

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 carefree cyclists all under 21, are lead along the military road at the junction of Wicklow by COACH VINCENT (50). The beauty of LOCK TAY right beneath them.

They come to a screeching halt. Wind blown. Huddled together.

COACH VINCENT

Take a look at that my little swans.

SEAN O'SULLIVAN an inner city lad with piercing blue eyes and an intellectual stare looks down at the stunning lake.

SEAN

Now that's what I call a view.

He glances over at the girls, particularly MAEVE MCCARTHY, an innocent Catholic girl. She catches his intense gaze and feels her heart skip a beat. Then whispers...

MAEVE

It's like a painting.

Like most Catholic girls, she's mannerly, a healthy weight but not conventionally pretty. Society certainly wouldn't find her attractive, however, there's something about her strong nose that makes her uniquely appealing.

COACH VINCENT

Now listen. Don't anybody dare try bolt downhill, do ye hear me. Slow and steady.

But his words mean nothing, as the thrill to ride free is too tempting. The eager group speed down with their coach trailing behind them.

COACH VINCENT

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)
And no funny business.

Sean quietly puts on his dirty boots and tip toes out of his tent towards...

MAEVE'S TENT

Maeve and best friend 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! How was it?

ROISIN
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 arrives. Pops his head.

SEAN
Pssst.
(scares girls to death)
Can I borrow Maeve for a minute.

Maeve throws on her shoes before she can answer.

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

Under the moonlight, Sean and Maeve dip their bare feet in the water. Maeve, feeling undeniably drawn to him, anticipates a romantic gesture of some kind.

SEAN
Did you know the moon drifts away from
the earth.

She looks up. Shakes her head no. Wonders how he knows such things.

SEAN
But it won't ever leave...because of
the gravitation force.

They lock eyes.

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.

He wonders if he should reveal more.

SEAN
I've just bought myself a dictionary
book.

MAEVE
A dictionary?

SEAN
Yeah. I going to educate myself. On
the makings of this world.

She thinks she understands him. Barely nods.

SEAN
Do you work yourself?

MAEVE

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

And now she cringes, because she now thinks, he thinks, she's a vegetable.

SEAN

What about dreams Maeve McCarthy. What do you dream about.

MAEVE

What. What do ye mean?

She knows exactly what he means.

SEAN

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

Her shyness takes over. He finds this so intriguing. Moves closer. Pressing for an answer.

SEAN

So....do you want a family one day?

We can hear her heart beating as the gentle waves rush against the sand.

MAEVE

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

Music to his ears. He smiles. Shoots his shot.

SEAN

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

MAEVE

Oh. I don't know, I can't dance.

SEAN

Do you have a nice dress?

Her eyes light up.

MAEVE

A red one.

SEAN

Lovely.

Remember RED.

MAEVE

Yeah, but I've two left feet.

True story. He draws her closer attracted to her honesty, hand around her waist, gently swaying.

SEAN

Would you look at that. You're two left feet must like my two right. Match made in heaven.

She grins as a safe warm feeling takes over her body.

MAEVE

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

Stops moving. Now his heart is beating out of his chest.

SEAN

If I was given the chance, I'd take it.

And he does. Their lips meet for the first time. The absolute beginning of everything.

INT. TENAMENT BUILDING -BEDROOM- DUSK

Cold and damp. No electricity or running water. The smell of mass habitation. 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. An unyielding determination to provide for her family.

CATHERINE 12 and MARIE 9, both wearing borrowed clothes and shoes clap hands together as Sean appears in a sharp suit. His hair is 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)
Where are you going?

SEAN
(kneels to her level)
Don't worry Marie, I'll be back.

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

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

SEAN
You sure its okay to borrow it?

SIOBHAN
Relax....he'll never know.
(winks)
I think this Maeve girl is in big trouble, you looking like this. 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.

PATRICK
What's going on here?

SEAN
(embarrassed)
Nothing.

HENRY
He going to Sunday Mass Paddy. Right Seany!

SIOBHAN
You shut your mouth Henry. Mind your business. Go wash your hands, dinners ready.

Patricks looks down at Sean's dirty work boots.

PATRICK

Look ma! He hasn't even cleaned his boots.

She glances down to his filthy work boots. Holy Jazus. The mortification.

SIOBHAN

Jesus Christ Sean. You promised me you'd buy yourself new work shoes. 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 for it)
Give it back Paddy!

Patrick throws it to Henry. Reverses it back to Patrick.

PATRICK

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

SEAN

Hand it over Paddy! I mean it!

SIOBHAN

Boys that's enough!

Patrick offers it back. Molly opens the back door.

MOLLY

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

But as Sean steps out into the alleyway, his bike is nowhere to be seen.

SEAN

Did you take it Paddy???

Rushes to the door.

PADDY
No. I swear.

SEAN
Henry?

Terrified, he shakes his head no.
They all know who did.

SIOBHAN
That bloody bastard.

Sean runs down the alleyway towards the...

INT. LOCAL PUB - NIGHT

Sean bursts inside the Smokey bar. Musky. Crowded. Grown workmen huddled 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. Couldn't care less.

SEAN
All for a few lousy pints!
(emotional)
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 you, I'd probably use me two legs and try walking to her, or did ye not think of that, ye stupid gobshite.

Sniggers form the men. They think the kid has lost this one. But Sean's 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 the big lad. Come on horse! You wanna fight me, fight me!

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

SEAN

I don't want to fight ye da, but what you did was wrong!

(tormented)

I just wanted you to know that...

Sean leaves.

MR O'SULLIVAN

What does he want a feckin apology. A cold one please!

Bartender pulls him a new pint.

INT. TENAMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

An hour or so has passed. Sean and Siobhan chat at the table quietly while the others sleep in the next room. His desperation to get away from his father and these slums, palpable.

SEAN

I feel so guilty. She'll never forgive me. She'll never understand.

SIOBHAN

Would you look at me for god's sake.

(takes his cheek)

I need you to forget about her for now son. You and your da are not getting along for a while. You need to think about you.

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

SIOBHAN

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

His heart sinks.

SIOBHAN

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

SEAN

American Army? I'm not a soldier ma!

SIOBHAN

Aa a labourer! Sushhh.

(puts cash in his hand)

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

He glances to the bedroom door. The thought of leaving his sisters behind kills him.

