

CUFFED

Episode 1 - "Adult Snack"

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INT. STEINER SCHOOL KITCHEN - DAY

A pristine wooden kitchen. Close up on nutrition charts and a woodland mural painted on the wall. We pull out to reveal RAY (25, Libra with Latina fire, her own worst enemy) laying out foodstuffs on the counter. She pulls on an apron, presses play on a MEDITATION TAPE on her phone and takes a deep breath as the SANSKRIT CHANTING INTRO plays.

BANG! The door swings to reveal GRETA (48, stern, German schoolmistress vibe), rocking socks and sandals. We see that Ray is wearing a PARENT VOLUNTEER badge. She pauses the tape.

GRETA
Remember, no salt, celery or soy.

RAY
Yep, got it.

GRETA
Or nuts. *Obviously.*

Ray clears her throat and shifts slightly to hide a jar of peanut butter behind her on the counter.

RAY
(earnestly half nodding/
shaking her head)
God of course. That goes like,
without saying.

GRETA
We serve lunch at midday.
(falsely comforting)
Don't stress, it's not a test.

RAY
Phew! Ok.

GRETA
Think of it as more like a fun sort
of...audition.

Greta exits and Ray turns to face the counter.

RAY
(under her breath)
Shit.

Ray stuffs the peanut butter into her bag. Recalling something, she swings out of the door and asks Greta:

RAY (CONT'D)
Sorry, um, how's Indie getting on?

GRETA

She's just fine. And if today goes smoothly she'll become part of our infant community!

RAY

Amazing. So great.

Greta walks swiftly off down the corridor.

RAY (CONT'D)

Has she been, er, asking for me?

Greta does a little wave with her back turned to Ray and walks around the corner.

RAY (CONT'D)

See you later then!

INT. STEINER SCHOOL KITCHEN - LATER

Ray sits on a high stool engrossed in an Instagram video on her phone of a woman giving birth. She pops Skittles in her mouth, one at a time. She glances up at the clock, looks down and glances up again.

RAY

(in Spanish)

Fuck. Oh fuck fuck fuck!

She jumps up.

INT. STEINER SCHOOL KITCHEN - LATER

Chaos has descended on the kitchen. Nothing's been washed up, a vat of soup is bubbling on the hob and there's flour everywhere. The clock on the wall reads 11.55am.

Meanwhile, the meditation tape is playing: *Inhale. Exhale. When you are peaceful, the world reflects peace back at you.*

Ray chucks a bunch of apple peels into the bin and misses.

RAY

Bollocks!

The meditation tape continues playing: *Feel totally at one with -*

Ray presses next on her phone and something energetic and Latin comes on, maybe 'Quimbara' by Celia Cruz. She tastes the soup, using the spoon that's in the pot, and grimaces.

She rifles through spices in the cabinet, sniffs one, adds a pinch to the soup and stirs.

Suddenly, something catches her eye in the summer's day outside the open window.

It's a SEXY GUY (27) and SEXY GIRL (24) making out against a tree. He has his hand planted firmly on the tree above her head as they kiss. Ray tears her eyes away from them and walks out of shot, picking up apple peels. But she can't help herself and looks outside again, magnetised.

We enter Ray's FANTASY. The sexy guy is replaced by Ray, and she's kissing the sexy girl. On beat with the song, the scene shifts and Ray's now snogging the sexy guy. The camera pans round and now the sexy girl is watching Ray and the sexy guy kiss.

A TIMER goes off and Ray's jolted back to reality. The couple pull apart and the girl glances up at Ray with a come hither look in her eye. Ray's nose has started to BLEED.

Greta enters, pushing a food trolley loaded with child-size bowls and cutlery.

GRETA

Order's up!

Ray realises that she's bleeding and wipes her nose with a tea towel before turning around. Greta scans the mess while Ray takes a moment to return from her tantalising fantasy.

RAY

Yep, the food's just about - um,
one minute, sorry. Got to sieve the
veg -

Ray sieves the pan of broccoli but burns her hand in the steam. She loses grip of the handle and spills some veg on the floor.

RAY (CONT'D)

Shit the bed! Sorry, I'm - god, so
clumsy today -

She picks up the hot broccoli pieces, pretending it's not painful.

RAY (CONT'D)

(trying to make light of
the situation)
Five second rule?

Greta's alarmed, clocking the spots of blood on Ray's apron. She's a hot mess.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Joking! That was a joke! I'd never
 do that.

Ray puts the food onto the trolley, tucking a stray broccoli in with her fingers. Zero food styling. She sneezes into the crook of her arm. Greta recoils slightly.

