CLOSING. She tries to stay  
composed, but can't help shaking her head.

She reaches into a smaller cupboard and pulls out a near-  
empty whiskey bottle. She pours the final drops into a glass.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aine returns, takes a sip of the whiskey, rests her head  
against the glass.

As she lowers it, she sees her PAPERS STREWN across the  
floor.

AINE

What the f...

Aine gets on her hands and knees, and starts collecting the  
loose pieces that have slid beneath her desk. She is visibly  
frustrated at the mess.

She neatens the pile in her hands and starts getting to her  
feet when - BANG! She smacks her head on the underside of the  
desk.

Doubled over, rubbing her head, a moaning noise bubbles up,  
turning into a broken scream. The final straw - Aine smacks  
the desk with her left hand, and immediately regrets it.



INT. SONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

In an uncanny parallel, Sonny stares at his reflection in the dark window, his head also resting against the glass.

THE FLOOR SQUEAKS.

Sonny turns around in time to see two small shadows at his door - Aine's feet. She is standing outside his door.

After a moment they pass by.

INT. AINE'S CAR - DAY

The next morning.

Aine's hands once more on the steering wheel. Her left hand has great PURPLE BLOTCHES across it. Sonny stares at it from the passenger seat.

AINE

You look dreadful. Get enough sleep?

SONNY

Fine.

AINE

I heard footsteps quite late.

SONNY

I'm a night owl.

AINE

Well, school night. When the sun's down you should be asleep, when it's up you should be awake, it's better for you.

SONNY

How did you hear footsteps then? (beat) Did you know that in the winter and autumn, like now, Scotland actually gets less sunlight than Iceland?

AINE

Yes, I knew that already.

Aine glances across and sees Sonny squeezing his hands and twisting his fingers around each other.



AINE (CONT'D)

Why do you do that?

Sonny shrugs.

Aine slows the car, prompting Sonny to look out the window - no school in sight.

                          AINE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna drop you here okay?  
It's an easier turn for the  
orphanage.

Sonny looks at her but says nothing. He grabs his bag and leaves. He closes the door with more force than required.

As Aine pulls away, she sees Sonny trotting down the road, shoulders hunched. Before she turns off the road, a small GROUP OF KIDS holler at Sonny, trying to catch up with him.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Aine moves through the hills. She is a ways from home. In the distance is a large old COUNTRY ESTATE, a building from a bygone era. It has seen better days.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

BLACKNESS.

The sounds of the outside world are muffled and melted. Except one. One is clear, crisp, yet unsettling.

                          VOICE (O.S.)

Sonny... Sonny... SONNY.

Sonny's eyes snap open. He jolts upright at his desk in the second last row. The force of his jolt causes his chair to squeak on the floor. The teacher turns to look for the noise. It was not her calling his name as he'd assumed.

                          TEACHER

Are we alright Sonny?

Suddenly Sonny sees the surrounding DESKS HAVE CHANGED. All other desks and students have been turned to face him. A circle with him at the centre. He averts his eyes.

                          SONNY

Uh-huh.

The teacher turns back to her smartboard. SNICKERING all around. The sound seems to go on too long.

The desks are BACK TO NORMAL. An exhausted Sonny tries to focus.

TEACHER

Oscillating currents produced by tides are called tidal streams. When the tidal current stops we call this slack water.

Sonny's eyes drift. He finds himself staring at the back of the girl's head in front of him. It belongs to ORLA.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

The tide then reverses direction, this is the tide turning. Slack water usually occurs near high water and low water...

Sonny sketches Orla's hair in the SKETCHBOOK he's concealed under his jotter. His watch reads 9.40am.

He glances around to make sure no one's looking.

He looks to his right, at his NEIGHBOUR: and notices something is amiss behind her cascading hair. But he stares slightly too long...

The neighbour's head SLOWLY TURNS. Her face is hidden behind a grotesques MASK, made of dark, dead, blue skin. The only holes in the visage are where the eyes should be - but behind them is only darkness.

Sonny turns away, eyes wide, disbelieving, terrified. He stares down at his desk, too frightened to look again.

After a moment, he notices something else. Something... moving beneath his school jumper. HANDS. Rubbing on his chest.

He spins around in his seat - but all that's there is another boy, LIAM, who appears to be doing his work while his friends to either side giggle.

SONNY

Fuck off...

LIAM

Wit'd you say?

Sonny faces forward again - and finds Orla looking at him. He immediately looks down.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Little cunt.

Sonny squeezes his hands again.

When he looks back up to check Orla's turned round, a PUPIL three rows down on the left leans his way...

The MASK again!

All Sonny can think to do is look away.

When he looks back the mask is gone - the pupil is picking up his dropped pen.

He RUBS HIS EYES.

When he lowers them his watch reads 10.02am. The other kids are all standing up and moving out.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Sonny leaves the classroom and walks through the crowd, trying his best to look invisible.

Up ahead he spots Liam and his friends. They are looking his way. And they're smiling.

EXT. ORPHANAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

Aine walks up the long path to the estate. It is flanked by large squares of grass. TWO NUNS stroll across one side. On the other a GANG OF KIDS chase a football. Some distance from them, a SMALL GIRL stands looking at Aine. Aine stares back as she approaches the building.

INT. ORPHANAGE FOYER - DAY

The building is far from homely. The walls are PALE GREEN. Every movement ECHOES LOUDLY.

A YOUNG NUN approaches Aine. She wears modern conservative clothes along with her modest habit.

NUN

Mrs Easter?

AINE

Miss. Sister Charlotte.

Another abrupt handshake.

NUN

Yes we spoke on the phone, lovely  
to meet you. Would you like to  
come this way?

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The two women walk through the equally unwelcoming hallway.  
Aine takes in her surroundings.

The place is quietly bustling. Other nuns flit to and fro,  
often with clipboards in hand. Some carry boxes, some are  
accompanied by children.

CHARLOTTE

Forgive me - you said it was Miss  
Easter.

AINE

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

It's just... on the phone  
yesterday you said you were  
dropping off your son.

AINE

That's right.

CHARLOTTE

I see.

They come to a door, beside which one nun is talking to a  
woman in a suit.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(whispered)

She's from the council.  
Concerning relocating the  
children. Would you please come  
in?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

They sit either side of a small messy desk. The room is cramped.

CHARLOTTE

I just find it so sad. Though it is a perfect illustration of the times. The rejection of God where He is most needed.

AINE

What?

CHARLOTTE

The care of children, the most vulnerable among us. It is not the job of politicians.

AINE

More to do with the abuse allegations than rejecting God I think.

CHARLOTTE

Forgive me... are you a journalist?

AINE

No. I have a... friend in journalism though, she was refused access to this place.

CHARLOTTE

I assure you it isn't personal, we aren't giving anyone any permission to cover the...

AINE

Closure.

CHARLOTTE

Transition.

Aine shrugs. She tried.

AINE

So my mother.

Charlotte pulls out the drawer of a stuffed filing cabinet. After some searching she removes a file.

CHARLOTTE

Here we are. Brought here in 1964, no birth certificate which makes confirming her age tricky but she was essentially a newborn. Removed from an impoverished home following the death of her mother, the name Breen we gave her ourselves. Stayed here until she was sixteen--

AINE

Sixteen.

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

AINE

Not eighteen?

CHARLOTTE

It is as stated in the information here. And upon reaching sixteen she left. After that we do not keep further records, that's all I have.

AINE

You don't keep in touch with your children, you don't know where she went afterwards?

CHARLOTTE

That's all I have, Miss Easter, as stated.

AINE

This doesn't really help me. I mean all you've told me is she was here and then she wasn't. You see I'm trying to find out why I myself had foster parents, I never knew Breen.

CHARLOTTE

I'm afraid Breen's time here ended well before my own began. I'm sorry you don't find this useful. But I really do have a lot to attend to so... come back anytime.

With that, Charlotte gets up and holds the door open. Aine however is still looking at the file in her hand, frowning. Charlotte leaves without her.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Aine closes the office door behind her, and looks up and down the corridor, unsure which way she had come.

The corridor is now empty, and UNCANNILY LONG, both ends SHROUDED IN PALE FOG.

INT. SECOND CORRIDOR - DAY

Aine looks in every door she passes, totally lost.

The final door is already open. Inside Aine sees someone sitting alone.

INT. CONSERVATORY - DAY

She walks into a glass room quite different from the rest. Natural light pours in, albeit a cold gray light.

At the far end a VERY OLD NUN sits in a chair facing out towards the grounds. Unlike the other nuns, her habit is of the old style - long and black, all fire and brimstone.

Aine approaches. Reaching the nun, Aine finds her staring blankly into nothingness, her eyes glazed and red.

AINE

Excuse me? I'm a bit lost.

Nothing. Aine gingerly pats the old woman's shoulder - she blinks and seems to wake up with a SHUDDER, spooking Aine.

