

Diminished

by

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Characters

MARY CONNOR

ADAM CONNOR

DR. BENJAMIN HUNT

LAYLA DHAWAN

CELIA WARREN

SCENE 1

MARY is sat in a consulting room. She is humming something, it's 'They Can't Take That Away From Me'. DR. PARKER enters.

DR. PARKER: Good evening, Mary.

MARY: Good evening, Charles.

DR. PARKER: Will you ever call me Doctor Parker again?

MARY: Potentially. Will you ever call me Mrs. Connor?

DR. PARKER: Potentially. If you'd prefer it.

MARY: I'd prefer we spoke to each other as normal people.

DR. PARKER: We do but I still think it better if you addressed me/ by my official title

MARY: /By your title in order to observe the 'correct' dynamic. To maintain boundaries.

DR. PARKER: This feels like familiar ground.

MARY: Not in an enjoyable way.

DR. PARKER: Really? I thought you relished these little repartees.

MARY: You suppose it's my little way of sticking one to the institutions? To the patriarchy. Of being a strong woman. Do you enjoy them?

DR. PARKER: I enjoy my job.

MARY: Are you sure?

DR. PARKER: Barely a minute in and already I feel like I'm the patient.

MARY: If only you had a sofa you could lie down on. You do look tired. Trouble on the home front?

DR. PARKER: How have you been this week?

MARY: Bored and mad. Same as everyone right?

DR. PARKER: You mean everyone in here?

MARY: I do feel different today. Clearer.

DR. PARKER: In what way?

MARY: There was a scrabble competition which was fun. I got to the final but Katherine beat me. She used Zax on a triple word. Sixty points.

DR. PARKER: Sax? Like a saxophone.

MARY: No, Zax. With a 'z'. I challenged but it's in the book. A tool used in the iron age or something. Like a hatchet. Katherine used to play a lot of competition scrabble.

DR. PARKER: Seems a bit unfair.

MARY:: If only I'd had a zax to hand then Katherine wouldn't have looked quite so smug. I'm joking.

DR. PARKER: I know.

MARY: I'm pleased she won. She needs it more than me.

DR. PARKER: That's very selfless of you.

MARY: Is it? Or am I just saying that so you'll think better of me?

DR. PARKER: I'm not sure you care that much what I think of you.

MARY: Are you fishing for validation Doctor? Or should I say fishing for 'constant affirmation of one's ability to contribute to and shape one's world'?

DR. PARKER: Been doing some reading?

MARY: It's from your book.

DR. PARKER: No. Is it? Didn't think we had any copies in the library.

MARY: I ordered it. Amazon were practically giving it away.

DR. PARKER: Did you memorise many passages?

MARY: Just that one. I've been subtly steering the conversation so I could use it.

DR. PARKER: Well done.

MARY: Thank you, Charles.

DR. PARKER: I'm glad you've been socialising. You feel comfortable here?

MARY: It's OK. The gardens are very nice. Wisteria and hysteria. You should rename it.

DR. PARKER: Sometimes patients get moved to new facilities, a fresh start; but my recommendation will be to keep you here, under my supervision.

MARY: How thoughtful of you.

DR. PARKER: If you'd rather move...?

MARY: Let's see how things play out.

Beat.

DR. PARKER: I'd like to talk some more about your father today.

MARY: We've covered that, let's talk about your father.

DR. PARKER: Mary.

MARY: Charles.

DR. PARKER: I've said before that this isn't how this should work.

MARY: And I've persuaded you.

DR. PARKER: And I should not have let you.

MARY: But you did and you will. Because you know that I find divulging extremely hard. I watch, I listen. I'm the one who likes to observe not the other way around and the only way that you're ever going to get me to open up is by way of exchange. And we know it's not normal and would be frowned upon by the authorities, perhaps you'd even get into a tiny spot of trouble/

DR. PARKER: /Could get the sack/

MARY: /Highly unlikely. But that's partly why you like it, because we're both complicit in it. Also, it's either that or we sit in silence. Who else do you have who actually listens to you?

Beat.

DR. PARKER: You never considered psychiatry?

MARY: Writing is like psychiatry, except you can't turn on the TV when your patients are boring you.

DR. PARKER: I suspect you have a low opinion of my kind. Perhaps you feel that the one treating your father failed him?

MARY: Good try. How's Sandra? Struggling still?

DR. PARKER: Please don't talk about my wife.

MARY: Why not?

DR. PARKER: Because it's highly unprofessional.

MARY: Says who? A manual written by someone who has doctorates coming out of his arse but wouldn't recognise a genuine conversation if it smashed him over the head.

MARY crosses her arms and looks away.

DR. PARKER: This is our last meeting before your trial. How are you feeling about it?

No reply.

DR. PARKER: Are you looking forward to it or dreading it? The attention and scrutiny repels but the chance for closure appeals?

Nothing.

DR. PARKER: I can do silence if that's what you really want.

He crosses his arms too.

DR. PARKER: I don't know why you care anyway. It's incredibly banal.

MARY: Not to me. I crave some normality. That's the long term aim isn't it? Find my way back to the track. Come on. Please, Charles. I need it. Just talk to me.

He finds it hard to refuse her.

DR. PARKER: She seems...discontent. But says that she can't talk about it with me because I just treat her like a patient.

MARY: Do you?

DR. PARKER: I try not to obviously. But there are always likely to be common phrases or...you know...ways of looking at things.

MARY: She resents the fact that you have a successful career while she gave up hers to look after the children? She needs to feel separated from that. More important to you.

DR. PARKER: Or she's just bored of me.

MARY: Perhaps.

DR. PARKER: Almost certainly.

MARY: And that makes you feel...redundant?

DR. PARKER: It makes me feel relieved. Which in turn makes me feel guilty and hence resentful, which feeds back into the feeling of relief that she doesn't want to speak to me. As I said, all very banal and predictable.

MARY: But that doesn't make it any less important. Or difficult.

MARY tries to touch DR. PARKER. He recoils from it.

DR. PARKER: Mary.

MARY: Crossing boundaries again?

DR. PARKER: Lucinda's birthday is this weekend.

MARY is caught out for a moment.

MARY: That was cruel.

DR. PARKER: It wasn't meant to be. How does that make you feel?

MARY: It makes me feel like your patient again. When Lucinda turned one I let some awful Mumsnet type who once gave me some biscuits in the park persuade me to have a party. Like I said, craving normality. It was...awful. Luce was even more unsettled, screamed the whole day. The worst bit was the mums all trying to pretend that everything was fine. These smiles plastered to their faces but their eyes full of pity. Poor you. At least the children were honest, goggle-eyed at this child who cries even when she has cake while their mums tell them not to stare. I remember when the last guest left, slightly embarrassed to take a party bag, as that's about the last thing it had been, a fucking party, and I cried for a full hour, holding Luce, who was also crying. Both of us, tears and snot and just... angry I suppose that all those perfect Stepford bitches would come and eat the dry cake I'd slaved over and be so grateful that they weren't me.

DR. PARKER: You were on.. (*Looking at notes*) Prozac at that time?

MARY: I guess.

DR. PARKER: Were you jealous of them? The perfect Stepford bitches?

MARY: You can do better than that.

DR. PARKER: Did you see your mother in them?

MARY: Better.

DR. PARKER: I try.

MARY: Some of them perhaps. I didn't really know any of them of course and the fact that they were even taking their children to a party puts them way ahead of her but in one or two of them I may have recognised a...superiority I suppose is as good a word as any, though egocentrism runs a close second. The world could be falling apart around her and she would just shimmer straight on.

DR. PARKER: She lacked empathy, emotional intelligence?

MARY: Did I say that?

DR. PARKER: On the (*searching notes*) twelfth you described her as a 'heartless monster'.

MARY: Must have been a bad day. My mother was perfectly capable of empathy, if she was interested in you. She didn't care much for children. Or husbands.

DR. PARKER: The infidelity.

MARY: T's (*As in more than one*). She wasn't made for monogamy. She enjoyed being discovered too much. Relished novelty.

DR. PARKER: Like you?

MARY: Maybe.

DR. PARKER: You've had about twelve different writing jobs through your career. You never cheated on your husband though?

MARY: No.

DR. PARKER: Do hold your mother responsible for your father's death?

MARY: Clever segue. I've already told you that I blamed myself.

DR. PARKER: Initially. But as you got older you realised how 'inappropriate' that blame was.

MARY: My father pursued my mother. Met her in the casino of course, she was going out with someone else when they first met but she was stunning and he was a man. Plied her with champagne and flowers. The fact that she was so easily swayed should have been a warning but he didn't care. He couldn't help himself.

DR. PARKER: So you blame him?

MARY: Do I have to blame anyone? My mother was selfish and strong. My father was giving and weak. Maybe I got the worst of both worlds.

DR. PARKER: I certainly don't think you are weak.

MARY: Why else would I have done what I did?

He shifts. This is new.

