

ST. JUDES

EPISODE ONE

WRITTEN AND CREATED BY
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A dark, atmospheric photograph of two children holding hands, seen from behind. The scene is heavily tinted with a deep red color. The child on the left wears a patterned t-shirt, while the child on the right wears a plain t-shirt. They are standing in a wooded area with tall grass and trees in the background.

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OVER BLACK

ON SCREEN: *The following story is inspired by true events.
Manchester, England 1985.*

ESTABLISHER: BOGGART'S CRESCENT, BLACKLEY, MANCHESTER - 3AM

DRONE SHOT: A clear, crisp, chilly night. Everything is still and quiet aside from two urban FOXES who have come out to play. We move in on them as they dart between and over parked cars on the 'New Blackley Park Estate', which is not as fancy or as new as its names suggests.

EXT. 'ST JUDE'S' - 13 BOGGART'S CRESCENT - CONTINUOUS

The FOXES pause momentarily as they reach the last house. 'St Jude's' - a well kept home, with a bright red door and matching window sills. They confidently prowl up the immaculate hedged-lined path and straight down the side passage, a familiar route. Undeterred by the large metal gate that blocks their access, they hop onto the bins before scaling the top of the narrow wall and jumping down into a tidy back garden.

Immediately they are drawn to the far corner, directly in front of the back fence, where a fresh mound of soil holds up newly planted pansies.

The excited FOXES sniff furiously before digging up the pansies, hunting for their treasure.

SLAM!

The FOXES turn and freeze.

POV FOXES: Under the light of the moon we make out the silhouette of a stocky man- PAT O'LEARY, 30s, Irish, shoo-ing away the nighttime intruders from the back door of ST JUDE'S.

Undismayed, the FOXES return to digging even faster.

Moments later PAT, barely clothed in just a vest and boxer shorts, storms down the garden. A fag glowing from his mouth as he wields a large shovel.

The larger FOX turns. There in its mouth is a small bone, not like the disregarded leftovers of a roast chicken but a human bone.

A *small* human bone.

An angry PAT is now feet away. At the last second, both FOXES scarp, squeezing under a loose fence panel.

We see PAT closely now - blotchy pale skin, the type that goes bright red in the sun. He runs his hand through his thin fair hair. Covering the entirety of his bare arm is a large, rather tasteless tattoo of the Virgin Mary. He grunts as he takes in the mess the FOXES have left.

PAT'S POV: Where the pansies had just been dug up is a shallow muddy hole, revealing the partial contents of what was wrapped in a black BIN BAG. Several small bones lay among the slashed plastic. By the MAN's foot lies a tiny dirt-stained knitted BOOTIE. A *BABY* BOOTIE.

PAT huffs as he kicks the BOOTIE into the hole and starts to fill the cavity back in.

We follow his plume of cigarette smoke up as it dances into the crisp night air.

Directly on the other side of the fence is a GRAVEYARD.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: PRESENT DAY

ESTABLISHER: COUNCIL ESTATE/HIGH RISE MANCHESTER - NIGHT

SOUND: Heavy shallow breathing can be heard, interjected with a rusty squeak.

INT. COUNCIL FLAT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A cramped, dated kitchen is littered with leftovers, unwashed dishes, empty lager cans and cider bottles. The scuffed Lino floor is covered in fag-burn craters. There's a gap in the units where a cooker has been removed.

The sound of WHEEZING gets louder accompanied by an uncomfortable metal screeching.

CLOSE UP on the floor. A FLY sits atop a leftover dollop of days-old congealed chicken korma.

SPLAT.

A rusty wheel ploughs straight through the curry obliterating the FLY, whilst smearing the sauce across the Lino like a trail of shit.

Seconds later a pair of tatty slippers shuffles through the remnants.

We **PAN UP** - to reveal PAT O'LEARY, now in his 60s- but looks two decades older. He's wearing a tatty wife-beater vest that proudly shows off the faded grotesque tattoo of the Virgin Mary.

He's pushing an ancient OXYGEN CYLINDER CART, that doubles as his walking aid. His oxygen mask rests on his chin. An unlit FAG dangling from his dry blistered lips.

Exhausted, he finally reaches the kitchen worktop, his breathing now a shrill whistle. He casts aside a pile of kitchen debris - searching for something before letting out a growl.

PAT
(Thick Cork accent)
Bastard. She's fuckin' taken it!

He carelessly waves an arm, knocking over an empty cider bottle but unearths a lighter - *the lighter he's been looking for*. He lets out a small chuckle of delight.

However, his joy is short lived as the lighter won't work. Frustrated, he flings it across the kitchen. It ricochets off the fridge and collides with a miniature figurine of 'Saint Jude' - *the Saint of Hopeless Cases* - on the window sill, knocking it over and breaking one of St Jude's ceramic arms off.

PAT turns back to the counter and looks up at the cupboard facing him.

He opens the cupboard door, and starts pulling out the contents: two cans of baked beans and several out-of-date tins of condensed milk, revealing a large battered BISCUIT TIN at the very back.

Pat grunts, pleased with himself. He places the BISCUIT TIN on the countertop but struggles to prise the lid off. He digs his long nicotine stained fingernails under the rim of the lid. He yanks hard. Eventually it opens.

His face drops immediately. This is not what he thought was in there, for the tin is filled to the brim with knitted baby BOOTIES. Pink, Blue, White, there must be at least 30 pairs stuffed into the metal container.

Furious, Pat slams the lid back on and shoves the BISCUIT TIN back in the cupboard. He puts his unlit FAG behind his ear as he gasps for breathe. The momentary excitement has taken it out of him.

PAT places his oxygen mask over his mouth and nose and turns up the dial fully. The air flow **HISSES...**

Knackered, he leans against the sink inhaling deeply until--
Something catches his eye.

Ah-ha!

PAT, now trembling, slowly drags his oxygen cart over to the other side of the kitchen, a marathon in his condition but he's not beaten yet.

One more step...

He falls against the worktop, triumphant.

He rips off his mask. It hangs below his chin as he quickly turns the oxygen supply dial to OFF. The HISSING stops.

He grabs the bent cigarette from behind his ear, shoving it into his mouth, salivating as he counts down the seconds until the nicotine hit.

He is now beaming. There in front of him is the answer - shining at him like a beacon of hope and happiness.

The TOASTER.

Using all his might, Pat pushes himself up onto his tip-toes to get in position. His FAG dangles out of his mouth, saliva dribbling down his chin.

The **HISSING** starts again, but Pat is too focused on his mission to notice.

HISSES....

Almost there...

Pat's bulbous red nose skims the top of the cold metal toaster as he lowers his CIGARETTE in between the bread slot.

He takes a deep breath, closes his eyes and presses hard down on the lever.

BOOM!

EXT. COUNCIL FLAT - CONTINUOUS

An almighty EXPLOSION can be heard as Pat's kitchen windows blow out- glass shattering everywhere.

A plume of black SMOKE bellows out - flames licking the ledge.

Car alarms shriek, DOGS bark. Confused and panicked NEIGHBOURS cautiously peer out from behind their stained net curtains.

INT. KITCHEN, CONTINUOUS

FROM ABOVE: C/U on Pat's blackened face (which is hard to make out if it wasn't for the whites of his dead eyes staring up at us).

Slowly, we pull back off Pat's face revealing his lifeless singed body in his burnt out kitchen.

By the side of his smouldering body, clearly defined in the heavy soot, is a path of small footprints...

A CHILD'S footprints.

CREAK.

The front door's open.

We follow the little footprints out of the kitchen into the hallway. A large crucifix hangs over a wooden sideboard that has several framed family photos on it. As we pan across, we linger for a second on the largest most ornate frame which shows Pat in his thirties with his sad looking wife June, stood outside a red front door of a terrace house, a plaque on the wall reads- 'ST JUDES'. June is holding a new baby, whilst a young shy boy no more than 4 years old, peers out from behind his mother's legs.

