

Both Sides

by

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Based on true events

@2024

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EXT. WICKLOW MOUNTAINS - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: CO.WICKLOW IRELAND 1939

A group of young carefree cyclists all under 21, ride along the military road at the junction of Wicklow, with the beauty of GUINNESS LAKE-LOCK TAY panning into frame right beneath them.

VINCENT 50, leader of the group, comes to a screeching halt.

COACH VINCENT

Take a look at that my little swans.

SEAN O'SULLIVAN an inner city boy with an intellectual stare, looks down at the stunning view.

MAEVE

It doesn't even look real...

MAEVE MCCARTHY an innocent Catholic girl pulls her bike next to Seans. Locks eyes. His intense stare makes her nervous yet she pretends to be unfazed with the sight below.

MAEVE

It's like a painting...

Like most Catholic girls, she's polite, a healthy weight but not conventionally pretty. Society certainly wouldn't find her attractive, however, there's something about her strong nose which gives her a unique appeal.

COACH VINCENT

Now listen. nobody go blazing down
this hill do ye hear me. Slow and
steady...

But the group blast downhill, the great Irish wind blowing in their hair.

SEAN

(shouts back)

Bit too late for that coach! Come on,
you only live once!

COACH VINCENT

(Starts to cycle)

I said SLOWLY!!

EXT. GUINNESS LAKE - WICKLOW- NIGHT

Tents are pitched. Girls one side, boys the other. Coach Vincent paces the site with a flashlight so both sexes won't dare sneak near the other.

COACH VINCENT

Light out!
 (beat)
 No funny business.

But Sean's desire to see Maeve is too strong. He quietly puts on his dirty boots and tip toes out of his tent.

INT. MAEVE'S TENT - NIGHT

Maeve and Roisin lay awake smoking, chatting under a night lamp.

ROISIN

Guess what?

MAEVE

What?

ROISIN

I kissed Mickey Fay last Friday night.

MAEVE

You didn't.

ROISIN

It was alright. The ground didn't shake. Do ye think my baby will arrive next week?

MAEVE

You'll have to ask Father Brophy. Was it just a kiss?

ROISIN

Yeah, what else?

MAEVE

It might take longer than a week.

SEAN

(pops his head in)
 Pssst.
 (scares girls to death)
 Can I borrow Maeve for a minute.

Maeve throws on her shoes before she can think.

MAEVE
Won't be long, keep sketch.

And she's gone.

ROISIN
(pops her head out under
flashlight)
No kissing Maeve! Or ya might end up
with twins!

EXT. UPPER LAKE -NIGHT

Sean has already removed his shoes. He dips his bare feet in the water, looks up at the moon. Maeve anticipates a romantic gesture of some kind but gets nothing. What's he up to.

SEAN
I've never seen the moon so bright,
isn't it lovely.

He wants to just talk. Okay.

MAEVE
Is it true you're a fish monger?

SEAN
Yeah. Not the best wage, but it helps
my mother out. I have other plans.

Should I tell her. She seems open. He hesitates, then goes for it.

SEAN
I've got my eyes on a dictionary I'm
gonna buy myself.

Ah this fella's bloody mad.

MAEVE
A dictionary?

She thinks I'm stone mad.

SEAN
Fella's like me don't get decent
chances in life. How else will I
educate myself.

She thinks she understands.

SEAN

Do you work yourself?

MAEVE

I help me da out on weekends in his vegetable shop.

Great, now he think's I'm a vegetable.

SEAN

What about dreams.

What the hell are they.

MAEVE

I don't really talk like that.

She's a tough nut to crack.

SEAN

Right. Well. A dream can be as simple as wanting to be happy, or wanting a big family of your own one day.

Her shyness takes over.

SEAN

What's he like, your da?

MAEVE

You wouldn't want to cross him in a dark alleyway.

SEAN

(moves closer)

So. Do you want a family one day?

All we hear are the gentle waves in the water. And the sound of her heartbeat.

MAEVE

Whatever the good lord gives me I'll take it.

I have to ask her.

SEAN

Don't suppose you'd like to accompany me to the local barn dance this

Friday?

MAEVE

Oh. I can't dance.

SEAN

Do you have a nice dress you can wear?

Before she can think she answers.

MAEVE

Of course! A red one, but--

SEAN

Red?

Remember RED.

MAEVE

Yeah, but honestly I've two left feet.

True story. She does. But he draws her close intrigued anyway, hand around her waist, swaying gently.

SEAN

Sure look, you're dancing now.

How did he do that. This feels so nice. What is this feeling?

MAEVE

If I didn't know any better Sean
O'Sullivan, I'd say you're wanting to
court me.

SEAN

If the good lord gives me a chance
I'll take it.

And he takes his first kiss. The absolute beginning of everything.

INT. TENAMENT BUILDING -BEDROOM- DUSK

Cold and damp. No electricity or running water. Two toilets shared by 100 residents. The smell of mass habitation. Miserable and deprived. However, the sound of children laughing, running up and down the street, tells us, despite the worst hardship and housing conditions there's still laughter and hope.

SIOBHAN O'SULLIVAN (39) slender and strong peels potato's

over the stove. Her hands are worn from labour, but also quick and adept, hinting at her unyielding determination to provide for her family.

CATHERINE 12 and MARIE 9, both wearing borrowed clothes and shoes clap hands together.

Sean appears in a sharp suit. Hair slicked back. Feeling confident. The girls stare at him goo goo eyed. Mad about their big brother.

CATHERINE

You look like a movie star Seany!

MARIE

(cute as a button)

I like your hair.

SEAN

(kneels to her level)

Do ye think she'll like it Marie?

MARIE

Uh huh.

He kisses the top of her head. The look on his face tells us he loves his sisters more than anything.

His ma fixes his shirt, admiring how her boy's turned out.

SEAN

You sure its okay to borrow it?

SIOBHAN

How's he ever gonna know.

(winks)

I think this Maeve girl is in big trouble with you looking like that. You be a gentleman you hear me.

SEAN

Always.

BROTHERS PATRICK 17 and HENRY 15 enter from the back door covered in dirt. Their faces can't hide their envy.

HENRY

What's this?

PATRICK

Where do ye think your going dressed

like that, Sunday mass!

SIOBHAN

None of your business. Both of yiz
shut up and go wash your hands,
dinners almost ready.

PATRICK

Look ma, he hasn't even washed his
boots.

She glances down to Sean's filthy work boots. Holy Jazus. The
mortification.

SIOBHAN

Jesus Christ Sean, you promised me
you'd buy yourself new work boots. You
can't go wearing those things!

Patrick grabs Sean's new dictionary tucked away behind his
suit jacket. Holds it up.

PATRICK

This is what he's spent his money on
ma. A stupid book for smart people!

SIOBHAN

Tell me ye didn't???

SEAN

(reaches)
Give it back Patrick!

Patrick throws it to Henry. He reverses it back to Patrick.

PATRICK

Hi, my name is Sean O'Sullivan, and I
now own a dictionary!

SEAN

Hand it over Paddy! I mean it!

SIOBHAN

Boys that's enough!

PATRICK

Fine. Here's your SIM-PLI-FIED
dictionary.

Molly opens the back door.

MOLLY

Go on. On your bike. And don't be home too late.

Sean steps out into the alleyway but his bike is nowhere to be seen.

SEAN

Did you take it Paddy?

Rushes to the door. Oh shit.

PADDY

No. I swear.

SEAN

Henry?

Terrified, he shakes his head no.

They all know...

SIOBHAN

That bastard.

Sean runs down the alleyway towards the...

INT. LOCAL PUB - NIGHT

Sean bursts inside a Smokey bar. Musky. Crowded. Grown workmen drunk in dark corners.

Mr O'Sullivan senior is drunk, slumped on a bar stool.

His eyeballs land on Sean. Double take. Wearing his suit.

That cheeky son of a...

MR O'SULLIVAN

Is that my suit?

Oh shit. Yes. But that's not the point.

SEAN

You sold my bike da!

His da sniggers.

SEAN

All for a few lousy pints! I saved two years for that bike!

His da stands up, like a Mexican standoff from a movie. The bar clears to his side.

MR O'SULLIVAN

How dare you come in here, making a holy show of me.

SEAN

I was suppose to take a girl to the dance tonight.

Some whispers in corners. What girl?

SEAN

How am I gonna get to her now.

Bar goes silent. Yeah, what's he gonna do.

MR O'SULLIVAN

You're acting too big for your boots Seany. Wearing your fathers suit without permission. Planning things you can't commit to. If I was as stupid as you, I'd use me two legs. How about trying that ya gobshite, before I break them.

Sniggers form the men. They think the kid has lost this one. But Sean grown now. And this built up anger is ready to explode. He clenches his fists.

SEAN

What kind of father does this to his own son. You're a disgrace!

This doesn't land well. He flings Sean over a table, breaking all fours. They scuffle and the bar goes mad like a ringside match. He swings for his da's face. Hits.

MR O'SULLIVAN

(finds some blood)

Would ya look at my big lad. Come on horse! You wanna fight. I'll fight ya.

Sean gets a swift one back. Now he's covered in blood.

SEAN

I don't want to fight da! But what you did was wrong!

MR O'SULLIVAN

He want an apology. Okay. I'm sorry.

But he's not. He'd do it again. This is hopeless. How has it come to such torment.

SEAN

(backs off)

Forget it. Look at me. You've ruined it.

Just like you ruin everything. Seans gone.

INT. TENAMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Sean's desperation to get away from the slums is palpable. The guilt he feels, all consuming.

SEAN

She'll never forgive me. She'll never understand.

SIOBHAN

I need you to forget about her for now son. You can't have anything holding you back.

SEAN

What do you mean?

SIOBHAN

You and your da are not getting along for a while now.

(whispers)

There's a cattle ferry that leaves for London in the next hour.

Hi heart sinks.

SIOBHAN

They're recruiting Irish citizens for employment to work for the American Army.

Confused. But hopeful.

SEAN

American Army? I'm not a soldier.

SIOBHAN

Aa a labourer.

(certain)
 You'll work a decent job and send
 money home when ya can.

Wow. She's serious. A new life as in London sounds perfect
 but he can't leave her with that tyrant. Fear and doubt creep
 in.

SEAN
 I'm not leaving ya ma!

She reaches into the back of her small cupboard, pulls out a
 tin with secret money.

SIOBHAN
 No. But I'm kicking ya out.
 (places cash in his hands)
 You're made for more love.

He wants more...

SIOBHAN
 It's not a lot, but it's enough to get
 ya started.

She's right. This is the opportunity he's been dreaming of.
 He looks at the clock. 9.10pm. Doesn't have much time.

SEAN
 What do I need to bring ma! Tell me.

SIOBHAN
 (excited)
 Some work clothes, a warm jacket,
 socks. Face cloth!

He sneaks into the bedroom quietly. Patrick and Henry asleep
 in one bed. Catherine and Marie in the other.

He throws some clothes into a duffle bag when Patrick stirs
 awake.

PATRICK
 Is there a fire?

SEAN
 No. Everything's fine. Go back asleep.

Now Catherine wakes.

CATHERINE

Where's ma, what's going on?

Oh dammit. He can't lie. He rushes to the kitchen.

Now everyone's facing him, wide eyes curious.

HENRY

Where ya going Seany?

He doesn't want to hurt them.

SIOBHAN

London. Don't worry. He'll be safe.

PATRICK

He'll be home soon. What will we tell'em?

SEAN

Pog mo Thoin!

Girls giggle. Patrick hands him his dictionary.

PATRICK

You're gonna need this.

SEAN

Look after the girls, you hear me.

CATHERINE

Come back to us Seany, promise.

SEAN

I'll always come back, promise.

The girls cling to his legs. Dammit goodbyes hurt. He opens the back door.

SEAN

(kisses his mother away)

See ya ma.

And we watch him disappear down the damp alley.

EXT. DUBLIN PORT - NIGHT

Sean offers his ticket to A CABIN OFFICER and finds a spot back of the boat. It's Baltic cold but it doesn't matter, he'll bear anything for what's on front of him. Ferry horn blows and off he goes.

EXT. PICCADILLY TRAIN STATION- NIGHT

Sean wanders through the dim lit streets of London a free man. Some American soldiers walk past, their guns on show, their defences up. A young couple kiss at the station steps. Love still exists in the dangerous air.

He continues towards--

EXT. THE RITZ HOTEL - NIGHT

Sean walks by a DOORMAN as he assists a glamorous couple out from a fancy car, the woman dressed in fur, the man a tuxedo. As he passes the hotel window he see's finely dressed couples dining at intimate tables eating lobster and drinking champagne. Not only is love in the air but so is the finer life. Impressive.

He keeps walking. This new world so fascinating. He passes some PROSTITUTES in dimly lit doorways holding pencil torches to their faces.

PROSTITUTE 1

Alright darling, fancy a midnight
cuddle?

He doesn't answer, just keeps walking. A bit shy, a bit astounded.

PROSTITUTE 2

Ten shillings for a night with me
sweetheart, you'll be a new man by
sunrise.

This makes him chuckle. Keeps walking. He reaches a homeless man rummaging for food in a rubbish collection.

SEAN

Excuse me sir. I don't suppose you
know a cheap place to stay around
here?

HOMELESS MAN

Buckingham palace, right down the
street mate. Aaahhhh hahaha!!!

Sean smiles. Nothing like homeless humour. He spots a ROOM FOR RENT sign across the street.

INT. SEANS RENTAL- NIGHT

This place s worse than dirt. Nothing but a single bed, side lamp and a window. I guess that'll do. Landlord MR HUGHES (50) offers Sean his new room key in exchange for money.

LANDLORD HUGES

Restroom's down the hall. Rent's due first day of each month. If you're one day late, you won't get no notice, you'll be gone.

SEAN

Yes sir.

