HERSELF

Written by

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(Yellow Revisions)

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Merman Productions 202 Blackfriars Road London, SE1 8NJ +44 207 846 0650 1 INT. BEDROOM. RENTED HOUSE. DUBLIN - DAY

1

FACE of a working-class woman from Dublin: SANDRA KELLY (29).

Decent looking if she bothered; young, but tired - a Mother.

She has a BIRTHMARK on one of her eyes. Both are now closed: she's being "styled" by her daughters -

EMMA, 8, vivacious, chatty, and MOLLY, 6, old soul, quieter. They wear party-dresses, lip-gloss, glitter on their cheeks.

EMMA plaits Sandra's hair, perfectly. MOLLY dusts her brush in the eye-shadow palette, and whispers -

MOLLY

I'm gonna do your eyes now.

SANDRA

Ckay. Cool.

MOLLY pauses, delicately touches her birthmark.

MOLLY

What d'ya call that again?

SANDRA's smile belies the amount of times she's been asked.

EMMA

Molly, you <u>know</u> it's her birthmark. Why d'you always ask?

MOLLY

Why do you have it and nobody else, Mam?

SANDRA

I've already told you love, I was just born with it. (indulges her) I was in God's pocket -

EMMA, here we go, again. MOLLY, never tiring of this story.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

He had me in his Àrt Shop, and He said, "In case I need to find you, I'm giving you a special mark..."

She peeks an eye open, to see EMMA mouthing along.

SANDRA AND EMMA

"Because there's Loadsa Sandra's in Dublin!"

MOLLY

Yeah well, we won't cover it then.

SANDRA smiles and takes in her beautiful, clever girls, in their bright, accessorized room

and on bunting above their bunk-beds, glow-in-the-dark stars on the ceiling, and a FAIRY-DOOR on the skirting-board. Hold on this, then MUSIC -

1A INT. DOWNSTAIRS. RENTED HOUSE - DAY

1 A

"Chandelier" by Sia blaring out of a portable speaker on the workt op, beside popcorn and crisps, a jug of juice and party make-up from Penneys.

SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY dance like mad and sing, uninhibited.

SANDRAY EMMAY MOLLY

I'm gonna fly like a bird through the night / Feel my tears as they dry.

SANDRA links hands with her girls, twirls them round, until their feet lift, and they're flying, and squealing...

SANDRA/ EMMA/ MOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna swing from the...

The music suddenly stops, and heads turn.

EMMAY MOLLY

Daddy!

GARY MULLEN, 30, handsome, construction-gear, stands by the speaker.

EMMAY MOLLY (CONT'D)

Dance with us, Dad! Dance! Spin us!

GARY

Jays, will ya let us in the door.

He embraces them, coolly taking in their mother. SANDRA sees he's clutching a ROLL OF CASH, bound with a bobbin. Stiffens.

GARY (CONT'D)

MOLLY

I don't want to go out.

SANDRA

Gary, it's cold.

GARY

They've coats. Go on now. Out.

Masking fear, SANDRA grabs coats off the back of a chair and bundles the girls towards the rear patio-doors.

However, when she wraps EMMA's coat around her, SANDRA leans close, hushed -

SANDRA

Black Wdow.

EMMA looks at her, really?

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Black Widow, Emma. Hurry.

Letting them out, SANDRA sees EMMA dart to the big, plastic WENDY HOUSE.

Beat, then SANDRA turns back to GARY, who's in her face now, brandishing that roll of cash.

GARY

Taped under the car-seat - are you pl anning your escape, or something Sandra?

2 EXT. STREET. SANDRA'S ESTATE - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

2

EMMA runs, fast as she can, gripping a TOY-BOX, both hands.

3 INT. SHOP. SANDRA'S ESTATE - DAY

3

SHOPKEEPER, 40s, a Pakistani-Dub, watches something on his phone, when the toy-box is suddenly slammed on the counter.

EMMA

Call the Guards!

He's thrown, by the toy-box, by the breathless little girl opening it and demanding.

Inside is spare keys, birth-certs, welfare documents, piece of paper with important phone numbers written on it - and hand-written instructions taped to the lid.

The alarmed SHOPKEEPER glances up at EMMA, tapping the box.

EMMA (CONT'D)
It's me Mammy. Hurry up!

4 OM TTED 4

4A INT. DOWNSTAIRS. RENTED HOUSE - DAY

4A

Dazed SANDRA crawls across the carpet, determined, rigorous, vision-blurred, face bloodied.

She pushes one of the patio-doors open, just slightly - too late - GARY grabs a handful of hair and hauls her back. Sandra's LEFT HAND, reaching out, clawing for the door-frame.

She's dragged back until SLAM

GARY's steel cap boot rages down. A sickening crunch. Her hand under, his boot. Crushing it. An agonized howl. Silence.

5 INT. CORRIDOR. HOTEL - DAY

5

That wrecked HAND, in a tube-grip, trembling, struggling to insert a hotel key-card.

(Sandra's other, good hand is carrying shopping and laundry, and school bags dangle from her shoulders. She's like a mule)

Caption: Three months later

EMMA routinely takes the key-card, and inserts it for SANDRA.

The light blinks Green, and EMMA and MOLLY bicker over whose shot it is to turn the handle, enter first. It's my go, Emma!

On SANDRA - tired, frail, fed-up.

6 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

6

A 2 star Basic Family Room with a business man's tears on the pillow. Modern, but stale. Cramped but tidy, now made homely.

That same Fairy Door on the skirting-board. Teddies tucked under duvets. Toys in boxes labelled Emma/Molly. Family photos tacked round the mirror.

SANDRA discreetly swallows a Solpadeine, swigs water, and continues stripping a Spar-roasted chicken on the desk.

She fills three wraps with chopped cucumbers, peppers, meat on the desk beside the TOYBOX - and MOLLY picks at it.

EMMA does homework on the bed, pencils scattered around her.

SANDRA

Move over love, let's see?

She trades, food for copy-book, and takes in Emma's work, a beautiful drawing.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Emma, that's amazing. Shading and everything!

EMMA

Would you take a picture and send it to Dad?

Beat.

SANDRA

Show hi m Sat ur day.

She returns the copy-book, hugs her.

EMMA

Where will our new house be, Mam?

SANDRA

(hesi t at es)

I don't know, Íove.

EMMA

How much longer will we be here?

SANDRA

I don't know.

Aware Emma's fed up of "don't know's", she fishes a chain from under her vest. There's a ring attached.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Here, kiss Granny M chelle's ring and wish for one.

EMMA shuts her eyes and kisses the ring.

MOLLY (O.S.)

How long is Granny Michelle in heaven now, Mam?

SANDRA sees MOLLY kneeling by the skirting-board, leaving a bit of her wrap at the Fairy Door, for the fairies.

SANDRA

Going on six months, love.

Beat.

MOLLY

I left my bobbin in her flat.

EMMA mimes, she's away with the fairies! SANDRA smiles. Out on the Fairy Door.

EXT. HOTEL CAR PARK - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

MOLLY Emma at e my banana.

Sandra sighs, fishes in her bag, finds a little pack of biscuits they leave beside hotel kettles. Gives them to her.

SANDRA

Here. Quick while I fix your hair.

SANDRA brushes her hair with fingers, tying it up, rapidly.

10A

MOLLY Ow. THAT HURTS.

EXT. DUBLIN 4 - DAY

10A

SANDRA

Nearly done. Now. Gorgeous. (hugs her, wipes crumbs) Be good. Love you.

MOLLY takes her (as big as she is) school bag, and trudges in.

SANDRA sees ROSA smiling comradely, only for another MOTHER to click that and side-mouth, something to Rosa. Rosa listens, now included in the gang, while looking at Sandra.

SANDRA averts the gaze of the women, dashes back to her car.

10 QM TTED 10

Georgian townhouses. Embassies. Luxury hotels/apartments. The tree-lined Grand Canal. We might glimpse TENTS pitched on the grass verge beside the tow-path.

Traffic is still heavy. Observe Sandra's beaten-up car, stuck at a red-light, surrounded by brand-new 4x4s.

11 QM TTED 11

12 EXT. FRONT OF PEGGY'S HOUSE. DUBLIN - DAY

12

Wide street. Large redbrick houses. Mature gardens. Sandra's car parks in a driveway.

SANDRA bolts out, sorting through a bundle of coloured-coded keys.

13 INT. HALLWAY. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

13

Tasteful. Characterful. Original art and African ornaments.

SANDRA

(calls out)

Only me Dr O Toole, sorry l'mlate. The traffic this morning.

Grabbing a cleaning bag from a cupboard under the stairs, she habitually runs a finger along the dado rail, only to hear -

PEGGY (O.S.)

Ch, fuck off!

14 INT. LOUNGE. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

14

Living room, converted into a bedroom Single-bed. A desk by the window. Commode-chair. Walking-frame.

PEGGY is Dr Margaret O Toole, a young 70, and until recently a practicing GP.

She has a fractured hip, she's achy and grouchy first thing - and she can't get her bloody jeans on!

SANDRA (O.S.)

Need a hand?

PEGGY sees SANDRA at the door, and reluctantly nods.

SANDRA helps her dress, quiet at first, aware PEGGY's proud, and tetchy today.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Did your one turn up last night?

PEGGY

They sent a replacement. <u>He</u> tried to put me to bed at half-past six.

SANDRA, imagining how went. PEGGY winces trying to get into the jeans.

SANDRA

Sorry. Have you taken your tablets?

PEGGY

Just help me through. I've already wasted half the morning.

SANDRA

Ckay.

(positions walking-frame) Now, grip and up you go. Deadly. Nice and steady. Take your time.

PEGGY halts, cuts her a look.

PEGGY

I broke my hip in a field hospital Sandra, not tripping in Marks and Spencers - in the jungle. Stop making me feel like an old woman.

SANDRA, not ed.

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

SANDRA, on her knees, polishing the balusters, under the watchful eye of a HOUSEKEEPER, late-70s, female, austere.

A door opens O.S and SANDRA hears barking, a man's voice.

HOUSEKEEPER moves off, leaving the kitchen door slightly ajar.

SANDRA cranes to see a big, flinty man in wellies and wax-jacket, with an equally imposing DOG.

SANDRA sees the man remove his jacket to reveal a clerical collar. She averts her gaze when he looks her way, afraid that he saw her staring, slacking.

HOUSEKEEPER

The new Nora, your Grace.

ARCHBI SHOP

Ah, very good. Big shoes to fill there.

SANDRA smiles, unsure and buffs harder, intimidated.

17 EXT. ARCHBI SHOP'S RESIDENCE. DUBLIN - DAY

17

Stately house. An adjacent Chancellory. Ash-lined drive, and extensive, well-kept grounds.

SANDRA speeds of f, always rushing, only to stop the car and roll down the window, to take in the (10-acre) "field", and the high perimeter wall beyond. A beat, then she drives of f.

18 INT. PUB - DAY

16

18

Traditional boozer. SANDRA cleans the fire-grate; polishes wood-panels; dusts stoneware flagons on a shelf above optics -

While JOHN, 40s, the landlord, tucks into a fried breakfast and a pint of stout... and eyes her.

