

Birthng Season

written by

Niall Byrne

+353 (0) 87 9147923
n.byrne77@hotmail.com

© 2023

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON

A pregnancy test in a woman's hand. She shakes it.

ANGLE LOOSENS TO SHOW

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

PENNIE, 21, hair dyed black, black eyeliner, sits on the edge of her bed staring at the strip anxiously.

CLOSE-ON

The strip turns blue. Pregnant.

BACK TO PENNIE

Her face is numb. She shakes it again, desperately. Dread dawns. No change.

PENNIE

Shit!

She falls back on the bed, stares at the ceiling forlornly.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Pennie marches down a city street, head down, determined. She's wrapped in a heavy overcoat and wears a tartan mini-skirt, black leggings and Doc Martens. She turns a corner and sees

A LARGE CROWD OF PROTESTERS.

They are waving placards and chanting.

CROWD

(chanting)

Human rights! Children's rights!

Pennie stops in her tracks when she sees them. They are stationed outside her destination - an abortion clinic. The placards have disturbing photos of aborted fetuses and slogans:

ABORTION IS MURDER SAVE THE CHILDREN

Pennie takes in the scene, loses her nerve, turns around the way she came.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie's at her bedroom desk, typing on her laptop, eyes fixed on the screen, while talking into a mobile phone tucked under her chin.

PENNIE

(Into phone)

Mum, I don't want to talk about it.
I've already decided.

(beat)

It's not a waste of a year. If I
want to be a journalist I have to
see some of the world.

Pennie stands up, saunters around the room.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

Look, I'm grateful that you asked
uncle Fred for a job, but I don't
want to work in some mickey mouse
paper reporting on sheepdog trials
in the sticks. I didn't study four
years for that.

Someone knocks on the bedroom door and without waiting for a reply enters. SHAUNA, 21, blonde, winsome, wears a white bra and short pink skirt.

SHAUNA

Hey, Penny. Can I borrow your top?
You know the striped one?

PENNIE

(Into phone)

Look, mom. I gotta go now. I'm in
the middle of something.

SHAUNA

Oh sorry. I didn't know you were on
the phone.

Shauna makes her way to the wardrobe door and opens it. She scans through rows of blouses and tops.

PENNIE

(Into phone)

No, I'm studying. Talk later. Love
you, bye.

She hangs up.

SHAUNA
You're not going out tonight,
right? I can borrow it?

PENNIE
Yeah, sure.

SHAUNA
Thanks. I just got a new skirt. I
think it'll go really well with it.

PENNIE
Take whatever you want.

SHAUNA
It's just this one top I think will
really match.

She whips out the top, holds it to herself.

SHAUNA (CONT'D)
Here, what do you think?

PENNIE
(Gives a quick,
uninterested glance)
Yeah. It looks cool.

SHAUNA
Cool? That's all?

PENNIE
It's great.

Shauna's jaw drops.

PENNIE (CONT'D)
What?

SHAUNA
Oh my god, Penny!

PENNIE
What?

Pennie realizes Shauna is looking over her shoulder at the laptop screen.

She winces at her own carelessness, turns and looks at the list of search results that have grabbed Shauna's attention:

Abortion pills. Discrete service. Buy abortifacents online.

INT. LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Pennie and Shauna share the leftovers of a bottle of wine. The living area-kitchen has all the cliched hallmarks of student life - Monet and Picasso prints on the wall, bansai trees neglected in the windows, post-it notes and rosters on the fridge door.

SHAUNA
What about Brian?

PENNIE
What about him?

SHAUNA
You're not going to tell him?

PENNIE
You think he has a right to know?

SHAUNA
It's your body.

PENNIE
Wish I'd been more careful with it.
I'm breaking up with him anyway.

SHAUNA
I figured. You're going travelling.
Don't figure him the type to be
climbing Angkor Wat.

PENNIE
He has things keeping him here.

SHAUNA
So do you.

There's a tender pause between them.

SHAUNA (CONT'D)
You're right to go. Be the
independent traveller.

PENNIE
It's just something I gotta do. No
point being a journalist if you
don't travel.

SHAUNA
I know. What you should do is come
out tonight.

PENNIE

I can't. I've got exams next week.

SHAUNA

You'll ace them. You always do.

PENNIE

I'm just not in the mood. I've got something growing inside me for god's sake.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie's at her bedroom desk, back at the laptop. 'Buy abortion pills' is typed into the search bar, and a page of search results displays. She hovers over a link:

'Fast discrete service'

She clicks, is taken through to the website.

It's a generic Amazon-y type display website. There's a picture of a pack of abortifacient pills, a sales blurb, and an Add to Cart button.

She selects:

'Add to Cart'.

A payment prompt comes up. She takes out her credit card from a wallet, types in the card details into the box. A box for her address appears. She starts to type in the delivery address:

15 Holywell Crescent, Castle Road, Dublin....'

She finishes typing the address, presses enter. A message displays:

'Order has been processed.'

Simple.

Pennie, satisfied, sits back, relieved. She switches off the computer.

INT. LIVING AREA - NIGHT

CLOSE ON

An intimidating stack of books on a table. Titles like:

- Understanding Media
- Semiotics and Verbal Texts: How the News Media Constructs a Crisis
- Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media
- News in a Digital Age

ANGLE LOOSENS

to show Pennie studying an open book beside the stack, making notes in her journal.

She rubs her eyes, checks the time on her phone.

She sits back, closes the book, yawns, stretches her arms and legs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie drops a nightshirt over her body, her clothes discarded in a heap at the bottom of the wardrobe. She goes out to the hall.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

She finishes brushing her teeth, rinses.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She comes back into the bedroom, goes to the bed, reaches for the bedside lamp to turn it off, ready to turn in for the night.

She catches sight of herself in the full-length mirror on the front of the wardrobe.

She stalls, looks at herself.

She goes closer to the mirror, turns sideways.

She sticks her stomach out, making a bump, and smooths her hand over it.

She stares at herself like this, trying the bump on for size.

She snaps out of her reverie, shakes her head and loosens her body.

She goes back to her bed, climbs in and switches off the light.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Pennie wakes up suddenly in the dark. She cocks her ear, listening.

She turns on the lamp, gets out of bed. She walks slowly to the door, puts her ear to it. She opens the door a crack, listens out.

No sound. She walks out carefully.

She moves through the house, to the

LIVING ROOM

She moves to the kitchen area. She relaxes.

She goes to the sink, takes a glass from a press, and pours some water from the tap.

She takes a sip, looks at the window, sees her own reflection,

..... and that of a FIGURE STANDING BEHIND HER.

She shrieks, drops the glass. As it smashes, she's already lunging for the knife rack and pulls out a sharp steak knife and spins around.

But it's too late. The intruder grabs her wrist, restrains her.

INTRUDER

Hey, hey... it's me. Calm down.

She calms down, realizing who she was about to slice.

BRIAN, 21, tall, cocky, crumpled shirt, disheveled hair, bleary eyes, lets go of her hand.

She puts the knife down. She beats her fists against his chest angrily.

PENNIE

You idiot. What do you think you're playing at?

BRIAN

Sorry, sorry.

PENNIE

You fucking scared me half to death.

BRIAN

Sorry. I didn't mean to.

Pennie calms down.

PENNIE

What are you doing here anyway?

BRIAN

I met Shauna in the club. She gave me the key. Guess I fell asleep waiting.

PENNIE

She's not bringing people back is she?

BRIAN

What do you think?

PENNIE

Ugh. I told her I've exams.

BRIAN

That's interesting you should say that. I could brush up on my biology.

He slips his arms around her waist, moves in, lips parted. She pushes him away.

PENNIE

No, Brian.

BRIAN

What?

PENNIE

Look, I'm not in the mood.

He makes his move again, she brushes past him.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

I'm going back to bed.

Brian yawns exaggeratedly, following her up the corridor to her room.

BRIAN

I could do with turning in myself.

PENNIE

Alone.

She slams the bedroom door. He goes to it, tries the handle. Locked.

He grimaces, goes back to living room, grabs a beer from the fridge.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie lies with a pillow pressed over her head, trying to get some sleep as music and drunken conversation bleeds in from outside.

Defeated, she sits up, searches for some ear plugs and pops them in. She pulls the pillow over her head again, more in hope than anticipation.

INT. LIVING AREA - MORNING

Pennie roams through the house, stepping over bodies asleep on the floor, legs sprawling from chairs and couches.

Empty beer bottles and pizza cartons litter the floor and coffee table.

She moves to the kitchen area, takes down a box of corn flakes from a press.

She looks in another press, can't find what she's looking for, scans the counter area. She sees a bowl, goes to grab it, notices the cigarette butts stubbed out in it. A look of disgust passes her face.

She looks the mess over.

She makes a viewfinder shape with her hands and looks through, framing the scene.

PENNIE

Fade out.

She grabs a cigarette from an open pack and goes out to the garden.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

She smokes, staring up at planes leaving trails overhead. Brian comes out, even more dishevelled looking than last night. He's cracked open a beer and is slugging from it.

PENNIE
Hair of the dog.

BRIAN
Got a bit wild.

PENNIE
I know. I heard it.

BRIAN
You should have come out.

PENNIE
Same party that's been happening
for years.

BRIAN
You liked it once.

PENNIE
Everybody grows up.

BRIAN
You know I was thinking... I don't
have to start that grad programme
next year. I can defer.

PENNIE
Why would you do that?

BRIAN
Why do you think?

PENNIE
Brian. A grad programme will suit
you.

BRIAN
Pennie....

PENNIE
We've had our fun. Let's not
pretend it's anything more than it
was.

She stubs out her cigarette on the garden wall, turns towards
the house.

BRIAN
The grass isn't always greener, you
know.

Brian stares after her. He Slumps on a garden bench, takes
another long slug his beer.

INT. LIVING AREA - MORNING

Pennie takes out the vacuum cleaner from a cupboard. She plugs it into a wall socket, turns it on and starts to Hoover.

Sleeping bodies start to stir, awakened by the noise, groaning at the interruption to their sleep. Pennie hovers around them, making sure she makes as much noise as possible. Payback.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Pennie browses a shelf of books. She selects one - Rough Guide to Southeast Asia - reads the blurb on the back, flicks through the pages. She brings it up to the counter to buy.

INT. CAMERA STORE - DAY

Pennie browses a selection of professional cameras. She takes one up for a closer look, looks through the viewfinder.

An attractive, well-groomed salesman spots her, sidles up and starts giving her the hard sell. She seems interested in his patter, asks him some questions, a hint of easy flirtation in the air between them.

INT. LIVING AREA, HOUSE - DAY

Pennie studies in the living room. The house is spick, span and empty.

The doorbell rings.

She gets up, goes out to the hall and to the

FRONT DOOR

She answers the door to a MAN, mid-40s, well-built, lived-in appearance, wearing a white shirt, black pants and a baseball cap.

MAN

Hi. I'm looking for Pennie Vaughan?

PENNIE

That's me.

MAN

Are you alone?

PENNIE

What?

MAN

I mean... can you talk?

PENNIE

Is this the delivery?

MAN

Yes, yes it is.

PENNIE

Great. That's for me then.

He stares at her.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

So, do you have it?

MAN

It's in the car. I didn't want to...
I'll go and get it, okay.

PENNIE

(suppressing bemused
awkward grin)

Okay. You do that.

He goes to his car, parked on the kerb. She sways on her heels, hums to pass the time.

He returns with a small package and a clipboard and pen.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

I didn't expect it quite this
quick.

MAN

In situations like this we try to
be quick. We always like to help
people in trouble.

He hands her the clipboard form and pen, indicating a line for her signature. She signs, hands it back.

PENNIE

There you go.

He looks at the package in his hand, looks at her.

An awkward beat as she waits for him to hand it over.

MAN

You know, a lot of people are funny about receiving it at the door. That's why I always ask first. I always try and make sure there's no-one in, so it's discreet, y'know.

PENNIE

Well, that's very considerate.

MAN

You seem to be alone, so lucky for you I guess.

PENNIE

No, there is someone in here with me actually. It's not a big deal.

MAN

Not a big deal. That's the modern world, I suppose.

He grits his teeth. Pennie looks a little put off by him by this stage, eager to get rid of him.

PENNIE

Well, thanks.

Her prompt works. He hands it over.

MAN

Of course. There you go.

She closes the door in his face.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

She opens the package.

It contains a small pillbox and an instruction leaflet. She opens the pillbox. It's one pill.

She reads the instruction leaflet.

INT. LIVING AREA - DAY

Pennie pours a glass of water at the kitchen sink. She has the pill in her hand.

She looks at it for a second, then pops it in her mouth and washes it down with the water.

She hears a noise outside.

She goes to the window, looks out to the back garden.
Nothing.

She shakes her head, thinking she's imagined it. She walks back to her bedroom.

She stops, puts her hands to her temple, like she's been struck by a migraine.

POV - PENNIE

The room starts to sway.

ANGLE LOOSENS

Pennie walks across the living area.

She loses balance as she walks, has to support herself against the wall.

