



1

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JOE walks along an empty road. Headphones on. Under his arm is a small plastic duck.

We hear the opening chords of 'In Between Days' by The Cure (TBC). As we come closer we are aware that JOE is singing along to the song in his headphones.

THE CURE

"Yesterday I got so old  
I felt like I could die  
Yesterday I got so old  
It made me want to cry  
Go on, go on, just walk away  
Go on, go on your choice is made."

The sound of a car horn interrupts. He looks straight ahead and sees DAVID and PAVEL waiting, smiling at him. JOE remains poker faced.

CUT TO:

2

---

PAUL in the gastropub, sleeping, the crack of dawn.

He has clearly been sleeping here all night in his sleeping bag on a camp bed. On the floor next to him is the concrete floor polisher, paint, rags.

The floor is half polished concrete, half timbered. The plaster walls painted. The mezzanine and the staircase up to it are visible but a plastic black and yellow strip bars the way to the stairs.

The bar is in place but the pumps and taps not yet fitted so bottles and wine and glasses, etc.

PAUL stirs as he hears keys in the lock. Looks up, bleary-eyed, and SALLY is entering. She's surprised to see him.

PAUL

Somebody's keen.

SALLY

Says the man who's slept here all night.

PAUL stands, in old T shirt and trackie bottoms, taking in his surroundings by the early morning light.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Are we ready?

PAUL  
(NOTICING A TINY GAP IN  
THE PAINTWORK)  
We will be . . .

There's a tiny patch of plaster that has been missed around a light fitting. PAUL picks up a small tin of emulsion as SALLY checks out the mezzanine. PAUL's phone rings. He ignores it and we . . .

CUT TO:

3

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4

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ALISON is at the door waiting, phone to her ear as JOE is dropped off by DAVID and PAVEL. She raises a hand in greeting and thanks. Her tone is friendly, lighthearted, clearly leaving a message.

ALISON  
(ON PHONE)  
We'll be there as soon as we can  
with flowers so you can't avoid me  
forever! You're going to be  
knackered. I love you!

She heads into the house, letting the waiting JOE do his door thing behind her.

CUT TO:

5

---

MAURICE, in suit and tie, stands outside Louise's house. He has been standing there a long time. He raises his hand to knock on the door but can't do so.

Paralysed by fear. He turns, and heads back to his car, cursing himself at his own cowardice.

CUT TO:

6

---

ALISON heading up the stairs.

ALISON  
(SHOUTING)  
I hope you're getting a move on,  
Joe!

CUT TO:



GARY  
(WITHOUT BREAKING STRIDE)  
Hundred and one. The potwasher just  
called in sick.

PAUL turns, the moment gone. He looks out towards the Diner  
and sees the awning slowly rising, like the spaceship door in  
Close Encounters . . .

11

---

PAUL stands by TERRY as, to PAUL's bemusement, TERRY is  
rubbing down the Diner with a cloth.

TERRY  
(OF THE DINER)  
I want her looking her best for her  
special day.

PAUL  
You're not opening today.  
(NODS TOWARDS GASTROPUB)  
You're needed up the hill.

TERRY  
Alison said we were opening. Did  
she not tell you?

PAUL  
No. I'm not exactly on speaking  
terms with her at the moment.

TERRY  
(WORRIED)  
Right. Hopefully, that's nothing  
you want to talk about, is it . . .

PAUL sees Stuart's car pull up, a distance away. STUART,  
REBECCA and BABY ELLA inside.

CUT TO:

12

---

STUART, looking less smooth than last we saw him, in fact  
looking frazzled, as REBECCA sits in the back talking to her  
half-sister, baby ELLA.

REBECCA  
(WAVING A RATTLY TOY)  
Look at this Ella. Isn't this  
lovely?

STUART

Becky. Just leave her will you. If you ignore her long enough she'll go to sleep. Please. For me. Will you just do that? Yeah?

(UNDER HIS BREATH)

Jesus Christ.

REBECCA's feelings are hurt but she tries not to show it.

STUART (CONT'D)

You'd better get going, eh. Don't want to fall out with your Mum and Dad.

REBECCA

Bit late for that.

REBECCA now leans in on baby ELLA.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

'bye, lovely sister. See you next Saturday! Yes. I will. Yes. I will.

STUART

Rebecca. Love. Next Saturday. It probably isn't great for us. We've got people coming and the boys are having friends for a sleepover.

REBECCA

Oh. Right. Well, all hands on deck then! I get it. I'm more practical than I look!

STUART

The thing is, love. And you'll find this out soon enough when you have kids of your own. Thing is, when you have a young baby in the house . . . It's just, well, if people turn up without warning . . . it can be a bit, you know . . .

REBECCA

"People" Sure, yeah. I get it. I'm "people".

STUART

Don't make it tough for me, Becky. You can see how I'm fixed. Four kids and a 'missus mainlining hormones.

REBECCA

You've got five kids, Dad. Five.

STUART

Come on. You know what I mean.  
I'm not saying don't come. I'm just  
saying . . .

He falls into an uneasy silence.

STUART (CONT'D)

I bet they need you at home, don't  
they? With that brother of yours!

REBECCA

Not really. He's just a kid. A  
normal kid.

REBECCA, as she leaves the car, nicks a toy rubber snake discarded by another of Stuart's kids. PAUL has approached the car unseen by STUART and bangs on the car roof, all false brightness and optimism.

PAUL

Thanks for dropping her off,  
Stuart!

STUART winds down his window.

STUART

(AS SPORTING AS HE CAN  
MAKE IT)

Hi ya, Paul. Good luck.

PAUL holds his arms outstretched.

PAUL

Looking good, hey? Fancy a quick  
drink and a bite while you're here?  
All free and gratis for nothing.

STUART

(DRIVING AWAY)

Not really. Bit of a rush . . .

PAUL smiles to himself and turns to find REBECCA has been watching this. He feels a bit sheepish for his triumphalism. PAUL puts his arm around REBECCA who is carrying the toy snake.

PAUL

Can you do me a favour today, love.  
Can you keep an eye on Joe? And if  
he's being . . . you know . . . a  
bit, can you calm him down or maybe  
take him somewhere for a play?

REBECCA

(WALKING OFF)

If he's embarrassing us I'll lock  
him in a cupboard somewhere, sure.





GARY  
 (TO PAUL)  
 You're going to need to ring the  
 supplier about the leaves. I've  
 seen more life in a Pharoah's dick.

ALISON  
 (APPEARING AT SERVING  
 HATCH)  
 Remind me why they turned you down  
 for Saturday Kitchen again, Gary?

PAUL turns to see ALISON, all smiles. Him not so. GARY carries on checking the food. ALISON is determinedly cheerful.