We move across towards the open front door, still tracing the little soot markings - that abruptly stop at the door.

We peer around the doorframe and look outside in both directions.

The footprints have vanished.

No one is there.

TITLE: SAINT JUDES'S

OVER BLACK, WE HEAR:

*EE VOICEMAIL(O.S.)
You have five new messages.*

*SARAH (V.O.)
Hi love. Just to say tea will be
ready about six-ish and can you
pick up some milk on your way home.*

Beep.

*SARAH (V.O.)
Hi, It's me again. Where are ya?
Dinner's bloody cold. Call me back.*

Beep.

FADE IN:

EXT. ST JUDE'S. 6 AM- DAWN

We move across the unkempt front garden of the end terrace. The red window sills have peeled and the once bright red door is faded and scuffed.

This is 'St Jude's'. Pat's former home.

We push in closer until we're looking through the front ground floor window into a living room.

*SARAH (V.O.)
(Emotional)
Darren, I really need you to call
me when you get this. There's been
an accident.*

Beep.

*SARAH (V.O.)
It's 3am, Darren... and... I'm
worried. Where the hell are you?*

Beep.

*SARAH (V.O.)
Why won't you pick up your bloody
phone.*

On the sofa, with her back to us, is a WOMAN wearing a Tinkerbell dressing gown. She's fast asleep. This is SARAH O'LEARY 30s, Mancunian.

INT. 'ST JUDE'S' - LIVING ROOM -CONTINUOUS

On the floor next to the sofa is an empty bottle of wine and a half drunk glass of red.

SOUND: Faint BABY CRIES gradually getting louder.

Sarah stirs, then suddenly sits bolt upright. The BABY CRIES stop abruptly.

Sarah rubs her puffy eyes; she's been crying. She looks to the BABY MONITOR that's on the side table. The nursery is still.

She roots in her dressing gown pocket and pulls out her MOBILE.

6.17 AM. No missed calls.

She shakes her head and curls back up into the sofa.

INT. KITCHEN/HALLWAY INTERCUT - MORNING - 7.30AM

A messy kitchen. Kids' artwork is stuck all over the fridge. A crayon drawing of a family of stick figures holding hands takes pride of place in the centre. Unwashed plates are piled up from last night's tea.

KEYS rattle in the front door.

Sarah's husband, DARREN O'LEARY, late 30s, cocky and surprisingly spritely for this time of day, saunters into the kitchen, sunglasses on. He opens the fridge, tipping an empty carton of milk into his mouth. A trickle runs out. He shoves the empty carton back into the fridge and closes the door, revealing-

Sarah, face like thunder, staring intently.

Darren jumps.

DARREN

Fuck sake! What you doing creeping up on me like that?

SARAH

I've been ringing your phone all night.

DARREN

Battery must have died. You making a brew? I'm parched.

DARREN picks up a carton of apple juice from the worktop - and drinks straight from it. It dribbles down his chin onto the floor.

SARAH
Where were you?

Sarah walks past him to the sink and grabs a cloth. She attempts to bend down to wipe up the spillage but stops. She arches her back, her dressing gown falls off her shoulders and for the first time we see that she's pregnant.

DARREN
At me Dad's, obviously.

SARAH
All night?

Sarah squats down wiping the juice off the floor.

DARREN
Yeah, we played cards, watched some TV. Didn't want to leave him. The home help carer called in sick - *again*. Taking the piss if you ask me.

SARAH
So you didn't pop by the supermarket?

DARREN ignores her. Sarah stands up, looking him straight in the eye.

DARREN
Err...Oh, yeah.... nipped into Aldi. I was starvin' and me dad had already had his meals on wheels and there was nowt in.

PAUSE.

SARAH
What did you get?

DARREN
Come again?

SARAH
What did you *pick up* when you were nearing starvation?

DARREN
Er... I dunno.

SARAH
You dunno?

DARREN
I can't remember...Sausage roll.

SARAH
Sausage roll? What was it? Buy one,
you get a blow job free?

DARREN picks up another empty wine bottle off the side.

DARREN
You shouldn't be drinking in your
condition.

Sarah starts to get upset and angry, struggling to hold back her emotion but not wanting to appear vulnerable.

SARAH
Bleached hair, 20s, puffy lips -
works the checkout. Rochelle
something.

DARREN
What?

SARAH
Her Facebook profile says 'plays
hard, takes it hard'. Very classy.

DARREN rolls his eyes.

DARREN
Sarah, I don't know a Michelle.

SARAH
Rochelle. Me Mam saw her get into
our car.

DARREN
'Ere we go.

SARAH
Y' sayin' me Mam's a liar?

DARREN
I'm sayin' I know what to buy her
for Christmas - some new fucking
glasses!

SARAH
How long's it been going on?

DARREN
Nothing's going on.

SARAH
Stop lying!

DARREN grabs Sarah by her shoulders and pushes her back against the cooker, getting right in her face, his temper flaring.

DARREN
Are you fucking deaf? I told you I was at me dad's all night. I slept on the bleeding sofa.

He grabs a handful of leftover baked beans from an unwashed dinner plate and rubs them in her face. She freezes. She's been here before.

DARREN turns and walks away.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Take a shower and clean up this pigsty.

Sarah takes a moment to compose herself before--

SARAH
The police rang here last night, looking for you?

Darren's stops and turns. His cocky bravado starts to fade.

DARREN
What? Why?

SARAH
Your dad... There was an accident at his flat. He was rushed to hospital.

DARREN grabs his keys off the kitchen counter and immediately heads for the front door.

SARAH (CONT'D)
It's too late, cause while you were screwing *Miss Checkout*, your dad was pronounced dead at a quarter past nine.

DARREN freezes. Rage in his eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 But you'd already know that, cause
 you were there.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

At the top of the stairs are two young boys listening. A small dark haired boy: ALFIE (6) still in his dinosaur PJs sits next to BLONDE (7) with shoulder length blonde hair, dressed in a Man United strip - 'CANTONA' printed on the back.

The two boys look to each other. They too know what's coming.

The kitchen door SLAMS. Crockery SMASHES.

Darren lets out an almighty roar. Sarah cries out.

BLONDE puts a protective arm around ALFIE. The moment is broken by a BABY'S cry coming from the bedroom behind them. The door has blue bunting across it with the name "Jack" embroidered on it. Immediately BLONDE stands tugging at ALFIE'S pajama top, wanting him to follow him into the nursery.

ALFIE, tearful, closes the door behind them.

We stay on the door as we hear ALFIE try to soothe his baby brother's wails. He sings him a lullaby - which despite his best efforts fail to drown out his mother's terrified screams from below.

EXT/INT. KITCHEN - A WEEK LATER - DAY

We see Sarah through the kitchen window, her MOBILE tucked under her chin, buttering bread one-handed, baby JACK in the other. Her caked foundation fails to conceal her bruised cheek. She looks into an almost empty cupboard and grabs a lone packet of quavers and crushes them into the sandwich.

SARAH
 (on phone)
 No...No. Mam, you're not listening.
 I've told you, I'm not going to the
 police. They'd only get the social
 services involved. I can't risk it.
 I've kicked him out. What more can
 I do?

Sarah cuts the sandwich into two and walks into the living-come-dining room, oblivious to the mess.

Alfie and Blonde are playing in the den they've made - football print bedsheets cover the dining table and chairs.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Yes, for good this time. (To the kids) Lunch.

Sarah puts down the plate amongst the debris and returns to the kitchen.

Alfie crawls out from the den and devours half the crisp sandwich in one go.

DING DONG.

SARAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Look, Mam, someone's at the door, and I need to put Jack down for his nap. I'll call you later.