SIOBHAN

I can hear your thoughts. I know what you're thinking.

SEAN

I don't want to leave you girls.

SIOBHAN

But you're made for more than this place Seany.

(tears up)

This home is where you started. Out there is where you'll finish...

She wraps her motherly arms around him. Over his shoulder see's the clock which reads 9.15pm

SIOBHAN

You don't have much time.

She's right, this is his only way out. He rushes into the bedroom quietly. Patrick and Henry in one bed. Catherine and Marie in the other. Throws some clothes into a duffle bag.

Patrick stirs awake.

PATRICK

Seany, is there a fire?

SEAN

No Paddy, everything's fine. Go back asleep.

Now Catherine wakes.

CATHERINE

Seany?

Dammit. He rushes back to the kitchen. Before he knows it all four siblings are right behind him.

HENRY

Where's he going ma?

SIOBHAN

Nowhere. Get back to bed.

PATRICK

Nowhere with a bag full of clothes. What's going on Seany?

Sean hesitates, doesn't want to hurt them.

SEAN

London.

PATRICK

But there's a war over there!

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

Henry hands him his dictionary.

HENRY
Don't forget this.

SEAN
Thanks Henry.

PATRICK
What are we gonna tell the old lad.

SEAN
Pog Mo thoin! How bout that.

They share a giggle. Girls Clinging to his legs.

CATHERINE
Come back to us Seany, promise.

SEAN
(lump in his throat)
I'll always come back, promise.

He opens the back door and we watch him disappear down the alleyway.

EXT. DUBLIN PORT - NIGHT

Sean offers his ticket to A CABIN OFFICER and finds a spot tail end of the boat. 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, 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. 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. 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!!!

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

INT. SEANS RENTAL- NIGHT

This place is worse than dirt. Nothing but a single bed, side lamp and a window. But for now it'll do. Landlord MR HUGHES (50) offers Sean his 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. Understood.

SEAN

Yes Mr Hughes. Thank you.

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 dead bodies into ambulances.

Sean, head down, afraid to look anywhere, dumps pulverized 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 that
O'Sullivan.

Sean looks up. What could be worse than this.

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
O'Sullivan!

Sean looks over his shoulder. Holds his stare. Nobody's ever seen him in this light before.

SEAN

No disrespect Sergeant, but I'm a
pacifist. I don't condone this war

sir.

SERGEANT TAYLOR

(climbs down from rubble, face to face)

A peacemaker. I see. You know O'Sullivan, if we all settled disputes like you, 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, seems to stand out from the rest. She appears relaxed, hopeful, wearing red lipstick and pearls. She carries a bright aura, that special spark, which 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. Shouts over...

RITA

I'll be with you in a jiffy.

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

RITA

Now boys, what can I get you?

SOLDIER 1

Two tea's please sweetheart.

RITA

Milk, Sugar?

SOLDIER 1

Sure why not.

SOLDIER 1

Don't suppose you're on the menu today?

RITA

Not today.

SOLDIER 1

That's a shame. That bright rep lippy screams whore. Guess we got the wrong impression.

RITA

I beg your pardon.

SOLDIER 2

Come on darling.

(whispers)

You don't have to pretend with us. We was told you loose Nippy bird's are on special offer during lunchtime. Cut us a deal for two and we promise we'll be your best customers.

Dirty bastards. She leans in closer.

RITA

Are you really that cocky to think I'd go fishing with a prick like you.

SOLDIER 1

What the fuck did you say?

Sensing trouble, Sean grabs his shovel stepping on front of her before anything starts.

SEAN

I think it's best you two be off.

SOLDIER 1

Oh do ye now.

SEAN

That's no way to speak to a woman, now is it.

Now their really pissed off.

SOLDIER 2

Are you actually serious. An Irish Paddy trying to teach us elo-fuckin-cution lessons.

RITA

(to Sean)

It's okay, I can handle it.

SOLDIER 2

I got an idea. How about the two of
ya, fuck off back to Ireland.

BANG! Sean smacks his shovel over soldier 2's head. A scuffle starts, some chairs are thrown. Soldier 1 grabs a butter knife, holds it to Seans neck from behind.

Rita can barely look.

RITA

For gods sake, that's enough! Please.
Put the knife down.

Everyone in the room holds their breath.

SOLDIER 2

Come on. He ain't worth it.

Soldiers leave. Rita and Sean fix the table and chairs.

SEAN

I didn't mean to scare ya. It's just
that...

RITA

Hey. Takes more than that to spook me.
(curious)
You always carry that thing around?

SEAN

(grabs his shovel)
I'm a labourer. When I'm not battering
hostile brits, you'll find me
shovelling shite. For the American
Army.
(cheeky smile)
Sean.

RITA

(smiles back)
Rita....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 book shop with the ROOF BLOWN OFF, destroyed by a recent air raid.

Inside, smartly dressed gentlemen in bowler hats standing on piles of rubble reading their favourite historical novels, which strangely enough, are the only items which have survived the blast.

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

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

EMMETT

The Germans may have destroyed our shop, 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 very 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
everything that exists in this
wonderous world.

EMMETT
Wonderous. Hmmm. More like chaotic.
Thundering. Deafening.

SEAN
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to suggest...
It's sickening what's happening.

EMMETT
I believe we've had fifty six
consecutive nights of terror now.
These air raids have certainly brought
a whole new level of dread to the
city. But we will gain our victory.
One way or another.

Sean looks up at the roof's destruction.

SEAN
Gonna be some clean up.

EMMETT
Would you believe, I have no idea
where to start.

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

Emmett blushes. How thoughtful. But can he trust him.

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.

Sean sits in his bed, blanket over his head, flashlight in hand, 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 that 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 very aware how lucky I am to have found this place. Some people have nowhere to go. Forced to sleep underground in tube stations. How are you angel? Am I forgiven?

She chokes back tears. Unsure if she's angry or sad. Then enters the main entrance to the EVER READY FACTORY.

INT. EVERY READY FACTORY - AFTERNOON

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

An alarm goes off. Maeve wipes her dirty face clean with a cloth. Places her time card in the machine on the wall and enters the canteen.

INT. FACTORY CANTEEN -AFTERNOON

Maeve and best friend Roisin eat soup and bread for lunch. Their boss and foreman MR NOLAN (30), a skinny man with kind eyes limps towards their table.

