KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

Written by

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Place
A large town or small city in Wales

Characters
Ivy - A welcoming woman, early 50's, postal worker and mother.
Ron - Ivy's husband. Once a working man, now not so much, 50's.
Chloe - She is of Middle Eastern decent and is from Manchester, late teens early 20's.

Notes
- Both Ron and Ivy are written with a South Wales accent in mind, it is an animated accent.
- Chloe is from England, her accent should be noticeably different from Ron and Ivy.
- I encourage the exploration of the (...) and the quiet moments in the play.
SCENE 1


A modest terrace house in South Wales and a kitchen with all the things a kitchen deserves. On the wall, prominently displayed are two picture portraits, two young men in soldiers uniforms.

On the counter a dirty saucepan and a used plate from earlier.

We can also see the living room; Ron’s chair and a television set. Ron sits in his chair - he has been there all day.

The house is very still, apart from the reflecting blue light on Ron’s face and the sounds of an early evening game show in full swing. Lace nets hang on the windows, perhaps the curtains are closed.

He sits in his vest and trousers.

RON
(at the TV)

Bull Frog!

TV Sound: Incorrect.

RON (CONT’D)

Damn!

Ivy enters from outside into the kitchen. She wears a Royal Mail uniform, and her coat is wet from the rain. She sails in, plastic bag in hand.

Ron turns the television off.

She hangs up her coat and strategically places a tea towel beneath it to catch the drips from the rain. Ivy takes a stack of bills from her satchel and puts them on the dresser.
She keeps hold of one of the letters and puts it in an old tin on the top shelf of a cupboard.

IVY
(sing-songy)
I’m home!

Ron is picking up any mess he may have made, then enters the kitchen.

RON
Sorry ‘bout the dishes... I’ll clean up in a bit.

IVY
I got you pie for tea. And chips.

RON
Good day at work?

IVY
Oh don’t. It’s like a blooming funeral parlour.

RON
Ay. Big changes.

IVY
Let’s not -
(new idea)
I got you a Clark’s pie.

RON
Lovely, thanks!
(re her wet coat)
Raining again.

IVY
Did you go out?

RON
Nah

IVY
(with sympathy)
Awww.
She puts the parcel of chips on the plate.

IVOY (CONT’D)
(re chips)
There you are.
(beat)
Those coats they gave us are really working out a treat.

RON
Thought you didn’t like them.

He opens the newspaper parcel of chips and salts everything before tasting.

IVOY
Don’t be soft.

RON
Said they were a waste of money.

IVOY
Did I?

RON
Ay.

IVOY
Well I like them now aright?

Ron takes a huge bite of the pie.

IVOY (CONT’D)
Can you believe it... just four more days to go.

RON
(eating)
Ay...

IVOY
Ay? Some support and sympathy would be nice Ronald.

RON
You knew it was coming --
IVY

Doesn’t make it any easier though.

(beat)

What am I going to do all afternoon?

RON

It’s the end of second service, not the end of the world.

IVY

It’s just not The Royal Mail Way, Ron. We’ve had two posts since the beginning of time.

(beat)

I’m going to write to H.R.H!

RON

Oh here we go -

IVY

I’m dead serious. Let her know what these kids are doing to her company --

RON

(eating)

Mmhm.

IVY

This new “Upper Branch” - I swear they are no older than our Tommy.

Goes to get her letter writing materials

IVY (CONT’D)

I’m going to tell her!

RON

I doubt she gives a shit Ivy.

IVY

(gasps)

Of course she gives a (mouths) shit. It’s her company. Her face is on the stamp for God’s sake. She just needs to be made aware, that’s all.

RON

I’m sure she’s perfectly / aware --

IVY

Oh?
RON
Probably heard it on the news / or something.

IVY
Her Royal Highness does not have time to listen to the news.

RON
Well what else does she have to do?

IVY
She’s the Queen! She’s a very busy woman.

RON
If she’s so busy, she’s not going to have time to read your letter now is she?

IVY
Doesn’t affect you does it?

RON
How many letters are you going to send / woman?

IVY
As many as I like.

RON
I swear you are single-handedly keeping that Post Office alive with your complaints. You just sent a letter to Readers Digest!

IVY
The print. It’s gotten too small.

RON
They haven’t changed one thing in that magazine since 1923.

IVY
I can’t see it anymore Ron!

RON
Then buy a magnifying glass, or get your eyes tested like every other bugger.

IVY
She has a right to know what’s going on, that’s all I’m saying, and as a loyal employee for over twenty years, I feel it is my duty to say something. The need to “Modernize” - my ass!
RON

It’s going broke.

IVY

The Royal Mail has survived two world wars, you don’t think it can survive this internet? Thank God you weren’t running the country during the world-war, that’s all I’ve got to say. Your defeatist attitude would have been the end of us all.

RON

So send another letter.

IVY

If it were up to you I’d be goose stepping to work and back every day.

Ron gets up.

IVY (CONT’D)

Where you going?

RON

To get the sauce.

He *goose steps* to the fridge.

IVY

(stifling a smile)

It’s not funny.

RON

I know.

He goose steps back and sits. They relax a little in each others company.

IVY

(smiling)

Bloody impossible to have a serious conversation with you.  
(gently)

How was your day?

RON

Alright. I watched a bit of telly.
You and that / television.

Fixed that hook on the curtain too.

Good.

Bent as hell it was.

Ay -

Took a long time, almost broke my back, had to get the step ladder from under the stairs.

Ron you fixed the curtains not the boiler. No need to over do it.

Ay. Well it’s fixed anyway.

I’d better... / Star Trek.

Star Trek - I know.

Ron gets up.

What about your chips? Take them / with you!

I’m not that hungry. You have them.

You know I’m on a diet!

He turns the TV on.

Ivy starts eating the chips.
IVY (CONT’D)
(to herself)
Bloody chips!

She moves them to the side and lays out her letter writing materials.

IVY (CONT’D)
(to herself)
Dear...
(beat)
De..ar...
(to Ron in the living room)
How do I address the Queen in a letter?
(beat)
Ron! How do I address the Queen in a letter?

RON
(from his chair)
How the hell would I know.

IVY
(to herself)
No help at all.

She starts a few times before giving up.

IVY (CONT’D)
(to Ron)
I’m going to take a bath.
(to herself)
My feet are like blocks of bloomin’ ice.

RON
(from his chair)
(re: TV)
They changed the schedule again.

IVY
(from the kitchen)
I said I’m going for a bath.

RON
Ay.
She goes upstairs. Ron flicks around the channels.

RON (CONT’D)  
(to himself re: TV)  
Can’t leave anything alone can they.

Bath water runs upstairs.

IVY  
(from upstairs)  
Do me a favor will you love? If Star Trek’s not / on -

RON  
(to upstairs)  
What is it?

IVY  
(from upstairs)  
Dishes.

RON  
(to upstairs)  
Ay.

He continues to flick through the channels.

IVY  
(from upstairs)  
Thanks love.  
Tracy’s going to pick me up tomorrow.

RON  
(to upstairs)  
She’s not coming here -

IVY  
(from upstairs)  
Of course not.  
I saw Dr. Harris on my rounds today...

He gives up on the TV and goes back to the kitchen.
IVY (CONT’D)
(from upstairs)
I made you another appointment, for tomorrow.

He turns the water on.

IVY (CONT’D)
(she screams from upstairs)
Ronald!

RON
(to upstairs)
What?

IVY
(from upstairs)
The water! You’re scalding me!

He turns the water off.

RON
(to upstairs)
Sorry!

IVY
(from upstairs)
Will you go? Tomorrow?

RON
(to upstairs)
Let me know when you’re done...

IVY
(from upstairs)
You can turn the tap on now.

He does and let’s it run.

Ron goes to his plate, something on the paper parcel catches his eye.

IVY (CONT’D)
(from upstairs)
Will you go Ronald?
They said that they’ve finished building the new reception.
Ron begins becomes slightly short of breath.

IVY (CONT’D)
(from upstairs)
Marjory is still on the desk of course, I saw her when I dropped of your prescription. It’s going to be a couple of days alright love? Until we get the prescription. You’ll have to just make do with what you have. Apparently Steven Jones’ son got some girl pregnant -

Ron goes into the dresser, looking for his pills.

RON
(quiet and breathless)
/Ivy....?

IVY
(from upstairs)
I don’t know why they keep her, Marjory I mean. Patient Confidentiality? She doesn’t know the / meaning of the word...

RON
(breathless)
Ivy... I can’t find...

IVY
(from upstairs)
She wanted me to go “on-line” to make appointments from now on - “On line?” I said / the only line I’m dealing with is the washing line.

Ron hods his chest and really tries to breathe through the anxiety. He hits his chest gently.

RON
Oh God... oh god... One... two...

He studies his fingers that are going numb, wiggling them fuels the panic.

IVY
(from upstairs)
She didn’t like that. But try and go tomorrow love - There’s only so many times / they’ll re-schedule.
RON  
(reaching for air)
One... / Two...

IVY  
(from upstairs)
Can you bring me a clean flannel / love?

Ivy...

RON

IVY

They’re in the airing cupboard.

Ron still hyperventilating.

IVY (CONT’D)

Did you / hear?

RON

I / can’t...

IVY

A flannel.  
(beat)
From the airing cupboard.  Ron. 
(beat)
Ron.  A flannel.  
(beat)
Ron?  
(beat)
Ronald?

Ivy eventually comes downstairs and into the kitchen wearing a towel and shower cap.

IVY (CONT’D)

Ron!  Come on now breathe, remember?

She finds the pills easily.

IVY (CONT’D)

One... Two... Breathe in... Hold it... / Breathe out...

RON

I can’t -
IVY
One... Two... It doesn’t matter about the Dr....

RON
My / chest...

IVY
You don’t have to go anywhere if you don’t want to.

He struggles to breathe, takes the pills from her.

IVY (CONT’D)
Come on, sit up...

She puts the pills in his mouth and helps him with the water.

RON
(re fingers)
Numb... / They’re numb.

She rubs his hands.

IVY
You don’t have to do anything you don’t want. One... Two... Breathe in...

RON
/ Spinnin’ -

IVY
Breathe out... I’ll call Marjory in the morning, tell her you’re not well enough, you’re not going out / yet.