RAY (CONT'D)
 There'll be muffins for snack.

Greta nods and wheels the trolley out. Ray checks the muffins in the oven and sets a timer. She zones out - IMAGES of her kissing the sexy couple, close ups on their eyes, mouths, hands running through hair - delicious and enticing. Her breath quickens. She springs up, with purpose.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Ray wanders down the corridor away from the sound of KIDS CHATTING, and pops her head into an empty classroom. It's Scandi-chic, with woven decorations strung up.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Wo-ow.

She continues down the corridor to the STORE CUPBOARD.

INT. STORE CUPBOARD - CONTINUOUS

Ray enters a windowless room full of school supplies, where Felix (28, tofu-eating wokerati with a little man bun) sorts through piles of kids' books. He's wearing the same 'Parent Volunteer' badge as Ray.

FELIX
 You've finished cooking already?

Ray nods, checks that the door is closed and puts her index finger to her lips.

RAY
 Shhhhh

Ray starts singing a made-up burlesque-type song and doing a silly striptease. She takes her dirty apron off and whips him in the face with the straps.

FELIX
 What the - Ray - ?

She pulls her top off, wiggling her hips seductively.

FELIX (CONT'D)

What're you doing? It's our first parent shift, don't cock it up.

RAY

I'm done! The kids are eating. It's fiiine.

FELIX

Just / come on, put your top back on -

RAY

(half shutting her eyes)
Ugh. Don't be boring.

Ray goes to unbutton his jeans, running high on the sexy couple's erotic energy. She kisses gently up his neck.

FELIX

We're so close to nursery finally -
Ray, stop - don't you -

She starts nibbling his ears.

FELIX (CONT'D)

(becoming aroused)
Not the ears, not the ears, oh god-

Ray starts giving Felix a hand job. He's anxiously turned on. She places his hand on her breast and whispers seductively into his ear:

RAY

Rachel Stevens, chocolate digestives, mmm, your old French teacher, my boobs after hot yoga... Yorkshire pudding...

Ray stops touching Felix and cups his face instead.

RAY (CONT'D)

(teasing)
Do you want me to stop?

FELIX

No, go on - breasts, puddings...

Felix trails off and Ray starts touching him again.

RAY
 (slowly, seductively)
 A super *sooft* Yorkshire pudding...

A box of crayons shower down from the shelf that he's holding onto for support. Ray stares intensely into his eyes as she wanks him off to fast completion.

FELIX
 (like the life's been
 sucked out of him)
 Christ -

RAY
 Now could we try - could you sort
 of - put your hand up here?

Ray takes Felix's hand and plants it on the wall above her head (imitating the kissing couple), then takes his other hand and puts it down her pants.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Ok, go on.

FELIX
 Jesus. Ray. We shouldn't.

Ray raises an eyebrow.

FELIX (CONT'D)
 (reluctantly)
 Ok. Fine.

Felix starts pleasuring Ray. She scrunches her eyes shut.

RAY
 Yeah that's it...
 (beat)
 Could you sort of - pull my hair a
 bit?

He half heartedly pulls her hair.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Harder.

He pulls harder.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Ow! Stop. Um.
 (whispers)
 Tell me something naughty.

Brief silence. Felix is painfully self-conscious.

RAY (CONT'D)
Just try for *once*.

She clearly hits a nerve. He stops touching her.

FELIX
This is - I'm not into this. It's -
inappropriate.

RAY
Oh so now you've come it's
inappropriate?

Felix takes a step away from Ray.

FELIX
What are you trying to - make me
into? Some pervy guy dirty talking
in a cupboard? That's not me! I-I
respect you too much!

Ray releases a roar of frustration.

RAY
If you *really* "respect" me then
listen to what I want!

FELIX
(snapping)
What you "want" is - ugh. Never
mind.

Felix doesn't know what to do with himself so he sits down,
opens a book about the solar system and feigns interest.

RAY
(incensed)
Is what? Weird? Why are you
pretending to read right now, in
the middle of this, what a bizarre
thing to do -

FELIX
Forget it!

Suddenly, a FIRE ALARM sounds from the hallway. Felix quickly
picks up his backpack and jumps to his feet.

RAY
Don't shit yourself. It's probably
a drill.

FELIX
Are you serious?

RAY
Hold on. Where's it coming -

Ray pops her head out into the corridor and sees smoke seeping out from under the kitchen door.

RAY (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
Oh no.

Ray runs down the corridor in her bra and jeans, throws the kitchen door open, letting out great plumes of smoke, and finds the oven is on fire.