ALISON (CONT'D)  
 (TO PAUL)  
 What shall we talk about first?  
 You sleeping here last night or you  
 ignoring my calls this morning?

PAUL  
 (UNSMILING)  
 How about ice and lemon. Always the  
 little things you forget.

ALISON  
 Gary doesn't mind. Do you Gary? I'm  
 sure he's heard worse.

PAUL rescued by MAURICE putting his head into the kitchen.

MAURICE  
 Have you any idea what temperature  
 Eddie is keeping the Indian Pale  
 Ale at? One degree either way and  
 it tastes like Tonto's head band.

PAUL heads out with MAURICE.

PAUL  
 Why don't you ask, Eddie?

CONTINUOUS:

---

PAUL enters the main area from kitchen with MAURICE. ALISON starts unpacking vases and flowers. NICOLA is doing her best to move the cold beers to the front of the fridge and the warmer ones to the back . . . For reasons not clear JOE is wearing workman's yellow hearing protectors and swinging the toy snake that Rebecca has given him around. As PAUL and MAURICE talk, ALISON crosses and takes JOE's hearing protectors away. MAURICE nods towards the hill outside that EDDIE is coming down.



EDDIE (CONT'D)  
(TO PAUL)  
I think your floor's come up  
brilliantly, mate. Thematically  
consistent.

MAURICE has gone through the yellow tape and is mounting the  
stairs to the unfinished mezzanine, checking the workmanship.

PAUL  
The theme being, "We need to open  
before we run out of money."

ALISON gives JOE a vase of flowers to carry to a table.

MAURICE  
(FROM MEZZANINE)  
Joe could get up here no problem.  
Just saying . . .

PAUL  
(EXASPERATED)  
But he's not up there, is he? You  
are. You come through that,  
Maurice, and we'll bury you where  
you stand. (BEAT) Dead or alive.

At that moment JOE drops the vase just short of the table.

ALISON  
Okay. Don't panic. Rebecca. Pan and  
brush. That storage cupboard.

MAURICE says nothing in a way that says everything. He heads  
down from the mezzanine and hands JOE a silver tray. PAUL  
heads into the kitchen.

MAURICE  
Joe. You just stand there like a  
soldier and when people give you a  
glass bring it over to the bar. . .

JOE stands bolt upright with the tray, puts the toy snake on  
it.

ALISON  
Dad! He doesn't need supervising.  
He's just excited to see Rebecca  
again. He'll be fine.

MAURICE shrugs, "Have it your own way." JOE has rolled the  
silver tray across the floor on its edge because who  
wouldn't? ALISON turns to REBECCA as she starts to pick up  
the pieces from the vase.

ALISON (CONT'D)  
I brought you that dress I got you  
that you never wear.  
(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)

Don't look like that. You look lovely in it. You can change in the loo.

ALISON hands REBECCA a dress in a clothes shop bag and takes the pan and brush from her. REBECCA heads for the toilet. JOE follows her - does the door thing as she goes in.

An anxious glance from ALISON caught by MAURICE. PAUL comes out from the kitchen with a tray of finger food, positive, excited.

PAUL

Here we go. Finger food preview! Cod brandade with squid ink crackers. Pine nut and cucumber grani tas.

NICOLA

Delicious.

MAURICE

(DISMISSIVE)

Have you not got anything that's actually looked over a fence?

MAURICE takes a glass of beer from the counter. Has a sip. Smacks his lips in approval.

EDDIE

You getting it, Dad? The lemony tones?

MAURICE

What does it matter to you anyway? I thought you were leaving.

NICOLA puts her arm around EDDIE and smiles.

NICOLA

He's changed his mind.

MAURICE

Have you? Good. 'cos this tastes better than Debbie Harry's bath water. (A CONSPIRATORIAL WINK TO NICOLA) 'Parallel Lines' tour. Lancaster Town Hall. Don't ask. . .

NICOLA covers her ears as a joke as MAURICE walks away. EDDIE looks concerned. NICOLA catches it. JOE, unnoticed, has gone into the kitchen.

NICOLA

What?

EDDIE

The phone call.

NICOLA

What?

EDDIE

I've been offered the job. In Manchester. (BEAT) And I've accepted it.

NICOLA

What? Eddie? You've what?

EDDIE

It's exciting. For both of us. It's the right thing. I know it. And I think deep down you do too.

EDDIE starts to line some more bottles on the bar. NICOLA looks bewildered.

CUT TO:

15

---

GARY hard at it, as TERRY moves behind him with a pile of pots.

TERRY

Backs!

In the middle of this organised chaos, JOE has suddenly appeared, watching.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Child!

MAURICE enters, to witness this.

MAURICE

Joe. Come on! What you doing in here?

MAURICE crosses to JOE and we . . .

CUT TO:

16

---

ALISON is talking to a smartly turned out TOM who's just arrived. REBECCA comes out of the toilet wearing a dress she would never choose herself - not terrible but just a bit too sweet.

ALISON

You see an empty glass, you fill it, right?

(TURNING TO REBECCA)

(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)  
See. Perfect. You look lovely.  
Aren't I right, Tom?

REBECCA  
(TO TOM)  
Don't say a word.

ALISON turns to find MAURICE and JOE and PAUL standing together.

MAURICE  
You can have a great launch or you can have Joe here. You can't have both. I have to nip out for a bit. Why don't I take Joe with me? Let you get up and running.

ALISON  
He's part of the family. He should be here.

PAUL  
(IMMEDIATE)  
Maurice. That would be great. I never thought he should be here. Thank you.

ALISON accepting this. MAURICE exits with JOE (who's got his headphones and the toy snake). ALISON turns to PAUL and pushes his smile upwards with her fingers.

ALISON  
Hold that look. You won the argument.

ALISON moves off, busy, cheerful, as PAUL lets the smile drop.

CUT TO:

17

---

MAURICE with JOE. He knocks on the door. He has a hand on JOE's shoulder. He has an air of uncertain certainty. As though he is doing an impression of a confident man. Just before the door is answered he leans down and takes JOE's headphones off. JOE has the nicked toy snake that REBECCA gave him. MAURICE has his Louise greeting face ready but is surprised when RALPH answers the door. He takes a moment to adjust.

MAURICE  
Ralph, isn't it? I'm Maurice. This is Joe.

RALPH  
Did Mum know you were coming?

MAURICE  
No. 1, er . . .

RALPH  
He wants you to go and talk to him,  
Mum.

RALPH sits down with his drink opposite JOE, gets out his phone and checks it. JOE takes a biscuit. LOUISE looks at MAURICE. She has no choice.

CUT TO:

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LUKE strides away full of adolescent fury. REBECCA comes chasing after him.