DR. PARKER: Well.... A combination of exhaustion, acute anxiety, lingering trauma from the abuse you suffered and resulting depression had eroded your mental faculty and left you in a state of/

MARY: Madness?

DR. PARKER: Deep irrationality.

MARY: So you don't think I had any responsibility at all for what happened?

DR. PARKER: No. You were of unsound mind.

MARY: You seem so sure.

DR. PARKER: I am.

MARY: What if your wrong?

DR. PARKER: I'm not.

MARY: That's a little arrogant isn't it?

DR. PARKER: I don't think so.

MARY: I mean how could you possibly be sure that you know exactly what was going on in my head at a time that you didn't know me, in a place you have never been in and in a situation you have never experienced?

DR. PARKER: Because that's my job.

MARY: And your job requires that you are always right. Even when sometimes you couldn't possibly prove whether you are or not. Might that not be incredibly dangerous? Potentially.

DR. PARKER: You disagree with my diagnosis?

MARY: I think I do.

DR. PARKER: It's not uncommon for a patient to disagree, we should discuss it at our next session perhaps.

MARY: But that...What about my trial?

DR. PARKER: That's irrelevant. You're not fit to plea.

MARY: My opinion on my own state mind, my own culpability is...irrelevant?

DR. PARKER: In court, yes.

MARY: Because of your diagnosis.

DR. PARKER: Yes.

MARY: Then we need to discuss this now.

SCENE 2

The next morning

Another consultation or meeting room. Perhaps the same, perhaps not. MARY and DR. PARKER are joined by ADAM and LAYLA. Both are immaculately attired.

LAYLA: Are you being serious?

MARY nods her head.

LAYLA: Why on earth?!

DR. PARKER: I told you.

LAYLA: We don't have time to mess around, the trial is in three days, you know that right?

MARY: It's in my diary.

LAYLA: Is this a joke?

MARY: It was a stupid question.

LAYLA: Is this normal, Doctor? A reaction, nerves maybe?

DR. PARKER: It's not something I've personally come across before but there are many reasons/ that could

LAYLA: Is it for attention? Is it possible that you don't already have enough?

ADAM: Layla.

LAYLA: I'm sorry. I didn't.... You've considered the repercussions I take it?

MARY: I did give it some thought in between gardening and needlepoint yes.

~~LAYLA: Have you ever seen a prison, from the inside?~~

~~MARY: Not yet.~~

~~LAYLA: Most of them make this place look like a holiday camp.~~

~~MARY: I've never been to a holiday camp, they sound awful.~~

LAYLA: I'm so pleased that you've not lost your sense of humour.

MARY: Thank you. I'm so sad to see you've not found yours.

ADAM: Mary, please. What's going on?

MARY stops.

MARY: I knew what I was doing. Thought about how to do it, when to do it, how to tell you about it. I said in the assessment that everything was clouded but it wasn't. The moment I had decided on it I felt a clarity. If anything the cloud was lifted. It made perfect sense.

DR. PARKER: At the time, because your mind was altered.

MARY: Still.

ADAM: How can you say that?

MARY: Because its true.

ADAM: You can't think that. If you do then you must still be/

ADAM is struggling to keep his emotions in check which LAYLA notices.

MARY: /I need to take full responsibility for what happened. I knew what I was doing and I need for that to be recognised.

ADAM: By who?

MARY: By everyone I suppose.

LAYLA: You want to plead guilty for the full sentence?

MARY: Yes.

LAYLA: You'll get anywhere between fifteen to twenty five years in jail.

DR. PARKER: If you were to come here, engage fully in the treatment then I see no reason why you couldn't be home in two to five years time.

MARY: Treat what though? I was never ill.

ADAM: Of course you were. You were exhausted and depressed/

MARY: /I was struggling, yes, that's not the same thing.

LAYLA: It is according to the Doctor. That was your assessment?

DR. PARKER: You were suffering from acute anxiety and depression. Together with your extreme tiredness and/ the trauma

MARY: And the trauma that I've suffered, yes, could you leave us for a little while Charles? I'd like to talk to my husband and lawyer in private please.

ADAM: Charles?

DR. PARKER: Of course.

He leaves.

MARY: He's wrong.

LAYLA: He's an extremely experienced and respected psychiatrist. An authority in this field.

MARY: And authorities are always right.

ADAM: Are you running from it all as you always do? From having to go back to normal life? From me?

MARY: No.

ADAM: Then why are you risking prison for twenty years when you could be home in two? I don't understand, Mary. Please, help me here.

MARY: I need to. For Lucinda.

ADAM gets up. Turns his back to Mary and Layla.

ADAM: You can't just say that.

MARY: Why not? You asked me. It's not the whole truth but it's the closest thing I can give you right now.

ADAM: You realise that if you go down this road the whole thing erupts again? If you tell the world that you knew what you were doing and want to go to prison it will....It doesn't make sense!

ADAM calms himself.

MARY: It has to be this way.

Silence for an uncomfortable while.

ADAM: Fine.

LAYLA: Adam?

MARY: You're fine with it?

ADAM: Does it matter?

MARY: I expected more resistance.

ADAM: Sorry to disappoint you.

LAYLA: Mary, you need to know, Adam is struggling. Badly at the moment. He hasn't told you about it because he doesn't want to burden you out of some, misplaced in my opinion, form of guilt. You don't get the newspapers in here do you?

MARY: We get certain news journals.

LAYLA: The tabloids have had you and Adam splashed across the front pages. Adam has been stalked, harassed by journalists, verbally abused/ by total strangers in the street.

ADAM: /Layla.

MARY: That's obviously--

LAYLA: Can't you see it on him? He's been ill, lost weight, can't sleep at night.

MARY: (*Looking at him*) He always looks handsome to me.

LAYLA: His career has suffered too. Projects taken away from him, Peter would say it's to give him space but the real reason is that clients feel uncomfortable with him...

ADAM: Layla/

MARY: /Maybe you're better off without those particular clients.

ADAM: / You don't have/ to...

LAYLA: The trial would finally see things ease off. Guilty of manslaughter by diminished responsibility. Poor nice, white woman cracked under pressure. No huge story. But you decide to fight the assessment for a longer sentence and the media will swarm over it. You'll be safe in prison of course but Adam....he takes the flak. For you.

MARY: And what about you Layla? Guess all this publicity and a murder sentence wouldn't look good on the firm.

LAYLA: The partners know that I'm obliged to carry out my clients instructions.

MARY: Is that why you put pressure on me to claim diminished responsibility?

ADAM: That's not fair.

MARY: She wasn't alone. I suppose it's more palatable to have a mad wife than an evil one. Better for business.

LAYLA: No-one forced you to do anything Mary. You chose then as you can choose now but if you still love Adam then at least consider what the consequences might be for him.

MARY: You were really abused by a stranger? In the street?

ADAM: In the supermarket. Next to the frozen peas. Frozen broccoli actually. I can remember I was debating whether or not to get some, wondering if I'd ever had frozen broccoli before. Anyway I was just

there lost in my frozen broccoli world and this man, in his sixties I guess, looked like president of some golf club, came up to me and started telling me how its my fault, how it's up to a man to look after his family and make sure that they are happy. Told me that I had failed and that I should be ashamed of myself. He actually spat at me. Serves me right for shopping in Waitrose I suppose.

MARY: At least they source their meat ethically.

ADAM almost manages a smile.

MARY: How is she?

ADAM: She's good. I think she might have a new boyfriend. She won't admit it but when she talks about Alan Thompson her eyes light up. He plays a devastating hand of bridge apparently.

MARY: Quick mover. Shame she never met my mum, they'd have got on famously.

ADAM: Have you heard from her?

MARY: No. She was embarrassed by me before imagine how she feels now.

ADAM: Not sure your Mum has 'feelings'....

MARY: Runs in the family.

ADAM touches MARY's hand hesitantly. A small gesture but one that Layla notices.

LAYLA: It won't work.

MARY: Why not?

LAYLA: The original assessment still stands. Dr. Parker has already/ concluded that you were of....

MARY: /Dr. Parker's assessment was based on inaccurate information that I gave him.

LAYLA: Even if that were true it's still his standing diagnosis and nothing that he has seen so far has prompted him to change it.

MARY: He will.

LAYLA: Not got a lot of time to convince him.

MARY: No. Perhaps you're right. Perhaps he'll convince me that I'm wrong. Could you be a doll and get him for me?

LAYLA is uncertain. Suspicious of Mary.

MARY: If he is determined to stick to his diagnosis, then I guess I won't have much choice.

LAYLA: Sure.

LAYLA looks at ADAM who gives her a small nod before she exits.

An silence hangs between them.

MARY: She's right, you do look tired. Maybe get on the melatonin; I've been mainlining it in here, works a treat. Strange dreams but long sleeps.

ADAM: Please don't do this. I know you've got that doctor wrapped round your little finger

MARY: Adam/

ADAM: /You can stay here, do whatever treatments they need and be done in two years. Then you can come home. We can start again.

MARY: You really believe that?

ADAM: Why not? What happened was awful, tragic, but people deal with tragedies and they move on. That's life.