MR NOLAN
May I join you ladies?

Roisin's eyeballs widen, knows what's up.

ROISIN
I just remembered, I have to go call my mother. See ya later Maevey.

MAEVE
See ya.

Roisin leaves. Mr Nolan sits.

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

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 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'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 softens.

MAEVE

I thought that's how you walked.

A little smile. Not too much.

MR NOLAN

Give me a chance Maeve.

Dammit. She's struggling. Head, heart. Head, heart.

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

Say yes you fool...

MR NOLAN

I can't Mr Nolan. I'm sorry.

She rushes off towards the bathroom.

INT. VEGETABLE SHOP -INNER CITY- DAY

Maeve smokes a cigarette by the door wishing she were
someplace else.

Her Dad, MR MCCARTHY (44) a sturdy man with broad shoulders,
serves a bag of potatoes to MRS RYAN (70) , a nosy customer
from the neighbourhood.

MRS RYAN

How long have you and Mrs McCarthy got
that house out in Drimnagh.

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, and she was
down the housing office the other day,
and the housing officer told her
they're building new estates all over
Dublin.

MR MCCARTHY

That's great Mrs Ryan. Anything else I can get you?

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 go.

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

Ah you're right, lots of time. Don't rush. Make sure you choose the right one. Choose the wrong one, and you pay for the rest of your life.

(walks to the door)

Mind yourself Mr McCarthy.

MR MCCARTHY

Mrs Ryan.

Mrs Ryan waddles off down the street. Maeve slouches on the stool behind the counter, daydreaming out the window.

MR MCCARTHY

You hear that.

Ignores him, still daydreaming.

He grabs some cash from the register.

MR MCCARTHY

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

He leaves. A sigh of relief. She pulls out that letter from Sean. Her eyes light up. It 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 all walks of life pass by his window. Female factory workers in uniform. American soldiers. Shoeless children.

Rita the cute Irish waitress, slides onto the seat opposite Sean for a chat.

RITA

Why do you read so much Sean?

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. Because it
allows me the freedom to imagine.

She leans in. He's got her full attention.

SEAN

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

Or a fisherman out on his boat in
Indonesia. His hands bleeding from the
ropes and sales, but he doesn't care,
because that perfect school of raw
fish swim right underneath him...

The poetry and warmth in his voice gives her comfort.

She picks up his book. Examines it.

RITA

Madame Butterfly.

(reads preface)

Set in Japan, an American naval
officer Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton, is
captivated with a young geisha called
butterfly. His desire for Butterfly is
so strong that he must have her.
Shortly after their wedding he
abandons Butterfly and returns to
America, to marry an American woman.
In anguish and despair, the
heartbroken Butterfly ends her life.

(eyes over book)

Oh that's bloody great. She opens up
her heart and he cuts it right in
half.

SEAN

By the time he realized his mistake it
was too late.

Rita's eyes tell us she's experiences such heartbreak.

RITA

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

Looks out the window up at the passing clouds.

RITA

Somehow I get you...

We're now deeper in her eyes, her vulnerability.

RITA

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. Somebody she can finally trust.

An explosion is heard close by. Customers glance at one another out of fear but say nothing.

RITA

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

SEAN

Go for it.

RITA

Oh. By the way, 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, like a fish out of water.

CLUB MANAGER

This way gentlemen.

EMMETT

Thank you Sir.

They settle at their table as a young waiter JOHNNY (21), fills their glasses with Champagne.

Sean places his MADAME BUTTERFLY BOOK next to his glass.

Half joking, half serious...

SEAN

Don't suppose I can get a pint of 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 angel, singing a scattling seductive jazz tune.

Jaws drops...including Seans.

EMMETT

Good lord. Please tell me that's your lady friend who's invited us here.

SEAN

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, opens up)

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

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

SEAN

Jazus. 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.

Emmett's wheels start turning. He takes another sip of champagne and becomes excited.

EMMETT

Perhaps all this is fated. Meeting you, the brainchild. About to be introduced to the most gorgeous creature I have ever laid eyes on. We're in cahoots you and I my friend. 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.

Rita finishes her set to a gracious round of applause. 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, I had no idea.

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 from time to time.

SEAN

This is my good friend Emmett. A budding novelist.

Their eyes meet and something magical happens.

RITA

Another dreamer. Hello.

EMMETT

Hello to you. If you don't mind me saying, you were like a Goddess floating down from heaven. I couldn't take my eyes off you.

RITA

Were you born charming Mr writer?

EMMETT

My mother tells me 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.

SEAN

History certainly has their eyes on you.

SEAN

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 for pennies, right Seany.

SEAN

Not with that kind of talent. You know, I've heard there's a lot of publishing companies out in New York City.

EMMETT

(nervously stutters)

Really? Who? Have you names? Do you think I should write to them or just show up in person--

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

CLUB MANAGER

THIS PLACE ISN'T SAFE, EVERYONE OUT!

SEAN

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 doesn't notice but he's forgotten his book.

EMMETT

Sean, god forbid anything happen to me. Promise me you'll donate 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 soar above. Pandemonium on all corners.

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

Sean realizes he's forgotten his book.

SEAN

Wait. My book, I left it on the table. 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 that book. Just stay together, I won't be long.

They trust him believing they'll reunite.

EMMETT

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

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 arrives to a blown out club. The balcony has now collapsed, some dead bodies scattered throughout. He hurries down the staircase towards his table. Grabs his book. A THUNDERING EXPLOSION rocks the club's outer shell. Hangs on for dear life. He checks the money is still inside then gets the hell out of there.

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. He can't bare to 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...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!

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

POLICE OFFICER 1
(begins pulling bodies out)
One by one....that's it.

They finally make a way for Paramedics to get inside.

SEAN
Sir, please! 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 for the Doctors and Nurses.

NURSE 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.

She does the same to two more bodies.

NURSE CLARK
Dear God...they're all gone.

Two more paramedics 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)
Rita...it's Sean!
(shakes her gently)
Rita, wake up....it's me Sean, wake
up!!

NURSE CLARK
I'm very sorry sir.

DOCTOR CAMPBELL (50) examines Emmett. Also deceased.

He takes out a small notebook and pen.

DOCTOR CAMPBELL
Would you mind giving us your friends
names sir.

But shock hasn't even set in. It's just pure disbelief. He mumbles her name.