REBECCA  
Luke! Stop!

LUKE  
(TURNING)  
It' a wog pub. Notaw estaurant .  
I only came to see you. I didn't  
want to come to some poncey

MAURICE

Well, I wouldn't go that far . . .

LOUISE

No.

MAURICE

I know I can go in a bit two footed from time to time. And I'm not saying we're going to be cavorting on the side of Derwent Water - not without a flask and knee bandages at any rate but I wouldn't mind, you know, knocking around with you . . .

LOUISE

When was the last time you asked a woman out, Maurice?

MAURICE

I didn't really ask Sandra out. We found ourselves snogging at a club when the lights came up.

LOUISE

Ah, yes, you can't beat musical tongues.

MAURICE

(TRYING TO LIGHTEN THINGS UP)

Like an arranged marriage but with a glitter ball. (BEAT) Is that offensive to Muslims? I don't know what you can and (can't say these days). . .

LOUISE

(INTERRUPTING)

The thing is I can't be doing with strong emotion, Maurice.

MAURICE

Right.

LOUISE

Got enough of my own. And you strike me as a man who feels everything strongly. Even if you're not sure what it is you're feeling.

MAURICE

So are you saying, "Yes" or "No"? Are we on or not?

LOUISE Looks at MAURICE, disbelieving.

LOUISE  
Maurice. I've just said, "No" in as many ways as I can (think of and) -

RALPH (O.S.)  
Mum! Mum!

LOUISE gets up and heads into the kitchen. MAURICE, suddenly tense, follows her.

CONTINUOUS:

22

---

MAURICE enters and finds LOUISE and RALPH and no sign of JOE.

RALPH  
He was in the garden. And then Joe wasn't.

MAURICE looks at the open back door and heads out into the garden. We go with him.

LOUISE (O.S.)  
When was this, Ralph? When did it happen? When did he go outside?

RALPH (O.S.)  
I don't know. I made him another drink.

CONTINUOUS:

23

---

MAURICE looks in the empty garden. The gate open at the end.

MAURICE  
Joe! Joe! Joe!

He goes to the end of the garden and looks out at the road. Nothing. The street is completely deserted. He races on . . .

CUT TO:

24

---

MAURICE running down a road. An open gate. He turns, looks inside a garden. Nothing.

MAURICE  
Joe! Joe!

He runs on again. A road splits. He has no idea which fork to take. Goes along the lake path.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Joe!

MAURICE sees a couple of hikers walking towards him.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Have you seen a little lad? Coming along here? Have you seen him?

The HIKERS shake their heads, "No". MAURICE turns, doubles back.

CUT TO:

25

---

A different empty path. An empty landscape.

MAURICE

Joe!

MAURICE stares out, tries to get his bearings, tries to work out where JOE would have gone. And the more he looks, the more impossible it seems to be able to guess.

CUT TO:

26

---

LOUISE is standing opposite RALPH. MAURICE races back inside, urgent, terrified, intimidating, up in RALPH's face.

MAURICE

Where did he go? Which way did he go?

RALPH

He went outside.

MAURICE

(FRANTIC)

I know he fucking went outside. Where did he go when he went outside!

LOUISE

Maurice! Stop shouting at the lad. You're scaring him.

MAURICE

I'll scare him if he's done anything to Joe.

LOUISE

You what! Get out! Don't talk to my son like that!

MAURICE calms down a beat, trying to calm her down because he needs so badly to talk to RALPH.

MAURICE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Son. Can you just remember what happened?

RALPH

He went into the garden.

MAURICE

And where were you?

RALPH

Making him a drink. In here.

MAURICE

And you went out and he'd gone! You didn't see anything? Hear anything?

LOUISE

Just calm down. Think about it. Joe goes wandering off. You said so yourself. Now, will he have gone home?

MAURICE

Not from here. I wouldn't have thought so.

LOUISE

What about back to the gastropub?

MAURICE

You're right. He was enjoying himself. I'll drive back to the gastropub. Bet that's where he is.

LOUISE

So why don't you just ring Alison and ask her?

MAURICE

'cos he'll be there, won't he. And if he's not there he'll be on the road and she'll worry and they've got enough to worry about. So I'll find him, you know, and no harm done.

MAURICE trying to convince himself more than LOUISE. He dashes out into the car.

CUT TO:

---

Round a corner of the gastropub, in a secluded spot, REBECCA shows NICOLA the poem that Luke has written. She is excited as NICOLA reads it.

REBECCA  
(EXCITED)  
It's good, isn't it?

NICOLA  
It's very good. Yes. And it was  
very good when Simon Armitage wrote  
it.

REBECCA  
What? No. Luke wrote it.

NICOLA  
Luke wrote it out, Rebecca. That  
isn't the same as writing it.

REBECCA  
No way.

REBECCA takes the poem, reads a bit with a proprietorial glow  
. . . the poem MUST be about her.

REBECCA  
Come to think of it, I'm not even  
sure this is his handwriting.

CUT TO:

28

---

MAURICE is driving along the lake road. Looking around.  
Anxious now. Talking to himself.

MAURICE  
Come on, Joe. Come on. Next corner.  
Next corner . . .

MAURICE travels round a bend in the road and all he sees is  
another empty landscape ahead. He steadies himself, deep  
breaths, drives on . . . stares at his phone on the seat  
beside him. No. He isn't going to ring. He is going to find  
Joe.

CUT TO:

29

---

Busy and full. There are people standing round drinking,  
others at the table working their way through sample menus .  
. . . TOM, NICOLA, PAUL circulating with drinks, etc, then PAUL  
notices REBECCA on her phone. EDDIE behind bar.

REBECCA  
(INTO PHONE)  
Just so you know. I know you didn't  
write that poem. It's fake. Like  
you! Like when I pretended to come.  
As fake as that! Enjoy the rest of  
your life!

PAUL arrives, his anxiety making him more fierce than  
intended.

PAUL  
You can't be on your phone! Not in  
here! All right.

REBECCA  
(HANDING HIM THE PHONE)  
I won't need it ever again anyway.

REBECCA takes a tray from the bar and starts to circulate.  
PAUL looks at her. Sorry again.

PAUL

He looks slightly bewildered, stressed. He frowns as he notices a PUNTER leaving some food. ALISON appears beside him.

ALISON  
You are allowed to enjoy this, you know.

PAUL  
(SERIOUS)  
I'll enjoy it when we start taking money.

ALISON  
Outside. For one minute only.

PAUL  
I can't spare a minute. I can't spare a second.

ALISON leans in very close to him, cups the back of his neck with her hand as though to pull him in for a kiss.

ALISON  
I can say it in here. Or I can say it outside. But I'm going to say it either way . . .