POV - PENNIE

The room is swaying even more now. She hears a sound, like something being knocked over. Except it sounds echoey and far away, like she's hearing it from underwater.

ANGLE LOOSENS

She walks out to the hall, to the front door. She locks the door.

She turns and walks towards her bedroom. She staggers, zig-zagging as she walks. She knocks over a hall-table. She hears the sound of steps echoing around the house - ultra-loud, exaggerated sounds.

PENNIE

Hello? Shauna?

Her own voice sounds weird, echoey, slurred. She slumps her back against the wall, slides down to a sitting position.

POV - PENNIE

Her vision is blurred now, coming in and out of focus. Everything sways.

A pair of legs steps in front of her. She looks up.

Through her blurred focus she sees an outline of a man - blurred and shadowy dark. The outline of a man, a baseball cap on his head.

BLACKOUT

INT. UNFAMILIAR BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie's eyes flick open.

She looks to her side, where her hand which is being gicked by a white LAMB.

She recoils from the animal. She looks around the familiar room from the bed which she's been placed on.

A bare room. Two doors - one ajar revealing an ensuite toilet; the other presumably to a hallway. A window with bars on it. The roof is slanted - it's an attic room.

The lamb drifts around the room. Pennie goes to get off the bed, realizes her feet are shackled together.

Dread dawns.

She manages to rise, shuffles uncomfortably to the window, her movement limited by the shackles.

She looks out through the iron bars. Countryside.

Miles and miles of fields, interrupted by patches of woodland. No sign of another house. Of a road. Of anything.

She turns and looks around the room again. The lamb gazes at her dolefully.

She shuffles over to the door, tries the handle. It's not locked and opens out to a

HALLWAY

It leads to the top of a stairwell. She hears voices - a man and a woman - drifting up from downstairs.

She walks down the hallway, passing some closed doors, to the top of the stairwell, and descends the stairs carefully, the shackles making her progress slow and difficult.

She arrives at the bottom of the stairs to a

FRONT HALLWAY

One end of the hallway is the front door to the house; the other end is an open door through which she can hear voices.

The voices stop. There is silence, as if they're listening.

Footsteps sound, and a WOMAN (40s) appears in the doorway. Grey-flecked bangs frame a large, stony face, piercing eyes with crows feet. She wears a homely floral-patterned dress, an apron and beams a sunny grin at Pennie.

WOMAN

There you are.

The woman smiles at her like a party host, as if Pennie has arrived early for a party.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Come on in. Dinner's nearly ready.

The woman disappears from the doorway.

Pennie stands there, numb with shock. She hears the clang of plates and utensils from inside the room. She looks to the front door, realizes there's no way she can make a run for it with the shackles.

With numb resignation she approaches the door, walks in to a

KITCHEN

The woman sets the table, where the delivery man sits. He's shed the shirt and baseball cap, and is sporting a tatty jumper and mud-stained pants now, like he's just come up from the fields. He has his dinner set down before him, and beams a smile when he sees Pennie.

MAN

There she is. Our little lamb.

(to Woman)

Told you she had a spark about her.

WOMAN

Oh, that she does. And so beautiful too.

MAN

Pull up a pew. You must be hungry.

The woman ushers a dumbstruck Pennie to the table.

WOMAN

But where are our manners. This is Brendan, whom you've already met. And I'm Margaret.

BRENDAN

Mi casa tu casa.

Margaret pulls out a chair for Pennie.

MARGARET

We didn't know if you were vegetarian or not, so if you are just ignore the chicken. We have plenty of potato salad... And turnip... and there's some hummus.

Pennie sits down absently. Margaret goes and serves up a plate of food in front of her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You must be starving.

BRENDAN

Course she is. She's eating for two.

MARGARET

That's a myth.

BRENDAN

What is?

MARGARET

Eating for two. A pregnant woman doesn't need to eat extra. Just an extra slice of bread a day in the last trimester, that's all.

BRENDAN

I know, I know. Just making conversation.

He blesses himself, tucks into his food, eating in big mouthfuls. Margaret sits down with her own plate, blesses herself.

The two of them start to eat. Pennie sits staring at her food, hearing mouthfuls of food being chewed.

PENNIE

If you're looking for money, my parents will pay.

They stop eating, look at her, then at each other and smile.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

Just let me go. They'll pay whatever you want.

Brendan looks serious. He weighs up Pennie with his eyes, lifts his chin and strokes it solemnly.

BRENDAN

Hmm. Let me see. Would your parents have...

(beat)

...a million euros?

PENNIE

We can get you money. Whatever you want, we can... negotiate.

His face cracks into a smile. Margaret joins in with the gentle laughter.

BRENDAN

Everything's up for negotiation, eh? That's the modern world. Moral relativism I believe they call it. Postmodernism.

MARGARET

Don't tease her.

(to Pennie)

We don't want your money, silly.

PENNIE

Then what do you want? What I am here?

MARGARET

(bemused, as if it was obvious)

We want you to be happy.

They start eating again. Pennie is dumbstruck by the oddness.

As they eat, she stares from one to the other.

She looks down at her food. She picks up the plate, lobs it against the wall, sending food flying and causing the plate the smash.

Margaret looks horrified, stares at the mess on the wall. Brendan's face stiffens, he stares at the floor as if containing his anger.

BRENDAN

Now that is rude.

Margaret gets up and goes to the drawers, gets out some wipes and starts cleaning up the mess. She seems to be disturbed by the mess. The kitchen is otherwise spick and spot, the whole house in fact spotless.

Brendan stares at Pennie.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Just plain rude.

INT. BEDROOM ROOM -DAY

The door opens, and Brendan ushers Pennie inside.

He stands in the doorway as she gravitates towards the bed.

BRENDAN
We're here to help you, Pennie. You
can't see that now. But you will.

She stares at him disbelievingly, definitely.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Don't start off on the wrong foot.

He closes the door, and she hears it being locked.

She slumps down on the bed, stares at the lock door, at her prison.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Pennie pulls at the bars of the window, seeing if there's any give. There isn't.

She looks under the bed, checks the frame for anything she can use. She tries some screws, trying to loosen them. They're screwed tight.

She walks into the ensuite toilet. She sees the cistern lid, tries it. It's loose. A big heavy slab of ceramic. She shakes it lightly, getting used to the weight.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Pennie waits by the door, leaning back against the wall, the cistern lid by her feet.

She hears Brendan's footsteps coming up the stairs. She grabs the lid, raises it. She's beside the hinged side of the door, it will shield her when it opens. She's tense with anticipation.

The footsteps stop by the door, a key clangs into the keyhole.

Pennie raises the lid, her knuckles whitening around it, waiting to strike. She'll only get one chance.

The door opens a crack.

She waits...

The door stops mid-swing.

Her empty bed is visible from the doorway. The door stays open, but Brendan doesn't enter. She waits.

BRENDAN (O.S)

Pennie, you're not planning on whacking me on the head with the cistern lid, are you?

She starts to shake with anxiety. The door closes. Her chance gone.

BRENDAN (O.S) (CONT'D)

That wouldn't be a very friendly thing to do. This will work much better if we all learn how to get along.

She subsides against the wall, her legs going weak. She hears the door lock. His footsteps echo down the stairs.

Tears well in Pennie's eyes. She's totally out of her depth.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Pennie lies on the bed.

The door opens. Margaret enters with a tray of food. She brings it over, puts it down on the bedside locker. There's a plastic knife and fork.

MARGARET

Any special meals you want, just tell me. I'm a really good cook, and I'll make you up whatever you want. You have to think of your health now. This is your home for the next few weeks, we want to make it as nice as possible for you.

PENNIE

What do you mean, the next few weeks?

MARGARET

Well, that's what they decided, isn't it? Even they won't kill a child after 3 months.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

So once 3 months has passed, the baby will be safe. And you'll be free to go.

Margaret goes to the door.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We're here to help you. It need not be unpleasant.

Margaret exits.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Pennie is still lying in the same position on the bed.

Footsteps approach, accompanied by the sound of whistling. The door opens. Brendan enters, whistling, with a tray of food.

He freezes when he sees Margaret's tray of food is uneaten, cold on the bedside locker.

Pennie doesn't acknowledge his entrance.

BRENDAN

Pennie...

She ignores him.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

You have to eat.

He clears away the old tray, puts the new tray on the bedside locker.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

This isn't very clever, Pennie. What are you trying to prove, huh? We're trying to make this as nice as possible.

He goes to the door.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

We're not just doing this for you. We expect that food eaten when we get back.

He exits.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Pennie is still in the same position. The tray of food has not been touched.

Footsteps approach, the door opens.

Margaret stands in the doorway, observes with some disdain that the food is uneaten. She turns and goes, leaving the door open.

A few seconds later she and Brendan enter. They are both wearing matching overalls. They move with swift military like precision and grab Pennie by the arms and frog-hop her out of the room.

She resists, but is too tired and weak. They escort her roughly down the corridor to a spare room.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They carry her into the spare room. It is bare except for s a hospital trolley and a table with a bucket and a funnel. Handcuffs are chained to the trolley railings.

They hoist her up on the trolley, put her lying on her back. They cuff her hands and feet to the rails, immobilising her body completely.

They put a strap across her forehead and restrain her head so she cannot rotate it.

Brendan forces her mouth wide open. Margaret takes a tube and forces it down her throat. Pennie gags.

Margaret pushes the tube down further. She attaches a funnel to the end of the tube. She gets the bucket and tilts it down into the funnel. Liquidated food pours in.

Tears stream from Pennie's eyes. Food spurts out her nose. Brendan wipes it away.

They persevere in the force-feeding.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - LATER

They carry her limp body down the hallway back to the bedroom. She is drained, no fight left in her anymore.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They drop her on her bed. They seem at ease now. Margaret puts the covers over her, tucking her in. She rubs her head affectionately.

MARGARET
Get some sleep, dear.

They exit. She hears the clank of the key in the lock.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Footsteps approach, the door opens. Brendan enters with a tray of food and two lambs scampering around his feet. They roam around the room as Brendan places it down on the locker.

BRENDAN
I brought in a few friends. Thought they might cheer you up.

She ignores him.

He hunkers down, pets a lamb that has come over to the bed.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
You want to know their names?

A beat.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
This one is Andrew... and this one is Carmel.

Pennie stirs.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Or is this one Carmel... and that one Andrew. Hard to tell.

Pennie looks at him. He smiles tenderly at her.

She sits up.

PENNIE
I want to see them.

BRENDAN
Here they are. Cute little fellers.

PENNIE
My parents.

BRENDAN

And you will. In time.

PENNIE

I need to see them. They'll be worried.

BRENDAN

Then you shouldn't have put them in this situation.

(beat)

Did they raise you like this? To kill a child? I bet they didn't.

PENNIE

I want to see them. Please.

Brendan takes out a phone, shows her the screen.

It's footage of people in their 50s - Pennie immediately recognizes them as her parents.

In the footage they are being viewed through a window of their home through a zoom lens. Carmel is crying, Andrew comforting her.

She sobs.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

I need to talk to them. They have to know what happened.

Brendan turns off the footage.

BRENDAN

I'm sure we could arrange something, put them at ease. But that's down to you.

He rises.

Pennie looks at the tray of food. She picks up a plastic knife and fork, puts a carrot in her mouth and chews.

Brendan smiles benignly at her. Victory. He rubs her head affectionately.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

Good girl.

He turns to go, ushering the lambs out with him.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
 (to lambs)
 Come on, Andrew. Come on, Carmel.

The lambs ushered out, he turns to her from the doorway.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
 Remember, Pennie. You have the
 power of life and death in your
 hands.

He exits, closes the door and locks it. She looks at the food. She forces another morsel into her mouth, chews mechanically, the food made tasteless by her despair.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Brendan sits across from Pennie at the table, reading a letter she has just written.

BRENDAN
 I think that'll work.

PENNIE
 I'd rather talk to them.

BRENDAN
 A letter's better. Exam stress got
 the better of you. You're going
 away for a few weeks to get your
 head together. That's what people
 do these days, isn't it? Go to find
 themselves.

PENNIE
 They'll be worried.

BRENDAN
 When they see you again you'll be
 well on your way to making them
 grandparents. That'll make up for
 it. Think how happy you'll make
 them.

She laughs.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
 What?

PENNIE
 You don't know my parents.

BRENDAN

Everybody wants their children to have children.

PENNIE

They wouldn't want me to throw my life away. They wanted me to have a career. Be somebody.

BRENDAN

You can still do all that.

PENNIE

My mother gave me condoms when I was 15. This is the last thing they'd want.

BRENDAN

Can't say I approve of that. Well, a beautiful bouncing baby has a way of changing people's minds. Do you have siblings?

PENNIE

No.

BRENDAN

Well, that might explain it. I suppose you could say they were derelict in their duty.

PENNIE

What duty?

BRENDAN

Go forth and multiply. One's better than nothing I suppose. Was your mother a career woman also?

PENNIE

She's an author. She writes children's books.

BRENDAN

(smirking)

The irony. And your dad?

PENNIE

A solicitor.

