

INT. BATHROOM, ANA'S FLAT - DAY

The door FLIES open. ANA BYRNE (26), bursts in. She has a destructive intensity that makes everything important. Her pregnant belly bulges. Second trimester.

A bolt of pain. Ana winces and clutches her belly. She tears at her leggings. They're too tight. She's too slow. Frantic hands find nail scissors. Ana cuts herself out. She yanks her underwear off. *

Rotten flowers spill out, pulsing with half-life. Ana looks away and takes a deep, measured breath. She returns to her underwear. No flowers. No stains. Ana melts into the wall.

MICHAEL BYRNE (27), a sceptical optimist, rushes in. He glances at Ana. At the closed toilet. He opens the lid. Nothing.

ANA

We're okay.

Michael sits next to her. She's still clutching the scissors, by the blade. He pries them away. Blood stains her hand. Ana doesn't notice.

MICHAEL

Breathe.

Ana does so. It helps. Michael retrieves a first aid kit. He cleans Ana's hand.

ANA

I was doing the hospital bag. She got a little rowdy and I assumed...

MICHAEL

It's alright, just more phantom pain.

ANA

It's still early, maybe A&E isn't too busy.

MICHAEL

It's always busy.

ANA

But maybe they can squeeze me in for a scan. Just to check.

MICHAEL

There's no blood. You feel fine. She's okay.

Ana isn't comforted. She notices her hand. Michael puts a plaster over the thin cut. He softens, this isn't the first time this has happened.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Maybe Christie can squeeze you in
for one more session.

ANA
I doubt she wants to see me after
what I said last time.

MICHAEL
It's her job. What she wants is to
help, which she will.

Ana knows he's right. Michael presses a kiss to her plaster. She kicks her leggings off. They're ruined.

INT. CHRISTIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Ana eyes the vase of wilting roses on the table. CHRISTIE (50), notices. She picks them up and puts them behind her chair.

CHRISTIE
With the due date approaching your
body is trying to protect itself.

ANA
By hurting me?

CHRISTIE
So that if the worst were to
happen, you'd know what that pain
would feel like.

ANA
But I already do.

CHRISTIE
Exactly. The brain isn't being
rational, it's being defensive.

ANA
I've been seeing the flowers again.

Christie notes this down.

CHRISTIE
Can you smell them?

ANA
Sometimes. I try to breathe through
it but it's intense.

CHRISTIE
With the condition of your
pregnancy I don't feel comfortable
getting you back on your meds.

ANA
I'm not going to relapse.

CHRISTIE
That's not what I'm worried about.
We can try some alternatives at a
very light dosage.

ANA
Fine.

CHRISTIE
Your mental health is just as
important for your baby as your
physical health--

ANA
--How many a day?

Christie scribbles some more notes. She stands up and goes
over to her computer. Ana eyes the flowers poking out behind
her chair. They're now rotting.

INT. BABY SHOP - DAY

Ana browses a rack of maternity leggings. SALLY (40), holds a
pair up.

SALLY
These would be cute on you.

A VIBRANT MOTHER (36) emerges from the changing room. She
models the same leggings for her approving DAUGHTER (10) and
HUSBAND (35). She's further along than Ana but barely seems
to feel it.

Ana can't tear her eyes away from them, gripped with all-
consuming longing. Sally notices. She nudges Ana who breaks
out of her daze.

EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

Ana picks at a croissant, mindful of the refined fats. Sally
sweeps into the seat next to her, arms leaden with bags.

SALLY

Found these--

She passes one bag to Ana.

SALLY (CONT'D)

--Think they're your size. And--

A small box.

ANA

Sally I can't accept--

SALLY

--The lady said aromatherapy could help with, well you know.

Ana takes it. The box is embossed with a four-legged Brigid's cross. Ana opens the box. A set of essential oils.

SALLY (CONT'D)

They're all natural, unrefined, made on a farm in the Scottish Highlands.

ANA

They're lovely.

Ana smells one of them. The stench attacks her nose.

