C/U. CLOSED EYELIDS. DAY

MARTIN (V.O.)
Can I explain why I want to kill myself? ....Of course I can. I'm not an idiot.

There is the gushing of water.
The eyelid opens.

C/U. EYE. DAY

The pupil rises sharply into focus, as if taking a huge gulp of air.

INT. SMALL ROOM. DAY

MARTIN well-dressed, early 40s, practised grin, is rubbing his face with a towel having just washed it in the sink.

MARTIN (V.O.)
I can explain it because it’s not inexplicable; it’s a logical decision, the product of proper thought.

INT. CORRIDOR. DAY

He walks briskly.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Simply put, the reason why I want to die is because I don’t want to live. And you can’t get more logical than that.

INT. STUDIO. DAY

There are about three people assembling a shitty lighting rig and aligning camera tracks. This is not a high-end operation.

MARTIN looks up at the lights. They dazzle him.

INT. WHITE LIGHT. DAY

INT. CHEAP TELEVISION STUDIO. DAY

MARTIN sits on a comfortable chair opposite a C-LIST CELEBRITY.
MARTIN (V.O.)
I’m taking all the mystery out of it, aren’t I?

8 INT. CLOSED EYELIDS. DAY

The sound of canned laughter.

9 INT. CHEAP TELEVISION STUDIO. DAY

The C-LIST CELEBRITY laughs. MARTIN doesn’t. He sits there slightly pale.

MARTIN (V.O.)
No. I’d go so far as to say committing suicide is one of the most logical things I’ll ever accomplish.

10 INT. SHOWER. DAY

MARTIN takes a long luxurious gulp of the water as it cascades around him.

11 INT. BATHROOM. DAY

MARTIN is using his electric toothbrush.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Imagine you’re an assistant bank manager in Guildford and you’ve been offered the job of managing a bank in Sydney. Well, even though it’s a pretty straightforward decision you’d still have to think for a bit.... Maybe write a pros and cons list.

12 INT. BATHROOM. LATER

MARTIN is clipping his toenails.

MARTIN (V.O.)
On the cons, aged parents who might die when you’re on the other side of the world, friends you’ll miss, and a golf club where you know your handicap is not laughed at.
INT. BATHROOM. LATER

MARTIN is using a nasal hair trimmer and trying to look suave and debonair as he does. This is almost impossible.

MARTIN (V.O.)
...on the pros, more money, better quality of life, sea, sunshine, women with suntans, a chance to invent yourself as being someone other than an assistant bank manager from Guildford.

He takes the nasal hair trimmer out and cleans the top of it.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
No contest. You’re on the next plane.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

MARTIN walks into the room wearing a dressing gown and carrying a brandy. He walks past pictures of children we’ll later recognise as his own and pictures of him and a woman we’ll later recognise as CINDY, then there are pictures of him beside a woman carrying numerous daytime TV trophies, this woman we’ll later recognise as PENNY.

MARTIN (V.O.)
You see, I had everything, or at least something approaching everything, and what do you get for a man who has everything? You get him nothing.

He picks up the letter he’s left on the mantelpiece. He puts it on top of the answer machine.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
In my case nothing came in the form of Danielle Turnby, five feet nine inches. thirty-six DD. Fifteen years, two-hundred and fifty days old. And let me tell you those hundred and fifteen days make quite a difference. I didn’t even enjoy it. But she was a perk. And perks felt right....then.

He checks his watch. He picks up the letter and puts it back on the mantelpiece.

He exits.

The camera stays in the room.
EXT. DRIVEWAY. NIGHT

MARTIN is now dressed as he lashes a ladder onto the roof of his car.

INT. CAR. NIGHT

He starts the car. He takes a toffee from his glove compartment and shoves it into his mouth. He backs it out of the drive. He drives down the street.

MARTIN (V.O.)
So. No. I haven’t got aged parents, they’re dead, I don’t play golf, I hate the sport...

He passes a woman he knows who is wearing devil horns and an embarrassed grin. She smiles. He waves.

EXT. TOPPERS CAR PARK. NIGHT

MARTIN parks up the car and unlashes the ladder.

MARTIN (V.O.)
...but my wife hates me, I can’t see my kids, I’ve a criminal record, a listing on the national sex offenders register and have so spectacularly pissed away my career that I’m less successful than an assistant bank manager in Guildford.

He puts the ladder beside the car.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Yup. Suicide is my Sydney.

INT. TOPPERS TOWER. NIGHT

MARTIN is waiting for the lift, it arrives. He attempts to put his ladder inside. It doesn’t fit.

He tries it another way. It doesn’t fit. He tries it a third way. Yup. Really doesn’t fit.

INT. TOPPERS TOWER. STAIRCASE. NIGHT

MARTIN takes the stairs, carrying the ladder carefully as he does. He looks up the staircase.

Only fourteen more flights to go. Only – fourteen – fourteen – exhaustion awaits.
The roof has three feet of barbed wire netting around the outside of it, with a metal strut at the edge of the wire. MARTIN lays his ladder horizontally so that it traverses the barbed wire. He takes out a cigar. He tucks it behind his ear.

He begins to crawl out on his ladder. Over the wire. It’s an horrific and vertigo-inducing watch.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Life is what you say goodbye to. 
And I’m saying goodbye to a semi-functioning digestive system and a dim form of consciousness - to a life mislaid.

He sits as if on the edge of the world, lights the cigar.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
No. Not mislaid. That implies accidental damage.

He looks down.

It’s a long drop. It’s a really long drop.

MARTIN (V.O.)
I haven’t mislaid my life, I’ve...spent it.

He looks out.

MARTIN (V.O.)
I’ve spent my kids and my job and my wife and...

MAUREEN (O.S.)
Um. Excuse me.

Well, there’s a shock, it’s as if someone scratches the record off.

MARTIN turns and looks at MAUREEN, astonished there is someone else up there with him. MAUREEN is 40-something, dressed badly, and has a brave, anxious, smile on her face.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
I’m not entirely sure how to phrase this. But... Are you going to be long?
MARTIN
What?

MAUREEN
I wasn’t sure whether to wait my
turn or....I hadn’t considered
the wire. I’d really like to
borrow your ladder. If that’s....

There is a moment’s pause.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
Maybe I should just wait. I’ll
wait.

MARTIN’s lip curls.

MARTIN
Right.

MAUREEN
Sorry.

MARTIN
No. No.

MARTIN turns back to facing the night sky, frowns and turns
back to MAUREEN, his lip curled, his concentration gone.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
You’re just going to stand there
and watch are you?

MAUREEN
No. No. Of course. You’ll be
wanting to do it on your own I’d
imagine.

MARTIN
You’d imagine right.

MAUREEN
I’ll go over there.

She indicates the other side of the roof. She begins to walk
over to it. He half laughs.

MARTIN
I’ll give you a shout on the way
down.

MAUREEN attempts half a smile.

MAUREEN
Right.
MAUREEN stands quietly - looking towards MARTIN and then turns around. He checks what’s she doing and then looks down.

23

EXT. TOPPERS TOWER. NIGHT

It’s still a long way down.

24

EXT. TOPPERS TOWER ROOF. NIGHT

MARTIN composes himself. He feels the mood take him. He takes a puff of his cigar. He looks out forward, maybe he even lifts himself up ready to propel himself out.

He wobbles, he stops.

MARTIN
I can’t. Not with you watching.

MAUREEN
Oh.

He looks at her, she looks at him.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
I could leave, come back in twenty minutes...

MARTIN thinks and then frowns.

MARTIN
Maybe you should go first?

MAUREEN registers this.

MAUREEN
I’d want to be on my own. Completely.

MARTIN
Understood. Twenty minutes. Then I want my spot back.

MAUREEN
Right. OK.

He thinks and then starts crawling back along the ladder.

The ladder wobbles. For one moment, MARTIN stares into the abyss. He almost throws himself onto the edge of the tower to stop himself from falling.

He lies still a moment. He looks at MAUREEN. She puts out a hand.
MAUREEN (CONT’D)

Maureen.

MARTIN stands. They shake hands.

Martin.

MAUREEN
Are you from... I recognise your face...?

MARTIN
I used to be on television.

MAUREEN
Oh. Right.

They realise they’re still shaking hands. They stop.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
Well. I’ll....um...

MARTIN
Yes. You....

Which is when they hear a sound like a rebel yell.

JESS (O.S.)
Out my way fuckers.

JESS, 18, feisty, take no prisoners, smashes through them and starts running across the ladder.

MARTIN
What the...? Where did she come from?

MARTIN, hugely surprised, grabs her by her belt, she kicks him in the face, but he hangs on and pulls her backwards onto the roof.

JESS
No. No!

He is really having trouble keeping hold of her.

MARTIN
Calm down. Calm down.

She wriggles away. She makes for the ladder again, this time he full on rugby tackles her. They fall to the ground with an oooof.

JESS
Who the fuck are you?
JESS tries to stick her fingers into MARTIN’s eyes. She is wild on something.

MARTIN
Ow! Maureen. Bit of help...

JESS
Rape. Rape. Perverted rape.

The struggle continues, MAUREEN is anxious not to intervene.

MAUREEN
What do you want me...to do?

JESS looks up at MARTIN. She recognises him.

JESS
Oh my God. You’re Martin Sharp. You are a pervert. Officially.

MARTIN
Sit on her.

MAUREEN
That’s it! Rise and Shine with Martin and Penny.

MARTIN
Maureen! Concentrate.

MAUREEN hesitates, and then sits on Jess’s arse, and MARTIN kneels on her arms.

JESS
Just let me go. Let me go.

MARTIN turns and looks at her, amazed at her balls.

MAUREEN
Just a question....Shouldn’t we - let her go? I mean we’re all here for the same...

JESS
Yes! We are! And bagsie I’m first!

There is the noise of someone clearing their throat. They all turn towards it.

It is...JJ. A cool, tall, good-looking man (Evan Dando meets James Franco) in his mid-20s, he has a crash helmet in one hand and a big insulated pizza bag in the other.

JJ
Hi.
He talks with an American accent. They all stare at him. He thinks and then looks even more confused.

JJ (CONT’D)
Any of you guys order a pizza?

JESS starts to laugh.

JESS
If you’re here for the death ride ....there’s a queue.

INT. TITLES. DAY

And the camera does what they’re all incapable of and ascends the ladder and jumps over the edge and as we accelerate through the air we run titles that reveal the title of this film to be..

A

LONG

WAY

...DOWN.

EXT. TOPPERS TOWER ROOF. NIGHT

All four are standing in exactly the same positions.

JESS
So do we do introductions...? I’m Jess. People call me Jess.

MAUREEN
I’m Maureen.

JJ
I’m JJ.

MARTIN
I’m -
JESS
Martin Sharp.

MARTIN
Yes.

JESS
Quite exciting to have a celebrity in our suicidal midst.

The word ‘suicidal’ seems to make everyone wince. There is an anxious pause.

JESS thinks and then takes the pizza from JJ and opens the box. She grins at the contents. She seems to be enjoying herself. None of the others are.

JESS (CONT’D)
Ham and Pineapple? Really? No-one fancies jumping down and getting some pepperoni do they?

No-one laughs. No-one says anything. JESS looks at them all and begins to eat.

JESS (CONT’D)
There’s enough to share...

MAUREEN looks at MARTIN and then JJ.

MAUREEN
This....this feels wrong.

JJ
Does it?

JESS
Maybe we could jump together....One. Two. Three.

She makes for the ladder. But MARTIN is too quick kicks it out of the way. It falls through the wire and descends heavily to the ground far below. MARTIN watches it...anxiously. JESS laughs.

JESS (CONT’D)
Well, we’re not dead. But someone down there might be.

There is another pause. This is deadly.

MAUREEN
So, I suppose we should - leave...

They hesitate. No-one wants to leave. But equally no-one wants to acknowledge they don’t want to leave.
JJ

Yeah.

JESS smiles, sarcastically - but sort of hopefully.

JESS

Or we could just stay up here.
Start a new civilisation.

Then suddenly it begins to rain.

MARTIN looks up at the skies. He thinks.

MARTIN
Nice to meet you - all.

He exits the rooftop. He leaves everyone else behind.

The remaining three exchange a look - unsure what to do themselves - and the rain continues to pour.

INT. MARTIN’S CAR. NIGHT

MARTIN sits looking numb. He’s numb with shock. His skin has a greyish pallor to it.

The rain drums incessantly on the windscreen.

He turns on the radio. He turns it off again.

He turns on the windscreen wipers - but they’re slightly broken - there’s a weird pause in the middle of their rotation - oh, and they squeak.

MARTIN (V.O.)
I suppose I should have guessed.
The most popular suicide spot in London...

MARTIN just looks at the world. And then - suddenly - he hammers the steering wheel with his hand. And then he regrets hammering the steering wheel. This is both raw pain and, you know, slightly pathetic.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
...on the most popular night in the year for suicide attempts...

MARTIN starts the car. He begins to drive.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
...there was bound to be...

He drives past MAUREEN standing in the rain at a bus stop. She disrupts the thought.
He thinks. He stops the car. He looks back at her. He reverses it back.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT

MAUREEN is standing fastening a carrier bag onto her head as a make-shift hood.

MARTIN (O.S.)
Do you want a lift?

MAUREEN
No. No. The bus will be along in - fifteen minutes.

MARTIN looks at her gruffly.

MARTIN
Get in the car Maureen.

MAUREEN thinks and then does.

INT. MARTIN’S CAR. NIGHT

MAUREEN looks around and smiles at MARTIN, they’re still nervous of each other.

MAUREEN
I did like your television show.

MARTIN doesn’t answer, they lapse back into silence.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Yes. I should have guessed there’d be more than one...

They drive past JJ - trying to get a Pizza moped started in the rain.

MAUREEN looks at JJ. MARTIN looks at MAUREEN.

He stops the car.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Tonight is really not going how I expected.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT

MARTIN’s car now has a moped lashed to its roof.

MARTIN (V.O.)
...There’d be more than one of us out there. But it didn’t – occur to me to think that...
As it drives past JESS. Who is hitching for a ride with something, anything.

MARTIN (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Oh no.

MARTIN’s car stops.

JESS runs to the car and then looks inside.

JESS
Bit early for a reunion isn’t it?

MARTIN is dry, everyone else looks like drowned rats.

JESS
Maybe we should have some sort of group therapy. Right here. Right now. Maybe that’s what destiny wants. Take a right here.

MARTIN does take a right.

JESS (CONT’D)
OK. One word answers. You can all have one word answers which address exactly why you were up on the roof in the first place.

No-one says anything.

JESS (CONT’D)
To give an example, Martin might say notoriety.

MARTIN
I wouldn’t say notoriety.

JESS
To give another example, Maureen might say loneliness.

MAUREEN looks at JESS, hurt.

MAUREEN
Is that what you think?

MARTIN
And what would be your reason?

JESS
Love. The oldest most rottenest chestnut of them all. Chas. He spurned me.

(MORE)
JESS (CONT'D)
I'm a spurned woman. (she smiles broadly) Take a left.

MARTIN takes a left.

MAUREEN
I am not lonely.

JESS
Tell that to your cats.

MAUREEN
I don’t have cats.

JESS is shocked.

JESS
Really?

MARTIN
And I’m not notorious.

JESS
You are quite notorious.

JESS turns and looks at JJ.

MAUREEN
I was up there because I felt...helpless.

JESS is ignoring MAUREEN now.

JESS
And then there’s this guy...

JJ
JJ.

JESS
Do you mind if I call you pizza boy...

JJ
Yeah.