BRENDAN

There was a time when a woman wasn't ashamed to be a mother and a housewife.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

A man could support a family of 5, 6, 7 on one salary. That's all gone now. The rich really did a number on your generation. Got you to believe equality was copying everything a man did. What's the result? Houses that cost twice what they did before, you need 2 salaries to buy anything these days.

(Beat)

Then there's the latchkey kids - confused, abandoned, filling the voids in their lives with shiny baubles, new products, alcohol, drugs, every empty sin imaginable. Vanity, greed, emptiness. That's the modern world. All because of mothers not being there for their children, because of women burning their fertile years for some greedy corporation. Meanwhile, the rich and their feminist stooges are laughing all the way to the bank. You might call that progress, I call it crazy.

PENNIE

So what now?

MARGARET (O.S.)

Now, you earn your keep.

Pennie turns, sees Margaret has entered.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie is escorted into her bedroom by Margaret. She sees new clothes have been laid out on the bed. A faded second-hand dress, same floral print pattern that Margaret prefers; some bland t-shirts and underwear.

MARGARET

No good you being in your room all the time. Not healthy. You can help out around the house a bit, pay for your board.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

MONTAGE OF PENNIE WORKING

- Pennie mops the kitchen floor, wearing her new dress
- She hoovers the hallway
- She cleans the bathroom tiles
- She loads a washing machine with clothes

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Pennie washes in the shower. We see a shape enter the bathroom through the opaque shower curtain. A hand pulls back curtain, shocking Pennie, who recoils instinctively away.

Margaret.

MARGARET

You got enough soap?

Pennie tries to cover herself.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Oh, don't be silly. It's not all that much to drool over. If you weren't giving it away I doubt you'd get much interest.

Margaret pulls the curtain back and leaves the bathroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie, in her room, cries.

She looks out the window, as if to say 'what am I doing here?'

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

The three members of the household sit around the table for dinner. There is a heavy silence.

MARGARET

Pennie, I apologize.

BRENDAN

What for?

MARGARET

I was a bit rude upstairs.

PENNIE

It's okay.

BRENDAN

Well, let's forget about it with a prayer. Pennie, would you like to say grace?

PENNIE

I'm not sure...

BRENDAN

Don't worry. I'll say it.

(beat)

Bless us, dear Lord, as we partake of this food you have seen fit to provide us with. In your wisdom and mercy you have delivered us from evil, saved us so we too may be agents of salvation on this earth, and see out your holy plan. We consume this blessed bounty as a promise of the eternal bounty to come. Amen.

MARGARET

Amen.

PENNIE

Amen.

They start to eat.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

Margaret, I'm sorry too.

MARGARET

What for?

PENNIE

For throwing the plate.

MARGARET

Oh, isn't that sweet?

BRENDAN

That's what I like to see. We're all getting on like a house on fire. I think this is going to be a great few weeks.

PENNIE

You obviously don't get many visitors out here.

BRENDAN

Miles from anywhere. Way we like it.

PENNIE

I've been wondering...

BRENDAN

Yes?

PENNIE

Well, I mean... You're obviously so enamored with children. Why don't you have some yourself?

BRENDAN

The million dollar question, ain't it, Margaret?

MARGARET

We were not so blessed unfortunately.

PENNIE

You could have adopted? If you can't have one naturally...

MARGARET

(getting up suddenly)
Excuse me.

BRENDAN

Margaret...?

PENNIE

I'm sorry if I said anything to upset her.

BRENDAN

She'll be all right. It's a sensitive subject for her. You can understand now though, can't you? To see others throw away what we would die for? This is our way. This is our way of honouring god's commandment.

He goes over, puts arm on her shoulder.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

And I'm really glad it's you that's part of it with us. It could have been anyone I suppose.

(MORE)

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
But we could only save one. And
we're glad it's you.

He touches her stomach.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
This. What's in here.... That's the
real prayer.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Brendan escorts Pennie up to her bedroom. He sees a door open. He moves ahead, looks in the room, closes the door before pennie can see in as she passes.

BRENDAN
Thought Margaret might be there.
She must be outside.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

He sees her to the door of her room.

PENNIE
Brendan?

BRENDAN
Yes.

PENNIE
Could I get something to write on.

BRENDAN
You want to write?

PENNIE
Yes, it helps me relax.

BRENDAN
Oh. Okay. Not going to be writing
about us I hope?

PENNIE
No. just some... thoughts, ideas.

BRENDAN
Like a diary?

PENNIE
Yeah. Kind of.

BRENDAN

I'm sure I can arrange that. Of course, I should have realized you'd need some distraction. I'll see to it.

PENNIE

Okay, thanks.

BRENDAN

Tonight you'll just have to make do with sweet dreams.

PENNIE

Goodnight.

He goes out.

She shudders with the cringe of it all.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Pennie wakes up in bed.

She looks around, sees that a BIBLE has been left by her bed.

And a notepad and pen.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

MONTAGE OF PENNIE WORKING

- Pennie mops the bathroom floor
- She scrubs the toilet
- She sorts clothes into baskets
- She turns down beds
- She hovers the upstairs rooms

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Pennie carries the Hoover down the hallway, vacuum cleaning done.

She passes a door, stops.

It's the door to the room Brendan closed last night.

She tries the door. Locked.

She looks around her, cocks her ear for anyone coming.

She hunkers down, looks in keyhole.

POV PENNIE

She can see the corner of what looks like a wooden baby's cot in the center of the room.

The walls seem to be painted brightly with cartoonish animals. But it's hard to make out exactly with this limited keyhole view.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

She enters her room to find some books have been left on her bedside locker.

She goes over, picks them up.

Titles like

- Grace-based Parenting
- Power of a Praying Parent
- Parenting the Way God Parents

All books about parenting and Christianity.

She rolls her eyes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

She comes down to the kitchen. Brendan is sitting there drinking a cup of tea. Margaret is knitting.

BRENDAN

You see I got you some reading material?

PENNIE

Yes. Thanks.

BRENDAN

That'll keep you plenty of busy.

MARGARET

Cost a pretty penny too those books.

PENNIE
I'm grateful.

BRENDAN
Hahaha. We're only pulling your
leg. Here.

He hands her a present.

She opens it. She sees a bunch of best sellers.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Saw in your house you liked reading
those authors. I bought you a bunch
of their stuff. Hope you don't have
all of them?

PENNIE
No, I don't. Thanks.

BRENDAN
Haha. Had you going there. Thought
we were going to expect you to just
read the bible and books on
parenting all the time. Hahaha.

PENNIE
These are great. Really.

MARGARET
I do hope you read that other book
as well though. The big one.

PENNIE
I will.

MARGARET
And those books on parenting. I
think you need a lot of education
in that regard. Some people get it
naturally from their upbringing.
Others have to work a bit harder.

Pennie looks glum.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I don't need to offend you. It's
just... Looking after a child is not
as easy as it looks. If you're not
careful... Well, the consequences
are terrible.

PENNIE

I'll read those too, Margaret.
Maybe I can take them with me.

MARGARET

Take them with you?

PENNIE

When I leave. I won't get to read
all of them in a few weeks. I'll
pay you for them too.

MARGARET

Yes. Well, don't worry about
paying, child. They're your books
now.

PENNIE

That's really nice of you.

Margaret smiles at the compliment.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

I was thinking, for the baby....

MARGARET

Yes?

PENNIE

It would be nice to get some fresh
air.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

It's a shame to be in the
countryside and not get some of
that country air.

MARGARET

Being cooped up in here with me, is
it?

PENNIE

No, it's just... Maybe there's
something outside I could do, like
I helped out in here.

MARGARET

Never short of work around the
farm, are we, Brendan?

BRENDAN

Hmmm, I'm sure we could get you
doing something tomorrow.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Brendan and Pennie walk in the fields, feeding the sheep. Pennie's shackles have been loosened.

BRENDAN
Docile creatures, aren't they?

PENNIE
(patting one)
They're so cute. They feel so wonderful.

BRENDAN
Jumpers on legs. God provides whatever we require. You just need to know where to look. That one there you're petting is one here is one of my favorites.

PENNIE
How do you tell them apart?

BRENDAN
Oh, it's easy enough when you're around them as long as me. You get to know their ways, their foibles. I know them all. They all have their own personalities.

PENNIE
Was this your father's farm?

BRENDAN
5 generations.

PENNIE
Wow.

BRENDAN
Yeah.

PENNIE
That must give you a great sense of purpose.

BRENDAN
Just to look around, to know your dead ancestors looked around the exact same landscape. It's something else all right.

PENNIE

It's a pity you don't have anyone to continue it on.

BRENDAN

Why do you say that?

PENNIE

Well, you don't have any children.

BRENDAN

We can pass it on to who we like. Blood is important, but there are more important things. Even pagans know the bond of blood. Go into town, you'll see the pagan families fighting each other on a Saturday night. Not much better than these animals here.

(beat)

There's a higher bond. A bond of faith.

(beat)

The bond you have with the lord, that's the most important bond. As long as people keep the faith, me and Margaret will always have a family.

PENNIE

I'm not sure what you must think of me.

BRENDAN

Why do you say that?

PENNIE

What I was going to do. Commit such a grievous sin.

BRENDAN

You know what I heard once. A guy at a prayer meeting told me.

(beat)

There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

(beat)

Isn't that beautiful? A crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

PENNIE

That's Leonard Cohen.

BRENDAN

Huh?

PENNIE

Leonard Cohen. He was a singer. A poet. That's one of his lyrics.

BRENDAN

Leonard Cohen.

PENNIE

Yeah. He's fairly well known.

Brendan grimaces slightly.

BRENDAN

Cohen. That sounds like a Jewish name.

PENNIE

He is Jewish... was Jewish, I think.

BRENDAN

Huh. Well, we all have our crosses to bear.

EXT. FIELDS - LATER

They're walking up the field back towards the house.

He stops suddenly.

Brendan see the guy at the house.

Pennie looks at him. She sees the guy. She hesitates a second - to cry out or not. Before she can make a decision she is rugby-tackled to the ground by Brendan.

He drags her into the ditch, lies on her, puts his hand over her mouth.

She sees a guy at the door of the farmhouse talking to Margaret. After a few seconds he walks away, gets into a landrover and drives off.

The landrover passes by the ditch.

Brendan lies on pennie, stifling her breathing. The sound of the landrover fades.

Brendan keeps lying on her, breathing in her ear His hands are over her. He waits a few seconds longer, pressing into her.

Then he gets up, looks around.

BRENDAN

He's gone.

Pennie lies there still, dazed.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

Let me give you a hand.

He stretches out his hand.

She looks up warily, takes it, lets him pull her up.

He walks ahead.

She takes a few steps, falters, faints and crumples to the ground.

Brendan runs to her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

BLACKNESS

Voices.

Pennie's eyes snap open.

She's on a couch in the living room, her feet raised on the rest. Brendan and Margaret are in the kitchen adjacent. She can hear their voices through the open doorway.

MARGARET (O.S.)

He wants to sell the lot of it.
He's moving out, putting his farm
on the market.

BRENDAN (O.S.)

Well, I hope he doesn't make a
habit of coming up here.

The light is off, it's dark with the curtains pulled, but she can make out her surroundings.

She scans around quickly, sees magazines on the coffee table. She flicks through them.

She sees a bin. She gets off quietly from the couch, tiptoes to it, sees some crumpled papers in there. She takes it out, flattens it.

An envelope. With an address:

Brendan Kennedy, Kilmanagh, Five-Mile-Bridge, Roscommon.

She drops it back into the bin.

She hears a chair scrape on the floor from the kitchen, somebody rising.

She moves back to the couch, lies down, closes her eyes.

Brendan comes in, looks in at her. Turns back to Margaret.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Pennie is in the shower. Footsteps approach. A shape appears in the opaque curtain behind her. She tenses.

BRENDAN

Pennie?

PENNIE

(wary)

I could do with a hand down the field when you're ready.

He stands there waiting.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll just get dressed.

He moves out.

EXT./INT. SHED - NIGHT

He leads her to a shed. They go in.

Margaret is there already, watching over some sheep who are in the process of giving birth.

CUT TO:

Margaret holds a sheep, reassuring it, while Brendan helps the sheep give birth to a lamb, helping to pull it out.

Pennie is on standby with a bucket of water and sponge.

Brendan eases the lamb out. It lands on the ground. The lamb springs up, tries to walk, falters.

Brendan helps it up. It tries again, totters around.

Pennie can't help herself but smile.

BRENDAN
 (To Pennie)
 Amazing, isn't it?

PENNIE
 (Beaming)
 It's wonderful.

Margaret looks on sourly.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Margaret and Pennie set table after the lambing.

MARGARET
 Well, that was special.

PENNIE
 It really was.

MARGARET
 Suppose you've never seen that
 before.

PENNIE
 No. I've never spent much time in
 the country.

Margaret takes out some lamb chops.

MARGARET
 Almost a pity they're bound for the
 slaughter.

Pennie looks a bit unsettled by the sight of the lamb chops.
 Margaret stares at her, sees her discomfort.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 I didn't realize you were a
 vegetarian.