MARY: You sound like we had a dog run over, what happened to us/ was

ADAM: /We could start over. Move somewhere totally new like you always wanted. Where no-one knows us. Escape from everything.

MARY: Mozambique?

ADAM: I was thinking Australia or America but I bet they need human rights lawyers in Mozambique. A place on the beach, lobster sandwiches for lunch...

MARY: You'd get into kite-surfing or something cliched like that wouldn't you?

ADAM: Protecting humanity's rights by morning and master of the waves by the afternoon.

MARY: While I write my book on the veranda next to a bucket filled with long island iced tea?

ADAM: As long as I keep this fair skin out of the sun. Remember Tenerife?

MARY: Factor seven was...

ADAM: Ambitious. Our first holiday away and it must have been like sleeping with Freddy Krueger.

MARY: So a bucket of long island iced tea and a vat of factor 40.

ADAM: 50. Till the base tan kicks in.

MARY: Quite the dream.

ADAM takes her hands.

ADAM: We could live like kings.

MARY: Queens. We are modern colonialists.

ADAM: Quite right. Sun, sea and/

MARY: Surf.

ADAM: Surf! We could have fun. Be happy. Then maybe after time you might get pregnant/

MARY: /You'd want that?

ADAM: You're my wife. I love you.

MARY: How can you?

ADAM: You were ill. You weren't yourself.

MARY: How do you know? Are you saying this just because you want us to plead/

ADAM: /No.

MARY: Because thats the smoother road for you?

ADAM: No.

MARY: At least I could understand that. What makes no sense to me is you thinking we could ever be together again. Let alone have a child.

ADAM says nothing.

MARY: You always think you can fix everything! This is broken. For ever.

ADAM: That's what you think right now/ but I think

MARY: It's not a matter of what I think/ its

ADAM: Stop making this all about you!

Beat.

MARY: That's the first word in anger you've spoken to me since it happened. Its good.

ADAM: How is it good? Was this your plan? To tell Dr. Parker last night when you knew we wouldn't be able to visit you till morning. All night to stew and work myself up? I didn't come here for therapy.

MARY: Then why did you come?

ADAM: To persuade you that you don't have to throw your life away.

MARY: That horse has bolted. Out the door, down the path and off the edge of a cliff. And you know it.

ADAM: No. You're wrong. There's always/

The door opens and DR. PARKER comes in with LAYLA.

LAYLA: Hope we're not interrupting.

MARY: Hello Charles, that was quick.

DR. PARKER: I think it's important to sort this out.

MARY: I agree.

DR. PARKER: It's my belief that my original assessment/ was

MARY: Shouldn't we do this in private? I know we like to blur the boundaries on occasion but doctor patient confidentiality feels like a keeper.

LAYLA: Dr. Parker's testimony will be heard in court in three days time.

MARY: But today we're not in court.

DR. PARKER nods to LAYLA who begins exits...

ADAM: I want to stay.

DR. PARKER: If Mrs Connor consents then/ I don't see

ADAM: There's nothing she can't tell me.

MARY looks at him for a few moments.

MARY: I think I'd find it easier by myself.

ADAM leaves reluctantly with LAYLA who is still waiting at the door with him.

DR. PARKER: Quite a scene you're making.

MARY: Thats a patronising way to start.

DR. PARKER: Apologies.

MARY: No doubt Layla implored you to end this madness by telling me your diagnosis won't change. That I'm wasting everyone's time.

DR. PARKER: She didn't have to.

MARY: What's wrong?

DR. PARKER: What do you mean? Nothing's wrong.

MARY: You haven't shaved. You always shave.

DR. PARKER: I was running late this morning.

MARY: It's more than that.

DR. PARKER: Miss Dhawan is right in that/ whatever you

MARY: /Tell me.

DR. PARKER: /Whatever you plead, if the clinical/ expert

MARY: /Something's happened.

DR. PARKER: /Tells the court that you were of unsound mind then your testimony and plea/ will become

MARY: /You had another fight last night.

DR. PARKER: Can we concentrate/ on the

MARY: /She's kicked you out hasn't she?

Beat

DR. PARKER: I was running late this morning this morning. That's all. Can we please/ get

MARY: Are you alright? I'm sorry. I know I shouldn't pry but I hate all the attention being on me.

DR. PARKER: Are you sure this is what you want?

MARY: If I'm right and things are difficult on the home front then I'm sorry. You clearly put a lot into your work and that can be difficult for some partners to understand.

DR. PARKER: Adam worked very long hours didn't he?

MARY: If Sandra is unhappy or you are unhappy because of a situation that is unlikely to change then perhaps it's all for the best. They'll be queuing up for you.

DR. PARKER: I highly doubt it, now can/ we

MARY: You're a successful, attractive man.

DR. PARKER: Mary.

MARY: I bet you drive a nice car.

DR. PARKER: A Prius.

MARY: You see, you even have a conscience.

DR. PARKER: Sandra's idea.

MARY: But you bought it. You're a catch Dr. Parker, for Sandra or anyone else.

DR. PARKER: Thank you. Even if it is because you want something from me.

MARY: It's because it's the truth and you were fishing for a compliment. Not very subtly.

DR. PARKER: But you do want something.

MARY: Don't we all?

DR. PARKER: It's not something I can give you I'm afraid.

MARY: Layla thinks I'm very selfish.

DR. PARKER: If anything it seems as though your desire is for more punishment rather than reward.

MARY: Does that mean it's not selfish? If what I want is something difficult.

DR. PARKER: Maybe. Am I right? Is this about self-punishment?

MARY: Are you going to help me?

DR. PARKER: I think we have different ideas of what sort of help you need. You want me to say that I was wrong.

MARY: I want you to consider that you may have been.

DR. PARKER: I have considered it.

MARY: You believe I possess an abnormality of mind or mental functioning?

DR. PARKER: You were suffering from chronic depression after/ a

MARY: I was struggling, yes. I'd say you're struggling this morning. Does that mean you're impaired?

DR. PARKER: I might be having a bad day but it's clearly not comparable.

MARY: Why?

DR. PARKER: Because I have not suffered to the same degree as you.

MARY: So it's about suffering is it? If X has been through hell then he's allowed to do what he wants but Y's had an easy time of it so if he cracks then we chuck him in prison.

DR. PARKER: Obviously it's not that simple. It's depends on the diagnosis.

MARY: And from where does the diagnosis come?

DR. PARKER: For depression? A combination of factors: lack or excess of sleep, same with weight loss or gain, fatigue, blood pressure, mood swings, excessive guilt or hopelessness.

MARY: Feelings of redundancy?

DR. PARKER: Potentially.

MARY: You've lost weight recently and I'm guessing from your eyes you didn't sleep too much last night either.

DR. PARKER: I'm not depressed.

MARY: How do you know?

DR. PARKER: Because I don't possess any of the symptoms strongly enough.

MARY: Surely that depends upon perception. If someone came in to see you and said that their wife had kicked them out, that they had been struggling for a few months, working too hard, not eating or sleeping well and had been generally feeling redundant. If they said that they thought they were depressed, would you believe them?

DR. PARKER: You're saying these diagnoses are arbitrary.

MARY: I'm saying it's not an exact science. It depends on a lot of subjective evidence.

DR. PARKER: My colleagues and I train for years to discern and evaluate that evidence, to get to the root. That training is then enriched by the twenty years I've been practising and the hundreds if not thousands of patients that I have diagnosed and helped.

MARY: But it's still subjective.

DR. PARKER: Is it subjective that you hadn't had a good nights sleep for probably a year and a half before the incident?

MARY: You must have doubts about some/ of the patients

DR. PARKER: /There will always be an element of doubt. Every doctor makes mistakes, we are humans. Melanomas missed, celiacs have a hard time of it I believe, often misdiagnosed/ and

MARY: /Depression is often misdiagnosed too.

DR. PARKER: Sometimes. It is usually the case that it is not spotted or diagnosed quickly enough/

MARY: /So you admit, it's a grey area.

DR. PARKER: Even physicists and mathematicians will wonder if their calculations are truly balanced.

MARY: Two plus two always equals four but exhaustion and difficulty is sometimes diagnosed as depression and sometimes/ as a bad day

DR. PARKER: /It's a developing science that has made huge strides over the last thirty years. Yes, there are things left to discover and there are some things that might be considered/

MARY: Imprecise?

DR. PARKER: There is no doubt in my mind that you were not acting in full control of your mental facilities.

MARY: Because I was tired? Or because I was a relatively successful, white, middle-class woman who could not have possibly murdered her own child in her right mind because that's not what those people do?

DR. PARKER: That has nothing to do with it.

MARY: Then why is it that in cases of infanticide that more mothers are found guilty by way of diminished responsibility compared to fathers?

DR. PARKER: I wasn't aware that they were.

MARY: The mother child bond is sacred right? So any mother who could break that must be out of her mind?

DR. PARKER: Plenty of mothers are sent to prison for killing their children.