JESS
Pizza boy. Why might pizza boy want to die? I’m guessing -

JJ looks at her - he doesn’t like this game.

JJ
Cancer. I have inoperable cancer.

JESS smiles broadly and punches his arm.
JESS
We have a winner. Brilliant. Very impressed. Embarrassing cancer?

JJ hesitates.

JJ
Brain. CCR.

JESS
Colon would have been better.
Right. Pull up here.

MARTIN pulls the car to a stop.

They look up at the squalid house they’re outside of, they listen to the pumping music it’s emitting. There is a party going on.

MAUREEN
Here? You live here?

JESS
No. But Chas the cunt is likely to be here. And I’ve got things to say to him. I’m going on a cunt hunt.

She looks around the car.

JESS (CONT’D)
Well. Good luck with your next attempts. See you in the afterlife.

She points at JJ.

JESS (CONT’D)
Very impressed with you. Cheers for the lift Martin.

She exits the car.

32 EXT. PARTY HOUSE. NIGHT

She stands looking up at the party. And for a moment her face is that of a little girl.

JESS
Right then.

33 INT. MARTIN’S CAR. NIGHT

MARTIN drives with steady intensity. The broken windscreen wipers grow ever more annoying.

MAUREEN looks at MARTIN. He tries to ignore the implication.
MARTIN
Where am I dropping you JJ?

JJ looks up. He’s in his own world.

JJ
Sorry? What did you say man?

MAUREEN looks at MARTIN again. He can’t hold it in no longer.

MARTIN
What? What?

MAUREEN
I’m not saying anything. She thinks I have cats.

MARTIN stops the car. Again.

No-one says anything.

MARTIN
We can’t leave her can we?

EXT. PARTY HOUSE. NIGHT

The car reverses back to JESS. Who is still in the same position. They get out and stand beside her.

JESS
Was wondering when you were going to turn up.

INT. PARTY HOUSE. HALLWAY. NIGHT

It’s loud. It’s proud. It’s happy to know you. It’s full of people who look like they don’t belong anywhere but here.

JESS
OK. So - Martin take the stairs, Maureen take the bathrooms, JJ the kitchen, I’ll take the dance floor. He’s tall, pierced, slick-haired, slightly wimpy looking and answers to the name of Chas.

No-one moves.

JESS (CONT’D)
Go on. Off you go.

MAUREEN
No. We’re here to – you should come with us.
MARTIN
We think we should talk with you about the big decision you almost just made -

JJ
To die.

MAUREEN
We’re going to go to Martin’s place for tea and a...chat.

JESS smiles at them all.

JESS
Yeah. We can have a tea party and talk about dying. I’m game. We just need to find Chas first. So when you find him, give a whistle and I’ll be there on the double.

JESS disappears into a crowd of people.

The others look at each other.

JJ
What else are we going to do...

JJ shrugs and heads off into the crowds. MARTIN and MAUREEN think and then copy JJ’s bravery.

36 INT. PARTY SQUAT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

MARTIN walks slightly disorientated through the crowds. This party really is a rampaging beast.

DREADED MAN
I know you. Breakfast TV.

A guy with dreads has approached MARTIN.

MARTIN
Hi. Um. Yeah, I’m looking for Chas?

DREADED MAN
Shit. Yee-ha! Breakfast TV. This is not for a special is it? Cos I’ve got shit to say to the breakfast masses. About...

MARTIN
This isn’t being filmed. I don’t do breakfast TV anymore.

BONG laughs at a joke that MARTIN hasn’t told.
DREADED MAN
I’m thinking ‘always eat breakfast’. And ‘clean socks feel nice, discuss’. And ‘go fuck yourself, Dad, I’m happy’. That sort of thing.. Cultural.

MARTIN
Yeah, nice to... I’m looking for somebody.

MARTIN walks away. The DREADED MAN watches him and then moves on.

He sits on a sofa.

A girl sits beside him. She looks at him and then strokes his face.

SHANAY
Hi.

She strokes his face again.

SHANAY (CONT’D)
Hi.

MARTIN
Um...

She looks at him for three seconds, and then instantly falls asleep. On his shoulder.

MARTIN looks at her a moment.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
There are few less lonely places to be. Than someone else’s party. On the most sociable night of the year. After you’ve just failed to kill yourself.

He extricates himself from the girl and lies her down against the arm of her sofa.

Then people start chanting.

CROWD

He aims for the exit. But he literally can’t get through. MARTIN looks for somewhere to hide. He spots a staircase. He aims up it.
INT. PARTY HOUSE. STAIRCASE. NIGHT

CROWD
Six. Five. Four.

MARTIN takes the stairs two at a time.

He opens the exit at the top.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE ROOF. NIGHT

MARTIN takes several deep breaths. And maybe – for the first time we see his pain. The pain of his life.

Then two people come out after him.

And he looks for somewhere to hide.

He wedges himself beside a sort of grill in the corner.

PEOPLE
Three. Two. One. Happy New Year.

There’s an audible cheer from the house and the streets outside. There’s an audible cheer throughout London. The two people snog. MARTIN winces.

CHAS (O.S.)
Hey.

MARTIN turns, surprised. He didn’t realise he had company. CHAS is sort of sitting underneath the grill.

MARTIN
Oh. Um. Hi. Hiding too are you?

CHAS
Yeah. I mean, sort of – I can’t come into the light.

MARTIN
Is that – comfortable?

CHAS
You get used to it. I’ve taken some pills. All good.

MARTIN laughs, he likes this guy.

CHAS (CONT’D)
What you hiding from?

MARTIN
Oh, you know – reality. You?

CHAS’s eyes are as round as saucers.
CHAS
Snap. Hoping the psycho bitch I just spotted is not really here.
That I’m just having a pill spasm.
But it probably is her and I’m not spasming. Though I’m pretty sure I’ve seen you on breakfast TV, so maybe...you know, spasm o’clock.

MARTIN looks at CHAS and then smiles softly.

MARTIN
You’re Chas aren’t you?

CHAS looks back and frowns.

CHAS
How d’you know that?

MARTIN
I’m here with the psycho bitch.

CHAS looks at MARTIN like he’s dangerous, then tries rapidly to escape.

This is easier said than done. He bangs his head on the underside of the grill and then almost falls off the roof as he runs to get away.

The two snoggers shriek and run inside. CHAS makes to follow them. MARTIN bars his way.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Chas. Chas. Listen to me. Let’s go find her together. What’s the worst that can happen?

CHAS turns to him with incredulity.

CHAS
She’s tried to kill me twice, got me arrested once. I’m banned from three pubs, two clubs, a cinema, and a hairdressers...

MARTIN
Ok. So the worst that can happen is...bad but...

CHAS stops and sways and looks at MARTIN more carefully.

CHAS
Look. Just let me leave quietly. I did nothing wrong.

MAUREEN (O.S.)
Nothing wrong? Taking her to bed. Nothing wrong?
MAUREEN is sitting on top of the roof by the chimney stacks.

CHAS
No more drugs for this man.

MAUREEN looks at MARTIN and shrugs.

MAUREEN
All those people - and you should have seen the toilets...

MARTIN smiles acknowledgement.

CHAS
I’m off -to a monkery - monastery - I’m becoming, you know, a monk.

MAUREEN
You owe her the courtesy of talking to her.

CHAS
She won’t talk! She’ll chase me with a bread knife -

MAUREEN
And tonight she was prepared to end her life because of what you did to her.

CHAS wobbles. Suddenly sober. MARTIN looks concerned. But MAUREEN is determined to let her bitterness hang on.

CHAS
What?

MARTIN
Maureen. I think that’s a bit (much).

MAUREEN
That’s where we met her. On top of a tower block. Preparing to - you know...

MAUREEN is clearly very upset. CHAS wobbles slightly again.

CHAS
What?

Then JJ bursts through the doors.

He looks at MARTIN, and then at MAUREEN.

JJ
It’s Jess. I think she’s taken an overdose.
INT. MARTIN’S CAR. NIGHT

MARTIN drives fast through the streets.
He’s following an ambulance.

MAUREEN is beside him. CHAS in the back. JJ is obviously with JESS.

INT. HOSPITAL. NIGHT

JESS is pushed hard through the hospital.
She’s trying to speak. She’s bucking hard. She’s deathly white.

MARTIN follows the trolley. MAUREEN, CHAS and JJ two steps behind.

MARTIN

NURSE
Are you her father?

MARTIN frowns at the question.
MARTIN
No.

JESS manages to get some words out.

NURSE
Next of kin? Are you next of kin?

MARTIN
No. No.

The trolley is moving quickly, MARTIN has to half run to keep up.

NURSE
Sir. I need her full name.

MARTIN
I only - she’s called Jess - I didn’t - none of us knew her before tonight.

Another nurse is going through JESS’s pockets.

NURSE 2
She’s got no identification on her. No nothing.

MARTIN half-smiles, but not in a good way.
MARTIN
She probably didn’t want to make identification easy....I think she likes things - difficult.

The NURSE looks at him coldly.

NURSE
You need to wait here....

The hospital double doors close on him.

INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM. NIGHT

MARTIN stands washing his face at the sink.

MARTIN (V.O.)
It’s hard not to consider the notion that I didn’t mean it. The suicide. That none of us meant it. But I did - I know I - I scored very highly on Aaron T. Beck’s Suicide Intent Scale. Twenty-one out of thirty points. Yes, suicide had been contemplated more than three hours prior to death, yes, I -

He looks up and into the mirror. He looks tired.

He makes to reach out and touch his face.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
- was certain of death even if I received medical attention. It’s fifteen storeys high, Toppers. Yes, there was preparation for the attempt: ladder, cigar... It’s just these - people - showed up. And I - well, I...

Then decides better of it. He speaks aloud.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Sometimes -

He decides better of finishing that sentence too.

INT. HOSPITAL. WAITING ROOM. NIGHT

MAUREEN, MARTIN and JJ sit in a line in a green-soaked waiting room. CHAS is lying on one of the other benches. Curled up. Asleep. With a thumb in his mouth.

There is a small television in the corner. Blaring out images of Hogmanay.
JJ
I need some air.

JJ stands and walks out.

MAUREEN thinks, looks at MARTIN and then follows JJ.

MARTIN thinks and then follows MAUREEN.

CHAS is left alone. Curled up. Foetally.

EXT. HOSPITAL CAR PARK. NIGHT

MARTIN’s car is parked in an empty car park looking up at the hospital. JJ, MAUREEN and MARTIN stand against it.

MARTIN gets out a cigar and lights it. He hands it wordlessly to JJ. Who takes a puff and hands it to MAUREEN, who smiles, doesn’t puff and hands it to MARTIN.

JJ
The rain’s stopped.

MAUREEN checks her watch. MARTIN rubs his eyes and smiles.

MARTIN
Late for something?

MAUREEN looks at him guiltily.

MAUREEN
My son’s home in three hours. And - Matty’s breakfast is quite complicated.

MARTIN is surprised.

MARTIN
You have a son?

MAUREEN reads his surprise.

MAUREEN
I don’t.... If I’m not going to die tonight it’s important he doesn’t know anything - happened.

MARTIN thinks, and then nods.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
We don’t even know her.

MARTIN
We don’t know each other.
Arguably we don’t know ourselves...

MAUREEN and MARTIN look at JJ.

JJ (CONT’D)
We wanted to kill ourselves. If that’s not self-alienation I don’t know what is.

They still look at him.

JJ (CONT’D)
I read a lot of self-help books.

MAUREEN nudges MARTIN, he sees what she sees.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE. NIGHT

JESS is coming out of the fluorescently tinged hospital dressed in a gown wearing nothing on her feet.

She sees them looking at her. She pulls a dance move. Saturday Night Fever style. Then she coughs. Then she starts to walk towards them.

She walks a little like John Wayne. They watch her approach.

EXT. HOSPITAL CAR PARK. NIGHT

She stands and looks at them a beat. Looked at closely she has charcoal smears at the corners of her mouth. She smiles at them all.

JESS
OK. So a few things to clarify. One, my gown is open backed because they’ve stolen my clothes, so I’m going to twirl so you can look at my arse once.

She twirls. We get a look at her arse.

JESS (CONT’D)
But please don’t look again. It’s not my best feature. My tits are. But I’m not showing you those til I know you better. Two. It wasn’t an overdose. It was an accident.

MARTIN
Jess...
JESS
I just took some pills - for fun - and then took some more..I'd never kill myself with pills - jumping off a tower block is way - way - cooler.

And then she laughs, but no-one else laughs.

JJ
We were worried Jess.

Her face grows more serious. She looks at JJ.

JESS
That’s three. Thanks. For, you know, caring ....appreciate it.

MARTIN
He was worried. I was trying to work out why we are still here.

JESS
And that’s four. I’ve been thinking. We’ve gone too far. We need to make a pact.

MAUREEN
What?

MARTIN
What kind of pact?

JESS
When’s the next date? After New Year’s Eve? When every one kills themselves?

MARTIN
Why - ?

MAUREEN
Valentine’s Day.

JESS looks at MAUREEN and smiles, that is a good answer.

JESS
That’s six weeks. Here’s the pact: No-one kills themselves until then.

There’s a brief silence.

MARTIN
Why? Why would we do that? Why would we not kill ourselves if and when and how we want?
JESS
Because we’ve met each other now –
because – you stopped me – twice –
you Martin. But mostly because –

JESS thinks, she’s trying here.

JESS (CONT’D)
You know that bit in films where
people fight up the top of the
Empire State building – and there’s
the bit when the baddie slips off
and the hero tries to save him, but
the baddies sleeve rips off and you
hear him all the way down. Aaargh.

MARTIN
You want to watch me plunge to my
doom?

JESS
I’d like to know I’ve made the
effort. I want to show people I’ve
made the effort.

There’s a silence. A soft tissue silence.

JESS (CONT’D)
Besides, what’s the alternative? A
race to finish. Me checking the
obituaries every week to see Martin
Sharp is dead...

She looks at JJ and MAUREEN.

JESS (CONT’D)
No offence, your deaths won’t make
the papers....Think about it. It’s
only six weeks.

MAUREEN is thinking hard.

MAUREEN
It does seem to make sense. Just
til Valentines Day.

JESS turns and smiles at MAUREEN, surprised at her ally.

JESS
Thank you Maureen! Who’s got a
pen?

JJ gets out a pen.

JESS (CONT’D)
Paper?

MAUREEN thinks and pulls out a piece of paper.
MAUREEN

Paper.

JESS speaks as she writes in a faux posh accent.

JESS
The undersigned do hereby promise
not to kill themselves until
Valentine’s Day. Maureen sign...

MAUREEN nods and signs.

JESS (CONT’D)
Pizza boy sign...

JJ
But...

JESS
Just do it. You’re dying anyway.
Makes no odds to you.

JJ thinks, hesitates, and then signs.

JESS signs after him.

JESS (CONT’D)
And then there’s you
Martin...life saver. Superman.

The two hold eye contact for a moment.

MARTIN
I’m pretty sure we’re going to live
to regret this.

MARTIN signs.

JJ
Guys. Look. The sun’s coming up.

And the sun is coming up. Breaking low over the assorted houses.

They all turn and stare at it.

MAUREEN
(soft, so soft)
So it is a new year then?

JESS
Yeah.

And the four stand together looking up at the beautiful dawn sky.
MARTIN (V.O.)
And there we were. The Topper House four. Like superheroes. Only not. Four people who thought they’d never see a new year. Four people joined only by a shared desire to -

His voice-over is interrupted by JESS.

JESS
Hang on. Maureen.....Just a fucking question here...

JESS has unfolded the piece of paper which they’ve written their pact upon.