RAY (CONT'D)
JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!

LENA (65, retired witch energy, wearing an art smock) enters wielding a fire extinguisher.

LENA
Stay back!

RAY
No I've got this!

Ray takes a pot full of water and bits of potato and chucks it in the oven, putting out the fire but making a huge mess. Ray and Lena see the remnants of a dishtowel left in the oven which caught fire. Felix watches from the doorway, his flies undone beneath the button.

Ray opens the window, waves her hands and blows uselessly at the smoke. The alarm stops.

RAY (CONT'D)
Really, um, sorry about that. I'll clean up.

Ray picks up a tea towel with Year 3 class' faces printed on it and tries to subtly wrap it around her torso like a bath towel.

LENA
What on earth happened? I presume you're the parents on shift?

A BELL rings outside. Ray and Lena look out the window and see the entire school body evacuating the building and filing in lines. What a shitstorm.

RAY

I - um - it was. Ok.
 (solemn, gesturing at
 Felix)
 He's a sex addict. Serious problem.
 Bad childhood.

Lena looks uncertainly at Felix who is in mortified silence.

RAY (CONT'D)

He's on medication for it but it
 flared up today. It's a real, um,
 illness. Won't happen again.
 Obviously! But we love it here, the
 sort of, nostalgic attic-y smell,
 the wood everywhere, the vibe. If I
 sort this out *please* can we not
 tell the head?

Ray turns her charm on, smiling hopefully.

RAY (CONT'D)

I'll owe you big time.

LENA

I *am* the head.

EXT. STEINER SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Felix and Ray walk with Indie (2, wearing butterfly wings)
 between them, all holding hands. Felix pushes a bike along
 while Ray pushes an empty pram with her spare hand.

They pass a HIPPIE MUM (35, wearing a bandana and a 'Parent
 Volunteer' badge) painting a mural. She waves warmly at the
 family. Felix ignores her but Ray guiltily waves back. A taut
 silence between the couple until they've left the school
 gates. A moment later:

FELIX

(bursting out)
 What was that? What THE HELL was
 that!

RAY

(rolling her eyes)
 Here we go.

FELIX

Three hours, three **whispers**
fucking hours of parent duties,
 that's all we needed to do.

RAY
I'll sort it out!

FELIX
Three hours a month.

RAY
I know! Don't you think I know! I'm the one who **whispers** *fucking* found the place and arranged it.

FELIX
This one's on you.

RAY
What? Takes two to tango.

FELIX
If you weren't such a nympho we'd be free to go about our day by now.

RAY
(under her breath)
Please, like you could *handle* a real nympho. We have sex what, twice a month? The recycling gets collected more often.

Felix pulls to a halt and looks at Ray seriously.

FELIX
Can you at least try and be mature about this?

RAY
Don't. Patronise me.

Felix runs his tongue across his teeth before he concedes.

FELIX
(magnanimously)
Look. I'm sorry you felt patronised.

RAY
No. I didn't *feel* patronised. You patronised me. Objectively.

FELIX
I'm going to the practice now. We'll talk through this later.

RAY

No? I've got my meeting with that publisher this afternoon.

FELIX

And I've got an afternoon of clients. Deal with the consequences. You started a fire -

RAY

Oh come on -

FELIX (CONT'D)

- in a school.

RAY (CONT'D)

I put it out! You can't just -
(incredulous, appealing to him)
Felix, please. Please!

Felix kisses the top of Indie's head.

FELIX

Good luck at the meeting.

Ray vehemently mouths "fuck you" at Felix.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Love you Inds. We've got swimming tomorrow. Babycino if you're lucky!

Felix straps his helmet on, double checks it, mounts his bike and cycles away.

RAY

(shouting after him)

What am I meant to do with Indie?
Felix. Felix!

Ray calls MAMA on speed dial but gets her voicemail:

ELENA/MAMA'S PRERECORDED VOICEMAIL

(jolly, Hispanic accent)

Holaaa, you've reached -

Ray furiously ends the call and looks around, as if for someone to step in and help her. The street is barren besides her, Indie, and a mangy three-legged dog limping past.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A plush carpeted office with huge glass windows overlooking the city. David (53, scared of kids, loves white wine spritzers) sits at a fancy desk with Ray and Indie opposite him. Ray has changed into rumpled smart clothes.

David has a file open in front of him. He waves at Indie and does patronising hand and face gestures which she ignores.

DAVID
 (to Indie)
 Hello! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

Ray opens a bag of kids' crisps and hands them to Indie.