MARY: Usually when they abuse their children so much that people are shocked by the brutality of it and then there's a real price to pay but so long as it was done humanely, delicately then we start looking at what was broken in the loving mother. Seems ironic that a woman who considers very carefully how and when to do it so that its gentle is considered lacking control while those who take a baseball bat to their children are sent to prison.

DR. PARKER: The fact that you were gentle suggests that you loved your child, as does all the other evidence which makes it all the more likely that there was something irrational in your line of thinking. Your doubts about psychiatry are not going to change my opinion on that. I'm sorry Mary but I can't tell you what you want to hear. I do think that we should discuss why it is that you feel the need to receive more punishment/ than you

MARY: I lied.

DR. PARKER: What?

MARY: About my father. He never abused me. Not in that way.

DR. PARKER: You're searching for a way to get what you want/ and what

MARY: /Look at me. He never abused me. Not like I said. Do you remember what I told you about the first time?

DR. PARKER: He was drunk, back from the casino.

MARY: All that was true. He could never handle his drink. Should never have worked in a casino. He'd been angry for weeks. He smacked me. I'd been naughty plenty of times but he'd never done that before. I figured in retrospect that he had found out about one of Mum's affairs. God knows how it took so long. I remember being so indignant, so furious at him. But scared too. And that's how I felt that night. Like he had changed, wasn't the man who I had worshipped all my childhood. Mum was out that night, I remember Dad making an awkward pass at the babysitter before scaring her out of the door. He was throwing things around, breaking things, talking to himself. Then my door opened. I could tell somehow that he wasn't himself and I would have given anything at that point for him to walk away but he didn't; he came to my bed. He turned off my night-light, that made it so much worse somehow and he lifted up the covers and got in while I pretended to be asleep. And this is where the story is different. He didn't touch me, inappropriately. He just held me. And cried...

DR. PARKER: And all the subsequent times?

MARY: He came in again. Lots. When he was drunk usually. But just the same. Holding me. Till he fell asleep. He always fell asleep before me but he was always gone in the morning and of course there'd be no mention of it.

DR. PARKER: False Memory Syndrome, it's possible that you convinced/ yourself

MARY: I made it up.

DR. PARKER: You made it up?

MARY *nods.*

DR. PARKER: Then how do I know you're not making it up now?

MARY: Because of the 'years of training that you and your colleagues have to discern and evaluate the evidence/, to get

DR. PARKER: This isn't a game,/Mary.

MARY: /It's true.

DR. PARKER: Then I am disappointed in you but it doesn't change my diagnosis.

MARY: There's a whole section in your book on how childhood abuse and trauma is fundamental in the creation of adult mental illness.

DR. PARKER: It's probable that such episodes were still traumatic.

MARY: No. The first one was a little scary in a monster in the cupboard type way but after that they were just a bit sad and bewildering. I didn't need my dad sobbing all night to realise he was unhappy.

DR. PARKER: Your father killed himself. Dealing with and understanding a suicide at such a young age can be very destructive.

MARY: I'm sure it could have been.

DR. PARKER: Meaning?

MARY: My mother didn't tell me about the suicide.

Dr. Parker goes to his notes.

DR. PARKER: In the... dress shop while she picked out a new hat for/ the funeral?

MARY: /No. She was uncharacteristically sensitive about it. She took me to the river, a place called Hurley. A beautiful spot. And she told me that he'd had a blood complication, something I wouldn't understand. It's what she told everyone. She told me the truth when I was eighteen. If I didn't know better I'd say she felt guilty.

DR. PARKER: What an impressive imagination you have.

MARY: You're angry?

DR. PARKER: No, I'm...how do I know you're not just saying this to get what you want?

MARY: Are you admitting you have doubts Dr. Parker?-Tricky when so much depends on the accounts you get from the patient themselves isn't it?- You could call my mother if you want to confirm the second part.

DR. PARKER: Why did you lie?

MARY: Lie is a strong word. I was just trying to give you what you wanted.

DR. PARKER: What who wanted?

MARY: I felt under pressure from Layla, Adam. Even you.

DR. PARKER: Me?

MARY: I think you had an idea of me before we even spoke.

DR. PARKER: That would be highly unprofessional.

MARY: Or very human. Adam looked so... so desperate for it to have not been me. To be able to blame it all on something else. A condition, a disease. I had to give him that at least.

DR. PARKER: But now you've changed your mind?

MARY: The truth will out.

DR. PARKER: You want to go to prison that badly?

MARY: I need to take full responsibility.

DR. PARKER: And you feel what, that other people here haven't? Should Kelvin have been imprisoned?

MARY: He's has schizophrenia, it's different.

DR. PARKER: Why?

MARY: Because schizophrenics suffer from psychotic episodes.

DR. PARKER: So can people with chronic depression, could it be there's something about mental health that I know and you don't?

MARY: Schizophrenia is a binary condition, you either have it or you don't. If you do then its clearly debilitating. Depression is different, it's a spectrum. They're just labels. Sometimes they are apt and helpful. Sometimes they alleviate people of their responsibility to other human beings. Sometimes people are let off too lightly.

DR. PARKER: And what if those people are genuinely sick, impaired physiologically? Surely it's better to risk being lenient to someone who is struggling and may or may not be hiding behind a label than to wrongfully punish someone who's not really in control?

MARY: Where does that take us? A world full of people who can do what they want? Wreck people's lives with no repercussions?

DR. PARKER: Is this about your mother?

MARY: What?

DR. PARKER: You said that she was diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder a few years before your father killed himself.

MARY: I've told you I didn't blame her.

DR. PARKER: You've apparently told me a few things that haven't been true. You said your father couldn't leave her. That he wanted to but didn't. Was it because of her condition? Do you think he stayed with her because of it, excused her because of it. That he 'let her off too lightly'? That's why you're doing this. To make a point. To who? Your mother? The field of psychiatry?

MARY: I think we're done here.

DR. PARKER: Talk to me.

MARY: It doesn't matter why I'm doing it.

DR. PARKER: Of course it does. If you go down this road there will be no coming back. It will cause a lot of pain to a few people, including yourself, who have already been hurt enough. What do you think Lucinda would want?

MARY: They made you the youngest consultant here ever didn't they?

DR. PARKER: Mary.

MARY: Very impressive. Headed for high places.

DR. PARKER: Mary, please/ lets

MARY: What would the board say if it were suggested that you had crossed the line with certain patients?

Beat.

DR. PARKER: I haven't.

MARY: Are you sure? Perhaps you shared details of your home life/ and

DR. PARKER: I hardly told you anything, you intuited/ everything

MARY: And perhaps influenced their plea because...i don't know, you found them attractive. Whereas you see most of the inmates here weekly perhaps there are some who you visit every other day.

MARY tries to touch DR. PARKER. He moves back.

DR. PARKER: Everything I've done has been within the professional/ boundaries that

MARY: /It's so unfair how a few well chosen words from certain high profile patients could cause waves.

DR. PARKER: No-one would take your word over/ mine

MARY: Probably not and yet these things tend to stick don't they? After all its difficult to prove what really goes on in these rooms....

DR. PARKER: If your attempting to blackmail/ me with

MARY: /I wouldn't dream of it. I don't need to.

A knock at the door. DR. PARKER goes to the door and opens it. Layla enters.

LAYLA: How are we doing?

MARY: Very well.

Beat. LAYLA looks at DR. PARKER, he doesn't look so well.

DR. PARKER: There is some... New evidence that has come to light. I would like to make a call to Mary's mother.

LAYLA: What new evidence? You're/ not

DR. PARKER: It's possible that I may have to change my evaluation, the original assessment seems to have been based on information that was...unreliable.

LAYLA: What? Unreliable how?

DR. PARKER: I'll be in touch.

He exits hastily through the door.

LAYLA: Well done, he was only in here fifteen minutes; you should have been a policewoman. Or a lawyer.

MARY: Where's Adam?

LAYLA: He's around. I've bought someone to see you.

MARY: How intriguing.

LAYLA: Would you rather I left?

MARY: No, don't; I so relish these visits.

LAYLA: You know I thought we might be good friends when we first met, a smart, opinionated woman married to a colleague that I respected.

MARY: Are we not? Friends?

LAYLA: Why did you appoint me as your lawyer?

MARY: I didn't. Adam did.

LAYLA: Under your direction.

MARY: You were his choice. Naturally.

LAYLA: Mary, there's nothing/

MARY: /Of course not, that wouldn't be the best way to make friends.

LAYLA: I respect Adam a lot, he's a very good lawyer and good guy, rare combination in my experience but he's/

MARY: Not your type?

LAYLA: No, not really. Is this why you 're doing this? To punish me, to punish Adam for something that never happened.

MARY: It doesn't matter why.

LAYLA: If I was in love with Adam why would I be trying to persuade you against a longer prison sentence?

MARY: Because you know that there's no future for us whatever happens.

LAYLA: That's not what he thinks. He still loves you.

MARY: Well he shouldn't.