RON
One....

IVY
Two.... Breathe... Three... Breathe... / Good.

She continues to rub his hands.

IVY (CONT’D)
One... / Two...

RON
The / newspaper.
IVY
Breathe in...

RON
Look...

Ron grabs the newspaper that was around the bag of chips, flinging chips on the floor.

RON (CONT’D)
See -

IVY
One... Hold... / Two...

RON
Boy - ... - dead -

IVY
Breathe or I swear I’ll call the ambulance -

RON
In Basra -

IVY
Breathe!

...

RON
It / says -

IVY
What?

RON
Boy found / dead in -

IVY
Come on now. Breathe.

He thrusts the paper towards her. His breathing has eased.

RON
You -
It's not him.

...?...

Breathe!

You don’t / know.

Ron!

... ...

Look!

Sees - does.

(losing her temper)
He’s an American! “American soldier, killed in Basra.”

(exhausted)
Are you / sure?

Yes. It says so!

She shows him the article.

See?

...

Good God Ron...

(beat)
You shouldn’t be looking at the paper, you know / that.
I didn’t mean / to -

I know.

I thought it was... I didn’t / see -

You’ve been doing so well.

I’m... I’m so / sorry.

I don’t want to hear it.

(gently)

Love...

She touches his face.

Aww love. You’re all clammy. Why don’t you go take my bath water. Go on... My feet are warm so I’m happy. It’ll make you feel better.

I haven’t done the dishes.

I’ll do them.

I’m so sorry.

(beat)

Chin up love. Go on. Go upstairs.

Ron leaves the kitchen and climbs the mountain of stairs while Ivy looks at the article carefully.

Maybe we can have Chinese tomorrow night?
She throws the paper away.

**IVY**  
(from the kitchen)

Good idea.

After a few deep breaths, Ivy quickly pulls herself together again.

**IVY (CONT’D)**  
(re the chips)

All over my new floor.

She turns the radio on.

Time passes as...

Ivy moves through the house, she gets a robe, she cleans, tidies - the radio changes in a montage of music and frivolous Radio articles - time passes, interviews, film sound bites, gardening shows, movie shows, old tunes.

In the living room she reaches down the sides of Ron’s chair, clearing away any wrappers from the day. She sprays everything with air-freshener.

Music still playing: Ron comes down in his robe and hands her a comb, she combs his hair in the kitchen.

They sing along to a few lines of “Dream a Little Dream” before he goes back upstairs.

She takes the mop and bucket and superficially mops the kitchen floor.

Ivy takes the picture of a young soldier off the wall and places it on the kitchen table.

A song comes to an end.
RADIO ANNOUNCER
And now the eight o’clock news / with Sarah Lloyd

She quickly moves to the radio and turns it off. Ron comes to join her again.

RON
Ready?

IVY
Ay.

IVY (CONT’D)
Your turn.

They sit at the table and pray.

RON
Lord, hold my son in your loving hands and protect him from the evils that try to bring harm upon him... And Lord... I...

(beat)
I ask for courage... Courage to face... and conquer my selfish fears. I ask for strength. And please Lord... Through it all... Please be at my son’s side.

(beat)
Amen.

IVY
Amen.

She takes the picture and places it back on the wall.

Outside the house a young woman appears, she is wearing a long baggy rain coat and carries a bag, she wears a scarf that covers her head. She approaches the door and goes to knock, but hesitates.

IVY & RON
(inside: to the picture)

Good night.

She puts her bag down and goes to knock again. The kitchen light is turned out.
She’ll come back another time.

SCENE 2

An alarm clock. Ivy runs down the stairs. It is barely light out. She is in her Royal Mail trousers and a bra.

IVY

Bloody hell.

She puts the kettle on first, then pulls the Corn Flakes out of the cupboard. She goes into the airing cupboard under the stairs and gets her shirt which is hanging nicely on a hanger, she grabs it and gallops towards the stairs.

Ron emerges.

IVY (CONT’D)

Don’t cross me on the stairs - how many times?

RON

(to himself)

Good morning.

Ron sets two mugs and places tea bags in each one. Once the kettle boils he pours two cups of tea, and sits at his corn flake bowl. Ivy comes flying down the stairs in her full uniform.

She pours his Corn Flakes, he pours his own milk.

IVY

Why couldn’t they cut first delivery instead of second?

RON

Ay.

IVY

Love, why don’t you stay in bed, have a lie in? You could be all wrapped up in that blanket like a warm sausage roll.
RON
Don’t you want me to get up with you anymore?

IVY
Of course I do.

She looks out the window, moving the nets.

IVY (CONT’D)
Let’s see. Urgh.

(new idea - carefully)
Dr. Today?

Ay.

RON

IVY
Great! Don’t say a word to that Marjory, just sign in, and carry on into the waiting room. You know how she is. Just go on through.

Ay.

RON

IVY
You only have a few pills left love so / if you do...

I’ll be / alright.

RON

IVY
Just making you aware / that’s all.

I’m aware.

RON

IVY
You know where they are now if you need them. Back in the old spot.

Ay.

RON

IVY
And call me... if you can... if there’s a problem.

Ay.
I better go -

It’s early yet.

Tracy’s picking me up down the road. If I’m late, she’ll come knocking on that door, you know how she is.

Is there something wrong with the car?

No.

Carpooling. It’s this new thing they want us to do at work.

Just the two of you?

No - Sandra too -

Bloody hell.

What?

It’s gonna be a car full of clucking. Everyone’s business will be flying out the window.

I don’t know what you’re talking about...

She kisses him on the head.

You alright?
Ron

Ay, go to work.

Ivy

Ta-ra love.

Ron

Ta-ra.

She exits through the front door.

It’s suddenly very quiet.

Ron sits for a while, listens to the stillness of the house.

Quiet.

He begins to eat his Corn Flakes - stopping between crunches. The crunching becomes jarring. Loud. He pushes the bowl away.

Quiet.

He walks around the kitchen and goes to the dresser. He pulls out a CD Walkman with foam ears and places them on the table. The set up is a process: Opening it up, taking out the CD, finding a new one from the tower of CD’s in the living room, coming back, inserting it into the player, putting the ears on.

At first he sits, listening, then after some time of tapping fingers and waving his foot, he gets up and does a little moving. He sings along a little, joining in at the “ay ay ay” part of Bay City Rollers “Saturday Night”.

Chloe appears outside again, it’s lighter out now. She’s wearing exactly the same thing as she did the night before, she looks behind her as if she’s being watched. She knocks the door gently.
Ron still moving around the kitchen doesn't hear her.

A knock on the door. He might have heard something.

A knock on the door - he sees the silhouette through the netting. Startled he drops the CD walkman.

RON (CONT’D)
(re the walkman)

A knock on the door.

CHLOE
(from outside the door)
Hello?
(beat)
Hello?

A knock on the door.

RON
Who is it?

CHLOE
Hi!
(beat)
Mr. Davies?
(beat)
Who’s asking?

RON
Chloe... My name is Chloe...
(beat)
Ummm... Hello?
(beat)
Mr. Davies? Hello?

RON
Yes.
CHLOE
I’m calling because - I’ve come to discuss / something -

RON
Are you selling?

CHLOE
No... no I’m not selling.

RON
Preaching?

CHLOE
No I’m not preaching / either -

RON
What is it then?

CHLOE
I need to speak with you and your wife -

RON
She’s not in.

CHLOE
Oh. Could I maybe come in and speak with you?
(beat)
Face to face?

RON
No. It’s just not possible at this time.

CHLOE
I can assure you that I wouldn’t be disturbing you if it wasn’t very important. And It’s really very cold out here... and damp...

He thinks for a while, she waits.

RON
What’s this about then?

CHLOE
Umm... Well... Your son was a friend of mine.
He slowly moves towards the door and looks through the netting, moving it slowly with his finger.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
We were friends / in --

RON
I don’t think so. I’ve never seen you before. I’d remember.

CHLOE
No, we’ve never met Mr. Davies, but Thomas and me, we were friends... Please, I would really like to speak with you...
(beat)
I know you’ve been through a lot / these past few months.

RON
What would you know about that?

CHLOE
Mr. Davies - I would rather not discuss it on the door step.
(beat)
I know it’s early... I’d rather not wait here much longer... People keeping looking at me funny... Especially... Does that woman across the road always look out at your house?
(to curtain twitcher across the road)
I can see you you know!

Ron twitches the curtains to look at Chloe.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
It's really very important Mr. Davies...But if waiting is what I have to do...

Silence for some time.

RON
Hello?

CHLOE
Still here.

RON
Shit.

CHLOE
I have absolutely nowhere else I need to be Mr. Davies.
He backs away from the door.

RON

Shit.

CHLOE

I can stand here all day...

Ron goes into the dresser and puts a pill firmly in the palm of his hand.

RON

And it's about -

CHLOE

Thomas. I have some information about Thomas.

RON

...

CHLOE

Thomas Davies - British / Army.

He takes a deep breath

RON

It's open.

She opens the door slowly.

RON (CONT'D)

Quick!

She closes the door quickly behind her as instructed. She is a beautiful young lady, dark and has a scarf on her head.

RON (CONT'D)

What is it?

CHLOE

Mr Davies - hello!

RON

Say it -
CHLOE
Do you have a towel I can use?

RON
What?

CHLOE
Something I can dry myself with? I'm soaked.

He reaches for a tea towel, she takes off her coat exposing her huge pregnant stomach, her head scarf still on her head.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
I may need something a little bigger.

RON
Bloody hell!

Ron goes into the airing cupboard and brings out a towel keeping an eye on her at all times. She sees the photographs on the wall and goes to it.

RON (CONT’D)
What are you doing?

CHLOE
He looks so young / there.

RON
Don’t touch that.

CHLOE
(re the second picture)
Is that you?

RON
Yes.

CHLOE
I didn’t know you served too.

RON
You don’t know me -
CHLOE 
I mean he didn’t say -

RON
Out Tommy -

CHLOE
We were together...

RON
Where?

CHLOE
Can I have a glass of water or something? I’m really thirsty. I’ve traveled a long way.

Ron stares at her.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
Please?