ALISON looks at PAUL. She means it.

CUT TO:

30

---

As PAUL steps outside ALISON grabs him and kisses him, passionately this time.

ALISON  
There. Now. You and me are in the middle of thirty shades of crap right now.

PAUL  
I won't argue with that.

ALISON  
And I lied to you about the morning



ALISON  
(INTERRUPTING)

Shut up before I kiss you again. I love you Paul Hughes. And you love me. And maybe if I hadn't talked you out of that tattoo you wanted done at Blackpool that time then I wouldn't have to say any of this out loud. I could have just pointed to that mermaid with our names written on her breasts and you'd have known what I meant.

PAUL smiles, melts a little.

PAUL  
Okay.

ALISON fixes him with her gaze.

ALISON  
We can sort this out. All right. We can sort anything out. You and me. Do you believe me?

PAUL  
Yes. I believe you. (BEAT) But that doesn't mean it's sorted out.

ALISON  
No. I know that. But for now. For today. Buck your ideas up and get back in there with a smile. Because we're going to make this work. The restaurant. Me. You. Joe. Rebecca. All of it. Because we always have and we always will. All right?

PAUL  
(ACCEPTING)  
Yes. Thanks.

ALISON  
Now get back in there and make the speech of your life.

PAUL  
Speech? There aren't going to be any speeches.

ALISON is already on her way inside.

CUT TO:

---

PAUL follows ALISON back in. EDDIE is returning glasses to the bar. NICOLA is waiting. He tries to busy himself but she isn't having it.

NICOLA



PAUL

So thank you for coming. And if you had a good time and think the food is top then go and tell your mates and if you aren't having a good time and think the food's shit then, it's free, so you know, keep quiet about it.

PAUL raises his glass.

PAUL (CONT'D)

"The Fellside!"

"The Fellside!" PAUL turns to smile at ALISON but she is locked looking at MAURICE in dismay and horror. She looks across at PAUL and he knows something is very wrong indeed . . .

CUT TO:

35

---

A police car parked outside Louise's house. A couple of NEIGHBOURS stand and stare.

CUT TO:

36

---

RALPH and LOUISE sit in silence with a young female PC - PC PLEVIN - who also sits at the table sipping tea and making notes. In the garden, a couple of POLICE OFFICERS can be seen searching. RALPH looks terrified.

CUT TO:

37

---

EDDIE and NICOLA park and rush towards the Hughes house where a PC LAING is waiting for them. EDDIE unlocks the door and they go inside and we . . .

CUT TO:

38

---

EDDIE looks in the kitchen.

BOB (O.S.)  
We've got four officers on foot and  
four patrol cars looking in parks .  
...

CUT TO:

39

---

NICOLA looks under Joe's bed.

BOB (O.S.)  
... and streets within a half  
mile radius of where he went  
missing.

CUT TO:

40

---

EDDIE looks quickly around REBECCA's room.

BOB (O.S.)  
First thing you need to know is  
that most ...

CUT TO:

41

---

EDDIE and NICOLA pick their way through the debris in the  
outbuilding at the end of the house ...

BOB (O.S.)  
... five year olds are found  
close by where they are missing.

CUT TO:

41A

---

Two police cars are parked up outside and small groups of  
people hanging about, some arriving, not quite knowing what  
to do but wanting to do something ...

CUT TO:

42

---

Another table has been commandeered as another UNIFORMED OFFICER is starting to take the names and addresses of some of the EX-LAUNCH ATTENDEES including LINDA and JANINE.

PAUL

Can we just get out there and look! What's the point of this? Half these people want to be out looking for him. What's the hold up?

BOB

Trust me. The last thing we need is a posse of well meaning publics getting in the way. That's why I've got my lad trying to get some ground rules in place.

BOB nods towards the OFFICER taking names and phone numbers of volunteers, and giving out a contact number to each of them.

ALISON

(GETTING UP)

I'm going. I've heard enough.

BOB

(PRESSING ON)

Hang on. Alison.

MAURICE

Please, love!

BOB

Let's wait till we hear from your home, okay? If he's not there we can scale up and sharpish. Believe me.

MAURICE

He'll have gone home, won't he? 'course he will. I bet you.

A glance from ALISON. She sees MAURICE's desperation but she feels no sympathy, instead showing BOB a photo on her phone.

ALISON

This is the most recent one. Took it last week.

BOB

(GLANCING AT PHOTO)

Thanks. Let's get that printed off. We know what he was wearing. Headphones likely as well. Medical conditions. You and Maurice both said he had a bit of a problem?

Nobody answers for a little too long.

BOB (CONT'D)  
With his hearing?

PAUL Looks at ALISON. BOB'S phone goes.

BOB (CONT'D)  
(INTO PHONE)  
Hello? Yes. Yes. Just use a couple  
of 'Hobby Bobbies' to search  
garages and that near the house,  
yes . . .

BOB drifts out of earshot.

PAUL  
We have to tell them, love, you do  
know that.

ALISON  
What did Bob Herd just say? He's  
most likely gone home.

PAUL  
He didn't say that.

ALISON  
If we tell everyone about Joe's  
problems now and then it turns out  
he was at home all along. Just  
think about that. How is that going  
to be for him? The autistic kid who  
went missing for the rest of his  
life.

REBECCA  
Mum's right. I don't want him being  
the village freak.

PAUL  
Maurice? Surely you agree with me?

MAURICE, unusually tentative, catches a searing glance from  
ALISON.

MAURICE  
I don't know.

PAUL  
You don't know? You always know.

ALISON  
Just like you knew he'd be safe  
with Ralph.

MAURICE reels a little but before he can reply BOB returns to  
the table.

BOB

So you say he does do a bit of wandering off on his own?

ALISON

Not wandering off exactly. He just goes for a walk every morning. Near the house.

BOB

Oh his own. At five years old.

PAUL

We knew where he was.

BOB

And where was that?

The phone rings, BOB takes it.

BOB (CONT'D)

Sorry. Guys. Right. Thanks. Yes. Yes.

He turns to the family.

BOB (CONT'D)

Joe's not at the house. They've searched the gardens and the outbuildings and nearby farm buildings. We'll step up our operation so you need to give the volunteers all the details you can. It's always better coming from Mum and Dad.

PAUL

I'll do that.

ALISON

No. I will. I will.

Out on ALISON, a new resolve.

CUT TO:

43

---

ALISON is standing on the steps of the gastropub. Various VOLUNTEERS and also, by now, PAUL, PAVEL, DAVID, TERRY, GARY. About 20 in all, but including LINDA and other MOTHERS.

MAURICE circulates with hastily printed A4 sheets - a photo of Joe, basic description, contact numbers: "5 years old. Red coat. Headphones on. Went missing from (TBC ADDRESS), Coniston at lunchtime TODAY!