RAY
 (to Indie, in Spanish,
 with subtitles)
 Sit quietly and we'll get an ice
 cream afterwards ok.

DAVID
 (to Ray, impressed)
 Oh!
 (to Indie, in exaggerated
 slow voice)
 Do - you - speak - English?

Indie munches on the crisps, silently staring him out.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 (perturbed)
 Lovely kid.

Ray grins tightly.

RAY
 We do everything together.

DAVID
 Of course. Livin' the dream. So!

David starts making an origami paper aeroplane on his desk.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 (generously)
 We liked your opening chapter -

RAY
 Great! Where do I sign?

Ray laughs alone for no reason.

DAVID
 ...which is why I brought you in.
 Your tone *intrigued* me. But, if I'm
 honest, we were concerned by the
 part where Kat's considering all
 the ways she could
 (MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 kill her child.

RAY
 I mean, she hasn't slept for 48
 hours. It's a pretty normal
 reaction I think.

DAVID
 - we just don't think readers want
 to be inside the head of a
 potential
 (whispers again)
baby killer. Infanticide's not a
 hot seller.

RAY
 You've misread the - she's not -
 (with a little laugh)
 well we're all *potential* killers.

David squints like there's a bad smell in the room. Indie
 starts to rhythmically kick the desk.

RAY (CONT'D)
 We're all potential anythings. In
 the right circumstances. Aren't we?

Crunchy silence except for the knocking of Indie's foot.

RAY (CONT'D)
 (to Indie, in Spanish,
 with subtitles)
 Please stop that.

Indie continues to kick but at a slower pace.

RAY (CONT'D)
 (chipper, to David)
 Anyway! She's not actually gonna *do*
 anything, it's sleep deprivation
 that's driving her nuts.
 (beat)
 Sorry, which bit are you referring
 to?

DAVID
 (reading from the file)
 "Kat imagined...
 (he hesitates, troubled)
 blanking the ... blank."

RAY
 (referring to Indie)
 She's two.

DAVID
 Right.
 (reading from file again)
 "Kat imagined stoppering that
 wailing pink O till silence filled
 the vacuum and she could breathe
 again."

Ray pulls Indie onto her lap.

RAY
 One sec, sorry.

Ray plays a YOUTUBE VIDEO on her phone and hands it to Indie.

RAY (CONT'D)
 I mean, yeh, I could re-configure
 some stuff -

DAVID
 What if, hmm, let me ...*what if* you
 gave it a sort of thriller edge and
 Kat has to solve a crime or a
 murder... that could work...

RAY
 ...a mum with a month old baby
 solving crimes?

DAVID
 I've never read anything like that.
 That's what you call a gap in the
 market.

RAY
 Hmm, ok. The thing is, then it
 wouldn't be about anything that
 it's um, meant to be about.

DAVID
 No one wants to read about sad
 tired mums, Ray. That's the truth.
 It's boring. S'not PC whatever
 whatever to say it but there you
 go.

David throws his paper aeroplane and it lands neatly in the
 bin in the corner of the room.

DAVID (CONT'D)
But that's not to say we aren't
interested in your voice.

RAY
And that's nice um, really nice of
you but -

Ray clears her throat and puts a hand on her shaking knee,
mustering up the courage to be assertive.

RAY (CONT'D)
- but I'd love to discuss a deal,
really. An advance? On the novel?

A KNOCK at the door. David's ASSISTANT (24, meek) enters.

DAVID'S ASSISTANT
Sorry, excuse me, any hot drinks?

DAVID
(looking at his watch)
No thaaanks we're gonna wrap this
up in a min -

Ray's panicked; is her time nearly up?

RAY
I'd love a tea please if that's ok!

The assistant looks between Ray and David, nods unsurely and
exits. David's annoyed by Ray buying time.

DAVID
So, you see it in novel form?

INDIE
Mama, pee pee.

RAY
(To Indie, in Spanish,
with subtitles)
Hold it please.
(to David)
Yeah. Yes. Thoughts?

Indie squirms on Ray's lap while Ray tries to look cool.

DAVID
I can email you if it's easier.

RAY
No, that's ok, it's great to be
here in the room with you.

(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)

Writing is - y'know - means so much to me, it's the way I make sense of this weird world and - *of course* you'll know better than I do that representation matters like, mums need to write and make art too or else we're invisible and -

Ray lifts Indie off her lap slightly and sees that she's wet herself, leaving a big dark patch on Ray's trousers. Ray swallows and tries to pretend nothing has happened.

RAY (CONT'D)

Sorry?