She composes herself, unlike the nun, who brings her hands to her face, exhausted.

AINE (CONT'D)

Can you tell me the way out?

Only then does Aine notice the glass door leading outside.

AINE (CONT'D)

Sorry. I didn't mean to disturb you.

The nun lowers her hands to look at Aine. Her expression becomes one of shock and terror.

NUN

Breen.

It's Aine's turn to be shocked.

AINE

I'm her daughter.

The nun stands with great effort, and makes her way to the corridor door.

NUN

I pray the apple managed to roll  
far from the tree.

Before she can respond, Aine's phone BUZZES. She turns away from the nun to answer it.

MAN (V.O.)

Miss Easter, this is Mr Crane  
your son's headmaster.

INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Aine and Sonny sit opposite the HEADMASTER.

On the back wall hangs a CHART illustrating different facial expressions for kids entitled 'HOW I FEEL'.

CRANE

This is not the first incident.

AINE

He was provoked. That's clear.

CRANE

We cannot treat words and actions  
equivocally.

AINE

So provocation is fine, just  
don't touch?



CRANE

He could have seriously hurt the other boy. I'm sorry but a suspension is unavoidable. The remainder of the week at least. We can review the situation from there.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Sonny and Aine walk away from the office. Behind them, a woman gets out from her seat outside Crane's office.

LIAM'S MUM

Call yourself a mother? You're both mental! Fucking mental!

Sonny glances at his mum, who looks straight ahead. As they leave, we see the woman standing beside a seated Liam, who is nursing his face.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Aine marches across the deserted concrete square to the exit. Sonny does not attempt to keep up.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Aine gets to her car. She fumbles in her bag for her keys with her bruised hand, dropping them as she pulls them out.

On the opposite pavement, MARIA, sixty, is walking her dog, HOOP. She spots Aine standing up behind her car.

MARIA

Aine?

Aine freezes halfway up, considering not answering.

AINE

Hi.

MARIA

How are you?

AINE

Quite busy, how are you?

MARIA

Can't complain. Just taking this one down to the beach, only place he can do his business without a neighbour whining at me. As if I was going to just leave it there.

AINE

Uh-huh.

Aine unlocks the car as Sonny rounds the corner. Aine motions him to speed up. Maria looks at Sonny.

MARIA

I was wondering what you were doing here, I'd heard you lived further out now.

Aine waves goodbye as she gets in. The car zooms off.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door opens and mother and son enter. Sonny dumps his schoolbag and walks straight up the stairs.

AINE

Where are you going?

SONNY

Changing.

AINE

Changing?

SONNY

(shrugs)

Won't need these for a bit.

AINE

I'm doing dinner soon, I'm hungry.

Sonny doesn't miss a step.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

They sit at opposite ends of the small table with their meals. Sonny's eyes glued to his phone. Aine delicately transfers a small piece of meat from the plate to her mouth, and chews while she stares at her son.

AINE

Rude to text at the table.

SONNY

On Facebook.

AINE

Oh in that case... you going to text your dad your news. Might as well, you know, if you're going to continue to be rude.

SONNY

Why can't you?

AINE

You seem very okay with what happened today. Even though... limits your future choices somewhat. Little boys with suspension on record struggle when it comes to placements.

(Sonny shrugs)

You're fine, you're cool with that are you.

SONNY

I mean, statistically it wasn't looking good for me anyway. Kids from broken homes tend to be less successful.

AINE

Put your phone down and eat your food.

SONNY

I'm not eating this shit.

Aine smashes a fist down on the table.

AINE

DON'T EVER TALK TO ME LIKE THAT AGAIN NOW SHUT UP AND EAT!

Aine's ferocity makes Sonny jump. She has his attention now.

AINE (CONT'D)

You buy a house, you can buy the food. I won't hold my breath though. Owning a home is easier with a graduate job. Not for you though, right, a sad little boy from a broken home?

Sonny slides his plate away and leaves, and soon his feet thump up the stairs. Aine sits down and eats.

SONNY (O.S.)

Bitch!

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Sonny reaches the landing, PANTING, but not from the stairs. He marches to his door.

INT. SONNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He slams his door shut and SLIDES THE CHEST OF DRAWERS across it. It's heavy. When he's done, he vents frustration further by PUNCHING IT, KICKING IT, a LOW SCREAM bursting his lungs. Coming to a stop, he rests his head on the chest, shoulders heaving. He stays there until his breathing slows.

SILENCE.

Sonny pushes himself up, sniffing and walks to his unmade bed. He flops backwards onto it--

LIMBS BURST from underneath his duvet and wrap around Sonny. Scabbed, dirty, dark blue limbs.

Before he can react he is pinned, one skinny rotting arm wrapped around his neck, the other glistening, grubby hand sealing his mouth shut; long nails dig into his face.

Sonny's eyes bulge.

As he struggles he pulls at the duvet. The masked face of THE BLUE GIRL appears at his side.

Her jet black hair hangs limply around her horrifying visage. Bloodshot eyes hide beneath dead, peeling blue flesh. One pupil is huge like a kittens, the other no more than a dot. Pale lips are haphazardly sewn together with thin twisted pieces of steel wire. One yellow tooth is visible through a gap, through which can be heard her heavy breathing.

The Blue Girl stares at Sonny's dying face, held over the edge of the bed. Blood trickles to the carpet. Sonny's eyes scream as she moves closer...

KNOCK KNOCK.

INT. SONNY'S ROOM - DAY

Sonny wakes up in bed.

Morning sun pours into his silent room. There's no sign of her.

*He feels his face and finds no marks. He bends to look at his carpet, and finds no bloodstains.*

Another knock on the door followed by a RATTLING of the doorknob.

He moves the chest away and opens the door to find Aine.

AINE

Did you block the door to sleep in?

SONNY

What? What time is it?

AINE

It's midday Sonny.

SONNY

Sorry I... I had a dream, I didn't sleep well.

AINE

You slept plenty. Downstairs. Or shall I make your breakfast?

Sonny heads out, leaving Aine to look around his room.

She looks at the chest. It's not where she'd left it.

After sliding it into its proper place, she looks around. In a short time Sonny has made an impressive mess.

Aine pulls a face as she breathes in; it stinks, as only a teenage boy's bedroom can. She opens the window wide.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Walking down the stairs, Aine sees the back of Sonny's head at the couch.

AINE

So that we're on the same page,  
let me tell you that you are not  
on holiday. You're not at school  
but you are not going to waste  
your day and by extension mine.

Sonny doesn't speak. He doesn't move.

Frowning, Aine walks around the couch... to find Sonny sleeping, a bowl of cereal in his lap, a trail of milk dribbling from his chin.

She takes the bowl and rattles the spoon off the side - the noise shoots right through Sonny.

SONNY

Why'd you do that? I'm tired!

AINE

You're tired because you were up  
all night doing God knows what.  
You don't have any structure.  
Your behaviour is symptomatic.

SONNY

I don't know what that means.

AINE

(proffers bowl)  
You done with this?

SONNY

Yeah. Can we get some Crunchy Nut  
or something?

AINE

Go get dressed and we'll talk.  
I've got a job for you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Aine at her desk. Sony comes down in his orange jacket. Aine spins in her chair, holding a piece of paper. She hands it to Sonny; on it is a hastily drawn map with an X marked SHOP.

AINE

There's a list on the other side.  
For dinner. Walk will do you  
good.

                  SONNY

Why do you live so far from town?

                  AINE

Here.

Aine hands him £20 and turns to face her computer.

                  AINE (CONT'D)

The sooner you start the sooner  
your back.

                  SONNY

Supermarket's closer, I'll go  
there.

Aine spins again, faster. She flips the map over and points  
to the unseen bottom list item.

                  AINE

The supermarket ID's kids.

                  SONNY

You know Google has maps?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny's head bobs past the window and out to the road.

Aine makes sure he's out of sight before taking out her  
phone. Her CONTACT LIST contains three names - MARIA, LEWIS  
and WORK. After some hesitation, she chooses the second one.

Holding it to her ear, staring ahead blankly, she hears two  
rings before changing her mind.

                  AINE

Fuck it.

Aine opens her email, and types:

SUSPENDED. NEXT WEEK AT LEAST. THINK HE'D BE BETTER OFF BACK  
HOME - GET BACK TO ME. AINE.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Sonny walks down the street approaching the start of town.

His eyelids flicker as he struggles to keep them open. A man in the distance is walking his way.

VOICE (V.O.)

Sonny.

He stops in his tracks. Shaking his head, he resumes.

The sounds of a CROWD OF PEOPLE start to bubble up.

As soon as Sonny scans the road for a source, the sound disappears. The lone man passes him with a gentle countryside smile, which Sonny does not return.

Just before he's out of Sonny's periphery, the smile vanishes; the FACE STAYS LOCKED on Sonny.