SEAN

Rita McAvooy. Irish citizen.

DOCTOR CAMPBELL

And the gentlemen sir.

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 BOMBSITE- DAY

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

EXT. LYONS TEA SHOP CAFE - DAY

Sean stops by his usual 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 sees Rita's face, smiling, engaging so warm with this young customer. Just like she did with him.

But as she looks out the window 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.

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

A female clerk behind reception waves goodbye.

SEAN

Slan. Goodbye.

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.

INT. TENAMENT BUILDING -BEDROOM- NIGHT

Sean arrives home, drops his bags, enters the bedroom where Catherine now 17 and Marie 14, lay together in a single bed vomiting, sweaty, nothing but skin and bone.

Horror rips through his heart as he falls to his knees in disbelief. Beside him, his ma Siobhan kneeling with a bucket of cold water and damp cloth trying her best to keep their temperature down. Sean looks into his ma's eyes, and by one single exchange, they know they'll both be dead soon.

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.

EXT. BURIAL SITE - DAY

Father Burke says a final prayer to the mourners of Catherine and Marie.

FATHER BURKE

In your hands, oh lord, we humbly entrust our brothers and sisters. In this life you embraced Catherine and Marie with your tender love. Deliver them now and from every evil and bid them eternal rest. The old has passed away. Welcome them into paradise, where there will be no sorrow, no weeping, no pain, but fullness of peace and joy with your son and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

CROWD

Amen.

Siobhan struggles to leave the girls, who are now buried six feet under.

SIOBHAN

My babies...my babies....

PATRICK

Come on ma. Lets get you home.

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

FATHER BURKE

Sean...I'm very sorry for your loss. May the lord bless you and watch over you.

Father Burke goes to walk away when...

SEAN

Why would a loving God would bless and watch over me and not my two sisters?

FATHER BURKE

Life is full of questions. 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?
(stumbles to one side)
Is he over here?
(back again)
or right here?
(furious)
WHERE IS HE?!?!?

FATHER BURKE
(uncomfortable)
Anger is a normal part of grief. Best
go home, your mother needs you now.

SEAN
(furious)
My mother needs her two daughters!
Here! Now! Alive! Not six feet under!
They had their whole lives ahead of
them...

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

Sean is now alone at the grave. He finds his hardened rugged
breath. The only thing we can hear. But all his hope and
faith he ever possessed has now departed. He looks up to a
flock of birds above him.

SEAN
Where are you. You bastard. My baby
sisters. You liar.

He glances down to their coffins, 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.

EXT. O'CONNELL STREET - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: DUBLIN 1945

The heart of the city's layout is simple and elegant. A paved median space runs down the centre of the street, featuring monuments and statues to various Irish political leaders. To the left the famous GENERAL POST OFFICE, and to the right the glorious department store CLERY'S.

INT. CLERY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Maeve stands on a pedestal facing a full length mirror, 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!

MAEVE

You think?

CARA

Yeah. Hats are all in now. All the American girls are wearing them.

ROISIN

Wait until Mr Nolan see's ya.

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

What, he's a cripple??

MAEVE

No. Jesus no. He just has a bit of a

limp. It's only been a few months.
Nothing serious.

CARA

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

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

MAEVE

I'm sorry. I juts need a minute.

Cara leaves to serve another customer.

ROISIN

What's wrong?

MAEVE

I can't put my finger on it. Something
just feels off.

ROISIN

You're just not used to being treated
so well.

(sighs sadly)

You deserve a nice fella Maeve. Did ya
know I was about to write to the
sisters of mercy, put ya in their
convent you were single for so long!
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.

She buries her face in her hands.

ROISIN

Listen, I know he was your first
crush, nobody can take that away from
you. But I've seen you alone for too
long. If he wanted to be with you, he
would have come back by now. You need
to let it go...once and for all.

She's right. Best friends know best.

MAEVE

(snaps out of it)

Don't know what came over me.

(gets excited again)

I better get going. The color is perfect Cara.

(exchanges cash)

Thank you!

CARA

Good luck!

She kisses Roisin goodbye.

ROISIN

Have fun, take lots of pictures and remember no twins!

Roisin and Cara hang over the balcony waving goodbye as Maeve struts down the main stairs out the front entrance.

EXT. CLERY'S DEPARTMENT STORE- CONT'D

A huge green landmark hangs above the main entrance.

Maeve exits the front doors and walks straight into Sean.

The very sight of her almost takes his breath away.

SEAN

Maeve.

She gathers herself.

MAEVE

Sean.

Well 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.

SEAN

Thank you. I was planning to come home, open up 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 back to us now.

MAEVE

Don't. Not now...

He walks to her.

SEAN

All we have is now...

She turns.

MAEVE

Will you stop, people are looking.

SEAN

Let them. Were my letters not enough to let ya know I was thinking of ya. That you were still dear to my heart.

MAEVE

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

SEAN

I was in the midst of chaos. Bombs dropping left right and centre. Friends dying on front of me eyes. 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. She looks away. 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 other choice.

This is all she's wanted to hear. She swallows a lump. Composes herself.

MAEVE

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

SEAN

Oh. A nun. With two left feet.

(tries not to laugh)

Well 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...

He places his hands around her waist, desperate to hold her. The woman of his dreams? Did he just say that?

They stare into each others soul, right under the clock. Both emotional, unable to comprehend how time has suddenly stood still.

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 gives her the kiss of life and with an unexpected twist of fate, something unforeseen and magical occurs. 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 simply, yet conservative. Pretty lace and satin up to her neck. His suit, dark grey with a white rose boutonniere. A nod to the purity of their love.

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

INT. MCCARTHY HOUSEHOLD-DRIMNAGH- EVENING

Maeve recovers in bed, after just given birth to a BABY BOY SEAN JR. Her parents Mr and Mr McCarthy along with Sean are trying to calm her, as there are complications with the baby's airways.

MAEVE

I can't hear him, what's going on ma?

MRS MCCARTHY

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

DR DEMPSEY 50 and NURSE O'KEEFE 60, try unblock his lungs but fear the worst.

DOCTOR DEMPSEY

We'll just check his heart and lungs, should be just fine...

But no. Dr Dempsey realizes its worse than expected.

Nurse O'Keefe pulls Sean aside towards the door.