DAVID

I didn't say anything.

RAY

(flustered)

Why did you invite me here?

DAVID

To express interest.

RAY

You don't seem very interested in what I have to say.

DAVID

Sorry?

RAY

Sorry.

DAVID

Right. Ok. Right.

Indie starts to cry.

RAY

(under her breath)

Oh fuck this.

DAVID

Excuse me?

Ray reaches boiling point but *just* keeps it under control.

RAY

(smiling furiously, about to explode with anger)

Email me! Thanks!

EXT. PLAYGROUND - LATER

Ray pushes Indie on the swing, looking murderous. Next to her is OREN (40, irreverent, flame-haired former model) pushing TEO (3).

OREN

We're just trying it out. Seeing what happens. I mean, it's been 10 years together.

Ray's distracted, refreshing the email on her phone.

RAY

Wait so, what's the arrangement?

OREN

We're lightly dating other people. But we're still each other's primary partner. Monogamish.

RAY

Huh.

OREN

(breezy)

I just feel like...there's no certain quota of pleasure we're entitled to and.. yeah. Desire for someone other than your partner's nothing to be ashamed of.

A beat as Ray feels a spark of recognition. The women's eyes meet momentarily as the swings fall in sync with each other. What exactly is Oren saying..?

OREN (CONT'D)

Jack agrees. You guys should meet sometime, come for Sunday lunch. Bring Felix.

RAY

Sure, ok.

OREN

Oh I nearly forgot, how'd the nursery trial go?

RAY

Mmm, nah. Not sure it's for us.

OREN

Really? Mary's got her three there and says it's

(MORE)

OREN (CONT'D)
 (breathy Scottish accent)
 "magical, the shifts are totally
 worth it. The kids can crochet
 their own snoods now".

Oren snorts and rolls her eyes while Ray forces a titter.

RAY
 TBH it felt like it'd been carved
 by elves, and not in a good way-

MAN'S VOICE (O.S)
 Ray? Ray Collins is that you?

Ray turns and sees DEV (60, your fave uncle, cries watching
 Toy Story) holding an empty Tupperware and a book. Dev
 examines Ray and Indie, visibly taken aback. Ray stops
 pushing the swing, looking like she's seen a ghost.

DEV
 My god it is you. My god.

He runs his hand down his face.

DEV (CONT'D)
 It's me, Dev.

RAY
 Oh wow um - hi.
 (beat)
 Can't believe you er, recognised
 me.

DEV
 Is this your kid? She looks just
 like you did when you were little.
 And your dad. Wow. Do you -

RAY
 Yeh, I do now.
 (beat)
 I remember you. You and - you were
 good - how are um, things?

DEV
 Haven't seen you since around then,
 since he -
 (clears his throat)
 15 years ago now.

An edgy moment. Dev gets emotional and looks upwards to stop
 himself from crying. Ray's perturbed and tries to distract.

RAY
 (gesturing at Indie)
 Indie's two, nearly three.

DEV
 She's perfect. He would've loved
 her. Would've aced being a grandad.
 And you're alright?

RAY
 (lightly)
 Spend my life at the bloody
 playground but apart from that,
 yeh, fine.

DEV
 Still singing?

Melancholy flashes across Ray's face and she shakes her head.

DEV (CONT'D)
 Well that's a shame.
 (to Oren)
 Voice of an angel, this one.
 (to Ray)
 I need to get to a meeting, so
 sorry, but...good to see you.

RAY
 Yeah. You too Dev.

Ray starts pushing the swing again. Dev turns to go but
 pauses and adds:

DEV
 I'm running the marathon for Mind
 next week. Y'know, the charity. Do
 it every year. I know you can't
 tell by looking at me!

Dev pats his round belly.

RAY
 That's...nice.

DEV
 Managed to raise a good amount last
 year. It's something.

RAY
 ...good for you.

Ray acts like the conversation's over.

DEV

I wear a T-shirt with your dad's face on it and everything. Shil thinks it looks naff and that he'd have hated that.

RAY

(not following)
What?

DEV

Still think about him every day. What I might have done differently.

RAY

...right.

DEV

Support meetings help, dunno if you've tried them. When someone takes their life it's just, it's just - yeh.

Dev wipes a tear away. Ray forgets to breathe.

DEV (CONT'D)

(cross with himself)
Don't know why I'm telling you!
Silly old man. Sorry.

This is earth shattering news to Ray. She numbly takes it in and puts one of Indie's snacks in her mouth. She chokes and has a dramatic coughing fit.

DEV (CONT'D)

You alright?