PENNIE
 I'm not.

MARGARET
 Then don't be so upset? That's the
 natural order, sweetie. We mustn't
 get attached to things that aren't
 human, must we?

She opens the packet of lamb chops, starts to fry them on a
 pan.

Pennie sees that she has left her mobile sticking out of her jacket pocket on the chair.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Can you finish setting the table?

PENNIE
Yes, of course.

As she walks past she reaches down and snatches the phone out of the jacket pocket. She stuffs it up her sleeve.

Brendan comes in.

BRENDAN
That was great. My favourite time of the year. What's for supper?

PENNIE
Margaret's prepared some lamb.

BRENDAN
Margaret? Could have done with a salad tonight.

MARGARET
I'm only teasing. There's a salad in there. Some people would swear their McDonald's burgers grow on trees.

Pennie sits down at the table. Under the table, her fingers are working overtime, jotting out a text on the phone:

Brendan Kennedy, Kilmanagh, 5-mile
Bridge, Roscommon. Help. Pennie.

Brendan sits down, cuts himself some bread, Margaret starts to serve him.

Pennie types in a number:

0876453321

She presses 'Send'.

Margaret walks to her jacket.

Pennie sees this, is alarmed.

She reaches over for some bread and knocks over Margaret's glass of water over. It rolls off the table and smashes on the floor, distracting Margaret.

PENNIE
Oh, I'm so sorry.

MARGARET
Must you be so clumsy?

Margaret can't help but go over and clean it.

PENNIE
Let me help you.

MARGARET
It's all right. I'll do it.

PENNIE
I'll get you more water.

She walks over. As she passes by the jacket she slips the phone back into the pocket.

She returns to the table with the water.

Margaret cleans up, gets her jacket and hangs it in the atrium by the front door.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie stares out the window, the treetops of some nearby woods visible in the moonlight.

PENNIE
Come on, Shauna. Don't let me down.
I'm counting on you.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

MONTAGE OF PENNIE WORKING

- Pennie mops the kitchen floor
- She cleans the oven
- She cleans the windows
- She wipes down surfaces

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Pennie sits alone drinking tea at the kitchen table.

She cocks her ear, hearing something.

A car approaching.

She gets up, shuffles to the window as fast as the shackles allow her.

She looks out the window, excited.

PENNIE

Oh Shauna, say you've done it.

The engine sound gets louder, coming nearer. Her heart races.

POV

Outside the window, looking in at Pennie staring out hopefully.

The engine sound gets louder.

A car pulls into view.

Margaret's car - Margaret at the wheel.

BACK TO PENNIE INSIDE

She looks crestfallen as she realizes it's Margaret's car.

She sees Margaret get out and unload groceries from the boot.

She scuttles back to the table.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Pennie stares out the window again. Her expression is grim, her face drained of all hope.

PENNIE

Say you didn't lose your phone,
Shauna. That was my one chance.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Pennie is woken up by sounds in her room in middle of the night.

Brendan is standing in the middle of the room looking at her.
He is flanked by 2 lambs.

BRENDAN
Andrew or Claire?

PENNIE
What?

BRENDAN
Pick one. Andrew or Claire.

PENNIE
I don't know what you're talking
about.

BRENDAN
We all have to make difficult
choices. Choices have consequences.
(He points to one lamb...)
Andrew...?
(then the other)
Or Claire?

She says nothing.

PENNIE
Brendan, you're scaring me right
now.

BRENDAN
I guess I'll make the choice for
you then.

He shoos one of the lamb out of the room, closes the door.

He comes back, grabs the other by the neck.

He produces a sharp serrated knife from his belt. It glints
in the moonlight coming in through the window.

She gasps.

He pins the lamb to the floor. It resists, bleating, eyes
terrified in the moonlight.

PENNIE
No.

He cuts its throat.

It bleats, pathetically, an awful gurgling sound.

He lodges the knife deep in its throat, moves it around.

Blood spurts, pools on the floor.

The other lamb in the doorway bleats.

The dying lamb bleats, blood gurgling in its throat, making vain attempts to rise, Brendan's weight keeping it pinned down.

He cuts along the throat.

The lamb stills.

He gets out.

Pennie is shocked, turns away, puts her hands over her ears to drown out the awful sounds.

He goes to her, grabs her by the hair. forces her ot look at the dead lamb, its blood pooling out from the carcass, spreading across the floor.

BRENDAN

This.... this is the wages of a
sinful choice.

He takes his mobile from his pocket, opens the message he sent.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

This is a pay-as-you-go phone. It's got no credit. Margaret said you'd try something. You didn't disappoint her. I was willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. But no more. We made this too easy for you. All this little miss homemaker stuff.

(beat)

Butter wouldn't melt in your mouth. Who'd you think you're fooling?

He shoves her back down on the bed. He goes to the door, takes a last look back at the dead lamb in the middle of the floor, then looks at her.

He steps out, pulls the door closed.

PENNIE

No. don't leave that in her with me.

He looks at her coldly, pulls closed the gap. She hears it lock.

She turns away from the dead lamb, rolls herself into a ball.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Pennie comes downstairs. Margaret and Brendan are in the kitchen. When Brendan sees her he gets up and goes out the door. Pennie sees him walk down the fields through the window.

MARGARET

You made him angry. He's rarely angry.

(beat)

But when he is it's for a good reason. He trusted you more than I. but he sees what's in front of him now.

PENNIE

You must be pleased.

MARGARET

What's there to be pleased about? We want the best for you and your child. And you betray us.

PENNIE

You're keeping me here. How could you think I would not want to get out.

MARGARET

Couldn't wait to get out and become a murderer.

PENNIE

What do you get out of this?

MARGARET

This is all for you. All for you and your child. you silly girl, you don't understand.

PENNIE

What does Brendan get out of it?

MARGARET

Same as me.

BRENDAN

You sure?

MARGARET

What's that supposed to mean?

PENNIE

He doesn't look at you at all.

MARGARET

What?

PENNIE

All this time I've noticed. He doesn't look at you with any lust, with any sensuality.

Margaret slaps her hard across the face. Pennie composes herself.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

There's no affection between you. You're just playing out a role. Is this project to have a baby... is this the only thing you have left?

MARGARET

You understand nothing. You played a good game, fitting in. but it's plain to see you understand nothing.

Margaret storms off in a huff.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Pennie eats alone at the table. Brendan comes in in his work clothes, see her, ignores her.

PENNIE

Brendan...

He hangs up his coat, washes his hands and face at the sink, dries them.

BRENDAN

You'd best work in here from now on.

PENNIE

I understand. You feel you can't trust me.

BRENDAN

You've proved that.

PENNIE

You have it wrong. Margaret said something to me earlier. That I couldn't wait to get out and be a murderer. That's not true. I wasn't going to have an abortion. I just wanted... freedom. you believe me, don't you?

BRENDAN

I'd like to.

PENNIE

You've done what you've set out to do. I'm keeping the baby.

(beat)

I know you can't let me out before the term limit, but I'd like the next few weeks to be as comfortable as possible between all three of us.

She rubs her stomach.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

All four of us.

BRENDAN

Pennie...

PENNIE

We can be a family.

BRENDAN

You've broken our trust.

(beat)

We can't take the chance of letting you go when the legal limit has passed.

PENNIE

(shocked)

What?

BRENDAN

We can't trust you. We can't trust you to deliver the child.

PENNIE

But it will be illegal to terminate the pregnancy then. You'll have gotten what you wanted.

BRENDAN

There are ways and means. You've shown you can't be trusted. We can't let you go till the baby's born.

Pennie's face sinks.

PENNIE

You can't be serious?

BRENDAN

You left us no choice. I better get back to work. It won't be bad. I promise you. We can rebuild our relationship again.

He goes off. She sinks down in despair.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie is lying on her bed, staring at the ceiling. The door is open. Margaret appears in the doorway.

MARGARET

Don't think you can sulk for the next few months. You still have to pay for your board.

PENNIE

When am I going to be let out?

MARGARET

Didn't Brendan tell you? We have to make sure you safely deliver that baby.

PENNIE

And then you'll let me go?

MARGARET

Of course.

PENNIE

With the baby?

MARGARET

Of course. Once the baby's safe, its yours.

PENNIE

What about the room?

MARGARET

What room?

Pennie stars at her.

PENNIE

The room with the crib in it.

Margaret looks pensive.

INT. ROOM WITH CRIB - DAY

The room with the crib in the centre. The walls are painted with cartoon animals and rainbows, some cherubs and angels. There are boxes around the walls of the room, stuffed with toys and baby clothes.

The sound of a key in a lock. The door opens. Margaret leads Pennie into the room.

They walk over to the crib, look down into it.

A teddy bear of an angel inside. A photo of a newborn infant in the angels' clasp.

MARGARET

His name was George. Georgie I called him. He was only seven months when he passed.

(beat)

I couldn't bear to throw out his things. I've kept it all here. A reminder of my little angel.

PENNIE

How did he die?

MARGARET

It happened very suddenly. A rare condition, the doctors said.

PENNIE

That must have tested your faith.

MARGARET

God works in mysterious ways. Sometimes it seems like he's pushing you away. Daring you to lose faith in him. But it's just so you can grow back stronger in his love.

PENNIE

It must have been hard on Brendan.
Losing a son to pass his farm onto.

MARGARET

Brendan's a good man. He saved me.
He helped me see the light. I might
not have survived otherwise.

She turns to Pennie.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

That's what we're trying to do for
you, Pennie. Help you see the light
too. You have so much and you don't
even see it.

She takes Pennie's hands in her own, examines them in hers.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We want to do God's work here.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Pennie and Margaret sit in the kitchen, sipping cups of tea.
They seem more relaxed now, like an ice has thawed.

MARGARET

I was in a dark place. i felt like
i was drowning, my life flashing
before my eyes.

(beat)

But my life flashing before my eyes
didn't make me want to live. it
made me want to keep on drowning.
sinking into the anonymous
blackness. That's how empty it all
seemed.

(beat)

If it wasn't for Brendan's hand
reaching out, I would have sunk
without trace.

Pennie puts down her cup, stares down pensively as if
gathering her thought.

Beat.

PENNIE

My boyfriend... the father of my
child. Brian.

(beat)

The night we...

(MORE)

PENNIE (CONT'D)

the night this baby was created...
I hadn't wanted to. We were both
drunk. But I remember saying no,
not tonight. He kept going. And I
suppose I gave in.

MARGARET

That's tough, dear. Men contain the
best and worst of humanity. We have
to bring out the best in them if we
can.

PENNIE

You can see why I felt ambivalent
about giving birth in those
circumstances.

MARGARET

We all have our moments of
weakness. But it's not the child's
fault.

INT. HOUSE - DAY - MONTAGE

MONTAGE OF PENNIE WORKING

- Pennie hovers the floor.
- Pennie fills a dryer with clothes.
- Pennie scrubs the bathroom floor.
- Pennie in the room with the crib. She paints the wall,
adding a cherub to the characters.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pennie enters the kitchen. Margaret and Brendan are there,
drinking tea at the table.

Pennie stands there until she gets their attention.

PENNIE

I was thinking... it's about time I
gave the child a name.

They look at each other, their interest is piqued.

MARGARET

That sounds like a great idea. What
do you think, Brendan?

BRENDAN

Yes, it is. Huh. We should have thought of that a lot sooner. It'll help you bond with the little angel.

PENNIE

I was thinking...
(beat)
if it's a boy, George.
(beat)
If it's a girl, Georgina.

They let this sink in.

Margaret looks emotional. Tears start to stream down her face.

MARGARET

You don't need to do that.

PENNIE

I want to.

Margaret can't contain the tears now. She starts to shake.

MARGARET

Excuse me.

She leaves quickly, the tears beginning to roll.

PENNIE

(to Brendan)
I hope I haven't upset her.

BRENDAN

No. It's just.... It's such a nice gesture.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Pennie walks down the hallway towards her room.

She passes the room with the crib. She notices the door is open. She stops and looks in.

Margaret is inside. She's standing by the crib, holding the angel teddy bear with the picture to her chest.

She has her eyes closed and is swaying gently. She looks gently rapturous.

Pennie watches her for a few moments. She doesn't say anything or intrude.

She walks on gently up towards her room.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Pennie wakes up. Margaret is sitting by her bed, reading a children's book, Goldilocks, quietly, staring at Pennie's stomach which she has exposed, the sheets down and Pennie's nightshirt up to just below her breasts.

MARGARET

... and the first bowl of porridge was too cold... Goldilocks didn't want that... so she moved on to the next bowl...

PENNIE

Margaret?

Margaret stops reading, realizing Pennie is awake. She closes the book.

MARGARET

Oh, sorry. Pennie. I didn't think I'd wake you. I was trying to be quiet.

PENNIE

What are you doing?

MARGARET

I thought reading to George.....
Georgie...

(beat)

let's assume he's a boy for now..... I thought reading to him would be good for him.

(beat)

It's kind of silly I suppose, but it must do some good. They must be able to sense things outside of that little cubbyhole they're snuggled up in.