NURSE O'KEEFE

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

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

INT. MRS BROWNS HOUSE - EVENING

BANG BANG BANG! Mrs Brown appears in nightgown, and curlers.

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 to...

INT. MRS FITZPATRICKS HOUSE - CONT'D

BANG BANG BANG! Mrs Fitzpatrick opens up, also in nightgown
and curlers.

MRS FITZPATRICK

Sean??

SEAN

I need whiskey for the baby Mrs
Fitzpatrick, don't ask any questions,
just hurry!

She runs to her drink cabinet. Flings a bottle at Sean and
he's off again.

MCCARTHY HOUSEHOLD-BEDROOM

Sean bursts back in with the whisky. Maeve now screaming
crying 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 fingertip and places it inside
the baby's mouth.

Everyone holds their breath.

Then, CRYING...screaming crying from their little boy.

MAEVE

(disbelief)

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

SEAN

(licking his fingers)

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 with 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

BRENDAN! LIAM! BRIAN! KEVIN! AIDEN!
DECLAN! IT'S AFTER TEN! IF YIZ DON'T
GET YOURSELVE'S UP THOSE STAIRS IN
FIVE SECONDS I'LL SWING YIZ AROUND
THAT LAMPPOST!

The brothers scurry into the building, 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. Calm down. Come on ya
filthy rats, out ya go.

Maeve lowers her heavy shoulders, staring protectively at her baby boy sleeping in the drawer. Sean comes up behind her, arms around her waist, 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 that story over and
over...are ye 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.
(kisses her neck)
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 that music?

MAEVE
What music. I don't hear anything.

SEAN
Use your imagination...

She closes her eyes, trying her best to imagine his music as they slow dance cheek to cheek.

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

She smiles. This is so silly. Thinks it's all in his head. She leans her head on his shoulder. His heartbeat is all she hears.

MAEVE
Here I am dealing with the rats, while my husband is dreaming of the opera.
(stops dancing, practical)
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 you 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, terrified they'll eat him alive!

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 pen and papers for her to sign.

She picks up the pen, but strongly hesitates.

MRS MCCARTHY

Sign the papers love.

MR MCDONAGH

If you just sign at the bottom there.

She hesitates and hesitates. 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 your bloody mind! If you don't sign those damn papers you'll be on that waiting list for the next ten years! Is that what you want??

Maeve walks her baby to the door. Mr McDonagh and her mother throw her a look of such disgust.

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 (60) appears perplexed and concerned.

FATHER DELANEY

Mrs O'Sullivan, everything alright
dear?

MAEVE

(embarrassed)

Father Delaney. Yes of course. I was
just...having a moment.

He raises his bushy eyebrows.

FATHER DELANEY

Have a seat...

They sit in the front row. Knows she can't lie.

MAEVE

I turned down a house offer from the
government today.

FATHER DELANEY

Oh...

MAEVE

They offered me a home out in Cabra.
The North side. That's miles away from
here, nowhere near my ma's house.
Drumnagh is the best place to raise a
family. Everything I want is here...

FATHER DELANEY

Are you on any medication?

MAEVE

No Father.

She looks at her baby, then bursts into tears.

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's consent?

MAEVE

Oh Jesus...

(sobbing)

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

She rushes towards the front doors when...

FATHER DELANEY

Mrs O'Sullivan hold it right there!

She slowly turns like a child about to be punished.

FATHER DELANEY

In order to be saved, you must repent. To repent you must turn away from sin and self-centeredness. Go now and confess your sin to your beloved and make restitution. Is this understood?

MAEVE

Yes father.

She's disappears out the back door.

INT. YORK STREET ROOM- EVENING

Maeve sits across from 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 gets up from her chair, rests on his lap.

SEAN

You don't worry about a damn thing darlin, do ye hear me. The baby's safe. We're doing just fine. In fact, do ye 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 we need.

She melts because he understands her. He lifts her off his knees, onto the bed.

SEAN

And this bed right here. Gives us the chance to be together.

(deep into her eyes)

Even when the rest of the world are against us.

She could cry with happiness.

SEAN

Our dream home is on its way...mark my words.

He kisses her passionately.

EXT. YORK STREET TENEMENTS BUILDING- MORNING

SUPERIMPOSED- 1954- SEVEN YEARS LATER

Maeve now 32 and nine months pregnant with her forth child sits on her front steps alongside neighbour Mrs O'Malley, both peeling a bag of potatoes over cold pots of water.

Sean Jr now 7, plays with second born Catherine 5, and third born Marie 3 on the street and the O'Malley boys.

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

POSTMAN O'SHAE
 (Over to the ladies)
 LETTER FOR MR AND MRS O'SULLIVAN! MRS
 O'SULLIVAN...DELIVERY!!

Maeve dries her hands, dusts her apron off and waddles over to Mr O'Shea.

MAEVE
 (to Sean Jr)
 Hey. Be careful on that.

POSTMAN O'SHAE
 (holds 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 her the letter.

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

She rubs the sweat away from her forehead, takes a deep breath. Mrs O'Malley also stands to her feet as the women in the area have been here many times before, all desperate to get that one letter which comes once a year.

POSTMAN O'SHAE
 Could be your lucky day.

She appreciate his positivity but knows chances are slim.

She tears it open and reads nonchalant out loud.

MAEVE

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 overwhelming.

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 pot of potatoes.

MRS O'MALLEY

Plus the ten others you're gonna have.
(genuinely pleased)
Well done Maevey. Bout bloody time one
of us got the hell out of this place.

All the kids skip around Mrs O'Sullivan cheering her on.

EXT. BENMADIGAN ROAD ESTATE - DRIMNAGH - DAY

Aerial view of their brand new neighbourhood. A tight knit
community, with a football field surrounded by semi detached
homes.

Middle aged women stand at corners with shopping bags as
young boys play football. We move towards number 114. A cocoa
brown painted home with a nice front garden garden.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - DAY

Brown wallpaper, brown sofa and bookshelf with a collection
of Seans books. Some religious pictures on the walls such a
Jesus and Mother Mary. Typical for a catholic household.

Maeve and Sean sit together, her sowing a sweater on her new SINGER SOWING MACHINE, him reading a book by the window, as Catherine and Marie play together on the floor.

MAEVE

I'm going to go get the shopping.
 (grabs her shopping bag)
 Keep an eye on Seany. Come on girls.