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Sarah answers the door to be greeted by an almost life-size tacky TEDDY holding a love heart that says 'Sorry'.

DARREN
(Baby voice) I'm saw-wee babeee.

BABY JACK giggles. The sentiment almost makes Sarah smile, before she remembers his fists and steps back. Sarah closes the door but it's too late. Darren's foot jams it.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Please baby. I know I fucked up. Can I come in? Two minutes, that's all.

INT. LIVING ROOM- 5 MINUTES LATER.

Darren is sat with two cups of tea whilst Sarah's upstairs putting Jack down. Alfie is sat at the table colouring whilst Blonde is lying down in the den playing with his cars. Darren stands and wanders over to Alfie.

DARREN
Do I not get a hug?

Alfie, slightly scared, sits still and doesn't move as Darren awkwardly wraps his arm around his stiff son.

DARREN (CONT'D)
What's that you're drawing?

ALFIE
(quietly)
Family tree. It's for school.

Darren points to the drawing of a stick man holding a smaller stick man's hand. They both have wings.

DARREN
Hey, is that Daddy and Alfie?

Alfie shakes his head.

ALFIE
It's Grandad Pat and your brother.

Darren, suddenly uncomfortable, takes a gulp of his tea.

DARREN
Why have you drawn me brother?

ALFIE
Mummy, she said-

DARREN
-Yeah, well ignore her. You can rub
him out.

Sarah enters. Darren walks away from Alfie, relieved and hands Sarah her mug of tea, who is surprised by the gesture.

SARAH
(sarcastic)
Ta. That's only the second brew
you've ever made me. I feel
special.

Darren looks embarrassed.

DARREN
He go down ok?

Sarah nods. You could cut the atmosphere with a knife. Darren gestures towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN- CONTINUOUS

Darren and Sarah both lean on the worktop a few feet apart, Sarah refuses to look in husband's direction.

DARREN
You look well.

SARAH

So...Miss Checkout kick you out did she?

DARREN

Babe, a swear, I don't even know who your mam was talking about. You know there's only ever been you.
(BEAT) Ever since I saw you in that PE skirt.

Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH

We were fourteen Darren.

DARREN

I used to pretend I'd lived at the end of Cavendish Drive just so I could walk you home off the bus.

SARAH

Some would call that stalking.

DARREN

Remember what I use to sing to you-
"I said maybe - you're gonna be the one that saves me, after all you're Wonderwall".

SARAH

Still sound like a strangled cat.

Sarah can't help but give a half smile.

DARREN

(emotional)
I meant it, babe. You're the only one who can save me. Without you I may as well be dead like me Dad.

SARAH

Daz-

Darren starts to cry. Sarah feels genuinely sorry for him. She reaches out and gently touches his hand. He immediately turns to her, pulling her close to him, using the moment for his gain.

DARREN

Babe- I know I don't deserve you. But we belong together...I can't survive without you.

(MORE)

DARREN (CONT'D)
I'm begging you. Please, one more
chance babe. Do it for our family.

Darren caresses his wife's pregnant belly. He moves in closer, his breathing heavier, turned on. It's clear they have undeniable chemistry.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I've missed you baby.

He bends down and kisses her bump, slowly moving his way up to her chest before kissing her neck. Sarah wants to push him off but the tension melts away and she gives in.

CLANG!

Sarah and Darren pull apart like 'caught out' teenagers. Stood in the door are Blonde and Alfie, who's holding a toy drum.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Alright.

ALFIE
Is there any biscuits?

Sarah, flushed, opens the cupboard and pulls out a pack of digestives.

SARAH
Here, just a couple. Why don't you
take those upstairs and play. Go
on, build some lego.

Sarah shoos the boys out and closes the door. Darren takes the opportunity and practically pounces on her, pushing her up against the back of door as he slides down her tracksuit bottom before undoing his belt and buckle, thrusting inside her.

DARREN
Look what you do to me.

Sarah gasps.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alfie and Blonde are scoffing their face with biscuits in the den. They freeze before sharing a look of fear as they mishear Sarah's cries of pleasure for pain. Alfie puts his fingers in his ears as Blonde crawls out of the den. Moments later, Blonde returns with Sarah's MOBILE PHONE in his hand.

He taps the screen before handing the PHONE to a hesitant Alfie.

EMERGENCY SERVICES V/O
999. Which emergency service do you
require?

Alfie looks terrified. Blonde nods encouragingly.

EMERGENCY SERVICES V/O (CONT'D)
Hello?

ALFIE
It's my daddy... He's hurting my
mummy again.

INT. KITCHEN- 5 MINUTES LATER

Darren has Sarah bent over the sink, as he takes her from behind. Both close to coming.

DING DONG- neither of them respond to the doorbell - too absorbed in the moment.

Thud... THUD!

The back door shakes. They both freeze.

Sarah opens her eyes to see two young uniformed COPPERS waiting in her back yard.

SARAH
Fuck! FUCK!

DARREN
I'm going as fast as I can, babe.

SARAH
No. The police are here!

INT. LIVING ROOM. 15 MINS LATER

Darren, red faced sits on the arm of the sofa. Next to him is an embarrassed Sarah who can barely look the MALE OFFICER in the eye. The FEMALE POLICE OFFICER is writing up her notes on a pad.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You sure I can't get you a brew?

MALE OFFICER
We're fine, Mrs O'Leary.

Darren laughs nervously.

DARREN
Kids, eh? You got any? Imaginations
run away with them.

The FEMALE POLICE OFFICER's radio crackles into life.

POLICE CONTROL VO.
Disturbance. 94 Ringside Ave.
Crumpsall.

FEMALE OFFICER
Copy.

Both POLICE OFFICERS stand as Darren escorts them out,

DARREN
Oh, right. Well thanks for checking
in. Won't happen again. All the
best.

SOUND: The front door closes.

Darren returns to the living room- he smirks at Sarah before
they both burst out laughing.

DARREN (CONT'D)
So does this mean I can come home?

Sarah takes a moment.

DARREN (CONT'D)
It will be different this time. I
promise.

Darren passionately kisses Sarah.

INT. LIVING ROOM- AFTERNOON - FRIDAY

Sarah's mum, EILEEN (late 60s) is ironing whilst engrossed in
'Murder She Wrote'. Jack is playing in his playpen.

Sarah walks in, dressed in an oversized black cape dress with
bellowly sleeves and red polka dots.

EILEEN
Is that what you're wearing for the
funeral?

SARAH

Nothing else fits. I look like a
bat that's been shot, don't I?

EILEEN

It's lovely on you.

Sarah double checks her make-up in the mirror over the
fireplace. Her bruises are completely faded.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Oh, there's a letter there for you.

EILEEN nods to an official looking ENVELOPE on the side
table. Sarah opens it. A concerned look grows across her
face.

SARAH

For God's sake.

A perplexed Sarah hands her mum the letter. EILEEN holds the
paper at arms length, squinting. She feels on her head for
her glasses - they're not there.

EILEEN

I haven't got me glasses, love.
You'll have to read it to me.

SARAH

It's from Alfie's headteacher.
They're calling me in for a
meeting.

EILEEN

Has he won something?

SARAH

Mam, they want to refer him to a
child therapist.

EILEEN

Why?

SARAH

Apparently, he's been withdrawn at
school, not interacting with the
other kids. Just being in his own
world.

EILEEN

Is it any surprise when he's
witnessed his dad take a swipe at
his mother.

SARAH

Mam, stop. How many more times can he apologise? He was upset about his dad dying. I mean... I shouldn't have pushed him. I'm as much to blame.

EILEEN nods towards the door.

EILEEN

He tell you that? What about all the womanizing. Christ if he's given that baby any disease by shagging about!

SARAH

Mam, you got it wrong!

Darren sticks his head round the door.

DARREN

Car's ere'. Thanks for watching the boys, Eileen.