Pennie thinks about this, trying not to come across like she's shocked or alarmed.

PENNIE

No, it's a good idea. Carry on.

MARGARET

But you'll want to be getting up.

PENNIE

No, no. Carry on reading. I'd like to hear it too.

Margaret smiles. She opens the book, picking up where she left off.

MARGARET

...so Goldilocks moved on to the next bowl. She puts her spoon in and took a taste. Ugh, she said. This time it's too warm...

Pennie lies there, eyes vacantly pointed up at the ceiling, forcing a smile. She gently rubs her stomach.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Pennie enters the kitchen and hears Brendan and Margaret mid-conversation.

BRENDAN

....I'm just saying, Margaret, he's not a plant.

MARGARET

I know it's silly. But don't tell me it won't do some good. They can take things in when they're in there.

Brendan sees Pennie has entered, acknowledges her with a look.

BRENDAN

Once Pennie's okay with it.

Margaret now looks at Pennie.

PENNIE

I think it's a wonderful idea. I'm going to start reading to him myself. Seems like a good idea.

BRENDAN

Well, like I said he's not a plant. just don't start watering him.

MARGARET

Don't be silly.

Margaret whips a tea towel at brendan playfully.

BRENDAN
Hey, leave off. that's domestic
abuse.

Pennie stands there with a frozen smile.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pennie sits on the couch reading the children's book aloud.
Margaret knits in the corner, smiling as she listens.

Brendan appears at the door. He has a guitar slung around his
shoulder.

BRENDAN
You think little George is a
musician?

He walks over, stands in front of Pennie. He starts to strum
a few chords melodramatically.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Why read to him when you can sing
to him?

He composes himself, then strums a chord, launches into 'My
Darling Clementine'.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Oh my darling, oh my darling, oh my
darling clementine...

Margaret chimes in.

MARGARET AND BRENDAN (CONT'D)
... you are lost and gone forever,
oh my darling Clementine...

Pennie sits there awkwardly. She starts to clap along,
nodding her head in rhythm to the music, the smile still
frozen on her face.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Pennie walks with Brendan in the fields. Her shackles have
been loosened somewhat to allow her to walk more freely, but
not totally. She still has to shuffle quicker to keep up with
Brendan, and skip up alongside him every so often. Brendan
has slowed his walk so she can keep pace with him.

PENNIE

I haven't been out in so long. The fresh air feels good.

BRENDAN

We can't deny God's clean air to George.

PENNIE

Margaret told me she wouldn't be alive without you.

BRENDAN

It's all God's will.

PENNIE

He must have a special plan for you.

BRENDAN

And you.

PENNIE

He does work in mysterious ways. The father of my child, he's not going to raise it. It's a shame a child can't have a father.

BRENDAN

It's not ideal, but the right thing is that it has a life.

PENNIE

I think this baby... I feel in a way you're the one that's responsible for it.

(Beat)

You saved it. It's a shame a child shouldn't have a father. Especially one who really cares.

BRENDAN

You can visit anytime. We'd really love that.

PENNIE

I might not be able to stop visiting. I'll need the help I feel.

BRENDAN

Your parents will help.

PENNIE

My parents were always so busy with their careers. I ended up with guys who didn't really care either. I guess you get used to that distance. Never really connect. Never really feel the spark of life. Before you I'm not sure anybody really cared. About what really mattered anyway.

BRENDAN

Me and Margaret, we do our best. That's all we can do.

PENNIE

You and Margaret, you've been together a long time?

BRENDAN

Feels like forever. The only part of life that mattered at any rate.

PENNIE

How did you meet?

BRENDAN

A religious event. We were both searching. We found each as we found God.

PENNIE

It can't be easy, just the two of you out here all alone all the time.

BRENDAN

You're never alone with God. We do all right.

PENNIE

You and Margaret, would you say you're happy?

BRENDAN

Of course.

PENNIE

Some people deserve happiness. God sends things our way I think, if we can recognize them.

BRENDAN

I think so too.

PENNIE

Like love.

She smiles, walks away, leaving him dangling.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Pennie comes in. She's holding her notepad and pen. Margaret is pottering around doing something.

PENNIE

Margaret, do you think I could get some things from the shops?

Margaret looks at her.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

Just some quinoa and some other nutritious foodstuffs. It would be good for the baby.

MARGARET

My food isn't good enough for you.

PENNIE

No, it's not that. Your food is great.

(Beat)

It's just that quinoa really helps boost my energy. I went to the doctor once. he said I had low iron levels and needed supplements. I think it would be great for the baby.

(beat)

I think he needs all the chances he can get. This isn't the perfect environment for being pregnant.

MARGARET

We've done our best. You have board, you have fresh air.

PENNIE

I know. But you understand, it's all new to me.

(beat)

I'm just worried that my stress will affect the baby.

MARGARET

You should have thought about that before you betrayed us.

PENNIE

My mistakes aren't Georgie's fault.
For him, I think it would be best
to .

MARGARET

Quinoa. Anything else?

PENNIE

I'll make a list. I'll pay for the
extra expense, once the baby is
born.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Pennie watches Margaret drive into town.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Pennie is in the shower. She stands there naked and wet but
there is no water as the shower is turned off.

She hears Brendan walking coming in from outside below. She
turns on the water.

Brendan potters around making himself a cup of tea in the
kitchen.

Pennie turns off the water, steps out, throws herself to the
ground on the wet floor and and screams.

BRENDAN

(calling out)

Are you okay?

He arrives at the door, stands there without entering.

PENNIE

Can you help me up, Brendan?

He takes in her naked form. He looks away.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

It's all right. Help me.

He reaches out, lifts her up. Her naked wet flesh presses
against his.

He backs away, turns his face away in shame.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

It's all right, brendan. You're the father of this child. I've nothing to hide from you.

BRENDAN

Be that as it may.

She grabs his hand, puts it to her stomach.

PENNIE

It's kicking.

BRENDAN

I don't feel anything.

PENNIE

Wait.

BRENDAN

Does it kick at this stage?

He stands there, staring at her.

PENNIE

God sends us things...

She moves his hand up to her breast.

He lets it stay there. She moves towards him to kiss him.

As her lips press against him he pushes her back angrily and turns away.

BRENDAN

No!

She falls backwards and hits the floor with a thump.

She sees a nail scissors on the sink. She grabs it in her hand, concealing it.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

She throws a nightgown over herself. She has dried herself down.

She waits to hear him come up the stairs.

She takes out the scissors. She lifts the nightgown, cuts the top of her thighs, blood runs down her legs.

Brendan walks in, looking sheepish.

BRENDAN
I'm sorry I pushed you.

She stands there, looking distraught. He looks down, sees her bleeding down her thighs.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Oh no.

He hunkers down to examine her.

While he's down, she slips back the bedsheet where she had the cistern lid hidden.

She takes up the cistern lid, whacks him across the head with it.

He goes down in one. He's out cold.

She exits. She fumbles her way downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She goes through Brendan's jacket pocket. She finds the keys, undoes the shackles.

She goes back upstairs, slips on jeans, a jumper and shoes.

She goes back downstairs.

She hears a car coming into the yard. She looks out the window and sees Margaret entering the drive.

She runs out the back, towards the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She moves through the woods.

She comes to a house.

She sees a familiar vehicle outside - the SUV of the neighbour who called to Brendan and Margaret.

She goes to the door, knocks loudly. No answer.

She tries the handle. It opens.

She goes in. She sees a lot of boxes packed up, as if the owner is planning on moving.

PENNIE
 (calling out)
 Hello? Anybody here?

No answer.

She spots a landline phone. She darts to it, lifts the receiver, frantically dials some numbers.

She puts the receiver to her ear, hears an absent tone. not connected.

She drops the handle back down.

NEIGHBOUR (O.S.)
 Don't make a move.

She freezes.

NEIGHBOUR (CONT'D)
 Think you're robbing me again, do ya?

PENNIE
 Please, I need help.

NEIGHBOUR
 Stay still.

PENNIE
 Please, this is not what you think.

She turns around slowly.

NEIGHBOUR
 I said keep still!

She keeps turning, looks to see the man standing pointing a shotgun at her.

He's in his 60s, bearded, weatherbeaten face, knotted long hair, dirty plaid shirt.

She stares terrified at the barrel of the gun.

PENNIE
 Please, I need your help.

The man's face creases in scrutiny of her. He lowers the gun slightly as he examines her face.

PENNIE (CONT'D)
 I've been help captive....

NEIGHBOUR
 (perplexed)
 I've seen you.

PENNIE
 your neighbours, Brendan and
 Margaret Kennedy... they've....

NEIGHBOUR
 You're that girl. The one that is
 missing.

Relief crosses her face. He knows her.

PENNIE
 Yes. I've been held by your
 neighbour, Brendan Kennedy. I need
 to get to a police station.

Beat as he takes this all in.

He lowers the gun.

NEIGHBOUR
 Okay. Come with me. I'll drive you.

PENNIE
 Do you have a phone?

He reaches into his pocket.

NEIGHBOUR
 Here.

He throws a mobile phone at her. She catches it.

NEIGHBOUR (CONT'D)
 Reception's bad. It'll work out on
 the road. She follows him outside
 to the car.

She tries the phone, but can't get a signal.

He throws the shotgun in the backseat, gets in the driver's.
 She gets in the passenger seat.

He pulls out of the drive, up a narrow lane cloistered with
 branches.

INT. CAR - DAY

The neighbour speeds up the country lane. Pennie tries the
 phone.

NEIGHBOUR
So... he kidnapped you?

PENNIE
They both did.

NEIGHBOUR
The wife too?

PENNIE
She's in on it, yeah.

Beat. The neighbour takes this in.

NEIGHBOUR
I knew they were odd. Never thought
they'd do that. Sick fucks.

He drives the car down the narrow winding lane, potholes
making it a bumpy ride.

The car pulls out onto a wide main road. He speeds up on the
smoother surface.

Reception bars appear on the phone in Pennie's hand.

She frantically dials a number, puts the phone to her ear.

The phone rings. Then a voice appears.

SHAUNA (O.S.)
Hello?

PENNIE
Shauna. It's me. Pennie.

SHAUNA (O.S.)
Pennie? Oh my god Pennie, you're
alive.

PENNIE
I've been held captive.

SHAUNA
Oh my god pennie. we thought....

PENNIE
I'm okay. I'm going to the police
now. Tell my mam and dad I'm all
right.

Behind Pennie we see a familiar land rover appear on the road
through the back window. Brendan and Margaret's land rover.

SHAUNA (O.S.)
Oh my god Pennie.

PENNIE
It's all right, Shauna.
Everything's going to be all right.

The land rover passes up beside their car, as if to overtake it.

It doesn't overtake it. It stays driving side by side with their car.

Pennie looks out, sees Margaret staring at her from the driver's seat of the land rover.

The neighbour hasn't seen who it is yet. Pennie turns to him.

PENNIE (CONT'D)
Drive!

Before he can do anything Margaret slams her car into the jeep.

His car jolts. He loses grip of the wheel momentarily before gripping it, preventing the car from careening off into the ditch.

The jolt causes Pennie to drop the phone to the car floor.

He speeds up.

Margaret hangs back for a few seconds. A car comes their direction. She pulls in behind the neighbour in order to let the other car pass.

But there's a wildness in her eyes now.

The road clear ahead of the neighbour, she speeds up beside him again, matching him for high velocity.

She pulls out wide, then slams in hard to the side of the car again.

The contact sends his car sprawling off into a ditch.

His car speeds into the ditch, into a tree.

The impact knocks him and Pennie forward.

Concussed, Pennie crawls out of the car.

She tries to stand, but her legs give way. On her hands and knees she watches numbly as Margaret parks the car on the road ahead and walks back towards them. Pennie is too dazed to react.

The neighbour crawls out his side, a cut on his head, equally dazed and numb.

Margaret steps down the incline, approaching him calmly. On her way she reaches down and scoops up a rock.

Pennie watches numbly as she walks over to the neighbour and smashes the rock down on his head. He collapses in a heap instantly.

Pennie tries to scree - nothing comes out.

Margaret brings the rock down several more times on the man's head.

He's dead. His head dented in, a bloody mess.

Pennie tries to turn and rise, but she falls over, her legs like jelly.

She turns around in time to see Margaret advancing on her, the bloody rock in her hand.

POV - PENNIE

Blackness.

Eyes open.

Blurred figures come into focus. They reveal:

INT. ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Margaret, standing right beside her, Brendan sitting in the background.

Clumps of hair fall before Pennie's eyes.

ANGLE LOOSENS

She realizes Margaret is randomly shearing clumps of her hair with a scissors.

She snaps her head back from the blades, tries to move, realizes she's tied to a chair.

PENNIE

What are you doing?

MARGARET

Whores get their hair shorn. It's an ancient tradition.

Brendan looks sheepish in the background.

BRENDAN

Margaret, that's enough.

MARGARET

It's enough, is it? Seems like there's never enough for this one. World isn't enough for her. Little precious.

Margaret stops cutting, stands back. she puts down the scissors and holds up a mirror so Pennie can see the fruits of her handiwork. A zig-zag pattern of thinned out patches, a random hairline.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Not so pretty now.