SALLY

Are they too much?

She fights a gag reflex.

ANA

I'm just a bit sensitive.

Ana rushes to the toilet. Sally follows.

INT. TOILET, CAFÉ - DAY

Ana throws up croissant and bile. Sally rubs Ana's back. She gives Ana some toilet paper. Ana wipes her mouth.

ANA

Sorry.

SALLY

I'll give you a lift.

ANA

I was going to take the bus.

SALLY
No way. Is Michael home?

ANA
Work.

Ana looks down at the toilet. Putrid petals float in the mess. She blinks. It's just sick. Ana flushes.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ana slips inside. CARMEN (72), gossips with the CONGREGATION (60's). She spots Ana and excuses herself.

CARMEN
Everything okay?

ANA
Michael's at work and you weren't home.

CARMEN
What's happened?

ANA
I'm alright. Just wanted to be with someone.

Carmen eyes her. It's clear that something is going on.

CARMEN
Right, let me just say goodbye--

ANA
--We can stay. I just want the company.

CARMEN
If you're sure. Don't forget to say hi to your parents.

The congregation sneak glances at Ana's belly.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The congregation quietens. Ana lingers at the back where rows of candles are lit in prayer. She strikes a match and eyes the fire with great respect.

ANA
Early check-in. Gran says hi.

Ana lights two candles.

ANA (CONT'D)
Some pain today but I'm good.
Michael thinks I worry too much.

She blows out the match.

ANA (CONT'D)
Is it cheating if I ask you to send
me a sign?

The fire sways, still and completely mundane.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The scattered congregation listen to the PRIEST'S (50)
sermon. Ana amuses herself by flicking through a worn bible.
She rubs her belly, wincing a bit.

PRIEST
As in John, behold your mother and
her pains.

She glances at a statue of Mother Mary holding baby Jesus. A
surge of discomfort. Ana squeezes her bible.

CARMEN
Alright love?

ANA
She's just kicking.

PRIEST
It's sacrificial but the mother's
love triumphs.

Ana winces. She drops the bible. The Congregation sneak
glances their way.

CARMEN
Should we get some air?

Ana nods. She stands up. Carmen picks up her things. She
slides along the pew. Her hand touches a puddle. Something
wet. She freezes.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
Don't panic alright?

ANA
I know, she's just kicking.

CARMEN
I'm going to call an ambulance.

ANA

What?

Ana turns. Blood stains Carmen's hand. It seeps into the wooden pew. The congregation spot the blood on Ana's skirt. They erupt into confused chaos. Carmen rings 999.

A drop of blood rolls down Ana's leg. It drips on the floor, drowning out Ana's hearing. Drip. Drip.

INT. A&E, NHS HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An IV drip feeds medicine into Ana's arm. DR CASTELO (40) prods at her belly. The skin is marred by IVF scars.

DR CASTELO

There's minimal damage, nothing
that your daughter won't be able to
heal on her own.

Carmen toys with a cross round her neck. Michael clutches Ana's hand.

DR CASTELO (CONT'D)

I'm unfamiliar with the case but
your tests came back clean which is
a great sign.

Ana shoots up. She winces. Michael helps her.

ANA

It's not preeclampsia?

Dr Castelo takes her stethoscope off. Human to human.

DR CASTELO

I reviewed Dr Thomson's notes and
it's possible that there might have
been a mistake.

ANA

But my symptoms are still the same.

DR CASTELO

Our working theory is that it's a
mutation of a hereditary condition.

Ana struggles to process this. Somehow, Carmen is more affected. She kisses her cross.

ANA

And you've only caught it now?

DR CASTELO

There's no concrete test to confirm diagnosis, but looking at the history of the women in your family would be incredibly helpful.

A thick silence.

ANA

My parents died when I was young, I don't know if we have anything.

Ana looks at Carmen. She's lost in thought.

ANA (CONT'D)

Gran?

Carmen snaps out of it.

CARMEN

Sorry--I'll see what I can find.