LAYLA: I agree. But he feels this incredible sense of loyalty to you

MARY: Is this the bit where you persuade me to do what 's best for the man I married?

LAYLA: I tried that earlier, remember?

MARY: I thought lawyers relied on persistence. Wars of attrition.

LAYLA: Bad ones perhaps. 'The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result', Einstein.

MARY: A misattribution apparently. Either way it's not a popular quote in here. We're more about: 'One person's craziness is another person's reality'.

LAYLA: Nietzsche?

MARY: Tim Burton.

LAYLA: Right.

MARY: Who is it then? The mystery guest. Your trump card. I'm guessing it's not my mother.

LAYLA: Correct.

MARY: It's not Peter himself is it? The big boss. That could be entertaining.

LAYLA: He's not that worried.

MARY: Shame. I'd happily give him a few sleepless nights. A friend from school maybe? Tanya? Louisa?

LAYLA: It's no-one you've met before.

MARY: It's not a priest is it?

LAYLA: It's someone whose been in contact with me from the start, interested in your case. When I got the call last night about your new direction I thought I'd get in touch with her.

MARY: A back up plan? How John Grisham.

LAYLA: Will you see her? She's dropped everything and come a long way.

Beat.

MARY: Why not.

LAYLA: Thank you. I'll get her.

LAYLA gets up to go to the door.

MARY: I was going to say you're a good lawyer, Layla.

LAYLA: You were?

LAYLA waits but Mary says nothing. She walks out the door. MARY sits by herself for a few moments.

In comes CELIA, a woman in her late forties, early fifties perhaps.

CELIA: Hello. I gather you weren't expecting me?

MARY: Not exactly. I'm Mary.

CELIA: Of course. I'm Celia.

CELIA goes to shake MARY's hand.

Beat.

CELIA: Did Miss Dhawan tell you anything about me?

MARY: Nothing.

CELIA: And yet you agreed to see me?

MARY: You're not one of those 'fans' are you? Not sure I'm looking for a penpal.

She takes out some photos from her wallet and shows them to MARY.

MARY: Handsome boy.

CELIA: He's thirteen there. He made it to fifteen years and three months.

MARY: Your son? I'm sorry. What happened to him?

CELIA: He died seven years ago when the average life expectancy was around thirteen and a half.

MARY: Ah. I see. Of course.

CELIA: Latest studies have it just over fourteen.

MARY: Going in the right direction then. Sorry, that sounded trite.

CELIA: What does trite mean?

MARY: Not genuine.

CELIA: Oh. I didn't think that. It is going in the right direction. I read about you in the newspapers with close interest as you can imagine. Your daughter was one and a half?

MARY: Yes.

CELIA: Was she diagnosed early?

MARY: At birth.

CELIA: Much better that way. Your husband was a lawyer?

MARY: Still is.

CELIA: I bet he worked very long hours.

MARY: Yes. What about you? Are you married?

CELIA: I was. My husband was a plumber. Owned his own company, a small one but still. When Anthony was born he was very supportive, took a month off work to help out and cooked and cleaned. I couldn't believe it. More enthusiasm than talent but still in those first few weeks everything is a blur right?

MARY: Yes.

CELIA: I read that you had postpartum depression.

MARY: For a few months.

CELIA: Right. Where was I? James, my husband, yes, he wasn't exactly cordon bleu but he looked after me, after us. To start with. He went back to work and that was fine, then after six months or so he began working more and more. Getting home later and later. When Anthony was almost three I found out that James was having an affair. With his secretary. She was only part time but, anyway, I found some receipts amongst the bills. Hotel rooms, presents that weren't for me that sort of thing. All very cliché.

MARY: Clichés are clichés for a reason.

CELIA: Still, leaving those receipts in our household bills? My sister said it was because he didn't have the courage to tell me face to face but he was never a coward.

MARY: People can be brave about some things and weak about others.

CELIA: Are you suggesting I didn't know my own husband?

MARY: No, no...I was just...I'm/

CELIA breaks into a smile.

CELIA: I was teasing you. I'm sorry. Reminded me of that line from 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' when the old man says 'are you saying I don't know my own brother' or something like that.

MARY: Oh, yes. Is it raining? I hadn't noticed.

CELIA: Yes. Anyway, James and I got divorced. It was all very...amicable. He used to come and see Anthony from time to time, take him to the park and talk with him about the football.

MARY: Could Anthony talk?

CELIA: Oh, yes. Part speech, part sign. Most people couldn't understand a great deal, including James, but we used to have marvellous conversations when he was up to it. Dinosaurs, space travel, the beach. Father Christmas was always a favourite of his. He adored Christmas, it was always a very happy time of the year for us. James used to come as well even though his new wife didn't approve. Just for an hour or so but it was good of him. Anthony appreciated it.

MARY: Did you have help with Anthony? I mean more family support.

CELIA: No. My parents are very old and not really up to it. James' Mum used to come round a bit in the early days but it was a lot for her.

MARY: Yes.

CELIA: And when we separated I think she felt a bit embarrassed. When James was alive and/ paying

MARY: /Your husband died as well?

CELIA: Did I not...yes, car crash. About twelve years ago. Anthony was ten. Anyway while he was alive then the child support meant I could stay at home and look after Anthony but after that it was challenging at times. God bless the NHS but they didn't always give the best painkillers for him. There were other drugs that he preferred that we had to pay for and everything else. I started working at home, I'd worked in sales before but it'd be hard when you're in the middle of your pitch and Ant needs his pills or has a bad turn, you know?

MARY: It must have been extremely hard.

CELIA: Like I said it was challenging. As you know.

MARY: The sleep. I remember when a doctor told me that I'd never get more than two hour stretches of sleep every night through her life I didn't really believe her.

CELIA: Yes. I remember a lot of the time not being sure if I was awake or dreaming. Everything seeming...

MARY: Surreal.

CELIA: Yes. And never to have a holiday again. James and I used to go to Portugal every Summer. Nothing flash but I used to long for that sun. A lounge and a book. Ant loved the outdoors.

MARY: Could he walk?

CELIA: On crutches, yes. He got pretty fast. I remember running after him down the street once when he didn't yet have his trousers put on. I think he liked to make a scene.

CELIA laughs.

MARY: It's nice to talk to someone whose child ...I've never met any parents in the same boat before.

CELIA: You never went to any of the support groups?

MARY: We couldn't, the risk of infection...

CELIA: Lucinda couldn't but you could have, or got in touch with people by phone.

MARY: I didn't think of that.

- CELIA: Your care helpers must have told you.
- MARY: I didn't always get on so well with them.
- CELIA: No. It's not ideal having strangers in your home. Turning the house into a hospital. Certainly puts a strain on the marriage.
- MARY: Yes.
- CELIA: The earlier days are the hardest. The first few years. Was Lucinda in a lot of pain?
- MARY nods.*
- MARY: The crying was...awful, obviously but it was the coughing. The endless coughing that I couldn't stand. Cut right to the core of me for some reason.
- CELIA: Relentless. That was the word that James used to describe it. I can remember not wanting to be let go from the hospitals sometimes, ghastly places that they were at least you were surrounded by support. At home, once the carer's gone it's just you. Trying to deal with the fact that the person you love more than anything is in constant pain. (*MARY nods*). The tiredness, the emotional draw, the injustice of the whole thing is enough to turn your mind totally to pieces. We all questioned our sanity at those times.
- MARY: Why are you here?
- CELIA: I work for a Foundation, we help raise awareness of the condition and money to research it
- MARY: That's great, the disability is so/ poorly
- CELIA: /We prefer the word 'condition' to disability.
- MARY: Sure.
- CELIA: In some ways your story was very helpful. It put the condition on the map for a lot of people, into the public consciousness if you will.
- MARY: That's good, it's such a rare/ disease, I mean
- CELIA: /In other ways it was incredibly damaging.
- MARY: How so?
- CELIA: Your very photogenic face has been everywhere. Newspapers, chat shows. Poor mother who couldn't cope with this terrible condition. Less than one in ten thousand kids gets this condition but when they do it's unspeakably difficult. And you know what people's reactions are? Not to pick up the phone and donate money for

research or write a letter to their MP, no, they goggle for a bit, hug their children, say 'thank God it wasn't me' and then they go back to their morning TV.

MARY: I don't understand, I'm to blame for people's apathy?

CELIA: Miss Dhawan tells me that you won't be claiming insanity anymore.

MARY nods.

CELIA: I consider myself truly blessed to have had Anthony and I believe that as much as his illness inflicted a great deal of pain and difficulty on him that overall his life was a good one. Overwhelmingly so.... But there were times when I may have had doubts, a few dark moments when I let the demons have their say. I feel weak for admitting it but it's the truth. I'm sure many parents in the same boat have similar moments. You want to stand up in court and say that you knew what you were doing and thought that it was the right thing. Imagine/ the message

MARY: /I've never said that it was the right thing to do.

CELIA: But you must have thought it was the right thing because that's what you did. A mercy for your child in pain.

MARY: I didn't do it for Lucinda I did it for me. I couldn't take it. I was weak.