Maeve leaves with the two girls. Sean glances out the window, watches her walk away down the street. See's Sean Jr safe and happy playing football with the other boys.

An moment or so passes as he continues reading.

Then...DING DONG.

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. I mean, I read a bit of it...

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 uncomfortable and curious at the same time.

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 see's some neighbours staring over.

SEAN

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

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

POLLY

Have you ever wondered why wars exits. 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 sure the local priest would approve. Or the missus.

POLLY

We understand. But don't be afraid. 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.

A MOMENT LATER- LIVING ROOM

Sean chats with Dan and Polly.

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 with the girls. Embarrassed,
Sean ushers Dan and Polly to the front door.

DAN
If you'd like to know more...

Dan offers Sean a Bible and they disappears down the street.
He 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
bleeding from his weary eyes, desperate for life's 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 son.

SEAN JR
Please da. Just a penny.

SEAN
I said no.

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

Sean stares at his pleading son.

SEAN
You know Easter is coming up.

Yeah. And.

SEAN
If I give you a penny, you won't be getting an Easter egg, alright. That's the deal.

SEAN JR
Yeah, fine. I don't care about an stupid egg anyway.

SEAN
(pulls a penny from his pocket)
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. The seeds have been planted. Feels something new is coming.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD-BEDROOM- MORNING

Easter Sunday. An excited Catherine and Marie wake Sean JR.

CATHERINE
Seany wake up! 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, baby Damien 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 mine?

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

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

MAEVE
You made a deal with your da love.

SEAN JR
 (cries)
 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 small group of about fifteen people. Sean sits next to Dan
 and Polly Freeman as 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 were helpful.

SEAN
 Your words are very comforting.

DICK
 God's words. God's true words.
 (holds up his bible)
 Written in this very book.

They sit together. Sean's buried 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

It was sudden. So arduous. Extremely difficult to comprehend why it would to our family. The worst part is accepting they're both never coming back...

Dick feels his pain.

SEAN

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

DICK

But you haven't. If that was the case you wouldn't be here. You've taken the first step of reconnecting with your heavenly father Sean. God is not responsible for their deaths. We want to blame him but bad things happen all the time, most tragedies simply unexplainable. The truth is, you can let this destroy you...or allow it to transform you. I can't convert you. Only Jehovah can do that.

Tears build in Sean's eyes and he breaks.

SEAN

I should have been there to help them.

Hand on his shoulder.

DICK

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

trusting that takes time.

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

DICK

Now, I know what you're thinking, any rational mind would suggest any hope of seeing your sisters again is simply not possible...

They lock eyes.

DICK

But 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 Sean. 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.

SEAN

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

For the first time in his life he finds deep comfort in these words. Nods.

DICK

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

They walk to the front door together.

DICK

You see Sean, God wants to work through you. Once you heal all wounds, only then can you pass on this knowledge to others.

SEAN

Thank you Dick.

He goes to leave.

DICK

Remember. Some people won't like you choosing another path that's not traditional to the way they think. 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, fifth 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 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. Offers 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 a few years now. I'd like to pay you back. Apologise. I'm a Christian now.

MR MCCABE

Sean, many a man has stolen fish to help feed his family. 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.

(pauses, concerned)

I'm curious, what's 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. But I know everything you've just said took courage....but I am warning ye. Be very careful who you talk to like that.

Seans cycles off 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 evenings 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. Holds it steady. Calmly takes the knife.

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 better father to our children, you've got to understand this.

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

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 steps.

SEAN

Look at me...

(she looks)

We don't need the Catholic Church.

How can he even say this. She frantically rummages through the kitchen drawers searching for the magazines.

MAEVE

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

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

SEAN

What are you doing??

MAEVE

The devil has got a hold of ye.

SEAN

The devil?! 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, denial, 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!

An unmerciful wail comes out of her mouth.

MAEVE

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

(terrified)

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

SEAN

(holds her shoulders)

Stop worrying about what the neighbours will think! Since I've known ya all you've ever cared about was what others think! Think for yourself and your children...have you see Seany's hands. Go look.

MAEVE

(rushes to the stairs)

What's wrong with your hands? Come here...

Sean Jr turns up his two roaring red palms.

MAEVE

Lord have mercy...

(kneels to him)

What Happened...

SEAN JR

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

SEAN

With his stick.

Maeve glances over to her husband.

This isn't going to end well.

INT. HALLWAY- CATHOLIC BOYS SCHOOL DAY

Sean walks down the corridor towards his sons classroom.

We hear brother browns voice through the classroom door.

BROTHER BROWN O/S

Moral code. A set of guidelines that help people to decide whether an action is right or wrong. Example, The Ten Commandments for Christians page 14.

CLASSROOM- CATHOLIC BOYS SCHOOL - DAY

Sean Jr and his classmates mess around the classroom as BROTHER BROWN, 38, writes a new lesson on the chalk board.

BROTHER BROWN

Two. Ritual. A religious ceremony in which God is worshipped...

Sean 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 arm just as the hidden stick
with a metal point head drops out from under his sleeve.

The class gasps.

Sean snaps the stick over his knee breaking it in half.

SEAN
You think you have a right to hurt my
son because you wear a collar. Shame
on you.

BROTHER BROWN
Shame on you! Teaching the poor child
pagan religion!

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

They disappear 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, placing them
inside 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, staring at her empty shelves with a profound sadness. How could he do this to her?

Sean comes in through the front door. A moment of silence eye to eye.

MAEVE

Tell me you didn't...

SEAN

Those statues you pray to don't do us any good.

MAEVE

Don't. 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.

SEAN

Is that it?

No. She's got the shakes now. Erupting from within.

MAEVE

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

SEAN

Yeah well. I'm sorry. They're gone.

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

MAEVE

I'm so bloody sick of ye! The embarrassment you've brought on this family! The mortification! You've betrayed me! Your own wife and mother of your children!

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

SEAN

Are you finished now Maeve?

Its here they both realizes their love is broken. She gets on her knees, picks up the pieces of the cracked plate and continues to prepare dinner.

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

Maeve and her Mother Mrs McCarthy meet with 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 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...go on.

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!

MAEVE

It gets worse.

(emotional)

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

His eyes widen as he splashes HOLY WATER around Maeve's head, feet and baby bump.