Will be walking and carrying a toy. Could be on any roads or tracks leading out of town! Please call (TBC NUMBERS) with any sightings or information."

ALISON

For those of you who don't know Joe he's . . . well, he's a bit different from other five year olds.

She catches herself looking at LINDA.

ALISON (CONT'D)

He doesn't always do what you think a kid his age might do.

MAURICE looks back at ALISON.

BOB

(ENCOURAGING)

Tell them a bit more about that, Alison.

ALISON

Well. He might not want to talk if you do find him. And he might . . . he will be wearing headphones so shouting his name . . . it'll be worth a try but even if he isn't wearing headphones. . . . he tends to be a bit dreamy so . . . he might have gone off anywhere. He likes trees and . . . He isn't great with people talking to him directly so he, you know, he isn't going to just come running if he sees you.

PAUL

He loves pop music. A lot. So. So any music you have. On your phones. Car stereos. iPods and all that . . . . He feels safe with music.

BOB

What Alison and Paul are trying to tell you is that he's on the, he's got autism. Is that right? He's autistic.

ALISON

(STARING AHEAD)

Yes. Joe is on the autism spectrum.

LINDA

And what does that mean, exactly, Alison? You know, in terms of helping to find him?

MAURICE  
You can put stuff that's been on  
telly out of your head. It's  
nothing like that . . .

ALISON  
It means a lot of things. But the  
main thing is that it means he  
might not know that he's lost, or  
in danger. That's the difference .  
. . . That's the real difference.

ALISON looks as though she is about to break.

BOB  
(BIG VOICE)  
Groups of two or more, people. We  
don't want to waste time looking  
for you as well!

In the background we see TWO VOLUNTEERS cross to ALISON and PAUL as they are leaving and start to ask them questions. People start to divvy up areas on a map that has been pinned to the side of the gastropub - co-ordinating areas covered.

BOB joins MAURICE by his car. MAURICE has got his boots out and is putting them on, tucking his smart trousers into his hiking socks.

BOB (CONT'D)  
How long were you in the living  
room with Louise?

MAURICE

MAURICE

What's this about? That stuff on the bus from years back? We both know that was all bollocks. You told me it was.

BOB

It was. But there's a child missing now. So nothing's off the table.

MAURICE

Hang on. Ralph did nothing wrong then and he's done nothing wrong now.

BOB

Joe ran off.

MAURICE

Ralph wouldn't hurt a fly.

BOB

You know that, do you?

MAURICE

Just a feeling you get about people. And I trust my feelings.

BOB

Trust your feelings enough to bet Joe's life on them?

44

---

MAURICE is working his way up a hill, determined, half running, half walking. As he gets to the top of the hill he looks down at the wilderness below.

MAURICE  
Joe! Joe! Joe!

He looks down at his feet. He sees a ringpull. He smiles to himself. It is the sort of thing JOE would have noticed. He picks up the ringpull and puts it in his pocket.

Then he stops. In the middle of the empty landscape. And the enormity of what he might have done in leaving Joe alone threatens to overwhelm him. He slaps at his forehead with both hands.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!

He pulls himself together and marches on, determined, suddenly starting to sing a song as though it is a marching song.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
(SINGING)  
"Lost your love of life?  
Too much apple pie!  
Oh have you lost your love of life?  
Too much apple pie!  
And now Harry's walked away with  
Johnny's wife."

He strides on, more determined than ever . . .

CUT TO:

45

---

PAUL and ALISON in the hall. REBECCA can be seen typing into her laptop in the study. PC LAING is visible in the kitchen, at the table, notebook out, talking to someone on his radio (his dialogue in background). . .

PC LAING  
Are all the civilians clear on the  
dedicated phone line? I've had a  
couple calling me . . .

PAUL is heading towards REBECCA as ALISON is heading upstairs, not knowing what to check and where.

ALISON  
Call me if you hear anything.  
Anything at all.

PAUL  
Of course I will.

PAUL joins REBECCA.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Can we just get moving?

REBECCA  
I'm saying he's autistic because people don't understand if you just say he's on the spectrum.

PAUL  
Has autism? "Has autism" would be better. People would know what that meant.

She has the page open on her Messenger site and there is just a moment's hesitation where she sees a whole string of conversation that LUKE and DAN have posted.

INSERT: LUKE: She is such a slut. DAN: Dirty slut. My favourite. LUKE: Hi, Becky. DAN: Hi, Dirty Slut. Do you have a porn name?

PAUL (CONT'D)  
What's that about?

REBECCA  
(CLOSING DOWN THE THREAD)  
Boys being stupid is what that is.

REBECCA shuts the laptop and is good to go in one beat. As they start to head out . . .

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
I just hope he understands why we did this when he's 16. Once on the internet always on the internet.

PAUL  
Yes. Exactly. Like that stuff Luke and his mate were writing about you?

REBECCA  
I wasn't talking about that, it's just banter, Dad.

PAUL  
Every bully's excuse since the beginning of time. It's not just banter. The little shit! I'll kick him from here to Barrow in Furness.

REBECCA  
This isn't helping find Joe, is it?

PAUL

You're worth a hundred of him! Just remember that. He's a piece of shit you need to scrape off your shoe!

REBECCA, stunned by Paul's vehemence, follows him out the door.

CUT TO:

46

\_\_\_\_\_

47

\_\_\_\_\_

EDDIE and NICOLA in the car together, driving slowly around the town, both looking down side roads, etc.

EDDIE

So. How late is late?

NICOLA

A week.

EDDIE

So not that late.

NICOLA

No. And I've not done a test.

EDDIE

And why the big secret? Why keep it from me?

NICOLA

Because I needed to prepare myself for the result. Either way.

EDDIE turns this over.

NICOLA (CONT'D)

What do you think?

EDDIE

Not really the right time to talk about it, is it?

NICOLA

No. (A HALF SMILE) And when Joe is found safe and well I'm sure you can come up with another excuse not to talk, hey?

NICOLA glances at EDDIE - he doesn't respond. They drive on and we . . .

CUT TO:

48

---

RALPH, LOUISE and BOB sit around a kitchen table.

LOUISE

You've got nothing to be scared of.  
The police just want to talk to you  
so you can help them find Joe.

RALPH

I know. But I don't want to talk to  
the police.

LOUISE

It won't be like last time.

RALPH

It won't. I know Kung Fu.

LOUISE

(SMILES)

Oh, Ralph, you can't go hitting  
policemen, love.

RALPH

It's self-defence.

BOB smiles.

BOB

Ralph. How long have we known each  
other, pal? You and me.

RALPH looks at his watch as BOB sits down.