LANDLORD HUGES

Oh. And paint this window black soon as ya can. Those German bastards see any glimmer of light coming out of'ere you're a dead man.

Literally.

EXT. BOMB SITE -THAMES RIVER- DAY

Four HAWKER HURRICANE PLANES soar above bridge crossing near THE THAMES RIVER. A RED DOUBLE DECKER BUS has sunk deep in the ground. Windows blown out, debris and body limbs everywhere.

The BRITISH RED CROSS carry the bodies into ambulances.

Sean, head down, afraid to look anywhere, dumps bloody debris from the wreckage into the back of his truck. A thick death stench right under his feet. His shovel lands on a lady's handbag and a child's teddy bear. His blood turns cold.

AMERICAN SERGEANT SAMUAL TAYLOR (57) stands on top of the mound of rubble smoking a cigarette with a look of fury.

SERGEANT TAYLOR

You can expect worse than this O'Sullivan.

Sean looks up. What could be worse.

SERGEANT TAYLOR

You know, if you were in my platoon, I'd give you a crash course on a staple weapon. An M1 Garand semi-automatic rifle, would hold a lot

better than that shovel.

But the idea of violence doesn't sit well. He scoops up the shoe and teddy, dumps it into his truck.

SEAN

I'd be no use Sergeant Taylor. I'm half the size of your men sir.

SERGEANT TAYLOR

I don't see no labourer holding that shovel. You're more than that.

He looks over his shoulder. The look holds. Nobody's ever seen him in this light before.

SEAN

No disrespect sir, but I'm a pacifist. I don't believe in this war.

SERGEANT TAYLOR

(climbs down from rubble, face to face)

Well, if we all settled disputes like you boy, that evil Hitler swine would have the entire world in the palm of his hands. We fight O'Sullivan.

(walks away)

We fight to the very end.

INT. LYONS TEA SHOP CAFE -COVENTRY STREET- DAY

A vibrant ART DECO style café. Pretty NIPPY WAITRESSES wearing black uniforms with white collars/aprons float in and out of tables trying to avoid advances from middle aged men.

RITA MCAVOY (34) pretty and Irish, stands out from the rest. She has an aura, a spark. With her bright red lipstick and shiny pearls around her neck, something tells us she's destined for greater things.

She clocks Sean resting at a window table reading a book. In work clothes and with his shovel. She grins.

RITA

I'll be with you in a jiffy.

She approaches two BRITISH SOLDIERS 20's, on the opposite table to Sean.

RITA

Now boys, what can I get you?

SOLDIER 1

Two beers please sweetheart.

RITA

Sorry but this isn't a public house.
I'm afraid we don't serve alcohol
here.

But it's Friday. They drink on Fridays.

SOLDIER 2

I think you need to change that policy
love.

SOLDIER 1

And that lipstick color. What is this
a whore house.

Sean senses trouble. Grabs his shovel.

RITA

I beg your pardon.

SOLDIER 2

Come on darling.

(whispers)

We was told you loose Nippy bird's are
on special offer during lunchtime. Cut
us a deal for two. We'll be your best
customers.

Ugh. Dirty bastards. She leans in closer.

RITA

Are you really that cocky, to think
I'd go fishing with prick like you.
You wish pal.

Sean steps on front of her before anything starts.

SOLDIER 1

What the fuck did you say?

SEAN

The lady doesn't want any trouble
lads. I think it's best you be off.

SOLDIER 1
Would you look at that, a fucking
paddy trying to defuse the situation.

Ugh oh.

SEAN
If you had taken a moment to look at
the sign on the door, its says tea and
coffee.

Now their really pissed off.

SOLDIER 2
Is he actually fucking serious, trying
to teach us how to read?

RITA
(to Sean)
It's okay, I can handle it.

SEAN
How about you tell lover boy to fuck
off back to Ireland.

BANG! Sean smacks his shovel over his head. Some chairs are
thrown when...

Soldier 2 holds a knife to Seans neck.

SOLDIER 2
Didn't you hear what I said, you
potato picking paddy.

Rita can't bare to look.

RITA
For gods sake, that's enough!

Everyone in the room holds their breath. Sean is released and
the boys leave.

SEAN
Sorry, I didn't mean to scare ya.

RITA
Takes more than that to spook me.
(fixed a chair upright)
You always carry that thing around?

SEAN
 (helps her)
 I'm a labourer. I work for the
 American Army. Sean.

RITA
 Rita.
 (smiles)
 Fancy a hot cuppa?

SEAN
 That would be lovely.

She fetches his tea with the understanding she's just made a new friend.

EXT. LONDON BOOK SHOP- DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN reads the CITIZEN'S NEWSPAPER dated Sunday September 3rd 1939. Headline: "BRITIAN AT WAR-GERMANY IGNORES FINAL ULTIMATUM".

Behind her, a bombed out library with the ROOF BLOWN OFF, destroyed by a recent air raid. Inside, smartly dressed gentlemen in bowler hats stand on piles of rubble reading their favourite historical novels, which strangely enough, are the only things that survived the blast.

Sean manoeuvres his way above wood and broken glass. Finds his balance next to some saved books which are now noticeably much more dishevelled.

A soft spoken dapper store clerk EMMETT ROBERTS (35) with rolled up sleeves, well groomed and fashionable, dusts off a book form under his feet.

EMMETT
 The Germans may have destroyed the store, but we will continue to read.
 (cracks a smile)
 This place belonged to my father, before they blasted him off into space.

Well that's one way to put it.

Sincerely...

SEAN
 I'm sorry.

EMMETT

God certainly works in mysterious ways
eh.

(extends his hand)

Emmett Roberts. Nice to meet you.

SEAN

Sean O'Sullivan. Likewise.

Emmett picks up a book, dusts it off...

EMMETT

The Maltese Falcon. I thought Hammett
might be better than Hemmingway, but I
beg to differ since I read A Farewell
To Arms.

SEAN

(no clue)

Hemmingway....yes.

EMMETT

Looking for anything in particular?

SEAN

Stories that will help me understand
our world. Must be a relief the
American's are supporting you.

EMMETT

Damn straight. I believe we've had
fifty six consecutive nights of terror
now. These air raids have brought a
whole new level of trepidation to the
city. But we will gain our victory.

Sean almost falls between a crack.

SEAN

Gonna be some clean up.

EMMETT

I have no idea where to start.

SEAN

I've got a shovel. And a truck. Two
strong Irish hands.

Emmett blushes. How thoughtful.

SEAN

All I'd ask in return is one book a week. To take home and read without purchase.

A brief pause. Emmet searches behind Seans eyes. Finds a deep hunger for knowledge.

EMMETT

Extraordinary. Deal.

SEAN

Great.

INT. SEANS ROOM RENTAL- NIGHT

The window is now painted black. A strong collection of about twenty books line his shelf.

Yet still...LOUD AIR RAIDS roar across the city. Sean grabs his flash light, climbs under his blanket and begins writing a letter home to Maeve.

SEAN V/O

Dearest Maeve. There's only three things I value more than anything in this life. My job. My family. And the thought of seeing you again...

EXT. PORTOBELLO CANAL- MORNING

Maeve reads a letters from Sean, as she strolls along the canal towards work.

SEAN V/O

The sirens at night are almost deafening. However, I try not complain as I'm aware of how lucky I am to have found this place. Some people have nowhere, forced to sleep underground in tube stations. How are you angel? Am I forgiven?

She chokes on some tears. Not sure if she's angry or sad. She enters the main entrance to the EVER READY FACTORY.

INT. EVERY READY FACTORY - AFTERNOON

About a thirty female workers pack hundreds of blue batteries into cardboard boxes on a moving conveyor belt.

Alarm goes off. Maeve wipes her dirty face. Dirty enough to know she's a hard worker. She places her time card in the machine on the wall. Enters the canteen for lunch.

INT. FACTORY CANTEEN -AFTERNOON

Maeve eats sandwiches with a fellow FACTORY GIRL 25.

Her boss and foreman MR NOLAN 30, limps towards her table. He's skinny, not very attractive and extremely persistent.

The factory girl knows what's up. Quickly leaves.

MR NOLAN

You haven't missed a single day in three years, did ya know that.

She nods. And?

MR NOLAN

I really admire you getting here early every morning. Shows good work ethic.

Okay. Eyes widen. Anything else?

MR NOLAN

I was wondering if you'd like to go for a drink Saturday night?

Oh not again.

MAEVE

That's the tenth time you've asked me out now Mr Nolan. How many times do I have to tell ya. There's plenty other girls who'd be more than happy to go out with ya.

This little white lie usually gets her off the hook.

But...

MR NOLAN

I've already told ya, I'm not interested in anybody else. Sure isn't there always a spring in me step coming to work. Knowing you'll be here.

This is sweet. Now the harsh look in her eyes has softened.

MAEVE

I thought that's how you walked.

A little smile. Not too much.

MR NOLAN

Give me a chance Maeve.

Head, heart. Head, heart.

Head wants to forget about Sean. Heart simply won't let it.
Those damn letters.

Say yes you fool...

MR NOLAN

What time do ya wanna pick me up?

And there it is...

Heart's door is pushed open.

INT. VEGETABLE SHOP -INNER CITY- DAY

Maeve's Dad, MR MCCARTHY (44) a sturdy strong man with broad shoulders, serves a bag of potatoes to MRS RYAN, a local nosy customer from neighbourhood.

Maeve smokes a cigarette by the door. Overthinking her decision to go on this date.

MRS RYAN

How long have you and Mrs McCarthy got that house out in Drimnagh, that was a God send.

MR MCCARTHY

About a year. Its a new estate Mrs Ryan.

MRS RYAN

My brother's best friend's cousin, has a sister with nine babies. She was down the housing office the other day. Housing officer told her they're building new estates all over Dublin. Think she got one out in Cabra.

Over her shoulder to Maeve.

MRS RYAN
Still in the cycling club love?

Maeve throws the butt of her cigarette away. Forced to answer.

MAEVE
No Mrs Ryan. I stopped cycling a while back.

MR MCCARTHY
She works full time now Mrs Ryan.

MRS RYAN
And what about a fella. Any new love interest on the scene.

Jesus she's nosy.

MAEVE
In case ya haven't noticed Mrs Ryan, there's a shortage of decent men around here.

MR MCCARTHY
Our Maeve is waiting on the right fella Mrs Ryan. Plenty of time for that kind of thing.

MRS RYAN
Well don't be waiting too long.
(walks to the door)
Before ya know it you'll be old and lonely like me, wishing you were young again.
(genuine smile)
Mind yourself Mr McCarthy.

MR MCCARTHY
Mrs Ryan.

Mrs Ryan waddles off down the street.

Maeve slouches on the stool behind the counter, a flood of emotion returning.

He grabs some cash from the register.

MR MCCARTHY
I've got a delivery arriving out back.
Be nice to the customers.

He leaves and she pulls out that letter from Sean. Her eyes light up. She's feels like she's right there with him.

MAEVE V/O

Most days the only thing that makes me happy is my warm jam scone from my favourite Lyons tea shop café...

INT. LYONS TEA SHOP CAFE - DAY

A jam and butter scone half eaten lays on Seans table, as he reads MADAME BUTTERFLY BY JOHN LUTHER LONG (MADE FAMOUS BY PUCCINI).

People of all walks of life pass by his window. Female factory workers in uniform. American soldiers. Shoeless children.

Rita the Irish waitress, slides onto the seat opposite him, curious to chat.

RITA

Why do you read so much?

SEAN

Why?

RITA

Yeah, you have a different book in your hand every time you're in here.

SEAN

Alright, I'll tell ye why. It allows me the freedom to imagine. Different people. Their unfamiliar lives.

RITA

(she leans in)

Like...

SEAN

A child. Walking barefoot across Africa. For a bucket of fresh water. Lions and tigers. On the hunt for their next zebra or wildebeest only a hundred feet away.

(leans into her)

Or a fisherman out on his boat in Indonesia. His hands bleeding from the ropes and sales, as the perfect school of raw fish swim right underneath...

There's something about the way he speaks that makes her feel like home.

RITA

(picks up his book)

What's this one about?

(reads preface)

Set in Japan. An American naval officer marries a girl called butterfly. Shortly after their wedding, he abandons Butterfly and returns to America, to marry an American woman.

(eyes over book)

Don't tell me. He left her high and dry.

SEAN

By the time he realized he had made a big mistake...

RITA

It was too late...

Her eyes tell us she's experienced such heartbreak.

RITA

You're interesting Sean O'Sullivan. Full of mystery.

SEAN

Mystery. Something that is difficult or impossible to understand...like women...

RITA

(a dreamy smile)

...but somehow I get you...

(day dreaming out the window)

I would spread the clothes under your feet. But I being poor have only my dreams. I have spread my dreams under your feet. Thread softly because you thread on my dreams.

RITA AND SEAN

W.B Yeats.

Their bond is obvious. She feels she can really trust him.

RITA

I've been looking up boat tickets to New York City. I've decided I'm gonna go out there after the war. Shoot my shot.

SEAN

That's brilliant news. Go for it.

RITA

(stands)

I sing at Café de Paris on Saturdays. Stop by this weekend. Anybody gives you any hassle at the door, just tell them you're with me.

Winks. Gets back to work.

INT. CAFE DE PARIS- WEST END LONDON

A grand double staircase entrance leads us down to the main floor, stage and band. Gorgeous tall palm trees with white satin tables and red velvet chairs. Fashionable and delightfully comfortable.

Despite the war outside, this place is a hidden gem for high profile jazz lovers, such as film stars, politicians and professional beauties who accompany armed forces on weekends.

CLUB MANAGER (50) escorts Sean and Emmett to their VIP table. A relaxed Emmet has clearly been here before, but Sean, looks like a fish out of water.

CLUB MANAGER

This way gentlemen.