Pennie stares stoically at her reflection, seems to pay no mind to it, turns to Margaret.

PENNIE

You killed him. You murdering bitch, you killed him.

MARGARET

(putting down the mirror)
No. You killed him. We warned you what would happen. You didn't care.

PENNIE

You bitch.

MARGARET

His blood is on your hands, just as that child's blood would have been if you'd had your way.

PENNIE

You killed him in cold blood.

MARGARET

You don't understand, do you? This is a crusade. Tell her, Brendan.

BRENDAN

It's a crusade. A holy war.

MARGARET

I know people think Christianity means we're all meant to love each other, hold hands, overlook the filthy sins beaming from each other's eyes. But God never cared for the death of a heretic. History shows us that. He tasked real Christians with putting them to the sword. This whole society has declared war on God. It allows his children to be murdered for the sake of convenience. No, that was not murder that you saw today. That was making sure the righteous prevail against this sick society.

BRENDAN

He was a gambler and a drunk. Long strayed from the path of God.

PENNIE

And he deserved to be killed for that?

BRENDAN

The innocent die in wars. It's unfortunate, but that's the way it is. It's all part of God's plan. He was what you call collateral damage.

MARGARET

He certainly wasn't innocent. But it was you who got him caught up in all this, embroiled him in your sinful scheme.

BRENDAN

No. He wasn't innocent at all.

Brendan stands up, takes up a laptop from the table, comes towards Pennie and shows her the screen.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

I found this in his house. Look at the sites he was visiting.

(beat)

Dark web, underage children. God won't shed a tear for him.

PENNIE

That's a lie.

BRENDAN

You stand up for him.

PENNIE

You typed in those websites, not him. You don't fool me.

Brendan grits his teeth.

MARGARET

Look at her, standing up for the child molester.

PENNIE

You're both sick.

MARGARET

If you cared so much for that sinner you shouldn't have got him killed.

PENNIE

You killed him. you sick twisted lunatic bitch, you killed him.

MARGARET

If you hadn't betrayed us he'd be alive.

PENNIE

I betrayed you?

MARGARET

Haven't done anything else since you arrived.

Beat.

PENNIE

He recognized me.

(beat)

The farmer, he recognized me. That means my photo was on the news.

(beat)

You didn't send that letter, did you? Beat.

Margaret looks to Brendan, who sits back down on his chair.

BRENDAN

No.

PENNIE

Then you betrayed me as well.

MARGARET

You've some cheek talking. The only betrayal is what you were going to do to that little child inside you. You deserve the death penalty, an eye for an eye. The only thing keeping you alive is that baby.

BRENDAN

Margaret, go easy.

Pennie looks at Brendan, smirks.

PENNIE

Speaking of betrayal, didn't Brendan tell you how I got the better of him, Margaret?

(beat)

Bit of a wandering eye there has your husband. Seems I'm not the only sinner in this house.

MARGARET

Pah. As if he could do anything.

PENNIE

Not for want of trying.

MARGARET

Brendan's told me everything.

She goes over to him, puts her hand on his shoulder. He clasps his own hand over it firmly. They look at Pennie.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You needn't worry about what's between us. Our bond is something a little whore like you can't break. It's stronger than anything you have to offer.

She bends down, kisses him on the lips, looks back to Pennie.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I thought you were sent by God for us to save. But maybe you were sent to test our faith.

BRENDAN

Sent as a tempting devil.

MARGARET

Devils need to be cast out.

They stare at Pennie intently.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie lies awake in her bed, staring at the ceiling, her face tear-glistened in the moonlight coming through the window.

She hears steps outside. A key in the door. It opens.

Brendan turns on the light, steps in.

He stares at her.

She sits up, looks at him warily.

He closes the door behind him, steps into the middle of the room.

He pulls his jumper over his head, takes off his t-shirt.

She backs up the bed away into the corner.

He unbuckles his belt, kicks himself out of his trousers.

Pennie turns away.

PENNIE

No...

He removes his boxers, stands there fully naked in front of her.

She looks back warily to see him standing there staring at her, fully naked.

She stares shocked at his naked body.

There are scars and burn marks running all down his abdomen, groin and thighs. A honeycomb of reddened, folded flesh.

His penis has been partially severed, just a blackened pockmarked nub remaining. A lone testicle hangs in a gnarled sack.

He stands there blankly, letting her take it all in.

She looks away, presses herself into the wall as if seeking to merge into it and away, forces her eyes closed.

He starts to dress.

When he's finished, he turns silently and exits, switching off the light and leaving her again in darkness.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Morning. Sun streams through the window. Pennie lies aimlessly on her bed.

The door opens. Margaret comes in with her breakfast, leaves it on the bedside locker.

MARGARET

You're not capable of tempting him.
God saw to that.

PENNIE

What happened?

MARGARET

He was doing God's work, planting a bomb in an abortion clinic in England. It went off prematurely. It left him the way he is. Physically useless, but with the holy spirit descended on him. It's his stigmata.

PENNIE

So Georgie wasn't his.

MARGARET

He wasn't Georgie's father. But he will be this child's.

Margaret turns and leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie sits on the chair by her drawer while Brendan stands behind her evening out her hair with a scissors. He is giving her a boy cut.

BRENDAN

I'm not much of a hairdresser. But it'll be better than what it was.

Pennie stares at the boy cut he is giving her in the mirror.

PENNIE

So who was Georgie's father?

BRENDAN

Some guy she met.

PENNIE

What really happened Georgie?

BRENDAN

Margaret had a lot of trouble with her husband. He was a mean drunk, abusive, a fornicator. And her with a small child to look after. Then one day he just upped and left. Ran off with all their money too, as if leaving wasn't insult enough.

(beat)

Margaret took to hearing voices. She always did, since she was a child. But now they became louder, impossible to ignore.

(beat)

One day, those voices whispered terrible things to her. Told her they wanted her child, that she couldn't look after him, but she could. They convinced her to give them the child. She drowned Georgie in a bath. All those voices, that was Satan's voice, finding cracks in this world. Cracks are how the light gets in. They're also how the dark gets in.

PENNIE

What happened to her?

BRENDAN

She pleaded temporary insanity, served some years in a mental institution. After she got out I met her. It was at a church service. We were both searching. We'd both suffered. We both saw how God had tested our faith. We both saw how it had made us stronger.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

We fell into each other, like it had all been planned. From then on we knew our job was to do God's will.

Beat.

PENNIE

I know you plan on keeping my child.

BRENDAN

That the child lives is the important thing. And you'll always be his mother.

PENNIE

Will you keep me alive after the child is born?

BRENDAN

Don't be silly. You'll always be his mother.

PENNIE

Am I safe?

Brendan finishes cutting, steps back, admiring his handiwork. he picks up a hand-mirror and shows her the back.

BRENDAN

As long as the child is safe, you're safe.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Sounds of sheep bleating offscreen.

Pennie stands at an upstairs window, looking down at the yard where Brendan herds sheep up a ramp into the back of a truck.

When the sheep are all in, he kicks away the ramp and closes the truck doors. Sheep stick their noses through the slats.

Brendan waves to the driver, who drives the truck out of the yard.

Pennie looks pensive - she knows where those sheep are going.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Pennie, Brendan and Margaret sit in the living room watching TV.

The sound of a car coming up the yard.

Pennie knows the drill. She gets up, follows Brendan up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brendan puts a ball-gag on her, handcuffs her to the bed.
He exits.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The car pulls up outside the house. It's a Garda (police) car.

Garda DAVID O'MARA gets out in full uniform, goes to the front door and knocks.

Margaret opens the door halfway, peers out at him.

GARDA

Hi. Hope I'm not disturbing you.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

O'Mara sits at the kitchen table with a cup of tea. Margaret and Brendan sit opposite him.

O'MARA

It's a mystery all right. No question about it.

BRENDAN

Maybe he just moved. He had it all sold as far as I know.

O'MARA

A lot of his stuff is still in the house. No-one's seen hide nor hair of him.

BRENDAN

We hadn't seen him in weeks. Came up to the house, trying to sell a few things. Didn't he, Margaret?

O'MARA

(to Margaret)
you weren't interested in anything he had to offer?

MARGARET

He'd nothing I'd want. We didn't really know him, Garda. There's nothing more we can tell you.

O'MARA
You wouldn't have been down on his
farm or anything?

MARGARET
No.

O'MARA
So you wouldn't have seen if he had
anybody else with him?

BRENDAN
It was just him, i'm pretty sure.

O'MARA
Aye.

Beat.

BRENDAN
Is there something else, Garda?

O'MARA
So there's no chance you would have
seen a young woman around his house
at all?

BRENDAN
No. Why are you asking about a
young woman?

O'MARA
Pennie Vaughan?

They look blank-faced.

O'MARA (CONT'D)
The missing girl. You've heard of
her?

BRENDAN
Can't say we have, Garda.

O'MARA
You haven't seen her on TV.

MARGARET
We don't watch TV.

O'Mara eyes the TV through the door tot the living room.

O'MARA
She's been missing a few weeks now.
Disappeared out of sight.

MARGARET

(smirking)

She'd hardly be taking up with
Donnellan.

Beat.

O'MARA

Her mother is convinced she
received a phone call from her. The
call came from Donnellan's phone.

BRENDAN

You don't say.

O'MARA

Sure as I'm sitting here.

BRENDAN

My God. That's something else,
isn't it, Margaret?

O'MARA

It could easily have been a crank
call. No guarantee it was her at
all. But it's funny it came from
his phone and now he's gone
missing.

BRENDAN

That's something else, all right.

MARGARET

He was always strange.

O'MARA

Living out here would do that to
you all right, wouldn't it?

He chuckles, then sees Brendan and Margaret aren't laughing.

O'MARA (CONT'D)

No offence, of course. I come from
a farm myself.

This seems to have the desired conciliatory effect.

BRENDAN

It's a dying way of life, but we
like it.

O'Mara rises.

O'MARA

Hope to get back to it myself some day. Anyway, I've taken enough of your time. Thanks for the tea.

He puts on his jacket which he'd draped over his chair. Margaret and Brendan see him to the door.

He stops at the door.

O'MARA (CONT'D)

Well, thanks again. Sorry to bring all this to you. Just be careful. We don't know where he is or what his state of mind is.

MARGARET

We're always careful, Garda. The world is a sick and evil place. This country used to be a refuge but it's becoming as bad as everywhere else. When you legalize the killing of a child you open the floodgates to everything.

O'Mara is a bit taken aback. He grins nervously.

O'MARA

Aye. Well, I'll be off. Thanks again.

He exits.

Margaret closes the door, leans her back against it as if shutting out the outside world, looks at Brendan.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

O'Mara walks to his car, gets in. He drives out the yard down the lane.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Halfway down the lane he pulls into a layby. He takes out his mobile phone, dials a number.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Killmanagh Station.

O'MARA

Jennie, it's David here.

JENNIE (O.S.)
Oh hi, David.

O'MARA
Listen, remember that missing girl,
Pennie Vaughan?

JENNIE (O.S.)
Yeah?

O'MARA
Didn't her friend say she was
pregnant when she went missing?

JENNIE (O.S.)
Yeah, I think so. Why?

O'MARA
Nothing. Probably nothing. Okay,
thanks, Jennifer. See you at the
station.

He hangs up, looks back at the farmhouse in the distance.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brendan uncuffs Pennie.

He exits, leaving the door open. In her own time she follows
him out.

CUT TO:

O'Mara walking up the lane. He approaches the house, creeping
quietly up to it, staying close to the hedgerows.

He walks around the perimeter of the house, looking in
windows.

He completes a circuit of the house. He walks around the back
of the yard, looking at the range rover and a hatchback car.

He goes up, hunkers down. Carefully shielding his mobile
phone he uses its light to illuminate the registration plate.

CUT TO:

Pennie coming out of a downstairs toilet.

She passes a window, sees a pinpoint of light in the distance
out in the yard.

She looks out. She can make out the back of O'Mara by the car. He has his back straight to her.

She is standing in the window.

He puts the phone away, stands up.

She can see his outline in the dark.

He turns around towards the house.

As he turns she ducks out of sight to the side of the window, turning flat against the wall.

When she does she sees Brendan behind her, watching her.

O'Mara turning behind sees Brendan through the window.

O'Mara ducks down, hoping the darkness shielded him. He watches Brendan pass by the window.

O'Mara catches his breath.

He waits a few seconds. Then he sees the light in the window go out. He scuttles out of the yard.

CUT TO:

Brendan stands by the wall the other side of the window to Pennie. He peeps out from the blackness, just about able to make out O'Mara's retreating form.

He looks over at Pennie, who stares back at him.

CUT TO:

He goes down the lane, gets back into his car. He starts the engine, drives off.

CUT TO:

Brendan goes over to Pennie, stands in front of her. He strokes the side of her face gently. He looks at her serenely, with pride and awe.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Pennie, Brendan and Margaret stand in a circle, holding hands, eyes closed.

Brendan leads the prayer.