EILEEN doesn't even look in her son-in-law's direction as he saunters over to Sarah grabbing her and planting a big kiss on his lips defiantly, proving a point - "they're good".

DARREN (CONT'D)

You look beautiful, babe. I'm a lucky sod, aren't I?.

Darren roughly rubs her pregnant belly.

DARREN (CONT'D)

I love you.

Darren waits for a response. Sarah, embarrassed in front of her mum, can barely speak.

SARAH

(almost inaudible)
Love you too.

Darren strides back out, not looking in Eileen's direction. Sarah picks up Jack and gives him a cuddle.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Right, he'll probably drop off when you do the school run, but don't let him sleep more than an hour otherwise he'll be awake all bleeding night.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

There's fish fingers in the freezer for tea and if Jack needs a snack, there's carrot puffs in the cupboard but don't give him any of those chocolate biscuits. He was sick yesterday--

EILEEN

Sarah. I do know how to look after me grandkids.

SARAH

Sorry. I won't be back late.

EILEEN

There's no rush, love. (To Jack)
There's nowhere else Nana would rather be. In't that right, Jacky?
Shall we go feed the ducks in a bit.

Sarah kisses Jack on the head and passes him to her Mum.

SARAH

Love you.

EILEEN

Love you, darlin'.

The women share a look. Her mum gets it. Sarah leaves--

SARAH (O.S)

Bath time is six-thirty, then bed.
Lights out by eight at the latest.

The door slams.

EILEEN

(to Jack)
What's your mummy like, eh? She thinks Nana's a daft sod. Shall we have a choccy biscuit?

EXT. ESTABLISHER: MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC CHURCH - BLACKLEY

INT. MOUNT CARMEL- DAY - 3PM.

The Church is packed. A MOURNER is in the middle of a reading. Darren sits on the first pew, looking like a nervous school boy in a dark suit that doesn't quite fit.

He holds tightly onto Sarah's hand- solidarity. Sat on the other side of Darren is his very emotional AUNTIE TINA (60s, Irish). The MOURNER finishes their passage.

FATHER KELLY, (50s, shaggy hair, unshaven - looks more tarts & vicars costume party than an actual priest) stands revelling in his packed church - which is rare. A twitchy Darren keeps turning around, eventually he nods at someone. Sarah cranes her neck and spots at the very back a glamorous woman(20s, bleached hair in a skin tight faux leather black dress).

FATHER KELLY

Thank you. I think we can all agree that was a lovely reading, wasn't it? Are you free Sunday? Joking!

Father Kelly laughs; no one else does.

FATHER KELLY (CONT'D)

The time has now come to say a final farewell to Patrick, or Pat as he was known to many of us as he is welcomed into God's Kingdom. Whilst saying goodbye is never easy, we take comfort knowing that Pat will be reunited with his loving wife June and their youngest son Luke who was tragically taken so young. May they all rest in eternal peace.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

FATHER KELLY

Pat is survived by his two brothers, who sadly can't be here today, his sister Tina and his eldest son- Darren, who I believe would like to say a few words.

Sarah reassuringly squeezes his hand as he gets up.

FATHER KELLY.

Up you trot. Don't be nervous.

DARREN

Thanks, Father. Firstly I just want to say a big thank you to you all for coming today. I know it would have meant a lot to me Dad.

Darren, nervous, clears his dry throat.

DARREN (CONT'D)

As you know, er... me Dad had two loves in his life: watching Man United and drinking lager, preferably at the same time. In fact, he's probably up there now bending Bobby Charlton's ear over a cheeky half. That's if the 'Big Fella' has actually let him in.

Murmurs of laughter from the congregation.

DARREN (CONT'D)

On that note, after the graveside, I'd like to invite you back to 'Newton Heath Working Mens Club' to share your memories and raise a pint to Pat. Thank you.

INT. NEWTON HEATH WORKING MENS CLUB - NIGHT -8.25PM

Large groups of now drunk MOURNERS sit chatting. It's quite raucous for a wake. One of the mourners is up singing '*Wind Beneath My Wings*.' Father Kelly stands with a shandy, arms in the air swaying to the song.

An exhausted looking Sarah nurses a flat tonic water. She scans the room trying to find Darren, before breaking up a gaggle of nattering AUNTIES, scoffing sandwiches.

SARAH

Er.. Auntie Tina?

AUNTIE TINA

(re: Sarah's glass)
Hope that's not got gin in it?!

SARAH

I wish. Have you seen our Darren?

AUNTIE TINA

No, love, I haven't. How are those gorgeous boys of yours?

SARAH

They're good, yeah. At home with my Mam.

AUNTIE TINA

How old's the little un' now?

SARAH

Coming up to eighteen months.

AUNTIE TINA
 Eighteen months? God love em' and
 another one on way!

Auntie Tina rubs Sarah's belly.

AUNTIE TINA (CONT'D)
 You deserve a medal.

SARAH
 Or me head seeing to! In fact,
 excuse me. Nature calls.

AUNTIE
 Oh, don't let me stop you.

SARAH
 Oh, if you spot our Darren, will
 you say I'm looking for him.

AUNTIE TINA
 Of course.

Sarah gives another glance around and waddles toward the
 toilets.

INT. TOILET CORRIDOR- CONTINUOUS

There is a massive queue running down the corridor as several
 desperate ladies wait...

FEMALE MOURNER
 (to Sarah)
 Only two sodding loos. One's out of
 order and someone's being sick in
 the other- could be a while, duck.

Sarah in discomfort looks to the gents which has no queue
 outside.

INT. GENTS - CONTINUOUS

A DRUNK MALE MOURNER is at the urinals, oblivious to the
 pregnant woman who waddles pass. Great - two cubicles and one
 unoccupied - Hallelujah!

Sarah, barely able to hold it in, squishes into the cubicle
 and sits down. Pure relief. She takes a moment and pulls out
 her phone. No missed calls or texts.

She taps *DARREN* and types: *Darlin where RU?*

A second later she hears a 'PING' from the following cubicle.
Is that Darrens phone?

Sarah texts again.

'xxx'

PING. That IS Darren's phone.

Sarah wipes herself and is just about to call out when-

DARREN (V.O.)
Ignore it, I'm close. Don't stop.

Sarah puts her hand to mouth to stop herself squealing.

DARREN (V.O.)
I'm gonna cum. Baby, I'm gonna cum.

Devastation washes over Sarah's face.

SOUND: A toilet flushes, heels tottering, followed by
footsteps.

The door SLAMS.

Sarah's frozen, trying to process the truth.

BUZZ. BUZZ

Her phone vibrates.

ONE NEW MESSAGE - DARREN:

Hiya Baby, outside gettin air. In Bar now x

INT. TAXI - 5 MINUTES LATER

Sarah clambers into the back seat of her Uber, staring
blankly out the window, quiet tears streaming down her face.

INT. LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Eileen is fast asleep, mouth open dozing in the arm chair. A
half-eaten packet of biscuits in her lap. 'MOST HAUNTED' is
playing on the TV. Next to her on the side-table is Jack's
BABY MONITOR - coming from it is a CRACKLING, faint WHITE
NOISE intermingled with almost inaudible WHIMPERING.

Eileen stirs and drops straight off again. The noise from the
monitor begins to gets louder and then -

A SHRILL BABY'S CRY!

Eileen JUMPS awake, biscuit crumbs fly everywhere. She looks to the monitor screen.

Everything in the nursery is still and silent. Jack is asleep.

Eileen sighs and picks up the TV remote, turning the volume down and places it next to the baby monitor which is now flashing blue.

EILEEN

What the--that can't be right?

She searches for her glasses on her head. They're not there.

She holds the monitor close to her face, trying to figure which button to press. She pushes the left one and a lullaby starts playing.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Oh, Christ.