CELIA: Lots of people are weak but they keep going. Partly because they fear what the world might think of them if they don't. If you stand up, a clever, successful woman and say that you thought about it clearly and realised that you couldn't go on then that validates the thoughts of other people who are thinking about giving up.

MARY: Maybe those thoughts should be validated.

CELIA:: Excuse/ me

MARY: /Maybe we should consider how it is that sane, rational people are driven to such extreme measures. My husband did work long hours and, like you, my parents and his did nothing. I had nothing, no help. People like me need far more help, more support. If I did what I did because of childhood trauma and post-natal depression then the whole thing gets swept under the carpet as bad luck, just a crazy lady.

CELIA: I speak to government agencies every day, you know what impact this will have on them? Zero. The story won't be what you did to Lucinda and why but how a pretty, middle class woman chose life in prison over/ a few years in hos

MARY: /Maybe If your foundation got behind/ it then

CELIA: /The only people who will look at you with anything other than fleeting interest will be other parents with disabled children. One paper, if that 's not too respectable a label for it, actually ran an article around your trial titled 'Is disability worse than death?' If you go in there in three days time and tell them that a nice, popular/ educated

MARY: You clearly don't know me.

CELIA: Don't need to, this is your media image; a nice, popular, educated woman murdered her daughter humanely and she did it totally rationally and with sound mind. If that makes it a more acceptable or less horrific prospect for even one of the many parents and carers out there who are struggling then you may be responsible not just for Lucinda's death.

Beat. MARY thinks about all of this.

MARY: So you do think I was responsible then?

CELIA: It doesn't matter.

MARY: How can it not matter? It's the truth.

CELIA: The truth is irrelevant.

MARY: You've been spending too much time with politicians.

CELIA: You want to tell the truth to make yourself feel better.

MARY: Maybe I want to tell it to make myself feel worse.

CELIA: Either way, it 's selfish.

MARY: I think maybe its time for you to leave.

CELIA: You don't care what damage it will do, do you?

MARY: Please go.

CELIA: Do you care about other people?

MARY: Get out.

CELIA: Did you care about her?

MARY: Get out!

CELIA: Did you feel anything when you put the pillow over her /head?

MARY: I don't know who the fuck you think you are but you don't know me! You've no idea what I've been through!

CELIA: Of course I do I've been through it too. You're a privileged woman who isn't thinking for one second about anybody's shit except her own.

MARY: And you are a self-righteous, bitter cow who wasted her life feeling sorry for herself and wants the whole world to know what a bloody martyr she is.

CELIA: Wasted my life!? Is that what you have to tell yourself to justify killing that poor, innocent little girl!

MARY: I'm not justifying it, that's the point. That's the whole fucking point!

CELIA: No, it's not! The point isn't some attention seeking statement of self-punishment, it's the consequences. The point is the people that you will be hurting/ because

MARY: I don't fucking care. Get out. Get out!

CELIA: Maybe I'm wrong, maybe you do belong in prison.

MARY: /Fucking get out now!! (*MARY throws her chair over*)

The door opens and LAYLA and ADAM rush in.

ADAM: What's going on?

MARY: Get her out of here.

LAYLA: Mrs. Warren.

CELIA gets up from her chair very calmly and walks to the door.

CELIA: Whilst it's difficult for me to understand what you did I am sorry.

MARY: I don't want your pity.

ADAM: Could you please leave.

CELIA: You're the husband are you? That poor child.

LAYLA: Mrs. Warren.

CELIA: Yes, I know. I never intended to upset you.

MARY does not look at her. CELIA goes to leave...

MARY: I'm glad you came. In a way.

CELIA looks at MARY, she nods and then exits.

ADAM: Are you OK?

LAYLA: What did she say?

MARY: Broadly speaking she agreed with you, that I'm a cold, heartless bitch.

LAYLA: I never said that.

MARY: No.

ADAM: What do you want to do?

MARY: I want...I want to get into a warm bath and sink down and down and never, ever come up....

ADAM looks at LAYLA.

MARY: I'm joking. Ha ha. You're not laughing.

ADAM: You're confused, it's understandable.

MARY: No, I'm not. I want a divorce.

LAYLA: I'll leave you.

MARY: No, stay.

ADAM: Why?

MARY: Come on, Adam, you know.

ADAM: You always think you know what everyone's thinking, what's really going on but you don't.

MARY: You truly believe you can forgive me for this?

ADAM: It wasn't your fault, you were very ill.

MARY: I was so ill was I?

ADAM: Yes.

MARY: So ill that you didn't notice?

ADAM: I noticed.

MARY: When did my illness start? Has it finished?

ADAM: I guess it started when Luce was born, the post natal-depression.

MARY: But I'd had treatment before that? Therapy, medication...

ADAM: I know.

MARY: Then why did you leave me alone with her?

ADAM: You seemed to be handling it.

MARY: Seemed when? On the one day off at the weekends? The hour we might have together when you got back at night before I fell asleep.

ADAM: You blame me?

MARY: No, but I think you do.

ADAM: Do you now?

MARY: It's the only possible way I could explain why you've been so strangely understanding, so very sure that we can be together still and make it all right. Why else would you not be more angry with me?

ADAM: You've got it all figured out.

MARY: My point is that there's no need. Really there's no reason for you to feel guilty.

ADAM: I don't. Not anymore. I wasn't around enough and I regret that but I didn't do anything wrong. I was working hard for our future/ and

MARY: /Because it suited you.

ADAM: It suited us; but I would have stopped if ever you'd asked.

MARY: Some things shouldn't be asked for.

ADAM: I did feel angry at first, disappointed I suppose that you hadn't told me truthfully how bad things were. I felt like maybe what you did was because you lacked the strength to deal with it. That it was just another form of running away. Like you ran away from your mother. Like you run away from any permanent job. Like you're running away from me now. Then I felt guilty, like I should have noticed, I should have helped more, I should have understood that it was more than hard work. And then I felt like I do now, like I know it was no-one's fault.

MARY: Let's not get/ into

ADAM: /And I've been thinking how I know that/ since you

MARY: /You don't know/ that

ADAM: /since you asked me earlier and I realised/ it

MARY: /Adam, you need to let it go/

LAYLA: /Adam, maybe we should/

ADAM: /I realised it was because you loved her. Adored her. I'm not assuming anything, I've seen mums who aren't that bothered. But you loved her so much. As much as me. More. Even though it was hard and painful. You remember that day when Luce was about six months old that we went for a picnic by the river, Hurford? Hurley?

MARY: Hurley.

ADAM: Hurley. And we expected a quick and noisy visit but Luce was having a good day, and we stayed for hours in the sun. I've never seen you look happier in all the time I've known you.

MARY: Which hasn't been that long/ really

ADAM: /You held her all day, even though it was hot and you must have fancied a swim. Not because she needed it but because you didn't want to let her go. Your baby.

MARY nods, vulnerable now.

MARY: She smiled that day. Really smiled.

ADAM: You loved her with all your heart; so I know that there is no way you could have done what you did unless something had changed you and I don't know if that thing was madness, anger, misery, exhaustion; whether it was just one tough day too many but I know that for you to lose the thing you held dearest in the world, for you to end the life of our little girl that there was....

He can't continue, overcome with emotion. MARY goes to him.

MARY: It's Ok. It's all right. Shhh.

She holds him as he sobs.

ADAM: It wasn't you. Even if it feels like it was. It couldn't have been.

MARY: I don't...I don't know.

ADAM: I do.

ADAM holds MARY's head in his hands, looking directly into her eyes.

ADAM: I do.

Their faces are inches apart. Lips, inches apart...

LAYLA: Adam knows you better than anyone, Mary. Perhaps if you're not sure then you should listen to him.

MARY: Perhaps.

ADAM: Please. You can stay here and get the treatment that you need. Then, when you feel up to it you can come out. We can still make something good out of our lives.

MARY: That woman, Celia. I was mean to her.

LAYLA: You're under a huge amount of strain.

ADAM: She understands. We could help her foundation. Make sure that this never happens to other parents ever again.

MARY: Yes.

ADAM: We can raise awareness, lobby the government, write angry pamphlets.

MARY: I'd be good at that.

ADAM: You would. We still have the chance to make all of this mean something. To have some happiness. To help others. Surely that's what Luce would have wanted?

MARY thinks. She nods.

MARY: OK. OK.

LAYLA: You wish to continue with the plea for diminished responsibility?

MARY: Let's give happiness a shot.

ADAM: We can make a real difference. Make things better.

MARY: That would be good.

LAYLA: It's the right decision, Mary.

MARY breathes. Something lifted.

MARY: Yeah. Course it makes me look rather silly for all this fuss.

LAYLA: Not at all.

MARY: Thank you, Layla. You are a good lawyer.

ADAM: She's the best!

MARY: Thank you.

ADAM: You don't have/ to

A knock on the door.

DR. PARKER comes in.

MARY: Charles, I thought we'd lost you.