BRENDAN

Lord, bless this family. Keep us safe. Let us trust in each other as we trust in you. Watch over us as we honour you and your commandments. As we keep the law of God above the law of man.

PENNIE AND MARGARET

Amen!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pennie, Margaret and Brendan sit eating dinner. It's a big spread. They're all dressed up nice, like it's a special occasion.

MARGARET

This is wonderful, Pennie.

PENNIE

Thank you, Margaret. I'm so glad you like it.

MARGARET

Like it? I love it. You've come on leaps and bounds.

BRENDAN

You'd get this in a restaurant.

PENNIE

Maybe not that good.

BRENDAN

I'm serious! They'd charge an arm and leg for this in one of those fancy places.

PENNIE

I'm just glad you like it. I think about the junk I used to eat in college.

MARGARET

It's so great to see you happy.

PENNIE

It's great to be happy.

BRENDAN

God's plan. It's all God's plan.
Look after him, he'll look after
you.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie wakes up. She rolls over onto her side, feels her stomach. She looks like she's in pain.

She looks down. Her eyes shoot open.

She pulls down her sheets to reveal a bloodstains on her sheets.

She gets up, sees the blood stains down her thighs.

INT. UTILITY ROOM - DAY

Pennie, fully dressed, stuffs the bloodied bedsheets and her nightclothes into the washing machine. She pours in the detergent, switches

Margaret walks by the door to the room.

MARGARET

Morning!

PENNIE

Hi... good morning.

MARGARET

Everything okay?

PENNIE

Yes, fine. Just a bit of morning sickness.

MARGARET

Growing pains, isn't it? I'll prepare some breakfast.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

ANGLE ON PENNIE

picking at her breakfast.

Brendan and Margaret also sit around the table eating breakfast, talking loudly about something - we can't hear clearly because their sound is distant, submerged, as if underwater.

We zoom in closer on Pennie, up to her face, her downcast eyes.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Pennie looks at herself in a long mirror. She lifts up her dress, examines herself stomach, rubs her hand over it's smooth flat surface.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Margaret sits on the couch beside Pennie. Margaret knits a tiny cardigan. It's half finished.

She holds up her handiwork.

MARGARET

How do you think it's coming along?

PENNIE

It looks great.

MARGARET

I used to be able to do all sorts of nice patterns. i'm out of practice.

PENNIE

It's wonderful.

MARGARET

It'll keep George warm. You'll have to learn.

PENNIE

I wouldn't know how to begin.

MARGARET

I'll teach you. Here.

She hands Pennie the knitting needles, grabs a ball of wook.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We'll start teaching you casting.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie lies on her side, grabbing her stomach. She winces as if in pain as she clutches her stomach, moaning softly.

Footsteps approach the door. She stays quiet.

Keys clang in the door. The door opens, Brendan comes in. He's carrying a tray of food.

BRENDAN

How are you two?

Pennie hesitates.

PENNIE

We're fine.

BRENDAN

Margaret said you were feeling a bit tired. Thought you might want to eat here, get some rest.

PENNIE

Thanks.

Brendan goes to leave, stalls by the door, turns around.

BRENDAN

You'll start showing soon.

PENNIE

I suppose so.

BRENDAN

Hope you're not too fussy about your figure.

PENNIE

Not much I can do about it.

BRENDAN

You'll get it back in no time.

(beat)

Unless you decide to have another one.

PENNIE

One will do for now.

BRENDAN

Hehe. I'm sure George will be a handful.

He leaves, closes the door. We hear the lock shut.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

ANGLE ON PENNIE

knitting a cardigan.

She's sitting on the couch. The cardigan is nearly finished, a decent piece of work.

ANGLE LOOSENS

to show Margaret knitting in the chair opposite her, also knitting. Margaret stares at her, peering over her needles as they make the stitches, knitting on autopilot, her face stony.

Pennie sees Margaret staring at her, keeps her head down, carries on knitting. Margaret puts her knitting down, rises, goes to the door.

PENNIE

(nervous)

What do you think, Margaret?

Margaret looks back at her as Pennie holds up her half-finished cardigan.

Margaret says nothing, turns and exits the room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pennie sits at the table with Brendan and Margaret. Margaret skewers her with penetrating eyes as Pennie picks at her food.

BRENDAN

Is there a problem?

PENNIE

What do you mean, Brendan?

Brendan and Margaret share a look.

BRENDAN

Margaret thinks you should be showing now.

PENNIE

(nervous)

It varies, I think. Every woman is different.

MARGARET

(to herself, dismissive)

Every woman is different.

BRENDAN

You're not lying to us, are you, Pennie?

PENNIE

Of course not.

BRENDAN

We thought we'd moved on from that.

PENNIE

We have. We have.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pennie is escorted to her bedroom by Brendan. He lets her in. He goes to close the door. She turns to him, speaks through the gap.

MARGARET

Goodnight, Brendan.

BRENDAN

Yeah, goodnight.

PENNIE

Is everything okay, Brendan?
Margaret, she seems....

BRENDAN

Pennie, Margaret's going through some stuff, y'know.

(beat)

So we were thinking... maybe you spend less time out and around the house.

PENNIE

Okay? So you want me working the fields.

BRENDAN

That's not really suitable at the moment, Pennie.

(MORE)

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

We were thinking you just take it
easy, rest yourself.

(beat)

We'll get you books, your knitting.
You have your journal. We'll see
how things are in a few weeks.

He closes the door. She hears the key in the lock.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie paces the floor, numb with boredom.

Footsteps approach. She perks up, waits at the door.

It opens. Brendan and Margaret are there. Margaret holds a
tray of food.

She comes in, goes to the bedside locker and places it down.
Brendan stands at the door, sentry like, observing.

Margaret comes back out. She takes a look at Pennie's stomach
as she leaves. She shakes her head, muttering under her
breath.

PENNIE

I could really do with fresh air.

He ignores her, closes the door.

She rushes to the gap before the door shuts.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

George could really do with some
air, Brendan.

He closes it on her, not looking at her.

MONTAGE

- Pennie lying in bed, face to the wall. The door opens,
Brendan comes in with a tray of food, leaves it down on the
bedside locker.

- Pennie lying in bed, face to the wall. The door opens,
Brendan comes in with a tray of food, leaves it down on the
bedside locker.

- Pennie lying in bed, face to the wall. The door opens,
Brendan comes in with a tray of food, leaves it down on the
bedside locker.

- This repeats a number of times, getting faster each time until it becomes a blur.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Light streams in through the window, capturing Pennie who sits in the lotus position in the middle of the floor in her underwear. She looks uncaring, unfazed, like she has given up.

Margaret and Brendan stand at the door, looking at her. She has her back to them.

MARGARET
What did you do?

PENNIE
I didn't do anything.

MARGARET
Liar.

PENNIE
It just happened. I swear. I was too scared to tell you.

MARGARET
You waited... waited to try and escape again.

PENNIE
I was scared to tell you.

BRENDAN
We'd have understood.

PENNIE
Would you?
(looks at Margaret)
Would she?

Brendan and Margaret stare at her.

MARGARET
I thought it was God sent you. So we could save your child, maybe save you.
(beat)
Maybe I was wrong. Maybe it was the devil sent you.

She turns and leaves, Brendan follows her out, locks the door behind him.

She hears them outside arguing in the hall.

BRENDAN (O.S.)

Don't despair, Margaret. God tests
his chosen ones the most.

MARGARET (O.S.)

God would not do this. This is too
much. This is no test.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie lies on her bed.

The door opens. A plate of food is left on the floor just
inside the door before it is closed.

Pennie rouses herself. She looks weak, thin, bags under her
eyes, hair a knotted mess.

She goes over, looks at the food.

It's gruel. Almost looks like cat food.

She picks up the plate, throws it against the wall, goes back
to bed.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie is lying in bed.

The door opens. Brendan stands at the entrance holding a
plate of gruel. He sees the food and plate on the floor, the
drippings on the wall.

He steps back out and closes the door.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Pennie crawls over to the food on the floor. She picks up
chunks, starts putting them into her mouth, swallowing hard.
She's famished.

A mouse comes along, nibbles at some chunks. She scares it
away, takes the chunk for herself.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Pennie kneels by the door. she looks exhausted. the plate is
still on the floor. she hasn't been fed in how long.

She bangs on the door.

PENNIE

(shouts)

If you're going to kill me, kill
me. Don't starve me, you cowards.
Look at me, you cowards.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

She lies there, wasted on the bed.

Then the key clanks in the door, it opens.

Brendan and Margaret come in. They go to her. Brendan brings
her some food.

She sits up, eats it greedily.

They watch her.

Brendan hands her a drink. She washes the food down, eats
some more.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Pennie showers. Margaret's shape is seen through the shower
curtain, overseeing her.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Pennie is escorted down the corridor by Brendan and Margaret.
She has a new fresh set of clothes on her.

They take her to a room, use a key to unlock it.

They bring her in.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Brian is sitting in the room, tied to a chair. He looks
distraught.

PENNIE

Brian?

BRIAN

Pennie? Thank God you're alive.

PENNIE

What is he doing here? Why have you brought him here? What are you going to do with him?

BRENDAN

It's about time you too had a reunion.

BRIAN

Pennie, are you all right?

They drag her back out of the room, close it, lock it.

PENNIE

What are you doing with him?

They drag her down the corridor.

PENNIE (CONT'D)

(Calling out)

Brian?

BRIAN (O.S.)

(Calling out)

Pennie!

They push her back into her own room, lock it.

She bangs on the door.

PENNIE

Leave him alone. Why don't you leave him alone?

She bangs on the door as she hears them walk away.

She hears Brian screaming from down the corridor.

BRIAN (O.S.)

(Calling out)

Pennie? It's okay. I'll come and get you. Pennie, hang tight.

Then suddenly his voice stops. Silence.

She bangs on the door more furiously.

PENNIE

(Shouting)

What are you doing? What are you doing with him?

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

She lies forlornly on the bed.

Brendan comes in.

PENNIE

What are you going to do with him?

BRIAN

We're not going to do anything. I think it's about time he knew the truth.

He escorts her out of the room.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

He takes her down the corridor to the other room, goes inside.

INT. ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Margaret is already in there sitting with Brian. He is no longer tied to the chair but has shackles on his feet and a long chain fixes him to a radiator. He is looking calmer, an empty plate and cup beside him.

BRIAN

Pennie, are you okay?

PENNIE

Yes. I'm sorry, Brian. I'm sorry they brought you into this.

MARGARET

We brought him into this? That's a good one. Tell him, Pennie. Tell him why you're here.

PENNIE

(to Margaret)

Let him go. He's nothing to do with this.

MARGARET

On the contrary, he's everything to do with it.

(to Brian)

Do you know what Pennie was going to do, Brian? Your beloved Pennie. Light of your life.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(beat)

Did you know she was carrying your child?

Brian looks at Pennie.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Your child. Right there...

(pointing to Pennie's belly)

Brian junior. Growing, developing inside her.

BRIAN

(to Pennie)

Is this true?

PENNIE

Brian...

BRIAN

Is it true? That's what they said, but is it true?

BRENDAN

And do you know what she was going to do? Without even telling you.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

Without even consulting the father of the baby. She was going to kill that child. She was going to kill your child, Brian. You had no say in it. Pennie took it upon herself. Judge, jury, executioner. Brian's child has to die. There is no place in this world for Brian's baby.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

What you created... was worthless in her eyes. Brian stares at Pennie.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

We'll leave you to it. You've a lot to catch up on.

Brendan and Margaret leave, locking the door behind them.

INT. ROOM - DAY - LATER

Brian and Pennie talk.

BRIAN
So it's true?

PENNIE
Yes.

BRIAN
You were going to abort my child.

PENNIE
Don't you start.

BRIAN
You know I love you, Pennie. Why would you do that?

PENNIE
You don't want a child.

BRIAN
I'd a right to know. To be told.

PENNIE
And you would have tried to stop me?

BRIAN
We should have talked about it.

PENNIE
It was my decision.

BRIAN
I still had a right to know.

PENNIE
Why? Why did you want to know?

Beat.

BRIAN
Maybe you should have kept it.
Maybe it was meant to happen.

PENNIE
It happened because you forced yourself on me.

BRIAN
Don't start that. You didn't say no.

PENNIE
I was drunk.

BRIAN

So was I.

She breaks down in tears.

PENNIE

You wouldn't stop.

BRIAN

You could have left any time. I
can't believe you'd do that to me.

INT. ROOM - DAY - LATER

Brian and Pennie sit in silence. The door opens. Brendan and Margaret come in. They take Pennie and march her out of the room.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They march her to her room.

PENNIE

What are you going to do with him?

BRENDAN

Don't worry. There's a way out of
this for all of us.

He pushes her back into her room, locks the door.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie is kneeling by the door, looking through the keyhole.

Through the keyhole she sees Brendan and Margaret entering the room Brian is in. A few moments later they emerge with Brian. His legs are shackled. They escort him down the corridor and down the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Pennie lies on her bed. The door opens. Brendan stands there. He beckons her. She rises, goes to him.