He gets her some water.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
It’s so nice and warm in here. Comfortable. Like a little oven. You have a lovely kitchen... it’s just how I imagined it, just like he said. We used to talk so much about home... Oh I’m sorry, Chloe, my name is Chloe.

She extends her hand to Ron. He just looks at it.

RON
Didn’t think you were supposed to touch men.

CHLOE
Sorry?

(re the scarf)
Oh! No, it’s the rain.

She takes the scarf off her head.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
I didn’t want - my hair, it turns into a mess with the rain... His hair is so long in that picture... It’s so hot in the desert, it’s easier to bzzzz... Shave it all off, tempted to do it myself a few times, but I’d look like a lezza without hair. It’s funny, they all look exactly the same, you know when they first deploy... Eggheads with shades.
RON
My son is not an Egg-Head.

CHLOE
No, I’m sorry, I wasn’t... I didn’t mean... It's just what we would say you know.

Chloe knocks over the bowl of Corn Flakes.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
Oh God, I’m sorry... I’m so sorry... I’m such a clumsy... I’m sorry. My mother used to say that it was amazing I didn’t trip over my own feet. Ha. I’m so sorry.

RON
Stop saying your sorry.

CHLOE
Sorry.

RON
Where did you say you come from?

CHLOE
I didn’t. I came down from Manchester. Yeah, it was a bit of a journey, standing room only the whole way, but people, you know are good like that... they see the belly... she’s a handy accessory to have sometimes - Not that I think that having a baby is fashionable, because look at me. Trust me, it’s not.

RON
You talk too much.

CHLOE
Yes I do. I’m sorry.
We were soldiers together / over in-

RON
Funny looking soldier.

CHLOE
He would talk about this place all the time -

RON
He’s not much of a talker.
Maybe not when he was home -

What’s that supposed to mean?

Nothing.

He takes a pill, and they study each other for a moment.

Whose side are you on then?

What?

You heard.

Ron studies her.

I...

What do you have to tell me then?

I was hoping to come sooner, earlier... I don’t know which one I’m supposed to say there. Is it sooner or earlier? My / grammar -

Do you have some information or not?

Yes - it’s just... It’s not easy -

Saw the paper?

Today?
RON

Yesterday.
Another boy beheaded in Basra, his body left on the side of the road.

CHLOE

That’s -

RON

Killed by a rag-head.

CHLOE

(taken aback)

Oh!

RON

Damn sand niggers goin’ out and fetchin’ young men -

CHLOE

I can see that turning up like this was a mistake.

RON

Too right it was a mistake. What? Saw our story is that it? Thought you’d come and gloat?

CHLOE

No -

RON

We’ve had our share of nutters, sending things, but turning up with your haji hat -

CHLOE

YOUR SON SAVED MY LIFE!

Chloe turns to leave.

I thought you’d like to know that.

RON

Wait.  (beat)

What did you say?

CHLOE

It doesn’t matter.

RON

You said -
CHLOE
Thomas, Tommy... he saved my life.

(beat)
I was hoping for the opportunity to speak to you and your wife, talk about... everything... get to know you... sounds stupid when I say it out loud... This was a stupid idea. I should have stayed away... Well... I know now.

She goes to leave again.

RON
How?

CHLOE
Do you really think I want to stand here and talk to you about it after you insulted me like that -

RON
No... No I didn’t... I... I’m just not used to visitors.

Obviously.

RON
Especially brown ones.

CHLOE
Oh my god!

RON
Ivy would love to hear that he did something like that. She’d be very proud -

And I wanted to tell her.

RON
I’m sorry alright, for.. You know...

CHLOE
I want to tell her the whole thing, but I won’t stay to be treated -

RON
She won’t be home for a while. Maybe you can wait somewhere and come back.

CHLOE
Where would I go?
There’s a greasy spoon -

I don’t have any cash on me.

I’m not giving you money.

I didn’t ask / you -

No, sorry. There’s a park -

It’s raining.

Is it? She’ll be back at four.

I should go -

Will you come back? To tell her? About Tommy?

Chloe looks on, damp, and somewhat pathetic.

You can wait here, in the kitchen.

They stand with each other for some time.

I have some things to attend to.

Don’t you want to know - ?

When Ivy gets home. I’m out of pills.

(beat)

Stay here. You can stay here. Don’t touch anything. Just stay in the kitchen. I’ll...
He leaves and goes to his chair in the living room. Chloe’s clothes are uncomfortable, sticky from the rain. She goes to the door, moves the net with her finger.

CHLOE
(re curtain twitcher across the road)
Bet you’re loving this.

Chloe takes in the kitchen again. She smells it, feels it, embraces it. She’s damp but the house is hot. She goes into her bag, and takes a few items of clothing out and goes to the stairs.

RON
I thought I told you to stay in the kitchen.

CHLOE
My clothes are wet, I need to change. Don’t want to give her a chill.

RON
Bathroom’ at the top of the stairs.

She goes, she’s gone a while, he listens. It’s quiet again. Very quiet. After some time.

RON (CONT’D)
(calling to her)
What are you doing up there?

CHLOE
(upstairs)
Takes a little navigating sometimes.

He continues to listen. It’s so very quiet. He hears the bathroom door open and Chloe slowly waddles down the stairs.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
Is that his room at the end of the hall?

RON
Did you go in?
CHLOE
I was looking for the bathroom and -- I didn’t know / where I was going --

RON
Did you touch anything?

CHLOE
I was just / looking around -

RON
Did you touch anything? I said, top of the stairs, I said - did you touch anything?

CHLOE
No, of course not.

RON
Are you sure?

CHLOE
Yes. I didn’t mean to go in -

RON
Get out of my way.

Ron goes upstairs.

RON (CONT’D)
(shouts)
Stay in the kitchen!

CHLOE
I didn’t touch anything...

The sound of a door slamming.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
Fuck.

She waddles to the kitchen.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
(to the pic)
So your Dad’s a bit of an asshole.
She fans herself before opening a window in the kitchen.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

Damn flushes.

Chloe goes into the refrigerator to see what’s available. She pulls out a can of Vimto. Opens it up, and takes a big swig... and spits it out.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

Shit - that is the worst!

How does anyone drink that?

Wondering around the kitchen gets boring quickly. Chloe goes into the living room, it feels like a home, lived in. She sits in the chair, and makes herself comfortable. She flicks through the channels of the TV.

Ron comes down.

That’s my chair.

It’s so comfortable.

That’s why it’s my chair.

Ron goes to the kitchen

CHLOE

Where are you going?

RON

Kitchen. Where you should be!

(beat)

I’m putting the kettle on.
CHLOE

Great!

He notices that the window is open, he closes it.

RON
(re: window)

Did you - ?

CHLOE

Sorry, I was hot. Flushes. Any chance of some lunch?

RON

It's not lunchtime.

CHLOE

No, I guess not.
You said you were putting the / kettle on?

RON

No one goes into his room.

CHLOE

I understand.

(beat)

I’m really sorry -

RON

If you say that you are sorry one / more time -

CHLOE

No - I’m so sorry for your loss.

RON

(beat)

He’ll come home soon.

We hear the BBC News intro.

“Pip”

RON (CONT’D)

You changed the channel.
CHLOE

What?

“Pip”

RON

Change it back!

“Pip”

CHLOE

I didn’t think you were watching...

Ron pushes Chloe out of the way and into the living room.

RON

Where’s the remote?

“Pip”

She joins him.

CHLOE

I just had it...

RON

Turn it off. We need to... Turn it off!!!

“Pip”

CHLOE

Is there a button on the -- ??

RON

Where the hell is the button on this thing?

They gather around the TV.

“Pip”

CHLOE

What about the plug?
NEWS REPORTER
Prime Minister Tony Blair speaking today about the mounting casualties of the Iraq war / speaking to an American news agency he said -

He pushes Chloe until she stumbles onto the couch with a yelp, then the television is pushed off it’s stand with a huge bang!

Ron stares at the broken TV for some time and then at Chloe. He is breathing heavily.

CHLOE (shaken up)
I need to go...

RON
No -

CHLOE
It stopped raining - I should... I should just...

I pushed you -

RON
I’m fine.

CHLOE
I didn’t mean to push you -

I really should / go...

RON
You coming back?

CHLOE
I don’t know.

RON
Ivy, she... She’s a good woman...

(beat)
If you do come back... Here...
He hands her a ten pound note.

CHLOE

What’s this for?

RON

A packet of Golden Virginia... and papers.

CHLOE

Oh.

RON

(beat)

You said he saved you.

She nods.

RON (CONT’D)

Ivy would really love to hear that.

(beat)

There’s a Paki shop on the corner. Shit. Sorry.

CHLOE

If I don’t come back -

RON

Then you’re ten pound richer.

(beat)

I didn’t mean to scare you.

(beat)

We don’t listen to the news.

CHLOE

/ Ok.

RON

It gives me headaches... and... I have... A lot of things give me headaches.

She continues to nod.

RON (CONT’D)

We pray for him. Every night, we pray that he comes home safe. Do you pray?
Sometimes.
You have a nice home Mr. Davies.
Good luck.

She leaves the house.

The house is still.

Very still.

He stands in the stillness, listening to it.

Eventually, he reaches under the sink and grabs a few black bags and parcel tape. Ron wraps the TV in the bags the sounds of the tape being pulled echo’s around the house.

He picks it up with a struggle - it isn’t that big, he’s just out of practice. Takes it to the kitchen and leans it on the counter.

Ron looks over at the garden door. He extends his hand towards the handle, holds it for a while.

He pulls his hand back.

He touches the net curtains on the window, looks out and extends his hand once again towards the door handle.

He pulls it back.

Ron props the whole weight of the TV on the kitchen cabinet and walks away from it, then turns to study the door, determined to conquer, as he tries to tackle the problem again.

He pulls his hand back.

Damn it!

The TV goes back into the living room.
He takes the discarded tea towel and throws it into the washing machine, pops the powder in and cleans the table properly. He surveys the room for some time... it’s so quiet.

He takes the radio from the window in the kitchen and turns it on, not the news, music. He tunes it to the channel of his liking and sits at the table.

Unsatisfied - he gets up and takes the radio from the window and puts it somewhere else in the kitchen, he changes the channel, talk radio. He tries to get comfortable again.

RADIO DJ
The welfare state is collapsing all around us. There are people that realize that we can't go on this way...