EMMETT

Thank you Sir.

They settle at their table and before they can speak, a dapper young waiter JOHNNY 21, fills their glasses with Champagne.

Sean places his MADAME BUTTERFLY BOOK next to his champagne. Looks inside the glass.

Half joking, half serious...

SEAN

Don't suppose I can get a Guinness.

But the waiter has already gone.

Lights go down. Rita appears centre stage under a spotlight like an ethereal Goddess in chiffon yellow. Too perfect for this world.

RITA
(Sultry voice)
This one's for the fella's.

She dazzles the spellbound crowd like a delicate and light butterfly, singing a scattling seductive jazz tune.

Jaws drops...

EMMETT
Good lord. Please tell me that's not your actually lady friend who's invited us here.

SEAN
I believe so.
(utter gobsmacked)
She's from Dublin...

EMMETT
(memorized)
An Irish Rita Hayworth. Now I know I'm in heaven.

SEAN
She serves me Tea at the Lyons tea shop after work. I believe she's got her sights on Broadway.

EMMETT
(raises his glass)
Everyone deserves a chance to fly.
Cheers. To a very good night.

SEAN
Slainte.

EMMETT
So she's not your type?

SEAN
No I prefer brunettes.

EMMETT
Old flame back in Dublin then.

Rather not say.

Sean looks up at the large palm tree.

SEAN

I've always wondered how long it takes to grow a palm tree.

EMMETT

I'd say the same time it takes to grow into a man.

(sighs)

I'll admit the destruction of my father shop has forced me to re-evaluate my entire life existence. That book shop always gave me so much meaning, but now without pops, I'm finding myself rather detached. The sober truth is, I'm a closeted novelist. Terrified of the savage critics of this world. And their cruel assessment of one's creative expression.

SEAN

You'd let them yobbo's hold you back?

EMMETT

I feel like I'm at the threshold of an important discovery. You see, I'm most comfortable in between worlds. Playing it safe is just so darn easy. But, I know that if I don't send my writing out soon, I'll remain stuck here forever. Suffering in unimaginable ways only a troubled artist could relate.

SEAN

You sound like a wet blanket.

EMMETT

You're right. I'm a cold fish. A drip.

SEAN

If you've got the goods, stop bloody complaining and do something about it.

This makes him think. He takes another sip of champagne and gets rather excited.

EMMETT

Perhaps all this is fated. Meeting you, such a brainchild. About to be introduced to the most gorgeous creature I have ever laid eyes on. We're in cahoots you and I. I can just hear the angels playing their trumpets as we speak.

Sean looks at the trumpet players on stage, makes a funny face.

SEAN

Would ye mind telling them this is the worst horse shite I've ever drank in my life.

Emmett smiles. Feels seen by Sean. Grateful.

Rita finishes her set to a gracious round of applause. She unravels her hair to her shoulders and hurry's straight over to Seans table.

RITA

What's a girl got to do to get some booze around here?

Waiter Johnny arrives with a fresh bottle.

WAITER JOHNNY

For the beautiful lady.

RITA

Thanks Johnny.

SEAN

You were dynamite up there.

RITA

Not your typical Nippy broad huh.

She pulls out a cigarette box form her dress. Lights up.

RITA

Guess I can pull a rabbit out of my hat form time to time.

SEAN

This is my good friend Emmett. A budding novelist.

Their eyes meet and something magical happens.

RITA
Another dreamer.

EMMETT
You were like an angel floating down from heaven. I couldn't take my eyes off you.

RITA
Were you born charming Mr writer?

EMMETT
My mother seems to think so. How long are you performing?

RITA
Lets just say I'm above my pay grade.

EMMETT
Seany boy tells me you're leaving for Broadway.

RITA
(drinks)
Yeah. I'm ready to become somebody new.

EMMETT
History certainly has their eyes on you.
(wheels turning)
The big smoke. Would be nice to write stories about Manhattan.

RITA
You write them, I'll sing them. No more serving tea and scones to rif raf. Right Seany.

Not with this much talent and confidence.

SEAN
I've heard there's a lot of publishing houses out in New York.

EMMETT
(doesn't catch on)
Really?

RITA

I heard there's a lot of everything.

Party interrupted. AIR RAIDS go off in the area. Panic in the club.

SEAN

This place isn't safe! We need to find an underground shelter, NOW!

WAITER JOHNNY

Bethnal Green tube station, two streets over!

They make a run for it through the crowd, up the main staircase. Sean forgets his book.

EMMETT

Sean, god forbid anything happen to me. Promise me you'll donate some of my fathers books to the American troops.

SEAN

(pushes him upstairs)
That's very noble of you. But lets save the donations for later. Keep moving!

They rush out the main door towards...

EXT. BETHNAL GREEN STATION - NIGHT

WAR PLANES roar above. Pandemonium on all corners.

Sean, Rita and Emmett arrive at the station steps. A massive crowd already trying to get down. A bus full of civilians pulls up. Now it's overcrowded.

Sean realizes he's forgotten his book.

SEAN

I have to go back.

EMMETT

Forget it Sean, we've got to get inside now!

SEAN

You don't understand. The money I send home to my mother is inside my book. I

left it on the table.

Dammit. It's too dangerous but they understands.

EMMETT

Go now. Hurry. We'll meet you inside.

Certain he will.

SEAN

Stay safe.

Emmett's takes Rita's hand and they rush down together.

Sean pushes back out through the crowd back towards...

INT. CAFE DE PARIS- NIGHT

Sean rushes down the staircase towards his table. A THUNDERING EXPLOSION rocks outside the club shattering part of the balcony. He hangs on for dear life. Then bravely retrieves his book at the table. He checks the money is still inside. Yes. Quickly leaves.

EXT. BETHNAL GREEN STATION - NIGHT

Sean arrives to unmerciful wails and screams from inside. Stacked with people collapsed over each other.

He yanks himself up onto the railing. Jesus he can't look but must. Nothing but stacked dead bodies.

SEAN

RITAAAA!!! EMMETTTTT!! CAN YOU HERE
ME?? ARE YOU IN THERE???

A DISTRESSED GENTLEMEN (60) reaches his hand through a tiny crack in the door. Suffocating from the pressure of the crowd he whispers...

DISTRESSED GENTLEMAN

Please sir, I can't breath sir...help
me...

Sean tries to pull him out but it's no use. He's stuck.

POLICE OFFICERS and PARAMEDICS arrive.

POLICE OFFICER 1

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT, ORDER PLEASE!
EVERYBODY BACK! EVERYBODY BACK!

DYING WOMAN
HELP US!! WE CAN'T BREATH!

POLICE OFFICER 1
ONE BY ONE....THATS IT.

They begin pulling people out making way for Paramedics to get inside.

SEAN
My friends are in there. Please help them!

POLICE OFFICER 1
Step aside sir. Please.

Paramedics begin to emerge carrying lifeless bodies, laying them next to each other on the pavement.

A veteran nurse MRS CLARK (40) kneels down to a young lady. Checks her pulse. Nothing. Holds a small mirror under the girls nose to check if she's breathing. But no sign of life.

NURSE CLARK
Dear god...they're all dead.

TWO YOUNG OFFICERS emerge carrying Rita and Emmett, placing them next to one another. Sean holds his breath as Nurse Clark examines Rita. No pulse. Mirror under her nose. No life.

SEAN
(falls to his knees)
No Rita...it's Sean, look at me!
(shakes her gently)
WAKE UP FOR GODS SAKE!!
(realizes)
Rita????

NURSE CLARK
I'm very sorry sir.

DOCTOR CAMBELL (50) examines Emmett. Also deceased.

Unable to find their ID's Doctor Campbell takes out a small notebook and pen.

DOCTOR CAMPBELL
(takes out his notepad)
Would you mind giving us your friends names sir.

SEAN
Rita McAvoy. Irish citizen.

DOCTOR CAMPBELL
And the gentlemen.

SEAN
Emmett Roberts. My friend, Emmett
Roberts.

DOCTOR CAMPBELL
Thank you sir.

Sean stumbles away from the horrific scene, towards Bethnal Green Gardens across the street. He finds a park bench. Pulls out his book. The one thing that saved his life.

INT. WAR ZONE BOMSITE- DAY

Sean packs up some things into his truck at his work site. Something profound has now shifted inside him. A loss of Hope. Of heart. Of faith.

EXT. LYONS TEA SHOP CAFE - DAY

Sean stops by the window, sees on a young man sitting at his old table, reading a book.

A new blonde waitress arrives with hot tea. And for a split second he see's Rita's face, smiling, so warm and open with this young customer.

But as she looks out the window at Sean her face disappears.

INT. VE DAY/LONDON - DAY

Hundreds of British civilians and American soldiers raise flags and banners rejoicing in the defeat of the Nazi war.

A PHOTOGRAPHER takes a snapshot of Sean and some soldiers sitting back of his truck. Making front page news.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE "END OF WORLD WAR II"

INT. EMMETT'S BOOK STORE- DAY

Sean signs his signature for an American POSTAL OFFICER as some books are carried out in boxes by three American soldiers.

POSTAL OFFICER

Thank you sir.

AMERICAN SOLDIER 2

Sir.

He looks around the store. Glass roof now fixed. Shelves repainted. Emmett's last wish granted.

A female clerk behind reception.

SEAN

Slan. Goodbye.

FEMALE CLERK

Farewell.

INT. SEANS ROOM RENTAL- EVENING

Landlord Mr Hughes hands Sean a TELEGRAM outside his front door.

LANDLORD HUGES

Arrived today.

Sean tears it open fearing the worst.

MOLLY V/O

Son. Catherine and Marie have fallen ill with tuberculosis. Get home soon as you can. Your Ma, Siobhan.

Oh dear. Worse than he thought.

INT. TENAMENT BUILDING -BEDROOM- NIGHT

Catherine now 17 and Marie 14, lay together in a single bed. Vomiting. Sweaty. Nothing but skin and bone.

Sean sits end of the bed, while his ma Siobhan, kneels by their side with a bucket of cold water and damp clothe trying her best to keep their temperature down.

A local priest FATHER BURKE (50) gives them their last rights.

FATHER BURKE

Lord I am not worthy to receive you.
Only say the word and I shall be
healed. May the Lord Jesus protect you
and lead you to eternal life. Amen.

SIOBHAN
(sobbing)

Amen.

Horror tears through seans heart, as he watches his sisters die.

EXT. BURIAL SITE - DAY

Catherine and Marie and now buried.

Siobhan struggles to leave the girls.

SIOBHAN
My babies...my babies....

HENRY
Come on ma. Lets get you home.

Patrick and Henry help their mother away leaving Father Burke alone with Sean.

Sean eyes are lifeless, dead, as struggles to strive for answers that he know won't come.

SEAN
Father...

FATHER BURKE
Sean...I'm very sorry for your loss.

SEAN
Tell me. Why would a loving God allow my two sisters to die so young. Their whole lives ahead of them...

FATHER BURKE
Yes. Life is full of questions. But we must keep our faith during hard times. Isaiah 41:10, do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your god.

This isn't good enough.

FATHER BURKE
But where is he? If he's with me...
(stumbles to one side)
Is he over here?
(back again)
or right here? Where is GOD!

FATHER BURKE

(uncomfortable)

Anger is a normal part of grief. Best go home. Your mother needs you.

SEAN

(furious)

My mother needs her two daughters!
Here! Right now! Alive! Not six feet under!

The fury behind Seans eyes disturbs Father Burke and he quickly bolts.

Good riddance.

Sean needs to be alone saying goodbye.

Not sure how he's going to.

He finds his hardened rugged breath.

The only thing we can hear.

But all the hope and faith he ever retained, has now departed. He looks up. A flock of birds above him.

Where is it GONE GOD?

My faith.

You bastard.

My sisters.

You liar.

He glances six feet down into the earth.

And weeps for their stolen lives.

His sisters names scream out of his soul.

His face and heart bursting with unimaginable pain.

SEAN

Goodbye Catherine! See ya Marie!

He pulls out a nagan of whiskey from under his coat, stumbles away down the pathway.

INT. CLERY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: DUBLIN 1945

Maeve stands on a pedestal in a blue suit and matching hat.

Best friend Roisin and a SALES ASSISTANT CARA (25) make a fuss over her.

ROISIN

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, aren't ya a vision!

CARA

Hats are all the new rage now. All the American girls are wearing them.

MAEVE

(looks in the mirror)
How much?

ROISIN

Treat yourself. Wait until Mr Nolan see's ya. His eyes will burst!

CARA

Where's he taking ya?

MAEVE

The Gresham Hotel for afternoon tea.

CARA

Fancy.

ROISIN

Four years he was asking her out.

CARA

Four years??

ROISIN

Says she puts a spring in his step, until she realized that's how he walks.

CARA

He's a cripple??

MAEVE

No. He just has a bit of a limp.
(hits Roisin to shut up)

I'm only seeing him a few months.
Nothing serious.

CARA
(Places a broach on her jacket)
You never know. He might pop the
question.

Maeve gasps. This terrifies her. Panic stricken she removes
her hat, steps off the pedestal.

MAEVE
I'm sorry. I juts need a minute.

CARA
You don't like the color?

MAEVE
No. I do...

CARA
I'll lets you girls chat.

Cara leaves to serve another customer.

ROISIN
What's wrong?

MAEVE
I don't know. I can't put my finger on
it. Something feels off.

ROISIN
You're not used to being treated so
well.
(sighs sadly)
But you deserve a nice fella Maeve. Do
ya know I was about to write to the
sisters of mercy, put ya in their
convent you were single for so long!
Without male company. Waiting on that
gobshite over in London.

MAEVE
Don't you dare say his name.

ROISIN
I don't have to. It's written all over
your face.

Dammit. Her face falls in her hands. This limerence is

killing her.