RALPH

I don't know where he is.

BOB

Who?

RALPH

Joe. Little Joe.

BOB

But you were here. In the kitchen.  
When he went?

RALPH

I was, yes.

LOUISE

You need to tell the truth, Ralph.

RALPH

I always tell the truth. He went  
out to play. And I made us a drink.

LOUI SE  
And he' d gone.

RALPH  
I told him to stay in the garden.

LOUI SE  
I know you did, I love, I know.

RALPH  
I'm telling the truth.

LOUI SE  
I know, I love. And Bob does too.  
Don't you, Bob?

BOB answers his mobile. LOUI SE strokes RALPH's hand and watches BOB on the phone and we . . .

CUT TO:

49

---

TWO POLICEMEN break into a disused, graffiti strewn petrol station.

CUT TO:

50

---

The TWO POLICEMEN step into what was the garage and shine their torches around the empty shell of the room.

CUT TO:



55

---

PAUL on a hillside up behind The Fellside.

PAUL  
Joe! Joe! Joe!

He gets his phone out and starts to play a track from his music library - the opening of 'The Story of the Blues' by Wah! And now PAUL is half shouting/half singing along.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
"Here in my pocket I've got the  
story of the blues,  
Try to believe me cos' it could be  
front page news . . ."

PAUL stands alone, on the hillside, holding his phone up in the air. The real track bleeds into the following . . .

CUT TO:

56

---

ALISON checking the internet for responses (NB we don't see the screen). Pacing.

CUT TO:

57

---

A POLICEMAN breaks into a shed at the back of a garden, looks inside, nothing.

CUT TO:

58

---

DAVID and PAVEL's van drives slowly along the side of the lake, windows down, playing music on the stereo.

ARCTIC MONKEYS  
"Now then Mardy Bum, I see your  
frown and it's like looking down  
the barrel of a gun and it goes  
off."

CUT TO:

PALOMA/TOM/REBECCA

"Angels watching over me, with  
smiles upon their face,  
Cause I have made it through this  
far in an unforgiving place."

TOM

Joe! Joe! Joe!

REBECCA/PALOMA

"It feels sometimes this hill's too  
steep for a girl like me to climb,  
But I must knock those thoughts  
right down I'll do it in my own  
time."

They look out into the growing darkness shouting, "Joe!" as  
PALOMA plays on in the background.

CUT TO:

60

---

The valley, the layby. EDDIE has his car doors open. He  
sticks a CD in the car, playing his CD at full volume. 'Going  
Underground' by The Jam to which he sings along as loud as he  
can . . . NICOLA strides up the hillside ahead of him.

NICOLA

Joe. Come on, Joe! Joe!

THE JAM

"Some people might say my life is  
in a rut  
But I'm quite happy with what I got  
People might say that I should  
strive for more  
But I'm so happy I can't see the  
point . . ."

EDDIE scans the sky - the light's beginning to fade.

EDDIE

Joe! Joe! Come on, feller! Joe!

He returns to the car and turns up the volume and The Jam  
plays out at the empty sky.

THE JAM

"Something's happening here today  
A show of strength with your boy's  
brigade  
And I'm so happy and you're so  
kind. . ."

CUT TO:

61

---

ALISON checks her phone. Checks the laptop again (we don't see the screen). Paces. She can't stand still but moving around doesn't seem to help either.

CUT TO:

62

---

MAURICE in the pine forest opposite the gastropub - singing.

MAURICE

"If I could read your mind, love,  
What a tale your thoughts could  
tell,  
Just like a paperback novel,  
The kind the drugstores sell."  
Joe! Joe! Joe! Come on, lad! Joe!

MAURICE looks around him at the nest of trees. He feels tortured with guilt.

CUT TO:

63

---

ALISON opens JOE's reading folder and pulls the contents out. Her eyes linger on a painting. She stares down at it as though seeing it for the first time.

INSERT: A picture entitled 'My Family.' Four figures. All the same size. Heads and Legs.

And a teacher has labelled them 'Mum', 'Dad', 'Rebecca', 'Me' . . . and if the teacher hadn't labelled them you wouldn't have a fucking clue but 'Rebecca', 'Me' and 'Dad' all have big smiles and 'Mum' is frowning and sad.

Something about how bad the painting is starts to break ALISON's heart. She has to move and heads out of the kitchen.

CUT TO:

64

---

PC LAING searches Joe's bedroom. He has already laid out some of Joe's immaculate unplayed-with toys on the bed as he searches the room. He is laying a small plastic gnome on the bed as ALISON - suddenly adrenalin charged - enters - and suddenly she's furious.

ALISON

Why are you doing that? What is it  
you think you'll find?

PC LAING

Anything Joe might have hidden or left behind.

ALISON

It's getting dark for God's sake! Why aren't you out there looking for him?

PC LAING

There are other units on the way. And we might find something in here that's important.

ALISON

Well, if you aren't going to go out looking for him then I am.

ALISON heads outside.

CUT TO:

65

---

Dusk:

ALISON has opened the front door. She holds up the iPod dock - it blasts out The Human League 'Don't You Want Me' (TBC) into the fading light. Occasionally she shouts over it.

ALISON

Joe! Joe!

She stops shouting and listens to the music for a few moments and it threatens to overwhelm her.

She turns and sees someone approaching on foot - it's MAURICE, alone. A moment's hope.

ALISON (CONT'D)

What is it? What've you heard? Have they found him?

MAURICE

Nothing yet. I just thought you might need somebody with you. Half the town are out there searching. And . . . and there was something I've got to tell you.

CUT TO:

66

---

MAURICE with ALISON.

MAURICE

What do you . . . what do you make  
of Ralph?

ALISON

Ralph? He's the Lollipop man. I see  
him every day. Why are you asking  
me about Ralph?

MAURICE

I don't know. He was the last  
person to see Joe and . . .

ALISON

And he's Downs. So that makes him  
suspicious, does it?

MAURICE

No. Not at all. Just something Bob  
Herd mentioned - well reminded me  
of really. Something or nothing I'm  
sure, but if I didn't tell you and  
you heard the rumours from someone  
else . . .

ALISON

Rumours! What f ( from somp-5 s9aC666666666666666 2 278 49he

E C I R U A

ALI SON  
Ralph can't speak up for himself,  
Dad. You might want to think about  
that!

MAURICE  
I've thought of nothing else.

ALI SON gets up, restless, looks at MAURICE.

ALI SON  
You stay here. They need someone  
here in case Joe comes home.

MAURICE  
Where are you going?

ALI SON exits.

CUT TO:

67

---

ALI SON walks towards Louise's house. There is a police car  
parked outside. She knocks on the door. LOUISE opens it.