He turns it off. He tries to sit in the quiet.

The quiet is impossible.

He takes the radio to the living room and places it on top of the broken TV. He turns it on. There is static on almost every channel. He fiddles with the aerial. No help.

Ron looks in the closet under the stairs for a coat hanger. He makes a little sculpture, ties it to the radio. Doesn’t help. The sound of static fills the house.

Chloe opens the door slowly. She has her bag and a small carrier bag.

CHLOE
(calling)
Hello?
(carefully)
I bought Drum, they come with free papers, and a filter.
Hello?

CHLOE

Hello.

RON

Didn’t think you’d be back.

CHLOE

Well, I did come all this way. What’s that / noise?

RON

Radio. I’m going to listen to some radio... if I can get a reception in the living room.

CHLOE

Have you tried making a bigger aerial?

RON

Ay, hanger.

CHLOE

Oh... Maybe foil. You know, kitchen foil. Make the antenna bigger.

RON

Won’t work.

CHLOE

I can help you, if you like.

RON

It needs to be by the window - the aerial. Only place it’ll work.

CHLOE

We can do that. Do you have foil?

Ron gets foil, then goes to the living room. She waddles behind him.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

Let’s pad the aerial out with this.

They do. Smatterings of “here”, “rip another piece”, “wrap it around that bit.”
Nothin’

Then let’s make it bigger.

It won’t / work.

Are you always this defeatist?

Static of the radio, cutting in and out while Chloe and Ron tape silver bunched foil from the radio antenna up the walls, along the ceiling and into the kitchen, towards the window.

Various smatterings of “Be careful with that”, “Here’s the blooming remote”, “Don’t push that over with your belly”, “I was always good at things like this”, “Are you sure this will work..?” “Ivy is going to kill me”, “all the way?”, “I think it’s enough” - Until they reach the kitchen.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

(from the kitchen)

Try tuning it!

RON

(from the living room)

This’ll never / work.

RADIO VOICE #2

And so you have to turn the soil for the best results...

CHLOE

It works!

RADIO VOICE #2

The peas will grow in an outward direction so it’s important to keep them bound to the pole. The trick here is plenty of sunlight, this is how you will get the sweetest peas...
Content he makes himself comfortable in his chair and grabs the TV remote as if to turn the TV on. Then he rolls a cigarette.

CHLOE

Mr. Davies I -

RON

Ron. Mr. Davies was my math teacher.

CHLOE

May I join you, Ron? In here?

RON

Ay. You can sit there.

They sit and listen and watch the radio. He rolls a second cigarette.

CHLOE

Are you going to smoke that in here?

RON

No, we don’t smoke in the house.

CHLOE

I bought some snacks, at the shop. Do you like Cheese and Onion?

RON

Ay.

CHLOE

I’m gonna give these Roast Ox and Gravy flavor a go.

They open up the packets.

RON

Roast Ox and gravy. Bloody crazy.

CHLOE

Mmm... They’re quite good. Would you like to try?

RON

No.
Go on...

Ron

No.

Chloe

You only live once.

Ron

I like Cheese and Onion and Salt and Vinegar. That’s it.

Chloe

It’s a bit like sucking on an OXO cube. Go on try one.

She pushes the packet towards him, he takes one.

Chloe (cont’d)

See what I mean? Very gravy.

Ron

Ay... ay... mmm... not bad. Not bad at all.

Ron puts one of his crisps in his mouth.

Ron (cont’d)

Bloody spoilt the taste of cheese and onion now.

Chloe

Let’s swap.

Ron

No, no. The flavors, they don’t go together.

Chloe

I’m pregnant Ron. Everything goes together to me

They swap crisp packets.

Chloe (cont’d)

Oy, you’ve eaten more than me.

Ron

Too late.

Chloe smiles, comfortable and content.
They crunch together to the sound of the radio.

SCENE 3

Later. Ron and Chloe are in the living room listening to a radio quiz show.

RON Melbourne. CHLOE Sidney.

RADIO HOST Cambria!

RON Damn! CHLOE Shit.

CHLOE (CONT’D) I don’t think that’s right.

RON Whoever heard of Cambria?

RADIO HOST Who was the first British Sovereign to take up residence in Buckingham Palace?

RON Elizabeth CHLOE George

Queen Victoria.

RADIO HOST

RON Bloody Hell CHLOE No way.

RADIO HOST What was the name of the first ship to answer the Titanic’s distress signals?

They both look at each other - no idea.

RADIO HOST (CONT’D)

The British ship Carpathia is correct.

RON I knew that. CHLOE Yep.
IVY
(singing)
I’m home. I think I saw a ray of sun peeping through today.

Ron maneuvers out of his chair and he quickly picks up the empty packets and stuffs them down the side of his chair. Chloe watches.

RON
(to Chloe)
Cholesterol.

IVY
(from the kitchen)
I got us Chinese.

Ron come to the kitchen.

RON
Good day at work?

IVY
Oh you know -

Chloe has appears behind Ron.

RON
Ivy, this is --

CHLOE
Chloe! So nice to meet you, I’ve heard so much about you, and I’m so happy to meet you finally! I’ve met Ron, obviously, we were just playing a game -

IVY
Ron?

RON
She’s --

CHLOE
A friend... Yes, goodness, forgive me, I’m a friend, from Iraq.

IVY
What?
CHLOE
Different regiments, as I’m sure you can tell, because of my accent I mean, not because I’m brown. Ha! Ummm...
(she’s so nervous)
I was thinking of what I would say to you, I have so many things I want to say... Ron let me wait... And we were just playing... I’ve been thinking quite a bit, well a lot, all afternoon really... I’m sorry, I seem to be babbling...

IVY
You’re a -- ?

CHLOE
Soldier.
(stands to attention)
Chloe Mahari, Petty Officer 3rd Class.
Well I was a soldier, they’ve probably sent the papers by now -

IVY
What can I do for you?

CHLOE
I came to talk to you about Tommy / about us -

IVY
Has he been found?

CHLOE
(taken aback)
No...

RON
He saved her life Ivy.

IVY
(to Ron)
What?

CHLOE
Yes.

IVY
Our Tommy?
CHLOE

Maybe you should sit down.

IVY

I’m alright thank you.

CHLOE

Do you mind if I do? It’s just...

She directs the attention to her belly.

IVY

(Ivy finds her manners)

Please, yes. I’m sorry, it’s been such a long time since we’ve had visitors. How rude of me. Can I make you a cup of tea?

CHLOE

No, no thank you. I haven’t had caffeine since month four. She doesn’t like it. Gives me terrible heartburn. Makes me gurgle - it’s not nice.

IVY

You’re having a girl.

CHLOE

Yes.

IVY

Aw... We only had the one, beautiful though wasn’t he when he was born - big blue eyes. When are you...?

CHLOE

Almost here -

IVY

That’s exciting -

RON

I’m going to hear the end of the show -

CHLOE

NO! Please stay.

IVY

Did the Army send you?
CHLOE
Not exactly.
You work at the Postal Service, no wonder he liked to write letters.

IVY
He never sent me a postcard -

RON
You don’t send postcards from Iraq Ivy.

IVY
It’s a figure of speech Ron -

CHLOE
I have heard so much about you from Thomas... he spoke very highly of both of you. He wasn’t much of a talker, as you know, but he would talk about this place often.

IVY
Well... Any friend of his is a friend of ours. Isn’t that right Ron?

RON
Ay.

CHLOE
He said you were the salt of the earth. I see what he means now. Now that you’re both here... oh it’s all happening so fast isn’t it. We keep digressing from the situation at hand, we’re just all getting on so well aren’t we. And I’ve been so relaxed all afternoon and now I could pop! Oh I won’t pop, don’t worry. Ha! Umm... You see I have a situation that I wanted to talk to you about... the Army have cut my... I was discharged. For dishonorable conduct. And they’ve cut my benefits, and... That probably wasn’t the best place to start... He said, Tommy said... Tommy said that if anything happened to him... and I needed anything, anything at all, that I should come to you.

IVY
Where did you come from?

CHLOE
Manchester.

IVY
And you came all the way here...?
On the train. Yesterday.

What’s this got to do with him being a hero?

Shut up Ron - if our Tommy told her to come --

Awww...

Are you alright.

Yes, it’s just a... Awww.

Where’s the pain?

She indicates.

Ron, wet a flannel for me - hot water.

It's fine. It happens.

I had spasms for weeks. It’s alright love. Sit for a little while.

Thank you.

Slow down now, you’re moving at a hundred miles an hour.

Yes. I’m nervous.

(beat)

He said that I could rely on you Mrs. Davies.

Ivy, please.
Ron hands her the hot flannel.

**IVY (CONT’D)**

Put this on the top of your belly. Just pop it under your top. It’ll move any gas that’s causing you pain.

**CHLOE**

You think that’s what it is?

**IVY**

(smiles)

Yes.

**CHLOE**

When I get stressed you know, it just happens - it’s been happening all week and no matter how many pain killers I take --

**IVY**

Are you staying with friends?

**CHLOE**

No. I stayed at The Salvation Army shelter last night.

**IVY**

I see. Are you hungry?

**CHLOE**

Very.

**IVY**

I brought home some Chinese. Do you eat chicken?

**CHLOE**

Yes.

**RON**

Ivy -

**IVY**

Turn that Telly off we have a guest for dinner.

He goes to the living room and turns the radio off.
Chloe you said? (in a whisper)
How did you get in today?

Where?

The house? I mean, did Ron... did he let you in?

Yes.

Oh good. Good.
Let’s have some dinner then.

She lays the table, just like she always does.

Ron, can you pass me another table placing?

And three bowls please Ron.

He does.

Ron brings her the bowls.

Ivy looks up and sees the tin foil that’s been taped in the creases of the ceiling.

What the hell is that?

R O N
For better signal.

C H L O E
An antenna.

She follows the trail to the living room.

What happened to the telly?

R O N
It broke.

He puts his finger up to shh Chloe.
IVY
I’m going to kill you. We can’t afford to buy another new telly Ron. I’m still paying for that one.

(beat)
Oh Ronald.
Let’s eat.

CHLOE
Can I just wash my hands quickly?

IVY
Of course.