SANDRA feels him looking, and catches the eye of the barmaid.

AMY, 22, funky inner city girl with the mouth of a Meath St market trader, sympathiz82.7t96 4ih0.008 T0lf above optic35eter wall beyo

JOHN

Sandra, give the Mens' a good clean - young fella left them in an awful state last night.

SANDRA

Right. It's just, you said I could leave a bit (earlier) -

JOHN

If you finished. You're nowherenear done.

When he waddles off -

AMY

Prick. Tell him to get fucked, Sandra.

SANDRA

I wish, Amy. Don't have the luxury.

Hurriedly wheels the mop to the Gents, only to turn back -

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Where are you living these days?

AMY

Squat. Rathmines. Shit-hole like, but the humans are sound so.

19 EXT. HOUSING ESTATE. DUBLIN - DAY

19

A viewing. Queue around the block to see it. SANDRA at the mid-point, with a house-spec, hopeful. Behind her, moaning -

GRUMPY WOMAN IN QUEUE

Don't know why I bot her ed. (beat)

None of us are gonna get to see this gaff.

Beat, then an ESTATE AGENT exits, shaking on a deal with a young, professional COUPLE avoiding the 'queue's eyes'.

SANDRA, downcast, returning to her car. Waste of her time.

20

20

Messy. Desk's covered in piles of paper, folders, case files.

JQ 54, hippy edge to her office look, searches in vain for a 'post-it". Needle in a haystack-stuff.

SANDRA paces, wound-up, clock-watching.

JO

How's himself? Behaving, Access Visits going okay?

SANDRA

Grand. Well...he's been kicked out of the house - landlord's selling. He's back at his Mam and Dad's now. He wouldn't do anything there.

JO

Well, if he does, remember you've a 3-year Safety Order. He lays a hand on you it goes straight to criminal court.

SANDRA

Jo, we can't go on being this far from school. I'm getting the girls up in the dark. It's 3 hours there and back, every day -

You need to keep on to the Council about that -

SANDRA

Jo but it's costing me over thirty Euro a week in petrol -

JO

Just keep telling yourself "it's temporary". Only temporary. Now! (finds the post-it)
I got a tip-off. Kimmage. Fullyfurnished and the Landlord takes Rent Supplement. Give him a buzz.

SANDRA grabs the note, and mouths thanks as she rushes out -

JO (CONT, D)

Sandra, I've forms for you (here somewhere) -

SANDRA

I'mlate for the girls.

JO
Go, I'll drop them round to you.
 (mutters to self)
If I ever find them

21 EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY 21

Everybody has gone, apart from ROSA and her daughter, LUCIA,

23

SANDRA

Er . . .

She hesitates, evasive. EMMA rolls her eyes, and reels off-

EMMA

089-966-4062.

Get out of that. SANDRA smiles weakly as ROSA enters it in her phone, and texts her number in return. Ping.

ROSA

Now, you have mine. No excuses.

22 OM TTED 22

23 INT. ATTIC - DAY

A once-grand townhouse, that has been neglected and chopped into poky bedsits.

LANDLORD is a heavy-set man from the country, 50s, wheezy.

He shows SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY into the loft-studio. Low ceilings. Exposed wiring. Tiny Velux-window. Small galley-kitchen, with a stove and oven, that doesn't have a door. Four stained mattresses on the floor. Mould all over the walls.

SANDRA sees EMMA tentatively touching the wall, brushing the mould of ${\bf f}$.

SANDRA

Oh, eh...a month, coming up? This is our third hotel.

DAD

This is our sixteenth. Been at this the guts of two years.

SANDRA, Jesus.

MUM

Yeah, "temporary" my arse. See ya's around.

SANDRA watches them trudge in, tired of this life, unable to imagine theirs, when -

MOLLY skates into her, hugging her. SANDRA laughs, then lies down, plays 'dead'. MOLLY messes with her hair and face, but SANDRA stays still.

MOLLY

Ah Mammy don't be dead, we need you for chips!

EMMA joins in. Lifts SANDRA's arm to tickle under it, and whispers -

EMMA

Molly, grab her, will ya.

SANDRA suddenly wakes with Zombie arms! The girls squeal as she stalks and grabs and tickles them to death.

SANDRA

Come here you two, ya messers! Only need me "for chips" do ya?

25 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

25

SANDRA and EMMA, curled-up on the big bed, in pyjamas. MOLLY plays with Lego on the floor, in her own world.

EMMA holds the St Brigid Cross, retelling the myth, her way.

EMMA

So Brigid prays to God and says God will you make the King of Ireland's heart all soft, 'cos it's gone icy and like a rock or something, and God did and she smiled and said to

SANDRA pricks up, and is drawn in by the story.

EMMA (CONT'D)

'Cos she was wearing this cloak just normal size, and he starts laughing his head off 'cos he thinks she's mad... But she bends down and the cloak is magic with the Holy God spirit in it and she tells her four sisters with her they're like her sidekicks, right? they take a corner each and spread it out over the land they're on, and they do, and it goes out for miles and he can't believe it... it's a mirkle – a mir-a-cle. And he goes, 'Brigid, what's the story, how did you do that?' And she says, 'It's 'cos you're being so stingy and all to the poor people in your land' and then he says 'Alright, ya can have loads of me land.

SANDRA, moved and soothed by this bedtime tale.

EMMA (CONT'D)

And she gets it, and starts a convent and helps all the people in the town, and they start a farm where they make jam with the berries on the land and then everyone was grand.

SANDRA

(appl auds)

Bualadh bos! How d ya remember all that?

EMMA

I don't like the way me teacher says it, so I remember it my own way. She's got a real moany voice.

SANDRA smiles, proudly cradling EMMA, reflecting on the St Brigid myth, only to see Molly's lego-build. It's a house.

26 OM TTED 26

27 INT. BATHROOM. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 27

Napkin-full of ICE, being tipped into a sink.

SANDRA fills it with water and plunges her aching hand into it. Hold, as the shock gives way to (temporary) pain relief.

She takes in her body in the mirror. She's skinny, pinched, her eyes are dark and sunken, and her eyebrows are a state.

O.S - laughter, a couple, joking.

SANDRA shuts her eyes. Lowers her head. Lets Cary into her thoughts, the room His smell. His touch. His body against hers.

Then GARY is there behind her, tender, comforting, kissing her neck, moving his hands over her body -

MOLLY (O.S.)
No Emma... stop it... not fair.

SANDRA opens her eyes. Molly's babbling in her sleep. Back to reality. Alone again.

28 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

28

SANDRA turns off the bathroomlight off, and goes to check on MOLLY, only to tread on something.

Feeling round her bare feet, SANDRA finds a piece of Molly's lego.

SANDRA gets into bed, holding and taking in the LEGO BRICK.

35

35 INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

SANDRA, parked up across from the school. She doesn't notice the KLDS IN UNIFORM being allowed out. She's too absorbed by a nearby house renovation.

SANDRA watches a YOUNG BRICKIE scooping mortar with a trowel, spreading it, laying a brick, repeating the process.

A knock at the passenger window startles SANDRA. EMMA, what gives? As both girls clamber in the back -

EMMA

Why are you in the car? It's not even raining.

SANDRA

(sarky)
"Hi Mam, how was your day?" "Grand, thank you Emma."

MOLLY

How was your day Mammy grand thank you.

She drapes her arms round SANDRA, giving her a kiss. EMMA rolls her eyes, such a lick!

36 EXT. CITY-CENTRE - DAY

36

Sandra's CAR, parked on a pavement. EMMA and MOLLY, faces pressed to the window, bemusedly watching -

SANDRA, peering through a palisade fence at a vacant plot of land, in the middle of the city.

SANDRA types on her phone as she returns to the car.

36A INT. LIBRARY - DAY (PREVIOUSLY SC40)

36A

SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY, all doing homework of sorts. While the girls colour and write on worksheets, SANDRA is on the PC. The webpage is a Credit Union Loan Calculator.

She fills out the required fields, only to see EMMA on her shoulder clinging a leaflet, peering at the screen. A beat -

EMMA

Mam, what's a "Guarantor"?

SANDRA's heart sinks. Nods to the "Reference" shelf.

SANDRA

Look it up.

Emma leaves the leaflet in Sandra's hand and goes to the shelf. Sandra scans the leaflet: TIRED OF BEING HOMELESS? CRISIS MEETING MALBOROUGH HOTEL Date and time are listed but obscured.

37 INT. OFFICE. REUSING DUBLIN - DAY

37

Small, noisy public meeting. Half a dozen PANELISTS behind a table, fighting to be heard.

SANDRA's at the back of the room, with Emma and Molly, craning to see an ACTIVIST, 23, Trinity, O E

S

Т

WOMAN IN AUDI ENCE (CONT'D)

It's this government! Busy building hotels and keeping house prices skyhigh -

ACTI VI ST

Lads, if this was France they'd be rioting. Let's take back our city!

YOUNG MOTHER beside SANDRA, toddler in arms chunters, sotto -

GI RL

Aw and is really gonna sort it out is it? No wonder we're all fucked.

On SANDRA, couldn't agree more, mind racing, fired-up.

37A INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

37A

OVERLAY: SHOT OF SANDRA CARRYING SEVERAL BAGS OF SHOPPING DOWN HOTEL CORRIDOR.

37B INT. APARTMENT - DAY

37B

Fold-out bed. Bundles of separated sheets/towels. Discarded bags from souvenir shops. Remnants of a short-stay rental.

AMY

So this guru fella said I was gonna end up in the Amazon some day, that I'm an old soul that needs to like, reconnect to me shamanic qualities, which is grand, because I kind of always knew that about myself, ya know what I mean? But Tomo. Ch my God. He told Tomo he was gonna be an economist. Tomo. Tomo doesn't even have a bank account!

JCHN enters with boxes of crisps, only to take in the joined tables, SANDRA with her sheets of The Irish Times. Busted.

JOHN

'The fuck are you up to, ya loolah?

38 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

38

SANDRA tapes together sheets of The Irish Times as EMMA and MOLLY watch telly. MOLLY, what's she up to? EMMA, no idea!

39	OM TTED	39
40	OMITTED (MOVED TO SC36A)	40

SANDRA walks MOLLY to the gate only. EMMA runs ahead, and

44	INT.	CAR	(STATI ONARY)) - DA\

44

SANDRA grips the wheel, head swirling, chest tightening. She swallows hard, shuts her eyes, trying to calm down. However -

45 INT. DOWNSTAIRS. RENTED HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

45

SANDRA, cowering. GARY, gripping the cash he found in a fist.

GARY

You think your money and running away is gonna solve what's going on inside your toxic little head? Aw that's a great idea Sandra. End up some lonely fuck-up like your Ma.

46 OM TTED

46

47 INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

47

SANDRA opens her eyes, gulping, panicking. She takes shallow breaths, but can't shake the memories -

47A INT. DOWNSTAIRS. RENTED HOUSE - DAY

47A

SANDRA's head snaps back from a ferocious punch to the face, and she folds to the floor.