INT. CORNERSHOP - DAY

A BELL at the door TINKLES

An aisle full of garishly packaged junk food.

Sonny stares, face contorted with fatigue, a state of stupefied reverie.

A YOUNG MAN excuses himself as he tries to move past Sonny. It seems to snap him out of a trance. He looks around, as if confused how he got here.

SHOPWORKER (O.S.)

Oi. Oi, mate.

Sonny turns around, BRUSHING against the shelved products..

Suddenly the AISLE HAS NARROWED; the products surround Sonny, every movement he makes creates unnecessary, embarrassing noise. He is the center of someone's attention, and he isn't used to it.

The young lanky SHOPWORKER stands at the end of the aisle, which to Sonny seems a long way away from his own claustrophobic location. Sonny is visibly anxious.



SHOPWORKER

Fifteen minutes. You've not even picked anything up. I'm just warning you, the camera will pick it up if you're trying anything fly.

SONNY

Sorry.

Flustered, he grabs the first thing in front of him - two microwave meals.

INT. CORNERSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

At the checkout. The young man is being served, Sonny stands behind him.

SHOPWORKER

That's you, cheers.

The young man moves aside, packing his shopping into a bag, and Sonny moves forward, eyes down as always.

SHOPWORKER (CONT'D)

Need a bag?

SONNY

(beat)

Can I have some whiskey too please.

SHOPWORKER

What?

Sonny starts ringing his hands.

SONNY

Sorry.

SHOPWORKER

Listen pal, God loves a trier but give me some credit eh?

The young man leaves, the shopworker's eyes on his back.

SONNY

I'm sorry.

Sonny takes the meals in his hands when BANG-

A familiar rotten blue hand keeps him from moving them. He steps back with a yell.

SHOPWORKER

It's alright, man, calm your  
tits. Whiskey was it?

The hand belonged to the shopworker, who now jovially grabs a bottle from the shelf behind the counter. He places it down and Sonny, recovered, hands him the money.

SONNY

Mind your surroundings next time  
eh? Not trying to get the sack  
here. Have a fun night.

Sonny takes his change and walks out. Something just out of sight seems to follow him outside...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

As Sonny gets further away from the shop, we see a FIGURE standing at the shop door looking at him, though too far away to make out the face...

Sonny turns to have a look himself...

Nothing.

He turns back-

And there *she* is. The Blue Girl stands at the end of the road. Sonny gasps for air, panicking.

He bolts across the road, turns a corner, and flies through the door of a LITTLE ARCADE.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A blank white on the COMPUTER SCREEN.

Aine eyeballs her monitor, a pen poking out of her mouth. The CURSOR flashes mockingly back at her.

She types.

A headline - MY FIRST COLUMN. She gets rid of it and tries again.

TRIAL...

MY THOUGHTS...

IN MY OWN WORDS...

FAMILY...

Under the last one she starts to write...

She deletes whatever she put and replaces it with a single key - a QUESTION MARK.

She leans back.

Opening a new tab, she checks her INBOX. No new messages.

Defeated, she looks at her depressing pile of notes. On top lies her FAMILY TREE. Most of the branches are blank, save for the bottom four, which hold names and dates:

SONNY 30/9/07, AINE 17/10/80, LEWIS 9/4/78, BREEN.

Under the final name, Aine absently writes the year Sister Charlotte provided:

1964

Her eyes drift - then she stops, looks again.

She leaps to her feet, grabs her coat and her KEYS.

EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - DAY

Aine races halfway up the driveway before realizing something.

AINE

Shit.

She hastens back to an EMPTY PLANT POT by the front door, behind which she conceals the KEYS; the fuzzy yellow keyring pokes its head out in the corner.

She hastens into her car.

INT. AINE'S CAR - DAY

Aine is back on a familiar road, twisting through the countryside. Her audiobook plays cheerily.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Be a good listener. Encourage  
others to talk about themsel--

She cuts it off. She needs to think. To focus.

She is so focused that she doesn't register the TALL BLUE  
FIGURE staring at her from the SIDE OF THE ROAD. It quickly  
shrinks in the WING MIRROR, as Aine pushes on.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

A SHOOTER BLASTS A ZOMBIE TO SMITHEREENS.

BOY

Fuck you, fuck you!

Two YOUNG TEENAGERS, a boy and a girl, aim big plastic guns  
at the machine and spam the triggers, the air full of their  
CLICKING NOISES, CHEESY SOUND EFFECTS and GIGGLING.

A SECOND GIRL is buried in her phone at their side, not  
nearly as enamored with the game. All three are in school  
uniform.

BORED GIRL

This is shite. I might as well  
head back to school.

BOY

Fine, go. Waaay, you are DEAD.

The girl at the game, now revealed as Orla, loudly smacks her  
gun down on the machine in playful frustration.

ORLA

Fuck-this-shit-I'm-done!

A gawky member of staff rounds the corner.

ARCADE STAFF

Hey, hey! If you keep doing that  
you'll have to leave, you hear?

ORLA

I'm not gonna break it, fuck's  
sake!

She points the gun at the employee's crotch.

ORLA (CONT'D)

Oh my God, should I shoot him in the dick? Will you be angry if I shoot you in the willy?

Orla's friends guffaw. The guy retreats, shaking his head.

Smiling, Orla turns around - in time to see Sonny staggering in.

He clocks her and disappears behind a nearby machine.

We see Sonny crouched at the bottom of the game.

The BANGS, WHIZZES and RATTLES of the arcade ECHO around his panicked mind...

The dim lighting turns almost BLACK. His senses are overwhelmed...

He looks back at the DOOR through which he ran, then peers back to where he had seen his classmates - but they're not there.

He faces forward - where he comes face-to-knee with Orla.

ORLA (CONT'D)

Hi Sonny.

SONNY

...hi.

ORLA

How's suspension?

SONNY

Fine.

Orla extends her hand and helps Sonny to his feet. As he stands, the arcade returns to normal.

Orla's friends catch up to them.

ORLA

You know you could have come and said hello just now.

Sonny stares at the floor.

BORED GIRL

(pointing)

What's that?

Sonny follows her finger. She is pointing at Sonny's bag. The whiskey bottle pokes out the top.

BOY

Fucking hell, Sonny ye madman!

ORLA

You bought bev?

SONNY

Uh, yeah.

The trio murmur in surprised approval. Sonny's lips twitch in a sheepish grin.

INT. ARCADE - MOMENTS LATER

A three-pronged metal claw descends into the pile of prizes below. The kids excited shouts run over each other.

BOY

Come on ya dancer!

ORLA

Come on Sonny, come on!

It closes around a ludicrously large chocolate bar. After a second of doubt, it lifts the bar securely into the air.

BORED GIRL

He's got it! He's got it!

SONNY'S FACE is one of absolute concentration as he guides the claw over to the chute and calmly drops the bar. His new friends are besides themselves, laughing and cheering.

ORLA

I thought these things were rigged, how did you get so good?

SONNY

You just... there's YouTube videos, tell you how. Then you just practice. My dad used to always drop me off here when he took his girlfriend out.

Orla smiles while the other two exchange looks.

ORLA

Well, you're really good.

BORED GIRL

Lunch is over soon.

ORLA

We've gotta go, sorry.

Sonny takes the chocolate from the chute bin as Orla's friends start to head away.

SONNY

Do you want this?

ORLA

No, you won it, you should have it.

SONNY

I got it for you though.

ORLA

No keep it, don't be so nice, it's weird.

Sonny reacts to this last word. His face turns. Noticing, Orla reaches into her pocket.

ORLA (CONT'D)

Here.

She hands Sonny a small red plastic PEN with fuzzy hair at the end. Cheap tat.

ORLA (CONT'D)

I only won like five tickets, it's shite. But you can use it when you come back to school.

SONNY

Thanks.

ORLA

See you.

All three wave at him as they hurry off. Orla smiles before leaving.

Sonny stares after them, a funny grin on his face - until he looks down at the empty space where his bag had been.

Sonny weaves between the machines, the room once again DARKENING, save for the garish flashing of the machines and their obnoxious SOUND EFFECTS. He scans the ground for his stuff...

LIAM (O.S.)

Alright cunt?

Sonny looks up and sees Liam, smiling, sporting a black eye, and holding his bag just out of reach.

LIAM

This yours? This your maw's bevvv?

SONNY

Can I have it back please?

LIAM

Your maw likes a drink doesn't she?

SONNY

Can you give it to me please?

LIAM

Swap you.

Sonny hands over the chocolate. Out of the darkness two of Liam's CRONIES approach Sonny from behind. They gently take his arms in their hands. He does not resist.

Liam takes a step towards the trapped Sonny. It seems like they are the only four people in this dark world.

Liam SMACKS the chocolate across Sonny's face. Hard. The noise is like a CRACKED WHIP. Sonny makes no noise.