ROISIN

Listen to me. I was there when you first laid eyes on him. He was your first crush at nineteen. Nobody can take that away from you. And those letters he wrote ya. You keep them. But know this. False promises never made any woman a housewife. It's time to let that idea go now. Once and for all.

She's right. Best friends know best.

MAEVE

(snaps out of it)

Sorry. Don't know what came over me.

(gets excited again)

I love the color.

She puts her hat back on, kisses Roisin goodbye.

MAEVE

I'm gonna be late.

ROISIN

Make sure he takes a picture! Tell me all about it tomorrow!

MAEVE

Thanks for the help!

Roisin and Cara hang over the balcony watching Maeve strut her stuff down the main stairs out the main entrance.

EXT. CLERY'S DEPARTMENT STORE- CONT'D

A HUGE GREEN LANDMARK CLOCK hangs above the main entrance.

Maeve exits the front doors and walks straight into Sean, now 26.

The very sight of her almost takes his breath away.

SEAN

Maeve?

She gathers herself.

MAEVE

Sean.

Woah this is awkward. But secretly astounding.

SEAN

Forgive me. I appear to be stuck for words.

MAEVE

Says the man with the dictionary.

He smirks. What a woman.

MAEVE

I'm sorry to hear about Catherine and Marie.

Oh.

SEAN

Thanks. I was planning to come home, open my own fish shop, but then, well, life changes so fast, so unexpectedly.

MAEVE

(emotional)

I'm sorry I have to go.

She brushes past him abruptly when...

SEAN

I haven't stopped thinking about you. Even dreamt of you a few times.

She stops in her tracks. Her heart sinks.

She turns. Please don't. Not here.

MAEVE

Will you stop, people are looking.

Walks to her.

SEAN

Let them.

MAEVE

Four years of reading your stupid letters. Sometimes I read them over a hundred times like an eegit!

SEAN

Were my letters not enough to let ya know I was thinking of ya. That you were dear to my heart. Through all the chaos. Bombs dropping. Friends dying on front of me. But I still wrote to you. Does that not tell ya something.

Dammit. He's more handsome than ever. Especially when his anger is so passionate.

He reflects. His eye still piercing blue like she remembered.

SEAN

The night of the dance. I'm sorry I stood ya up. I was having issues with my father. I didn't want to leave Dublin, leave my family behind, not the girls...

(that's too sore)

But coming from the inner city with no prospects I had no choice.

This is all she's wanted to hear.

MEAVE

The truth is Sean O'Sullivan, I'm thinking of becoming a nun.

SEAN

Oh. A nun. With two left feet.

He places his hands around her waist, desperate to hold her and she quivers like a school girl.

SEAN

You see that's a bit problematic for me, because I can't have the woman of my dreams moving into a bloody convent, now can I...

The woman of his dreams. Did he just say that?

They stare into each others soul, right under the clock. Like something out of a movie.

SEAN

Imagine, bumping into each other under the Clery's clock. Now that's good timing.

MAEVE

Now you listen to me Sean O'Sullivan,
you can't just expect me to...

Oh yes he can. He kisses her passionately and with a twist of fate and something special caused by the great divine, they are finally reunited in the love they once knew.

EXT. LOCAL DUBLIN PARISH- DAY

Sean and Maeve's wedding day. Both side by side on the steps of a local inner city church. Her dress is simply yet conservative. Pretty lace and satin up to her neck. His suit, a dark grey with a white rose boutonniere. A nod to the purity of their love.

Their family and friends rejoice, including both their parents. Although, Mr O'Sullivan Sr doesn't say much, only hangs around the back gate smoking.

Siobhan pulls her son aside.

SIOBHAN

You look after her, you hear me.

SEAN

Yes ma. Always.

INT. MCCARTHY HOUSEHOLD-DRIMNAGH- NIGHT

Maeve has just given birth to a BABY BOY SEAN JR, but there's complications as his airways are obstructed.

DR O'KEEFE 50 and NURSE DELANEY 40, try unblock his lungs but fear the worst.

Mr and Mrs McCarthy try comfort their daughter. As does Sean.

MAEVE

Somebody do something for Christs
sakes!

MRS MCCARTHY

Nothing to worry about love. The
doctor is taking good care of him.

MAEVE

I don't hear him crying! He's not
crying ma!

DOCTOR O'KEEFE
Breathing difficulties are normal
after the birth. We'll just check his
heart and lungs, should be just
fine...

Dr O'Keefe realizes its worse than expected.

Nurse Delaney pulls Sean aside.

NURSE DELANEY
Mr O'Sullivan, back in my day if there
was something wrong with the baby, we
gave it whiskey. Go find some
whiskey...hurry!

Sean dashes down the stairs, out the door to...

INT. MRS BROWNS HOUSE - NIGHT

Sean bangs on the front door. Mrs Brown appears in her
nightgown, curlers in her hair.

MRS BROWN
What's wrong Sean?

SEAN
Have you any whiskey Mrs Brown, hurry,
the baby's not breathing!

MRS BROWN
I don't, try Mrs Fitzpatrick next
door!

He rushes next door to...

INT. MRS FITZPATRICKS HOUSE - CONT'D

Sean bangs down the door. Mrs Fitzpatrick opens up, also in
nightgown and curlers.

MRS FITZPATRICK
What is it Sean??

SEAN
I need whiskey for the baby Mrs
Fitzpatrick, hurry, hurry!!

She runs to her drink cabinet. Pulls outa bottle. Flings it
at Sean. He rushes back to the...

MCCARTHY HOUSEHOLD-BEDROOM

Sean bursts in with the whisky. Maeve screaming for her baby. Hysterical. Her parents are kneeling by the bed praying.

MCCARTHY'S

Hail Mary full of the grace, the lord
is with thee--

SEAN

Everybody move aside! My son is not
gonna die today!

MR MCCARTHY

What the hell do you think you're
doing? You can't give a baby whiskey!

SEAN

Nothing wrong with starting him on the
gargle early Paddy.

Sean drops some whiskey on his fingertips and places it
inside the baby's mouth.

Everyone holds their breath.

Then---CRYING...screaming crying from the healthy baby.

MAEVE

(disbelief)

It worked! He's breathing, my baby is
breathing!

SEAN

(chuffed with himself)

If ya like it now son, wait till ya
get older!

NURSE O'KEEFE

You did it Sean. You saved him.

EXT. YORK STREET TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

One of the worst, if not the worst, slum communities in
Dublin. The O'MALLEY BROTHERS, BRENDAN 15, LIAM, 13, BRIAN
11, KEVIN 9, AIDEN 7, DECLAN, 5, all shoeless, dirty faces,
epitome of inner city poverty, hang around an old run down
horse cart under a flickering street lamp.

Their mother MRS O'MALLEY 45, a tough woman with scars on her
face, opens her window and shouts down to her sons.

MRS O'MALLEY
 BRENDAY! LIAM! BRIAN! KEVIN! AIDEN!
 DECLAN! It's after ten! If yiz don't
 get yourselves up those stairs in five
 seconds I'll swing yiz around that
 lamppost!

The brothers scurry into the block, knowing all too well the consequences. We move up the stairs with the boys and come to number 12.

INT. YORK STREET ROOM- NIGHT

Nothing but a bed, open fire and rusty iron range.

Sean reads by the window as Maeve places baby Sean Jr inside a chest of drawers, comforted with a warm blanket.

MAEVE
 Don't know how she does it with six.

Rat scratching noises come from inside the run down walls. She grabs her sweeping brush.

MAEVE
 You hear that?

SEAN
 Ignore them.

A rat runs across the floor scaring her half to death.

MAEVE
 Get it out Sean, please!

SEAN
 (takes her brush)
 Alright love. Come on ya filthy rats,
 out ya go.

Maeve lowers her heavy shoulders. Stares lovingly at her baby boy sleeping in the drawer. Oh how she wishes she could give him more.

Sean comes up behind her, arms around her waist like a safe blanket of protection, reading softly from his book.

SEAN
 Something in her voice touched me.
 That's the way love sounds. When it is
 sincere. It would be a terrible sin to

break those frail wings.

MAEVE

(turns to him)

Why do you read this thing over and over? Are you having a secret love affair.

SEAN

Never. She was a Japanese girl who was left heartbroken after she sacrificed everything to be with the man she loved. You know you're the only woman for me.

He sways her back and forth, cheek to cheek.

MAEVE

What are you doing, stop.

SEAN

(holds her tight)

You hear the music?

MAEVE

What music. I don't hear anything.

SEAN

Use your imagination...

He slow dances with her around the room.

She closes her eyes. Hoping to hear something. Anything. But it's no use. All in his head. She smiles. Leans her head on his shoulder. This mans heartbeat is all she needs.

SEAN

Italian composer Puccini turned this story into a famous drama at the Opera. I'd give anything to see it on stage...

MAEVE

Here I am dealing with the rats, while my husband is dreaming of the opera. Only rich people go there love.

She undresses. Crawls into bed. He follows her in and kisses her forehead.

SEAN
Let a man dream woman.

MAEVE
(nervous)
Housing office tomorrow.

SEAN
They'll give us the perfect home.
Don't worry.

They kiss, madly in love.

INT. HOUSING CORPORATION - DAY

Maeve chats to housing officer MARTIN MCDONAGH 45. Joined by her mother for support. Sean Jr sleeps in his pram.

MAEVE
I'll do anything to get a home next to me mother out in Drimnagh Mr McDonagh. Our room we rent in York Street is infested with those rats. I'm beside myself with the baby!

MR MCDONAGH
Mrs O'Sullivan, we'd like to offer you a house out in Cabra.

Maeve's heart sinks.

MR MCDONAGH
It has good schools nearby. A shopping centre and busses directly into the city.

MRS MCCARTHY
Do ye hear that love. Oh that's wonderful Mr McDonagh. Thank you so much. We are so grateful.

He slides over the papers for her to sign.

But she strongly hesitates.

MRS MCCARTHY
Sign the papers love.

MR MCDONAGH
If you just sign at the bottom there.

She pauses. And they wait. Then she drops the pen.

MAEVE

Thank you for the kind offer Mr
McDonagh. But myself and my husband
are going to hold out for a house out
in Drimnagh.

A pin could drop. How DARE she.

MR MCDONAGH

Hold out? Have you seen the hundreds
of families lined up outside, begging
for a home?

MRS MCCARTHY

(mortified. furious)

HAVE YOU LOST YER BLOODY MIND!

(exploding under her breath)

Do ye want to be on the waiting list
for the next ten years!? Sign the damn
papers!

Maeve walks to the door.

MRS MCCARTHY

Don't you dare walk out that door
Maeve McCarthy! I'm warning ye!

MAEVE

O'Sullivan. I'm an O'Sullivan now ma.

Maeve leaves down the hall in tears.

INT. DRIMNAGH PARISH - EVENING

Maeve arrives at the alter with baby Sean Jr.

The weight of her decision brings her to her knees.

MAEVE

Forgive me lord. Please forgive me.

FATHER DELANEY appears deeply perplexed and concerned.

FATHER DELANEY

Mrs O'Sullivan, everything alright
dear?

MAEVE

(on her feet)

Oh yes of course. Hello father. I was just...

He raises his bushy eyebrows. She knows she can't lie.

FATHER DELANEY

Have a seat...

They sit in the front row together.

MAEVE

I turned down a house offer from the government today.

FATHER DELANEY

Oh...

MAEVE

They offered me a home in Cabra. The North side. That's miles away from here, nowhere near my ma's house. Drimnagh is the best place for us, to raise a family. I've got everything I want here...

FATHER DELANEY

Are you on any medication?

MAEVE

No Father.

FATHER DELANEY

But you have a child.

She bursts into tears. Feels terrible.

MAEVE

You think I'm a bad mother. A sinner.

FATHER DELANEY

Well. I'm sorry to say, but when a child's welfare is concerned, there's no saying no.

MAEVE

My husband will be so disappointed.

FATHER DELANEY

You made this decision without your

husband present?

MAEVE

Oh Jesus...

(sobbing)

Sorry. I didn't mean to say the lords name in vain. I better go.

FATHER DELANEY

Mrs O'Sullivan...

She looks at him terrified.

FATHER DELANEY

In order to be saved, you must repent.
Is this understood?

MAEVE

Yes father.

She's disappears out the back door.

INT. YORK STREET ROOM- EVENING

Maeve sits across form Sean, her soup untouched, his finished. Baby Sean Jr sleeping peacefully in the top drawer.

MAEVE

Well...aren't you going to say something. Or, get angry?

He leans back in his seat, trusting every bone in her body, but happy to keep her guessing.

SEAN

You didn't kill anybody...or did ye?

He smirks. Phew. Hugh sigh of relief. She rests on his lap. His heartbeat all she needs.

SEAN

You see that window.

(she glances at the window)

That keeps the draft out so our baby doesn't get cold. And that burning fire.

(She looks at the burning coal)

Cooks us every hot meal. But do you want to know the best part.

He lifts her off his knees, onto the bed.

SEAN

This bed, gives us the chance to be together.

(into her eyes)

Even when the rest of the world are against us.

She could cry with happiness.

SEAN

I'll work extra shifts, do whatever it takes to get us, the best home, for this family.

He kisses her passionately.

EXT. YORK STREET - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSED- 1954- SEVEN YEARS LATER

Mrs O'Malley hangs her clothes on a clothes line.

Local mailman MR O'SHAE 45, arrives on his bicycle with a brown sack full of mail.

POSTMAN O'SHAE

(up to her window)

LETTER FOR MR AND MRS O'SULLIVAN! MRS O'SULLIVAN...DELIVERY!!

INT. YORK STREET ROOM- MORNING

Maeve now 32 and nine months pregnant with her forth child sweeps rat droppings outside her front door while Sean Jr now 7, plays with second born daughter Catherine 5, and third born daughter Marie 3.