Her vision blurs. A distorted GARY looms over her, throwing punches, spitting insults. Examples. 'You think you can just walk out of here with my two kids and say nothing? Ya thick. Greedy two faced bitch. Just like your Ma. Another mental case.' She curls up, to protect herself.

The patio-door is ajar. She sees EMMA in the garden, exiting the Wendy House, clutching the toy-box. Her safety-box.

SANDRA scurries away, desperate to escape, only to be yanked back.

Her fingers desperately reach for the door-frame..

48

CM TTED

48

49 INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

49

SANDRA grips the steering-wheel with that hand, controls her breathing, willing this episode away.

A long beat, then she lifts her head, dries her eyes, drives off, switches the radio on. Numb the pain with noise.

50 INT. RECEPTION. HOTEL - DAY

50

SANDRA Lumbers through the nice foyer, past the front desk.

A Receptionist, LAZLO, 30, Bulgarian, shirt and tie, slick, dashes out from behind the desk, and tries to be discreet.

LAZLO

Mss. Excuse me, Mss, hello? May I remind you of the rules. You can't come through here.

Fuck's sake. SANDRA turns, trudges out.

51 INT. STAIRWELL. HOTEL - DAY

51

Grotty, neglected. For staff, tradesmen.

SANDRA slogs up the fag-butt littered, concrete stairs.

52 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

52

SANDRA lights a candle, and sits on the edge of her bed, watching the flame.

Fishing her mother's ring out from beneath her top, SANDRA clasps it, Her eyes land on a picture of her and her mother, so young, Michelle cuddling Sandra in her arms. She closes her eyes, mutters quietly. 'Help me Ma. Please, I can't... just help. Please.'

A plane takes off nearby. Its lights arc across the window.

FADE TO BLACK.

53 INT. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

53

SANDRA trudges down the hall way with a tray of tea - at half the pace she normally operates.

SANDRA

Dr O'Toole?

She knocks at the lounge-door. Nothing. Opens the door, only Peggy's not in bed. Strange. Her walking-frame is there.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Dr O'Toole?

Panic. She dumps the tray. Dashes back into the hallway, and tries the bathroom door.

It opens 6 inches, then jams. There's something behind it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Bollocks. Dr O Toole?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 54

SANDRA squeezes in, and steps over PEGGY, who's lying still, face-down on the floor, a cut on her temple.

SANDRA

Ch Jesus.

She grabs a towel, folds and puts it under Peggy's head.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Dr O'Toole? Hello? Can you hear me?

Carefully turns PEGGY onto her side.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Dr O Toole it's Sandra, your cleaner. Wake up. Come on. Peggy?

A twitch of recognition. PEGGY opens her eyes, confused.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Ch thank God. Dr O Toole, it's me.

Will call an ambulance?

PEGGY

No.

SANDRA

I probably should. Just to be -

CI ARAN CROWLEY (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)

It's a Self Build. You can literally DIY a permanent home.

PEGGY hits Pause. SANDRA, busted.

SANDRA

I didn't mean for you to see that.

PEGGY

Well I did, so here's my proposal.

55A EXT. BACK OF PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

55A

SANDRA, alongside PEGGY on her walking-frame. They walk away from the back of the house, down a long, well-kept lawn.

CLARAN CROWLEY (V. O.)

We built mine in 54 days on site. With basic woodwork skills, the odd hand from your friends and a bit of professional help, within 6 months you could have a home of your own.

56 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

56

PEGGY, on her walking-frame, leading SANDRA to a whole other part of the property. It's massive.

SANDRA takes in the stretch of lawn, and the ruined pottingshed with its smashed panes at the far end.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Picture it.

SANDRA

Here?

She turns to PEGGY, overwhelmed and confused.

PEGGY

(Iooking towards shed)
It's land, Sandra, going to waste.
Use it. I can't. Build a house for you and your girls.

(MORE)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I can't watch you live between the car and the hotel any more. It's a crime.

Sandra Looks at her, taken aback.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Your mother was far more than a cleaner to me, she was a friend. And she helped me through some bloody awful times. You're looking for a way out.

(beat)

I want to lend you the money to do this.

SANDRA

Dr. O Toole, This is mad you can't -

PEGGY

I can. And you can pay me back, over as many years as we decide. I want to help you. So. What do you say?

SANDRA's eyes fill with tears taking in the plot.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Is that a yes?

SANDRA nods. PEGGY taps her shoulder, once. There. Come on.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Now, back to work. Good woman.

57 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

57

SANDRA on a PC, glasses on, earphones in... oblivious to the OAPs behind her, griping to the LIBRARIAN, female, 40s sound.

SANDRA feverishly scans Ciaran Crowley, Architect's website. Lists Materials Required. Saves a Step-by-Step guide, "Build your own house".

Whipping out her memory-stick, she hands it to the LIBRARIAN.

SANDRA

Could you print something for me?

LI BRARI AN

There's a self-service printerscanner...
(MORE) LI BRARI AN (CONT'D)

(don't worry) I'll show you.

Comes out from behind her desk, and takes the memory-stick.

LI BRARI AN (CONT'D)
This goes here. And Select. Print.
Just the one copy?

SANDRA

(sees the price - shit)
Wow, the price! It's mad, isn't it?

LI BRARI AN glances round. Anybody watching? Then types.

LI BRARI AN

One nine three four.

(as the machine prints)

The year this place was built.

SANDRA, touched, and heartened.

58 INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

58

SANDRA, parked outside Goodwins, a large Builders Merchants' on an industrial estate.

She's scoffing chips, watching a web-tutorial on her phone,

DAVE

(mouths a sarky "online")
'These costs inclusive of VAT?
"Value Added Tax" - are these
prices plus or including..?

SANDRA

Yeah, I think... I'd say so.

DAVE

'Cos there's a big difference.

SANDRA

Yeah... I know.

She doesn't know. Feels patronized, out of her depth. Becomes aware of a customer behind her, breathing a bit too heavily.

AIDO DEVENEY, late-50s. He stands a six-foot chimney flue against the desk. Towers over it.

DAVE

Be with you in a sec there.

ALDO says "work away", but it sounds more like a grunt.

DAVE reads Sandra's list to himself. Waste of time.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Onduline? Dunno what that is. D'ya know what thickness of insulation? 'Cos there's loads of sizes, like.

SANDRA

Yeah, no, I'll ask.

DAVE

Biobase? Never heard of it.

SANDRA

What about like, basic concrete? Can you give me a price for that?

DAVE

That's actual ready mix.

SANDRA

Not bags?

DAVE

No. Concrete would have to come in a truck, in cubic-metres. You'd have to go to Roadstone.

(refers to Aido)
'Mind if I serve this young fella?
Yes my friend, what can I get you?

AI DO

Some manners. A bit of courtesy.

DAVE

What?

AI DO

What? You're Customer Services. Serve the customer. She's only after a price check. It's not rocket science.

He slaps down cash on the counter, takes the flue, and goes. SANDRA, watchful. DAVE bristles.

61 EXT. CAR PARK. BUILDERS MERCHANTS - DAY

61

SANDRA, printouts clutched in hand, walking back to her car when she notices AIDO in a van (faded remnants of name 'AIDAN DEVENEY, BUILDING AND CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS' emblazoned on the side). The name makes her stall.

She thinks about approaching him, but is intimidated - only to see him open a lunch-box, fussily remove lettuce from his cheese and ham sandwich and wind down the window to fling it.

Fuck it, SANDRA walks over, as if on the way by, calls out -

SANDRA

You're throwing away the good stuff.

He takes her in, then takes a big bite of his sandwich. She bites her lip but goes for it. Walks up to his window.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Can I ask your advice on something?

He looks at her...has another bite. Fuck it she keeps going.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I'm building a house, well - a self-build?

AI DO

Right.

SANDRA

(print outs)

I'm only getting started - but I dunno... to start I suppose?

Aido impatient, gestures, let's have a look.

She passes her cost-breakdown through the window. He scans the pages - and talks - whilst devouring his sandwich.

AI DO

Where's the site, have you a field?

SANDRA

A back garden. Woman I work for is giving me the land.

AI DO

Giving you? Why is she doing that?

SANDRA

Eh... trying not to think about it too much.

AI DO

I would. Nobody does anything for not hing, not in this country.

(returns the plans)

Well...I wouldn't live there, but it's a roof and four walls, what more do you need?

She's kind of assured. Smiles, and shapes to go, but -

SANDRA

You wouldn't come and have a look would you?

AI DO

No love. I've a flue to install, on a job that's grown arms and legs -

SANDRA

It's only around the corner -

AI DO

I can't help you, can't afford to.

Turns on ignition, Sandra's last try.

SANDRA

Look, you don't know me, but I think you worked with my ex, Gary. Gary Mullen?

Aido freezes. This stops him in his tracks. Looks at her.

AI DO

Gary Mullen? M chael Mullen's young fella?

SANDRA

Yeah.

He spits that out before he thinks. Sandra has an in.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I know. That's why he's me ex.

Beat. He looks out front, takes a deep breath. CUT TO.

62

Al DO surveys the proposed plot. Paces. Bellows. Refers to the plans. Rubs his head. Gets his tape-measure out. Sighs. Takes in neighbouring properties. Pulls a face.

PEGGY leans on her walking-frame measuring this man.

SANDRA measures her expectations. Just sees AIDO padding the earth, prodding the potting-shed. It's a complete shock when -

AI DO

It's possible.

PEGGY's optimistic, but SANDRA knows he's niggled.

SANDRA

Why the face then?

AI DO

You're gonna need somebody knows what they're doing -

PEGGY

He means a man?

AI DO

I mean a person who's qualified to handle the compliances, put in for planning.

PEGGY

Could you be that person?

He looks back at the land, almost nervous.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Your van says "Building and Civil Engineering Contractor".

He looks to SANDRA, no flies on that one, shakes his head.

PEGGY For Sandra and her girls.

GRAINNE
Whose idea was this?
(off her pointed look)
(MORE)

GRAINNE (CONT'D)

Sorry, but do you know each other well enough to do this?

PEGGY

I knew her mot her.

GRAI NINE

Yes, and M chelle was lovely, and a really good cleaner, but -

PEGGY

But what?

GRAI NINE

(regrets)

She used to help herself to Daddy's whiskey.

PEGGY

Well she did us all a favour there.

A tense beat. Peggy and Sandra's eyes meet a second.

GRAI NINE

I'm sorry Sandra, I shouldn't have said... (actually) Can I just have a moment with Mum?

PEGGY

Sandra, stay.

SANDRA, paralyzed against a wall. Grainne shakes her head to herself. No privacy. Fine.

GRAI NINE

Look - at the end of the day, it's none of my business. I get it. It's your house, your choice - you can be very hard to help Mum (halts, suddenly tearful)
What are you gonna do about Aisling's Den?

SANDRA, thrown. She really shouldn't be here.

SANDRA

I'll let you... I shouldn't be... See you tomorrow, Dr O Toole.

PEGGY

Sandra, wait. Sandra -

SANDRA hurries out. Rues not leaving sooner.