Liam does it again - THWACK!

Tears of pain and fear shine in Sonny's eyes.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Can't you even fucking look at me, mingo? Look at me - still think I got you suspended? Speak English? Fucking LOOK AT ME.

He grabs Sonny by the jaw, raises the bar for another strike...



ARCADE STAFF (O.S.)

Get off him! How old are you lot?

Liam and his friends drop everything and leg it, laughing.

The worker approaches Sonny, who has dropped to his knees.

ARCADE STAFF

You... good?

The LAUGHTER sounds as loud to Sonny as if it was all around him, continuing unnaturally long.

The worker bends down...

...wearing a MASK.

Sonny snatches his bag and, leaving the snapped chocolate, makes for the exit.

The worker is left to stare after him, puzzled - and of course, wearing no mask at all.

EXT. ORPHANAGE GROUNDS - DAY

Aine marches up through the grass at the side of the estate. She spots what she is looking for - the CONSERVATORY.

The OLD NUN is there again, staring out the far window.

She makes her way towards it - but her attention is broken by distant yells.

She looks across the grass to see a group of kids with the LONE GIRL from her last visit in the centre. They are all pointing and laughing at her as she looks at the ground.

Aine tears her eyes away - and finds the nun looking right at her.

INT. CONSERVATORY - DAY

Aine comes through and stands three or four feet from the seated older woman. A small bowl rests in her lap.

NUN

Welcome back dear.

Aine doesn't answer. She pulls a chair from the window to sit facing the nun.

AINE

Your colleague lied to me.

NUN

Not necessarily.

AINE

Her file claims Breen was born in 1964 and left when she was sixteen - 1980. That's when I was born. Why does your record not show that Breen was pregnant? Why was a pregnant teenager out in the world when it was within your power to look after her and her baby here until she turned eighteen?

NUN

Well. Dishonesty and ignorance are not synonymous.

AINE

You knew my mother. You can't claim ignorance.

NUN

So many years ago. Now I am very old. So old that they have to do this to my food so I can eat it.

She shows Aine her bowl - a nasty looking yellow mush.

NUN (CONT'D)

So that I can keep going. Apples today. Like you. A little apple that did roll far from the tree. You're cleverer than she was. But did you roll far enough?

AINE

What happened to Breen?

The nun offers her the bowl.

NUN

My arms are tired.

Aine takes the bowl and slightly repulsed, lifts the spoon to the nun's wrinkled, toothless mouth.

The WET SMACKING SOUND of mashed apple cuts right through Aine. The nun smiles grossly.

NUN (CONT'D)

You know I've seen hundreds of children come through these doors. The Lord's forgotten flock. My life's work has been protecting them.

AINE

Maybe they'll make you a saint.

NUN

Maybe. When I came here I was little more than a girl myself. Young, naive. I did not truly appreciate the purpose of this place. All we are, child, is a port in a storm. The children who begin life here - they are doomed from the start. That's how Breen arrived in this world. Some people are born broken. They are just... unfortunate.

The nun gestures for another mouthful. Aine reaches out...

A FLASHING IMAGE - Aine's hand in the wet mouth of the nun, mashed apple seeping out of the corners, dribbling over her.

Aine pulls her hand back, spoon in hand. The nun "chews".

NUN (CONT'D)

She was born in sin, you know. Parents died penniless, she was brought here. You're welcome, I'm sure. The queerest child I had ever cared for. No friends. Never. She would run from us and from the children at every opportunity.

AINE

She was one of them wasn't she?

NUN

One of what?

AINE

The allegations. Historical abuse. The reason you're getting closed down. Breen was one of the victims.

NUN

I do laugh when I read these accusations. Children are far crueler to each other than any adult could be.

AINE

If any were still alive they might contest that.

NUN

Not Breen.

AINE

These children were in your care.

NUN

No one like to admit it. How easy it is to hate the children one is responsible for. Whether you understand this I cannot say.

This shuts Aine up.

NUN (CONT'D)

She grew. And grew worse. As a teen Breen became volatile, violent even. She ran away, more than once, though always returning. On one occasion she was gone for long enough that we tried to give her room away. No child would stay there. She had scratched pictures... people into the walls. The children were terrified. Just as well, because one night she came back. And she was pregnant. And unmarried. Naturally this could not be ignored.

AINE

What?

NUN

She had sinned.

AINE

The pregnant sixteen year old?  
Did you find out how it happened?

NUN

It is of little significance.

AINE

I think it is of great  
significance, a lonely teenage  
runaway with no family suddenly  
becomes pregnant, and no one  
asked if she was raped?

NUN

It is of little significance.

AINE

Okay, I think I understand -  
Breen came back, pregnant, and  
the abuse naturally got worse,  
you had to "punish" her.  
The minute I was born you saw fit  
took her baby way from her.  
And then what - she killed  
herself?

NUN

We followed God. Again, you're  
welcome.

AINE

Fuck you, you crazy old bitch!

NUN

Old... yes. We are not living in  
my time anymore. There is little  
room in this age for God, for  
faith.  
But while humanity remains, there  
will be room for Hell. Your  
mother was proof of that.

AINE

What are you talking about?

NUN

Breen did not leave this world  
alone, dear.

AINE

(beat)

You're crazy.

Aine gets up. She places the bowl on her seat, out of reach of the nun, and makes to leave.

NUN

The night they found her, hanging in her bedroom... they found five other bodies.

Aine turns slowly.

NUN (CONT'D)

One was a friend of mine. The other four were Breen's age. She mutilated them, child.

AINE

You're lying.

NUN

No. I'm confessing. The diocese directed us to conceal the 'incident'. Even then there were journalists and atheists, if there's a difference, looking to damage the Church.

AINE

How could you hide something like that?

The nun looks out over the grounds once again.

NUN

Like I say... some people are unfortunate. Those poor children had no one. No one but us. They were a part of our hearts. They will always be a part of this place.

Aine looks out too, horrified, disgusted, at the unmarked graves, then back at the nun. Her ancient face is unreadable.

AINE

Why would you tell me this?

NUN

It is a different time. What more can they do now? Many secrets have now surfaced. They are taking our children away from us. Do what you want, tell who you want. I am old, and so very tired. I simply want one night's sleep.

Aine moves close to the old woman. For the first time, she looks someone straight in the eye.

AINE

You think telling me this will absolve you? It doesn't. I'm not going to the papers. However many years you have left, however many bowls of slop are yet to slide down your throat, live with the knowledge that I'm out there too. I know what you did. Me, alone. And I don't forgive you.

NUN

Well. We all have our demons. You didn't roll far enough, little apple. Your mad mother was doomed. So are you.

Aine tips her chair over, sending the bowl and its contents all over the floor.

She leaves. The nun stares after her, clutching her rosary.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

SUNSET. The days are growing short.

Aine's car trundles on.

INT. AINE'S CAR - DAY

The sun is low.

The car is silent. Aine drives numbly, mechanically. She has not shaken the feeling of the orphanage. She clenches the steering wheel far too tight.

SCREEEECH!

The car has ground to a halt.

Aine is buckled over, shaking, panting, overcome.

She is having a panic attack.

She LIFTS HER EYES to see her white knuckles still wrapped around the wheel.

The BRUISING on her left hand is darker than ever - but beyond it she can still make out the OLD SCARS.

NUN (V.O.)

"She had scratched pictures...  
people into the wall..."

Aine reaches her fingers to touch the scars. A second before reaching them, SOMETHING MOVES in her periphery.

Both hands slapped on the wheel, Aine lets out a hoarse scream; all of her anxiety and frustration forces its way past her carefully controlled exterior.

She sets off again.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

SUNSET

We are not far from THE COTTAGE

Sonny LOOKS AROUND as he had in the shop. Again he is not quite sure where he is or how he got there.

His face is badly swollen where Liam hit him.

He sits at the BOTTOM OF THE HEDGE along the roadside.

He looks left. He looks right. He stands.

His BAG hangs from one hand.

Seeing the cottage, he takes a step forward, then stops.

He raises his hand to his face. He looks back at the cottage - the LIGHTS have been left on.



EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Sonny shimmies up the PIPE to the roof by his open bedroom window.

INT. SONNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sonny clambers in the window head first, eventually hanging down in a handstand position. He drops the bag on the floor. The room is lit only by moonlight.

As he hangs upside down, his pockets start to empty - his change, the fuzzy pen and his phone slip out onto the carpet.

After a moment Sonny brings his feet in after him and gets to his feet.

A SMALL LIGHT appears on the floor as his phone BUZZES, making him jump.

He picks it up and looks at the screen.

It's a FRIEND REQUEST FROM ORLA.

Stunned, Sonny accepts.

A message immediately pops up:

HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR CHOCO XX

He smiles in the dark as he sits on the bed.