Maeve shouts down from her window unbothered.

MAEVE

Coming!

She hurries the three children down the main stairs.

EXT. YORK STREET FLATS - MORNING

Maeve waddles over to Mr O'Shea, as her children rush towards a swing tied around a lamppost.

MAEVE

Hey. Be careful on that.

POSTMAN O'SHAE
 (holding a single letter)
 How'a'ya Mrs O'Sullivan, how's life
 treating ya.

MAEVE
 Oh you know Mr O'Shea. Living the high
 life. Although those stairs might be
 the death of me...

Offers the letter.

POSTMAN O'SHAE
 Department of housing affairs Mrs
 O'Sullivan.

She rubs the sweat away from her forehead, takes a breath.
 She's been here before. Many times. Just another rejection
 letter.

POSTMAN O'SHAE
 Could be your lucky day.

She appreciate his positivity but knows chances are slim.

She tears it open and cannot believe her eyes.

MAEVE
 (out loud to herself)
 Dear Mr and Mrs O'Sullivan, upon
 reviewing your application for this
 new year, we are happy to offer you...
 (trembles at the thought)
 a nice corner house, number 114
 Benmadigan Road, Drimnagh.

She almost falls to her knees, but Mr O'Shae catches her.

MAEVE
 (continues the letter)
 With a nice front and back garden for
 your children to play...

The emotion she feels is unfamiliar. Other mothers in the
 area are drawn in, curious, whispering.

POSTMAN O'SHAE
 You're babies have a house now Mrs
 O'Sullivan!

Mrs O'Malley walks towards her smiling, roaring red hands,

elbows, holding her wash basket.

MRS O'MALLEY

Plus the ten others you're gonna have.
(genuinely happy)

Well done Maevey. Bout bloody time one
of us got the hell out of this place.

EXT. BENMADIGAN ROAD ESTATE - DRIMNAGH - DAY

Arial view of their brand new neighbourhood. A tight
community with a field surrounded by semi detached homes.

Middle aged women stand at corners with shopping bags.

Young boys play football.

We move towards...

EXT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - DAY

A cocoa brown painted home. Nice clean garden. Maeve leans
against her wide open front door arms folded, grinning ear to
ear. Her kids rush past her into the living room.

Brown wallpaper, brown sofa, religious pictures on the walls.
Typical for a catholic household.

Maeve returns to her kitchen table sowing a sweater, on her
new SINGER SOWING MACHINE.

Sean Sr dances around the living room with the girls
Catherine and Marie. The apple of their fathers eye.

He chases Sean Jr and Damien out to the...

BACK GARDEN

Tackles them to the grass laughing uncontrollably.

Maeve appears by the back door, thinks- this is what life is
all about.

MAEVE

I'm going to get the shopping!

Smirks. Leaves with the girls.

Later...

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - EVENING

Sean is reading by the window when there's a soft knock at the front door.

He opens up to find an American couple DAN and POLLY FREEMAN 50's, kind eyes, soft spoken.

SEAN

Yes?

DAN

Hello. My name is Dan Freeman. Myself and my wife Polly thought we'd stop by, introduce ourselves. See if you had a chance to read the magazine we dropped in earlier this week.

SEAN

Yes. I've seen it. Well. I read a bit of it.

But he's not interested. Nothing but hog wash.

DAN

A lot of folks are very stressed about the way the world is. How uncertain things are. Wondering what kind of future it all holds.

(holds up the bible)

This book right here offers great hope for our future. Says the good lord will end all wars and suffering.

Sean is unsure what to say. He's experienced war. And suffered. This all makes him uncomfortable even though he's somewhat curious. And what makes it worse is some neighbours close by are watching.

POLLY

People wonder if God is interested in us. If he really care about injustice. What do you think sir?

Sean has a lot to say but refrains.

SEAN

If only that were true. Some chance. I better...

He tries to close the door but Polly holds her hand out.

POLLY

But have you ever wondered why wars
exists. Death, old age, sickness?

Yes all the time.

SEAN

I'm sorry, forgive me. I'm just not
sure if I should be even speaking to
you. Not too sure the local priest
would like it. Or the missus.

POLLY

Don't be afraid sir.

(pauses)

Never be afraid to hear the truth. At
least if you hear it, then you can
decide for yourself.

Sean likes truth. And he wants to prove he's not afraid of
anyone.

SEAN

Alright. Come in.

To the kids firmly.

SEAN

Out the back and play, go on.

A MOMENT LATER- LIVING ROOM

Sean chats with Dan and Polly Freeman.

SEAN

I left the communist party over their
lies. My local union over their lies.
And sometimes if I'm honest, I feel
like the Catholic Church lies too. How
will your way of thinking improve my
life?

DAN

Well take your Our Father prayer for
example, which we all pray. "Our
Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be
thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will
be done, on earth, as it is in
heaven". What do you think the world
Kingdom means Sean?

Good question. He reaches for his dictionary.

SEAN

Excuse me a moment.

(searches the word KINGDOM)

Ah here it is. A state or country ruled by a king. Also the spiritual reign or authority of God.

DAN

Exactly.

POLLY

That's right. If we're praying for God's government to come, then that should bring great things to earth. Jesus the son of God, encourages us to pray for that government to come one day. Which will bring equality and justice to all people, not just the rich.

This statement stirs something in Sean. He's been a poor man his whole life. And Dan and Polly see the confusion and anger behind his eyes.

DAN

Sean... we know life hasn't been easy. There's always been a divide between rich and poor. Yet we still get sick...and we all still die.

Sean sees this as a perfect window of opportunity to reveal his greatest loss. For some reason he trusts them.

DAN

I lost my two younger sisters about eight years ago. Catherine just seventeen, Marie fourteen.

POLLY

This book here Sean...

(holds up her bible)

Promises one day, death and sickness will be no more.

The front door swings open with Maeve and her shopping bags.

MAEVE

What's this?

She knows very well what it is.

SEAN

These good people seem to have answers
to our future love.

MAEVE

Are they Roman Catholic?

POLLY

No. We're from...

MAEVE

Then I'm sorry. You can't be in our
house preaching. You'll have to go.

Maeve continues to the kitchen. Sean highly embarrassed
ushers Dan and Polly to the front door.

DAN

If you'd like to know more...

MAEVE

(from the kitchen)

No we don't!

SEAN

(whispers)

I would.

Dan offers Sean a Bible and they disappears down the street.
Sean hides it back of his trousers, under his belt and takes
himself quietly upstairs.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Sean's fingers run over the pages of his new bible. Curiosity
bleeds from his blue eyes, desperate for answers. But he
knows this will cause trouble. He wraps it inside a pillow
case, slides it under the bed.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - DAY

Sean plants seeds to grow flowers in the front garden. He
digs some earth up with his shovel when...

A sweet seller MRS WALSH (50) wheels her PRAM onto the street
past his garden.

MRS WALSH

How'a'ya Sean. Lovely day for

business.

SEAN
Mrs Walsh. Indeed.

She parks her pram at the corner and all the neighbourhood children run towards her bursting with excitement.

Sean Jr approaches his dad.

SEAN JR
Da, can I have a penny.

SEAN
No.

SEAN JR
Please da. Just a penny.

SEAN
No son.

SEAN JR
Ah but da, all the kids get rocks every week. I'll do anything. Please da. Just one penny.

Sean stares at his son pleading.

SEAN
You know Easter is coming up.

Yeah. And.

SEAN
If I give you a penny, you won't be getting an Easter egg this Sunday. Do you understand.

SEAN JR
Fine. I don't care about an stupid egg anyway.

SEAN
Alright.
(pulls a penny from his pocket)
Go on. Go get your rock.

Sean Jr speeds towards Mrs Walsh like his life depends on it.

MRS WALSH
Hey Seany! What ya got there?

SEAN JR
A penny for a bag please.

She gives him a rock bag in exchange for his penny.

MRS WALSH
You enjoy that now.

SEAN JR
Thanks Mrs Walsh!

Sean rushes back home, in through his front door.

SEAN JR
Thanks da!

Sean stares at his budding flower bed, knowing everything takes time.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD-BEDROOM- MORNING

Easter Sunday. Catherine and Marie shake Sean JR to wake up.

CATHERINE
Seany wake up! Hurry! Happy Easter!

MARIE
Come on, lets go see what we got!

All three rush down the stairs.

KITCHEN

Maeve prepares breakfast as Sean Sr reads his morning Sunday papers.

Catherine, Marie, Damien and Gerry sit at the kitchen table holding their small chocolate eggs.

Sean Jr comes in but doesn't see his egg. He looks around puzzled.

SEAN JR
Where's my egg da?

SEAN
(over his paper)
We had an agreement, remember. A penny

for an egg.

He looks to his mother and her heart breaks for him.

MAEVE

I'm sorry but you made a deal with
your da.

SEAN JR

(utter shock)
So I don't get an egg?

MAEVE

Not this year love. Come on, eat your
breakfast.

Sean Jr slides onto his seat, staring at his da differently.
Unable to comprehend his fathers lesson.

INT. KINGDOM HALL CHURCH- DUBLIN - DAY

A group of about twenty. Sean sits next Dan and Polly
Freeman. DICK FOSTER 40, head of congregation, speaks into a
microphone on stage, a large sign behind him reading "GODS
KINGDOM ON EARTH"

DICK

At my lowest, Jehovah is my hope. In
my darkness, Jehovah is my light. At
my weakest, Jehovah is my strength.

(wraps up)

I hope these words help you this
coming week to bring more people to
the good Lord.

Crowd filters out. Dick approaches Sean.

DICK

Nice of you to join us again Sean. I
hope my words are helpful.

SEAN

Your words are very comforting.

DICK

God's words. God's true words, which
will always set you free.

(holds up his bible)

It's written in this book.

They sit together. Sean's hidden trauma now starting to

resurface.

SEAN
May I be honest.

DICK
Please.

SEAN
I'm struggling Dick. The passing of my two little sisters still effects me tremendously. It's like I carry this guilt everywhere. There's no escaping it.

DICK
Very sorry to hear that Sean.

SEAN
Yeah it was sudden. So arduous. Extremely difficult to comprehend why it would even happen to our family. I think the worst part is accepting they're both never coming back...

Even a professional advisor such as Dick gets emotional, a lump in his throat.

SEAN
I miss their little faces, their sweet voices. I think it's safe to say, I've lost all my faith.

DICK
I understand. The good news it you're here, you've taken the first step of reconnecting with your heavenly father God. God is not responsible for their deaths Sean. We want to blame him but bad things happen, but bad things happen all the time, that are simply unexplainable. Now you can let this destroy you...or strengthen you.

Tears build in Sean's eyes and he breaks.

SEAN
I should have been there to help them but I wasn't...

Hand on his shoulder.

DICK

You're not to blame either, do you hear me. This is where we are given the hope of the resurrection. The promise that you will see their faces again. When God's kingdom comes, there will be no more pain.

Sean takes one hell of a deep breath. If this is true, all hope can be restored.

DICK

I know what you're thinking, any rational mind would think, but is it true Dick...how do I know he'll come.

They lock eyes.

DICK

When you accept Jehovah as your true father, your life will begin to change in ways you never imagined. And that truth you're searching for will pour out of your veins like a running river. Because its truth. And its the only truth we've got to hold onto, in this treacherous undignified chaotic world.

This hits Sean hard. Almost a visceral reaction.

SEAN

Where should I start?

DICK

Thy kingdom come....say it.

SEAN

Thy kingdom come.

DICK

Thy will be done. On earth. This earth. Our earth. As its done in heaven.

How he wishes his father had have comforted him like this. Sean wipes his face, nods and finally accepts this as truth.

DICK

Only then do you find peace in his promises. I can guarantee you that.

(smiles)
 You see Sean, God wants to work through you. But first you've got heal. Only then can you pass on this knowledge to others.

SEAN
 (sighs)
 Thank you Dick. I best be off.

He goes to leave.

DICK
 Remember. Some people won't like you choosing another path that's not traditional to the way they think. Believe me, it will create conflict.

Sean nods, knowing the consequences, but no idea how bad they are about to get.

EXT. DRIMNAGH PARISH - DAY

People pile out after Sunday mass. Father Delaney catches up with Maeve and her kids.

FATHER DELANEY
 A word Mrs O'Sullivan.

MAEVE
 I've only a minute Father.

FATHER DELANEY
 I've noticed Mr O'Sullivan has been absent from Sunday mass a while now. There are rumours in the Parish that he talks to those American protestants.

MAEVE
 He's taken on some extra hours at the weekends Father, that's all. It costs money to raise five children.

He stares at her growing bump, a sixth child on the way.

FATHER DELANEY
 Indeed...because if he is talking to those protestant Pagans, he'll answer to me!

Frightened she hurries down the street.

INT. MCCABES BUTCHERS -GEORGES STREET ARCADE- EVENING

JIM MCCABE 55, serves MRS WHITE 50, some fish as Sean mops up some watery blood from the floor.

MR MCCABE

Mind yourself Mrs White.

MRS WHITE

Mind yourself Mr McCabe. See you next week.

Mrs White leaves with her fish. Mr McCabe locks the door. Hands Sean his weekly wages in a brown envelope.

SEAN

Thank you.

Sean removes his dirty apron. Washes his hands. Puts on his coat.

MR MCCABE

Plans for the weekend?

SEAN

I go to bible studies on Sundays now.

They knock off the lights. Walk to the back door.

SEAN

(remorseful)

Mr McCabe. I have a confession to make. I've been stealing fish from you every Friday for years now. So I'd like to apologize. Pay you back. I'm a Christian now.

MR MCCABE

Sean, many a man has stolen fish to help feed their families. You've another baby on the way. Relax. I don't mind.

SEAN

It's still wrong to steal. The Catholic Church forbids people eat meat on Fridays. Say you'll go to hell forever because it's a mortal sin. Forever...can you believe that.