64 EXT. HOUSING ESTATE. DUBLIN - DAY

64

SANDRA, in her car, outside Gary's parents'. She rolls down the window when EMMA and MOLLY run out.

Gary's mum TINA (50's) gentle in manner, almost expressionless, but sad to see her grandchildren go.

SANDRA

Hiya, did you have a nice time?

EMMA

Daddy got us new runners. M ne flash!

She stamps her feet, and the soles light up.

SANDRA

Cool.

Smiles stiffly when she sees GARY, out to wave them 'bye.

GARY

They were so good for Nannie and Granda I thought they deserved a little treat.

SANDRA sees MOLLY get straight into the car, quiet.

GARY (CONT'D)

(calls out)

Need a hand with the belt there, Molls?

MOLLY

No.

GARY

Big girl now.

He shares a look with SANDRA, then pulls out a twenty Euro.

GARY (CONT'D)

Here, I got a little bonus. There's so much work out there for joiners now, you can take your pick. It's like back in the day.

That note, between their hands. As she takes it, he blurts -

GARY (CONT'D)

I'm getting help.
(beat, quieter)
I've a Counsellor. Jesus it
was a bit... I don't know. I didn't
walk out - which is... I mean, I
wanted to, but... I stayed.

She meets his gaze, softening slightly.

GARY (CONT'D)

Anyway, it's a start.

SANDRA

(def I ect s)

Emma, come on.

She starts the engine, only for GARY to lean closer. Hushed.

GARY

Mam says you can stay, if we want to try again, y'know, try to make it work, for them

SANDRA clocks TINA looking at Sandra in the doorway, avoids her eyes and then hurries EMMA -

SANDRA

Are you in?

EMMA

(teenager-like)

Yes.

SANDRA winds her window, and drives away, conflicted. Hold on her, mulling her options.

64A INT. DOWNSTAIRS. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

64A

PEGGY, doing (gentle) exercises, earphones in, listening to a podcast. She startles when she glimpses SANDRA in the diningroom tentatively waving, apologizing.

When PEGGY unhooks her earphones -

SANDRA

I rang the bell... I wasn't sure...
(blurts)
I can't accept your gift. The only
way I could do this is by building
it myself and paying you rent, like

Beat.

PEGGY

I said to the Council.

Sandra, I know Grainne's upset and maybe rightly so.. this place would have been shared between her and her sister.. But here we are..

(Half joking)
And I'd hardly be improving her
deal by landing her with a tenant,
would I? I want to see that plot go
into something.. good, that's all.
I want to split the land cleanly.
Give you enough space for the girls
to play in. How much do you want
this?

SANDRA

More than anything, obviously.

PEGGY

Then let me talk to Grainne. And you, contact that architect, make him help you.

SANDRA cautiously nods. Ok

		Herself	(April	26 -	Yel I	ow)	40A.
66	OM TTED						66
67	OM TTED						67
68	OM TTED						68
69	OM TTED						69
70	OM TTED						70
71	OM TTED						71

72 OM TTED 72

73 INT. BATHROOM. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

73

3am SANDRA, in her PJs, Face-timing ClARAN CROWLEY, the architect whose story inspired her. He's in America, in a noisy bar, after-work his time.

CI ARAN CROWLEY (ON SCREEN) You've only gotta say "Self-Build" to a Builder and he'll run a mile, but you are gonna need an expert... Honestly, the only person who'd do this for nothing is me and I'm not back till next year - can you wait?

SANDRA smiles, despondent. What's her next move?

74 OMITTED 74

74A INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY 74A

An (unseen) child's POV of the window. Sunlight. Trees. Sky.

MOLLY (O.S.)

AIDO (O.S.) It's okay Francis, I know the girl.

SANDRA sees a casually-dressed ALDO exiting the house.

SANDRA

Look, I tried your man the architect. He's in America, on a job and he's not back till next year. He says I need an expert I can trust -

Beat. Aido sighs. Sandra I owers her voice.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Look we've been in temporary
accommodation for months already. I
can't do this anymore. This is a
chance for us to -

EMMA (O.S.) Mam - Molly needs a wee.

Jesus. SANDRA Looks to ALDO.

AI DO Francis, show them inside.

SANDRA

Look I'm just asking. And the one good thing my Ma always used to say was 'Don't pray for miracles, just ... ask for them'

She smiles at him, unsure but genuine. He sighs.

AI DO

I don't know. Gfts of land, plans off the internet, everything on the cheap, off your own back - it's nearly asking to go wrong... and if I wasn't on site? It's too much of a risk Sandra ... for

She nods. Gets that. Beat, then the girls exit the house.

MOLLY

Mam the house is <u>really</u> messy. I think it's too big a job.

SANDRA, crimson. AIDO can't resist joking to Molly.

AI DO

When my wife's back from milking the cows, I'll be sure to convey your remarks, Madam

Grim smiles, then FRANCIS comes back with a pair of old safety-boots, assuming Dad's agreed to help.

FRANCI S

Are you Size 6? These are my old ones.

SANDRA

You're very good Francis, but -

FRANCI S

Take them

He insists, only to suddenly, without reserve, point to SANDRA's birthmark, and laugh, Dad, look.

SANDRA smiles, touched. AlDO's awkward, but moved. A beat,

AI DO

Get your one, the Doctor to give me a call, to talk money. I can't work for nothing, but ... I'll do what I can.

Understood. On SANDRA, relieved, grateful.

76 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

76

SANDRA types 1934 into the printer-scanner, sharing a furtive look with the same female LIBRARIAN. Beat, then she collects her Planning Application.

77 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (EVENING)

77

Of ot hes, drying everywhere - on hangers, vents, lamp-shades.

The girls are just out of the bath. EMMA brushes/untangles MOLLY's hair (to cries of "Ow... Careful... That hurts!").

SANDRA has the house-plans, architect notes, planning forms laid out on the bed.

She addresses an A4 envelope to Aido Deveney, when there's a knock at the door. Odd. A beat, then another knock.

JO (O. S.)

Sandra, it's Jo, from Women's Aid.

Shit.

SANDRA

Jo - one second.

She frantically gathers up all her paperwork, shoves it in a bag for life, and sticks that in the bottom of the wardrobe.

EMMA and MOLLY watch, puzzled.

SANDRA goes to the door, gathers herself, and opens it to JO.

JO

Hi. Just a drive-by.

(breezes in, handing her)

Council is carrying out

assessment of housing needs. As if they don't know already - houses

are needed, Christ almighty.

(waves)

Hey Emma, hey Molly, have you just had a bath? You look squeaky-clean!

SANDRA, noticing the wardrobe door's swung open.

JO (CONT'D)

You're still one parent, he's been keeping up the maintenance, has he?

SANDRA

Eh, right, he has, no difference.

JO

It's grand, just the maintenance affects how your rent allowance gets calculated.

SANDRA

Sure. Yeah, no, I remember.

She casually heels the wardrobe door shut.

JO

It's red-tape, but once it's done, it's done. It's not going to change much - unless you won the lotto and you're not telling me!

SANDRA laughs nervously.

JO (CONT'D)

Ring me if you need help with the forms. 'Night girls.

And she's out as quick as she came in. A beat, then -

EMMA

Okay, why are you being weird?

SANDRA

(deflects)

Do you's want to get milkshakes?

77A EXT. BULL I SLAND - DAY (EVENING)

77A

Sunset. Sandra's car in silhouette, rattling over the narrow wooden bridge linking the coastal road to a low lying, sand spit.

78 OM TTED 78

Dublin Bay. The soaring statue of the Virgin Mary. The city. The lighthouse on the East Wall. Pool beg Towers.

MOLLY

What's that?

EMMA.

It's a code-word. It's better ya don't know.

SANDRA

Come on. Home.

They finish their 'shakes, and play "tag" back to the car.

Music plays over the following scenes.

79 INT. HOTEL ROOM/BATHROOM - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

79

EMMA and MOLLY are as leep. The only light comes from the ensuite, where we might hear:

CI ARAN CROWLEY'S VOICE

It's simply empowering for people to build their own house.

SANDRA sits on the floor with her phone propped against the bath. It plays a Ciaran Crowley interview.

CI ARAN CROWLEY'S VOICE (CONT'D)

It allows them to influence the world they want to live in.

She absently looks at the Assessment Forms that Jo dropped round. There's a section asking if she has LOANS / CREDIT.

She puts the form aside. Maybe not right now.

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)

80

SANDRA Looks over a contract, with a map of Peggy's garden. PEGGY and GRALNNE flank her.

GRAI NINE

We asked a friend of the family to draw it up. It sets out the boundary between the properties and just protects - should circumstances change.

PEGGY

'Means when I kick the bucket she can't take it off you.

Grainne bristles. Sandra tries to decipher the contract.

81 FRONT OF PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)

81

SANDRA accompanies PEGGY on her maiden trip outside the front door on her walking-frame.

PEGGY takes in the PLANNING NOTICE on her front wall. Smiles.

Progress is slow, frustratingly, but SANDRA offers support.

A neighbour, NATHAN, 38, waves -

NATHAN

Great to see you out and about, Peggy.

PEGGY

Sagev. I don't know myself!

82 INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S FRONT HALL - DAY (MONTAGE)

82

SANDRA and PEGGY, nervously looking at an envelope. There's a Dublin City Council logo. Planning Department.

SANDRA gives her Mum's ring a squeeze for luck, while PEGGY opens it.

APPROVED. Shock. Delight. Then anxiety. It's happening.

83 INT. PUB - DAY (MONTAGE)

83

SANDRA, on her hands and knees, trying to scrub a stain off the carpet, flexing her hand when it gives her grief.

JOHN the landlord sits at the bar, reading the paper, eyeing

48A.

84 OM TTED 84

85

SANDRA confidently reels off items, to condescending DAVE.

SANDRA

... metal brackets, spirit-level, sledge-hammer - oh, and a bag of lime.

She slaps a wad of cash on the counter, Aido-style.

86 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (MONTAGE)

86

SANDRA pulls on extra pairs of socks, and takes in the boots Francis gave her.

They have steel toe-caps, thick soles. Like Gary's boots.

Beat, then she shakes the memory that was blocking her, and defiantly pulls them on, laces them up... RHBeory that was blockic0slee408

88 OM TTED 88

	Herself (April 26 - Yellow)	50.
89	MERGED WITH SC87	89
90	MOVED - MERGED WITH SC96A	90

Al DO (CONT'D)
It's your home. So... You break ground.

Ok, she takes the handle, looks to Peggy, then Amy who is beaming at her now. He watches her warily but she meets his gaze, bites her lip, and swings. It cuts the soil. It begins.

TIME CUT TO:

Later. SANDRA and AMY hold sledge hammers and begin to destroy Aisling's den.

A MONTAGE of hands and builders boots, measuring and marking the ground.

Al DO scrapes the ground with his mini-digger.

We watch PEGGY, EMMA and MOLLY in the background. The girls are playing, running - enjoying the space.

TIME CUT TO:

A bedraggled MY LITTLE PONY DOLL from the 1980s amongst a pile of timber. A hand reaches to pick it up. PEGGY stands, examining it, watched by an exhausted AMY and SANDRA.