Dev and Oren pat her on the back and Ray recovers, coughing up the snack and spitting it out onto the grass. She reaches out to hold Indie's arm.

RAY

M'fine.

DEV

You sure?

Ray nods.

DEV (CONT'D)

Sorry to bring ... that up. In front of - . It just. Feels like yesterday sometimes.

Ray coughs again, her eyes watering.

DEV (CONT'D)

Bye then.

Dev ruffles Indie's hair and embraces Ray warmly. Ray closes her eyes in the hug but doesn't lift her arms. Dev pulls away and holds onto her shoulder as he says goodbye.

DEV (CONT'D)

Send my love to your mum will you?
She stopped replying to my messages
years ago.

(gesturing at Ray and
Indie)

You're so young, people must think
you're sisters.

(beat)

Mike always said you'd have your
own way of doing things.

Dev leaves, glancing back at Ray once to wave before going.

OREN

Fuck. I thought your dad died in a
car crash? I'm so sorry.

RAY

Yeh. Just... easier. To explain
that way.

Ray and Oren continue pushing the swings. Ray's world has just been upended but she masks her shock well.

INT. PARK TOILET - LATER

Ray squats and holds Indie over the loo as Indie does a wee. Ray is blank as she checks CLEM's location on Find My Friends on her phone. She goes to pull loo roll out of the dispenser but it's run out. She closes her eyes, puts her head between her knees and breathes deeply.

EXT. STUDIO ENTRANCE - LATER

Ray arrives with the pram to a brick warehouse. She presses the buzzer. Her energy is urgent and volatile.

BUZZER VOICE (O.S.)

Yes?

RAY

Delivery!

She gets buzzed in.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

A whitewashed studio with a LIGHTING CREW, MODEL and photographer CLEM (30, androgynous, coolest person in the room). Ray watches from the doorway, unnoticed, and clocks the Sexy Girl from earlier rifling through clothes on a rack. She loses steam and turns to leave before anyone spots her. But Indie makes a CRY and everyone looks over.

CLEM

Ray?

Clem comes over. Their dialogue flows seamlessly between Spanish and English.

RAY

(nervous, in Spanish, with subtitles)

I'm not here for - I need to, um -

CLEM

(doing a funny voice)

Oh hey shexy.

Clem bends down and tickles Indie's feet.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Hi booboo -

RAY

(in Spanish, with subtitles)

It's serious.

CLEM

Swear I turned my location services off?

RAY

(in Spanish, with subtitles)

Let's go outside.

CLEM

I'm shooting, come chat here.

RAY

No I - it's -

Clem walks back to the camera and Ray follows.

CLEM

Go on.

Clem starts taking photos of the posing model. Ray speaks in a hushed, grim tone, slightly out of breath.

RAY

(in Spanish with
subtitles)

Fuck can we really not - this is -
ok fine. Fine. The news -- so -

Clem pauses her work.

CLEM

(in Spanish with
subtitles)

Are you pregnant again?

RAY

No -

CLEM

Thank god, 'cos mum would have
another heart attack!

JUDE (19, mini-fringe, TikTok influencer) hands Clem a lens. Ray notices their hands touch and a palpable chemistry.

CLEM (CONT'D)

(to Jude)

Thanks J.

(to Ray, in Spanish, with
subtitles)

Can you stand on this side?

Ray glares at Jude until she gets the hint and walks away. Ray itches the backs of her legs and takes a deep breath.

CLEM (CONT'D)

What is it then?

RAY

It's about dad.

Clem stiffens ever so slightly but continues shooting.

CLEM

Riiight...

RAY

I bumped into Dev in the park, you
remember, his old friend -

CLEM
 (to the model)
 Can we give it a sort of washed up
 at sea energy?

Clem snaps another photo.

RAY
 Clem can you just - *please* -

CLEM
 I'm *listening!* Dev. The one who got
 us dolphin themed Christmas gifts
 every year. You bumped into him
 and...?

RAY
 Well. He was saying some weird
 stuff.

Ray turns so that she has her back to the model.

RAY (CONT'D)
 (gently and quietly)
 That Dad...killed himself. There
 was no car crash. Mum lied to us.

Clem takes another photo and then puts the camera down. Ray
 bites her top lip and puts a hand on Clem's shoulder.

RAY (CONT'D)
 (in Spanish, with
 subtitles)
 It's horrible news. I'm sorry.

CLEM
 Okay. Okay.

Clem breaks contact, her face unreadable. This isn't playing
 out the way Ray expected.