He scrolls through her profile - an endless display of popularity and happiness - before replying.

His reply is TWO PARAGRAPHS long before he sends it.

The ELLIPSIS SYMBOL of Orla typing a reply appears for a second - then vanishes. Sonny sits waiting for a moment, before losing heart.

He gets up and moves towards his door, sliding his phone screen-down onto the chest of drawers. He switches his LIGHT ON--

The Blue Girl is crouched on the chest.

She leaps at him, bringing him crashing to the floor.

She grabs him by the head, bringing her face close to his.

She tries to SCREAM through her sewn-up mouth; BLOOD trickles from the metal in her lips to splatter onto his terrified face. He screws his eyes shut.

BUZZ BUZZ!

Sonny's phone again. The noise distracts the Blue Girl enough for Sonny to throw her off him.

He scrambles to his feet and flings the door open; he runs out of his room--

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

--and straight into Aine's midriff.

AINE

Jesus, what are you doing?!

Sonny tries to get to the stairs but she grabs him by the wrist and spins him around so that Sonny is facing his bedroom door.

Aine sees his face. She tightens her grip on him, horror-struck.

AINE (CONT'D)

What's that? What happened to your face?

Sonny barely registers her questions - he is looking over her shoulder at his open doorway.

The room is empty.

Aine spins them around again, shining a better light on Sonny.

AINE (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to your face?!

SONNY

Nothing!

Sonny looks behind him - SOMETHING SHIFTS under his bed.

Aine pulls his face back to her.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You don't see...?

AINE

I see it, yeah! Who did it?

SONNY

What?

AINE

Your face, your bloody face! Tell me it wasn't that kid...

Sonny nods absently, his mind miles away. As he stares into nothingness, Aine's hands slide off him.

A SOB. Sonny looks up.

Aine sits at the foot of the wall, crying. This is a new image for Sonny. He doesn't know how to react.

AINE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

SONNY

...didn't do anything.

AINE

No. And I'm supposed to. It's my fault...

Sonny slides down the wall to join her.

After a moment, he pats her on the head.

SONNY

It's okay.

(beat)

I'm hungry.

Aine collects herself, and begins to stand.

AINE

Right.

SONNY

No that's not - I meant, like are you hungry too. I can make dinner.

AINE

Yeah?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A microwave DINGS.

A steaming pile of macaroni cheese is placed in front of Aine, who smiles wryly.

AINE

Don't remember putting this on my list.

Sonny pours a healthy portion of ketchup onto his own plate. As he does this he glances at Aine.

When he's done she takes the bottle and follows suit.

They eat quietly for a few moments.

SONNY

Most people don't like it.

(beat)

They act like they're grossed out.

AINE

Yeah. They don't get it so they act like it's bad.

A few more silent mouthfuls.

AINE (CONT'D)

Not much flavour without it in my opinion.

SONNY

Yeah.

(beat)

Not on scrambled eggs though.

AINE

Oh yeah, people how have ketchup and eggs, they're freaks.

They share a chuckle. Another first.

SONNY

Why did you cry.

AINE

A very, very long day.

SONNY

Never seen you cry.

AINE

Yeah well, adult cry too.

SONNY

I know, but you don't.

AINE

Oh. Am I really such an oddball?

Sonny shrugs.

SONNY

I was crying because I... felt...  
like I'd failed. To protect you.

Sonny frowns. He starts playing with his pasta.

AINE

What?

SONNY

I'm not, not a kid you know... I  
don't need protection.

AINE

Well I mean, you do, and  
technically you are a kid, you  
know? You're that kid.

SONNY

What kid?

AINE

There's always kids out there -  
that other kids look at  
different. It's fine, there's  
nothing wrong with that, it's  
just life.

Sonny lowers his fork.

SONNY

I'm not a victim you know.

Aine pauses, slightly impatient. She points her knife at  
Sonny's face

AINE

That says different. You're  
mac'n'cheese with ketchup Sonny.  
You need to be careful.

SONNY

Well... what about you? You're  
mac'n'cheese with ketchup. You're  
a forty year old woman, no  
friends, crying in the hall of  
your house where you live alone.

The familiar tension is well and truly back.

AINE

Listen - first of all let's not  
get too uppity about me not  
having any friends Mr Popular--

SONNY

I have friends.

AINE

Yeah? Well my advice to you would  
be not to get too attached. I  
don't care that I don't have  
friends, I don't have a use for  
them.

SONNY

Sure.

AINE

"Sure" - God, you think you know  
me? The marks other kids used to  
leave on me would make that on  
your face look like freckles. It  
taught me a lesson you're yet to  
learn and that's to get tough,  
FAST. That's why you need  
protecting. You think you have  
friends? Good - watch out for  
them. You think you might fall in  
love some day? That's for them,  
the rest of the world, it's not  
for you. Stay away from it. I  
tried it once and I got nothing  
to show for it.

SONNY

Nothing, yeah?

AINE

No that's right, I got fucking  
you. Aren't I lucky.

Silence. Sonny stares at his mum, shaking.

Then he FLINGS his plate against the wall, SHATTERING it and  
spraying pink macaroni everywhere; he stands up and makes to  
leave, but Aine jumps up after him.

AINE (CONT'D)

Don't you fucking dare--

But Sonny grabs her by the wrists and violently shoves her  
backwards - she crashes against the table.

She doesn't move as he walks away.

SONNY (O.S.)

I'm not tough?!

FOOTSTEPS ascending the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Sonny stops short of his bedroom door. He doesn't look  
inside.

SONNY

Only I can see you. So you're not  
there. You're not real. If you're  
not real, you can't hurt me...  
I'm not scared of you.

He braces himself and enters...

INT. SONNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It empty.

Sonny checks under the bed...

He checks in the wardrobe...

The top drawer...

Nothing.

As he closes the drawer his phone buzzes again.

The message is a SINGLE QUESTION MARK - Orla.

He opens the conversation to view the previous message:

MUM'S MEETING HER BOYFRIEND TONIGHT, HAVING FRIENDS OVER  
COMING? XX

Sonny's face lights up.

He wanders over to the WARDROBE MIRROR - as he looks at his bruised, tired reflection, he yawns loudly, before slapping himself awake.

He turns around, dazed, and spots the CARRIER BAG.

EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Sonny shimmies back down the pipe, wearing his schoolbag.

He jumps the last couple of feet and creeps around the corner.

He sees the KITCHEN LIGHT on. Ducking low, he steals away into the night.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pink macaroni slides down the cupboard doors.

Shattered shards of the plate lie scattered on the floor.

Aine surveys the scene from her chair.

INT. STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Aine looks up the stairs, considering whether to venture up. She thinks better of it.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The shards are carefully piled on the table. The ends are very sharp.

Aine runs kitchen roll under the tap and starts wiping down the pink mess.



EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Aine carefully carries the shards out the door and across to the wheelie bin by the wall.

She opens the bin lid.

FAINT NOISE: QUICK FOOTSTEPS.

Aine pauses with one hand on the open lid, the other balancing the broken plate.

The noise gets louder. Something is running her way.

Aine peers into the darkness, fear rising.

She drops all but one of the plate pieces, and holds it point down like a knife.

The footsteps get louder and louder, out there in the darkness...

THE BLUE MAN emerges from the shadows - a tall sinewy dark creature, in the shape of a man, sporting a broken lower jaw dangling from one side of his face, with the same dead blue skin as the Blue Girl.

He pounces at a screaming Aine, who is quick enough to slash at his horrible face with the shard.

He howls in pain. Aine ducks underneath him and runs out, away from the house, down the dark road.

She runs and runs.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Aine staggers to a near-stop, gasping for air. She turns around, walking backwards. We see the distant lights of home.

She turns around and keeps on running.

TOWN lies up ahead.

EXT. PROMENADE - NIGHT

A HOUSE lies not too far away facing the dark beach. Light shines out of several windows.

The sounds of the quiet ocean can be heard.

Sonny stands on the promenade, looking at the house with nervous excitement.

He checks a message on his phone:

WHERE ARE YOU??

He doesn't answer.

The nerves are getting the better of him - he squeezes his hands together, and touches his swollen face. He can't be seen like this.

He turns away. He can't do this. He moves off.

His phone buzzes again:

? XX

His thumb lingers on the kisses. He looks back at the warm inviting glow of the house.

EXT. ORLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

KNOCK KNOCK

Sonny's small fist wraps the door twice.

Controlling his breathing, he swings his bag around and, unzipping it, sticks a hand in ready to produce the bottle.

The DOOR OPENS...

A woman, mid-30s, stands in the entrance, dolled up, fixing her earrings.

Sonny's eyes drop to the floor.

ORLA'S MUM stands looking at the strange boy for a moment.

ORLA'S MUM

What?

SONNY

(beat)

Is Orla in... ma'am?