She taps all the buttons and eventually the music stops playing. She places the monitor back on the table and readjusts herself to get comfy in the armchair, reaching for another biscuit.

Again... Faint CRACKLING comes from the baby monitor. Eileen glances over. All is still.

The CRACKLING stops then starts, building in sound until it's louder than the TV.

It stops abruptly.

Eileen, now annoyed, shakes the baby monitor, then holds it up to her ear.

SILENCE

Then...

PIERCING BABY'S CRIES blast out, nearly deafening Eileen who almost jumps out of her skin sending the monitor flying onto the floor.

We stay close on the upturned monitor.

We hear an irritated Eileen pulling herself out of the armchair, her heavy footsteps stomping up the stairs.

Through the monitor we hear:

EILEEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Right, Nana is not impressed with
 this messing. It's past your
 bedtime--

Moments later, Eileen appears on the monitor in Jack's nursery. She suspiciously looks around. Perfectly calm. She strokes Jack's head and quietly creeps out.

INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fired up, Eileen swings open the boys bedroom door.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
 It's not funny, scaring Nana--

She is met with complete tranquility.

A rotating night light projects coloured dinosaurs onto the ceiling. Alfie lies in the bottom bunk, his arm dangling over the edge. Eileen moves closer to check if he's acting. He's in a deep sleep, snoring.

She tries to peer over the top bunk. No movement. She inspects the room before tiptoeing out and quietly closing the door, confused.

INT. LIVING/HALLWAY-NIGHT - 1 MINUTE LATER

Eileen, now calmer, sits back down. She reaches for the biscuit pack. It's empty - damn.

SOUND: Heavy footsteps running across the floor from upstairs.

Eileen startled, looks up at the ornate light, fitted above her head, that is rattling.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
 What the...?

She pulls herself up off the sofa, squinting as she checks the time. She can't read the CLOCK that stands on the fireplace without her glasses. She moves closer. It's 8.50pm.

Her gaze flits to the MIRROR hung above. Reflected, she sees Blonde sat on the stairs, solemnly peering through the bannister.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
I see you, Mister. Right, into bed!
Stop messing around!

We pan with her as she turns to face the child.

Blonde is gone.

Eileen rushes into the hallway and looks up the stairs.

No one.

He can't be that fast, surely? To the side of her, she spots the DOOR under the stairs, slightly ajar.

She creeps towards the DOOR, holding her breath, gleeful she will have caught the child. She gently clasps the handle, takes a breath and whips it open.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Gotcha!

The space is cramped with a Hoover, an artificial Christmas tree and a pile of coats, nowhere for a child to hide.

Confused, she closes the DOOR- revealing Sarah stood in the doorway of the kitchen, startling her.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Jesus, y'nearly gave me a heart
attack.

SARAH
What are you doin' under the
stairs?

Sarah heads back into the kitchen, not waiting for a response.

EILEEN
The kids they were-

SARAH (CONT'D)
You wanna a brew?

Sarah pours herself a large glass of wine, not listening.

EILEEN
No, I'll be up and down to the
toilet all bleeding night. Ey,
should you be drinking that?

SARAH
Mam, don't.

EILEEN
Well, how did it go?

Sarah shrugs.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Where's Darren?

Sarah, ashamed, can't bear to face her mother. Her shoulders shake up and down as she tries to mask her tears.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Ah, come 'ere.

Sarah collapses into her mum's arms, broken.

SARAH
You were right.

EILEEN
Let it all out, love. Let it out.

Reflected in the kitchen window, we see Blonde peering round the corner of the door watching the women embrace.

EXT. BACK GARDEN- 2 WEEKS LATER - DAY

Alfie is practising keepy-uppies with the FOOTBALL in the garden whilst Blonde is using a broken plant pot like a mini shovel to dig up the earth at the end of the garden.

Alfie waves to his Nana Eileen, who is stood at the kitchen sink washing up.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

Eileen waves back in her marigolds as Sarah waddles in holding two filled bin bags.

EILEEN
Ey, what's all that mess at the end of the garden?

SARAH
Bloody foxes again. Darren's been meaning to concrete that bit over but...

EILEEN
(ref:binbags)
Is that the last of his stuff?

Sarah nods.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

I know this is hard, love, but it's for the best. Cut the ties once and for all. You've got to think of the kids.

Sarah, exhausted, lets out a sigh.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

And in time you'll meet someone else, who deserves you.

SARAH

Like you did?

EILEEN

Kicking your nasty father out was the best thing I ever did. Better on me own. (BEAT) We did alright, didn't we?

Sarah shrugs.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

So, where's he staying? Is he at y'one's? She won't need filler in those lips once he's taken a swipe at them.

SARAH

Mam, just stop! He's been staying at Mark's on the sofa the last two weeks.

EILEEN

A likely story. Men like him don't change. He can't keep his fists or his dick to himself. Both should be cut off!

Sarah, exasperated, can't be bothered to argue with her mum.

EXT. BACK GARDEN- CONTINUOUS

Blonde, his hands now completely covered in mud, taps Alfie on the shoulder, causing him to break his concentration of keepy-uppies.

ALFIE

Ah, what did you do that for? I was at sixteen. Could have broke the world record.

Blonde holds out his hand. He is holding several small BONES.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Did you just dig those up?

Blonde nods as Alfie examines the bones.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Cool. Do you think they're dinosaur bones?

Blonde shakes his head.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

I reckon it could be a baby T-Rex or a Triceratop?

Alfie passes the FOOTBALL to Blonde as he kneels down and starts digging. Blonde starts kicking the ball against the wall.

INT/EXT. KITCHEN/BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Sarah takes two mugs off the draining board as Eileen removes her rubber gloves.

SMACK!

The FOOTBALL hits the kitchen window making both women jump.

Sarah bangs on the glass-

SARAH

(Shouting)

How many times have I said to watch the bleeding windows?!

EILEEN

Hey, you never said- how did it go with the therapist?

SARAH

Alright, she wants to see Alfie on a weekly basis. So we'll see...

EILEEN

You got any crisps or biscuits in?

SARAH
I thought you were on a diet?

EILEEN
I could be dead tomorrow.

SARAH
There's a packet of Jaffa cakes
behind the pasta.

Eileen pulls out the biscuits as Sarah gets the milk from the fridge. Alfie, breathless appears at the back door with several TINY BONES in his hand.

ALFIE
Nana, are these dinosaur bones?

EILEEN
Jesus, your hands are filthy. Where
did you get those?

ALFIE
End of the garden. There's loads.
Ah, can I have a Jaffa cake?

Alfie grabs a handful.

EILEEN
Eh, don't be greedy.

ALFIE
I'm not. I'm sharing them with
Blonde.

EILEEN
Blonde?

ALFIE
Me best mate, Nana.

EILEEN
Oh, is he coming over?

Alfie looks confused, then giggles.

ALFIE
He's already here, Nana.

Eileen scans the garden confused.

EILEEN
Are you having me on?

WHACK!

The FOOTBALL bounces off the kitchen window. Sarah turns with two mugs of tea in her hand, livid.

SARAH

That's it- give me that bleeding ball before all me windows are destroyed.

ALFIE

It wasn't me.

EILEEN

Sarah, he's been stood ere'. He never touched the ball.

Sarah hands her Mum a cup.

SARAH

Oh, really? Who was it then.

ALFIE

I just said it was Blonde.

EILEEN

Is he an imaginary friend?

ALFIE

He's not imaginary!

SARAH

Is this who you've been talking to in lessons? Why the school insist on dragging you to a therapist?

EILEEN

Sarah!

ALFIE

He's right there. Look.

POV: FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE GARDEN-

Blonde is doing kick ups with the FOOTBALL. We can see Sarah, Eileen and Alfie stood at the back door staring.

POV: FROM THE BACK DOOR-

The FOOTBALL is hovering in the air, moving up and down by itself. No one is there.