DR. PARKER: I wanted to let you know that I spoke to Mrs' Connors mother/

MARY: Where is she? St. Tropez? The Amalfi coast?

DR. PARKER: She has confirmed certain aspects of Mrs Connor's revised account.

LAYLA: And? What do you mean?

DR. PARKER: The revisions will have an effect on my diagnosis.

ADAM: What effect?

DR. PARKER: I'm still reviewing the case and it's/ possible

MARY: /Get it out, Doc.

DR. PARKER: I believe that Mrs. Connor whilst under great duress and in a depleted state was conceivably in possession of sound mental faculties.

ADAM: No.

DR. PARKER: Of course I shouldn't be telling you this but/

MARY: Thank you, Charles.

DR. PARKER: Goodbye, Mary.

MARY: Goodbye.

ADAM: But you've changed your mind. Tell him! Wait, can't/ we

DR. PARKER has already gone.

ADAM: What did you tell him? Just take it back.

MARY: I wonder where she is.

ADAM: Lucinda?

MARY: My mother.

LAYLA: We should get back, this is going to change everything.

MARY: Yes.

ADAM: You go.

LAYLA: Are you sure?

ADAM: I'm staying here a bit longer.

LAYLA: I can wait if you want.

ADAM: It's fine. I'll get the train.

MARY: You should go.

ADAM: I'm staying. I'll see you later, Layla.

LAYLA: Sure. I'm taking it that we are still pleading diminished responsibility?

ADAM: Yes.

LAYLA: Mary?

Beat.

MARY: Do what you can.

LAYLA nods and leaves.

ADAM: Are you ok?

MARY looks at him. She put her head into her hands. ADAM's turn to go to her.

ADAM: It's all right.

MARY: I've messed everything up.

ADAM: No. We can still win this case, talk /to Dr.

MARY: No. Please.

She takes her head out of her hands, moving away from him.

MARY: No more talking about the case, about me. I can't bear it. Tell me about you, how 's work? How 's the flat, the damp? How's the football?! Are we winning? Barkley still on form?

Beat.

MARY: Do you wish we'd never had Lucinda?

ADAM: There was never a choice.

MARY: Of course there was.

ADAM: I was in love with you.

MARY: We'd only been going out for two years.

ADAM: Still.

MARY: I wish I'd heard her speak.

ADAM: It's not worth thinking about.

MARY: Just to have had some conversations with her. At the time it was hard to think that she could ever speak, ever do anything except cry. She was in so much pain. But if I'd have held on then perhaps she could have told me where the pain was, what it felt like, what made it better. Do you ever dream about her?

ADAM: Some times.

MARY: I do. All the time. Strangely she's often about ten in my dreams. She always has your smile. She's always happy. I keep dreading the night when I go to sleep and she's there saying 'Why did you do it? How could you?' but she never does. She's always just happy. Maybe it's the drugs.

ADAM: Maybe.

MARY: You know they have new treatments, in America, of course. A new drug that attacks the disease, slows it down. Early testing but they think they might be able to increase the average life expectancy to twenty.

ADAM: I did read something...Fractadyl. Was that the name?

MARY: I think so.

ADAM: It sounded promising.

MARY: Uh-huh.

Beat.

MARY: Have I ever said sorry to you?

ADAM: I don't know.

MARY: I don't remember saying it.

ADAM: You don't have to.

MARY: But I am. I'm sorry, Adam. I'm so sorry...

ADAM: It wasn't your fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. We can still move forwards together still/

MARY: I'm going to prison, Adam.

ADAM: No. We're going to win. Whatever Dr. Parker says there are other routes we can take, other defences/ that we can

MARY: I don't love you anymore.

ADAM: What?

MARY: We won't be together. I don't love you.

ADAM: I don't believe you. You said earlier/ that

MARY: /I told you what you wanted to hear.

ADAM: No, you always... but you don't get to decide/

MARY: /Adam, move on.

ADAM: No. You stay here for as long as you need and I will wait and then when you're better if you can still tell me that you/ don't love me

MARY: /I'm in love with someone else.

ADAM: What? Who?

MARY: Dr. Parker.

ADAM: No. How?

MARY: It was never planned...it just happened. I slept with him.

ADAM: Bollocks.

MARY: Why do you think he changed his diagnosis so suddenly? I threatened to spill the beans.

ADAM takes this in.

ADAM: You're ill.

MARY: I knew what I was doing. I enjoyed it.

ADAM: All this time, I'm standing by you, supporting you... You've only been in here three months!

MARY: Long enough for you and Layla.

ADAM: What? That's...Nothing has happened between...We're/ just.

MARY: /It's OK. It's good for you.

ADAM: Good for me?! None of this is good for me Mary. You killed our little daughter and now you tell me you've been shagging your fucking psychiatrist! What the fuck is wrong with you?!

MARY says nothing.

ADAM: He'll be struck off for this! Getting involved with a mentally ill patient. He'll be gone by the end of the day...

He gets up and strides towards the door.

He stops for a moment.

ADAM: And what do you want? Divorce? For me to just let you go? Forever?

She nods. He walks over to her. He looks at her for a few moments.

ADAM: I wish I'd never met you.

He kisses her on the mouth. The last vestiges of affection.

ADAM: I'll see you at the trial.

He walks out of the door and closes it behind him.

MARY is left standing for a few moments before she sits down at the table by herself.

She starts humming something that is indistinguishable at first but might then be recognised as 'They Can't Take That Away From Me'.

SCENE 3

MARY is in a small, quite cramped kitchen that has been fastidiously tidied but is still bursting at the seams. There are the faint sounds of a dinner party coming from next door and music is playing quietly from a radio or speaker.

She is dressed up but looks a bit uncomfortable in it. She is making coffee. A keen observer might notice something slightly offbeat in her manner.

She opens up the box of delicate coffee cups that may have been bought for this exact occasion. She lays six of them out carefully and in order on a tray. She waits a moment and then puts one finger on one of the cups and pushes it very slowly towards the edge. She stops as she gets towards the edge but then pushes it that final bit and it falls off, smashing on the floor. She stares at it, unmoving.

A few moments and then the door opens letting in more chatter from the dinner party and also ADAM who is also nicely dressed.

ADAM: *(Speaking back into the room he has come from)* A gigolo only screws one person at a time? Yeah, I've never heard that one. Ha. Exactly.

He lets the door shut and turns to MARY.

ADAM: You alright? Thought I heard something.

MARY: I smashed a cup.

ADAM surveys the broken mess on the floor.

ADAM: Yeah.

MARY: Sorry. Butterfingers.

ADAM: It was a set of eight right?

MARY: Yes.

ADAM: Feel free to smash another then!

ADAM gives her a big smile and briskly goes to a cupboard and pulls out a dustpan and brush to clean up the mess while MARY smashes another one. ADAM laughs, sort of.

ADAM: So? What do you think of them?

MARY: They seem nice.

ADAM: And now with honesty?

MARY: I think she's a stuck up snob doing a poor job hiding her disgust at having to travel out of Kensington and Chelsea/

ADAM: /Almost as well as you are hiding your disapproval/ of them

MARY: / I don't disapprove of her, I feel sorry for her. I think it's been a long time since she's been happy. Mainly because she's married to a misogynistic, racist, immoral dinosaur.

ADAM: To be fair to Peter I don't think he's actually said anything racist tonight. So far.

MARY: When are they leaving? It must be nearly midnight.

ADAM: It's just past ten.

MARY: Time flies...

ADAM: You're doing very well. I know you're exhausted.

MARY: She keeps looking around the flat like it's a refugee camp. I might hold up a collection bucket on her way out, see if she chucks in some fifties.

ADAM: You're imagining the worst. They like going to people's houses. Peter wants everyone to feel part of a family, to find out about his employees' real lives.

MARY: Then why do we have to hide ours?

ADAM: Tidying is not the same as hiding.

MARY: Tidying every single trace of Lucinda?

ADAM: Peter knows I have a daughter.

MARY: Does he?

ADAM: I haven't told him everything. We've only met a few times and I didn't want to look...needy. Like I'm laying out my sob story you know?

MARY turns the percolator on.

ADAM: What about Layla and Ian?

MARY: They seem nice.

A look from ADAM.

MARY: Honestly. He's smart and engaged but not nearly as confident as he'd like us to think. She's strong, hungry, genuine I think which is rare. Takes what she wants. She's in Criminal?

ADAM: Yes.

MARY: I thought firms didn't mix Criminal and Corporate.

ADAM: Not usually. No money in Criminal. Peter likes to do things differently.

MARY: A real maverick with his Old Etonian schooling, Knightsbridge penthouse and Caribbean holidays.

ADAM: I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say.... you're not a fan.

MARY: I think you could do better.

ADAM: By 'better' you mean poorer.

MARY: By better I mean....better. Doing things that make the world a little fairer as opposed to helping the rich get richer.

ADAM: Non-profit human rights lawyer is very catchy when you're a single man trying to get laid/ but

MARY: /Didn't work that often/

ADAM: It did when it mattered; anyway it's not so catchy for a husband. For a Dad.