AIDO with EMMA standing beside him, oversees MOLLY 'driving' the stationary digger.

As SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY trudge home, SANDRA looks back and sees PEGGY standing alone in the middle of the now barren site.

93 EXT. HOTEL - DAY (EVENING)

93

Worn-out SANDRA and a mud-caked EMMA and MOLLY trudge onto the forecourt.

SANDRA

Bath first, then ya can watch Frozen.

Only to see GARY, waiting for them, holding a bag for life.

SANDRA stiffens. Looks round, for a way out, help? EMMA is happy to see him, and goes for a hug. MOLLY stays put.

EMMA

Dad.

GARY

(Laughs)

The state of you. Where ve you's been playing, in the bog?!

SANDRA

(ur gent)

Emma. Take your sister in.

SANDRA offers the hotel key-card, imploring EMMA to take it (and say nothing). EMMA huffs, grabs it - and MOLLY.

As the girls go -

GARY

Sandra, I just wanted to -

SANDRA

What are you doing, Gary?

GARY

... here, I made you dinner.

Reveals a large thermos-flask.

SANDRA

You shouldn't be here Gary.

GARY

I'm not asking to come in and eat with ya's Sandra, Jesus. I want them to have a hot meal. You could use one, too. 'Wasting away.

He's almost affectionate. He offers the flask, and against her better judgement, all she has been told, she takes it.

GARY (CONT'D)
It's mad isn't it? We could all just get in that car now. Together. We could just go back.

SANDRA

(into his eyes for once) To what, Gary?

He hears her. But looks away, trying to hold in wer.

93B EXT. GARDEN. RENTED HOUSE - DAY(FLASHBACK)

93B

ACTION COMBINED AND MOVED FROM SC103/105

Silver cocktail shaker, rattling with ice, Gary making cocktails. Last year. Summer's evening. Kids are in bed. SANDRA and GARY have their mates, SHANNON and ROB, 20s, over for a barbecue.

We might see GARY posturing, explaining how to cook a perfect steak. SANDRA's showing SHANNON a College Brochure.

SHANNON

That's deadly Sandra, fair play.

GARY

"Monte-fucking-ssori" Teacher, her?
She can't even look after our two!
 (nudges laughing ROB)
Ya mad yoke. Mad Sandra Kelly isn't
that what they used to call ya?!

GARY brings over drinks for everyone but SANDRA, who's like, Where's mine?

GARY (CONT'D)

You've had enough.

He cuts her a look, then lobs a lime in the air, catches it behind his back, like no words were exchanged. Mr Charisma.

93 C EXT. HOTEL, EVENING

93 C

Sandra shakes of f the memory, opens her eyes. Onwards. She heads through the side entrance door of the hotel.

94 EXT. SITE. DAY

94

A CEMENT M XER turning. SANDRA scoops cement into a barrow, and AIDO wheels it to the foundation hole. As AIDO tips it into the hole SANDRA stands ready with a piece of wood to scrape off any excess.

AI DO

Grand, grand. Skimit nice and flat.

SANDRA focuses hard, supporting all her weight on the wooden bar as she skims. Suddenly she notices AMY documenting the action on her phone.

SANDRA

What are you doing?

AMY

Getting an "action-shot", for me Instagram Here hold it like you were -

SANDRA

NO! No photos Amy. Not of me, or the kids, or the site, alright? Don't be putting anything online!

AMY

Jesus. Okay. Relax. Just thought you'd wanna track the progress, like Grand Designs..? No?

Emphatically, No. AMY makes a show of pocketing the phone, to lighten the mood, and SANDRA continues scraping the wood over the frame.

AI DO

Just smooth and gentle - you don't want to let any dips happen in the middle, d'ya see? You want the rain to run off the edges. Okay? Got it?

SANDRA

Yeah.

However, now having her full weight on her bad hand causes it to shake uncontrollably.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

No!

Coming up from the frame, steadying her shaking hand which is now in spasm She tries to hide it from AIDO as he grabs her wooden scraper and continues flattening the concrete.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I just need.. back in a sec.

PEGGY, is poking some chicken nuggets round a tray just out of the oven, looking at them warily.

Emma and Molly sit at the table, Emma doing homework, Molly 'doing homework' and gazing round at Peggy's kitchen.

PEGGY
I'm not sure this counts as one of

PEGGY (CONT'D)

That won't do anything for nerve damage.

SANDRA

Yeah well... it helps.

She washes it down with water, and notices MOLLY's restless.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Molly, go for a wee.

MOLLY

I don't need.

SANDRA

I can see you holding it in. Go on.

MOLLY stomps away, clearly desperate. ALDO opens the French windows and calls inside -

AI DO

Sandra, you all right? Yeah?

A tight smile belies how tense she's feeling.

AI DO (CONT'D)

(hat es sayi ng it but..)

We're gonna néed more hands next Saturday.

She nods, turns, mind racing, washes out her glass.

96 OM TTED 96

96A EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY (MERGED FROM SC90)

96A

SANDRA collects EMMA and MOLLY. It is the last day of term, which means no-uniform and a term full of art to take home.

The girls skip back to their car, giddy and high on sweets.

EMMA

And we got to play games and watch Mbana!

SANDRA

Deadly - and now every day is a..?

MOLLY

"Mammy Day"!

Delight. SANDRA sees ROSA waiting nearby, who half smiles, putting stuff in her boot. Sandra thinking fast, gestures to the girls go on, I'll be with you in a sec.

She wills herself to walk over, stalls Rosa getting in.

SANDRA

Rosa, are you free at weekends?

ROSA

Sorry?

SANDRA

This is a bit mad. I'm building a house, like a self-build thing, and I need a hand, for a few weekends over the summer. And I was just wondering, now only if it suits, if you were around and wanted to help?

(sees she's thrown)

Hang on - I should write it down -

She can only find a receipt in her handbag, continues to gabble while scribbling with her absurdly large, blunt Carpenter's pencil -

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Sorry I know I've not been, we've not talked much, like, but you're always saying hi and I thought...

Holds out the scribbled receipt.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Look. There's the address. There's no pressure. You're probably busy or going away.

ROSA, speechless. This woman rejects all offers of playdates, but wants help building a house?!

SANDRA (CONT' D)

Sure I'll leave it with you.

Thanks!

SANDRA returns to the girls, why did I think that was a good i dea?!

97 97 **OMI TTED**

SANDRA

Come outta the wardrobe Molly. We need to go.

MOLLY (O.S.)

I. Don't. Want. To. Go.

EMMA

Dad won't let her watch Frozen.

SANDRA

(Jesus)

Molly, come on -

She tugs the wardrobe door, only for MOLLY to grip tight and scream

MOLLY (O.S.)

Leave. Me. Al one.

SANDRA

Let go of the handle. Molly. You could trap your finger. Enough.

She yanks open the door, only to see MOLLY, rigid, quaking.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Molly, what's going on?

She sees Molly's tights are soaked. She's wet herself.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Did you..?

MOLLY

Nooooo!

Molly scared, embarrassed. SANDRA, thrown.

SANDRA

Come here pet. It's ok. Come here to me, I'm sorry. What's wrong?

Holds MOLLY in her piss-soaked clothes, kisses her head.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

D'you want to stay with me today?

MOLLY's face is buried, but she nods. EMMA steps over, with the My Little Pony PEGGY took off the site, all cleaned up.

EMMA

Here, Molly. Would you like to play with Pony?

MOLLY nods.

SANDRA

Did you take that from Peggy's?

EMMA

No, she gave it to us. It's Aisling's.

MOLLY

(recovering)

She's in heaven with Granny Michelle.

EMMA

(solemn and grown up)

She had I eukem a.

SANDRA

She did.

EMMA joins the family hug, only at a distance - doesn't want wee on her.

99 EXT. FRONT DOOR. HOUSING ESTATE - DAY

99

SANDRA, with GARY. He takes in MOLLY, in the car, calm now and playing with the My Little Pony.

SANDRA

She's not herself. Could be a kidney infection. She wants to stay with me.

Outting her a look, GARY brushes past, and goes to the car.

GARY

Hey Molly, d'you know what Grannie Tina's made? Your favourite, eggybread. There's gonna be none left.

MOLLY starts to cry. Fuck's sake. GARY opens the back door.

GARY (CONT'D)

Alright, come on, out, let's go.

He tries to lift her out. MOLLY screams, kicks, No!

GARY (CONT'D)

Molly, stop it... Jesus, will ya calm down... you're being a baby!

SANDRA

Gary, don't hurt her.

She reaches in to shield MOLLY. She ends up close to him so he stops trying and snaps at Sandra. That look.

GARY

She's only acting up because she knows she can get what she wants. She's messing us both about here.

Beat. He takes a deep breath. Calls out.

GARY (CONT'D)
Your sister's just gonna get all the treats then.

He goes, cutting SANDRA a look, muttering -

GARY (CONT'D)

Cunt.

We see Emma and Tina waiting to see if Molly is coming in.

100 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

100

SANDRA and MOLLY walk hand-in-hand down the lawn, when they hear - chatter? They round the hedge and enter the site, to see...

Al DO being introduced new faces on site - acquaintances of AMY.

TOMO, 17, Dublin-jersey, wiry, hyper - he repeatedly tosses and catches an Energy-drink bottle, unable to keep still;

DARI USZ 30s, Polish, ripped, rat-tail haircut, laid back;

YEVANDE, 30s, African origin, highly-educated, handy.

SANDRA sees AIDO measuring them And MOLLY clings to her, shy, scared.

AMY

Sandra - I rounded-up some heads from the squat. One of them even knows what they're doing!

She indicates DARI USZ. He shakes her hand.

DARI USZ

Dariusz.

AI DO

What's your trade Dariusz?

DARI USZ

Construction and eh, Deliveroo?

Tomo holds in laughing. Aido clicks him

AMY

This is Yewande from -

YEVANDE

(matter of fact)

Sligò. Cameroon, oríginally. Nice to meet you.

Yewande shakes firmly, meets her eyes. Amy elbows Tomo.

TOMO

Tomo. From eh, down the road... What's the story? -

He drops the bottle - 'ah shite.', more reason to laugh. She warily shakes hands with him ALDO looks on, bemused.

SANDRA

This is Rosa everyone. Rosa -

AI DO

Get the names after. Let's put this up first.

He's tense, but the others banter while they balance, feet dancing beneath the frames as they move to and fro.

AI DO (CONT'D)

Left. Bit more. Left. Left ya's, Jesus. Now forward. That's it.

Fixing a rope to the frame, AIDO hoists it up with help from the gang, and braces it into position. DARI USZ checks the spirit-level.

A second frame, soaring up from the ground, to be braced to the first.

TIME CUT TO:

A fortnight later. All the frames, upright. A lot of banging.

AIDO, SANDRA, ROSA, DARIUSZ, FRANCIS, TOMO and AMY hammer floor beams into position (Aido's blood-pressure spikes each time Tomo swings!). PEGGY looks on, sitting on a box.

MOLLY and EMMA play in their 'Command and Control' area.