She goes to the sink and washes her hands, then comes to sit.

IVY (CONT’D)
Mine are clean, just so you know.

CHLOE
I wasn’t trying to insinuate / anything.

IVY
No, it’s good. Better to be hygienic! Especially with this SARS.

RON
You don’t get that from dirty hands.

IVY
Of course you do.

RON
No. You get it from the Chinks.

IVY
You’re not allowed to say that anymore.

RON
What?

IVY
Good God, it’s enough to put you off your food isn’t it. Come on, dig in.

RON
No chips?
IVY
You never eat them.

RON
Can’t have Chinese without chips.

IVY
You can have Chinese without chips.

RON
Not the same -
(see Chloe grinning)
What are you smiling at?

CHLOE
Nothing.

IVY
It’s you, going on about your chips.

CHLOE
This is nice.

RON
Ay, they’re not bad at that old Wok and Roll.
(see Chloe grinning again)
What?

CHLOE
No - it’s just a great name that’s all.

IVY
Not as good a name as the Cod Father down the road.

CHLOE
No way.

RON
Ay... Good chips there.

IVY
I’ll kill you Ron!

RON
Just not the same that’s all.
IVY
Eat your food.

They continue eating.

IVY (CONT’D)
I didn’t realize that boys and girls were mixed up in the Army now.

CHLOE
You know, women make up nine percent of the British Army now.

RON
Madness.

IVY
So you were in the same regiment..?

CHLOE
We were on opposite sides of this town in Basra Province.

They wait, listening for more.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
We met at Fallujah first... I liked to tease him that he followed me to Basra. He was always sneaking over with something or other, to our camp, he was always sneaking over. King of the hustle, always had something to barter with, to trade you know?

IVY
Sounds like him.

CHLOE
He had this pile of terrible music CD’s, bands from the seventies that no one listens to, and he’d find the old Sergeants and trade them for cans of beer or Porno mags... Sorry, too much information.

IVY
No, it’s nice to hear that our son has gained some entrepreneurial skills while in the Army.

RON
Our own very Richard Branson.

CHLOE
Ayyy. My grandfather used to say that all the time. Ayyy.... Sounds funny when I say it right? Ayyy... Ayyy...

(MORE)
We used to call him Taff.

Used to call me that too -

“Watch your wallets! He’s got taffy fingers to match the accent”

Bloody English.

It was funny at the time. Can I call you Taff?

No.

Ok.

So your family are all in Manchester?

Mostly.

Is that where / the father is?

It's none of our business Ivy.

Quite right.

Had to come up sooner or later.

Ron’s right, I shouldn’t have asked. Oh it’s nice to have company isn’t it Ron.

I was really hungry.
I can see that.

If it wasn’t for Tommy, I’d probably be six feet under by now.

I have to ask you, when did you see him last?

It was a Sunday.

Where did you see him?

At our base. Could I trouble you for some water?

Of course! Ron.

Ron gets her the water

Do you have any magic towels for headaches.

Ron, fetch a cold flannel will you?

I’m trying to / eat.

Go.

Ron gets up again.

I shouldn’t be pressing you. We’ve been trying to piece it all together you see since the Army told us he was, well that they couldn’t find him. So any little information you may have - I mean, you may not even know...

I came -
IVY
Listen, you can’t go staying in that Salvation Army, it’s not safe for a young woman like you.

CHLOE
It’s fine -

IVY
No it’s not. People round here, they’ve got a bee in their bonnet about, you know...

CHLOE
What?

IVY
Immigration, all these new faces in town they haven’t seen before - now I don’t mind, there’s a very nice girl on our mail-room floor, she’s Somalian I think and she’s the fastest sorter out of all of us -

CHLOE
I’m English.

IVY
Of course you are. You know that and I know that. You can stay with us. Couple of days. You can tell us about... Tommy saving you... and... maybe you can... Help us piece a few things together... 

(beat)
Stay. It’ll be fun.

Ron returns.

RON
Here.

Ivy puts the cold flannel on Chloe’s head.

IVY
Love - Chloe here is going to be staying -

CHLOE
Are you sure?

IVY
I won’t here a word against it. Isn’t it Ron. It’ll be nice.
Thank you.

Are you done love?

Yes.

Ron take that bag up to our room --

I can take it.

Up those stairs? Don’t be soft, Ron’ll take it. I’ll clean up.

A word?

Ivy goes into the hallway with Ron.

One night.

Ay.

I know how you are.

She came all this way to tell us about our Tommy... that was very nice of her. Very considerate. I don’t want her to feel pressured it wouldn’t be good for the baby.

We don’t have the room. One night.

You let her in Ron, I’m so proud of you.

One. Night.
He takes the bag upstairs.

CHLOE
Can I help you with anything?

IVY
No love. Why don’t you go and put your feet up in the living room, relax a bit. We just have a few things we have to do.

Chloe sits in the living room. Ron comes down stairs with a box and places it on the kitchen table.

RON
I’ll get the radio.

IVY
Let her use it.

RON
We always pack with the radio on.

IVY
So?

RON
It’s how we always do it.

He gets the radio.

RON (CONT’D)
(to Chloe)

Sorry, we need this.

He unhooks the foil antenna and brings it back.

IVY
What are you like.

Ron puts the radio back on the window sill.

IVY (CONT’D)
Are you going to tell me what happened with the telly?
RON
I couldn’t find the remote.

IVY
I see. You’re getting those headaches again aren’t you -

RON
No...

(beat)
Only if it’s too quiet. But that’s not -

IVY
I’ll make a new appointment for you to go see the Dr., tomorrow --

RON
I was going to go today Ivy, I was, but I couldn’t just leave her in the house.

IVY
I know. You let her in... That’s good. That’s a good sign.

IVY (CONT’D)
Pass me the tape.

They turn the radio on, music. They fill the box as the music montage plays once again, the items come from all over the house, each item placed in the box with care.

The Care Package Ballet:

1. A box of chocolate fingers
2. Serial Variety Pack
3. Seven Mars Bars
4. A small stack of Comic Books
5. The rolled cigarettes that Ron rolled earlier.

IVY (CONT’D)
Where did you get those from?
RON

From her.

IVY

She smokes?

RON

She went to get them.

IVY

That's nice. I wish you wouldn’t encourage him to smoke though, it’s not good for him.

Ron sits and rolls several more and puts them in a little tin and in the box.

6. Socks

7. Two letters in envelopes.

IVY (CONT’D)

Tracy wrote him a note. It’s rather lacking in substance, but there we go.

You read it?

IVY

Of course I did.

8. The walkman.

RON

I won’t bother with the CD’s.

Why not?

IVY

You heard what she said.

RON

Go on. Pop them in.

IVY

Chloe comes into the kitchen doorway and watches.
Would you like to add something?

CHLOE

What’s it for?

IVY

It’s a care package. We send one, every Tuesday for our Tommy.

CHLOE

I don’t have anything...

IVY

You can put anything you like in -

CHLOE

I don’t think -

IVY

(whispers)

There’s no weight restriction you see, perks of the job!

CHLOE

Umm...

IVY

Maybe you could write him a note. I’m sure he’d like that. I have some paper.

CHLOE

A note?

IVY

We’re closing the box, so if you want to pop something in, now’s the time.

CHLOE

No, thank you.

Ron gets the parcel tape and closes up the box.
Ron writes Tommy’s full name on the box with a black marker “Thomas. Davies”.

Ivy goes into the downstairs cupboard and takes out a pile of sheets.

IVY

I won’t be long.
CHLOE
There’s no need to change the bed clothes on my account.

IVY
I’d be doing it anyway love.
(to Ron)
I’ll do ours first, so if Chloe wants to lie down she can, then I’ll do Tommy’s room.

RON
Ay.

CHLOE
Will you sleep in his room?

RON
No one sleeps in his room.

CHLOE
Then why...?
(beat)
Have any of his other friends come over since he --

RON
No.

CHLOE
Oh.

RON
His friends from around here wouldn’t dare show their faces in this house again. Useless yobs!

CHLOE
If it wasn’t for the Army I’d probably be in jail - I used to run around with a bad crowd too. Guess that’s why we got along so well. He loved to break the rules didn’t he.

RON
He does.

Short silence. *

CHLOE *

Ron?

RON *

Ay.
CHLOE
I really want to tell you something, but I don’t know how to tell you.

RON
Do you know where my boy is?

CHLOE
It’s not about him... It’s not exactly about him -

RON
He didn’t save you did he -

CHLOE
He did.

RON
How?

CHLOE
That’s what I want to say -

RON
Then say it.

CHLOE
I’m having Tommy’s baby.

RON
What?

Ivy comes back in.

IVY
I swear that washing machine eats pillowcases.

CHLOE
It’s Tommy’s.

IVY
What is?

CHLOE
She is. The baby. And she’ll be here soon, any day now really... any day... due date is sometime next week, but they say that for the first child you can expect to be up to a week late.
RON

You’re out of your mind.

CHLOE

No, I’m actually not. Terrified, yes. Out of my mind, no.

IVY

Ron, what’s happening here?

CHLOE

Look, it’s not a bad thing. It wasn’t a bad thing.

RON

You’re sick!

IVY

Is she accusing Tommy / of -

CHLOE

I’m not accusing him of anything.

RON

(chest gets a little tight)

You came in... said he... saved... / wanted to tell us...

IVY

You need to sit down and breathe. Come on... sit... come on now.

CHLOE

Is he ok?

IVY

Breathe...

RON

You can’t come in here and say --

IVY

Shhh now...

RON

(to Ivy)

I’m fine!

CHLOE

He told me to come! He said you would be happy!
Ron!

He knew?

Ron

I'm not listening to anymore. There is no way that that baby is his!

Ron gets up and lifts her from her chair. Chloe gets up with a struggle. She has a small spasm.

Chloe

Awww.

What is it?

Chloe

Awww.

Are you alright?

Chloe

Yes -

She has another...

Chloe

Sit down.

Chloe

She is not sitting down!

Chloe

I miss him so much, and I know you miss him... and I want to be close to him again, and I can't --

Ron

Enough!

Ron

Chloe

Awww.
IVY

Sit down. Last thing I need is for you to have a baby on my brand new flooring. Sit.