MAUREEN turns.

JESS (CONT’D)
Have we written our pact on your suicide note?

MAUREEN smiles.

MAUREEN
Oh. Yes. There is that.

JESS laughs first. Then MARTIN. And then everyone laughs. And properly. And then they stop. Because it sort of isn’t that funny. But the smiles remain.

46 C/U. FINGERS. DAY

A hard and heavy pumping beat. This world is visually and rhythmically different to the world we’ve been in. If Martin’s soundtrack was Bruce Springsteen then we’re now in the land of Tinchy Stryder.

JESS (V.O.)
It surprised me to hear that invisibility is a technical possibility. It was in this book that Chas owned.

47 C/U. FINGERNAILS. DAY

They’re chipped to shit and covered in three chipped layers of different coloured nail polish – gold, silver and red.

JESS (V.O.)
The only book Chas owned.
EXT. BUSY STREET. DAY

JESS walks down a street. Like she owns it. She has the purpose of an SAS soldier on a secret mission.

Her phone begins to ring. She looks to see who is calling. She walks into the middle of the road. She disconnects the call.

A car slams on its breaks to stop from hitting her. It beeps loudly. JESS turns, looks at it aggressively and then raises her top and flashes her bra at the aggrieved driver.

JESS (V.O.)
I can’t remember the theory exactly. It was something about diffracting light. Good word. Diffracting. Chas didn’t really understand it. I didn’t either.
But, you know, good to know, I think, invisibility being a technical possibility.

Her phone rings again. This time, it has ‘The Minister’ on it. She looks at it, frowns, then disconnects.

She looks up, breaks into a small run and then slows down. She IS on a mission.

JESS (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Not that I’ve ever wanted to be invisible. But sometimes I don’t like to be seen.

We follow her POV – she’s watching a man walk down the street holding a guitar case.

He turns and looks towards her. JESS dodges behind a bin.

He turns onto a small square.

JESS follows him.

JESS (V.O.) (CONT’D)
I follow them all...Not just him...

EXT. SQUARE. DAY

She sits on a bench, obscured by a pillar, watching JJ.

JESS (V.O.)
It’s important to me - everyone sticks to the pact. You see the thing about me is I’m very contractual, by my very nature.

JJ gets out his guitar and begins to play. He’s a busker.
JESS (V.O.) (CONT’D)
It’s a trust thing, and, according to my fifth therapist – who I tried to stab with a letter opener – I have slight trust issues.

Someone sits on the bench opposite her. They open their newspaper.

JESS (CONT’D)
So I follow them all. Just to – check.

The front cover reads ‘TV’S MARTIN SHARP IN SUICIDE BID WITH MINISTER’S DAUGHTER’.

JESS looks at it. Frowns.

Then her phone starts ringing again.

She looks at it. She answers it.

JESS (CONT’D)
OK. To clarify. Now I know why you’re ringing...

INT. JESS’S HOUSE. HALLWAY. DAY

JESS is standing in a plush hallway talking in hushed angry tones to a middle-aged man in a suit. CHRIS.

JESS
Don’t even start...

CHRIS
Look, what we have here is a situation...so I’ve invited...

JESS’s eyes go dead.

JESS
A “situation”? That’s the word you’re choosing is it?

CHRIS
How else would you refer to...it?

JESS
I don’t know Dad.

CHRIS looks at his daughter for a beat, then dismisses the thought.

CHRIS
You did what you did.
...Tried to kill myself.

CHRIS
Tried to... Are you going to twist my words all day? Because this is hard enough.

JESS'S face grows cold.

JESS
Is it? Sorry Dad.

JESS exits to the living room.

CHRIS

INT. JESS’S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

MARTIN is standing staring at the room. JESS enters. She looks at him. Shocked. He looks back. Less shocked.

JESS
What are you doing here?

MARTIN
Uh... Hi.

CHRIS enters the room behind her. JESS turns to look at him.

CHRIS
I called his agent...

JESS
You called his agent?

CHRIS
So we could all talk -

JESS turns back to MARTIN.

MARTIN
A Junior Minister’s daughter – I was surprised...

JESS
Class is as class does, and I ain’t got no class.

MARTIN
Was it you - who... went to the press?

JESS scowls.
JESS
No. You think I want...?

There’s a brief moment of silence.

MARTIN
Cindy rang this morning - asking what I’d done - asking me what she should tell my children.

JESS has a despairing thought.

JESS
Chas. Fucking Chas. It was Chas. He sold us. Another one I can’t trust.

MARTIN
She told me I seem to be the only person in the world that the press gets bang on. If they say I’ve slept with a fifteen year old, I have. If they say I’ve contemplated suicide – I have.

CHRIS is looking at him, the words ringing in the room.

CHRIS
Yes, I read about that with the - girl...You didn’t....you two aren’t...

JESS
Dad. You’re asking whether we’ve slept together aren’t you?

MARTIN looks at CHRIS furiously. Who is this guy?

MARTIN
Jesus! Absolutely not.

JESS
Oi! I am at least legal.

MARTIN
Yeah and I value our friendship too much to complicate it.

JESS raises her finger at MARTIN’s irony. CHRIS smiles relieved.

CHRIS
Good to know. And, um, will you maintain a relationship with Jess?

MARTIN
Define your terms...
CHRIS
Define your terms..

MARTIN looks at CHRIS coldly.

MARTIN
Look. I came here because I knew you’d be worried, but if you’re going to talk to me like this, I’ll fuck off home.

JESS
Actually, we are in a gang.

MARTIN frowns at JESS.

MARTIN
We’re not in a gang.

JESS
We did sign a pact –

MARTIN is getting increasingly angry.

MARTIN
So now we’re blood brothers?

JESS looks at MARTIN, disappointed.

CHRIS
Look. This is a hard situation for all of us....

JESS looks at her Dad, equally disappointed.

JESS
Is it Dad?

CHRIS
Perhaps some calm...

CHRIS sits. He looks at his daughter, hoping she’ll sit, she doesn’t.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
Martin...I’m sure I don’t need to tell a man with your media training that this is a firestorm...

JESS looks at them both coldly. She puts on a faux posh voice.

JESS
Yeah. This is a media firestorm. Gentlemen. I’ll leave you to it.
INT. STAIRCASE. JESS’S HOUSE. DAY

JESS charges up the stairs. CHRIS follows her.

CHRIS

MARTIN follows him out. JESS turns around violently.

JESS
Go on give him money. Throw money at the problem, Dad. He can come to my therapy sessions or maybe our family therapy sessions. Or maybe you can pay him to be you.

CHRIS
Martin doesn’t want my money.

He looks at MARTIN.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
Do you? I mean...

JESS looks at her Dad - furious - and then continues up the stairs - Chris doesn’t chase.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
Jess. Come back here. Come back...

But she’s long gone.

MARTIN and CHRIS stand uncomfortably on the stairs, looking up at the empty space JESS has left.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
Did that go as badly as I think it did?

MARTIN
Has anyone ever told you, you’re a bit of an idiot?

CHRIS smiles sadly.

CHRIS
I’m a politician. No-one ever tells me anything but.

MARTIN thinks and then makes to exit.

MARTIN
Sort your own mess out.
Her bedroom is decorated how JESS’s bedroom should perhaps be decorated. It’s heavily angry. But angry with a hint of Selfridges. She’s spent money on accessorizing her anger.

JESS (V.O.)
A few words about my Dad.
Actually fuck him. And no words needed about Mum either.

JESS sits on her bed. She turns on the TV. She flicks to a pop show, and then to a cheaply made drama on repeat, and then flicks again before stopping as a news report spews out.

REPORTER
This is the second tragedy for the Crichton family of course -

JESS, transfixed, gently sings the words to Tragedy by the Bee Gees (but she knows the Steps version).

JESS
Tragedy. When the feelings wrong -

REPORTER
- after the high-profile disappearance of oldest daughter Jennifer four years ago.

A picture of a girl appears on screen. She looks slightly like JESS. JESS flinches. And stops singing.

REPORTER (CONT’D)
Jennifer was never found. And you have got to wonder how shadow Education Secretary Chris Crichton will cope with this new strain upon him.

There is a knock at the door. JESS turns off the TV.

Then regrets turning off the TV and thinks about turning it on again. But thinks better of it.

The knock is repeated.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Can I come in?

JESS says nothing.

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Jess...

Then opens a window and climbs out.
EXT. JESS’S HOUSE. ROOF. SUNSET

JESS climbs and sits on the ledge of the roof. The sun is beginning to set, she looks beautiful up there.

She smiles. She sings. Again. Under her breath.

JESS
Tragedy. When the feeling’s wrong
and you can’t...la la la.

She stops singing.

INT. JESS’S BEDROOM. SUNSET

CHRIS knocks again on the door.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Jess. Jess? Shall I come in?
Shall I come in?

EXT. JESS’S HOUSE. ROOF. SUNSET

JESS sits on the roof.

INT. JESS’S BEDROOM. SUNSET

CHRIS enters JESS’s room, with hesitancy. His face sinks.
He looks around the room. He talks almost under his breath.

CHRIS
Where have you gone now? Jess...

EXT. JESS’S HOUSE. ROOF. SUNSET

CHRIS (O.S.)
Jess...

JESS listens intently to all the noises her Dad is making.

EXT. JESS’S HOUSE. DAY

CHRIS, now besuited, leaves for work. There are a small throng of reporters on the front step.

JESS (V.O.)
It turns out being a suicide celebrity isn’t that great. Not because of the few reporters who - you know - salt and pepper my Dad on the way to work.
CHRIS pushes through the reporters.

INT. JESS’S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY

JESS sits eating rice crispies, as her Mum, HOPE, watches her birdlike from a perch by the fridge. She’s talking on the phone.

There is a big picture of JENNIFER behind JESS’s head.

    JESS (V.O.)
    Or because of grannies Mum has to talk to - and - persuade I’m not spending my gap year trying out different ways to kill myself -

EXT. STREET. DAY

JESS is following JJ. He has a guitar on his back and is moving quickly. She is moving quickly. He stops at traffic lights. She stops a few paces behind. In the shop window behind her is a bank of televisions, every one of which are showing her face.

    JESS (V.O.)
    No, the thing being a suicide celebrity really interfered with is - well, there’s nothing that slows stalking down like being mildly famous...

Everyone is looking at JESS. Everyone that is apart from JJ. She looks right back.

EXT. STREET. DAY

JESS follows JJ down a street.

He notices something. He notices he’s being followed. He stops. She stops.

He turns. She dodges behind a bin.

He carries on walking.

He stops. He turns. JESS throws herself into a doorway.

    JJ
    Is someone...?

JESS has to stuff her fist in her mouth to stop from laughing.
JJ (CONT’D)
I’m not interested in talking to the press – I don’t know who your sources are...

JESS steps out from the doorway, suddenly quite serious.

JESS
They know about you?

JJ is more than surprised to see JESS.

JJ
Jess?

JESS
They know you were....that night?

JJ
I guess so. They keep knocking.

JESS smiles in reflection.

JESS
Chas is cleverer than I thought....you’re very forgettable so for him to remember you...

JJ
Shocked me too.

JESS looks at JJ and smiles.

JESS
We need to sort this out don’t we? I smell a reunion.

JJ
No. Jess...

JESS
Come-on. This’ll be fun.

INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

MARTIN, JESS, and JJ all have fairly surprised looks on their faces. JESS is hiding her astonishment least well. MAUREEN looks shyly tentative.

JESS
Wow.

MAUREEN
Yes, this is Matty...My son.
JESS

JJ
Jess...

Cut wide and MATTY is sitting in a special chair in the centre of the room. He is 22 and has severe cerebral palsy and severe (related) learning difficulties. He is almost entirely incapable of speech or movement.

MAUREEN
He doesn’t - I don’t - what does that mean? Wow?

JESS
That’s what you were hiding in here! This is close encounters of the third kind! Not that I’m accusing your kid of being an alien. Obviously.

JJ
Jess. Enough.

JESS turns and looks at JJ. Surprised at him telling her off. Then she looks back at MAUREEN, who is visibly upset.

MAUREEN
I wasn’t - leaving him - that - night - there was care -

JJ
Maureen. No-ones accusing you of-

MAUREEN
- social services would have been forced to pay for proper care for him. But as it is I’m a sole carer which is..

She looks at MATTY she doesn’t like discussing this in front of him.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
The standard of care they can provide. It’s better - you can’t - understand..

MARTIN
Yes. We can. And I’m sure - certain - you’re a great Mum Maureen.

MAUREEN looks up at MARTIN - does no-one understand?

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Now. Shall we get back to the matter in hand?
MAUREEN turns to JESS fiercely. One thought left.

MAUREEN
And I don’t hide him. I’ve never hid him. Never.

JESS pulls her neck back slightly.

MARTIN touches MAUREEN on the shoulder. She flinches. And then she looks back at JESS.

MARTIN
We’ve convened this meeting...

JJ
To get them to leave us alone. I’d three people ring my cell today...How did they get my cell?

MARTIN
They won’t. Leave us alone.

Everyone realises MARTIN knows what he’s talking about.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
They’ll find out where you live - where Maureen lives..

MAUREEN
They’ll be here?

MARTIN looks at MAUREEN. He licks his lips, thinking hard.

MARTIN
So...I’ve been thinking... What if we shift the goalposts - make some money out of this...

MAUREEN
Money?

MARTIN
Don’t you need money for - Matty. Couldn’t JJ use exposure for his music....And...

This is difficult for MARTIN.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
And - I was fired today - so I could do with - something.

MAUREEN
Fired?

MARTIN
Turns out suicide is the brick that breaks the cable TV skull.

(MORE)
They wouldn’t be tuning in to watch the interview, they’d be tuning in to watch a crack-up.

That what we are is it? Crack-ups?

JJ suddenly pipes up with.

I’m in. I don’t care about exposure. I’ll just take the dollar. Beats Bob’s Burgers.

MAUREEN

I don’t want Matty in the papers.

We can’t stop that. But this way at least we don’t lose out entirely. And maybe we can - slightly - control the agenda. Trust me, Maureen. I know this world.

MAUREEN looks at MARTIN, she does trust him.

Well...I...yes. OK.

Then as one our team turn to JESS - who looks at them. She’s being quiet for once.

We do like these pacts don’t we?

She grins.

I’m fine financially. I’ve got my Dad to nick from. What’ll you do to convince me?

Make the story a fun one.

Close on JESS’s face. A small smile forms.

Stay close on JESS’s face. The shots merge. Bouncy bouncy pop starts playing underneath.
JESS
He looked like Matt Damon.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY
Close on MAUREEN’s face.

MAUREEN
Sort of like my old neighbour
Peter Hopworth.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY
Close on JJ. He looks desperately uncomfortable.

JJ
He looked kind of like....me.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY
Close on MARTIN.

MARTIN
I didn’t make out any kind of face at all.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

JESS
Not Matt Damon now... Matt Damon when he was attractive and a bit girly. Before he started doing action movies.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

MAUREEN
Not that.... not that you’d know what Peter looked like. But he always had a quality to his face.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

JJ
And he was naked - he was - I was - naked...
INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

MARTIN
Of course he didn’t say anything. He had no mouth.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

The confidence is starting to leave JESS.

JESS
What are you writing down? ‘She chewed her pencil romantically as she explained her angelic rescue’.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

JJ
And then his - my - eyes started to bleed - eyes started to melt down his face... I didn’t know - I don’t know what that meant.

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

JESS
“She chewed her pencil coquettishly as she...” Seriously, what are you writing down?