ORLA'S MUM

She went straight to her  
boyfriend's from school. And if  
she's not back in an hour she's  
in a lot of trouble.

Sonny looks ill. He slides his bag back across his shoulders.

His hands are going like never before.

Orla's mum takes out her ringing phone.

ORLA'S MUM (CONT'D)

You planning on waiting on the  
doorstep for her?

SONNY

Sorry for interrupting your  
evening.

Sonny starts to walk away. The light from inside the house  
disappears when the door is firmly shut.

In the new darkness, three or four bright dots of white light  
can be seen on the other side of the promenade. After a  
second they vanish beneath it.

Distant LAUGHTER.

Sonny speeds up, nearly jogging to get away from the scene.

He stops further along the promenade wall, and sits atop it.  
Streetlights illuminate the distant PIER.

He hugs himself in the cold night.

He removes the bottle from the bag and takes a sip.

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

A foot hangs out over the edge of the pier.

The black water ripples underneath.

Aine stares down at her foot. Both afraid and curious.

The wind picks up. Aine steps back, shivering. She ran out  
with out a jacket.

A small cry escapes her lips. She presses her bruised hand to  
her mouth, muffling the noise.

She looks down at the hand. At the scars.

FLASHBACK:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The corresponding hand of a TEENAGE AINE moves slowly across her bed.

BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

Grown up Aine's hand twitches in the light of the streetlamp.

FLASHBACK:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

SCREAMING.

The as-yet unbroken jaw of the Blue Man clenches as his teeth pierce the outstretched hand of the younger Aine.

She's in agony, terrified. BLOOD TRICKLES down her fingers.

She reaches across with her right hand and grabs something: a copy of THE DIVING BELL AND BUTTERFLY.

She smashes it into the side of the Blue Man's head, snapping his jaw and breaking free.

VOICE (V.O.)

Aine.

BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

Aine turns around.

Standing at the beginning of the pier is the Blue Man.

He doesn't run at her. He walks, slowly, calmly, his hand outstretched.

Aine takes a backwards step - and nearly falls into the water.

She turns back to face the water, in an almost dreamlike daze. She weighs up her options...

Long nightmarish fingers reach out to interlock with hers...

MARIA (O.S.)

Aine?

Aine spins around. She stands alone on the pier.

Maria and Hoop stand on the promenade.

MARIA

You okay?

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Sonny zigzags across the dark sand. The bottle, not far from empty, hangs limply in one hand.

He stops to raise the bottle to his lips.

After a small sip, most of which dribbling down his chin, he begins to spin on the spot as if doing the hammer throw - he flings the bottle towards the sea, the momentum of his spin landing him on his back.

He lies there, looking up at nothing. He turns onto his side-

The Blue Girl lies next to him.

Sonny doesn't even flinch. They just look at each other.

Sonny raises his hand to her face. He gently removes the metal attaching her mask to her head. He pulls the mask off.

Her face, though still blue and ghoulish, appears youthful. She could perhaps even have otherwise been pretty.

Next Sonny removes the metal from her sewn lips. He places each piece in the sand between them. She doesn't look away from him once.

SONNY

Now you can talk.

She doesn't.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I don't like to talk much. Or I... don't have anyone to talk to. I can't remember which came first. But people scare me now. Everything scares me. You're nothing special. So I don't care what you do to me. I'm just tired.

Tears roll down his cheeks.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Say something. Do something. Do something, I don't care. Hurt me. Kill me, I DON'T CARE! IT DOESN'T FUCKING MATTER!

Sonny cries long and loud. He turns away from the Blue Girl, curled up and bawling.

The Blue Girl reaches out...

She puts her arms around him and pulls him close.

They lie together in the sand. Sonny pulls her arm tight across him.

The Blue Girl raises a finger ever so gently to his chin, and lifts his face. She wants him to look at something.

They stare at Orla's dark house. Orla's mum is getting in her car. She drives away.

The Blue Girl's torn lips rest above Sonny's ear. They part slightly, and the sound of her breath whispers out.

The light GOES OFF.

INT. MARIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Aine looks around from a cushy seat in the middle of the cosy room. It is filled with homey touches: lots of photos of a family through the years, ornaments and paintings, plenty of comfy chairs. In the corner is a tall bookcase.

Maria pops her head through the doors.

MARIA

Tea?

AINE

Yes please.

MARIA

How'd you take it again?

AINE

(beat)

I'll do it, it's easier.

MARIA

I'll leave the sugar on the table there.

Maria sits facing Aine.

AINE

Your home is very different from mine.

MARIA

Not as posh I imagine, big fancy journalist.

AINE

All the chairs... you like having guests.

MARIA

Sometimes. Sometimes I like to be alone like everyone else. Curl up with a nice book. You still got that book I gave you?

AINE

Yeah.

After a silence, Maria hands Aine one of her pictures. A couple, around Aine's age, pose in a holiday scene with a happy infant.

MARIA

That's my granddaughter, can you believe it? You remember my--

AINE

Your son. Darryl.

Maria makes her way back out the door, breaking into laughter.

MARIA

Oh my goodness, I remember the pair of you getting in a right scrap with each other at school.

AINE

He bugged me.

MARIA (O.S.)

Forty years, not one wain caused bother like you Aine. They still tell stories about you to scare the new social workers. Should've got a medal with my pension but hey ho...

Aine looks at the photo for a moment before setting it down. Hoop wanders in and lies at her feet.

Maria returns with a tray carrying a steaming pot, milk jug and two mugs. She takes her tea back to her seat, leaving Aine to make her own.

AINE

Why do you think it was... that no one ever wanted me?

MARIA

You're mad, lots of parents wanted you. You would come back. You'd stay one night, maybe two, then find me and tell me your foster parents turned into monsters.

AINE

And what would you say?

MARIA

I'd say okay.

They sip their tea

AINE

So are you going to ask what I was doing at the pier?

MARIA

Not if you don't want to talk about it.



AINE

Go ahead.

MARIA

Why were you at the pier Aine?

Aine looks Maria in the eye.

AINE

The monsters are back.

Maria doesn't know how to react. She drinks her tea.

MARIA

Are they?

AINE

Yes. And... I think my mother saw them too.

MARIA

Your poor mother. They should've shut that awful place down a long time ago. This world has enough problems without getting God involved.

Maria leans in and addresses Aine seriously.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Aine. The monsters are only real if we allow them to be real. They thought you mother was a monster, for doing something they thought was evil, so she thought so too. You are not in danger.

Aine looks down, and only now realizes Maria is holding her hands. She doesn't move them.

AINE

Why did you keep trying with me?

Maria looks genuinely surprised, before shrugging.

MARIA

It was my job. And anyway, you look after kids. Period. End of discussion. No matter how hard you think it gets, it's harder for them. Or at least, treat it like it is. I'm not telling you anything you don't know.

AINE

What?

MARIA

I saw him, at the school. That was him wasn't it? Does he live with you now?

Aine looks away. She retracts her hands.

MARIA (CONT'D)

How is he?

AINE

Not good. Thanks for the tea.

She abruptly stands and leaves.

EXT. MARIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aine shuts the door behind her and steps out onto the street.

LAUGHTER echos around the empty town.

She follows it.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Liam and Orla round the corner, playfully shoving each other and giggling. Liam pulls her close to him, kisses her.

LIAM

Let's have a slumber party.

ORLA

Fuck off.

LIAM

Why not, your mum's off getting hers tonight.

ORLA

Fuck off!

LIAM

The house is empty.

They pass the closed shutters of the cornershop.

ORLA

That's what you think.

LIAM

Oh aye, you trying to trick me  
and all?

ORLA

You're not staying the night.

LIAM

You're so beautiful though...

ORLA

Shut up.

LIAM

No I'm serious babe--

ORLA

No, shut up. Do you hear  
something.

They look around in the dark...

BANG!

Liam is pinned to the shutters. Orla staggers back with a  
yelp.

It's Aine. She has Liam by the throat.

AINE

Stay away from my son.

LIAM

What?

AINE

Shut the fuck up up you tiny cunt. From this moment on, whenever you see him, here, there or fucking anywhere, you start walking in the opposite direction. If you don't, if he EVER comes back to the house looking like he did today...I'm gonna do something I won't regret. Do you understand me?

LIAM

Yes, yes!

Aine turns him loose and walks away.

Liam rubs his neck, fighting back tears. He looks at Orla, who doesn't look too impressed with his display.

ORLA

I'll see you at school.

She turns her back on him and disappears. Liam stares after her, humiliated.

BLACKNESS

SONNY (V.O.)

How did I get here?

EXT. ORLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We are right outside Orla's house now. The only light comes from one open window on the upper floor.

Orla walks past the window, running her fingers through her hair.

Sonny stares up at this light. Then he looks to his left. The Blue Girl stands by his side.

He is bracing himself to do something.

SONNY

I need your help.