RAY
 Are you alright?
 (suspicious now)
 Why aren't you saying anything?
 Clem, answer me.

Clem averts her eyes.

CLEM
 (loudly, to everyone)
 Take two everyone.

The model saunters off to the snack table.

CLEM (CONT'D)
 (in Spanish, with
 subtitles)
 It was mum's idea Ray.

Clem's tone is defensive and resolved. The colour drains from Ray's face.

RAY
 How long - have you -

CLEM
 (in Spanish, with
 subtitles)
 You were only 9 years old -

RAY
 No -

CLEM
 (in Spanish, with
 subtitles)
 - and the two of you were so close.
 Can we talk this through another
 time? I'm on the clock here.

RAY
 I - I can't believe this /

CLEM
 (matter of fact)
 He was sick for a long time, you
 were too young to realise -

RAY
 (raising her voice)
 What is this? Fucking - fucking -
 Jeremy Kyle? You lied to me!

The crew glance over. Clem is calm and in control.

CLEM
 Mate you can't be like this here,
 I'm working.

RAY
 (in Spanish, with
 subtitles)
 I'm not your fucking *mate*, I'm your
 sister! Who you're meant to be
 honest with.

CLEM

He's gone! We're all used to it.
Mum thought it would mess you up
too much, whatever. I've lived with
it on my own.

RAY

(vibrating with anger)
Oh wow, thank you!

CLEM

(bitter, in Spanish, with
subtitles)
Do you think it was fun for me?
Let's just - let's just talk
through this with mum later.

RAY

No! You don't get to control the
situation anymore.

CLEM

Honestly? Maybe it was the right
thing to do. You're very sensitive.

Ray turns her face away momentarily, trying to rein in her
reaction.

RAY

You know what? It's all -
(takes a breath)

Ray itches the backs of her legs again.

CLEM

Go home. I'll call you later.

Ray starts pushing the pram towards the exit but wheels it
round and comes back to Clem who is approaching her crew.

CLEM (CONT'D)

What?

RAY

How'd he do it?

CLEM

Really? Now?

RAY

Shut up, just. Shut up.

Ray waits, inches from Clem's face. The crew pretend not to watch. Clem takes a breath to speak but Ray walks over to Jude before she can.

RAY (CONT'D)
 (to Jude)
 Clem loves to fuck the teenager on
 set. Careful.

A flash of fury and humiliation in Clem's eyes.

EXT. STUDIO ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Ray comes out and vomits profusely into a potted olive tree.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ray walks in on Felix in child's pose on a yoga mat.

RAY
 Felix, I -

FELIX
 Five minutes.

RAY
 Can you just -

FELIX
 Just five minutes. I'm on lunch.

Ray looks stung as she watches Felix move into downward dog.

FELIX (CONT'D)
 Indie's new stabilisers arrived. By
 the door.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Ray pushes the pram in a trance-like state while singing a Spanish nursery rhyme. There are some TEENAGE BOYS smoking a spliff behind a tree. She hesitates and then approaches them.

RAY
 Hey. Can I uh, get some of that?

BOY #1 looks at his mate, shrugs and hands it to her.

BOY #1
 I guess.

Ray puts the spliff between her lips and takes their lighter but then looks down at Indie, fixated, and doesn't light it. The teens look perplexed. Ray removes the spliff.

RAY
My dad - I -

She cuts herself off and smiles falsely, almost grotesquely.

RAY (CONT'D)
Cheers!

She hands the spliff back to the teen and walks on. She scrunches her face up, driven mad by saying no to temptation again. She texts JULIO: 'oi where are you'. Julio replies a moment later with a pin dropped on a map.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Ray sits with JULIO (38, Mexican, lives for the drama) on a picnic blanket drinking wine out of Peppa Pig beakers. EVIE (4, in a pirate costume), ARTHUR (7) and Indie play nearby. Ray tries to act normal.

RAY
Shitstorm. The whole meeting.

Julio blows a raspberry.

JULIO
There are plenty more -

He forgets the name.

RAY
Publishers?

JULIO
Plenty more publishers in the sea... yeah, not so catchy.

Julio's phone pings and he checks it.

JULIO (CONT'D)
Oren's coming with her lot. Heard about her and Mark's sexploits?

RAY
A bit.

JULIO
(with a raised eyebrow)
Just the tip then?

Oren arrives with Teo and FOREST (7) in tow.

OREN
 (to her boys)
 Go! Run free!

The boys run off and Oren sits down with Julio and Ray. Julio whistles at her.

OREN (CONT'D)
 Stop it.

JULIO
 What!

OREN
 You know what.