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

It’s starting to leave MAUREEN too.

MAUREEN
I do believe in God. This won’t come across as -

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

MARTIN
Are we done?

INT. BLANK ROOM. DAY

JESS
And you will be...you won’t just write about my sister will you? I mean, the angel is the important part of the story...I mean, you know what I mean, right?
The four sit casually on a tree trunk. A photographer snaps them. And then JJ falls off the back of it and they all laugh.

JESS (V.O.)
We made £20,000 for the newspaper. Split four ways. Martin’s agent repped us, but Martin insisted on equal split. And then we did a photoshoot for a celebrity magazine. Another £7000.

JESS sits eating dinner with her Mum and Dad. She’s picking at her food. The difference between the tree and table is pronounced and the silence is deadly.

JESS (V.O.)
And everyone either laughed at us or - thought we were scam artists - but we didn’t care. They’d laugh anyway. And we got £27,000 of pleasure for our pain.

CHRIS
These potatoes are very nice.

HOPE
Olive oil. I normally use butter.

CHRIS
Olive oil is better for us too.

HOPE
Yes.

The family turn back to eating. Both parents try not to look at JESS.

CHRIS
I had an interesting thing happen today...

HOPE
Did you?

JESS
Let me guess. Your second daughter humiliated you on the pages of the national press.

CHRIS
Actually no, I was in chambers and...
JESS
Someone said ‘Chris, was that your daughter on the pages of the national press’.

CHRIS snaps back.

CHRIS
If you want to make this about something Jess, we can. Do you?

JESS
Yes. I want this to be about something. I want you to admit you’re angry with me. I want you to admit you’re mad.

CHRIS thinks and then makes to say something and then doesn’t and puts a potato in his mouth instead. He chews it, thoughtfully.

CHRIS
People have laughed at me for a long time. But I did prefer it when they didn’t laugh at you.

OK. This stings. JESS sits on her chair a little bit longer. CHRIS looks at her with grey eyes. He’s furious. But containing it.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
Angel? You told them you saw an angel?

HOPE
Chris...

CHRIS
And did it look like Jennifer, were you going to say that too?

There is a silence. That bites.

JESS
No Dad. No Daddy. I didn’t say it looked like Jennifer.

JESS is almost in tears. But not quite. She smiles, bravely.

JESS (CONT’D)
I said it looked like Matt Damon.

INT. PLUSH TELEVISION STUDIO. DAY

JESS is having her face dusted with powder.
JESS (V.O.)
My first television appearance was when I was three years old. I had to hug my Dad. A photographer told me to. I missed. And hugged my dog instead.

PENNY comes onto stage with her make-up napkin still around her chin.

PENNY
Martin.

MARTIN
Penny.

PENNY
You’re thinner.

MARTIN
You’re more or less the same - though maybe you’ve put on a little around the thighs?

PENNY laughs fakely.

PENNY
Still the dangerous sense of humour I see....

MARTIN
Still the vaguely supercilious grin I see...

PENNY
Oh. And you’re still using words you don’t understand. How...sweet.

JESS (V.O.)
Can’t say I fell in love with the cameras then. Can’t say I’m in love with the cameras now.

She turns to everyone with a practised smile.

PENNY
Hi. Everyone. I’m Penny. Now just relax and remember that our audience just want to see the real you. This should be...this can be...real fun...

PENNY thinks, smiles at MARTIN again, and then exits.

The four lapse back into nervous silence.

MAUREEN
This will be OK won’t it?
JJ
Just think about the money.

MAUREEN turns quietly to MARTIN.

MAUREEN
You’re as nervous as the rest of us aren’t you?

MARTIN blinks slowly, takes MAUREEN’s hand and squeezes it.

MARTIN
Yeah. I think I probably am.

JESS, saying nothing, frowns at them all.

81 INT. TELEVISION TITLES. DAY
Rise and Shine with Penny theme music and titles.

JESS (V.O.)
Jen was already better at that stuff. And Dad saw that, so basically generally used her, not me. And don’t give me that shit about parents loving their kids the same. Do you really think George Bush senior loves Junior the same as the other one?

82 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO. DAY
PENNY smiles down the camera lens. We swap between that and JESS’s pov. JESS obviously has the camera crew in hers as well as PENNY and the gang.

PENNY
Now many of us have been transfixed by the story of The “Topper House Four” and the “angel” that visited them. And we are so lucky here on ‘Rise and Shine with Penny’ to have them with us today.

Slow span over all the faces of our four. They look petrified. They’re trying not to be.

PENNY (CONT’D)
One of them certainly needs no introduction. Martin, Martin Sharp, my old co-host...

MARTIN
Penny. It’s an honour to be back on this old sofa again.
PENNY smiles.

PENNY
Now Martin, it’d be remiss of me -- not to start this interview by giving the audience a bit of a backstory on what’s happened to you in the last twelve months.

MARTIN nods, he’d been expecting this.

MARTIN
Yes Penny, well, I’ve been working on internet cable channel ‘Kapow’ -- and before that I was in prison.

We close on JESS, her eyes are flicking from left to right. She’s extremely nervous.

PENNY
For sex with an underage girl.

MARTIN
With a fifteen year old girl yes.

Off camera she’s passed a bunch of tabloid newspapers, she begins to flick through them. Laying them out on the coffee table in front of her.

PENNY
And here are some of the headlines that Martin suffered, and they were cruel weren’t they Martin?

MARTIN squints pure pain at PENNY. She’s twisting the knife and both know it.

MARTIN
Yes. Some.

JESS wipes some sweat from her forehead, it makes her make-up smudge.

PENNY
But many would say also deserved. And this incident led you to losing your job, your family, your home, and, finally, drove you to suicidal feelings.

MARTIN
That’s right Penny.

PENNY turns and beams at the other three.
PENNY
Which is where he met you lovely people.

JJ joins in, desperate to help.

JJ
Yes. We all met up there.

PENNY
And where you saw your angel.

JJ
Yes. We saw our angel.

PENNY turns to JESS.

PENNY
Now Jess -

JESS stiffens.

JESS
Me next? No. Do the others first.

PENNY smiles a kind TV smile.

PENNY
- our viewers of course will know you mostly through your father, Chris Chricton, shadow Education minister

JESS is actually genuinely very uncomfortable.

JESS
Talk to JJ, he’s much more interesting-

She’s panicking. She seems to be somehow holding her breath.

PENNY
...and of course from the sad disappearance of your sister Jennifer.

JESS
Or Maureen... Talk to Maureen.
Her son lives in a cage.

PENNY laughs a TV laugh. JESS stiffens more. She’s being backed into a corner here.

PENNY
I will talk to Maureen, but let’s just talk to you first. Was that what led you up there?

(MORE)
JESS’s eyes harden.

JESS
I said - talk to Maureen - bitch.

PENNY turns to camera. Trying not to look shocked.

PENNY
Viewers, I’d like to apologise now for -

JESS is in tears.

JESS
Why didn’t you listen to me you fucking - why didn’t you listen?

She rips off her microphone. She starts to try and move away, move through the floor of cameras.

MARTIN

JESS
How do I get out of here? This is a fucking - maze.

JESS charges off set as everyone else stands trying to put out the fire she started.

PENNY
Are we off air? Can someone tell me whether we’re off-air?

EXT. STREET. DAY

JESS walks quickly down the street. She wipes away a stray tear.

She realises she’s being followed. And turns down a darker street. The follower continues.

JESS
Who is that? Because - fuck off -

JJ comes into the light.

JESS (CONT’D)
Oh. It’s you.

JJ
Just wanted to check you’re OK.
JESS
Never better champ.

JESS turns and starts to walk again. JJ follows.

JJ
Why do you always pretend like you know everything? If you’d given us warning we could have protected you, but no, you had to pretend you were OK, until you weren’t.

JESS laughs derision at JJ’s attempted insight and then blinks back tears - hating the fact that they are there.

JESS
You going to keep following me?

JJ
Do you know where you’re going?

She turns to face him. She deflates slightly. Yeah. She knows where she’s going.

JESS
Walk beside me not behind me, OK?
My arse is not my best feature.

JJ
Yeah. You mentioned that.

EXT. SNOOKER CLUB. DAY

JESS sits down on a wall.

JJ thinks about sitting beside her, but changes his mind and leans against the wall.

JESS thinks and then says something difficult.

JESS
This is where she parked it...

JJ
Parked what?

JESS
Mum’s car. My car. The car that was going to be my car when Jen went to university.

JJ thinks, declares and pulls himself onto the wall alongside her.
They found the car. Didn’t find her. She’d vamoosed. Vanished. Presumed dead. Abducted. Savaged. Murdered. Hung up on a meat hook and cannibalized one internal organ at a time. Or, you know, just gone. Maybe she just learnt how to be invisible.

JJ
Must be - tough.

JESS looks at JJ and then looks away.

JESS
I know - I don’t know everything. I don’t know anything.

She looks at JJ.

JESS (CONT’D)
But I do know you don’t have cancer.

JJ turns suddenly.

JJ
What?

JESS
I followed you. You didn’t go to one appointment. Not one doctor. Terminally ill? No chance.

JJ
You followed me?

JESS
Oh don’t get an erection, I followed everyone.

JJ thinks and then nods.

JJ
It was an accident. I didn’t mean to... Don’t tell the others.

JESS laughs.

JESS
Wow. You did..? You lied about cancer. Wow. That’s like denying the holocaust. Or saying slavery was actually a good idea. You’re a racist. You’re a cancerist.

JJ says nothing, just nods. JESS looks at him queerly.
JESS (CONT’D)
You really wanted to jump, right?
You weren’t just trying to
deliver pizza and then got too
polite to correct us...

JJ
I wanted to jump.

JESS
Why?

JJ considers this. Biting his lip. He hesitates.

JESS (CONT’D)
It’s an easy enough question JJ.

JJ turns to her - his face unsure. He says nothing.

JESS (CONT’D)
Wow. Must be one dark reason.
You’re an embezzler. A murderer. A
paedophile. What are the chances of
that? Four suicidalists. One roof.
Two of them paedophiles. That’s
practically a convention.

JJ looks at her - he’s not going to tell her anything. JESS
smiles softly.

JESS (CONT’D)
You’re not going to tell me are
you?

JJ
I know I shouldn’t have - lied.
Just....cancer seemed - easier.

JESS
(laughs)
Said the Leukaemia sufferer to the
Aids victim.

JJ laughs and JESS looks at him, pleased. JJ looks back and
their eyes meet for a second and then he looks away.

JESS (CONT’D)
My sister is not the reason I
wanted to...she’s not the reason I
was up on that roof. She’s not
even...I don’t know what she is.

JJ
No.

They sit in silence a moment. She looks at JJ.
JESS
I just, I come here - sometimes, when....well, sometimes.

There’s a moment more silence. And then JJ sees something.

JJ
Look....

What?

JJ
Swifts.

He points up to the sky. She looks up. She thinks about making a joke. But changes her mind.

JJ (CONT’D)
You know, my favourite thing about swifts? They nest on the wing. They’re born, they’re fed, but from the moment they leave the birth place they don’t come down for two years until ready to create other baby Swifts.

JESS looks at him - softly understanding - and then laughs.

JESS
Oh my God. You wanted to kill yourself because you’re a bird watcher. That I understand.

JJ puts his hand on hers - still watching the swifts. And she looks at his hand. And it feels weird...and nice.

JESS (CONT’D)
You’re strange.

JJ
You’re stranger.

JESS smiles. He makes to move his hand, but she keeps hold of it and softly smiles. He turns away from the birds to look at her. So she looks up at the birds.

JESS
They don’t come down?

JJ
Yeah. Cool isn’t it?

And the camera pulls back. On a young confused couple, sitting outside a Snooker Club.
Close on the ear.

JJ (V.O.)
One elephant. Two elephants. Three elephants. Four.

An alarm and some loudly monstrous music bangs in. The ear canal contracts.

JJ wakes with a start. An alarm going beside his head – a track plays. A flailing hand twiddles with the dial until it finds something more acceptable. And something acceptable is – well – something quite JJ-ish. Animal Collective/The xx/Mouldy Peaches/Grizzly Bear you know the sort of thing...

JJ climbs out of bed in his boxer shorts. He has a body most would want.

JJ (V.O.)
There was only seven years between the release of The Beatles first album and their last. Seven years in which they changed the world, made a shitload of cash and desecrated Christ. That’s quite something I think.

On his floor are on the detritus of a musician’s existence. Guitars – music – CDs – rizla papers – few empty bottles – dirty clothes – a dirty life.

JJ stands underneath the water.

JJ (V.O.)
But nothing on us.

JJ, now dressed, his hair still wet and hauling a large canvas style army bag, leaves his flat.

JJ (V.O.)
In a mere five weeks we’d not only not died
JJ descends the stairs, walking past an old woman, GLADYS, making her slow way up the stairs with her wheely basket.

JJ (V.O.)
We’d been on the front pages of every major newspaper, led many people to believe again in the existence of angels.

On the ground floor, he walks down the hallway to the main door to the block of flats.

JJ (V.O.) (CONT’D)
And caused more television complaints to be logged than anyone since that time the guy did that thing to the girl’s dog on that TV talent show...

He looks through his door’s peephole.

JJ (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Yeah. You remember that thing.

He sighs.

There are quite a few reporters outside JJ’s front door. In fact, more than a few, there is a gaggle.

JJ stands a moment and then retreats up the stairs, carefully side-stepping GLADYS as he does.

JJ (V.O.)
We’d even had questions asked in parliament, though that might have been just to embarrass Jess’s Dad.

JJ opens a hallway window. And looks out.

GLADYS passes him as she continues her way inexorably up. She stands and frowns and catches her breath.

GLADYS
Suicide again is it?

JJ smiles charmingly.

JJ
Hello Gladys. Do you - need a hand?
GLADYS
You concentrate on what you need to do - I can help myself -

EXT. JJ’S BLOCK OF FLATS. DAY

JJ climbs out onto the building’s fire-escape, he ascends it slightly, and then climbs into someone’s balcony. This is not easy but neither is it Spiderman.

JJ (V.O.)
But the thing about avoiding press intrusion...

He then reaches the end of the balcony and – and this bit is a bit more tricky – in fact, it’s more or less impossible, the gap to the next balcony over is a bit too wide.

JJ (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Well.

JJ looks...
Steadies himself.
And then stops.
No. The gap is too big.

INT. BLOCK OF FLATS. DAY

JJ climbs back through the window.

GLADYS leans down over the banisters.

GLADYS
Change of heart?

JJ
Not the weather for it.

GLADYS smiles. She indicates down the stairs. She knows the truth.

GLADYS
Them press sure make buying a pint of milk tricky, eh?

JJ nods.

EXT. BLOCK OF FLATS. DAY

JJ bravely walks through the crowd of reporters.
They all ask him questions, he ignores all of them.
REPORTER 1
JJ, what's your reaction to Penny's statement about -

PAP
JJ. To me. Smile son.

REPORTER 2
JJ. Off to see another angel?

He doesn't like this. At all.

95
INT. BAGGAGE CAROUSEL. DAY

JJ stands with MAUREEN and MARTIN, all carry airline tickets.

JJ (V.O.)
It was Martin's idea. Go abroad, stay incognito.

JESS sitting on the carousel rides gently past JJ's back amidst the bags, wearing sunglasses and a large smile. Not very incognito.

JJ (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Use some of our TV bounty. Avoid the press. Enjoy some privacy and make it to our six week no suicide deadline.

MAUREEN
We're like Butch and Sunpat?

MARTIN
Sundance. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

MAUREEN
They ran away?