She takes his hand in hers and places something in it.

Sonny looks down. It is the metal he removed from her mouth: Bent, bloody PAPERCLIPS.

Sonny and the Blue Girl look at each other as the light in the window is SWITCHED OFF.

BLACKNESS.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

SCREAMS.

A sudden, shocking image.

Orla lies pinned on her bed.

One hand is at her throat. The other is bringing a paperclip to her mouth.

She struggles and shakes.

TWO BLUE HANDS descend from above her head to keep her in place.

With both hands free Sonny pierces her lips with the metal, spraying blood across her face, and slightly changing the sound of her screams.

Her eyes bulge in terror.

BLACKNESS.

KNOCK KNOCK.

INT. SONNY'S ROOM - DAY

EYES snap open.

Sonny lies on his ruffled bed. DAYLIGHT shines through the open window.

ANOTHER KNOCK.

Disorientated he gets up and walks to the door.

He puts an ear to it, listening.

SONNY

What?

AINE

It's me.

Sonny looks across the chest of drawers.

The Blue Girl stands on the other side. Waiting.

Sonny shakes his head at her before opening the door. Aine stands on the other side.

AINE (CONT'D)

Thought it was about time you got up.

SONNY

Yeah.

AINE

Get dressed and come downstairs.  
And close that widow, it's  
freezing in here.

SONNY

Right.

AINE

Okay.

Sonny shuts the door.

He grabs a pair of jeans and a jumper from the middle drawer of the chest.

The Blue Girl slides something across the chest to Sonny.

A SHARD OF PLATE. Stained red.

He puts it in his schoolbag.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny makes his way downstairs, clutching his bag.

Aine stands at the bottom holding out his orange jacket.

AINE

Ready?

Sonny takes it. Aine then takes her own.

SONNY

Where are we going?

AINE

Out.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Aine's car whooshes along in the pale sun.

INT. AINE'S CAR - DAY

Sonny leans his head on the window.

AINE

You hungry?

SONNY

A bit.

AINE

Can get something from that van  
at the beach. Fancy it?Sonny grunts nods without taking his forehead from the glass.  
His hands fidget.

EXT. PROMENADE - DAY

Mother and son sit on the promenade wall. The empty beach  
looks quite different in the daytime.They tuck in to greasy burgers and survey their kingdom.  
Sonny's schoolbag sits beside him.

AINE

This is my favourite place.  
Especially when it's cold. I have  
it all to myself then. In the  
summer you can't see the other  
side of it for all the people.  
Sometimes when I get a minute  
alone I feel like I'm back here.  
It can feel very real, and I have  
to remind myself that I'm not  
really there.

SONNY

Pretty empty right now.

AINE

Yep.

They take another bite. Sonny glances at the bag.

AINE (CONT'D)

It's unusual though.

SONNY

An empty beach?

AINE

Preferring to be alone. Most people aren't like that. Though I think maybe it's something we have in common.

SONNY

I hate being alone.

AINE

Oh... How's your burger?

SONNY

S'good... you like yours?

AINE

I do actually, I didn't think I would.

SONNY

Why'd you get it then?

AINE

Well you like them don't you?

SONNY

You're trying to find something we both like. You don't have to.

AINE

Don't know why you'd mind, you got a free burger out of it.

SONNY

I don't mind. You just... don't have to, it's fine. You like to be on your own. I ruined that for you.

AINE

You never--



SONNY

I'm not stupid. You don't want me in your house. It's fine. I won't be for much longer.

AINE

Sonny. You are in my house. And... I'm sorry about that. I'm sorry you have me for a mum. I'm sorry for how it's been the last few days.

SONNY

It's not your fault.

AINE

Well it isn't yours. I'm your parent. That makes your shit my shit. Period. But my shit isn't yours, it's not a two way street. I didn't get that, which is my fault. So yeah I'm sorry. This whole mum thing, it's new to me and I'm not very good at it.

SONNY

I know I'm weird.

AINE

There's something else we share. See? The list's getting longer.

They both smile, laughing quietly.

AINE (CONT'D)

And for the record I was much weirder at your age. I bounced around lots of different homes. Lots of people tried to be my parents who were better at it than I am, and they couldn't make it work. And you were right, I never had a friend.

SONNY

Not one?

Aine looks down at her hand.

AINE

Thought I did once...

SONNY

Thought?

AINE

Be careful who you let in.

SONNY

Maybe you shouldn't have let me in.

AINE

I disagree.

Sonny looks at his bag again; he turns to Aine.

SONNY

You'll find someone. Everyone does.

AINE

Oh yeah? Have you?

SONNY

I think so.

Aine smiles, misunderstanding him. For the first time, their eyes meet. Aine brings her hand to his face.

AINE

Your eyes. I think you got them from me too.

SONNY

Yeah, maybe.

AINE

(beat)

Love you.

Sonny looks at her.

He pats her head.

SONNY

Likewise.

Sheepish, Aine hops off the wall.

AINE

I've got work to do. It'll be dark again soon, you coming?

SONNY

I might stay here a while if  
that's okay.

AINE

Sure. You've got a whole weekend  
to enjoy. Back at school on  
Monday, yeah?

SONNY

Yeah.

Aine waves awkwardly and heads back to her car.

Sonny stares out to sea, until something grabs his attention.

He grabs his bag and moves off.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Liam walks down the street, eyes on his PHONE.

He sends a text to Orla:

WANNA SACK CLASS AND COME SEE ME?

He pockets his phone and turns a corner.

Sonny stands at the far end of the deserted pavement.

EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - DAY

The SPARE KEY turns in the lock.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front door swings open. Aine enters and sits at her  
computer.

She looks more contented than she has in a long time.

She opens her email and starts a new message to McKinley:

COLUMN IN PROGRESS, WILL SEND OVER SOON.

AINE.

She pauses. She pulls out her phone.

It goes straight to voicemail.

AINE

Lewis, it's Aine. Uhm, just a follow-up to the email I sent you the other day - ignore it. Just - I mean, it's fine. Looks like you were planning on doing just that anyway so... I want to keep Sonny here. I'm guessing you'll be fine with that, so we can talk about a new custody arrangement whenever you get this and, yeah, so whenever you're ready. Okay bye... actually one other thing, I just want to say what kind of fucking name is Marley anyway, are you dating a spaniel? Do the girl a favour and leave her alone. You've ruined enough lives, and it will come back to you... you fucking bacteria.

She hangs up, exhilarated.

Opening a BLANK PAGE, she types the header,

I MET MY SON TODAY

Before she can continue, something draws her eye.

Sonny's SKETCHBOOK by the door.

EXT. CORNERSHOP - DAY

Liam leaves the shop clutching a carrier bag. The top of a BOTTLE pokes out the top of it.

His phone is pressed to his ear.

LIAM

Pick up.. fuck it.

He hangs up and takes two steps...

He looks up to see Sonny ahead of him.

After a moment's hesitation Liam spins on the spot and walks in the opposite direction.

Sonny follows. Liam looks over his shoulder.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Fuck off ye creepy prick.

Sonny keeps walking.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Look man, well done getting your  
mum to fight your battles for you  
but don't push it, fuck off.

Sonny doesn't stop.

Resolved, Liam hooks a left.

EXT. BACK LANE - CONTINUOUS

Liam gets about halfway down the dank dark alley before  
removing the bottle from his bag and smashing the end off the  
wall. He spins round, waiting.

Sonny rounds the corner.

LIAM

Do it, I fucking dare you! Take  
one more fucking step you freak!

Sonny seems unperturbed. He even smiles.

He slides his bag from off his shoulders. Unzipping it, he  
wraps his hand around something inside...

LIAM (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

Liam steps to Sonny, raising the broken bottle -

The Blue Girl appears behind him and grabs his arms tight.  
Sonny looks around and screams at the sight of her.

Sonny drops the empty bag and walks up to his prisoner.

Liam looks down at what Sonny's holding. His eyes widen.

LIAM (CONT'D)

No, no - NO!

Sonny slowly raises one hand to Liam's face, muffling his  
screams.

Liam's face is concealed behind ORLA'S. Her face is now a mask, sewn at the mouth, detached from her head, fitted onto the terrified boy. His eyes stare through the holes where Orla's should have been.

Now Sonny can meet his gaze.

With his free hand, Sonny slowly drives the PLATE SHARD into Liam's belly. Sonny walks him to the wall of the lane.

Liam's screams falter, then stop.

Leaving the shard in, Sonny rummages in his pockets, pulling out two paperclips. He uses these to attach the death mask to Liam's ears.

Both boys slide down the wall to sit on the ground.

Sonny exhales heavily, and looks at Liam's dead body. His face is blank.

Next he looks up at the Blue Girl.

SONNY

Let's stay a while. I... need a rest.

The Blue Girl slides down the wall to join him. They join hands. They look out of the lane towards the beach.