SANDRA sees NATHAN the neighbour peering over the fence. He looks tired, tense and appeals to PEGGY -

NATHAN

Before 9, on a Saturday, again?

PEGGY

Ah now, do I complain about your little one waking three times a night? Earlier they start, the sooner it'll be finished.

NATHAN

Is this gonna be every weekend?

PEGGY

Ear-plugs, Nathan. Works for me.

He smiles insipidly. SANDRA winces, but PEGGY gestures, it'll be grand.

TIME CUT TO:

SANDRA, on the ground, watching AIDO and DARIUSZ working on the roof-beams.

TIME CUT TO:

Evening. Dusky light. The skel et on of the house, printed against the sky.

The crew stand back to take it in. Exhausted, but satisfied, proud, bonded.

AI DO

Where's herself?

A beat, then SANDRA rounds the corner, carrying MOLLY... and beer in a bulging carrier-bag. Cheers.

SANDRA

It's just a little something to say thanks for today.

As she hands out cans -

YEVANDE

Sandra, you shouldn't have.

TOMO

No fucking complaints here!

Grabs a can, only to wince, sorry for cursing in front of the little one. AMY playfully thwacks him and opens a can.

AMY

This won't even touch the sides!

AI DO

(asking permission)

Doct or?

PEGGY

Sure, one won't kill you. 'May even have one myself, for the day that's in it.

Cheering. SANDRA distributes the rest and lifts her tracksuit top off the floor to head home.

ROSA

You're not having one, Sandra?

TOMO

It's a bag of cans Boss, not a bag of can'ts!

SANDRA

(laughs, but...)
I need to get this one back. 'Been a long day hasn't it, sweetheart?

MOLLY nods, barely awake. SANDRA stands by Rosa takes in the basic grid-work of the house, still can't quite believe.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Nothing there few weeks ago. It's mad isn't it?

Sandra smiles at Rosa. Rosa winks. A silent thank you, you're welcome. Sandra lifts Molly in her arms.

101 INT. RECEPTION. HOTEL - EVENING 101

SANDRA carries a fast-asleep Molly towards the lifts. LAZLO calls after her, Mss -

LAZLO M ss Kelly, come on -

SANDRA

'You want me to carry her all the way upstairs? It's just this once.

He walks alongside her to the lifts.

LAZLO

They have cameras everywhere. I get in trouble too.

Lift opens. A COUPLE stagger out, a bit pissed, laughing, only to hush themselves when they see sleeping MOLLY.

PARTY GIRL

Aw look, ah isn't she gorgeous.

She has short shorts on and her arse cheeks hang out. SANDRA catches LAZLO checking it out as she enters the lift -

SANDRA

I wonder, do they have a camera on your face following her arse?

Lift doors close on his face.

102 INT. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS. DUBLIN - DAY

102

SANDRA strides round with her list, looking at the prices of tools, selecting screws, when she hears a familiar laugh and freezes.

103 OMITTED, MERGED WITH SC105 AND MOVED TO 93B

103

104 INT. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS. DUBLIN - (PRESENT) DAY

104

SANDRA peers round the aisle to see GARY at the Customer Service Desk, bantering with DAVE. Hail fellow, well met.

OMITTED, MERGED WITH SC103 AND MOVED TO 93B

105

106 INT. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS. DUBLIN - (PRESENT) DAY

106

SANDRA dumps the screws, backs out of the aisle and finds the exit, breathing fast.

Intercut with jagged images from 6 months ago: SANDRA, busted by an affronted GARY; viciously beaten; her hand, pulverized.

107 INT. CAR (PARKED/MOVING) - (PRESENT) DAY

107

SANDRA jumps in her car, locks the doors and rests her head on the steering-wheel - dizzy, dry-mouthed, swallowing hard.

Anxious that Cary's going to walk out and spot her car, she starts the engine and wheel-spins away.

108 INT. PUB - DAY

108

JOHN the Landlord admonishes SANDRA in private.

JOHN

Late three times, and you've your kids here. I won't have it Sandra, 'tis a pub, not a fucking nursery!

SANDRA

It's the holidays. They're being good. John, please, I need this job.

JOHN

Well, make it your priority then. Cos there's plenty of people out there would love to take your place. It takes all her strength not to react. She nods, understood, and paces away, bristling. Observe EMMA and MOLLY in the b.g, playing/colouring quietly.

A wrecked-looking AMY is at the other end of the bar. She's overheard the bollocking. Snorts, sotto -

AMY

Fuck him Wait 'till he hears Dariusz scored us tickets for Longitude this weekend!

SANDRA

(us?!)

Does that mean nobody's around to help?! I've the insulation coming, Amy. We're meant to be installing it Saturday.

AMY

Yewande'll be there, I'd say. And Tomo'll be back if you keep paying him in cans. Ya should've seen the state of him he was off his face!

SANDRA, worrying about that, whether anyone will be there.

109 INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

109

SANDRA enters, only to see PEGGY at the sink, Marigolds on, scrubbing a massive pile of dirty dishes.

GRAINNE (O.S.)

Stay where you are.

SANDRA stiffens. Glimpses GRAINNE, under the dining-table, with a dust pan and brush.

GRAI NINE (CONT'D)

There's bits of glass everywhere.

There are also muddy footprints on the carpet, mugs full of ciggie-butts, empty beer-cans and pizza-boxes on the worktop.

SANDRA

Dr O Toole, don't you be doing those. I'll see to them

She gathers the cans/boxes, as GRAINNE hotly wraps the glass in a sheet of newspaper and takes it the outside bin.

SANDRA, feeling like they're both against her. A beat.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. How late did they stay?

PEGGY
How well do you know Amy's friends?

On site, a reduced crew. SANDRA, FRANCIS, ROSA and YEWANDE hold up green plywood, the first layer of covering for the house on the outside. Al DO assists, straining, doing the work of two people.

AI DO

Just the A-Team today then?

No response. He grabs screws to fasten it down, only -

AI DO (CONT'D)

I thought I said Goodwins with the big boxes of screws.

SANDRA

Are they the wrong ones?

AI DO

No, but they're dearer. You get big boxes half the price in Goodwins. You need to think of your budget, Sandra. You should've rang me.

EMMA

(i n)

Here Mam, I was meant to give you -

SANDRA

Emma - don't be coming down here. You know better.

(to Aido)

I thought this was a self build? Not a call-your-builder-every-2minutes -

AI DO

I said to you, "Goodwins".

SANDRA

Well, I couldn't go there, alright?

AI DO

Fine. We'll just use these.

Tense beat, then SANDRA calls over to -

SANDRA

Emma pet, what did you want?

EMMA

(retreats)

Not hing.

TIME CUT TO:

Later. SANDRA waves goodbye to YEVANDE AND ROSA

SANDRA

Thanks a mill. See ya next week.

She continues putting up the green plywood using an electric-screwdriver. FRANCIS holds up the heavy panels for her. ALDO works round the back, by himself.

A screw goes in wonky and SANDRA tries to remove it with the electric-screwdriver, only for the battery to run out. Damn.

She automatically lifts a claw-hammer to pull it out, when EMMA pushes in, trying again -

EMMA

Mam, can I show you now -

SANDRA yanks... and the hammer and screw scrape Emma's arm

EMMA (CONT'D) AAAHHHHHHH. Maammml

SANDRA

Jesus love, I'm sorry -

EMMA

Bloooood! Make it stop!

FRANCIS freezes, unsure what to do. There's enough blood to freak out EMMA, and her frazzled Mammy -

SANDRA

Come here to me. Dr O Toole! Peggy!!!

111 MERGED WITH 110

111

PEGGY

Let me see, pet. Oh, that's a nasty little cut. Hold your arm up nice and high for me Emma, good girl.

Pulls a hanky from her pocket to stem the trickle of blood.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Molly, there's a brown feather bag under the stairs, fetch it for me? And a bowl of water please, Mammy.

SANDRA acts on that, as MOLLY returns with the medical bag.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Think we need the special plasters, nurse.

As MOLLY roots inside, SANDRA brings over water and kitchenroll. PEGGY assures Mammy, it's okay, and cleans the wound.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

EMMA Daddy told me to give it you. This stings. SANDRA looks to PEGGY, tears in her eyes, and darts away, so the girls don't see her upset.

112A INT. LIVING ROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

112A

SANDRA, sitting on Peggy's bed, looking at that photo of Gary and crying.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Why don't you watch a bit of telly.

Beat, then PEGGY knocks and limps in, and sits beside Sandra.

SANDRA

Sorry. I shouldn't let them see me like this.

PEGGY

Why not? ...

SANDRA

(pours, almost admitting)
I miss him, Peggy. Gary... I mean,
I don't ... I miss who he

Peggy puts her arms around her, holds her through it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

It's like it's all the wrong way round. I wish I could bring it back. I wanted to fix it, ya know?

PEGGY

I know. I know. No matter how much you might want to, there are some people you just can't...

(trails off, deflects)

Why don't you all stay here tonight have a proper feed, and a sleep?

SANDRA

I can't do that.

PEGGY

Sandra, you're exhausted. At this stage you should probably move in, while the build is happening.

SANDRA

I can't. I can't risk Gary finding out about this. I can't.

A knock at the door. Al DO I ooks in, checking on SANDRA. PEGGY, she's grand. Good, however -

AI DO

Sandra, I'm sorry, we have to draw a line. I can't have children -

SANDRA

I know.

AI DO

If the Inspectors came -

SANDRA

Alright, Aido. I know.

A long beat.

AI DO

Look, I can't make the next couple of weekends. Leave everything till I'm back, okay? It can wait.

SANDRA, takes that in, bracing fury. On PEGGY, concerned.

113 INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

113

Outside Cary's parents' house.

SANDRA

It's the same as the safety box, Emma. Now, what do you say?

EMMA

(rel uct ant)

'I hurt it playing in the hotel.'

SANDRA

It's only a white lie, love. White lies are harmless, yeah?

EMMA nods. SANDRA squeezes her hand, and kisses it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Love you.

EMMA

(small voice)

Love you.

EMMA gets out of the car, and runs up the path. SANDRA hates having to make her do this. Beat, then she turns, sees MOLLY clinging to the seat. Refusing to move. Really, again?

114 EXT. HOUSING-ESTATE. DAY

114

Front door of Cary's parents' house. SANDRA and GARY, heated.

GARY

Bullshit "kidney infection". For the last month? Are you grooming her or something?

SANDRA

No. Obviously not.

GARY

(a bit cheeky from her)
Well you aren't fucking
taking care of them are ya? If
she's getting sick that much?

She shapes to go, only for GARY to grip her wrist.

GARY (CONT'D)

Keep her... But I know when you're I ying to me, Sandra. I al ways know.

She pulls away, and dashes to the car, breathing hard, knowing she was right to be scared of him

115 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

115

The heavens have opened. The wind is up.

SANDRA, alone on the site, up on a scaffolding-tower with a staple-gun - defying Aido, only struggling to put the blue breathable membrane (the layer that goes over that green plywood) up by herself. She is a woman possessed.