RON

No! He’s been missing Ivy for -

IVY

Take those shoes off, put your feet up here.

RON

She is not taking off her shoes.

Ivy helps take Chloe’s shoes off.

RON (CONT’D)

Ivy!

IVY

The girl needs to be comfortable she’s about to pop for God’s sake --

CHLOE

Just for a second.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

It’s just spasms. It happens every now and then, it’s when the baby rubs against the cervix.

RON

Oh my God!

RON (CONT’D)

What’s your game ay?

CHLOE

(to Ivy)

I know it’s out of the blue, but it really wasn’t anything bad - we really liked each other, a lot... and... I know that he used to be tied up, with all sorts of things... And the Army really straightened him out, and he was worried to start, about telling you, because of his history, with messing up - so he didn’t. He told me to come to you. He told me I should come.

IVY

My boy told you to come?

CHLOE

Yes.
IVY
What did he say?

RON
You’re listening to this?

IVY
What did he say?

RON
He didn’t say anything! She’s making it up!

IVY
Shut up, shut up, shut up Ron! I want to hear what my son had to say!

CHLOE
(cautiously)
He said that going away was a good thing, he was mixed up with some bad friends and he was sorry for that, but he always felt like you were on his side, that you have always been on his side and that you would be there for us. He was such a good man.

Ivy extends her hand and carefully holds Chloe’s.

Ron grabs her by the arm, she had another spasm.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
Awww.

IVY
Ron!

RON
Get out of my house.

He pulls her arm.

CHLOE
(shouts)
You’re hurting me!

IVY
Don’t do this --
He pulls her towards the door.

RON

Don’t you ever come back here -

IVY

You’re hurting her!

RON

Ivy, open that door.

CHLOE

Awwww....

Ivy gets between them.

IVY

She’s pregnant!

RON

She’s a whole lot more than just pregnant Ivy. You think you can barge in here and leech off of us.

CHLOE

No!

IVY

You can’t just pull her like that!

RON

I want her out of my house, now. My son wouldn’t come anywhere near you -

CHLOE

Show’s how well you knew him.

IVY

(to Chloe)  

Hey.

RON

I knew my son fine.

CHLOE

Oh really - that’s not what he said to me!
IVY
(to Chloe)

Enough of that!

CHLOE

I’m sorry.

RON

How dare you.

Ron grabs her arm again.

CHLOE

Awww... I’m sorry! I’m sorry - I’m just mixed up...

IVY

Stop! Both of you, just stop!

Silence.

IVY (CONT’D)

I need to think... for a second...

RON

There’s nothing to think / about.

IVY

Let me think! I just need to think.

(beat)

A baby.

CHLOE

Yes.

RON

No.

CHLOE

Yes!

IVY

A baby.

RON

It could be anyone’s.
CHLOE

But it’s not.

RON

She said so herself, she has nowhere else / to go.

CHLOE

He would have been a good father.

RON

Stop that.

CHLOE

I’m sorry it took me so long - I was scared, I should have come sooner I know. I don’t want your granddaughter growing up not knowing her father, and you can teach her things about him that I can’t.

Ron grabs her again.

IVY

Let her go! Now!

(verbatim)

He lets her go.

(methodically)

I’m sorry about my husband’s behavior, we haven’t had visitors / in a while.

RON

This has nothing to do with / that!

IVY

He’s forgotten his manners!

RON

Manners?

IVY

Now. I’ve made the bed. You’ll sleep in our room, Ron you’ll take the chair in the living room, and I’ll...

RON

No --

IVY

And I will come up and sleep on the blow up.
CHLOE
I didn’t mean to cause trouble.

RON
There is no way that she’s staying under my roof.

IVY
This is my house too! God knows I’m the one paying for it. Now It’s getting late, and I have to work early, and we will all talk about this properly tomorrow when I get home, alright.

CHLOE
I’m feeling a little nauseous.

IVY
You should go up. Lie down.

(beat)
I’ll show you.

(to Ron)
I’ll be back in a second.

Chloe and Ivy leave the kitchen. Both Ron and Ivy watch her as she leaves. They move up the stairs slowly. Ron is left alone in the kitchen.

Ivy comes back down.

RON
She could be anyone.

IVY
You let her in Ron!

RON
We don’t even know if she was in the Army! Would you give that girl a gun?

IVY
You let her in. Not me!

RON
We have to talk about this.

IVY
There is nothing to talk about.
RON

Nothing?

IVY

We still have some things we have to do before bed.

RON

She just said she’s having his baby!

IVY

I know what she just said!

(beat)

We need to keep it together. For Tommy’s sake. He’s been gone a very long time and I’d hate for him to come home and see his parents a shambles. Now we have some things we have to do. Let’s just get through tonight.

RON

You can’t expect me to sit here with her tomorrow while you’re at work.

IVY

You have no choice.

Ivy takes the picture of Tommy off the wall and places it on the table again.

IVY (CONT’D)

My turn.

They sit.

IVY (CONT’D)

(she prays)

Lord, keep my son in your loving eye and protect him from the evils that try to bring harm upon him... Guide us through this troubled time with an enlightened heart and sense to accept all that you bring us for all that you bring, comes to us for a reason.
We thank you for the gift of life.
Guide us and we will follow faithfully.
Amen.

(beat)

Amen....

RON

Amen.
SCENE 4

Ron is sleeping in his chair in the living room, he has a blanket pulled up to his chin.

Chloe comes down in her pajamas, Ivy is in her Royal Mail uniform, ironing the contents of Chloe’s bag in the kitchen.

IVY
Did I wake you?

CHLOE
No, she did.

IVY
(to the belly)
Good morning.

Chloe smiles.

CHLOE
Where’s Ron?

IVY
(Sleeping.) I was worried my alarm would wake you.

CHLOE
Didn’t hear a thing.

IVY
You must have been tired. Hot water?

CHLOE
Lovely.

IVY
I want you to make yourself at home today alright. *

CHLOE
What time is it?

IVY
Six.
CHLOE
You would have done well in the Army.

IVY
Hungry?

CHLOE
Always.

IVY
I’m afraid I haven’t done a proper shop in a while.

IVY (CONT’D)
Here. If you’re feeling up to it first bus runs to town at eight, and they run on the hour.

CHLOE
You don’t need to give me --

IVY
Go on take it.

CHLOE
No, I couldn’t -

IVY
Now only if you’re feeling up to it. You don’t want to do too much. Take it.

She takes the money.

CHLOE
What about Ron? Is he...?

IVY
Don't worry about him.

Ivy makes a pot of tea.

It's so nice to make a full pot in the morning.

She stirs the tea in the teapot and grabs three mugs. Ivy pours the tea into all three cups. She hands Chloe a cup, she takes it.

I'll just go deliver this to the master.
Ivy puts the tea by his chair and comes back into the kitchen.

CHLOE
(re the ironing)
What's this?

IVY
Your bag was damp.

CHLOE
You went through my things?

IVY
No.

CHLOE
Then what's this?

IVY
I'm airing them out, ironing / a few --

CHLOE
Why are you going through my things?

IVY
It's only a bit of ironing.

CHLOE
I didn't say you could do that.

IVY
Don't be silly --

CHLOE
I'm not. These are my things.

IVY
I didn't look at anything that wasn't clothes.

CHLOE
What were you looking for?
Calm / now -

If you don’t believe me I wish you would just say it.

I do.

Chloe starts packing the bag.

You’re lying. I thought we were friends Ivy. You made me feel like we were friends, that you wanted to be a part of our lives, but you’re just like everyone else, say one thing, do another.

Please!

I never learn.

All I wanted to do was dry your clothes for you so that you would be comfortable. You are safe here Chloe... this is a safe place! Sit. Have some breakfast. Please. Please.

Oh God, I'm sorry. I’m not used to... this. You’re so nice. I don’t know if it’s the hormones, or...

It’s probably that. Love? Have you told your parents about the baby?

Yes.

And?

She doesn’t understand -

Love, you’d be surprised how much a mother understands.
CHLOE

It’s doesn’t always work out like that. My mother is a very religious woman.

IVY

And your father?

CHLOE

Paid for my train ticket. One way. What does that tell you?

IVY

What religion exactly are your parents? Not that it matters, I’m just curious.

CHLOE

Christians.

IVY

Oh.

CHLOE

Fighting in Iraq, that was doing God’s work, protecting our ancient peoples. Getting pregnant out there was not God’s work apparently.

Chloe sits, Ivy pours her some Corn Flakes, she pours her own milk.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

I want her to have a nice life. A safer life than I had... Somewhere like this.

IVY

Safer?

Yes.

CHLOE

IVY

I’ll put these on the dresser, you can do what you will with them then ok love. I won’t touch your things again without asking alright.

Ivy?

CHLOE

IVY

Yes. *

CHLOE

* I was at the ceremony in Coventry. I didn’t see you there. *
No. We don’t go to those things. We feel that it would be unfair to those poor families who have lost someone. Them with all that pain, and no hope, and our Tommy still out there.

But they did contacted you about the ceremony in May?

I suppose - Oh God, look at the time... If I don’t get to that corner pronto, Tracy will be knocking on the door and then all hell will brake loose.

Ivy grabs her coat.

Tommy was right to tell you to come.

(re Ron)

Just, give him some space. He’ll come round. His bark is much worse than his bite, but try and give him some space today if you can.

She leaves the house taking the care package with her. Ron stirs. Chloe plays with the cereal and pours the tea away. She grabs some of the already ironed clothes and takes them upstairs.

My neck.

Uncomfortable, he gets up and makes his way to the kitchen. The house is quiet. Ron looks around and sees there’s no one downstairs.

Chloe returns.

Sleep well?

(re the clothing)

What’s this?

Ivy did some ironing for me this morning so I’m just sorting some things out.
Chloe puts the twenty in her pocket. We had such a fun night, getting to know each other... It was really nice. She showed me pictures of you when you were in the Army. You were quite the stud. I don’t know how you both sleep in that small bed though --

RON
Nothing wrong with that bed.

CHLOE
Maybe I’m just bigger than I think... we had a great time --

RON
Talking?

CHLOE
Yes.

Can I help you with anything today? Ivy suggested we do a shop, maybe we can go together?

RON
No.

CHLOE
Then I’ll go alone. If I’m buying for the house though -

RON
I’m not giving you a penny.