MARTIN
They were being pursued. They decided to make a new life in Chile.

JJ catches the eye of a girl - KATHY - who is walking through the airport confidently. She has something about her.

MAUREEN
And did that work out well for them? Chile?

MARTIN realises this might be a bad metaphor.

MARTIN
Well....not so much....
JJ
Who’s looking after Matty, Maureen?

JESS (O.S.)
No-one, she’s just left some food in the fridge, some oxygen in his tank, and some baby-wipes beside his bed.

They all turn - JESS has dismounted the carousel and is standing directly behind them.

MAUREEN
Dr Stephens thought the experience could work for the both of us. He thought he could really do with a week of observing Matty close up...

MARTIN looks at JESS.

MARTIN
Not a word.

JESS
What was I going to say?

MARTIN
Something about your aliens observing...

JESS grins at MARTIN who can’t help but smile back.

JESS
Thanks Martin. But when you do my next joke, make a bit more effort with the timing...

TANNIOY
The BA316 flight to Mykonos is now ready to board at Gate 13.

They all turn towards the gate. Slightly hesitant. The wind out of their sails briefly.

JJ (V.O.)
Ya-huh. We were running away. Just til Valentine’s Day and the pact was dead, and so could we be.

MAUREEN
Are we sure we want to do this?

This is a line that makes sense.

JESS
Yeah. We’re swifts. We’re sure.

JJ turns and frowns at JESS and then smiles.
JJ (V.O.)
We’d booked on a Valentine’s break
to Mykonos and that was—well—

Cut wide JJ and JESS have kissing couples to either side of
them, they look at both uncomfortably.

JJ (V.O.)
Great.

JESS looks at JJ, maybe even with slight shyness in her
breath, JJ looks at JESS. Their eyes briefly meet. That’s a
bad idea. JJ goes for his book. JESS goes for hers.

JJ pulls out ‘Middlemarch’ by George Elliot, JESS pulls out
‘Pilot Error. The anatomy of a plane crash’ by Phaedra Hise.
And an apple. Which she bites into.

One of the couples breaks off kissing.

JESS
OK so fiver says one of us punches
one of the others by the end of
this holiday?

JJ
Punches?

JESS
Slaps. Kicks. Tickles. One of us
will use physical violence against
another before the week is out.
This holiday will be a disaster.

JJ
Let’s hope so.

JESS grins.

JESS
You wanna play cards?

JJ
Sure.

JESS
I tend to cheat and make up the
rules as I go along.

JJ smiles at her.

JJ
Sounds perfect.

JESS makes to get out of the cards.
They stand outside an airport looking very pale and palid in the hot Greek sun. MARTIN takes his sweatshirt off to reveal a Hawaiian shirt underneath. JESS looks at him witheringly. He thinks. He smiles and nods at JESS. He puts the sweatshirt back on.

INT. BAR HOPE. DAY

Four glasses clink together at once.
There is a man playing guitar flamenco style in the corner.
There is a large jug of Ouzu placed in front of them. By YANNI, a dark-haired 40-something man with a twinkle.

YANNI
My name is Yanni. I will be your waiter. Well, sometimes I will, other times I will be theirs.

He indicates another table.

MARTIN
Hello Yanni.

YANNI
Ah. You are from England, how nice.

MARTIN
You knew that, Yanni. You talked English to us.

YANNI
I did. I did. He always this clever, your husband?

JESS
Uh. He’s not her husband.

MAUREEN looks at JESS wondering who she’s insulting this time.

YANNI
Ah, you are lovers? Maybe in pairs, maybe all four of you.

MAUREEN looks up, surprised.

MAUREEN
What?

JESS laughs. She likes this guy.
JESS
Yeah. That’s right. I bought the Vaseline. Maureen bought the dildos...

MAUREEN
Someone told me a joke about Vaseline once. I’ve entirely forgotten it.

JESS laughs and refills her glass.

JESS
Then you must keep drinking til it comes to you.

And they raise their glasses and drink some more and music rises.

JJ (V.O.)
In my first band. We used to have this song, this little Motowny thing called ‘I Got Your Back’.

EXT. TOWN. DAY
They walk past the sunlit streets of a beautiful little Greek island town.

JJ (V.O.)
It was two minutes and thirty seconds long and no-one really noticed it, even people who actually bought the album.

EXT. BEACH. DAY
They walk across the beach Beatles style making shapes in the sand.

JJ (V.O.)
But when we played it live - it got longer, and I worked out this sweet solo. Not a rock guitar solo - more something Curtis Mayfield or Ernie Isley might have played.

And then JESS starts to strip off and run towards the sea.

EXT. SEA. DAY
And MARTIN laughs and follows and runs in after her. And JJ thinks and follows and MAUREEN laughs and stays guarding their clothes on the beach.
JJ (V.O.)
And it became this - the sound of pure joy. And being on the island - for those first few hours - feeling like we’d swindled the press - swindled - everyone - it felt like that.

INT. JJ’S HOTEL ROOM. DAY

JJ sits staring in the mirror. Not with vanity. With something more - introspective.

JJ (V.O.)
But the thing about joy is it’s sort of a false emotion - you don’t mean it - and then you start to remember reality - and -

And just then there’s a knock at the door and MARTIN enters.

MARTIN
Ready to - ?

JJ nods.

JJ
Just let me find my jacket...

JJ goes to find jacket.

MARTIN watches him carefully.

MARTIN
Doesn’t feel too strange this does it? Us? Being away together...

JJ
No. It feels nice.

MARTIN
I didn’t force everyone to come...

JJ
It was a good idea.

MARTIN
I know we’re not friends or...I just - ever since that night - I kind of feel - responsible - for everyone.

JJ looks at MARTIN.

JJ
You only need to be responsible for you.
MARTIN
No. I know that, it’s just I literally saved Jess’s life, and - I don’t know.

JJ
You had a reason to be up there too, right?

MARTIN looks at JJ and smiles, wanly. But he knows JJ is right.

MARTIN
Think I’ve drunk too much. I keep thinking of my children. Always a drunken sign.

JJ smiles and gets his jacket out of the wardrobe. He checks for his room key.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
The thing I keep imagining is them in years to come googling - or whatever it will be by then - googling their Dad expecting to be so proud - and the things they’ll see... Child molester. They described me as a child... I just - wanted - something else. Them to read something else. I wanted to be redeemed, you know?

JJ considers this outpouring.

JJ
That’s a big word. Redemption.

MARTIN looks at JJ, utterly wretched.

MARTIN
She was 15 years old, what the fuck was I thinking?

JJ says nothing. MARTIN thinks and then thinks again. He’s exposed himself here and he doesn’t like it.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Sometimes I envy you your cancer. So cut and dried.

JJ
Yeah.

MARTIN
No. Really. I’ve been so impressed with you JJ. You barely let it affect you. If it was me - I’d be shagging half the world to death.
JJ
Would you?

MARTIN looks carefully at JJ. Slightly broken.

MARTIN
Yeah. No. I don’t know.

MARTIN pulls himself together, he turns on the Sharp charm.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Christ I talk a lot of shit sometimes - all I wanted to say was I admire you. You keep it all together. Really well.

JJ
Do I?

MARTIN gets set to leave.

MARTIN
Yeah, you’re a really good listener...

JJ
No, I’m not a good listener.

MARTIN
Well. They’ll be waiting for us.

MARTIN exits. JJ is left alone.

JJ
I just never say much.

103 INT. TOWN SQUARE BAR. NIGHT

A busy bar full of busy people saying busy things. The night feels exciting and our guys are alive within it. Sitting at a table.

MARTIN
OK. God gives you three wishes.

MAUREEN
God is not a tombola machine. He doesn’t give wishes.

MARTIN
OK. Um. A cosmic - Martin - gives you three wishes -

JESS
“Cosmic” - oh my God, you’re starting to sound like my Dad at a family wedding.
MARTIN
Three wishes. Anything you want...

JESS
OK. Easy. A billion pounds. My own personal hitman. And a court waiver over anything I chose to do.

Everyone moves clockwise round to look at MAUREEN’s face.

MAUREEN
Really? Um. I’d want a bit more - help. A bit more of a - life.

JESS
What’s a bit more of a life?

MAUREEN
Just what other people....have.

JESS
What do other people have?

MAUREEN looks at MARTIN - cutting JESS out.

MAUREEN
And I’d wish my son all better. Which is why I don’t do wishes.

There’s a pause. As everyone considers the enormity of that.

MARTIN
I’d want to be famous again.

JJ looks across at KATHY, she’s still sitting alone. She smiles at him. JESS looks at JJ, and then where he’s looking and frowns.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Being famous is great. Everyone says it’s difficult - but it’s not. Getting seats in restaurants, having people smile when you sit next to them on the tube. It’s great. Certainly better than real life anyway.

MARTIN looks at JJ - he’s answering what he said in the room. JJ knows this and doesn’t like it.

JESS
Wow. You’re deep.

JJ
Martin...
MARTIN
What? You’re nothing if you’re not noticed.

JESS looks at MARTIN oddly.

JESS
Fame or your kids, which would you choose?

MARTIN turns and looks at her as if he’s considering it.

JJ
You don’t mean that Martin.

MARTIN
You see the thing that you people don’t understand is that my kids hate me. Or will do. So that question is utterly redundant.

JESS
What does that even mean?

MAUREEN frowns at MARTIN and then turns and looks at JJ.

MAUREEN
JJ - what would you -

JJ
This is a bad game.

JJ looks again at KATHY. JESS follows his gaze again, her eyes narrow.

JESS
A bad game is it? Maybe we should guess what JJ’s reasons are....obviously, he’d cure his cancer for a start. And then he’d..

JJ looks at JESS like she’s the worst thing in the world.

JJ
I need the bathroom.

JESS
And then he’d probably want a load of money so he could donate it to cancer research...

JJ stands up from the table.

JJ
Other people are allowed to be in pain, you know that Jess?
It’s brutally delivered. JESS wobbles slightly. JJ stands firmed jawed. Then YANNI arrives.

YANNI
My English friends!

And with that JJ walks off.

JESS makes to follow him.

MAUREEN
Leave him. He’ll be fine.

JESS looks after JJ, unsure.

INT. TOWN SQUARE BAR. CORNER BOOTH. NIGHT

JJ sits at a table, it has KATHY on it.

JJ
I just need to sit here for a minute.

She’s surprised.

KATHY
OK.

JJ
And then I’ll calm down and go back to my friends.

KATHY
OK.

JJ looks up at her and smiles.

KATHY (CONT’D)
Though – while you’re here – could you solve a problem I’ve been having? I think – I recognise you from some place...

JJ’s face drops.

JJ
Oh - um - yeah, um, there was this thing, me - I’ve been in the papers a bit recently.

KATHY
No. That’s not it. Are you in a band?

JJ’s face rises.
JJ
What?

KATHY
You supported The Clockers – Manchester Towers – must be three or four years ago?

JJ
Um. The Clockers. Yeah. We did. First time we came to Britain. Wow. You remember that...? Wow.

KATHY laughs.

KATHY
Still serious about it?

JJ looks over at JESS. And then back at KATHY. As if trying to make his mind up.

JJ
I was. Now – not so much. Wow. You really remember that...?

KATHY
What’s your name?

JJ
JJ.

KATHY
Hi JJ. I’m Kathy.

105 INT. TOWN SQUARE. NIGHT

JJ is dancing with KATHY. So is MARTIN, rather more flamboyantly.

MARTIN
This is brilliant.

JJ
Yeah.

He grabs JJ and pulls him close to him.

MARTIN
She’s a good looking girl...

JJ
Yeah.

MARTIN
You’re OK right?
JJ
Yeah.

MARTIN dislocates and carries on dancing.

JJ turns back to KATHY

KATHY
Who’s that?

JJ
My..... uncle...

KATHY
I recognise him too.

JJ
He’s - vaguely famous.

KATHY
A failed musician with a vaguely famous uncle. I am a lucky girl.

JJ
Well, I say vaguely famous, I mean, used-to-be. Wants it again though - he’d literally sell his kids for a front page.

KATHY
Would he?

He twists her around.

JJ
You know, I saw you at the airport.

KATHY bends into his ear just as JJ makes pure eye-contact with JESS sitting watching them both.

KATHY
I saw you first.

EXT. BEACH FRONT. NIGHT

There are beautiful lights hanging between the restaurant tops. As JJ walks along with KATHY.

JJ
So you’re just here on your own?

KATHY
Best way to get to know a place. Other people crowd it. Make it about them. Besides, I’ve always liked my own company.
JJ
Never liked mine. I think too much.

KATHY smiles.

KATHY
So – you’re here – with – family? Your uncle and...?

JJ
Bit of family. Friends. Sort of.

KATHY
But you don’t like them too much – you ran away from in the bar?

JJ
They can be a bit – intense – you know, people with problems, one wants to be famous again, another thinks she’s inadequate compared to her sister – la la – intense.

KATHY stops. She looks around.

KATHY
And you don’t like intense.

JJ realises the flirting’s stepped a gear.

JJ
Not – yeah – I can’t talk. I’m intense.

KATHY
Good. Because if you’re looking for a neurosis free girl, you’re bang out of luck.

He breaks into a smile.

JJ
Yeah?

KATHY
I once set fire to my own hair to see what would happen. I was 10, it was a portent to unhappier times.

JJ
Oh. That’s nothing. When I was a kid I jumped off our roof to see if I’d hurt myself. I broke my leg. And, well, I quite liked it.

KATHY grins wider – she likes this game.
KATHY
Well, how’s this for psycho? I carved my ex boyfriends initials into my left inner thigh as a way of telling him no-one else will ever see there. I’ve still got the scars. Beat that.

JJ laughs.

JJ
Easy. I recently told some people I had cancer to avoid telling them the real reason I had for attempting suicide.

KATHY stops. She looks at JJ carefully.

KATHY
That is intense.

JJ realises he’s broken the mood slightly.

KATHY (CONT’D)
What was the real reason you wanted to...?

JJ
I don’t know. All I do know is, I was part of a pact and I lied to become a member. Which...

KATHY looks at him.

KATHY
What pact?

JJ thinks - does he want to talk about it? No.

JJ
Just a bunch of desperate people being desperate together as a way of feeling less - desperate.

KATHY thinks, and then looks at him.

KATHY
OK. You win the psycho game.

JJ
Good. I always wanted to win that game.

She smiles at him.

KATHY
Go on. I dare you -
JJ
To do what?

KATHY
Claim your prize. Kiss me.

JJ laughs, leans in and kisses her.

INT. JJ’S HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT


JJ stops to get his breath.

JJ
I haven’t done this for a while...

KATHY
You know that stuff people say about it being like riding a bike...

JJ
Yeah.

KATHY
It’s not. It’s better.

JJ laughs. She kisses him and he kisses her back. And boom leads to boom and la leads to la. And shield your children’s eyes.

INT. JJ’S ENSUITE. NIGHT

JJ looks at KATHY’s hair against the pillow. He touches it gently. He likes touching it. Then he stands and walks naked into the bathroom.

INT. JJ’S ENSUITE. NIGHT

JJ makes as if to piss.

JESS (O.S.)
OK. Now I’m going to say something.

OK. That was unexpected. JESS is sitting in the bath. With a slightly strange look on her face.
JESS (CONT’D)
Because the humiliation of you -
spotting me after you’ve done that
is worse than the - this.

JESS looks at JJ who looks back at her stricken.

JESS (CONT’D)
Only took a credit card and a bit
of spit. Hotel security is not what
it should be.

JJ
How long have you been - ?