CUT TO:

68

---

As ALI SON comes into the hall, PC PLEVIN comes down the  
stairs with a battered laptop. It is clearly Ralph's -  
covered in stickers etc. LOUISE gives Plevin a contemptuous  
glance. Both women know what the computer check implies.

PC PLEVIN  
Just a preE opens it.

LOUI SE  
(TOUCHING ALI SON' S HAND)  
I get that.

ALI SON turns and sees RALPH sitting at the kitchen table with his head in his hands.

ALI SON  
Ralph? You know you're not in trouble, don't you. Not with me, and not with Joe's Dad.

RALPH looks up at ALI SON.

ALI SON (CONT'D)  
But if you remember anything. Anything Joe said. Anything you said?

LOUI SE  
Ralph?

ALI SON sits down opposite RALPH.

ALI SON  
I don't like Inspector Herd much, do you?

RALPH  
No. I don't like him.

ALI SON  
Is there anything that happened, Ralph? Not on purpose. Were you playing a game? Maybe? Got a bit mixed up?

LOUI SE  
Alison. He hasn't done anything to Joe. He didn't do anything to Joe. He's honest. Too honest if anything. So I know you needed to talk to him and I get that. Really. But that's enough.

ALI SON nods and moves away. She drops her voice to LOUI SE.  
RALPH doesn't move, he drops his head on to his folded arms.

LOUI SE (CONT'D)  
As one Mum to another. I'm telling you. He's had enough.

ALI SON  
I've got to ask you this. Somebody said there'd been a misunderstanding a few years back. Ralph was on a bus and some lads .  
. . .





Paul ?

ALI SON

PAUL  
Come on. Come on. It'll be all  
right. I promise it will be all  
right and we'll find him.

ALISON, clings on to him, wants desperately to believe him.  
The phone goes. And both of them jump out of their skin. PAUL  
answers it.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
(INTO PHONE)  
Hello?

CUT TO:

73

---

A police car is parked by a wall and training its lights on a  
tree against a dry stone wall. BOB is standing by the tree,  
NICOLA and EDDIE with him. PAUL and ALISON park and rush over  
to join the others.

BOB  
This must have been where he was  
coming every morning. With the  
stuff he found. Our guys missed it  
on the first sweep. Your sister-in-  
law found it.

Inside the hollow tree or a hole in the dry stone wall are  
some of Joe's "collection". Windmills, wind chimes, garden  
gnomes, etc. ALISON is transfixed, then sees the toy snake  
that Rebecca has given Joe earlier in the day.

ALISON  
That's new. He only had this today.  
He's been here.

BOB  
Are you sure, Alison. Loads ofe.



REBECCA  
(FURIOUS)  
You're just parked! Like this? What  
use is that? And he doesn't even  
like this kind of music.

LUKE  
All right. All right. Sista! We'll  
drive.

REBECCA  
Can you give us a lift?

DAN  
No.

REBECCA and TOM watch as DAN speeds away.

TOM  
The sort of prick who gives pricks  
a bad name.

CUT TO:

LUKE looks at DAN, nodding his head aimlessly to the music.



PAUL

Just don't go thinking finding Joe makes you a good person. It just makes you a twat who did a good thing.

PAUL turns and walks away, as he does so we can see LUKE wringing his hand slightly, clearly that grip hurt. ALISON looks back at LUKE, then puts her arm around PAUL.

ALISON

What was that about?

PAUL

Just a bit of old school parenting.

ALISON looks puzzled as they head for their cars. REBECCA looks back at LUKE then puts her arm around her Dad, a half smile to herself.

MAURICE turns to see RALPH and LOUISE walking away from the crowd of helpers. He takes a few steps after them but LOUISE looks back and offers no encouragement.

CUT TO:

78

---

MAURICE, PAUL, ALISON, REBECCA, NICOLA and EDDIE sit around the kitchen table. JOE is in one corner, headphones on. ALISON is on the floor beside him, stroking his hair. Coffee on the go. MAURICE and PAUL on the scotch. They are knackered, but wrung out, and what bit isn't wrung out is euphoric. Silence. And a feeling they have been silent for a while.

MAURICE

Good job we found Joe when we did.  
I think Bob Herd was about to go home for his guitar.

PAUL, NICOLA and REBECCA laugh. The others smile.

ALISON

(TO REBECCA)

I blame you by the way. All that time hanging round bus stops.  
Giving him ideas . . .

REBECCA

It was brilliant, though, wasn't it. That he thought of going to a bus stop?

PAUL

On the wrong side of the road.

ALISON

You can't have everything.

EDDIE

How do you know he was on the wrong side of the road? He might have just been trying to run away from this mad house.

PAUL

Fair point.

EDDIE glances at MAURICE surprised and catches an amused shrug from PAUL.

NICOLA

He wasn't running away though, was he? He was just walking. We all decided he was running away but in his head he was just walking. We're imposing our narrative on his inner state that we have no way of knowing anything about.

MAURICE

Does anyone else feel like they just walked into a cryptic crossword?

PAUL

That's what you get for trying to raise the tone, Nicola.

Uneasy laughter. NICOLA, as ever, not quite getting the mood, but ALISON gets up from the floor and exits to the hall.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What did everybody sing?

MAURICE

What? I'm not telling you that.

REBECCA

Not a fair question.

PAUL

Come on. When you'd run out of Joe songs. What did you sing?

MAURICE

I might have dipped into my Sinatra repertoire at a particularly low point.

EDDIE

Christ. No wonder he was waiting for a bus to Kendal.



ALISON appears at the door in her coat.

ALISON  
Can you put him to bed, love. I  
just need go and see someone.

PAUL slightly surprised but he thinks he gets it.

PAUL  
Yeah. Yeah, sure. Sure.

ALISON leaves, people a little puzzled, uneasy. Silence again. They all find themselves staring at JOE.

CUT TO:

79

---

NICOLA and EDDIE enter from outside. NICOLA turns and takes his hands in hers.

NICOLA  
(GENTLE)  
Love. False alarm, by the way.  
(BEAT) My period started.

EDDIE  
(BLANK)  
Oh. Right.

NICOLA  
Bit of a relief to be honest, hey?

EDDIE  
Yeah.

NICOLA  
You are relieved, aren't you?

EDDIE  
Yes. I am. Sort of.

EDDIE lets go of her hands and heads for the kitchen.

NICOLA  
You didn't want to start a family  
right now? Did you?

NICOLA waits, rooted to the spot for a moment, and then follows him into the kitchen.

CONTINUOUS:

80

---

EDDIE emptying the dishwasher. NICOLA stands watching him for a few moments.

NICOLA

As displacement activities go, the dishwasher is a bit finite.

EDDIE

What I've got to say. There's just no way to say it.