MR MCCABE

No. I don't believe God will burn his own children just for eating a piece of meat on Friday's.

(pauses, concerned)

I'm curious, what started this new religious obsession?

SEAN

No obsession. Just dedication to living the truth. I'm tired of the injustices in this world. Young boys and girls savagely beaten and raped behind closed doors in places like Artane. All over the country and people know about it and do nothing. These priests have total control of people's minds. Everyone is bloody terrified to contradict them, but I'm not afraid anymore. Because I know there's a better world coming soon.

This startles McCabe. He's utterly speechless. Senses trouble brewing.

MR MCCABE

Sean. I could have sacked you right now, sent you home with no wages, no job. Everything you've just said took courage....but I am warning you. Be very careful who you talk to like that.

McCabe hands him a frozen chicken.

SEAN

Thank you sir.

Seans cycles away through the Arcade.

EXT. BENMADIGAN ROAD ESTATE - EVENING

MRS BYRNE and MRS WARREN gossip at the corner as Sean cycles onto the street towards his house.

MRS BYRNE

There he is...the turncoat.

MRS WARREN

Speak of the devil.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - EVENING

Maeve and Sean sit down to dinner with their five children.

You could cut the tension with a knife.

MAEVE

People are talking...

SEAN

I'm not concerned with narrow minded gossip.

MAEVE

Father Delaney knows about those protestants. For Jazus sakes Sean!

SEAN

They're not protestants. They're Christians.

MAEVE

I need to know where you disappear to on a Sunday and Tuesday evening before I lose my mind!

A long pause. He doesn't know how to deliver this.

SEAN

I'm leaving the Catholic Church. I'm becoming a Jehovah Witness.

Transfixed with fear she grabs a knife.

MAEVE

YOUR A TURNCOAT! A FUCKING JUDAS! MY OWN HUSBAND A BLOODY TRAITOR!

He grabs her hand. Calmly takes the knife off her.

SEAN

Sit down. You'll upset the baby.

Catherine and Marie start crying.

CATHERINE

Mam stop shouting please.

MAEVE

It's alright love, finish your dinner.

But the children are too scared to eat.

SEAN

The Catholic Church have had too much power over us. I won't let them influence our children any more.

Maeve finds this too laborious to comprehend. She brings her plate to the kitchen sink.

SEAN

I want to be a better person. A better husband, a good father to our children, you've got to understand this.

But her mind can't compute or reckon with his words.

MAEVE

(panicking)

Our children go to catholic schools. We live in a catholic country. I won't let you ruin this families reputation!

Terrified the children run upstairs. Sean Jr lingers on the staircase.

SEAN

We're not bad people Maeve. We're good people. We don't need the Catholic Church.

She see's red. Frantically rummages through the kitchen drawers searching for the magazines.

MAEVE

Where are those bloody magazine's! I don't want them in this house!

She finds a WATCHTOWER MAGAZINE. Sets fire to it over the stove.

SEAN

The hellfire doesn't exist Maeve! What kind of loving God would deliberately roast his children forever, it's a sick doctrine!

MAEVE

Oh Jesus, Mary and Joseph!
(denial)

This can't be happening... my own husband believing lies from American Pagans!

SEAN

Not lies, truth! I don't believe in the Catholic Trinity anymore. There's only one God and his name is JEHOVAH!

She gasps. This is so heart breaking. An unmerciful wail comes out of her mouth.

MAEVE

YOU'RE BRAINWASHED! I'LL GO MAD IF YOU KEEP THIS UP!

(frantic)

What will the neighbours think? My own mother? Father? All our friends??

SEAN

Stop worrying about what the neighbours will think!

(holds her shoulders)

Since I've known ya all you've ever cared about was what others think! Think for yourself!

MAEVE

I think I'm having a nervous breakdown.

They both sigh. This is so heart-breaking.

SEAN

Have you see Seany's hands. Go look.

MAEVE

(rushes to the stairs)

What's wrong with his hands? Come here you!

Sean Jr steps down from the stairs. Turns up his two roaring red palms.

MAEVE

Lord have mercy.

(kneels to him)

What Happened my love, and don't lie to mammy.

SEAN JR

I was having a laugh. A joke with the
lads. I said something funny but
Brother Brown didn't like it. So he
whipped me with his stick.

Maeve glances over to her husband. This isn't going to end
well.

INT. CLASSROOM- CATHOLIC BOYS SCHOOL - DAY

Sean Jr study's with a class of young boys as BROTHER BROWN,
38, writes a new lesson on the chalk board.

Sean Sr appears at the door.

BROTHER BROWN

Mr O'Sullivan, can I help you?

SEAN

I'm here to take my son home. He won't
be doing this religious lesson
anymore.

Sean Jr gathers his copybooks, approaches his dad.

BOY 1

(whispers)

Your Da's a turncoat Seany.

Boys laugh. Sean Jr is Mortified.

BROTHER BROWN

(grabs Sean Jr's arm)

Hold it! I need to run this past the
Principal first.

SEAN

(pulls him towards the door)

I don't need permission. He's my son
Brother Brown.

BROTHER BROWN

(pulls at his arm harder)

May I remind you that your son is
indeed a Catholic Mr O'Sullivan.

SEAN JR

(both arms wide open)

Stop da please!

SEAN

If you don't let go of his arm right now, I'll go straight to the police and tell them you've been beating my son with that stick of yours.

Brother Brown releases Sean's left arm.

SEAN

(searching his sleeves)

Where is it? Where are you hiding it?

Sean discovers his hidden stick with a metal point head. He snaps it over his knee breaking it in half. Throws it on top of his desk in disgust.

SEAN

You think you have a right because you wear a collar? Don't ever touch my son again.

(beat)

I'm going to teach my son the Bible's true message, and nobody's going to stop me.

They head down the hall, leaving Brother Brown furious.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - DAY

Sean removes PICTURES and STATUES of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary from the shelves of his living room and kitchen, then places them in a bag.

The kids look up at their dad who's acting very strange.

SEAN

I'm going down the Canal. For a swim.

Yeah right.

EXT. GRAND CANAL DUBLIN - DAY

Sean arrives at the foot of the Canal. He leaps from his bike and dumps all the statues and pictures into the water.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - DAY

Maeve holds her belly, exhausted, feeling tortured and betrayed. She stares at her empty shelves with a profound sadness. How could he do this to her?

Sean comes in behind her.

MAEVE

Tell me you didn't...

SEAN

I don't want to argue with you, or hurt the baby. Those statues you pray to don't do us any good.

She turns to him with a devastating look in her eyes.

MAEVE

Don't you dare question my faith.

SEAN

Come on, we've been told our whole lives that they intercede for us, the mediator between us and God! They're just statues! Made of stone and cement. Did they save my sisters Catherine and Marie??

How can she answer that.

SEAN

Well....did they? I prayed, day and night. It didn't work!

She slaps him across the face. He's not shocked but not pleased either. He stares directly at her, unable to find the loving gaze he once adored. He knows he deserved it.

SEAN

You finished now?

No.

MAEVE

(shaking, crying)

You're pushing me to the edge Sean. I'm warning ya! I want my statues back, their mine!

SEAN

I'm sorry... but they're gone.

This is the nail in the coffin. She cannot control herself. Grabs a dinner plate, smashes it over his head with ferocious rage.

MAEVE

I'm sick of ye! The embarrassment
you've brought on this family!

Blood pours down his face. He clenches both fists. Holding
both hands by his sides, refusing to raise them.

SEAN

Are you finished now?

Its here they both realizes their love is broken. She picks
up the pieces of the cracked plate and continue to cook the
dinner as if nothing happened.

INT. FATHER DELANEY'S OFFICE - DRIMNAGH PARISH- MORNING

Maeve and her Mother Mrs McCarthy chat to Father Delaney.

MRS MCCARTHY

He's out of control father, this has
to stop. She could lose her baby, her
blood pressure is through the roof!

FATHER DELANEY

Maybe the best thing is to stop having
babies Mrs McCarthy.

He walks to the window, waters his plant. His face red with
fury.

FATHER DELANEY

Jehovah Witness's are led by the
spirit of the antichrist! Their
doctrine Satanic! Filled with
deceptions and false prophesies!

MRS MCCARTHY

Tell him the rest love...

Maeve can't bare to reveal anymore but knows she has to.

MAEVE

He's been taking our eldest son Sean
Jr out of religion class on Fridays.

FATHER DELANEY

Indeed, I have already heard. How dare
he interfere the children's education.

MAEVE

He's written letters to at least five

protestant schools. The girls came home last week in floods of tears because the nuns had barricaded the doors to their classroom.

FATHER DELANEY

Well fair play to the nuns for keeping the maniac out!

MRS MCCARTHY

It gets worse...tell him love.

MAEVE

(emotional)

He's removed all of my holy statues from the house, threw them in the canal.

Her distress alarms him. He splashes HOLY WATER around Maeve's head and feet and baby bump.

FATHER DELANEY

Almighty Creator, Lord of heaven and earth, who in holy baptism hast made water to be an emblem of the cleansing of our souls. Cleans this woman's spirit lord, allow this new creation in the waters of this rebirth to give her great courage to be brave. To do what's right in the lord's holy house. Amen.

(stares at Maeve)

Darkness has arrived in the Parish...and I will not tolerate such blasphemy. The Catholic Church has existed in Ireland since the fifth century. Sean O'Sullivan will not bring an American religion into my Parish. Over my dead body.

INT. DRIMNAGH PARISH - EVENING

The church is full with parishioners from the local area. Maeve, her mother Mrs McCarthy and the five children sit up front.

Father Delaney slams his fist against the pulpit.

FATHER DELANEY

We will not tolerate an American religion in our community! I'll be

dammed to hell before anybody speaks
sacrilegiously about our Holy Church!
We are the one true Catholic Apostolic
Church and we won't have Sean
O'Sullivan bring his pagan beliefs
into Drimnagh Dublin, not now, not
ever!

Sean Jr hides under his mothers coat.

FATHER DELANEY

If anybody has any objection God help
you now, for the one's who go against
this establishment, are the one's who
perish in hell for eternity!

Radio silence. Everybody stares at Maeve who's overwhelmed
with grief and embarrassment. She suddenly faints, collapses
in her seat.

MRS MCCARTHY

Somebody call a doctor!
Maeve...Maeve...

INT. MAEVE'S HOSPITAL ROOM- EVENING

Sean watches Maeve recover after giving birth for the sixth
time. An IV tube is strapped to her arm, tied to two bags of
new blood. A healthy baby boy Niall sleeps in a cot beside
her.

Doctor ANDREW BARRY 40, enters looking very concerned.

DOCTOR BARRY

Mr O'Sullivan.

SEAN

Yes.

DOCTOR BARRY

The baby is fine, but your wife has
lost a lot of blood. She needs to
rest.

SEAN

Yes doctor.

DOCTOR BARRY

there's REALLY no easy way for me to

say this, but, if she gets pregnant again, she will die.

Doctor leaves. Seans kisses her hand, knowing what he must sacrifice for the woman he loves.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - EVENING

A Christmas tree lit up in the corner. Maeve snuggles up to the children for the evening watching TV, when...

BANG BANG BANG!

She opens up. Two nuns, SISTER BERNADETTE and SISTER THERESA burst in the door.

SISTER BERNADETTE

No sign of the husband then Mrs O'Sullivan?

MAEVE

What's going on?

SISTER BERNADETTE

No doubt he's steering clear of all Christmas festivities.

MAEVE

What's going on?

SISTER THERESA

(whispers)

We can't even begin to imagine what you must be going through. We've heard he's been causing trouble up at the school. You must be mortified.

MAEVE

Well yes sister, I am. But my son was being beaten with a metal rod. That's not right either, now is it.

SISTER BERNADETTE

(tongue tied)

We'd like to say the Rosary with the children, for the conversion of Mr O'Sullivan.

What?

She can't get out of this, even if she tried.

MAEVE

Very well...

Maeve gathers the kids around in a circle, kneeling together holding hands.

SISTER THERESA

Our father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;

MAEVE & KIDS

(join in confused)

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on
earth as it is in heaven.

INT. SOLICITOR BARNS OFFICE- DAY

Maeve meets with SOLICITOR BARNS (50) and father Delaney.

MAEVE

Is this really necessary?

FATHER DELANEY

It is the only way Mr's O'Sullivan.

MAEVE

I can't take my own husband to court.

FATHER DELANEY

Of course you can.

MAEVE

But people will think I've gone mad.
Abandoned the man I love.

FATHER DELANEY

The man you love has abandoned you.

MR BARNES

Indeed. From what father Delaney tells
me, what he has done to your
reputation in your community has been
nothing short of notorious.

(pauses, unsure how to deliver)

I don't want to alarm you Mrs
O'Sullivan, but you can expect the
newspapers to run several articles
discussing the matter.

MAEVE

Newspapers? Jesus no, I'll have the

whole of Dublin talking!

FATHER DELANEY
Not just Dublin. This entire country
will be on your side!

MAEVE
This isn't about sides father!

FATHER DELANEY AND MR BARNES
Of course it is.

MAEVE
(the gravity of this dawns on her)
We're husband and wife. We're raising
six children together.
(weeps)
I love him.

Roll of the eyes from both men.

FATHER DELANEY
(offers her a tissue)
Now now. We understand your concerns.
Its okay to be frightened, but its not
okay to be in denial.

MAEVE
I know what he's doing is wrong, but
is he actually breaking the law?

FATHER DELANEY
What your husband has done to my
parish is criminal. Not only has he
stolen his own children's innocence
and education, he's now become a
danger to our society.

Her conditioning tells her he's right, but her heart doesn't
seem to think so.

MAEVE
You're talking like he's a thief. He's
a good man. Loves his kids more than
anything.