JESS
I - wanted to apologise - don’t
know why I did that earlier - and
then - I was probably going to try
and shag you.

JJ doesn’t know how to respond to this.

JESS (CONT’D)
Anyway. She’s pretty. Well done.

JJ tries to work out what to say.

JESS (CONT’D)
Don’t say anything. Take it as a
compliment. Is she asleep?

JJ
Yes.

JESS
Then I will leave quietly.

JESS makes to leave.

JJ
Jess.

She turns sharply.

JESS
Really. I’d prefer it if you didn’t
- say anything.

She turns away again. She starts to exit again. Then she
stops. And turns back.

JESS (CONT’D)
You do know she’s a journalist,
right?

JJ looks at JESS a beat.
JJ

What?

JESS
Look in her handbag, I saw her check her tape recorder in the bar.

JESS isn’t enjoying this. She knows she’s humiliating him and doesn’t like doing so.

JESS (CONT’D)
Still, she fucked you, right? So at least she’s thorough.

JESS thinks and then walks back and leans in and kisses JJ on the cheek and then she exits.

And JJ stands and sways.

110  INT. JJ’S HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

JJ sneaks carefully back into the room and opens KATHY’s bag. He searches inside it. He pulls out a tape recorder. And the blood drains from his face. He rewinds it. He presses play. He hears himself.

JJ (O.S.)
- a bunch of desperate people being desperate together as a way of feeling less - desperate.

She snuffles in bed beside him. He presses stop. He looks at her carefully. And then edges up the sheet so as to look at her left inner thigh. There is nothing written on there. No scars. Just the soft skin of a woman that knows she’s beautiful.

He stands. He walks. Carrying the tape recorder with him.

He shuts the door behind him.

111  INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR. NIGHT

JJ sits on the floor by his hotel room.

A night porter walks by. Singing a song. JJ tries to hear what it is, he can’t make it out.

112  EXT. SEA. DAY

The sun is just rising as JJ stands in front of the sea. Carrying the tape recorder with him.

He hurls it into the water as far as he can.
Then he thinks and then follows it in. Stripping off his clothes as he walks into the water.

Then he swims.

He swims and he swims. The hard swim of someone looking for something.

He looks beautiful in the early morning sun.

INT. HOTEL BREAKFAST BUFFET. DAY

JJ walks through the buffet bar and spots MARTIN, MAUREEN and JESS sitting together. He takes a breath and then joins them.

JESS looks at him and smiles softly. And he smiles softly back.

MARTIN comes back with his plate piled high with free breakfast goodness.

MARTIN
Work off the hangover...

MARTIN starts to shovel in some food. He looks up. He looks at JJ in particular.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
May have said some stupid things last night. Drink has never been my friend.

JJ
I’ve got a few things to say. I’m not sure you’ll like any of them.

All three look up at him - surprised.

MAUREEN
Are you going back to America?

JJ takes a breath.

JJ
I’ll start with the biggest: I’ve not got cancer of the brain. I’ve not got CCR.

MAUREEN
They’ve cured you?

JJ turns and looks at MAUREEN bravely.

JJ
I never had it. I made it up.

Beat.
JJ (CONT’D)
There’s not even any such thing as CCR. Just - Clearance Creedwater Revival are one of my favourite bands.

MAUREEN
Oh.

They’re beyond shocked. JJ looks at JESS.

JESS
I wasn’t going to tell them.

MARTIN
You knew about this?

MAUREEN
I thought there was - something strange about -

MARTIN
So why were you - up there - JJ?

JJ hesitates.

JESS
He can’t answer that. It’s personal.

MARTIN
I think we deserve an answer.

MAUREEN
You did mean to be up there didn’t you?

JESS looks at JJ.

JESS
I wasn’t going to tell them.

JJ notices KATHY approach across the restaurant. This is the wrong timing.

JJ
Guys. We’re going to need to postpone this conversation for another time.

MARTIN
Fuck that JJ. I need an answer. I’m feeling quite humiliated here.

JESS
Humiliated? Big word for a convicted paedophile.
MARTIN turns and finally explodes at JESS.

MARTIN

Enough with the paedophile shit!
When you are going to fucking grow up? You stupid little -

JESS

Cunt? Is cunt the word you’re looking for?

MARTIN turns to JJ.

MARTIN

We made a pact - I trusted you - I liked you.

JJ looks at KATHY, almost at the table.

JJ

Please. Martin another time.

KATHY thinks whether to kiss JJ, but decides better not.

KATHY

Where were you? I woke up, you’d gone.

MARTIN

Oh right, so we all stop for your girlfriend do we?

JESS

JJ. I wasn’t going to tell them I promise.

MARTIN pushes JJ hard against another table. JJ looks at KATHY, worried in all the wrong ways.

MARTIN

Why were you up there? Don’t look at her, look at me.

JJ

She’s not my girlfriend, she’s a journalist.

MARTIN goes purple.

MARTIN

You invited a fucking journalist here?

JJ

No...No.

MARTIN

And what did you tell her?
JJ looks at him and MARTIN knows.

MARTIN swings. And connects. And JJ connects back as if by instinct. They crash into another diner’s table.

JJ
Martin. Please. This is all wrong.
This is all wrong.

MARTIN swings again. They fight. And it’s not good, but it’s not comical. It’s more reckless than that.

MARTIN
I wish I’d let you all jump.

MAUREEN
What?

KATHY
JJ -

And soon they’re fighting. And something gets spilt. And people try to leave. And JESS makes some serious play at KATHY. Slapping her hard.

JESS
Just so you know, I’m ripping off your cheap shit hair extensions first.

The men fight. The girls fight. It’s not a riot. It’s considerably more pathetic than that. But it is something.

The camera follows everything. Swinging like punches around the room.

Only MAUREEN remains sat in her seat. Looking like this is hell she’s seeing.

114 INT. AEROPLANE. DAY

A slow pan along the faces of our four in aeroplane seating. MAUREEN has no noticeable physical damage, MARTIN has a blackening left eye, JJ a blackening right, but it’s JESS that licks the plate clean - with two eyes firmly black.

JESS is reading a newspaper. JJ is doing nothing.

JJ (V.O.)
I’ve been in three bands that have broken up. Two were violent.
Drummers impaling high hats on people’s heads - guitar strings being wound around each other’s throats - you know the thing.

JESS hands JJ a newspaper.
It's a tabloid.

It has pictures of the disturbance, and KATHY's picture on the by-line. With 'exclusive' written across it.

JJ looks at it. And then pulls out his wallet and hands JESS a fiver.

JJ (V.O.)
The one that hurt though...Was where we....just looked at each other and Tony, bass guitarist, said 'the problem is, I don’t even like you guys anymore.'

INT. AIRPORT. DAY

The four are being tailed by more reporters than ever before.

MARTIN turns.

MARTIN
This is it. The last thing any of us will say or do of interest. You can keep following us, wasting your resources. But from now on - we’re going to be really boring. Just so you know.

REPORTER
Why the matching black eyes Martin? Another pact?

MARTIN looks at the reporter and turns and continues walking.

INT. TAXI. NIGHT

They sit cramped in the back of a black cab.

Then MARTIN notices something out of the window.

MARTIN raps on the glass of the driver's window. The driver opens it.

MARTIN
Stop. Here. Please.

JESS
What? Why?

Then she notices.

JESS (CONT’D)
Oh.
The four stand at the bottom of Toppers looking up. All with the same slightly ominous look on their faces.

JESS
Of all the places you could have taken us Martin...

MARTIN
I didn’t know we’d drive past here. I do know this is where the pact ends.

JESS
You’re wrong. We cut short the holiday, it’s not Valentine’s Day for another three days.

MARTIN
We aren’t good for each other.

JESS turns and looks at MARTIN.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
I thought we’d help each other. Why? We’re destructive. That’s the whole point of wanting to... And destructive people together - destroy.

Pause. Every one considers the enormity of MARTIN’s words.

JESS
Right. Because -

MAUREEN
This is - a - good place for the - end.

They all stand there a moment. All feel vulnerable. All hate it. Then JESS declares herself.

JESS
Well - bye then. Actually, I don’t do goodbyes, so...

JESS hesitates a moment and then walks off.

MARTIN
Goodbye Jess.

She raises a finger over her head. MARTIN laughs.

He looks at the two of them.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
Bye Maureen.
MAUREEN
Yes. Bye.

MARTIN hesitates, looks at JJ, then walks off in the opposite direction from JESS.

JJ
Martin, wait...

MARTIN
We all said and did things we regret JJ, it’s in the past now.

MARTIN keeps walking.

MAUREEN looks at JJ, who looks right back. He wobbles and then finds his feet again.

He touches his eye. She checks her watch. He smiles.

JJ
Matty to pick up is it?

MAUREEN
Something like that.

She leans in and kisses JJ on the cheek.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
Bye JJ.

She walks off.

And JJ is alone. He thinks. And then thinks some more.

JJ (V.O.)
No. The truth is - there are good goodbyes and bad ones.

INT. TOPPERS LIFT. DAY

JJ stands numbly in the lift. Watching the floors tick by.

JJ (V.O.)
And the bad goodbyes are the ones where you don’t mark the moment.

EXT. TOPPERS ROOF. DAY

JJ stands on the roof taking in the early evening sun.

JJ (V.O.)
I’ve always been one for marking the moment - when my Dad died I -

The voice over is disrupted. JJ has seen something.
There is a man standing at the edge of the tower.

DAVID
Don’t come any closer.

JJ
No. You don’t want to -

JJ edges closer.

DAVID
Don’t I? You know nothing about me.

JJ’s face clouds with purpose.

JJ
I know that I stood where you’re standing - not too long ago -

DAVID
You were?

JJ
Yeah. Listen, why don’t we - go get a coffee or a pizza, we’ll talk -

DAVID
Why did you want to do it?

That question. JJ hesitates.

JJ
It’s not about me. What’s your name?

DAVID looks at him - disappointed.

DAVID
You’re lying. You were never up here.

JJ
Yeah man. I’m lying. I just like to hang out on the roof of a block of flats for fun...

JJ steps towards DAVID.

DAVID
Don’t get – don’t get -

JJ
Please. Step away.

DAVID
Tell me why you wanted to jump...
This is hard for JJ. No. This is more than hard. He smiles and then doesn’t smile.

JJ
Good question.

He stands a moment.

JJ (CONT’D)
My parents died young - Dad quite nastily - I’m a foreigner in a strange country - I’m massively unsuccessful - but they’re not - I know they’re not - I can feel they’re not...my reasons. And I won’t lie. To you. I’m a liar. But I’ve had enough of lying.

JJ stands a moment more. Thinking fast now.

JJ (CONT’D)
People always think I’m a good guy. Never got why. I’m not a good guy. I never speak, because if I do people will see the truth. And if people knew what I was - this -

JJ looks at DAVID, he’s listening.

JJ (CONT’D)
I’m bored of being me. Bored of being scared all the time. Bored of trying to change - leaving my latest shit band, moving countries - because however much I change I’m still left with - me. You want to know why I was up here? Because I hate - me. I hate - me. I hate - me. And I know how pathetic that sounds, so don’t...

JJ has said it. And hates it.

JJ (CONT’D)
And even now I want to tear my heart out and squeeze the black blood from it just to stop it - beating.

JJ checks himself - he wasn’t expecting to say all that.

JJ (CONT’D)
And that’s - that’s more than I’ve said in a long time - and - now you - step back - because I can’t watch you - tell me your name, tell me why you - please tell me why you...
But DAVID doesn’t come back. Instead he makes a slight noise in the side of his throat.

**DAVID**

But my reason’s better than yours.

And DAVID steps off the edge.

And JJ stands totally shocked.

He opens his mouth to speak, but says nothing.

There is a long, long silence. And then JJ makes a painful noise like an animal. Like an animal separated from all other animals. He howls death.

There is another deathly silence. Then JJ starts to walk slowly – inexorably – forward to the end of the building.

**MAUREEN (O.S.)**

JJ.

JJ turns, MAUREEN is standing in the doorway of the building.

**JJ**

How long have you...?

**MAUREEN**

I saw you go in. I thought you were talking to yourself.

JJ stands and then takes a few more steps forward and we pull up and away and in the distance we can see a body lying on the ground beside Toppers and a crowd of people gathering around it.

Then he turns and looks at MAUREEN like he’s got nothing left.

**JJ**

We’re over. Remember that. We’re done.

JJ walks past MAUREEN towards the exit of the roof.

120 C/U. FEET. DAY 120

Two feet dangle and then have tights pulled over them and then they’re placed in shoes.

121 C/U. SHOES. DAY 121

The feet - now in their sensible shoe sheaf - shift from one side to the other. And then they flip up as the person drops to their knees.
122 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY

MAUREEN gently prays.

123 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY

MAUREEN sits beside MATTY.

She’s feeding him. There’s a gentle persuasion to how she does so.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
Not having Matty with me on the holiday – it felt like I was missing a leg. Strange. Light. That’s probably not like missing a leg at all. I don’t imagine most people’s first impressions of leg loss is weightlessness.

124 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. BATHROOM. DAY

MAUREEN is helping MATTY on the toilet.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
I missed him most when the plane was shaking. I thought I was going to die and I hadn’t said goodbye to him.

125 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

MAUREEN and MATTY are watching TV.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
I also missed him when I saw that man drop off that building.

126 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. MATTY’S BEDROOM. DAY

MAUREEN tucks MATTY in.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
Don’t know why I missed him then.

127 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY

MAUREEN stands in front of the mirror. She tucks in her tummy. Looks worried at the reflection. Checks her hair. Despairs of her hair. Starts to put rollers in.
MAUREEN (V.O.)
Anyway, after...Everything turned
to normal pretty quickly. The press
still followed me - but I
concentrated on being boring, like
Martin said. Not difficult.

128   EXT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. DAY

MAUREEN leaves the house carefully pushing MATTY. She’s
surrounded by press. Jabbering questions.

129   INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY

MAUREEN pushing a MATTY’s chair with a basket attached to the
front. She fills it with essentials. She is being followed
down a parallel aisle by a still inquisitive JESS.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
I still saw them - patchily - every
now again. I saw Jess in places she
shouldn’t be.

130   EXT. LINCOLN’S INN. DAY

MAUREEN sits around a corner on the same bench JESS was
sitting on during the sequence at the beginning of her part.
MATTY and his chair beside her. She can hear JJ busking but
not see him. He can neither hear nor see her.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
And I did make a little effort to
find JJ - just to check he was OK.

131   EXT. STREET. DAY

MARTIN drives past MAUREEN pushing MATTY on the street. He
notices her, she doesn’t notice him.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
I never saw Martin.

132   INT. DOCTOR’S SURGERY. DAY

MAUREEN sits anxiously as DR STEPHENS - over-tall, over-bald,
late-40s, reads over his notes.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
No. Mostly I got on with my life
and hoped they got on with theirs.
DR STEPHENS
Matty did great. We did some interesting reflex work....

MAUREEN looks at MATTY and smiles.

MAUREEN
Nice to have him properly looked after for once.

DR STEPHENS
..He reacted well to company.

MAUREEN
I’m sure he loved a change from my blathering...

MAUREEN is unpicking everything.

DR STEPHENS
...And we couldn’t get him out of the pool.

MAUREEN
He’s always liked water. No pool at my house.

DR STEPHENS looks up at her and frowns, desperate to contradict her, but he can’t think how.

DR STEPHENS
Well...I was very pleased to have the opportunity to spend some time with him.

MAUREEN
I think the pleasure was all his.

DR STEPHENS has exhausted all he has to say.

They sit in silence for a beat too long.