CHLOE
I know this situation is not ideal, I understand - but we have to try to get along you know. For the sake of...

RON
It’s too early for this. I’m going to bed.

CHLOE
Oh really? I was thinking about going back to bed for a little while too, I haven’t been up this early for so many months!

Ron puts the kettle on.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
I already brought you some tea. I put it by your chair.
He gets his tea - she follows him.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

How is it?

RON

Too dark.

CHLOE

Where are you going?

RON

To piss! Is that alright with you? Or would you like to piss at this moment in time too?

CHLOE

No, I’m fine. You can have the bed if you like, I’ll take a nap in that chair in the living room.

RON

Stay away from my chair.

Ron goes upstairs. We hear him start to pee, then the bathroom door slams.

Chloe continues to sort the clothes, some are still on the horse. They smell clean and soft.

Ron comes back.

CHLOE

Where would be the best place for me to keep my clothes do you think?

RON

In your bag.

He goes back into the living room.

CHLOE

That went well.

She puts her head in the fridge and then in all the cupboards.
CHLOE (CONT’D)
(to the baby)
What is it? What is it you want?

She takes things out of everywhere, eats, snacks and leaves items on the table, empty packets... etc...

Jelly? Cubes of jelly!

Chloe opens the packet and starts ripping off cubes of raw jelly.

Urgh.

She eats more and discards packaging to the table.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

Just get out of me already!

She looks into her bag to see what else she has in there. She takes out a black dress, and brushes off the lint, she puts it in the washing machine and puts some soap in the trey and turns it on. Back in the cupboards, she reaches for a tin, it’s high. She gets it, it falls onto the floor.

CHLOE (CONT’D)

Shit!

RON

What are you doing in there?

CHLOE

Eating you out of house and home!

She opens the tin and takes out a stack of letters. She studies the envelopes carefully. She takes out a letter.

Ron comes back. She puts the letters back in the tin.

RON

What are you doing in here? Why are you crying?
CHLOE
I’m sad.

RON
Stop crying! I don’t want any crying.

Chloe cries harder.

RON (CONT’D)
Thought you were going upstairs.

CHLOE
I don’t want to lie down anymore. I want to scream!

RON
Then go out. You can scream outside.

CHLOE
It’s raining.

Ron moves the net curtains, it is raining lightly.

RON
It’s just spitting.

CHLOE
Spitting is raining Ron.

(beat)
It’s always fucking raining.

Suddenly bubbles start coming out of the washing machine. Lots and lots of bubbles!

CHLOE (CONT’D)
What’s that?

CHLOE (CONT’D)  RON
Shit! Shit.. shit!!     Shit! Shit!

She tries blowing the bubbles, wafting the bubbles, dispersing the bubbles with her hands.

CHLOE
Do something!
They come out fast and furiously.

RON

How much soap did you put in?

CHLOE

I didn’t touch it.

Ron battles with the bubbles and tries to turn the machine off to no avail.

RON

It won’t stop!

He disappears into the bubbles and under the sink. He re emerges with a crown of soap.

Chloe looks at him and starts laughing.

RON (CONT’D)

This is not funny.

CHLOE

I’m sorry!

She continues to laugh.

RON

This is her new floor. Do you know how much she loves this bloody new floor?

CHLOE

My dress! My new dress is in there. Will it be ok?

RON

How much soap did you put in?

CHLOE

It wasn’t me.

RON

You must have used a whole bloody /box -
CHLOE (defensive)
I told you, it wasn’t me! Why are you assuming that this is my fault? You have a shit old machine that's probably just ruined my clothes and your angry with me?

RON
You only need half scoop for a small load.

CHLOE
It's your machine.

RON
There is nothing wrong with that machine!

CHLOE
There are bubbles all over the floor!

RON
We have had that machine for over ten years, Hoover! / Build to last. *

CHLOE
Who has anything for ten years? That dress cost me thirty pounds.

RON
Thirty pounds?

CHLOE
That's how much things cost when you look like this.

RON
I thought you didn’t have any money!

She starts to cry again.

CHLOE
It's the only nice thing I have, and it’s ruined because of your cruddy old machine.

RON
You put too much powder -

CHLOE
I didn’t put any powder in!

RON
You washed your dress without powder?
CHLOE
You should pay for that dress.

RON
Pay...?

CHLOE
Yes!

RON
Look at this place! Look at it. You have to clean this place up before she gets home.

CHLOE
It wasn’t my fault.

RON
Oh no? It’s not just the kitchen. You are going to make a mess of everything, I know you are. Needle your way in here, you’ve got some talent though I’ll give you that.

CHLOE
What are you talking about?

RON
Managed to get your way into the house, feet under the dinner table, sleeping in my bed... oh you’re good. You may sound like you were born here, but you are no different from the rest of them. Leeches that’s what you are -

CHLOE
What?

RON
Don’t think I don’t know what you are!

CHLOE
Tell me. What am I Ron?

RON
Hajji!

CHLOE
What?

RON
Oh you can’t fool me. Coming in with that thing on your head -
CHLOE
It was raining!

RON
You are just another head banging Hajji - and you’re trying to infiltrate my home!

CHLOE
I was in the fucking desert being shot at every day. / Every day!

RON
You may not be card carrying but I see you’re one of them.

CHLOE
You don’t see anything.

RON
I see that my son would have nothing to do with the likes of you!

CHLOE
Oh, it must drive you crazy that your son wanted to / fuck “someone like me” -

RON
I’ve heard how you grift, take our jobs, there’s one at the Post Office, bet you’re in 
cahoots! Infiltrating our towns / that’s what’s going on.

CHLOE
Marrying your / women!

RON
Braking down our morals / our values.

CHLOE
And your morals are so upstanding, you are such a good Christian I’m sure! Raised your 
boy with good Christian values... What a good Christian he was... And look at how he 
turned out.. Brilliant.

RON
You didn’t know him.

CHLOE
I didn’t? Let me tell you something about Tommy 2.0! He would lose his / cool -

RON
/ Stop -
CHLOE
One wrong word, one foot out of place and he would lay into them, fists punching, kick in the ribs, stub of his gun broken /jaws -

RON
/ Stop!

CHLOE
Break down of moral values! You sound just like my father, you two would probably get on very well - you both hate Arabs / just as much.

RON
You’re doing it again - twisting things!

CHLOE
You know Tommy would sneak out at all hours of the night to see me. Not to just / see me - *

RON
I don’t want to hear / your lies -

CHLOE
* He risked his life nightly so that he could be with what you think is so disgusting. *

RON
/ No -

CHLOE
Oh you can dish it out, but you can’t stand the truth / can you.

RON
Shut up!

CHLOE
Christian? You don’t know the meaning of the word. Do you hear? (beat)
Aren’t you going to say something? (beat)
Fucking bubbles!

RON
Oh my God...

CHLOE
What? *
RON
It’s your fault isn’t it. You were stationed in another camp... He was crossing the city, to see you / wasn’t he -

CHLOE
It wasn’t / my fault -

RON
He’s out there somewhere because you / made him --

CHLOE
I didn’t make him / do anything -

RON
God knows where he is... They have him, somewhere... They’ve had him for months! And they have him all because you and your wicked ways, your twisting lies, you made him leave his base in the middle of the night and they took him. He’s out there - he’s -

CHLOE
Dead! *

(beat)
Tommy is dead Ron. *

RON
My son is out there - the Army are investigating his disappearance, they are looking / for him.

CHLOE
They took him off the list weeks / ago.

RON
I will shut that mouth if you don’t -

CHLOE
Ivy’s going to love that!

RON
Then stop with your lies!

CHLOE
He’s not coming home / not today, not tomorrow, not ever!
I will be here in this house the next time the Army knock on that door - I will be here when they tell me that they found him, and I will wait here for him / to come home, do you hear?

CHLOE
You really don’t know? Oh God... You really don’t. I thought that you and Ivy were doing this fucked up dance but you actually don’t know do you? The Army declared him dead / months ago.

RON
You’re lying.

CHLOE
I went to the ceremony in Coventry.

RON
What ceremony?

CHLOE
Army funeral. Not the real thing, that’s why they call it a ceremony.

RON
You’re not making any /sense -

CHLOE
Here. Look! Letters Ron, from the Army.

RON
Where did you get these?

CHLOE
I found them.

RON
Where?

CHLOE
Up there.

Ron reads a letter, then another, and another -

CHLOE (CONT’D)
The ceremony was for fallen soldiers whose bodies were never recovered.

RON
They said they were looking for him.
CHLOE
They were looking for his body.

RON
No one has knocked on my door. They are supposed to knock on my door.

CHLOE
They changed his status, it’s not the same as -

Chloe has a pain.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
Awww. Shit!

RON
There must be a mistake.

Another pain.

CHLOE
Awww... I think I’m going to be sick.

Ron frantically reading more letters.

Another contraction.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
Awww... No no no no - not now. / Not like this!

How could she... ?

CHLOE
Roo-oon...

Another contraction.

RON
There’s ten... eleven letters... From March - that’s months ago!

She lurches forward and grabs him.

RON (CONT’D)
What are you doing?
Call the ambulance.

CHLOE

Why?

RON

I think my water’s broken.

CHLOE

How can you tell?

RON

Call the fucking ambulance!

CHLOE

(beat)

Nooooooow!!!!!

Ron runs to the hallway and calls 999. He picks up the phone, he puts it back down, he does this a few times.

* 

RON

Ambulance.

* 

He put the phone down.

* 

CHLOE

What are you doing?

* 

RON

I’m trying!

* 

He picks up the phone again.

* 

RON (CONT’D)

Ambulance.

* 

He puts the phone down.

* 

CHLOE

(pain)

Awwww...

* 

RON

I can’t...
CHLOE
What do you mean?

RON
I’m sorry --

Chloe picks up the phone Ron gets out of the way.

CHLOE
Ambulance. What number?

RON
Twenty three -

CHLOE
Twenty-three Mountain Road.

RON
Mountain Ash Road!

CHLOE
Mountain Ash... I need to get to a hospital, a baby.... Full term... What do you mean? I can’t wait that long... You need to get here now!

She puts the phone down.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
I’m going to throw up... They can’t come for / half an hour.