MARY: If only it were catchy.

ADAM: We've talked about this.

MARY: Have we really?

ADAM: I know it's been really tough for you this year but with this job we can afford a bigger place.

MARY: And that will make it fine.

ADAM: Well why don't you take more help then? You can't do it all yourself, why don't you let me pay for more nursing?

MARY: No, you don't/

ADAM: /Why?

MARY: Because they don't help. They don't understand. They've read a few textbooks and think that they know but they don't. I don't need more optimistic people, who I don't know, who Luce doesn't know, coming into my house telling me what to do with my daughter. A different person every time. It's more trouble than its worth; I have to tell them everything and all the time they look at me like I'm the shittiest mum ever.

ADAM: You're a wonderful mother.

MARY: How would you know?!

ADAM is clearly stung by this. Lost for words momentarily which one might feel is very unusual for him.

MARY: I'm sorry, I'm/ so wound up

ADAM: /No, it's true/

MARY: /It's not/

ADAM: /It has been too much lately. It's not... ideal. But the security of working at a place like this will mean I can be around a bit more.

This doesn't ring true with either of them.

ADAM: Or at least make sure you have some....support. Some rest.

MARY: I'm glad that you derive so much satisfaction from your work.

ADAM is unsure how to take this...

MARY: You can go back to your guests.

ADAM: Our guests. Or at least my guests who you have agreed to tolerate in our home. (*MARY smiles*). I'll stay here. I said I'd be back with coffee.

MARY: A man of your word? I imagine that could be quite damaging to a lawyer's career.

ADAM: That's good. Peter would like that.

MARY: Peter is basically you in twenty years time.

ADAM: Then I should start my crash course port and cheese diet pretty soon.

MARY: He's literally twice the man you are.

ADAM: Will you leave me when I lose my hair or lose sight of my feet?

MARY: I'll probably leave you when you start salivating over the new hot rising star in your Criminal department.

ADAM: No danger there.

MARY: She's pretty. Sharp too.

ADAM: Layla? Not my type.

MARY: You don't have a type.

ADAM: You're my type.

MARY: The knackered type.

ADAM: You look beautiful tonight.

MARY: I look like I'm wearing ALOT of makeup.

ADAM: You always look beautiful.

MARY: You're drunk.

ADAM: You once told me that I was a very attractive drunk.

MARY: That's because I was drunk.

ADAM: Then might I suggest a large glass of red with a tequila chaser...

MARY: On my pills? Not unless you want an impromptu stripper at your party.

ADAM: Sure Peter would feel very at home.

MARY: /Another string to his/ bow

ADAM: /Wait...(listening)...It's our song.

He turns up the music. Billie Holliday is playing 'They Can't Take That Away From Me'.

MARY: It's not our song.

ADAM: It was playing when we first met, how could it possibly be more our song?

MARY: I really don't think it was this song.

ADAM: It definitely was.

MARY: It was Etta James.

ADAM: Nope. 'They can't take that away from me'. I remember crystal clear. You looked incredible in tracky bums and a baggy t-shirt.

MARY: You rudely interrupted my writing by asking to sit next to me at the bar despite a dozen empty tables.

ADAM: You said yes.

MARY: I was being polite.

ADAM: You were being curious.

MARY: And we know where that got the cat.

ADAM: Mrs. Connor?

ADAM offers a hand to the reluctant MARY, she takes it and he and dances with her, serenading her simultaneously though he doesn't know all the words...

MARY: If it was our song you could at least learn the words.

Mary joins in the singing for a few moments.

ADAM kisses Mary on the lips full and hard, she is lukewarm at first but gives into it.

ADAM: How much longer for the coffee?

MARY: A few minutes maybe.

ADAM: More than enough time.

MARY: Just what every woman hopes to hear.

ADAM kisses her again. He lifts her up onto the table. MARY is not as into it as he is.

MARY: They're right next door.

ADAM: So don't scream.

MARY: That's optimistic.

ADAM starts trying to take her pants off...Kissing her.

MARY: Adam...I...Adam.

ADAM: Come on.

MARY: *(Not into it)* Adam.

ADAM: *(Into it)* Mary.

MARY: No, Adam.

He stops what he's doing.

ADAM: What? You don't want to?

MARY: Not like this.

ADAM: Not at all more like.

MARY pulls her pants back up.

ADAM: Sorry. It's just... I love you.

MARY gets off the table, she turns the music off.

ADAM: You know this is no holiday camp for me either. I work bloody hard to try and provide something for this family and then I come back to a wife who won't touch me, will hardly even engage with me and makes absolutely no effort at this very important dinner with my boss and senior executive.

MARY: I dressed up.

ADAM: But you sit there in silence, worse, in judgement of them all.

MARY: I'm tired.

ADAM: So am I! I stay up all night with Lucinda too but at least I'm trying. I'm trying to make the situation better. Trying to help you, support you where I can but you just shut it down. This situation, Lucinda's condition is unbelievably hard but you are making it worse. You don't see your friends. You don't try to make new ones. What about those mums who came to Luce's birthday party?

MARY: You don't understand/

ADAM: /And then you take out your frustration and your anger on me and it's not fair. You've got to tell me what you need.

MARY: I need you! I need you to be here!

ADAM: Well I can't do that right now! You know that. Someone's got to earn money. I can pay for help for/ someone

MARY: No.

ADAM: Then you have to do better!

MARY: I'm trying! I'm trying really hard and still fucking it up!

Beat.

ADAM: No. You're not. You're gonna be fine. You're strong. I know you are.

MARY: I'm not, Adam. I'm really not.

ADAM: You need a break that's all.

Nothing.

ADAM: We can all go. I can take a few days off. Somewhere warm, Luce would love it. Maybe we could visit your mother? Where is she at the moment?

MARY: I don't know.

ADAM: She's hardly met Luce.

MARY: Not a big fan of children.

ADAM: Or humans. God I hope you turn out like her. It's the way that she zones out if you're not talking about her. I suppose that's her condition.

MARY: It's not her condition.

ADAM: Either way we are going on holiday, I will take Luce and you will drink and sleep and finish your book/

MARY: Start my book/

ADAM: /Start your book and all will be well with the world.

MARY: I'm not sure all will be well, Lucinda has/

ADAM: We'll do the best we can for as long as we can.

MARY: Then what?

He takes her in his arms.

ADAM: You worry too much. For now let's just try not to get me fired. Can you bear any more of Peter trying to flirt with you?

MARY: If I have to.

The door opens and Layla comes in. MARY and ADAM separate.

LAYLA: Sorry, just thought I'd see if you needed any help. Plus Peter just told a joke about 'non-swimmers'.

ADAM: He's started.

LAYLA: Such a nice flat, I love the way you've done it.

MARY: Thanks, I'm particularly proud of the damp water features.

LAYLA: Yes, I could never live anywhere that doesn't have at least two or three instances of damp.

MARY: Essential to modern living.

LAYLA: Quite.

MARY: How long have you been at Sutcliffe and Barrie, Layla?

LAYLA: Six years.

MARY: And you like it there?

LAYLA: It's very traditional but they're very well respected. Adam is fitting in perfectly.

MARY: He's certainly working hard.

They are interrupted by the sound of a baby crying. ADAM and MARY look at each other for a moment to see who will respond how.

LAYLA: Poor thing.

MARY: I'll go.

ADAM: Do you have to?

MARY: You want to?

ADAM looks towards the door behind which his dinner guests are waiting.

ADAM: I can't...

MARY starts to go but ADAM stops her.

ADAM: It doesn't make a difference. Whether we're there or not, she'll still cry. You always say that.

MARY: You want me to leave her?

ADAM: Just for a few minutes, have some coffee, enjoy yourself.

MARY: She knows I'm there. Even if she still cries she'll know I'm there. Say my goodbyes. Tell Emma I think she could do better.

LAYLA: Ha, she could!

ADAM: In front of Peter or in a quiet moment aside?

MARY: Take those suitably expensive chocolates your mother gave us.

ADAM: They were for you.

MARY: I don't like chocolate.

MARY has put everything onto a tray leaving ADAM to fetch the expensive chocolates.

LAYLA: It was lovely to meet you.

MARY: I wish that were true.

LAYLA is not sure how to respond.

LAYLA: I hope she's OK.

MARY: Thank you.

ADAM has the chocolates now, he looks at LAYLA.

ADAM: Shall we?

LAYLA puts a hand on his arm and he opens the door, big smile painted on.

ADAM: *(walking out)* Coffee's on its way but in the meantime here are some treats I got especially....

MARY is left alone. Just the incessant crying coming from offstage. She doesn't move. The crying turns to coughing. Difficult to hear.

After a few moments MARY goes off stage in the opposite direction to the dinner party. Soon she can be heard on the baby monitor. Shushing and humming a tune, the same one that opened the play.

The crying doesn't stop but it lessens markedly. The baby soothed as much as she can be. The gentler, more bearable crying continues as...

Fade to Blackout.

CURTAIN