DR CASTELLO

Just give us a ring. For now we'll get you started on some tablets to prevent further bleeding.

Dr Castelo steps out. Ana sinks into the bed. Michael squeezes her hand.

MICHAEL

We'll figure it out.

ANA

Yeah.

Ana stares into her stomach, trying to dissect it.

INT. LIVING ROOM, CARMEN'S HOME - DAY

Michael places a glass of water on the coffee table. Ana holds two sleeves of pills, slow-release progesterone and amisulpride (50mg).

ANA

It was going too well.

MICHAEL

We couldn't have seen it coming.

Ana pops out one progesterone and one amisulpride. Michael picks up the amisulpride.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I thought you stopped these.

ANA
Christie thought it was a good
idea.

MICHAEL
Are the flowers back?

Ana takes the amisulpride with a sip of water. Michael takes
the glass from her.

ANA
I just need some peace of mind.

MICHAEL
If it doesn't work out--

ANA
--We can't be thinking like that--

MICHAEL
--I'm just saying we have options.

ANA
I have a lot of years left.

MICHAEL
And how are you going to end up?
Covered in transplant scars? Stuck
in hospitals?

ANA
If that's what it takes.

Ana puts the progesterone pill in her mouth. Michael offers
the water. She swallows it dry.

EXT. GARDEN, CARMEN'S HOME - DAY

Ana flicks through her birth certificate. She hovers over the
mother category: Daphne Byrne. Carmen tends to a patch of
wilting hydrangeas.

ANA
What was her pregnancy like?

CARMEN
Tough. You were almost a caesarean
but Daphne insisted on having you
the natural way.

ANA

Is that all we have to go on?

Carmen shrugs. She stabs the dirt with her spade, butchering the soil.

CARMEN

I called the hospital. They said they'll check.

ANA

Any idea when they'll call back?

CARMEN

You know how it is with the system going digital.

ANA

I shouldn't have to know. I only have three months for god's sake.

Ana drops the birth certificate.

CARMEN

Sometimes all we have left is faith.

ANA

Because that worked so well all the other times.

Carmen stills. She lays the spade down. Something's choking her. An internal battle.

ANA (CONT'D)

Sorry. You're trying to help.

CARMEN

There might be another way to get her records.

ANA

When?

CARMEN

Less than three months.

Carmen tears her gloves off. Her hands are shaking. Ana notices. She walks over to Carmen.

ANA

Gran if this is some prayer thing I don't want to hear it--

Carmen stands up. She squeezes Ana's hands. Tears well up in her eyes. She's deathly serious. It makes Ana go still.

CARMEN

Some things got confused in the fire.

ANA

Did you take your medication?

CARMEN

Listen. You can still get her information, but it won't be easy.

ANA

I don't care.

CARMEN

Daphne's alive.

Ana lets go of Carmen. Half-laughing in disbelief.

ANA

That's not funny.

Carmen stands her ground.

ANA (CONT'D)

You can't be serious.

CARMEN

Just let me show you. After that you can think what you want. But let me show you.

Ana observes Carmen. She's on the verge of crying. Ana nods.

INT. ATTIC, CARMEN'S HOME - DAY

Carmen opens a flaking box. A soot-stained wedding band. A moon keyring. Crumbling photographs of a past life. Ana picks one up.

JULIAN BYRNE (24) holds the pregnant belly of DAPHNE BYRNE (23). They stand outside a bungalow. Daphne holds the keys. The moon charm dangles from them.

Carmen retrieves a pristine pouch from the box.

CARMEN

I tried to give you the good life she wanted.

She pulls out a silver necklace. The round pendant displays three women holding hands.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
This is the only thing she left
with you.

ANA
How did she make it out?

CARMEN
She was never in. She came back
from work to find the fire. Had
just enough time to save you.

ANA
Why did she leave?

CARMEN
Something serious with her family.
If you had seen the look on her
face--

ANA
--And dad?

Carmen's silence is answer enough. Ana snatches the pendant.

ANA (CONT'D)
Where is she?