- 121 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE DAY (MONTAGE) 121

 SANDRA wat ches AI DO and YEVANDE up on the roof, attaching the corrugated panels onto the roof-ridge. It's precarious work.
- 122 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE DAY (MONTAGE) 122

 SANDRA, working on the inside insulation. Her focus shifts to an ELECTRICIAN wiring the interior. She watches, learning.

YEWANDE (CONT'D)
I'll put this inside for her ...for later.

Peggy winks. 'Good thinking.'

126 EXT. CAR PARK. HOTEL - DAY

126

A tired SANDRA trudges towards the side entrance with EMMA and MOLLY, when -

LAZLO

Mss Kelly, I had to sign for this.

He hands her an official-looking envelope. Recorded Delivery.

127 INT. WOMEN'S AID OFFICE - DAY

127

SANDRA paces furiously, COURT ORDER in her wrecked hand. JO tries to calm her - but could wring her neck, too.

SANDRA

BREACH of access? That prick's lucky to see those kids at all. Now he's taking ME to court!

JO

Sandra, "breach of access" is an offence. You have to attend. You have to give your side of -

SANDRA

Aw well that's great. Wait till I get me A4 pad now and we'll get started will we?

JO

Well if you fight this, with that kind of attitude, he'll win. I've seen it. I've seen men get barring orders back against the women they hit, I'm telling you. (beat)

Now, we can either calmly put forward your side of the story, or you can go into mediation ranting and raving and risk losing cust ody of the kids altogether.

SANDRA, incredulous. JO clings to her professionalism

JO (CONT'D)

How many visit's did Molly miss?

SANDRA

I dunno. Seven, eight?

JO

Sandr a.

SANDRA

She wouldn't get out of the car Jo. What was I meant to do?

JO

SANDRA shakes her head, raging, mind racing. A long beat.

 $\label{eq:JO} \mbox{JO (CONT' D)} \\ \mbox{Any more news on the house front?}$

SANDRA turns to JO. She pauses, looks away, shakes her head.

128 INT. HOUSE SITE - DAY

View from above. The layout of the house. Workers inside.

A PLUMBER is in the "bathroom".

FRANCIS, TOMO, DARIUSZ, AMY ROSA and YEWANDE work in the "living-room", on the inner insulation.

SANDRA stands by the entrance, outside the house.

O oser. Sandra's holding a measuring tape, but a load of tape's spooled down, she's staring into space, distracted.

AIDO enters, with an interior door.

AI DO

How's herself?.. Hellooo -

SANDRA

I want one of them Banham I ocks, for the front door.
 (grabs a catalogue)
This one. D'you see? They flick open easy on the inside - but they're real secure?

AI DO

No, I know them Just. I thought you were on a budget.

SANDRA

Well I want one. Jesus, you ask me for a million decisions a day, and when I give you a freebie it's why why why or too much - fuck-sake!

Silence. She realises everybody inside has stopped work. And they're staring. Rosa watches her concerned.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

What?! Stop looking at me, will ya! Just... get on with it. Bleeding gaff'll never get finished!

Beat, then she sees next-door NATHAN peering over the fence.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

And you can stop staring me out of it as well, ya prick!

Awkwardness. The gang exchange looks, before resuming their tasks.

128

ROSA exits, non-judgmental, but firm Gestures, aside.

ROSA

Sandra - what's going on?

SANDRA

What's the point of this house, if I've no kids to put in it?

On ROSA, thrown...' what?'

129 INT. BATHROOM. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

129

A dress hangs on the shower-rail, to steam out the creases.

SANDRA smears the clouded mirror, and takes a look at her reflection. She looks beaten. Feral. Doesn't know herself.

Uncapping a concealer-pen, she furiously jabs dots on her face. Angry she has let herself go. Angry with the world.

ROSA (O.S.)
"OK Kelly girls, are we ready? I
think Park, first? Then ice-creams?

Reveal ROSA in the doorway, teasing the girls (unseen, responding 'Yeah!' or 'I'm just getting my skooter!'). She takes in SANDRA, feeling for her. A beat -

ROSA (CONT'D) Sandra - we should go.

130 OM TTED 130

131 EXT. FAMILY COURTS. DUBLIN - DAY

131

Grainne's BMW pulls up outside, and SANDRA and PEGGY alight. As GRAINNE finds a parking space, SANDRA and PEGGY wait at the bottom of the steps.

SANDRA is smartly-dressed, wears thick make-up. It conceals her birthmark, everything.

SANDRA

Maybe I should ring the girls -

PEGGY

The girls are fine. I just spoke to Rosa they're happy out. Relax.

GARY arrives, Conor McGregor-style three-piece suit, flanked by his parents.

Looks are exchanged, and they go in - only we might see TINA glancing back, briefly meeting SANDRA's gaze before going in.

A beat, then PEGGY hands her a dented cigarette-tin. SANDRA, puzzled. She opens it and finds a couple of rollies.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
From Amy. I hope it's only tobacco.

SANDRA thaws and looks round for a light, only for GRAINNE to arrive and offer one - then spark-up herself. PEGGY, stunned. Since when?

GRAI NINE

Since I was 16, mother. Let it go.

SANDRA lets out a little laugh, and they smoke together, only to glimpse -

132 INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

132

JUDGE MCBRIDE, 54, female, peruses the case-work, flanked by the COURT CLERK and the JUDICIAL ASSISTANT.

SANDRA sits in the witness-box.

GARY and his SOLICITOR, female, 30s, ironed into her suit, sit across from SANDRA'S SOLICITOR. JO from Women's Aid sits behind.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

I see there were a few years of this "ongoing threatening behaviour", Ms Kelly.

SANDRA

Yes Judge.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Was there a reason you didn't leave sooner?

SANDRA

I... did try to. I wanted to, loads
of times - I made a safety-box. I
j ust had nowhere to go.

The JUDGE weighs this, and looks to GARY.

JUDGE MCBRIDE Mr Mullen - you claim that Molly

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)

On Sunday August 7th, Emma was dropped at her father's place of residence with a bandage on her left arm, as you can see. When questioned about this Emma said she hurt it "making something in the garden with mammy". This didn't match what Mr Mullen was told by Ms Kelly, who claimed it happened in the "hotel", where they temporarily reside.

SANDRA's now looking at the photo, and feeling sick.

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)

We have evidence that suggests Emma was indeed "making something in the garden"... of a Dr Margaret O Toole - who is in fact allowing Ms Kelly to build a house at her property.

SANDRA

Judge, I... I can...

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Please wait, Ms Kelly... Ms Breen, what relevance does that have to this hearing? The matter is for another courtroom

SOLI CI TOR

Judge, if this hearing is about the character of these parents, and which one is a more suitable guardian to the children, it's certainly worth noting that Ms Kelly did not inform Dublin City Council about this build, or her change of circumstances -

SANDRA

Dr O Tool e got planning, it's her property -

SOLI CI TOR

And Mss Kelly lied on an Assessment form

SOLICITOR submits evidence to the JUDGE, and a stunned JO.

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)

When asked in June of this year if you'd received a Loan or had Other Housing options you wrote N/A, Not Applicable, did you not?

SANDRA

I didn't lie -

SOLI CI TOR

(deliberately informal)
Well it's on that form Sandra. I
mean.. it's hard not to think
you're trying to get two houses
instead of one.

SANDRA

(don't go there) Oh, fuck off.

JQ, wincing.

SOLI CI TOR

Judge - is this a fit mother?

SANDRA looks to JO, rattled, disbelieving.

SANDRA

No. No way.

(stands, roars)

You're not doing this... YOU ARE NOT TAKING MY KIDS!

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Alright. ALRIGHT! Twenty minute break, while I go over this new evidence. And your client calms herself.

SANDRA sees JO nodding, masking anger.

133 INT. FOYER. FAMILY COURT - DAY

133

SANDRA on a bench, shaking, stroking her fingers straight.

Besi de her, hushed, exasperated chat -

GRAI NNE

They might take the girls because she fudged some bloody form?!

JO

Yes. YES they might! Because when it comes to legally binding forms, you're supposed to tell the truth.

SANDRA

(in)

Truth in the right tone of voice though, isn't it? Tell the truth? Don't tempt me. I'll be here all fucking week.

She storms away, and eyeballs GARY, sitting with his parents across the hall. On PEGGY, watching this, feeling for her.

134 INT. TOILETS. FAMILY COURT - DAY

134

SANDRA clutches the sheets of paper preparation with one hand - she runs water on her other... puts the water down the back of her neck.

PEGGY enters, on her walking-stick. A beat -

PEGGY

Come here to me.

SANDRA takes the hug.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Of course you were going to stay on the bloody Housing List. Anything coul d' ve happened.

SANDRA

Look what I've done.

PEGGY

Sandra, you're building a house for your girls, from not hing. Working day and night for them to have the childhood they've been denied, and every weekend you've to drop them round to that fucker?!

(refers to the Court)

Do they know what it takes to do that? Do they?

SANDRA

I can't. I can't lose them Peggy.

PEGGY

I know. I know. (beat) (MORE)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Christ, after Aisling died, I buried myself in work, trying to save other people's daughters... I missed so much of Grainne's life I ended up losing her, too. I wasn't a good mother, Sandra. Not like you.

(grips her shoulders) I know you didn't stop Molly going to her father's, she just didn't want to, and you listened to her. You were trying to do what was best for your child. They have to see t hat .

(beat)

Jo's right, tell the truth. Put an end to this.

SANDRA's like a little girl looking at PEGGY.

PEGGY gets out some Wet Wipes, removes the concealer from Sandra's eye, exposing her birthmark. Then hobbles to the door, and holds it open.

135 INT. COURT ROOM - DAY 135

Tense room

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Mr Mullen, has Emma recovered from her injury, in your opinion?

GARY

Yes judge, but I don't want my kids in an unsafe environment.

SANDRA

Unsaf e?

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Mss Kelly -

SANDRA

It was a scrape, Gary. How many times has she done that coming off her scooter..?

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Okay. Let's just for a moment, look at the facts here. The report says Molly missed eight access visits. Mr Mullen hasn't missed one. He's paid child maint enance. (MORE)

JUDGE MCBRIDE (CONT'D) He's done everything that was legally required - SANDRA

Yeah, 'cause that's what he does, he does what's required but it's not real it's -

JUDGE MCBRIDE

No it's <u>fact</u>, Mss Kelly. Whereas you have not. Why is that?

A beat. She looks at GARY, then the JUDGE, steely-eyed.

SANDRA

Ask me better questions.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

I beg your pardon?

SANDRA

Ask me why he's using the children as pawns in front of us all, while you's all wondering why I didn't fill in a form?!

Directs this at GARY, with conviction, until she's done.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

You wanna know why I didn't let Molly go? Because she was so scared of seeing you. She saw, Gary. That day. She saw you punch my head and pull my hair and wreck my hand. And you didn't see her, but she saw you. And you're calling me to court because she didn't want to visit?! I can't make her un-see all that, but Christ I'm her mother and I'll listen. I'd do it again. I'd do it a million times over. Making out I'm the bad Mam a bad person? I put her first. I al ways put our kids first.