A stunned Sarah takes it all in - she can't deny what's she's seeing.

Suddenly the FOOTBALL flies up the garden towards them.

It SMACKS Sarah in the chest, causing her to drop her cup of tea. The mug SMASHES into pieces on the patio.

EILEEN

Jesus wept!

INT. KITCHEN- 2 MINS LATER

Sarah is scrambling about in the freezer draw. She pulls out a small bottle of gin (the one for emergencies). Eileen has swept up the broken mug and is holding a dust pan and brush.

EILEEN

Sarah, you need to calm down.

SARAH

He's clearly making this 'friend' up.

EILEEN

Then how did he get the ball to move. He's hardly Houdini is he?

SARAH

It was the wind, you know or --

Sarah pours herself a generous measure of neat gin.

EILEEN

I know you're shaken but it's not good for the baby. Come on. Let's talk to him.

INT. LIVING ROOM. MINUTES LATER

Sarah is sat on the sofa next to Alfie who playing with the 'dinosaur bones'. Sarah takes a deep breath and drains the last of her gin.

SARAH

Alfie, I need you to tell me about this friend of yours, Blondie.

Alfie ignores her, engrossed in his find.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Eh, will you put those grubby bones down and look at me!

ALFIE
He's called Blonde, not Blondie.

Eileen intervenes.

EILEEN
Look darling. Mummy and Nana just want to know how long this Blonde's been playing with you, that's all?

Alfie shrugs.

ALFIE
Er, I don't know, for a while.

SARAH
How long's a while?

ALFIE
I dunno...a couple of weeks.

EILEEN
And does this Blonde not have a home to go to?

Alfie nods his head and smiles.

ALFIE
Course he has a home, Nana...

EILEEN
Well that's good, a suppose.

BEAT

ALFIE
He lives here.

Sarah gasps.

SARAH
What about his mummy and daddy?

Alfie shakes his head, too engrossed in his 'bones'. Sarah grabs his shoulders and shakes him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Alf, look at me.

Alfie looks at his mother surprised by her outburst.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What does Blonde want from us?

ALFIE
Want? Nothing.

SARAH
Nothing?

ALFIE
Can I go play now?

Alfie jumps up and heads back into the garden, leaving Sarah and Eileen to get their head around what they thought they just saw.

INT. HALLWAY. LATER - NIGHT.

Sarah sees her mum out.

SARAH
Thanks for helping with bedtime.

EILEEN
You sure you don't want me to-
(stay)?

SARAH
Mam, I'm fine. I promise. Alfie's just got an overactive imagination that's all. Get yourself off. I'm gonna get in the bath. My back's cracking in two.

EILEEN
Night love.

Sarah closes the door and locks it. Her smile drops. She looks nervously about her quiet house.

INT. BATHROOM- 20 MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

Sarah is soaking in a bubble bath. A couple of tea light candles are lit around the side.

She washes her large bump as it protrudes above the water. She closes her eyes. A moment of peace as she exhales the days stresses away.

Her PHONE BUZZES on the sink.

She ignores it.

BUZZ BUZZ.

This time she sits up and stretches across for it, almost dropping it in the water.

DARREN:2 NEW MESSAGES.

She sighs as she clicks the message open.

I miss you babe. I'm a fool. Please let me make it up 2u. xx

Can I pop over once kids are in bed? xx

She really wants to stay mad but can't help enjoy the feeling of being wanted. A small coy smile spreads across her face. She is about to respond but stops. Let him wait.

She takes a deep breath and slides fully under the water closing her eyes, submerging her whole head - only her bump visible, like a glacier.

She blows out bubbles of hot water.

Calmness.

She slowly rises up out of the water and opens her eyes but the bathroom is in pitch darkness.

All the candles are blown out.

Uneasy, she scrabbles for her MOBILE PHONE.

Where the *fuck* is it?

Finally she feels it. She clicks the home screen and it illuminates a shallow glow.

She holds the phone out, scanning it across the bathroom but the light barely reaches the corners.

What's that?

There... at the end of the bath.

She squints.

Was it a *face*?

She moves the phone back again.

It's just a towel.

Nervous, Sarah calls out.

SARAH
Alfie? Alf you in here?

Nothing.

Sarah lets out a gasp, unaware she was holding her breath. She struggles to sit up in the slippy bath, sliding back in. She eventually pulls herself up and steps out of the bath.

The coldness instantly envelops her.

She grabs a towel, wrapping it tightly around her and reaches for the small pull-light on the steamed-up bathroom mirror.

BUZZ.

She jumps!

UNKNOWN: 1 NEW MESSAGE.

Sarah hesitates, then clicks it open.

I'M HERE.

Sarah looks towards the STEAMED MIRROR.

It has a finger drawing of a SAD FACE on it.

Freaked out, she hastily wipes the image clean off the MIRROR with her hand.

She turns, terrified, scanning the tiny bathroom once again.

She's alone.

She pulls her towel even tighter around her and turns back towards the clean MIRROR.

Reflected BLONDE glares back.

She SCREAMS - nothing comes out.

BUZZ BUZZ

She drops her PHONE in the sink. The screen smashes.

Sarah picks it up, CUTTING herself on the glass.

She looks back to the MIRROR.

Blonde is gone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - 1 HOUR LATER - NIGHT

Sarah, now in her PJs and dressing gown, is huddled on the sofa nursing *another* glass of neat gin.

ALL the lights are on. She keeps glancing at her smashed phone screen. She sucks on her sliced finger.

11.13 PM

Bang BANG!

She jumps.

Darren is outside knocking on the Living Room window waving some half dead/discounted fuel station flowers.

INT. LIVING ROOM- 2 MINUTES LATER.

Darren sits on the sofa, smartly dressed and wreaking of aftershave- he's made an effort.

DARREN
I'm really glad you replied.

SARAH
Darren, this isn't what you think.

DARREN
But you said '*come over now*'.
Christ, I raced round here.

Sarah, utterly shaken on the verge of tears, can barely get her words out.

SARAH
There was someone here, before.

DARREN
(his anger flares)
Hang-on. You've had another bloke round here? Is this some game to make me jealous, cos--

SARAH
No, of course not... There's something strange going on...

DARREN
You're telling me.

SARAH
Ah, I knew you wouldn't understand.

DARREN
Fine, I'm listening.

Sarah sits up on the sofa, serious.

SARAH
I know I sound like I'm crazy but-

DARREN
You're a woman. You're all bloody
crazy.

SARAH
Today, Alfie was in the back garden
playing football. He said he was
playing with a friend.

DARREN
Right.

SARAH
Only...

DARREN
Only what?

SARAH
There was no-one else there.

DARREN
So, he's got an imaginary friend.
Loads of kids do.

SARAH
No. The thing is, this friend isn't
imaginary.

DARREN
What? Hang on... If you've let our
kid play online with some dirty
paedophile pretending to be a
seven year old-

SARAH
-Darren, he was playing with a
ghost!

Darren stares incredulously at Sarah, before smirking.

DARREN
A ghost? A flaming ghost? You're
now taking the piss.

SARAH
It's true, The ball flew up the
garden all by itself.

DARREN
It's called wind, Sarah.

SARAH
My mam's saw it move too.

Darren creases up laughing.

DARREN
Now it makes sense. This is all your mam putting stupid ideas in your head. She bloody loves those daft ghost hunter shows. She'll have y'one, what's er name...? Yvette Fielding round ere' next.

SARAH
Darren, I'm serious.

DARREN
So am I. Your mam's cuckoo.

SARAH
But that's not all. When I was in the bath, this ghost blew out all the candles.

DARREN
Maybe it was his birthday!

SARAH
That's why I texted you.

DARREN
So, I've got Casper the friendly fucking ghost to thank for you inviting me round. Here was me thinking that I was on a promise, but no!