He escorts her down the corridor, down the stairs and down into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Brian is sitting at the table with Margaret. They have a dinner laid out.

Brian looks cleaned up, relaxed.

Pennie is ushered to a seat, takes it. She looks at the nice spread laid out before them.

PENNIE
(to Margaret, sarcastic)
What's the celebration?

MARGARET
Eat first. We'll talk later. You must be hungry. We haven't treated you well the past few weeks, Pennie. For that we're sorry. But now there is hope. Eat.

Brendan and Margaret tuck into their food. Pennie looks at Brian. He smiles at her. He tucks into his food as well.

BRIAN
It's good. Eat up, Pennie. You need to get your strength back.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Margaret clears the plates.

PENNIE
So what's the big idea?

MARGARET
Brian can fill you in on that.

She looks at Brian.

BRIAN
They're giving us a second chance, Pennie.

She stares at him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
We were due to become a family. we can again.

She shakes her head, realizing what he means.

PENNIE

You cannot be serious.

BRIAN

Pennie, it's a way out of this.

PENNIE

No, this is insane, Brian. You can't believe this. You can't believe them.

MARGARET

He had his child taken from him. he knows deep down that isn't right, don't you, Brian?

BRIAN

It wasn't just your choice, Pennie. We should have talked.

PENNIE

There was nothing to talk about then. there's nothing to talk about now.

BRIAN

I disagree.

BRENDAN

Jesus disagrees. that's the main thing. What happened can't be undone. but we can honour him. we can create life in his image. together. we can be a family.

Pennie gets up.

PENNIE

(to Brian)

You're gone as crazy as they are.

She goes to leave. Brendan grabs her, drags her into the living room to talk privately.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Pennie pulls away from Brendan.

PENNIE

Get your hands off me.

BRENDAN

This is a second chance, Pennie. It's not perfect. It doesn't take away from your loss. But it's a second chance. For you. For Brian. For all of us.

PENNIE

I don't know how you talked him into this. He's not right in the head. You've screwed him up.

BRENDAN

No, he sees very clearly. It's a revelation how clearly he sees. God has sent him.

PENNIE

Oh for fuck's sake...

BRENDAN

Have a baby with him.

PENNIE

You sick fuck. Does this turn you on? And I know you can get turned on, despite what's down there.

He looks wounded.

BRENDAN

Have the baby. Then we'll disappear. You can go on with your lives then.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pennie lies on her bed. The door opens. Brian stands at the door, flanked by Brendan and Margaret.

He enters the room. They close it behind him, so he and Pennie are alone.

Pennie turns away from him.

BRIAN

Pennie, this is the only way.

PENNIE

I can't believe you believe all their crap. I held out for weeks. You didn't last a few days.

BRIAN

It's not them. I always wanted a purpose in life. There has to be a meaning to life, doesn't there? A purpose to it. Boy meets girl. It's all set up for a reason. And one thing I know is, you're the one for me. I'll never love anyone as much. There has to be a meaning to that.

PENNIE

Jesus, you've lost it.

BRIAN

Don't say that. You love me too, i know.

PENNIE

I don't love you.

BRIAN

We have something.

PENNIE

We had.

BRIAN

You admit it. That just doesn't disappear.

PENNIE

I wish I could disappear.

BRIAN

That's not true. You wanted an adventure, Pennie. I know. Travelling the world, seeing what's out there. You can still do that. I'll look after the child. I'll wait for you. Years if I have to. You can have the best of both worlds. Our future's together.

Beat.

PENNIE

So what are you going to do? Rape me?

BRIAN

Of course not. We don't have to do this for them, Pennie. Can't you see that? It doesn't have to be for them. It can be for us.

Pennie stands up. She walks slowly over to Brian, looks at him.

She sidesteps past him, goes to the door, raps on it loudly.

PENNIE

You can take your stud out now.

She goes back to the bed, lies down facing away from him, curled up into a foetal ball.

CLOSE ON PENNIE'S SLEEPING FACE

Her head moves to waking. Her eyes flick open. She creases her brow, looks around at her surroundings.

ANGLE LOOSENS to reveal:

INT. DIFFERENT BEDROOM - DAY

She sits up. She's in a different bedroom. She's in a pretty night-slip. The bedroom is done up nicely. Clean, nice bedsheets. Unlit candles on the bedside locker.

Brian is sitting on the side of the bed, his back to her. He's drinking from a plastic cup. There's another plastic cup on a dresser and a cask of wine. There's a radio with soft music playing on the dresser also. There's a camera on the wall.

He glances over his shoulder, sees she's awake, takes a swig from the cup.

BRIAN

We should do what they say.

PENNIE

Brian, they're crazy. You can't trust them.

BRIAN

We've no option. Seems like if you get pregnant, they'll have to let you live at least. It'll give you time to escape. I don't care what they do to me.

PENNIE

I've tried that. It's no good.

BRIAN

Pennie, we have to.

He finishes his drink, stands up and faces her. He takes off his shirt.

PENNIE
What are you doing?

BRIAN
Pennie, they're going to kill us if we don't.

PENNIE
This won't stop them.

BRIAN
It will. It will stop them killing you. They want the child. That gives you a chance. It gives you nine months. Nine months to find a way out.

He takes the cup of wine from the dresser, hands it to her.

She slaps it out of his hand, wine spilling over his chest and the sheets.

He jumps on her, pins her to the bed.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I'm afraid I have to insist.

PENNIE
Brian, you can't trust them.

BRIAN
They'll kill me. I know that. But my death won't be for nothing, you understand? This will save you.

PENNIE
Get off me.

She bites him on the arm. He winces in pain, releases her.

She climbs off the bed. He grabs her by the hair, pulls her back. He is furious.

BRIAN
Selfish bitch!!! You killed my child. If I'm going to die, I want a legacy. I want a baby before I die.

PENNIE
No, no.

BRIAN

Pennie, you fucking better do this.

He punches her across the face, knocks her into the corner. She sits with her back against the wall, trying to back away from him as he approaches.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I've had enough of your fucking bullshit. Selfish bitch. You think I'm some kind of fucking idiot. Do what I want FOR ONCE.

He rains down a pummel of blows on her, furiously. She tries to shield herself.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Fucking bitch!!!

He keeps the avalanche of punches coming down on her.

Brendan rushes in with a billy club. He goes to smack Brian in the back with it. Brian is too quick for him, spins around and grabs the club. The two of them tussle.

They move around the room, fall into a corner.

Brian looks back at Pennie, whose in shock in a huddle on the ground.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Pennie, get out of here.

She looks up, sees there's a clear path to the open door.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Get out, now's your chance.

Brendan pulls the billy club free from Brian, hits him in the side with it, winding him.

Pennie takes her chance. She gets up and flees the room.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She runs down the corridor towards the stairs.

Margaret lunges out at her from a doorway, grabbing her and shoving her through an open door into:

INT. ROOM WITH CRIB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They fall into the room. Pennie crawls back away from Margaret, tries to get up. Margaret launches herself at Pennie again, this time toppling her backwards.

The two of them fall back onto the crib in the middle of the room, smashing it beneath their weight as they fall.

One of the wooden banisters on the side of the crib snaps as the crib collapses, creating a sharp stake-like point.

They roll around the floor fighting. Margaret comes out on top, squeezes her hands around Pennie's neck.

Pennie knees her in the groin, pushes her arms off her. She crawls away.

She crawls past the stake. She reaches out, grabs it, just in time as Margaret scrambles across the floor towards her. She plunges it into Margaret's eye.

Margaret screams. She stands up and flails around the room, the stake dangling from her eye.

Pennie rises, pushes Margaret against the wall. She pulls the stake from her eye, then plunges it deep into Margaret's heart. She forces all her weight onto it as it plunges in deeper, blood pouring from the wound.

Margaret coughs up blood as the light fades from her good eye.

Pennie steps back and Margaret falls forward dead.

Pennie leaves the room, exhausted from the fight.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As she steps out into the corridor she screams with fright as a bloodied figure grabs her.

It's Brian.

His face is a bloody pulp, he's limping badly.

BRIAN
You're safe.

PENNIE
Where's Brendan?

BRIAN

He's out cold. You're safe. I've got you. It's over. All that in there. It was an act, Pennie. To distract him. That's all. I've got you now. It's over. You're safe.

His head jerks forward in an explosion of blood and flesh.

Pennie screams and steps back as his body falls into her.

She looks down the corridor, sees Brendan approaching, limping, smoking shotgun pointed straight at her.

BRENDAN

Time's run out. You've been nothin' but devil-sent since you got here.

He aims the barrel at her. Pennie tenses.

He pulls the trigger.

Click.

Empty.

He cocks the barrel, takes another cartridge from his pocket and shoves it in.

Pennie turns, nowhere to run now, just the window at the end of the hall.

She goes to it, smashes it with her elbow, looks out, sees the drop below.

Low enough to survive, but not without damage.

She climbs out the window, reaches out and grabs the drainpipe, swings over to it.

She scrambles down a few steps before losing her balance and falling the rest of the way, landing on her back with a thud.

She lies there, winded. She forces herself to get up.

Brendan comes to the window, looks down. He aims the gun, takes a shot.

She rolls out of the way. It misses Pennie, disturbing the dirt beside her.

She scrambles around the corner of the house and out of view before the next shot comes.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Brendan reloads, goes back down the corridor.

He stops by the door of the room with the crib, looks in.

He sees Margaret's body lying there with the stake in it.

He steps into the room, goes over to her corpse.

He turns her over, looks at her face.

He palms her open eye closed, kisses her forehead.

Then makes the sign of the cross on her forehead.

BRENDAN
Together forever.

He gets up, cocks the gun and leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Brendan enters the kitchen en route outside.

He enters to a fog of smoke.

He coughs, choking on it.

He sees the curtains have been set on fire. He runs over to a cupboard, extracts a fire extinguisher, goes over and douses the flames.

He puts out the fire. He succumbs to a fit of coughing, his eyes watering up.

He goes outside.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

He comes out of the smoke, coughing and sputtering.

He looks around for sight of Pennie.

Too late to see the car coming at him.

It smacks into him, sending him flying over the bonnet and careening off the windscreen and to the side.

He lands with a thud, dropping his shotgun.

The car stops.

Pennie gets out, limps over to where he is lying a wreck on the ground.

The shotgun's a few metres away. She goes over, retrieves it, comes back, looks down at him.

He speaks with a winded, coughing croak.

BRENDAN

We only wanted what was best for you.

She puts the barrel of the gun to his face.

He looks away from her, tears welling in his eyes.

She cocks the trigger.

She lifts the gun up in the air quickly, letting off a shot. She screams along with it as it pierces the air.

She subsides to the ground.

She looks at him one more time. She takes out Margaret's mobile phone she found. She dials 999, waits to speak.

EXT. POOLSIDE, RESORT - DAY

SUPER: Bali - 18 months later

Pennie reclines on a lounge by a pool in her bikini and sarong.

Behind her is a resort bar packed with backpackers and tourists, mingling, dancing, chatting each other up.

She looks tanned, healthy and bored as she sips her drink and looks around her. It's getting dusky. Most of the other loungers are empty, the pool clearing of its last swimmers.

As she surveys the scene her eyes stop on a couple at the shallow end of the pool.

They're a few years older than her, and are helping a little girl about two years old with her water-wings. They all look the picture of contentment. A happy family.

Pennie lingers on them.

GUY (O.S.)

Hey.

She snaps to attention, sees a tall handsome backpacker standing beside her.

GUY (CONT'D)

You look like you're ready for another.

Pennie checks the near-empty drink in her hand. She smiles back at him.

PENNIE

Might be.

GUY

I'm Dan.

She shakes his proferred hand.

PENNIE

Pennie.

GUY

That's a pina colada by the look of it.

PENNIE

You've seen a few.

GUY

Guilty as charged.

She looks to the bar.

PENNIE

I'll have it inside if you keep a table.

GUY

I can do that for sure. Are you going to be long?

PENNIE

I'm just going for a final dip.

GUY

Okay. I'll be waiting, Pennie.

He walks off towards the bar, glancing back at her.

She gets up, removes her sarong and goes to the pool.

The poolside is now empty. There's no-one around.

She dives in.

EXT. POOL, UNDERWATER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She breaks the surface and swims through the water.

Everything is silent, tranquil, as she propels herself under the surface.

She swims to the middle of the pool, surfaces, takes some air, treads some water.

She lets herself sink down into the water again.

Treading water, suspended.

She opens her eyes.

Brendan floats in front of her - naked, grotesque, staring at her.

She comes up, gasping for air, terrified.

She turns and swims desperately to the side of the pool. Brendan's hand clasps her ankle, drags her down.

She sinks, struggling to free herself under water.

She kicks out of his grasp, swims with all her might, breaching the surface.

She reaches the edge of the pool, looks behind her, expecting a hand to drag her back down underwater.

The pool's empty.

She looks around to make sure. No-one in the water. No-one coming up for air. No shapes under the surface.

She breathes a sigh of relief.

She climbs out.

She takes a last look at the empty pool and walks away.

CUT TO BLACK