CARMEN
She was too scared to even give me
a direction.

Ana's mind reels, trying to re-configure the last twenty seven years of life.

ANA
I don't think I can forgive you.

CARMEN
I'm not asking you to.

Ana flips the pendant around. A four-sided Brigid's cross is carved into the metal.

INT. HALLWAY, BYRNE BUNGALOW - DAY

Ana weaves through lumps of wood that were once furniture.

ANA (V.O.)
Sally it's not on their website--I
checked. Did they give you a return
address?

Breeze rattles a cracked door. Ana opens it.

INT. NURSERY, BYRNE BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

In the corner of the room there's a perfect circle of
concrete. Damaged only by time.

ANA (V.O.)
And you're sure it's a family
business?

Ana drifts towards an unburned cradle in the middle of the
concrete. Bugs eat away at the wood.

She takes the necklace out of her pocket. Puts it on.

INT. KITCHEN, ANA'S FLAT - DAY

Ana presses her phone to her ear. She scribbles an address on
the back of a receipt: Loch Cailleach, Iverness, IV10 8SW.

ANA
Got it, thank you, thank you.
You're amazing.

She hangs up the call.

INT. BEDROOM, ANA'S FLAT - NIGHT

Michael slips inside, frazzled from work. He takes his shoes
off on autopilot. A silent ritual. Michael glances up. The
bed is made.

The only trace of Ana is a packed backpack in the corner.

INT. NURSERY, ANA'S FLAT - NIGHT

The rumbling of amniotic fluid. Wet. Churning. Ana holds an
antiquated speaker to her ear. It's connected to a scanner,
like that of an ultrasound.

She rubs it over her exposed belly, listening. Michael
watches her from the doorway. He surveys the space. The
nursery is newly lacquered. Awaiting its next guest.

MICHAEL
Looks different, but it feels the
same.

Ana doesn't look up at him.

ANA
Is this your first time in here?

MICHAEL
Second. Once, while you were still
in hospital.

ANA
I know you're worried.

Michael kneels in front of Ana. She looks down at him.

MICHAEL
Do you even know if she's there?

ANA
There was a picture.

MICHAEL
You're basing this on a picture?

Ana holds the radio out to Michael. He grabs it. Presses it
to his ear. He hears the fluid and the life it carries.

ANA
I want to see her move. I know it's
a long shot, but if she can give me
some answers then it's worth it.

Michael takes the radio and the scanner away from Ana. He
touches her belly.

MICHAEL
She's a fragile package.

Ana pauses.

ANA
I know.

MICHAEL
Take me with you.

ANA
You can't risk losing paternity
leave--

MICHAEL
--We have savings--

ANA
--Not enough.

Ana grabs his hands. Squeezes them tight.

ANA (CONT'D)
I'll only be a couple days. You'll barely notice.

MICHAEL
I don't like it.

ANA
You don't have to.

Michael kisses Ana's belly. He knows her mind's made up.

INT. TOILET, TRAIN - DAY

Ana kneels over the toilet. She wipes her mouth and flushes. Sick swirls down the drain.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Ana glances out her window. Thick fog parts. Spotlight sun shines on the Scottish highlands. An uncut gem. Wild. Ancient.

EXT. TAXI, MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Paved road scars untamed nature. The taxi takes curves around unflinching hills.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL, WOODS - DAY

The taxi rumbles away. Ana looks up at the intimidating hill. She tightens her backpack straps and gets going.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL, WOODS - DAY

Ana follows a trail of red ribbons tied to the tree trunks. The sun glares. She takes her last sip of water. Her ears ring. She presses on.

EXT. MAIN CLEARING - DAY

Ana emerges into a wide clearing nestled amongst the trees. Renovated farm houses dot the well-groomed grasses. Ana sits, struggling to catch her breath.

HAZEL
This is private property!

HAZEL (17), approaches Ana. Her youth is bogged down by self-inflicted responsibility. She's a weird mix between past and present, jeans paired with an embroidered tunic.