SARAH
Darren. He was watching me when I was in the bath.

DARREN
Oh, so he's a pervy fucking ghost an all? Marvellous.

Sarah's emotions are getting the better of her now.

SARAH
I'm telling the truth, I know what I saw!

Sarah bursts into tears, feeling humiliated. Darren relents on his teasing, feeling bad.

DARREN

Come 'ere, you daft sod. Look, I know the past few weeks haven't been easy since me Dad and all that. But when you're stressed, your mind plays tricks on ya'. That's all. Look, I'm here now. Nothing going to harm you.

He holds Sarah's face in his hands and kisses her softly on the forehead. It's nice to be held.

DARREN (CONT'D)

So no more talk of this stupid ghost nonsense, right?

Darren smiles at her. Sarah forces a smile back. Knowing she'll never convince him. He doesn't let go of her face and pulls her close as he kisses her.

SARAH

Darren, that's not why...

DARREN

Shush... come on, I know you want this as much as I do. We belong together.

Sarah gives in, rather than fighting it.

INT. BEDROOM- 5.30AM

Sarah is fast asleep. Beside her is a naked Darren. He's restless, tossing and turning like he's having a bad dream. We move in close to Darren's face from above. We can see beads of sweat on his forehead. He whimpers.

Suddenly-

His eyes open.

Darren's POV: Blonde stares back at him - his tiny hands strangling Darren.

Darren gasps, trying to prise Blonde's hands from around his neck, his legs flailing.

Sarah wakes. She turns to Darren.

Sarah's POV: Darren has his hands around his own neck.

Sarah shakes him out of his dream. Still in defence mode, he now grabs Sarah around the neck, before realising it was a dream.

SARAH
Darren, it's me. Just breathe.

Darren sits bolt up right, shaking, on the verge of tears.

DARREN
I...He was...I'm sorry.

SARAH
It was just a bad dream. You're alright.

DARREN
What time is it?

SARAH
Half five.

Darren sits up on the bed, his head in his hands.

SARAH (CONT'D)
To be honest, you should probably head off, before the boys wake.

DARREN
Why?

SARAH
I don't want Alfie getting confused.

DARREN
But, last night.

Sarah can't look at him.

SARAH
...Was nice.

DARREN
Just nice?

SARAH
You know what I mean, but I was upset and you were... How can I trust you, Daz?

DARREN
How many times have I've told you?
She was the one chasing me.

(MORE)

DARREN (CONT'D)

I was low about me dad. She took advantage. It was nothing. Meant nothing.

SARAH

I just can't keep doing this, letting you come back. It's not fair on the kids. The therapist said Alfie needs stability.

Darren's anger boils. He grips Sarah's wrists hard.

DARREN

What does some stuck up therapist know about our life?

Sarah winces, ready for a slap. Darren sees her recoil and lets go.

DARREN (CONT'D)

(calmer)
Babe. Look, let me come for an early family tea tonight. We can tell Alfie we're back together. A fresh start. I'll even sign up for anger management classes.

He strokes Sarah's cheek and puts a strand of her hair behind her ears.

DARREN (CONT'D)

We belong together. You don't want to be alone, do you?

He's touched Sarah's weak spot as she digests what he said.

INT. KITCHEN- LATER - 6.13PM

Sarah is wearing a pretty maxi dress that accentuates her cleavage and is flattering over her bump. She has lipstick on and her hair is down and curled. She takes out some over-done garlic bread from the oven, burning her fingers.

ALFIE (O.S.)

I'm starving. Is tea ready?

SARAH

(Shouting) In a minute.

She picks up her MOBILE PHONE, to check the time. He's late.

No messages.

She shakes her head and throws her PHONE back down on the worktop.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(to herself) Fuck sake.

INT. LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sarah enters, carrying a pasta bowl and the very overdone garlic bread.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Right, Alfie. Come n' sit to the table with your brother. Now!

Alfie rolls himself off the sofa and onto the floor. He gets up and notices Sarah's pretty dress.

ALFIE
Are you going out?

SARAH
What? No.

ALFIE
Why have you got lipstick on then?

Sarah goes back into the kitchen. Alfie sits down at the table. He clocks there are three table settings along with Jack's highchair.

ALFIE (CONT'D)
Is Nana coming back for tea?

SARAH (O.S.)
No.

ALFIE
But there's three table mats.

Sarah enters holding Jack, who has now got a bib on and a small bowl of plain spaghetti. She puts Jack in his highchair, ignoring Alfie's question.

SARAH
(To Jack)
There we go, darlin'.

Sarah pulls her chair closer to the highchair. She cuts up the spaghetti, blows on it.

ALFIE
Who's coming over then?

SARAH
Will you just stop with all the
questions!

Alfie goes to take some garlic bread and pulls off more than half the baguette.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hey, that bread's not all for you-

Sarah's PHONE 'beeps' from the kitchen. She gets up immediately.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Watch Jack.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sarah, full of anticipation, grabs her phone.

DARREN: 1 NEW MESSAGE.

She takes a nervous deep breath, bites her lip and opens the message.

Her smile fades as she reads the text.

Something came up at work. Call 2mo. X

Typical. She slams the phone down and wipes off her lipstick with the back of her hand. She's a fool.

She knocks back her glass of red and piles up a bowl of bolognese for herself and heads back into the dining room.

INT. LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alfie is giggling as he demolishes his way through the bolognese, dipping his last piece of garlic bread into the sauce. Jack is playing with his spaghetti.

Sarah sits down. She goes to take a piece of garlic bread but the dish is empty.

SARAH
Alfie, what did I just say?

Alfie says nothing, his face covered in tomato sauce.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Alfie!

ALFIE

It wasn't me.

SARAH

Y' little liar.

ALFIE

I'm not lying.

SARAH

That's it. No ice-cream for you for
afters.

ALFIE

But-

SARAH

-Enough.

ALFIE

It was Blonde.

Sarah freezes and calmly puts her cutlery down and looks sternly at Alfie.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Blonde took it Mummy.

Sarah takes a deep breath, composes herself.

SARAH

This has to stop, Alfie. Blonde
isn't real. He's just imaginary.
You can't keep blaming him for your
bad behaviour.

ALFIE

But he is real. He's sat right
there.

Alfie points with his fork to the empty chair opposite.

SARAH

Nobody is there Alfie. Stop it!

ALFIE

But you invited him. You set an
extra place for him.

Every hair on Sarah's body has stood up.

SARAH

That was for your dad. He was supposed to be coming round to see you and your brother.

Sarah gets up from the table. She's physically shaking.

ALFIE

(getting upset)
But I don't want to see Daddy. He always makes you sad Mummy.

Sarah grabs her plate and Alfie's plate, who is mid forkful and storms into the kitchen.

ALFIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey! I haven't finished.

SARAH

That's it. Bed. NOW! I don't like liars.

ALFIE

But--

SARAH

Now! And no more about this Blonde, do you hear?

ALFIE

Why are you angry with Blonde? He's nice.

SARAH

(snapping)
He can't be that nice if he ate all the bloody garlic bread, can he?

ALFIE

Stop shouting, Mummy, please.
Blonde just wants to protect us, that's all.

Sarah stops in her tracks.

SARAH

What did you say?

ALFIE

(Quietly) He's here to protect us.

SARAH

Protect us?

Alfie stares back at his mother, sheepish.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 (louder)
 Protect us from WHAT?

BEAT.

ALFIE
 From what's coming...

Alfie, deflated, pushes past her and storms upstairs to his bedroom - leaving Sarah utterly dumbfounded.

INT. HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Father Kelly wafts around some INCENSE. He lingers by the door under the stairs, sniffing. Suddenly he opens it and screams-

FATHER KELLY.
 AHH! (He laughs)
 Just kidding!