FATHER DELANEY

Almighty Creator, Lord of heaven and earth, 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.

(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!

Maeve suddenly keels over, collapsing under all the pressure.

MRS MCCARTHY

Maeve!!

INT. MAEVE'S HOSPITAL ROOM- EVENING

Maeve recovers 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 45, 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.

SEAN
What does that mean?

DOCTOR BARRY
There's 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. Mrs McCarthy holds the
baby in her arms, as Maeve rests alone on the sofa as the
children watch TV on the floor.

MRS MCCARTHY
Another cuppa?

MAEVE
No. If I have another one I'll burst.
(smiles)
Thanks mam. Thanks for being here.

Sits next to her with the baby.

MRS MCCARTHY
Its okay to ask for help love.
Especially at a time like this.

BANG BANG BANG!

MRS MCCARTHY
(behind the curtain)
Who the hell is that. You stay here.

Mrs McCarthy 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
 He's out. What's going on?

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

MAEVE
 He's working.

SISTER THERESA
 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 THERESA
 (tongue tied)
 We'd like to say the Rosary with the
 children. For the conversion of Mr
 O'Sullivan.

Maeve gives her mother a look. 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.

SISTERS
 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. DRIMNAGH PARISH - EVENING

Full with parishioners from the local area. Maeve, her baby, 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 damned 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. God only knows what's next.

INT. SOLICITOR BARNS OFFICE- DAY

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

MAEVE

You want me to take my husband to court???

FATHER DELANEY

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

MAEVE

I won't.

FATHER DELANEY

You will. And you must.

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? 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?

MR BARNES

What your husband has done to Father Delaney's parish is criminal. Not only has he stolen his own children's

innocence and education, he's now become a danger to our society.

Alarm bells go off here. He is definitely not a danger to society.

MAEVE

Mr Barnes, you're talking like he's a thief. He's a good man. Loves his kids more than anything.

FATHER DELANEY

Maeve.

MAEVE

What?

FATHER DELANEY

If we don't stop this cancer spreading now, his devilish influences will spill over everywhere, not just in Dublin but the entire world and everyone, will point, the finger, at you. Because you didn't stop it. Is that what you want?

She refuses to answer.

MR BARNES

This is impossible.
(frustrated)
Does she always bicker and answer back like this?

FATHER DELANEY

Forgive her Mr Barnes, she is uneducated. From the slums of York Street.

(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

Maeve, Mr Barnes and Father Delaney approach the front steps. Camera flashes from journalists as they gather outside. Sean arrives a moment later with his solicitor MR MARTIN (50).

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Mr O'Sullivan, right here! Over here!

SEAN

Piss off lads.

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 Mr's 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. 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

Maeve 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

The 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

But if it wasn't for you purchasing those two magazines in the first place, they would have never come back. 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 on November 1st.

MAEVE

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

MR BARNES

Would it be true to say you felt betrayed.

MAEVE

Very.

MR BARNES

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

MAEVE

Yes.

MR BARNES

Would it be also true to say you felt provoked. Like he was pushing you too far, emotionally and physically.

MAEVE

Yes. I warned him. I told him I couldn't cope with the fighting. I felt tormented.

MR BARNES

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

MAEVE

I couldn't think straight I was so upset.

MR BARNES

So how did you then feel when you heard 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 it 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 are you concerned about protecting the wellbeing of your six children.

MAEVE

Yes. But only regarding his religious beliefs and teachings.

MR BARNES

Would you mind telling the court your reasons why you have taken it to this courtroom. Why take it this far.

MAEVE

I'm Catholic. I was born and Raised Catholic. It's all I know. I never thought our marriage would breakdown, go in this direction. I don't want him 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

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.

SEAN

Yes.

JUDGE

Proceed.

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.

SEAN

Yes.

MR BARNES

I don't worship 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 act effect your wife?

He struggles here under oath. 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...

(holds up bible)

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 religious 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. In Ireland today, Artificial contraception is considered intrinsically evil! My own wife nearly died after giving birth recently

because the church doesn't condone
contraceptive practices!

(personal reveal)

Now we sleep in separate rooms so I
don't accidently kill the woman I
married.

Maeve glances at her mother.

SEAN

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

JUDGE

This is not America 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, heart
breaking for her son.

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 Mr O'Sullivan
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...

More whispers. This statement is nor better or worse. Maeve
feels utterly trapped.

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 and--

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...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 took 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

The man I was back then, yes, I wanted to make her happy. In unity.

MR MARTIN

And the man you are today?

SEAN

(stares at Maeve)

I accepted my wife whole heartedly as she is. Nothings changed.

MR MARTIN

May I 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 make decisions on their own merit.

JUDGE

We're talking about children MR Martin. Children who do not make wise decisions until they are at least eighteen.

MR MARTIN

Yes your honor.

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 Maeve as the court holds their breath. He wonders how their love story has come to this point. No doubt their attachment remains underneath all the suffering and separation, but somehow through artificial differences and social influences the system has equally torn them apart.

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.

INT. DUBLIN AIRPORT -ARRIVALS- DUSK

SUPERIMPOSED: 1966 TEN YEARS LATER

Sean 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. She glances at her da adorningly who's always there on time waiting for her.

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

PILOTS
 See ya Cathy. Have a good one.

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

CATHERINE
 Nice to see ya da.

SEAN
 How'a'ye princess. Welcome home.

He throws her case in the back.

CATHERINE
 Any dinner going?

SEAN
 (smiles)
 Sunday best.

They have a giggle and drive off home.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - EVENING

Sean and Maeve sit at the head of the table with Catherine (19), Marie (15), Damien (12), Gerry (10) and Nial (8) eating their favourite Sunday roast chicken dinner.

Maeve now in her 40's has aged well. Still holds her curves, strong features.

CATHERINE
 Where is he mammy?

MAEVE
 I told him not to be late.

Sean Jr (21) enters through the back door. A working man now. Stylish. Confident. Wearing a suspicious looking fur hat. His da notices the hat, says nothing.

SEAN SR
 (proud)
 Welcome home sis.

CATHERINE
 We were gonna call a search party for
 ye.

SEAN JR
 Ah. Don't be so dramatic.

Everyone smiles, 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 from duty free and they light
 up. Maeve hides the chocolate in a cupboard then re-joins the
 table.

MAEVE
 After dinner.