RON
You’ll have to meet them outside. They can’t come in / here.

CHLOE
Ron. Listen to me.

RON
I’ll give you Ivy’s number -

CHLOE
There’s a car outside the house - is it yours?

RON
It’s -
He grabs the keys from a jar.

CHLOE
*(the pain)*

Oh God... You have to take me.

RON

No -

CHLOE

I can’t drive like this!

RON

/I won’t be able to --

CHLOE

Throw me out of the car and leave me if you want / I just need you to take me, now.

RON

I can’t get in the car. I can’t leave... And I have to stay here, in the house... in case they come, in case they find him...

CHLOE

No one is coming. We need to get into that car.

RON

I haven’t left the house in eight months.

His breathing is full out panic attack now.

CHLOE

What? Awww...

(beat)

Alright.

(beat)

Oh-god-oh-god-oh-god! What am I going to do?

RON

/I’m sorry.

CHLOE

Shit.

(beat)

Ok -

(MORE)
Blue (mm/dd/yyyy) 98.

CHLOE (CONT'D) (militarily) *
Get it together! Get it together Chloe! *
(Chloe the soldier)
We have the car - yes? Answer me. Answer me! *

RON
Yes. Blue Fiesta. *

CHLOE
Awww... Take the keys. Take them! *

He does. *
Do you know where the hospital is?

RON
Yes.

CHLOE
Good. *

RON
/ I can't. *

CHLOE
Yes you can.

RON
/ You don't understand - *

CHLOE
Listen. We need to get into that car. Look at me. Look. At. Me! *
(she has his attention, slowly)
I know this is difficult - but if you don't get me to that hospital, and pronto - your wife is going to have more that just soapy bubbles on her new floor. Do you understand?

RON
Yes.

CHLOE
Good. I will help you out of the house, but you need to help me into that car. *
(beat)

You can do this.
She puts her arm around his shoulder and holds him tight, he does the same.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
I’m with you and I know you can do this.

They slowly start walking towards the front door.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
It’s alright... breathe... it’s the same out there today as it was eight months ago. Nothing has changed.

RON
Everything has changed!

CHLOE
One step at a time.

His breathing gets more and more erratic.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
I’m right here with you. Just hold on tight. You are not doing this alone.

Tears are streaming down his face, he looks to her. They stop. She wipes his tears.

CHLOE (CONT’D)
You’re doing a great job soldier.

She opens the door slowly and they leave the house.

SCENE 5

Ivy sits at the kitchen table - mess everywhere.

Ron enters.

IVY
Where were you? I’ve been worried sick!

RON
Hospital.
IVY
What did you do to her?

RON
/ For God’s sake --

IVY
Answer me! What did you do to the girl?

RON
Nothing.

IVY
Then where is she?

RON
She had the baby.

IVY
Why didn’t anyone call me? I’ve been home for hours.

RON pulls out a wad of letters bound with an elastic band and throws them onto the table.

IVY
Why didn’t you tell me about these?

RON
There’s nothing to tell.

IVY
There’s twelve letters Ivy!

RON
We need to go to the girl!

IVY
Months of letters! I waited for them to knock on our door... to tell me that they found him... waited for them to tell me, something! Anything! And these were here all along. Half of them weren’t even opened. They could have said anything!

IVY
It’s nothing. It’s a mistake.
Mistake? How is it a mistake -
(he reads)
The Ministry of Defense have concluded their investigation and determined that Thomas
Errol Davies died --

IVY
/ Stop it -

RON
... Along with three other soldiers in a gas explosion at midnight in Basra, January... 2004.
Death is ruled an accident. That’s just the first one -

IVY
/ Please -

RON
(reading)
We have been trying to correspond with you for several weeks...

IVY
You’re not being fair -

RON
Fair? Another one!
(reading)
The contact telephone number on file has been discontinued - you changed our number?

IVY
/ It was -

RON
You changed our telephone number and didn’t tell me?

IVY
The phone would ring and ring and people wanted to talk about him, and send regards and
sympathize, I couldn’t stand it / their voices!

RON
(reading)
Due to the lack or return correspondence, the Ministry of Defense will be organizing a state
funeral -

IVY
/ No -
RON
(reading)
For Thomas Errol Davies.
(beat)
Why didn’t you tell me?

IVY
Because there is nothing to say -

RON
They are saying that our son is dead! You read these and you kept this from me!

IVY
I know!

RON
You’ve been doing so well...

IVY
I kept thinking, I’ll tell him tomorrow about the letters. I’ll tell him tomorrow, and then tomorrow turned into tomorrow... And then I got to thinking. They can’t just do that, send us a letter and say that they’re not looking for him any more.

RON
/ Ivy -

IVY
That’s not what it says in the handbook - it says that when a soldier dies, the family are notified in person. They didn’t do that.

RON
/ No they didn’t -

IVY
No one has come to my door and told me that my son is dead!
(beat)
We would know wouldn’t we. You’ve been here, waiting.
I read them all. Every letter.

(beat)

You should have showed me!

And then what? / This is all -

They had a funeral for him.

/ No -

They had a funeral for him and we didn’t go. / I didn’t go to my son’s funeral -

Stop that! It wasn’t a funeral. It wasn’t! How can it be a funeral when there is no body Ron?

/ Ivy -

How can they say he’s dead if they haven’t found his body! There is nothing in those letters that says they found his body. Is there!

No.

See love? It’s all wrong... you can’t bury an empty coffin can you.

(beat)

Please don’t look at me like that, please!

(beat)

I don’t want to give up on him.

(beat)

And until my boy’s body is put in the ground, I will not believe that he is dead. No matter how many letters they send us! Do you hear?

Maybe we should speak with the councilor -
IVY

Maybe we should do nothing.

(beat)

Do you remember when he and you used to play hide and seek? He would always hide in the same place, behind that clothes horse and he’s spy on you through the holes in your socks. I know we don’t know where he is Ron, but I know he’s not dead. I just know. I just know.

(beat)

I’m sorry I kept them from you. I didn’t want to upset you.

(beat)

How is she doing, her and the baby?

RON

The baby has long black hair on her head and all over her body.

IVY

You were with her when she...?

RON

I’ve never seen anything like it. It was...

(beat)

She has blue eyes, the baby has blue eyes.

IVY

Just like Tommy.

RON

It was amazing.

IVY

And Chloe?

RON

She needs some things, she made a list.

IVY

Alright. I’ll fetch / things.

RON

I don’t want to wait anymore Ivy.

IVY

No?
RON
They’ll come back. I think... If they knock, and I’m not here... If they have news about
Tommy, and I’m not home - They’ll come back. *

They’ll come back.

IVY

RON
Ay. They will.

IVY
Alright then.

(beat)
I should go to the hospital -

RON
She wouldn’t let go of my hand, you know, when she was, well you know...

IVY
Poor thing was terrified / I’m sure.

RON
She’s tough, tougher than she looks. I’m starting to think she might actually have been a
soldier.

IVY
Of course / she was -

RON
We don’t know if it’s his baby. *

IVY
You just said she had blue eyes! *

RON
We have to know Ivy. We can’t just pretend - *

IVY
Why not? *

RON
Ivy -

IVY
You went out Ron.
RON

Ay.

IVY

You went out!

SCENE 6

Blue skies.

The sound of running water from the bathroom.

Ivy comes to the kitchen, excited and alive, Ron is under the sink, disconnecting the washing machine. Music plays on the radio, Ivy turns it off.

IVY

I can’t find my camera anywhere, have you seen it?

RON

It’s probably in your drawer.

Ivy looks. She finds it, and winds the film.

IVY

Twenty four... How many pictures are in these things again?

RON

Thirty six.

IVY

I hope it still works. Are you sure we shouldn’t get a plumber for that? You remember what happened when you tried to change the pilot light.. flipping freezing all Christmas.

RON

I can do it.

IVY

Why don’t you come up?

RON

I’m in the middle of something.
I found the yellow submarine.

RON

You kept that old thing?

IVY

Of course I did.

She takes a picture of Ron’s legs sticking out from under the sink.

RON

Hey.

IVY

Oops, shouldn’t waste the film.

RON

Go on, go up with you.

Ivy turns to go. She sees an envelope on the kitchen table.

IVY

What’s that?

She picks up the letter.

There’s no stamp, what is it?

RON

It’s a test result -

IVY

What test? It didn’t come in the post, I would have seen it!

RON

No it didn’t. It’s the results from the DNA test.

/Oh Ron...

IVY

RON

Marjory arranged / for it -
IVY  
Marjory! Why don’t you publish our business in the Herald!

RON  
I didn’t tell her what it was for.

IVY  
You don’t have to be a rocket scientist to work it out.  *

RON  
I thought I should wait for you.

IVY  
Does Chloe know it came?

RON  
No

Music from a baby’s mobile or child’s toy.  *

He takes the envelope.

IVY  
Don’t open it! Not yet. Just a few more seconds...  *

(beat)

It’s been nice hasn’t it, this past week. Tea for three.  *

We hear Chloe sing from upstairs.  *

CHLOE 
Twinkle twinkle little star  
(dialogue over song)

How I wonder what you are  
Up above the sky so bright  
Like a diamond in the sky  
Twinkle twinkle little star  
How I wonder what you are.

IVY  
Where do you think she would go?

RON  
I don’t know.  *

They listen to the song.
IVY
Oh God Ron I can’t stand it. Open the damn thing.

He starts to open it and the baby cries. He stops.

IVY (CONT’D)
Well come on.

(beat)
Ron?

RON
Why don’t you go up to her, I don’t trust her bathing that baby by herself - you’ve seen how she is, there’ll be water coming through the ceiling in no time.

IVY
/ But -

RON
Chin up love.

(beat)
We’ll open it tomorrow.

Eventually she agrees. Ivy gets to the bottom of the stairs, and puts on her happy face.

Ron puts the envelope in the tin, and puts it on the top shelf in the back of the cupboard where the letters once lived.

He pulls out his rolling papers, and rolls a cigarette, he puts it between his lips, and goes out to smoke.

IVY
(from upstairs)
Oh, don't you look a treat. Don't you look beautiful! It’s a submarine... Oh you like those bubbles... Yes you do... You like them just like your daddy used to.

Lights out.

END OF PLAY.