Sarah's heart is in her mouth. Just at that point the SMOKE ALARM goes off. Typical. Sarah grabs a damp baby-grow that's drying on the radiator and starts fanning the smoke away from the alarm.

FATHER KELLY. (CONT'D)
 Sorry about the... (coughing) it's a hazard of the job. But I think that should send whatever spirit was lingering on their way.

SARAH
 So you've done this before?

FATHER KELLY.
 Rest assured, I'm an expert with the spirit world. I really can sense them, smell them, (he sniffs loudly). It's a gift from God.

Father Kelly starts wheezing.

SARAH
 You alright.

FATHER KELLY.

Oh yes, just it's very draining,
this type of work. Could I trouble
you for a...

SARAH

I'll put the kettle on.

We pan up to see Alfie in his Man City kit peering over the
bannister.

INT. LIVING ROOM - 5 MINUTES LATER

Father Kelly and Sarah are sat with a cup of tea.

SARAH

You must think I'm barmy.

FATHER KELLY.

Not my place to judge Sarah and
it's more common than you'd expect.
Some spirits struggle to pass over
if they feel they have a purpose
still left. Perhaps a message that
needs to be relayed.

SARAH

A message? Well I wish they'd send
me a bleeding text instead of
scaring the living daylights out of
me!

Sarah laughs. Father Kelly does not.

She offers up the plate of biscuits. Suddenly aware of the
faded bruises around her wrist, she pulls her sleeve down.

FATHER KELLY.

Could I trouble you for the packet?

SARAH

Packet?

FATHER KELLY.

Yes, to check the points, the
calories. I've joined weight-
watchers. We do weekly weigh-ins at
the parish. The gowns hide a
multitude of sins- but you know?

SARAH

Sure.

Sarah gets up and heads to the kitchen. Father Kelly stands whilst he waits and peers out the window towards the overgrown garden and the mound of dirt dug up by the back fence. Sarah returns with the biscuit packet in hand.

FATHER KELLY.
Muchas Gracias.

He looks at the packet, sits and puts his second biscuit back.

FATHER KELLY. (CONT'D)
Just the one- ha!

He looks about the living room.

FATHER KELLY
Do you know, it's been years since
I've been here in Saint Jude's.

SARAH
Saint what?

FATHER KELLY
Saint Jude's.

SARAH
Oh, you mean the house?

FATHER KELLY
Oh yes. Used to be a frequent
visitor back in the day when
Darren's father Pat was the grounds
manager of the cemetery. You know
this house came with the position.

Sarah nods politely.

FATHER KELLY (CONT'D)
Pat took real pride of keeping the
grounds looking tip top, and his
own garden... that's when he wasn't
getting into trouble.

Father Kelly pulls a face.

FATHER KELLY (CONT'D)
(whispering)
He was very fond of the old booze.
Got a bit handy? If you know what I
mean.

Father Kelly munches on his biscuit. Crumbs fly everywhere.

FATHER KELLY (CONT'D)

But when he was sober, you couldn't meet a nicer chap. He was always planting something pretty. Some nights from the Rectory, I'd see him out digging with a torch late into the night. Dead-i-cation that is! Get it DEAD - i- cation.

Sarah forces out a giggle.

SARAH

I'm not really very green-fingered.

FATHER KELLY.

(he gestures to her bump)
Well...you've got a lot on your plate.

PAUSE.

SARAH

So you knew the family well then?

FATHER KELLY.

Oh, yes. Darren was even an altar boy for a time. On one occasion he thought it would be amusing to replace the blood of Christ with Ribena.

They both laugh.

SARAH

Sounds about right.

FATHER KELLY.

He was rugby obsessed if I remember. Which didn't go down too well with Pat and little Luke, who were big football fans.

He starts to pick out bits of biscuit from his teeth as Sarah rubs her growing belly.

SARAH

I can't imagine what it must be like to lose a young child.

FATHER KELLY

A tragedy for sure. Luke was such a sweet little lad. He'd just turned seven.

SARAH
Just a tad older than our Alfie.

FATHER KELLY
It broke June's heart - the whole
tragedy. She was never the same.
The not knowing was torturous. She
never stopped searching.

Sarah looks confused.

SARAH
Searching? For Peace?

FATHER KELLY.
For Luke.

SARAH
But, Luke died.

FATHER KELLY.
Well, they never did find a body.

Sarah, puts her tea down, baffled.

SARAH
Hang on. Luke died of cancer. Are
you sure you're not getting
confused, father?

FATHER KELLY.
As God is my witness, that little
lad just vanished one day. Caused
heartbreak to the family and to the
entire community. It was on the
news for weeks. Who told you he had
cancer?

SARAH
Darren. Darren said he died of
leukemia. Why would he say that if--

Sarah shakes her head trying to take all this in.

FATHER KELLY.
Darren was only ten or eleven at
the time. Perhaps it was his way of
coping with the grief. You keep
telling yourself a story, until you
believe it to be true. It can be
very hard to move on with the
future when you don't know the
answers of the past.

SARAH
What happened?

FATHER KELLY.
All we knew was Luke went out to get chips for tea and never came home. Darren took it the hardest. He was supposed to be watching him whilst his mum and dad were at work. He blamed himself, I guess. So sad.

Alfie interrupts swinging off the living room door.

ALFIE
Mum...I'm hungry. When's tea?

FATHER KELLY
Hello, young man.

ALFIE
Hello.

FATHER KELLY
A big 'City' fan eh?

SARAH
You're telling me. You practically live in that shirt. Don't you, Alfie?

FATHER KELLY
Who's your favourite player?

Alfie shrugs.

SARAH
Ey, don't be rude when Father's talking to you.

ALFIE
Er...Erling Haaland.

FATHER KELLY
I'm more of United fan myself, like your Grandad Pat. He was the same, little Luke - always in his red United shirt...

Father Kelly slurps the dregs of his cup of tea and stands.

FATHER KELLY (CONT'D)
Well I should really be off.

SARAH
Thanks Father. I'll show you out.

FATHER KELLY.
- No need.

Father Kelly passes Alfie and ruffles his hair.

FATHER KELLY
Good luck with the season, Alfie.

INT. KITCHEN - 10 MINUTES LATER

Sarah butters two slices of toast. She scoops up a spoonful of tinned beans and sausages from a saucepan and dollops them on the bread. She goes to the fridge to grab the ketchup. As she closes the fridge door she can't help but notice Alfie's latest family drawing: It's of Grandad Pat lying on the ground covered in flames. Above him is a family of stick figures holding hands. It's them: Mummy, Daddy, Jack, Alfie and...

She rips the drawing off the fridge, studying it.

One extra figure is holding Alfie's hand. This stick figure has long yellow hair and a red t-shirt.

Blonde?

Or worse- Luke?

FADE TO:

***FLASHBACK* INT. PAT'S COUNCIL FLAT - KITCHEN -NIGHT**

PAT now trembling, slowly drags his oxygen cart over to the other side of the kitchen, a marathon in his condition but he's not beaten yet.

One more step...

He falls against the worktop, triumphant - having made it to the TOASTER.

He rips off his mask, as he turns the oxygen supply dial to OFF.

As he grabs the bent cigarette from behind his ear, shoving it into his mouth, we pan back to the oxygen cylinder.

A small *HAND* reaches over and turns the oxygen cylinder nozzle back to *ON*.

HISS.... The oxygen starts pumping out from the mask that's resting on Pat's neck but he is oblivious, too concerned with getting his nicotine fix as he leans over the *TOASTER*, fag at the ready.

He takes a deep breath closes his eyes and presses hard down on the lever.

BOOM!

As the black smoke clears we slowly pan 360 degrees around the kitchen taking in all the debris and stillness. As we finally reach where we started, *BLONDE* now fills the screen looking directly into camera, looking at *US*. A small grin appears.

HARD CUT TO
BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.