He's inscrutable. Doesn't give her the reward of a reaction. Sandra turns on the court, almost realising in the moment.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

They're the reason I finally left. I'm done saying sorry. I'm done. You all knew what he did to mefrom the Medical and Carda reports, "facts", Judge - and you still put methrough this, still asking me" Why didn't you leave him?" You never asked "why didn't he stop?"

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Very well. You may step down.

She nods. This is a win, despite the financial implications.

CLERK (O.S.)

Court is adjourned. All rise.

SANDRA sees JO trying to stay dignified, but wanting to yell yes!

135A INT. FOYER. FAMILY COURT - DAY

135A

Moments later, SANDRA embraces PEGGY, scarcely able to believe the verdict, and squeezing her tight as GRAINNE and JO watch, beaming.

SANDRA

Shit. Your hip.

PEGGY

Hip's fine.

SANDRA

I'm keeping my girls.

PEGGY

I'm delight ed for you, Sandra.

They laugh/cry with relief.

SANDRA sees GARY across the foyer with his parents. A look between them She can't read him Is he sore, hurting, humiliated, or is that resigned acceptance?

	GRAINNE drives. PEGGY's in the passenger-seat.	
139	INT. GRAINNE'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY	139
138	OM TTED	138
137	OM TTED	137
136	OM TTED	136

SANDRA snuggles up to EMMA and MOLLY on the back-seat, squeezing them that bit tighter today. Beat.

EMMA Did you see Dad? Quick glance to PEGGY. Then SANDRA levels with her. No more white lies - $\,$

SANDRA

I did. We went to the court, and we talked, and the Judge said we're to go back to how things were with the visits, but in a little while they wanna ask how you feel about it and how it's going. You okay with that?

EMMA nods. Then SANDRA kisses MOLLY.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
It's grand. You can go and see
Daddy. You don't have to worry
about me anymore. Okay?

MOLLY (nods, then...)
Rosa just got a puppy.

EMMA

ALL

Surprise!

The gang are all there: AMY, TOMO, YEVANDE, FRANCIS -

SANDRA

Jesus, me heart.

AMY

Congratulations, ya ledge!

SANDRA

You laid the floor!

AMY

Team effort.

TOMO

Mainly me.

AMY

Me hole was it - Yewande's been at it all day.

(beat)

Here. From all of us.

She hands SANDRA a gift, beautifully-presented.

SANDRA

Aw lads - girls, look at the wrapping.

TOMO

Fuck "the wrapping", open it!

SANDRA carefully unwraps. It's a Gold Knocker for a door.

SANDRA

Oh my God. Me own door KNOB! It's gorgeous! The weight of it, feel.

AMY

Just don't you be letting anymore knob-ends in the door, ya hear?

Laughter, playful joshing, then heads turn when a BI CYCLE makes its way down the garden, rode by DARI USZ.

DARI USZ

Somebody order a lot of pizza?

Cheers. As pizza-trays get handed through the window-frame -

TOMO

Here will we have a photo?

Awkwardness. AMY knows she has issues with that. Only -

SANDRA

Go on. Yewande, lads, get in -

AMY

So we're allowed photos now?

SANDRA

(ha-ha)

Come on smart-arse, group-shot.

The gang gather, goof around, pose, only for SANDRA to see FRANCIS, and realize his old man's missing. As it flashes -

141A EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

141A

SANDRA goes round the back of the house with a pizza-tray, Prosecco.

We might hear TOMO, "The Boss is on the lash!" There's a party happening inside the house. Music blares out of a phone.

AIDO's at work, on all fours, checking the drainage system

SANDRA

Hungry?

AI DO

Al ways.

Wiping his hands on his boiler-suit, he takes a slice, and proceeds to pick half the toppings of fit.

SANDRA

Aido, what's the deal with all the

SANDRA

Fuss?

AI DO

St op. The wife gets on to me to have vegetables and salad, "eat healthy".

SANDRA

Since the scare?

AI DO

Since we wed. Every day for thirtyyears the same sandwich, and every day I give the lettuce to the birds.

SANDRA

Would you not just tell her you don't like lettuce?

AI DO

And let the birds starve?
(then, tentatively)
So the Mullens didn't get their way this time?

SANDRA

They didn't.

AI DO

(exhales a ton of relief)
Thank FUCKING Christ - sorry!...

He nearly punches the air. Sandra laughs. They share a smile.

SANDRA

Everything's okay?

AI DO

Everything's okay.

He puts a hand on her shoulder. It's awkward but well meant. Common soldiers. Battle won.

AI DO (CONT'D)

I'd say three more days, you could be in.

SANDRA

Seriously?

AI DO

Then you can settle up. You think I'm getting paid in pizza?

He winks, and goes looking for more. She smiles, then sees a familiar face coming down the garden path with a large pot-

ROSA

Heard about the session. I made Feijoada.

Aido already grimacing at the idea of that dish.

SANDRA

Brilliant! Come on I get you a drink!

142 OM TTED 142

143 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

143

The new-build house, at dusk. Music plays within. Hold this, longer than we might expect. It's almost unsettling.

Then I aught er.

SANDRA piggy-backs EMMA out (Emma's a bit more hyper than usual, have sipped some bubbles), DARI USZ cradles sleepy MOLLY, and the others follow, cans in hand, deep in chat, keen to carry on.

Light's fading, kids are wrecked, the party's moving inside.

144 INT. LIVING ROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

144

PEGGY "hosts", ensuring glasses are full, and people are fed. Then Peggy pulls the blinds on the windows onto the garden.

Al DO tunes a guitar. FRANCIS takes in Peggy's oriental art, and cracks up (finds it very bold!).

TOMO, DARIUSZ and YEWANDE lounge on a sofa, tipsy already.

JO holding a tray of sandwiches, chatting to AMY who is

embracing her into the fold. Chat and banter in full flow. We hear:

YEVANDE

I never did stuff like this when I was younger. I've got so used to having it to look forward to now.

SANDRA

(in)

Same.

She's perched on a nearby stool, formal jacket from court off, hair down, and for once chilling. SANDRA sees ROSA

ALDO lifts his can for toast.

AI DO

Listen..eh..l just wanted to say. It's been a long time since I did anything more than an odd job. And what's been done here makes me very proud -

(cups Francis' ears)
And puts me in mind of an old Irish

TOVO

A met h- head?!

Al DO gets him in a playful headlock.

term a Meitheal.

AI DO

A Meitheal. Francis, explain to the young ones what it is, while I put some manners on this eejit!

FRANCI S

A Meitheal is when people come together to help their own.

AI DO

And are helped in return. Sláinte.

All raise a glass, united and changed by this experience.

TIME CUT TO:

Later. It's turned into a lively session.

AIDO plays guitar, FRANCIS the bodhran, YEWANDE claps along, TOMO gently twirls PEGGY, DARIUSZ jigs with AMY and ROSA.

While SANDRA watches, smiling, feeling like she can breathe again. Closing her eyes, she starts to sing .

As SANDRA cuts loose, the others stop dancing and playing to listen, and take her in.

This is the real Sandra Kelly.

She closes her eyes, and sings her heart out, uninhibited.

Eventually she opens her eyes, and sees MOLLY at the door, quivering, trying to get the words out. Finally -

MOLLY

Black Widow. Black Widow, Mam

SANDRA stops. All eyes are on MOLLY, repeating Black Widow.

144A INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN - NIGHT

144A

SANDRA bolts down the corridor and bursts into the kitchen, only to tense.

The light from the flames glows through the linen curtains, colouring her face, orange, red.

Her darkest fears. The house she built is on fire. Falling apart.

SANDRA

No. NO.

144B OMITTED 144B

145 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

145

FI ames.

Huge, gushing flames.

And the cruel, crashing sound of walls tumbling.

SANDRA dashes out, screaming, crying, animal-like.

AIDO rushes after her. FRANCIS is not far behind, his minder.

PEGGY watches, distressed, faint. YEWANDE sees this, steadies her.

ROSA's on her phone, pleading, hurry.

AMM's in tears, yelling at Sandra to get back.

SANDRA tries to get to the house, only to recoil, the heat is intense.

Al DO grabs her, and tries to haul her away. She clings to his shirt. Begs. Screams.

Until FRANCIS, TOMO and DARIUSZ pull them both back.

SANDRA kneels as the house goes up, heart breaking, sobbing.

All look on, aghast, as the burning house folds in on itself.

BLACK

SI LENCE

EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

150 EXT. DUBLIN - DAY

150

Buildings, and building work, all over town.

New hotels, luxury-apartment blocks, swanky offices, gatedest at es, renovations, restorations.

So much construction. But so little housing.

151 INT. BEDROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

151

Sunlight streams through the windows. SANDRA stirs, hollowed and cried out, only to see a silhouette of a small woman in the armchair. Her eyes adjust to see -

TINA, Cary's Mum, sitting beside her. Nervous. Heartbroken.

TI NA

He's been arrested, Sandra - Gary.
He's in custody. He'll go down for a long time... You're safe.
 (fills up, regrets)
What he did to you...there's no excuse. When he was a child, he learnt well what could be done inside four walls with no one watching but...l knew. I just didn't want to believe... and when I heard you were building that house - and god bless him he's my only son - but I thought... Thank God.
 (beat)

(beat)
I have to stay with my one.
 (beat)
You don't.
 (looks at her)
He's set himself on fire, not you.
It doesn't matter what walls you're between now. It's over.
You're free.

Beat, then she gets up, and goes.

SANDRA, a flicker of something. Then her eyes close again.

FADE TO BLACK.

152 INT. BEDROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - (NEXT) DAY

152

PEGGY opens the curtains, and the September sun warms SANDRA.

PEGGY

Time to get up, Sandra.

SANDRA won't. Can't. So PEGGY I evers an arm under her, and raises her up.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I made you tea. Have a little sip.

SANDRA doesn't react. So PEGGY puts the cup to her lips and encourages her to drink.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Good woman. Can you stand?

SANDRA is too weak. So PEGGY pulls back the duvet, swings her legs out, and fixes a look.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Now, grip. And up we go. Deadly.

Flicker of recognition. Then PEGGY walks SANDRA very slowly out.

153 INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY 153

PEGGY follows SANDRA downstairs, through the hallway, into the kitchen.

GRAINNE's preparing tea. She smiles at SANDRA.

SANDRA sits in a chair staring out into the garden. Peggy puts Sandra's blackened safety boots down in front of her feet.

154 EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY 154

Sandra walks down the lawn, PEGGY at her side.

Steeling herself, SANDRA walks round the hedge, to the rear garden, where her house was, only to halt.

Reveal two little girls in hard-hats sinking tools into a heap of ash. MOLLY has a trowel, EMMA shovels ash into a wheelbarrow.

But from where SANDRA's standing, it looks like they're digging.

She takes in her beautiful, inspiring daughters. Smiles.

PEGGY stays put, and watches SANDRA wander over to them

SANDRA looks for a shovel, only to take in her bare hand, realise there's no support on it.

She grips a spade, both hands. Meets her daughters' gazes.

Out on SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY, shovelling the ashes away.

END