FATHER DELANEY
If we don't stop this cancer now, his
devilish influences will spread
everywhere. Is that what you want?

MR BARNES

This is impossible.

(frustrated)

Does she always bicker and answer back like this?

FATHER DELANEY

Forgive her Mr Barnes, she is uneducated.

(stern to Maeve)

This is a time for obedience Maeve.

(stands above her)

Do you understand.

Maeve's eyes widen. Oh dear, what has she done.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - MORNING

Sean picks up some mail at the front door. A letter form MR BARNES SOLICITORS & CO with his court summons. Which almost knocks the life out of him. The children pour down the stairs ready for school, followed by Maeve.

She briefly looks in his eyes for a split second. But this look feels like an eternity, as the weight of her world collides with the weight of his.

EXT. RIVER LIFFEY - DAY

We move up the River Liffey towards the Four Courts.

EXT. FOUR COURTS - DAY

Camera flashes from journalists as they gather outside the steps. Maeve, Mr Barnes and Father Delaney rush inside.

INT. COURT HEARING- DAY

Sean and his solicitor MR MARTIN 50, conduct their business the right side of the court. Only his mother Siobhan, and two brothers Patrick and Henry behind him for support.

Maeve sits the left side, accompanied by Solicitor Barnes, Father Delaney and her parents Mr and MRs McCarthy.

JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT 55 enters.

JUDGE

Morning. Please rise.

Court rises.

JUDGE

O'Sullivan versus O'Sullivan, court hearing now in session, please be seated.

Court sits.

JUDGE

Mr Barnes, would you please tell the court why the plaintiff Mrs O'Sullivan has brought her husband Mr O'Sullivan here today.

MR BARNES

Your Honor, in my clients own words, Mr and Mrs O'Sullivan have been happily married for ten years, no trouble of any kind. The couple married December 26th 1944 in the Church of Our Lady of Good Council, Mourne Road, Drimnagh. At the time of their marriage both Mr and Mrs O'Sullivan had always been catholic. Up until this year 1955 Mr O'Sullivan had always attended Sunday mass, always received Holy Communion, and always approved of their children being reared as catholic, following in his footsteps.

(pauses)

That was, until, Mr O'Sullivan began acting rather unusual. Sneaking behind his wife's back to attend secret meetings, and, over time, came to his own conclusions that it was somehow best for his six children to no longer participate and learn Roman Catholic teachings in their respective schools. Instead, follow him in learning Jehovah Witness beliefs, which go against Mrs O'Sullivan's beliefs.

(pauses)

Of course this brings all sorts of issues for my client. Mrs O'Sullivan feels the utmost humiliation. Feelings of betrayal. Betrayed by the one person whom she thought she could count on the most. The one person she valued more than anything else, her

life partner.

(pauses)

Your honor, my client believed she was embarking on a life long commitment to raise her children with the same traditional religion she always knew. Then out of nowhere, for no apparent sensible reasoning, like a thief in the night, those life long vows were broken.

JUDGE

Thank you Mr Barnes for that informative introduction. Mr Martin please proceed with cross examination.

MR MARTIN

Mrs O'Sullivan to the witness stand please.

She enters the witness stand. Takes oath.

MR MARTIN

Mrs O'Sullivan, do you swear by almighty God, that the evidence you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

MAEVE

Yes.

JUDGE

Proceed.

MR MARTIN

(holds up Sean's bible)

Mrs O'Sullivan, do you recognise this book?

MAEVE

Yes.

MR MARTIN

Please speak up and tell the court what this book is.

MAEVE

That's my husbands bible.

MR MARTIN

And where did it come from, Mrs

O'Sullivan.

MAEVE

Those two strangers.

MR MARTIN

Would you mind telling the court how you first met these two strangers?

MAEVE

It was on Christmas morning 1954. My husband was home. I answered the front door.

MR MARTIN

To a lady and gentleman whom you had never met before, correct?

MAEVE

Yes.

MR MARTIN

And what did these strangers give you?

MAEVE

I was distracted by the kids, wasn't paying much attention.

MR MARTIN

What did they give you Mrs O'Sullivan?

MAEVE

They offered me a magazine. I took it and left it in the front hallway.

MR MARTIN

Surly this couple were not from the area or even your Catholic Church Mrs O'Sullivan?

MAEVE

I wasn't sure.

MR MARTIN

But you bought the magazine anyway, correct.

MAEVE

(hesitates)

Yes.

MR MARTIN

So it was you Mr's O'Sullivan that actually invited the Witness's into your home.

MR BARNES

Objection your Honor!

JUDGE

Overruled. Continue.

MR MARTIN

Is it true that a short time after that, you came home from shopping in town with your children to find Mr O'Sullivan chatting to the same two strangers.

MAEVE

Yes.

MR MARTIN

And is it true, that after this encounter, your husband stopped attending weekly mass at your local parish and began steering towards his new interest.

MAEVE

Yes, he said he was leaving the Catholic Church and becoming a Jehovah Witness. Also. I didn't invite them strangers into my home, my husband did.

MR MARTIN

No further questions at this time your honor.

JUDGE

Mr Barnes.

Mr Barnes approaches Maeve.

MR BARNES

All of this has really taken it's toll on your health hasn't it Mrs O'Sullivan. In and out of Hospital, nine blood transfusions after giving birth to your sixth child, whilst trying to raise five other school

children. Tell me, how upset were you when your husband removed all your sacred holy statues from the home that afternoon.

MAEVE

I was beside myself. Couldn't understand his thinking.

MR BARNES

Would it be true to say you felt betrayed.

MAEVE

Yes.

MR BARNES

Would it be true to say you felt ashamed of his odd outrageous behaviour.

MAEVE

Yes.

MR BARNES

Would it be also true to say you felt provoked? Like he was pushing you too far.

MAEVE

Yes. I warned him. I told him I couldn't cope with the fighting, the torment. But he went and did it anyway.

MR BARNES

So you felt utterly pushed to your maximum limit, and you cracked.

MAEVE

I couldn't think straight I was so upset.

MR BARNES

So how did you then feel when you heard Mr Mr O'Sullivan had removed your eldest son Sean Jr from his religious class?

MAEVE

I was out of my mind with anger. I

received some letters, from different schools around Dublin. They said he tried to get the kids into protestant schools without discussing with me.

MR BARNES

And each and every school rejected your five children, correct.

MAEVE

Yes. But I was glad. The kids were already witnessing us arguing more and more. To change schools would have been a disaster.

MR BARNES

Must be totally mortifying having the entire community gossiping about your children and your broken marriage.

Her answer is written all over her face.

MR BARNES

Mrs O'Sullivan is it true you are deeply concerned about protecting the wellbeing of your six children.

MAEVE

Yes. But only regarding his religious beliefs.

MR BARNES

Would you mind telling the court your reasons why you have taken it, this far.

MAEVE

I'm Catholic. I was born and Raised Catholic. It's all I know. I never thought our marriage would go in this direction. I don't want my husband teaching our children his way.

MR BARNES

No further questions your honor. I'd like to call Mr O'Sullivan to the stand please.

Maeve returns to her seat as Sean approaches the stand.

MR BARNES

Is it true you removed all of your wife's religious belongings, such as photographs and statues of the Virgin Mary and lord Jesus Christ from the home, and threw them into the canal?

The court gasp. Wait.

SEAN

Yes.

MR BARNES

I don't worship neither icons or saints. The ten commandments states you must'nt bow down to a carved image or give it exclusive devotion.

Whispers in the court.

MR BARNES

And how did this effect your wife?

He struggles here under oath. He does not want to lie.

SEAN

She beat me over the head with a dinner plate.

Louder whispers. Mr Barnes and Father Delaney scold Maeve with their eyes. How did they miss that part.

MR BARNES

Is it true that you took your children out of religious class without permission to teach them about this book.

SEAN

The eldest, yes. The Irish school system is run by the Catholic Church, brothers and nuns who swear by doing what's right in the name of God. Yet lack so much compassion towards people like me. Show no kindness towards children. They have acted incredibly inhumane towards me all because of my beliefs.

(becoming angry)

In Ireland today, an Irish Clergyman or a Solicitor or Doctor can sign a

perfectly healthy person into a mental asylum for fifty years and nobody will say a word. Artificial contraception is considered intrinsically evil! My own wife nearly died after giving birth recently because the church condones contraceptive practices!
 (personal reveal)
 Now we sleep in separate rooms so I don't accidentally kill the woman I married.

Another blow for Maeve. This is just so personal. She glances at her mother crying. So taken back by her son in law's hurtful revelations.

SEAN

That's the kind of dominance they hold over this country.

JUDGE

This is not American Mr O'Sullivan. We have rules and regulations here.

MR BARNES

Indeed your Honor. Mr O'Sullivan do you enjoy being the laughing stock of your community.

MR MARTIN

Objection!

JUDGE

Overruled. Perhaps you could rephrase the question Mr Barnes.

MR BARNES

Surly you do not enjoy being a person of mockery and ridicule.

MR O'SULLIVAN

What do you bloody think. My entire community has ostracized me.

Court grows silent. Siobhan his ma, holds her breath.

MR BARNES

Then why would you publicly torment the people you love?
 (pause)
 Tear your family apart.

(pause)
 Have stories written about you in all
 the national papers. Why on earth
 continue being a Jehovah Witness if
 all it causes is damage and heartache.

Every single person in court looks to Sean. A pin could drop.

SEAN

Because its my truth. And there's a
 freedom in that...

This statement is nor better or worse. Maeve feels utterly
 trapped. She stares over at Seans parents. His da mortified.
 His ma heartbroken.

MR BARNES

Your honor, it is quite clear that Mr
 O'Sullivan's distorted beliefs have
 resulted in a community uproar. This
 man spends one hour each day teaching
 his children these Jehovah Witness
 distorted beliefs!

MR MARTIN

Objection! Can a father not tell his
 children great stories of our history,
 so they can get a better grasp of the
 world they live in, your honor.

MR BARNES

May I remind the court that these
 children's minds have not fully
 developed enough to make their own
 decisions or distinctions and this
 influence he's inflicting is highly
 dangerous to not only the children but
 those around them!

MR MARTIN

Your honor, it is a fundamental human
 right, under the Irish constitution,
 to have religious freedom!

(holds up constitution booklet)
 Article 42 states, "Both parents shall
 be free to provide an education in
 their homes or in private or public
 schools recognized or established by
 the state"!

JUDGE

ORDER! Order in court! Mr Martin you may proceed.

MR MARTIN

Mr O'Sullivan...

(turns to him)

The day you married your wife, did you believe in your heart of hearts that when you both welcomed children you would raise them as Roman Catholics?

SEAN

That was my belief back then yes.

MR MARTIN

Do you understand your wife holds rights to raise them in the Catholic Church?

SEAN

Yes your honor.

MR MARTIN

So the day you said your vows, was it not implied for better or worse, richer or poorer, sickness and in health, till death do you part, you would agree with your wife to rear your children Roman Catholics?

SEAN

I wanted to make her happy. I loved her more than words could ever express. Our adventure and miracles and tough times along the way have given us a sense of how we want to be in this world.

(stares at Maeve)

I accepted her as she was. Always put her and the kids first.

MR MARTIN

That is all Mr O'Sullivan. May I just conclude your Honor, that my client is simply doing what he feels is best. There is no malice, no crime, no hatred, just a man wanting to educate his children so when difficulty times hit, which they will, at least they will have the knowledge, wisdom and

perseverance to keep going.

JUDGE

Thank you Mr Martin.

(turns to Sean)

You made an oath under God Mr O'Sullivan, your God, my God, you made it. Therefor you have no choice. You must give an undertaking which means you cannot interfere with your children's religious education anymore.

Whispers.

JUDGE

You will not bring your children to any kingdom hall meetings or educate them with any Jehovah Witness teachings, is this understood.

Sean stares at his Mother sobbing. Then glances to Maeve who's turned stone cold.

SEAN

Yes your honor. I am prepared to give an undertaking, not interfere in any way with the religious education of my six children.

JUDGE

(voice fades)

Mrs Maeve Beatrice O'Sullivan, I appoint you their legal guardian, that you are awarded full custody of all six children. All necessary directions, educations and upbringing is now in your hands. Court Adjourned.

Maeve's eyes meet Seans and she remembers the day they met. Wonders how their love story has come to this point. No doubt their attachment still remains somewhere buried underneath all the suffering and separation, but society has won. Somehow through artificial differences and social influences they have been torn apart by the system.

INT. DUBLIN AIRPORT -ARRIVALS- DUSK

SUPERIMPOSED: 1966 TEN YEARS LATER

Sean Sr now 48, leans against his white Ford Consul Corsair

in his navy car coat, skinny tie, nice shoes. No matter where he is these days, he always dresses well.

Catherine 19, now a glamorous blonde air hostess with an insatiable spirit for travel and adventure comes out through arrival doors with three HANDSOME BRITISH AIRWAYS PILOTS. Glances at her da adorningly.

CATHERINE
There he is lads...
(to pilots)
Have a good weekend.

PILOTS
See ya Cathy. Have a good weekend.

She runs into her dads arms. She loves when he picks her up.

CATHERINE
Nice to see ya da.

SEAN
How'a'ye princess. Welcome home.

CATHERINE
Thanks for picking me up.

He throws her case in the back.

SEAN
Anytime.

CATHERINE
Any dinner going?

SEAN
(smiles)
Sunday best.

They have a giggle and drive off home.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - EVENING

Sean sits at the head of the table with Marie 15, Damien 12, Gerry 10 and Nial 8 eating their favourite Sunday roast chicken dinner.

Maeve brings some milk to table.

MAEVE
Where is she, its ready.

She's aged well. Still holds her curves and strong female features.

Catherine enters in more comfortable clothes.

SEAN SR
(proud)
There she is.

CATHERINE
Sorry mammy, I'm starving.