DR STEPHENS
You look like you caught a bit of colour...

MAUREEN blushes.

MAUREEN
Did I? Oh.

DR STEPHENS
You enjoyed yourself?

MAUREEN
Yes. Well, I won’t keep you...

She stands and bustles and begins to sort MATTY out.
MAUREEN (CONT’D)
Thanks for your help Dr Stephens.
We’re very grateful.

EXT. STREET. DAY

MAUREEN pushes MATTY along the street.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
Yes - I did think of them - as time
ticked by. If you spend all your
life in a very quiet room and
someone comes up behind you and
shouts ‘boo!’ You jump. And I -

A kid stops and stares at MATTY.
The kid’s mother pulls him away.

MOTHER
Sorry.

MAUREEN
Oh. No. No.

MAUREEN walks on.

Then she stops and looks in a window - ‘help wanted’
displayed. She looks at it and then catches the face of a man
in the window looking out and carries on walking.

She stops and traffic lights and presses the ‘wait’ button.
The green man starts flashing.

She just stands there.

We watch the green man slowly flick off.

INT. MATTY’S BEDROOM. NIGHT

MAUREEN is giving MATTY a gentle bed bath, carefully dealing
with the difficulties of his limbs.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
I just... wasn’t used to the very
quiet room anymore.

MATTY keeps knocking the water. Splashing her.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
What is it?

MATTY looks at her. He tries to form a word. He can’t. The
doorbell rings, but MAUREEN doesn’t register it, she’s
focused on her son’s need to communicate.
MAUREEN (CONT’D)

Matty....

MATTY tries to form a word again. He can’t. He knocks the water again. She’s splashed again.

Then the doorbell rings again.

And MATTY gives up. He lies back - exhausted.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)

Matty...

Then the doorbell rings again and MAUREEN takes another look at her son before exiting towards the stairs.

135 INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

MAUREEN answers the door. She doesn’t know the person on the other side.

CINDY

Hi.

MAUREEN

Hi.

CINDY

You’re wet.

MAUREEN looks down at herself and realises she is.

CINDY (CONT’D)

Sorry to have called so late - it was an impulsive decision to visit.

MAUREEN

Right. Who - are you?

CINDY barks a nervous laugh.

CINDY

I’m Cindy. Martin’s wife...

MAUREEN looks at her a moment, digesting.

MAUREEN

You better come in.

136 INT. MAUREEN’S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

CINDY tries to think where to sit, she can’t decide, she waits for MAUREEN to sit first. MAUREEN doesn’t sit.
MAUREEN
Did any of them recognise you? Out there?

CINDY
Who? The press? There’s no-one out there.

MAUREEN goes over and twitches her curtains. She looks out. Almost disappointed.

MAUREEN
Martin said they’d - go when bored.

CINDY
Well. Martin is the expert.

They fade back into silence. MAUREEN thinks and then sits in a comfy chair. CINDY sits opposite her.

MAUREEN immediately stands again. CINDY stays sitting.

MAUREEN
Do you want a cup of tea?

CINDY
No. No. I’m fine.

MAUREEN sits again. CINDY picks up a photo from beside her chair.

CINDY (CONT’D)
This your son I’ve read about?

MAUREEN
Yes. Matty.

CINDY
Looks like a nice boy.

MAUREEN nods. CINDY looks at MAUREEN carefully.

CINDY (CONT’D)
I haven’t heard from him in weeks. Every time I ring he puts the phone down. And I need to know he’s OK. When Martin falls off a cliff he really - falls off a cliff.

MAUREEN is hugely uncomfortable.

MAUREEN
I’m sorry, I haven’t seen him - since we came back from holiday.

CINDY digests this.
CINDY
What’s he - told you about me?

MAUREEN
Not much. He’s a very private man.

CINDY
He’s not private. He’s secretive. There’s a difference.

This comes out more aggressively than CINDY intends. MAUREEN retracts her neck slightly.

CINDY (CONT’D)
Has he told you I won’t let him see his kids?

MAUREEN
He did say that.

CINDY is pulled tighter than a guitar string.

CINDY
Of course he can see his kids... He just doesn’t want to.

MAUREEN turns and looks at her - shocked.

MAUREEN
What?

CINDY
You know, I’ve very good reasons to be angry with him so...I don’t know why I always have to be the one trying to mend... Sorry. Sorry. I promised myself I wouldn’t do this.

MAUREEN looks at her. CINDY is crying slightly.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
My kids need their Dad. And I need to know he’s OK.

MAUREEN offers CINDY a tissue. CINDY takes one.

MAUREEN
Better take two - they’re the supermarket value kind. They mush when exposed to water.

CINDY laughs, despite herself, and then takes two.

CINDY
Home, Job, Kids, Indiscretion, Suicide? It feels - too quick.
MAUREEN
Yes. I can - imagine.

CINDY looks at MAUREEN cautiously.

CINDY
Why were you up there? On the -
roof.

It’s a stark question. MAUREEN thinks about asking for clarification. But she doesn’t.

MAUREEN
Without me, social services would pay for Matty’s care. The standards they, um... He wouldn’t have me getting everything -

CINDY
You think he’d be better off without his mother?

MAUREEN
Not his mother. This mother.

CINDY tries to think how to rationalise this, she can’t. She stands up.

CINDY
This was a bad idea. Wasn’t it? Me. Coming here.

MAUREEN
Was it?

CINDY
I wanted you to tell me someone was looking after him. I hoped you were. But why would I expect you to help? You were up there too.

CINDY begins to exit then stops. She turns - she looks at MAUREEN a moment.

CINDY (CONT’D)
Thanks for the tea.

She exits. MAUREEN is left alone.

MAUREEN
I didn’t make you tea.

INT. MATTY’S BEDROOM. NIGHT

MAUREEN is dressing MATTY in his pyjamas.

She unknits his arm to get a pyjama top on to him.
He doesn’t resist. He doesn’t make a noise.

She forces the top on to him. It’s not an easy business.

**MAUREEN**

Sometimes I think you’re saying something to me. Then I realise you can’t.

She sits back.

**MAUREEN (CONT’D)**

Maybe I’ll just sit here a bit.

---

138 INT. MATTY’S BEDROOM. DAY

MAUREEN wakes squinting into the early morning light.

She’s sitting in exactly the same seat. She clearly fell asleep there.

MATTY is asleep on the bed. She reaches out as if to touch him, but changes her mind.

She stands. She is slightly unsteady on her feet.

She walks to the door.

She exits.

And then she re-enters at speed.

She checks MATTY’s breathing. Then she checks it again.

**MAUREEN**

No....No....

She puts an oxygen mask on him, she begins to administer CPR. A lady who we haven’t seen much action from at all is suddenly all action. She opens a phone with her mouth. She dials 999.

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139 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. DAY

MATTY is pushed along a corridor. NURSES and DOCTORS administer what they can as he moves. MAUREEN runs beside them, totally at a loss.

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140 INT. SURGERY. DAY

MAUREEN stands lost and limp as surgeons administer on her son. It looks desperate. She feels desperate. Desperate is the word. The only word.

A NURSE guides her out.
MAUREEN sits on the chairs. Around her life lives.

Maybe it speeds by. Maybe we watch people being wheeled in on gurneys and people shouting at vending machines. And drunks coming in and out.

And priests sit beside her and breastfeeding Mums and kids with angry faces...

And then it’s night. And MAUREEN is almost alone. And DR STEPHENS walks slowly towards her.

And she assumes the worst.

MAUREEN
Oh no. Oh no. No. Don’t tell me.

DR STEPHENS
He’s fine. Maureen. Maureen. He’s fine.

MAUREEN looks up at DR STEPHENS.

MAUREEN
What?

DR STEPHENS
He’s poorly. Of course. And, uh, the road is not... he’ll be fine.

MAUREEN
He’ll be fine?

DR STEPHENS
He’ll be fine.

MAUREEN looks at him and her face feels upside down, she’s not sure how to look.

DR STEPHENS (CONT’D)
You want to come see him?

MATTY is lying with lots of tubes sticking out of him.

DR STEPHENS
Tubes look worse than they are. We’ll remove some tonight. The rest will be out tomorrow I hope.
MAUREEN
I should have seen it sooner. If he’d had proper care. If he’d had proper care.

DR STEPHENS smiles.

DR STEPHENS
Maureen. You were brilliant.

He looks at her. She sits beside MATTY, he thinks about leaving but decides to stay.

DR STEPHENS (CONT’D)
It was a myocardial infarction. He had a heart attack. Of sorts. His symptoms were almost invisible. I didn’t notice it, I was the one to... But you caught it. You were great.

He stops talking. MAUREEN is gently - quietly - singing to MATTY without even realising it.

She realises she’s singing and DR STEPHENS is there. She stops. Immediately. Embarrassed.

DR STEPHENS (CONT’D)
No....don’t...stop...

MAUREEN
Please don’t tell me I’m a good singer. I’d think less of you. And you just saved my Matty. So I don’t want to think less of you.

She smiles at DR STEPHENS and then isn’t sure which way to look so turns back to MATTY. DR STEPHENS observes and smiles.

DR STEPHENS
I love the way you look at your son, have I ever told you that?

MAUREEN looks up at him – what does that mean? DR STEPHENS ploughs on.

DR STEPHENS (CONT’D)
I don’t know anyone who looks at their child like you look at yours.

MAUREEN doesn’t know how to take this at all.

DR STEPHENS (CONT’D)
He’s calmer when you’re around. You make him - calmer. He seems to - he always knows you’re there. He’s very lucky to have you - Matty.
DR STEPHENS stops talking. MAUREEN turns and looks at him.

MAUREEN
I only had one thought - when he - if he dies, I die.

DR STEPHENS looks at her straight.

DR STEPHENS
Well. He lived.

DR STEPHENS makes to exit, and then stops.

DR STEPHENS (CONT’D)
Maybe he feels the same way about you as you do about him, you ever considered that?

MAUREEN doesn’t move. DR STEPHENS exits.

And then she looks at MATTY, and then she softly, softly smiles.

MAUREEN
Are you - calmer - when I’m - are you calmer?

And then she looks at her son. And thinks a thousand thoughts.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
Do you think this was Jess’s room?

144 INT. HOSPITAL. DAY 144

MAUREEN pushes MATTY through the hospital. There’s a drip on the side of his chair and he’s wearing an oxygen mask. But he looks better.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
When Matty was born....

They walk past old ladies in hospital gowns talking to young grandkids. They walk past a kid with a post-chemotherapy shaved head arguing with her mother about whether she should be allowed crisps or not.

MAUREEN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
When Matty was born...

They walk past the hospital chapel of rest. MAUREEN catches the eye of two people - mourners - inside.

She looks. She thinks. She turns MATTY around and starts pushing him quickly.
145 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. DAY

MAUREEN dials a number into a payphone.

MAUREEN
Hello? Yes, hello, my name’s
Maureen - I’m a friend of - oh yes,
you would have seen my name.... No.
It was you I was phoning to speak
to....

146 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. LATER

There is now a man with a huge beard waiting behind MAUREEN for the phone.

MAUREEN
Well, I wasn’t sure what to do but
you are my friend so I hoped
you’d...

147 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. LATER

There are now a queue of semi-mutinous people waiting for the phone. But MAUREEN is on a mission. She has a new intensity.

MAUREEN
No. I don’t want to speak to a
secretary - I want to speak to -
pass him my name - pass him my name
-

148 EXT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. DAY

JJ is walking along eating an apple with a louche sense of sex appeal.

MARTIN (O.S.)

JJ?

JJ turns - surprised. But not too surprised.

JJ

Martin?

MARTIN
She invited you too then?

JJ

Yes. She invited me too.

MARTIN
Figured she might.

JJ smiles slightly ironically.
JJ
I thought we had a no contact agreement.

MARTIN
Birthdays. You can’t refuse birthdays.

JJ
No.

The two men look uncomfortably at each other.

MARTIN
I suppose the real question is whether she invited...

JESS (O.S.)
Oh yes. I’m here.

JESS drops from the tree where she’s been hiding. She looks at JJ.

JESS (CONT’D)
It’s not a party unless I’m invited. Hello double J.

JJ
Hi. Jess.

149 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. CORRIDOR. DAY

MAUREEN opens the door to the three of them.

MAUREEN
You’re all here together...

JESS
We shared a cab. We’ve been seeing each other the entire time. It was only you we decided to exclude. You’re a difficult person to like.

MARTIN walks in and kisses MAUREEN on the cheek.

MARTIN
Happy birthday.

JJ
Maureen. You’re looking great.

And actually she does – she’s had her hair done.

JESS
Do you still actually technically celebrate birthdays when you get to your age?
MAUREEN smiles at JESS.

MAUREEN
You probably should take your shoes off...

JESS
You didn’t tell us to take our shoes off last time.

MAUREEN
I was afraid of you last time.

JESS smiles and takes off her shoes.

MARTIN walks forward to the living room.

MARTIN
Wow.

MARTIN goes inside the living room.

JJ
Where’s Matty?

MAUREEN
In hospital. Just for a day or so...

JJ frowns as if he wants to know more.

Then JESS walks past him into the living room and JJ follows her in.

MAUREEN is left alone. She takes an apprehensive breath. This is going to be difficult.

INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. LATER

The house is done up in balloons.

It’s a proper old fashioned, magnificent birthday tea. There are cakes and crisps and wafers and twiglets and stuff. Most of which are now half-eaten.

And the gang are finishing singing Happy Birthday.

JESS
Speech. Speech.

MARTIN
Yes. Speech.

JESS starts banging her cup on the table.

MAUREEN
Yes. I do want to make a speech actually. I want to tell you -
JESS
Boring. Strip. Strip.

JJ puts his hand over JESS’s mouth – she bites it.

MAUREEN
What I need to say is...um....I
don’t think I can do this anymore.

MARTIN
What?

MAUREEN stands up. She looks around the room. She walks over away from the gang. JJ and MARTIN share a worried look.

MAUREEN
I’m starting from the wrong place. My mother – very pretty woman – she
told me I’d never be as pretty as her so I needed to marry well. I had a few boyfriends. And then I met this boy at Church – Paul. He was...wonderful. And when he asked me for my – virginity – I gave it to him.

JESS
Wow. Well I’ve certainly got an erection.

MAUREEN
And then I told him I was pregnant and he said he had to get back to University. I didn’t even know he was at University. He wrote a lot at first. Now we just get a card at Christmas. He moved to Canada. New family. Over there.

The three others are slightly bewildered by this speech.

MARTIN
I’m sorry to hear that Maureen.

JESS
I think she’s overdosed on her HRT. Maureen, a normal birthday speech is ‘thanks for coming, Martin, are you balding? Your arse looks great in those jeans, Jess...’

But MAUREEN isn’t listening, she’s in her own world now.

MAUREEN
And the baby I had inside me was Matty.

MAUREEN looks around the room.
MAUREEN (CONT’D)
There were lots of reasons why I was up on that roof. You sort of asked me why Jess and I said I felt helpless. But the truth is, I hadn’t thought about it before then - I hadn’t done a list for living and a list for.... It was a feeling not a.... thought.

We close on all four faces.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
And then recently I realised - the reason why was simple: I thought no-one cared. Yes, I thought Matty would be better off without me, but more than that I thought he wouldn’t care if I wasn’t there. And recently - I’ve found out that’s just not true.

She takes a moment.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
I brought you here today - it’s not my birthday, I lied, I did a JJ...I brought you here to tell you I cared. About you. And I think other people do too. And you’re not going to like this bit but - um -

She opens a door in the hallway. Then disappears through it.