NICOLA

I think most philosophers would take you up on that since you clearly have already thought it in language.

EDDIE

It's not funny.

NICOLA

I know it's not funny. It's horrible. What you're doing right now. It's horrible.

EDDIE

Not as horrible as what I'm thinking.

EDDIE moves past her back into the living room.

CUT TO:

81

---

EDDIE sits with NICOLA.

NICOLA

I know it wasn't planned. I know it's scary.

EDDIE

I'm not scared, not of Fatherhood, at any rate.

NICOLA

Oh.

EDDIE

I'm scared of what I thought. When you told me.

NICOLA

Like what?

EDDIE

I thought, for a moment I thought .  
 . . the very first thought I had  
 when you told me? "Am I the  
 Father?"

NICOLA

What? Who else could be the Father?

EDDIE

The dates. When you went to see  
 Michael. In Manchester. The dates.  
 It would fit. You know.

NICOLA

Michael? You don't believe that, do  
 you?

EDDIE

No. I don't. If I'm being rational .  
 I don't. But that little doubt.  
 That terrible, terrible idea . . .  
 it sweeps everything else away. It  
 blocks out everything that's good  
 about us. It kills everything.

NICOLA

(STILL REELING)

When would this have happened? How  
 . . . would . . . I have slept with  
 Michael. Why would you think that  
 about me after all we've done . . .

EDDIE

I don't want to be that kind of  
 man. And I am. I don't want to be  
 in that kind of relationship.

NICOLA stares at EDDIE, he can't hold her gaze for long.

CUT TO:

82

---

ALISON prepares herself and rings LOUISE's bell. She waits.  
 LOUISE opens the door.

CUT TO:

83

---

LOUISE sits. RALPH eyes ALISON warily and then gets up and  
 leaves.

ALISON

I'm sorry that you had to go through that. I'm sorry that Ralph had to go through that.

LOUISE

I'd have done the same. But that doesn't stop me hating you all for doing it.

ALISON

Right.

LOUISE

It's been a long day you know . . .

ALISON

I hope my Dad brings Joe around again. Get to know you better. And Ralph. He'll always be welcome.

LOUISE

Yes. 'cos the village idiots have to stick together, hey?

ALISON

That isn't what I meant . . .

LOUISE

The angry villagers might not come to the door with pitchforks and torches anymore but well . . . check out his Facebook page. It's a delight.

ALISON

People will forget . . .

LOUISE

Yes. But he won't. And I won't. You've got a child that's different. So it's always going to be there. You've got a child that's different, Alison, so you know what I'm talking about.

Out on ALISON, she does.

CUT TO:

84

---

JOE is lying on the bed asleep with his headphones on. ALISON and PAUL watch him, arms around each other.

ALISON

I just looked at Ralph and all I could think was what if that was Joe sitting there with a broken heart? What if that was Joe wondering what he'd done wrong? What if that was Joe who spent his life being told to trust the world and just found out that it didn't trust him back?

PAUL

We're just going to have to surround him with a family that loves him so much he won't ever feel anything but loved.

ALISON

(SMILES)

He's already got more family than any child should be asked to cope with . . .

They lie in silence.

ALISON (CONT'D)

You know what I said . . . about not wanting to change him.

PAUL

Yeah?

ALISON

I meant it when I said it. But I don't think I think it now.

PAUL smiles at her. She smiles back.

PAUL

I promised God if he was safe I'd go to Church for a year. Am I allowed to break that one as well?

ALISON

No.

PAUL kisses ALISON. They lie either side of JOE. ALISON reaches for JOE's headphones. PAUL stops her.

PAUL

Maybe you can just mean it for a bit longer, hey?

ALISON smiles, gives in. Leaves the headphones where they are. They both stare at JOE, never wanting to look away from him again.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
It feels like grief, doesn't it.

ALI SON  
What?

PAUL  
Well, that's the nearest I've had  
to this feeling. Knowing there's a  
boy in there that we could have  
had. And we didn't.

ALI SON doesn't reply.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Feels like grief to me, anyway.

ALI SON  
When he was missing. I hated the  
world. I hated the world without  
him so much . . .

PAUL and ALI SON lie down either side of JOE on the bed now  
and embrace.

CUT TO:

85

---

EDDIE has a suitcase packed. He shoves some more things in.  
NICOLA, distraught.

NICOLA  
Eddie. This is insane!

EDDIE

EDDIE

And that too! You are always on the outside commentating on our marriage. It never feels like you're actually inside it. Here. With me.

NICOLA

Don't do this. If you want to move we'll move.

EDDIE

Do you really think that's all this is about? God. You must think I'm a bigger loser than I do.

EDDIE picks up his suitcase and exits, slamming the door. NICOLA shuts her eyes. The door opens and EDDIE grabs his coat off the hook. Even his big exit doesn't quite work.

CUT TO:

86

---

PAUL and ALISON are lying either side of a sleeping JOE. ALISON looks up and sees REBECCA looking in on them from the open door.

REBECCA

Can I join in?

ALISON

(SMILES)

Course you can, baby, course you can.

ALISON beckons her over. REBECCA climbs on the bed behind ALISON and puts her arms around her. All four close their eyes. Somewhere, in JOE's headphones, we can hear Ron Sexsmith, 'Secret Heart'. The music swells and grows beyond the headphones and . . .

RON SEXSMITH

"f the hook. Even imbs on 7yorl Ee 0 0 12 -0.r:e of a sleepi

RON SEXSMITH (SINGS)  
"Or the fear of being overheard?  
What's wrong?  
Let her in on your secret, heart."

CUT TO:

88

---

NICOLA stares at the walls, still disbelieving what has happened here.

RON SEXSMITH (SINGS)  
"Secret heart, why so mysterious?  
Why so sacred, why so serious?"

CUT TO:

89

---

RALPH has his head down on the table. LOUISE has her hand resting on his shoulders.

RON SEXSMITH (SINGS)  
"Maybe you're just acting tough  
Maybe you're just not man enough,  
what's wrong?"

CUT TO:

90

---

MAURICE is back running with his head torch on. Mad and driven. But maybe not so mad and driven as he stops at the bus stop that JOE was found at and stares at it, almost offering what? A prayer of thanks, a word with Sandra, . . . for reasons he can't explain he leaves his head torch on the bus shelter seat, still on, shining brightly as he runs off into the darkness . . .

RON SEXSMITH (SINGS)  
"Let her in on your secret heart.  
This very secret you're trying to  
conceal  
Is the very same one you're dying  
to reveal  
Go tell her, how you feel . . ."

CUT TO:

91

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As the instrumental break goes on we move back above PAUL, ALISON, JOE and REBECCA. All eyes shut now.