The boys smile always happy to have their big sister home.

GERRY
Ye bring us anything?

CATHRINE
Not this time. Was too busy.
(pauses, winks)
What do you think.

She throws down some chocolate form duty free and they light up. Maeve hides the chocolate in a cupboard then joins the table.

MAEVE
After dinner.

Sean Jr 21 enters. A working man now. Stylish. Confident. Wearing a suspicious looking fur hat. His da notices, says nothing.

SEAN JR
Alright sis.

Catherine just blinks.

SEAN SR
What? Freezing out.

MAEVE
Give thanks...

The kids hold hands, close their eyes for prayer. Sean Sr doesn't participate. Normal these days.

MAEVE
Dear lord, thank you for this blessed

food we're about to eat. The gift of the gab and hearty laughter. May the love we share, be with us for ever after. Amen.

KIDS

Amen.

CATHERINE

Was dying for this all week mammy. I tell ya the French haven't a patch on an Irish Sunday roast.

MARIE

I thought you liked all that fancy food.

Marie can only imagine. Wants to be her big sister so bad.

CATHERINE

Well, there's this cute little café we usually get breakfast at, nice coffee, baguettes, right near our hotel. You'd love it.

DAMIEN

Is it true they eat snails over there?

CATHERINE

And frogs legs. And onion soup.

DAMIEN

Onion soup? Yuck!

CATHERINE

And the French fries. You'd think they make them in France, but they actually make them in grease.

Nobody gets it...but then...bundles of laughter.

CATHERINE

Greece. Ye get it.

SEAN JR

(rolls his eyes)
We get it.

CATHERINE

(whispers smiling)
Nice to be home ma...

MAEVE
Glad you're back safe.

Sean Sr looks at Sean Jr suspiciously.

SEAN SR
Hats off at the dinner table please.

But Sean Jr doesn't want to remove it. He's hiding something.

SEAN JR
It's freezing out. Baltic.

Maeve looks at her son's unusual hat. Something's definitely up. Secretly prays there's no trouble.

Stern...

SEAN
Take it off.

Kids stops eating. Frightened of an argument. Sean Jr hesitates, then slowly removes the woollen hat revealing his BALD HEAD. Everyone gasp. Maeve's heart drops.

The bloody state of him.

MAEVE
What have you done Seany?

But he's too embarrassed to answer. Genuinely regretful.

SEAN JR
Me and Jamie were just having a laugh.
Long hair is out.

SEAN
You think you're a big man now. Is that it.

Oh shit.

SEAN JR
We were just having a laugh da, relax.

SEAN
At who's expense. You've shamed your mother.

He wants to say it. He wants to say it.

SEAN JR
No more than you have.

A disturbing silence at the table. Sean Jr is getting brave lately. The usual unripe childish behaviour towards his parents.

Sean knows growing pains. Maeve just can't handle it.

SEAN
You haven't got the slightest idea of
the path I'm walking son.
(drinks his milk)
Be careful.

SEAN JR
Sorry da. Do ye want to come to work
with me tomorrow. I've a job out in
Dalkey, will be a decent drive.

SEAN
Its my day off...

But seconds thoughts, anything for his son.

SEAN
Of course I will. Now, lets eat this
chicken before it gets cold.

Dinner continues. Seans eyes meets Maeve's and as only parents can relate, they raise their eyebrows in amusement at Baldy. Somehow they've managed to live respectfully under the same roof. Regardless of their differences.

INT. SEAN JR'S WORK VAN-DALKEY - MORNING

Stunning million dollar homes along the beach front. Sean and Sean Jr eat sandwiches in silence in their parked van. A stunning direct view of the the Atlantic ocean only a hop skip jump away.

SEAN JR
Some life out here eh.

Yeah but...

SEAN
Everyone has problems.

SEAN JR
You think I'll do well, doing this?

SEAN

That depends. If you stop your messin.
Baldy.

(side eye)

If you take your job seriously. Life's
no joke son. Bad things can happen.
You can't fuck around forever.

But like all young men starting out life, he's only concerned
with the present.

SEAN JR

Look at that ocean. Might bring the
lads up here the weekend.

Sean grabs his side torso. The pain excruciating.

SEAN JR

Da....what's wrong?

SEAN

Aw, Jesus. What the hell is in that
sandwich.

SEAN JR

Might be the cheese. You okay?

SEAN

Drive. You're gonna have to drop me
home. Sorry son.

SEAN JR

I'll cancel the job. No problem.

They drive downhill.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - EVENING

Sean throws up in the toilet. Washes his hands and looks at
his reflection in the mirror which is getting pale/yellow.
Its this moment he knows something isn't right.

INT. DUBLIN HOSPITAL - DAY

A silhouette of Sean walking down the hallway towards the
doctors office.

INT. SEANS HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Sean rests in a bed. He's been in for about a week.

Maeve and Sean Jr speak to DOCTOR GALLAGHER 40. The look on his face says it all.

DOCTOR GALLAGHER

We've found some tumour cells in his body. In the blood. 'm afraid it's spread rather quickly.

Maeve blinks. Blood turns ice cold.

SEAN JR

What? I'm sorry, what did you just say? Spread? He's only been here five days...

DOCTOR GALLAGHER

I'm very sorry to tell you Mrs O'Sullivan but your husband will be dead in six weeks. I'm sorry.

Shock of Maeve's life.

Doctor Gallagher leaves the ward.

They both enter behind Sean's private curtain...

INT. SEANS BED- HOSPITAL - DAY

Sean sits straight up, see's the look on Maeve's face and knows. He just knows...

SEAN

Somebody want to say something?

But Maeve can't seem to speak.

SEAN

(knows its bad)

Come on. I've lived with the truth my whole life. Tell me what I'm facing.

But her body goes into shock. All she can do is whimper. Sean Jr places his arms around her for support.

SEAN JR

It's okay mam.

Looks to his da utterly terrified.

SEAN JR

Da...

SEAN

Go on....

SEAN JR

They said it's cancer of the liver.
 (swallows lump in throat)
 And that you'll be dead in six
 weeks...

Shock of Sean's life.

And now it all makes sense.

His eyes drift to his wife.

So this is how it ends...

SEAN

Right...
 (tries to comprehend)
 Well...
 (searching for meaning)
 This certainly changes things.

Maeve thinks yes....it certainly does...

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD- KITCHEN- DAY

Maeve finds herself in their empty kitchen. Stares at the walls. Oh if they could talk.

SEAN V/O

Firstly, I want a cheap coffin. No
 Catholic priest or rosary horse shit.

She walks to the living room. His empty rocking chair by the window. His hat resting on the shoulder. All his important books lining the shelves. That he built.

SEAN V/O

My good friend Dick Foster, will help
 you organise the talk. No driving
 around the streets showing the
 neighbours I'm a dead corpse in a
 coffin. Let them remember me as I am.

His dictionary stands out. She reaches for it. But decides not to touch.

She examines the photos of their children on the wall. Each child representing each chapter of their story. Then comes to their wedding day photo on those Drimnagh steps. Him so handsome and proud, her so hopeful and full.

SEAN V/O

Also, I don't want my hands joined in prayer Maeve, promise me.

MAEVE V/O

I promise...

SEAN V/O

God knows my heart.

She glances out the window to the other side of life. The innocent unaware children playing soccer in the field. The wheels of time continue to turn.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - BEDROOM- DAY

Now in their bedroom. She opens his closet full of shirt, dress suits. Pulls out his favourite. Runs her fingers over the fabric. Smothers her face in it. His smell.

SEAN

(accepting his fate)

Now...bring me my finest suit so I can say goodbye.

She falls to the floor in a heap. The gravity of her husband on his death bed planning his own funeral, has finally brought her down.

MAEVE

No God, why...why??

We stay with her for a while, until she gathers herself best she can. Coat and scarf on. She folds his perfect shirt, suit and shoes, places them in a small suitcase and heads out the front door down the empty street.

INT. SEAN'S HOSPITAL WARD - EVENING

Despite Seans alarming yellow and frail appearance, he's dressed in his finest suit. Sitting up right, hair slicked back, shoes shining, he says his farewells to his friends one by one, as they come say their goodbyes.

DAN

Of all the doors we knocked on, we're so glad we came to yours Sean. See you soon my friend.

SEAN

You sure will Dan. Goodbye.

POLLY

Goodbye Sean.

SEAN

Goodbye Polly. Thanks for changing my life.

Dick foster shakes his hand.

DICK

Looking sharp my friend.

SEAN

Dick...thanks for coming.

DICK

See you soon. When you're not sick.

SEAN

You sure will. Thanks for the friendship.

Dick stares at Sean. His bravery truly astounding.

Sean Jr comes in with his two friends.

SEAN JR

Da, my friends came to see ya.

MICK

It was nice knowing ya Mr O'Sullivan.

JAMIE

You always made us feel welcome at the house Mr O'Sullivan.

SEAN

Look after my boy.

MICK & JAMIE

Yes sir. Goodbye Mr O'Sullivan.

SEAN
See ya lads.

The boys leave.

Sean Jr pulls out two cans of Guinness.

SEAN JR
Don't suppose you fancy a pint da.

SEAN
Once its not horse shit.

They drink and cheers in silence.

SEAN JR
What am I gonna do da. I don't want ya
to leave us.

SEAN
Now come on. I need you to be strong
for your mammy. Remember, one day,
when you least expect it, when your
mother is making breakfast, I'll be
running across our field, running
towards you. One day son. One day in
the resurrection...

Maeve comes in like an angel...

Her face isn't as sad...more now accepting.

SEAN
Let me chat to your mother.

She settles in...possibly for their final chat.

MAEVE
You never wanted to compromise...

Something they both agree on.

MAEVE
Why not...why didn't ye, make an
allowance...for how I felt about my
faith.
(teasing him)
It was always your way...

SEAN
How could I...it would undo everything

I had ever hoped for and believed in.
 Matthew 5:48 said "Be perfect...as
 your heavenly father in heaven is
 perfect" I've always tried to hold
 that...

She take his hand. Damn he's stubborn but she loves him so.

SEAN

Doesn't mean I didn't love ye my
 darling. I've loved ye ever since you
 went down that hill towards that lake,
 on your bike, wind blowing in your
 hair. And that first kiss...

She kisses his lips softly.

MAEVE

Close your eyes my love...lets imagine
 for a minute...

He closes his eyes. She waves to NURSE DEIRDRE (30) who
 pushes a trolley carrying a VINYL RECORD PLAYER towards his
 bed.

Presses play: MADAM BUTTERFLY- ONE FINE DAY blasts throughout
 the hospital ward and hallways.

Sean is captivated.

Even some dying patients, doctors and nurses get a glimpse
 into the beautiful aria.

Maeve takes Sean's hand in hers, leans into his face.

MAEVE

We may not have ever made it to the
 opera... but nobody said I couldn't
 bring it to you...

Sean's memory returns back to...

YORK STREET TENEMENT ROOM

Where it all began. Sean and Maeve dance around their room
 rental, to the music in their head.

We transition to...

THE OPERA HOUSE

Sean and Maeve are now both finely dressed. Her in that RED DRESS the one she never got to wear to their barn dance. Him in his finest suit.

As they dance to PUCCINI'S ONE FINE DAY, their six children, appear in the audience also finely dressed, clapping to their parents wonderful stage performance. The music so powerful it sweeps us into their undying love.

Then he see's them...corner of his eye.

Catherine and Marie. Dressed in their cute nightgowns, the exact same hair and smiling faces, as the night he left for London.

His heart bursts. How is this possible. All he's ever wanted.

Maeve voluntarily lets his hand go, and he step off stage towards the bright light.

They whisper to him gently...

MARIE

This way Seany...

CATHERINE

You made it back...

SEAN'S YOUNGER VOICE

Sure I promised ye I would...

The girls lead Sean into the light and disappear into his kingdom.

We transition back to...

SEANS ROOM- HOSPITAL

Maeve kisses Sean's lips one more time, as he takes his final breath and gently slips away.

EXT. MOUNT JEROME CEMETARY DUBLIN - DAY

Maeve and the children are joined by family and friends from Drimnagh and the Jehovah congregation, as Sean is laid to rest.

People begin to depart, when Father Delaney finds Maeve.

FATHER DELANEY

I'm very sorry Maeve.

She can't even look at him. Until she finds the right words...

MAEVE

I did everything you asked me...
obeyed you...trusted you...dragged my
husband through the court system on
front of the entire country for
you...all for what, he's gone...

She forces herself to his face.

FATHER DELANEY

You came to me asking for help...and
that's what I did. I gave you my best.
(uneasy)
Death comes knocking to us all, sooner
or later...

He goes to leave when...

MAEVE

You felt threatened Mr Delaney.

It's Mr now. Not Father.

FATHER DELANEY

Excuse me...

MAEVE

By his nobility. His sovereignty. Yes
he was a stubborn bastard...but he was
my stubborn Bastard, and boy God did
he know who he was...
(emotionally driven)
I'd give anything...anything, to see
him sitting in his chair with that
stupid bible, one more time, just one
more time... he could preach to
whoever he wanted, I wouldn't care!

FATHER DELANEY

Maeve...you'll give yourself a heart
attack...

MAEVE

That's the problem...we care too much!
I might be poor, even uneducated, but

I know a fraudster when I see one. Mr
Delaney the great pretender...

FATHER DELANEY
Is that what you think...

MAEVE
(dawning on her)
Catholic! Christian! Jehovah!
(arms out wide)
We're all the same! All just trying to
survive...

She leaves down the path and never looks back.

We watch as Maeve leaves the cemetery in her black car with
her six children. She holds a single red rose as she
continues through Drimnagh, around the neighbourhood, past
all the neighbours.

She looks up at two floating clouds. One left, one right. And
finds herself somewhere in the middle of both sides.

FADE OUT