Our four sit in silence. Sort of digesting. JESS drains her paper cup.

JESS
OK. I think I’m going to need something stronger to drink than Dandelion and Burdock.

MARTIN
What are we not going to like?

INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. BOTTOM CORRIDOR. DAY
MAUREEN stands a moment listening and then walks purposefully down the corridor.

INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY
MAUREEN re-enters. With CHRIS and HOPE and CINDY.

And JESS and MARTIN both visibly blanche.
MAUREEN
I think in America - they call this an - words gone - um - I want to say interval.

CHRIS
Hello Jess.

JJ
You mean intervention, Maureen.

MAUREEN smiles at JJ, who doesn’t smile back.

MAUREEN
Yes. That’s right. Intervention.

JESS looks around the room for the nearest exit.

CHRIS
Jess, we’re here to tell you -

JESS
No. No. Bad idea Maureen. Bad idea Maureen. This is fucking hideous.

She runs out of the room, past her Dad, who lets her.

MAUREEN
Jess. Please...listen...

But she’s gone.

153 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. STAIRS. DAY

JESS charges up the stairs.

MAUREEN
Jess. Please....

154 INT. MAUREEN’S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

MAUREEN retreats back to the living room.

MARTIN
Well. That was pretty inevitable.

JJ
I’ll go after her.

CHRIS
No. I will.

CHRIS exits. HOPE thinks and then meekly follows him.
MARTIN
Maureen. Did you think about this properly?

CINDY
Yes. She did.

MARTIN looks up at CINDY. Suddenly extremely awkward.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Hi.

MARTIN says nothing.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Should we...take a walk?

MARTIN thinks.

MARTIN
OK.

MARTIN thinks and then exits.

CINDY looks at MAUREEN, smiles, and then follows him out.

JJ looks around the room.

JJ
And then there were two. Who’ve you invited for me...?

MAUREEN looks at JJ hesitantly.

MAUREEN
I tried to contact your parents...

JJ
Yeah. They’re dead.

MAUREEN
So I discovered. And then I tried to get hold of your old bandmates..

JJ
They move around a lot.

MAUREEN hesitates and then smiles.

MAUREEN
But you may notice, with Matty - absent, I don’t have anyone here for me either.

JJ
Yeah.
MAUREEN
So I thought – maybe – I could be here for you.

JJ
What does that mean?

MAUREEN
And you could be here for me.

JJ frowns – still confused.

JJ
OK.

MAUREEN
And if you could start being here for me by helping me clear up I’d much appreciate it.

JJ thinks and then laughs.

JJ
I’d love to.

155 INT. MAUREEN’S TOP CORRIDOR. DAY 155

CHRIS
Jess....

He hears a door knock shut in front of him. He looks – it’s the toilet. And it’s still open.

He opens it a fraction. Then hesitates. He takes a breath and walks in.

HOPE watches him do so, thinks, then doesn’t follow him.

156 INT. MAUREEN’S TOILET. DAY 156

The toilet is empty.

But the shower curtain is pulled across. JESS is inside the bath.

JESS (O.S.)
I could have locked it. The toilet door.

CHRIS
I know you could.

JESS (O.S.)
And I really need a shit. So I should have locked it.
CHRIS
Yeah.

JESS (O.S.)
But I was worried you might think I was slitting my wrists and break the door down or something similarly hideous. So I’ll just have to shit in the bath.

CHRIS is unsure what to do. He moves and sits on the toilet, putting the seat down first.

INT. JESS’S SHOWER CUBICLE. MAUREEN’S TOILET. DAY

JESS is listening intently to everything her father does.

JESS
OK. If you’re going to sit there. A few ground rules. You can’t tell me you love me. You can’t tell me how great or wonderful I am....And we’re not talking about Jennifer.

CHRIS thinks and then thinks some more.

CHRIS
How about a joke then?

JESS
What?

CHRIS
A friend of mine told me it the other day. You’ll like it, it’s edgy.

INT. JESS’S SHOWER CUBICLE. MAUREEN’S TOILET. DAY

JESS is confused. But maybe in a good way.

JESS
You’re going to tell me a joke?

During this we watch her face so intently.

CHRIS (O.S.)
A blonde and a brunette live together. The brunette comes home from work one day to find the blonde with a rope around her waist. The brunette asks “why’s the rope ‘round your waist”.

(MORE)
The blonde replies “I’m trying to commit suicide.” The brunette says “you need to put it around your neck then silly!” The blonde looks at her “I tried that but I couldn’t breathe!”

JESS laughs. In spite of herself.

JESS
OK. That’s a genuinely edgy joke to tell a suicidalist. It’s also genuinely sexist and shit. But -

INT. MAUREEN’S TOILET. DAY

CHRIS is almost holding his breath, listening to his daughter.

CHRIS
House of Commons tearoom.

He thinks some more. He’s emotional, but hiding it well.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
I ever tell you that you reminded me of me?

JESS
No.

CHRIS
Fate worse than death I know. But sometimes - sometimes I see myself so clearly in you...

JESS says nothing. And then says something.

JESS
Didn’t you think? With my face in the front of the paper...That she’d see it and come home...

CHRIS’s face grows momentarily cold. This hurts him more than his daughter can ever know.

CHRIS
Maybe she’s dead. Maybe she just had enough of us. Maybe she - I don’t know - I’m coming in...

JESS
Where?

CHRIS pulls back the curtain and looks at his daughter, then climbs into the bath
JESS (CONT’D)
Dad don’t be a nobhead.

Then he slips and almost lands on top of her.

CHRIS
Ow. Ow.

JESS starts to laugh first, CHRIS joins in with her.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
I think I’m bleeding...

JESS
You’re not bleeding.

CHRIS
There is blood here.

HOPE (O.S.)
What’s going on in there? Can I come in now?

JESS laughs even louder.

161  EXT. STREET. DAY  161

CINDY and MARTIN walk carefully along the street.

MARTIN can barely even look at her for fear of showing the vulnerability on his face.

CINDY can look and is looking at her ex-husband.

CINDY
You still shave your nose then?

MARTIN
What?

CINDY
Your nasal passage, always very impressively clear of all hair. I can see from here.

MARTIN
Oh. Yes.

MARTIN pinches his nose, as if embarrassed.

CINDY
Interesting. You’re having a breakdown, you’re unable to call the mother of your children, or seemingly anyone, yet you still shave the inside of your nose with one of your gadgets.
MARTIN
It’s called a nasal hair trimmer.

CINDY smiles.

CINDY
What’s the worst that could happen
Martin? If you see the girls?

MARTIN
They could find out what an utter
tit I am and hate me.

CINDY
And if you don’t see them? You
think they won’t hate you then...

MARTIN looks at her, he knows the answer to that question.

CINDY (CONT’D)
You ruined our marriage but you
still have a choice about what kind
of man you are to those kids.

MARTIN
But when they...

CINDY
And when the time comes, we’ll sit
them down, together, and we’ll talk
it through with them and explain
what happened, as best we can.

MARTIN looks at her.

MARTIN
I never understood why you were so
dy to me.

CINDY
I never understood why you were so
careless with me.

MARTIN
The things I did. I’m so...

CINDY interrupts.

CINDY
We’re not getting back together
Martin. We never will. But you do
need to answer the phone when I
call, you understand that?

MARTIN
I promise. I’ll answer the phone
when you call.
CINDY stops, looks pensive for a moment, and picks a leaf from a passing tree. MARTIN looks at her for a moment.

MARTIN (CONT’D)
So - what do we do now?

CINDY
Now? Now you ask me how your daughter’s are getting on...

MARTIN smiles.

MARTIN
Tell me.

CINDY thinks and then smiles.

CINDY
You hear about the nativity play?

MARTIN
No.

CINDY
Polly gets cast as Mary. Cries all the way through the rehearsals, cries all the way through the performance. She thought... ’Mary’ meant she was going to playing Mary Poppins.

MARTIN tips his head back and laughs.

MARTIN
She does love that film.

CINDY
She hated the boy playing Joseph. Hated the plastic Jesus. She wanted flying umbrellas and dancing chimney sweeps.

MARTIN
That’s my girl.

CINDY looks at him, warning.

CINDY
She could be Martin.

MARTIN looks at her, purely sincere.

MARTIN
I’m going to try.

CINDY
You’re going to do better than that.
And the two look at each other and smile.

INT. MAUREEN’S KITCHEN. DAY

MAUREEN is putting left over party food into plastic boxes in the fridge.

JJ enters, holding plates.

JJ
Where do I...?

MAUREEN
Oh just put them anywhere..

JJ looks for space. MAUREEN speaks very softly.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
I looked him up...

JJ
Who?

MAUREEN
The man who jumped. I cut out an article on him from the local paper.

JJ stops trying to put the plates down, he just keeps hold of them.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
He was called David. He had four kids and a wife. He was in debt. He’d made some wrong decisions.

JJ’s face curls with unhappiness.

JJ
OK. Good to - know.

MAUREEN hesitates.

MAUREEN
It’s not about anyone having a good reason or a bad reason. I’m not a well-read woman and even I know that.

MAUREEN reaches out to touch JJ, but doesn’t.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
The things I heard you say –

JJ says nothing.
MAUREEN (CONT’D)
I think you’re probably quite complicated JJ – I think, of all of us – you may need to see someone professional and get some medication –

JJ thinks. A tear drips down his nose.

JJ
I know. I’m – going to.

MAUREEN
But maybe there’s bits – me, them.... can help with. Put the plates down love.

JJ finally puts his plates down beside her. He wipes the tear away with a quick movement of his elbow.

JJ
OK.

MAUREEN looks out of her kitchen window and then starts filling the washing up bowl with water. This makes her nervous.

MAUREEN
Just little things...stop me being lonely, stop you being lonely...we could meet every now and again - some honest conversations – maybe the four of us, maybe just the two - nothing dramatic - you can tell me about your day and I can tell you about mine. Sometimes.

JJ
Um. OK...

MAUREEN
I’m not saying you’re not popular – you’ve far more friends than me certainly.

She doesn’t look at him – she’s embarrassed.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
Well, it was just an idea.

MAUREEN squeezes in the washing up liquid. JJ stares at her.

JJ
Maureen. Will you tell me about your day?

A large smile spreads across MAUREEN’s face, so pleased JJ is engaging with her.
MAUREEN
Actually, today was quite exciting,
I think I’ve got a job.

JJ
A job?

MAUREEN
Pass the cutlery. I like to do the
cutlery first...

JJ does. Sorting it and handing it to her.

MAUREEN (CONT’D)
Not a good job. Just in a shop, but
a job, Keith thinks it’ll be good
for me and Matty to spend some time
apart - make us value our time
together or...

JJ
Who’s Keith?

MAUREEN blushes.

MAUREEN
Well, that’s something as well.

INT. POST OFFICE. DAY

MAUREEN is standing behind the counter on a step ladder
carefully stacking cigarettes.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
I read this piece in Reader’s
Digest once - true story about a
man who survived the jump off the
golden gate bridge and he said that
in just that second when he let go
of the bridge’s side he realised
that all his problems -

DR STEPHENs comes into the back of the shot.

DR STEPHENs
Maureen...

MAUREEN drops all the cigarettes and almost falls off the
ladder.

MAUREEN
Oh - Keith -

They both laugh.
MAUREEN (V.O.)
- could be resolved - apart from
the one he’d just given himself by
diving off the bridge...

164 INT. MARTIN’S LIVING ROOM. DAY

MARTIN is sitting on the floor playing monopoly with his two
daughters, POLLY and MAISIE.

MAISIE makes a move that’s not within the rules of monopoly.
MARTIN starts to argue with her and gets out the rules.
MAISIE starts to cry. MARTIN starts to try to comfort her.
Then decides rationality would be better.

MARTIN
Maisie. How does crying help? We’re
just trying to obey some rules
here. Rules are good.

MAISIE cries harder.

165 EXT. CANAL BANK. DAY

JJ is pushing MATTY along a beautiful Thames canal bank.

JJ (V.O.)
But that man isn’t any kind of role
model. Nor is George Bailey from
It’s A Wonderful Life either by the
way. My Dad made us watch it. He
was hoping for inspiration. But
have I saved towns from bankruptcy?
Rescued brothers from freezing
water? Na-huh. I mean, who the fuck
has that kind of life?

JJ
I really fancied a hot dog too...

JJ (V.O.)
Well, you’re not sharing mine.

And she runs away from him shrieking along the canal bank.

166 EXT. PARLIAMENT HILL. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. DAY

JJ, MARTIN, JESS and MAUREEN sit together on Parliament Hill.
MAUREEN has a coffee cup and a thermos, MARTIN, JJ and JESS
are drinking lager from cans.
JJ (V.O.)
The point is we’re not George Bailey, or any man — or woman — like him. And our problems can’t be solved as that man on the Golden Gate bridge thinks they should be. Because, you know, we’re — more — screwed-up than that. Right?

The sun is shining and there are many others doing the same thing around them. It’s a kite-flying, strolling, sitting, romantically-inclined sort of day.

MARTIN
She likes to list my flaws, one after the other and her boyfriend hates me, and....

MAUREEN
Keith said he thought she smiled at you — in a way that was most —

MARTIN
Keith sees wine in water.

JESS
Maureen. No offence. I still can’t get used to the idea of you being romantically attached to a man called Keith.

MARTIN laughs, turns to JJ.

MARTIN
Like I said, good luck with that...

JESS
Him good luck? What about me good luck? Have you met him? He’s mental. Officially.

MAUREEN is counting numbers on the hill.

MAUREEN
You know, statistically, at least one person on this hill will at some point in his life kill themselves...

MARTIN
Nice.

MAUREEN
It was in Keith’s book, we looked it up. Suicide statistics.
JESS
Ooooh. Can I guess who the suicidalist is...?

MARTIN
No, you cannot.

JESS
I say that guy...

She points to a bearded guy sitting on his coat. Who looks surprised to be pointed at.

MARTIN
Jess...

MAUREEN
I think the girl with the dog.

There is a woman standing unhappily with her dog. The other three look at MAUREEN, outraged she’s just made such a judgement.

MARTIN
Maureen!

MAUREEN
What? It’s all part of life’s rich pattern...

JESS
So’s shitting...but no-one waxes on about that...

MARTIN
Yeah. I am eating cake.

JESS
Go on JJ, pick a suicidalist...

JJ
No.

JESS
Go on. You’re supposed to be falling in love with me, you’ve got to do what I say.

JJ
I’m not falling in love with you.

JJ raises an eyebrow at JESS, takes out his pills from his pocket, and takes one. JESS laughs.

JESS
He’s taking a mad pill. He’s making a statement.
MARTIN
I’ll tell you now, I’m never picking a suicidalist.

JESS
You’ll do what you’re told Martin. You all will. Now sit back and hold tight.

The camera pulls back - and watches our four chatting and laughing and being. Four people sort of together. Sort of friends.

MARTIN (V.O.)
I used to have a question I asked - on the TV sofa to whoever was the sob story of the week. ’What did you learn from that? What did you learn from your cancer, your mother’s death, or your battles with alcoholism?’

EXT. LONDON. DAY

And then the camera pulls back even further and we’re travelling over London...

MARTIN (V.O.)
I’d offer a tissue, get a great answer and win a daytime TV award. Well, the truth is, I’ve learnt nothing from these past three months.

...The whole of London. Amongst it, Toppers Tower, which the camera stops at for a second, but then continues on.

MARTIN (V.O.)(CONT’D)
Or maybe I’ve learnt - everything. That’s the thing isn’t it? Simple? None of this is simple.

CREDITS.