Julio raises an eyebrow at Oren.

JULIO
 Tell her!

Oren rolls her eyes.

OREN
 I went on a date today.

RAY
 After I saw you?

OREN
 It was a tea date thingy. He was perfectly...meh. If I'm gonna spend time away from Jack it has to be worth it.

JULIO
 (theatrically)
 God. Polyamory. Everyone's thinking about it, or trying it out against their will, like we're bad people if we keep our partners to ourselves. Not me, no sirree.'Cos I'm like, hmm, I've got enough on my plate, the last thing I need is to have to suck off my friends' husbands as well!

Oren cracks up.

OREN
 No one's asking you to -

EVIE runs up to Julio.

EVIE
Breadstick.

JULIO
Please.

EVIE
Please.

Julio offers her a box of crackers.

EVIE (CONT'D)
But I *hate* crackers.

JULIO
Crackers and breadsticks are the
same crap in different shapes.

Evie abruptly takes a cracker and runs off.

OREN
As I was saying. No one's going to
force you to...do that.

JULIO
(standing up)
Well, if nothing juicy happened I'm
gonna get a grown up snack. Keep an
eye on the gang.

Julio leaves and the women turn to check on the kids.

OREN
That guy kills me! He acts like
there's going to be a government
mandate on opening relationships.
Like bloody Rishi Sunak's gonna be
chatting about threesomes in
parliament.

Oren expects a laugh but Ray's deep in thought.

OREN (CONT'D)
(softly)
You alright?

RAY
Oh yeh, that's - . I just had a bad
meeting is all.

Oren places a hand on Ray's thigh. A beat here.

OREN
 (tenderly)
 You didn't know, did you.

RAY
 What?

Ray's caught unawares, suddenly completely exposed.

OREN
 That that happened. To your dad.
 It's ok.

Ray takes this in and then holds Oren's hand that she's put on her thigh. Ray leans in and they have a tender hug. Close up on Ray shutting her eyes and smelling Oren's hair.

OREN (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 It's ok.

They let go but stay close. Ray goes with the flow, leans in and stops an inch from Oren's face. Oren looks uncertain at first but then softly kisses Ray. Background noise of kids and dogs becomes muffled. Until:

JULIO
 Excuuuse me?!

Oren and Ray spring apart.

JULIO (CONT'D)
 I leave for two minutes and it's
 mums gone wild! What the hell!

RAY
 Um -

Julio looks around.

JULIO
 Where are the kids?

OREN
 Over there -

They turn and look but the kids aren't in the same spot as before.

OREN (CONT'D)
 They can't have gone far.

JULIO
 (incredulous)
 Jesus Christ!

The adults run into the forested bit of the park all shouting their kids' names until they come into sight.

RAY
 There they are!

OREN
 Thank god.

The adults find the kids building a fort out of branches. Ray looks inside and around it.

RAY
 Where's Indie?

None of the kids reply.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Guys hello? Where's Indie?

FOREST
 (nonchalant)
 Dunno. She was here a minute ago.

OREN
 Forest! You big kids should always
 keep an eye on the litt-

RAY
 Indie! Indie?! Oh no. Oh my god.

Ray runs through the trees, looking behind each one.

OREN
 I'm sure she's nearby, relax.

Ray's entire being is flooded with guilt and panic.

RAY
 (shouting)
 Don't tell me to relax! Indie!
 Indie come out! Shit oh shit oh-

Ray runs towards the path and stops to ask an OLD MAN (80):

RAY (CONT'D)
 Have you seen my child? She's this
 big
 (she indicates her height)
 green dress -

He shakes his head. She runs off and asks some TEENAGE GIRLS (13) dancing and filming a TikTok video:

RAY (CONT'D)
A little girl, this big, in a green dress, have you seen her?

TEENAGE GIRL #1
Sorry, no.

Ray runs off, wild-eyed and electric with fear. She's living every parent's nightmare. She jumps onto a bench and scans the park.

RAY
(in Spanish, under her breath)
My god my god oh my god my god -

Ray's phone rings and she quickly answers.

RAY (CONT'D)
(fraught, into phone)
I've lost - I can't find her -
Indie - come and - oh please -

She rotates on the bench, looking wildly in every direction. She suddenly spots Indie holding a flower, with a male cyclist (55, kindly) squatting next to her.

Ray hits herself twice hard on the forehead with her phone and squats and covers her face, letting out a cry of relief. We stay on her standing and walking slowly towards Indie, looking completely drained. 'Dirty Dancer' by Orion Sun plays. Cut to black.

THE END