SONNY (CONT'D)

It's low tide.

The sun is getting low.

INT. SONNY'S ROOM - DAY

Aine enters holding the sketchbook, and places it on the chest.

She immediately shivers - Sonny forgot to close the window.

She shuts it, but wrinkles her nose - the smell of teenage boy's rooms. She opens it again.

She turns, and looks again at the sketchbook, curious.

She picks it up and opens it.

The first page she sees is the back of Orla's head. Aine smiles.

The second is the beach. Neither drawing is very good.

The third page contains rows of circles, in which we find basic impressions of different facial expressions:

Happy, Sad, Angry, Very Angry, Neutral, Terrified, Laughing...

And the Blue Girl.

Aine lingers on the last one. It seems somehow familiar.

She turns the page...

A boy holding the Blue Girl's hand. Something like a smile on both faces.

She turns the page again, uneasy...

The next three images show grisly killings of a girl, a boy and a woman - Orla, Liam and Aine.

Stricken, horrified, Aine drops the sketchbook back onto the chest, before quickly picking it up again and opening the top drawer to hide it from sight--

And finds the DE-FACED CORPSE of Orla crammed inside.

Aine shrieks and staggers backwards past the bed. She falls backwards against the opposite wall. She screams and screams, screwing her eyes shut and shaking her head.

And under the bed, we see him.

The Blue Man GRABS Aine by the ankle. She tries to kick loose, to stand up, but can't.

He starts to drag her towards him. Nearly half of her disappears beneath the bed.

Suddenly, Aine spots Sonny's FUZZY PEN.

She reaches out, fingers stretch to touch it. The Blue Man breathes deep through his mangled mouth, his tongue dangling and salivating. He grabs her by the waist.

Aine pulls the pen towards her - she has it!

She stabs it into the Blue Man's arm - screaming, he lets go.

Before she can get to her feet, he starts crawling up her towards the pen.

Aine stabs his leg. Releasing the pen, she rolls out from under him and makes for the door.

The Blue Man scurries across to block the exit. He limps towards her.

Aine backs away, back to the window. With no other option, Aine clambers out of the window, tumbling out of sight.

The Blue Man approaches and sticks his head out. Horrible eyes scan the ground.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

SUNSET

The Blue Man's head sticks out of the window.

Beside the window, a crouched, panting Aine holds her hand to her mouth, trying to stay silent. She is frozen in fear.

The sun is dying behind the roof.

Aine looks down. Her SHADOW grows long in the low light.

She HEARS SOMETHING above her. She looks up.

He has crawled to the top of the dormer. He is nearly upon her.

Aine scrambles away, up to her feet, retreating to the roof's edge.

The Blue Man hobbles her way, pen still stuck in his leg. He stretches out his hand...

Aine leaps off the building.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

She lands badly, her ankle CRUNCHING beneath her. She tries to mute her pained cry - before noticing something beside her. Something YELLOW.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

NIGHT HAS FALLEN



The Blue Man looks below the roof in time to see Aine hauling herself through the door.

He scurries down the wall and into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The creature moves slowly and silently through the room.

He listens to Aine's FOOTSTEPS on the floor above.

DROPS OF BLOOD make a trail up the stairs.

INT. SONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room has grown dark.

Aine lies beneath Sonny's bed, shaking, tears streaming down her cheeks.

The door creaks open.

SLOW FOOTSTEPS.

The Blue Man walks across to the window.

A dark figure can be seen on the other side. He stares at it.

But it's shut. And locked.

THE KEY has been broken off inside it.

He turns in time to see Aine at the door.

The top drawer of the chest is now empty.

She holds the large set of keys, fuzzy yellow keyring dangling from the chain.

She slams the door shut as he speeds towards her, and locks it.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Aine falls backwards as the door rattles and shakes.

The noise becomes unbearable. Aine can't take it anymore.

AINE

Shut up!!!

The door goes still, the noise abates.

She stares at the door.

PING!

It's her phone. Lewis has sent a thumbs up.

AINE (CONT'D)

Sonny...

She replies:

PHONE THE POLICE.

And gets to her feet.

EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Aine limps out of the house as fast as she can and into her car.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The waves wash against the shore. Other than that the world is quiet.

Sonny looks at the water.

He is bare-skinned at its edge, his clothes in a pile several paces away.

He looks beside him - the Blue Girl looks back.

SONNY

Sorry... it's not her fault.

The Blue Girl takes his hand, and they start to walk into the water.

EXT. PROMENADE - NIGHT

Aine's car skids to a halt and she limps out.

AINE

Sonny! Sonny!

She walks along peering this way and that, but it's too dark to see very far.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

They are waist deep in the cold water now.

The moon is full.

SONNY

It's cold.

The Blue Girl inches closer to him.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Thanks. For everything.

EXT. PROMENADE - NIGHT

Aine struggles to stay upright, dizzy with pain.

AINE

Sonny!!!

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Sonny looks up. He hears something.

AINE (O.S.)

(faint)

Sonny!!!

The Blue Girl stares at him.

SONNY

Do you hear something?

She just stares.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I... I don't know, I... haven't been sleeping and... I hear things that aren't there.

He shakes his head, confused.

He takes another step forward.

AINE (O.S.)

Sonny!!!

Sonny spins around.

SONNY

Is that her--

As he speaks he turns to face the Blue Girl - she's vanished.

He looks around. Nothing. He is alone in the ocean.

AINE (O.S.)

Sonny!!!

Sonny turns again.

SONNY

Mum?!

BLUE HANDS BURST from the water to grab hold of Sonny, pulling him down by the neck.

He struggles all the way down.

A FINAL, QUIET SPLASH.

Both disappear beneath the sea.

Everything is still.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Aine has made it to the shore. She staggers, still searching.

AINE

Sonny!!!

She spots something up ahead.

She goes to it.

She picks up a PUFFY ORANGE JACKET.

Aine falls to her knees, screaming.

BLACKNESS

INT. OFFICE - DAY

McKinley enters his office holding a sausage roll.

He goes to his desk and moves his mouse around absently, brushing crumbs from his shirt.

He goes to his inbox. There's an email from Aine. It contains just a file, no message:

AINE (V.O.)

When I asked my editor to start a column, he told me it was going to be different; that it would be the distinction between reporting a story and interpreting it. Between fact and opinion. Reality and perception. I have had need of time to reassess that distinction.

EXT. AINE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Aine arrives home. She is greeted by a police car.

She walks towards it looking broken.

AINE (V.O.)

The fact is that my son disappeared last week. My opinion is that he's dead.

EXT. BACK LANE - DAY

POLICE TAPE closes off the alley. The shop worker looks on, worriedly.

AINE (V.O.)

Another fact is that before he left he killed two people. In my opinion that was wrong. And avoidable.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Aine is ushered towards the station.

The mothers of Liam and Orla stare at her from down the street. Aine stares right back.

AINE (V.O.)

What can I say to their loved ones that can mean anything? Even the most delicate person has nothing to offer them, and I am not that person. For this I am sorry. It has cost me.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Aine walks past the rattling door of Sonny's room.

                  AINE (V.O.)

There are things in this world that cannot be put into words, certainly not by me. Even if they could, perhaps they are better left unsaid. We cannot understand them, or reason with them, or blame them on anyone, not even ourselves. They live in dark corners where we dare not dwell too long. And they'll never leave, not really. The best we can hope for is to keep them there, and not show them the light of day. The best we can do is try to believe they're not really there. They are.

EXT. MARIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Maria opens her door. Aine stands holding The Bell and Butterfly.

                  AINE (V.O.)

With luck, we can find a way to keep them hidden. And with help, we can even try to live as if they always will be. But before he died my boy taught me that it's easy to let those monsters in if no help comes.

INT. CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

The old nun sits reading the paper.

AINE (V.O.)

And now I have to find a way to  
live with that.

Still.

We all have our own demons.

Sister Charlotte enters.

The old nun lowers her paper.

OLD NUN

It's getting late.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The two women walk, arm in arm, in silence, heads bowed.

They reach a door.

OLD NUN

Goodnight.

CHARLOTTE

Goodnight... Mother Superior?  
It's not right. Closing our  
doors. They're children. They  
need us.

OLD NUN

They suffer for others' sins.  
This is punishment for the  
sinner. They must watch suffering  
they'd happily take upon  
themselves. Now, if I may. I'm  
very tired. Goodnight.

CHARLOTTE

Goodnight.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The nun LIGHTS A CANDLE in her dark room.

Sitting on her bed, she takes her ROSARY BEADS in hand. She  
begins to pray under her breath.

As the flame flickers, SOMETHING MOVES in the dark behind  
her.

She stops and smiles. Closing her eyes she continues to pray  
- as she wraps her rosary beads around her neck.

Out of the dark, TWO BLUE HANDS reach to join with hers.

FADE OUT.