KIDS
 Ah ma.

Catherine notices his furry hat.

CATHERINE
 is this the style now?

SEAN SR
 What? It's freezing out.

MAEVE
 Give thanks...

The kids hold hands, close their eyes for prayer. Sean Sr
 doesn't participate. Completely normal.

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 wants to be her big sister so bad. She can only imagine.

CATHERINE

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

DAMIEN

Is it true they eat snails over there?

CATHERINE

And frogs legs.

SEAN

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)
Nice to be home ma...

MAEVE

Glad you're back safe.

SEAN

Hats off at the dinner table please.

But Sean Jr doesn't dare remove it. He's clearly hiding something.

SEAN JR

Come on da, its too cold. Baltic out.

SEAN

Take it off.

Kids stops eating. Frightened an argument might breakout. Sean Jr hesitates, then slowly removes the woollen hat revealing his BALD HEAD.

Everyone gasps. Maeve's heart drops.

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.
It was just a bit of fun.

SEAN

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

SEAN JR

We were just having a laugh da, I'm sorry.

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 rocks the table. Sean Jr is getting brave lately. The usual unripe childish behaviour towards his parents.

SEAN

You haven't got the slightest idea of
the path I'm walking son.

(beat)

Be careful.

CATHERINE

Lets eat this chicken before it gets
cold.

Dinner continues. Somehow Sean and Maeve have managed to live respectfully under the same roof. Regardless of their differences.

INT. DALKEY - MORNING

Stunning million dollar homes along the beach front. Sean's parked van with some Satellite dishes and Ariel's tied on top with rope.

Sean Jr and his da eat sandwiches on a brick wall facing a stunning view of the the Atlantic ocean.

SEAN JR

Some life out here eh.

Yeah but...

SEAN

Everyone has problems.

SEAN JR

You think I'll do well, doing this
satellite business?

SEAN

That depends. If you stop your messin.
Baldy.

(side eye)

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

SEAN JR

Everyone loves watching movies, and
I'm the man to give it to them!

(stares at the ocean)

Jazus, look at that water. Might bring
the lads up here the weekend.

Sean grabs his side torso. The pain excruciating.

SEAN JR
Da....what's wrong?

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

SEAN JR
I'll cancel the job. No problem.

They jump into his van and drive downhill.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - EVENING

Sean throws up in the toilet. Washes his hands. Pulls down his eye sockets in the mirror, notices them turning yellow. Its this moment he knows something is very wrong.

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. I'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.

Shock of Maeve's life.

Doctor Gallagher leaves the ward.

They 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. She starts to whimper.

SEAN

(knows its bad)

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

He looks to his da utterly terrified.

SEAN JR

Da...the doctor said it's cancer of
the liver.

(lump in throat)

That you've got six weeks to live.

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.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD- KITCHEN- DAY

Maeve finds herself in their empty kitchen. Staring at the walls.

SEAN V/O

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

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.

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.

She reaches for his dictionary. But decides not to touch. Remember him as he is. She examines some photos of their children on the wall. Each child representing each chapter of their story. 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 as they continue turning.

INT. 114 BENMADIGAN ROAD - BEDROOM- DAY

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

SEAN V/O

(accepting his fate)

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

She falls to the floor in a heap. The gravity of her husband 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. Coat and scarf on. She folds his perfect shirt, suit and shoes, places them in a small suitcase and heads out the door.

INT. SEAN'S HOSPITAL WARD - EVENING

Despite Seans alarming frail appearance, he's dressed in his finest suit. Sitting up right, hair slicked back, shoes shining, saying his farewells to his friends one by one.

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.

DAN

Goodbye Sean.

SEAN

Goodbye Polly. Thanks for coming.

POLLY

Goodbye Sean. Have a good trip.

Dick foster up next, firm handshake.

DICK

Looking sharp my friend.

SEAN

Dick...thanks for all your kind words of wisdom.

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.

DARRAGH

You always made us feel welcome at the

house Mr O'Sullivan.

SEAN
Look after my boy.

MICK & DARRAGH
Yes sir. See ya Mr O'Sullivan.

SEAN
See ya lads.

Boys leave. Sean Jr pulls out two cans of Guinness from a brown paper bag.

SEAN JR
Don't suppose you fancy a pint.

SEAN
Once its not horse shit.

They drink and cheers to his life once lived.

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 mother. Remember, one day, when you least expect it, I'll be running across that field, running towards ye. One day son. One day in the resurrection...

Maeve enters.

SEAN
Let me chat to your mother.

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

MAEVE
Why did ye never compromise...or make an allowance for me. 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 that first kiss at Lough Tay. You were gorgeous...

MAEVE

(remembers back)

Remember what you said about the moon that night when our feet were in the water.

(lock eyes)

Do you think I could be that moon for you. Just in case it gets dark...

SEAN

You've always been that light for me my love. Even in our toughest times, you never walked away...you never left me.

Tears roll down her cheeks as she kisses his knuckles softly.

MAEVE

Close your eyes...and imagine for a minute...

He closes his eyes as NURSE DEIRDRE (30) enters the ward pushing a trolley carrying a VINYL RECORD PLAYER. Maeve places the stylus on the MADAM BUTTERFLY RECORD and plays ONE FINE DAY. It blasts throughout the hospital ward and hallways captivating everybody's senses.

Sean is transfixed, even some dying patients, doctors and nurses get a glimpse into the beautiful aria.

Maeve takes his hand in hers, leans into his face and whispers...

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 transporting him 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 up into their undying love.

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

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 her 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 HOSPITAL ROOM

Maeve mourns the loss of her husband, as he takes his final breath and 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 approaches Maeve.

FATHER DELANEY

I'm very sorry Maeve.

She can't even look at him.

MAEVE

I did everything you asked me...I obeyed you...I trusted you...I even 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 face him.

FATHER DELANEY

You came to me asking for help remember, 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 by 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, just one more time! He could preach to whoever he bloody wanted and I wouldn't care!

FATHER DELANEY

Maeve...stop it now, you'll give
yourself a heart attack.

MAEVE

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

(arms wide open walking away)
Catholic! Christian! Jehovah! Don't ye
know that we're all the same! All just
trying to survive...

She leaves down the path and never looks back.

Maeve climbs into her black car with her six children. Holds
tight to a single red rose, and continues through the
Drimnagh 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