

# KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

Written by

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Time:

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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

October 2004.

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.

IVY (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.

IVY

Don't be soft.

RON

Said they were a waste of money.

IVY

Did I?

RON

Ay.

IVY

Well I like them now aright?

Ron takes a huge bite of the pie.

IVY (CONT'D)

Can you believe it... just four more days to go.

RON

(eating)

Ay...

IVY

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

Aright. I watched a bit of telly.



You and that / television. IVY  
 Fixed that hook on the curtain too. RON  
 Good. IVY  
 Bent as hell it was. RON  
 Ay - IVY  
 Took a long time, almost broke my back, had to get the step ladder from under the stairs. RON  
 Ron you fixed the curtains not the boiler. No need to over do it. IVY  
 Ay. Well it's fixed anyway. RON  
 I'd better... / Star Trek. (beat)  
 Star Trek - I know. IVY  
 Ron gets up.  
 What about your chips? Take them / with you! IVY (CONT'D)  
 I'm not that hungry. You have them. RON  
 (on route to living room)  
 You know I'm on a diet! IVY  
 (from the kitchen)  
 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?

RON

Ivy...

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.

Breathe in... IVY

Look... RON

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

See - RON (CONT'D)

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

Boy - ... - dead - RON

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

In Basra - RON

Breathe! IVY

...

It / says - RON

What? IVY

Boy found / dead in - RON

Come on now. Breathe. IVY

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

You - RON



It's not him. IVY

...?... RON

Breathe! IVY

You don't / know. RON

Ron! IVY

... ..

Look! RON

Sees - does.

IVY  
(loosing her temper)  
He's an American! "American soldier, killed in Basra."

RON  
(exhausted)  
Are you / sure?

IVY  
Yes. It says so!

She shows him the article.

IVY (CONT'D)  
See?

... ..

IVY (CONT'D)  
Good God Ron...  
(beat)  
You shouldn't be looking at the paper, you know / that.

I didn't mean / to -  
RON

I know.  
IVY

I thought it was... I didn't / see -  
RON

You've been doing so well.  
IVY

I'm... I'm so / sorry.  
RON

I don't want to hear it.  
IVY

Love...  
(gently)

She touches his face.

IVY (CONT'D)  
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.  
RON

I'll do them.  
IVY

I'm so sorry.  
RON

Chin up love. Go on. Go upstairs.  
IVY  
(beat)

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

RON  
(from the stairs)  
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.

Bloody hell.

IVY

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?

RON

Ay.

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.

RON

Ay.

IVY

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

RON

I'll be / alright.

IVY

Just making you aware / that's all.

RON

I'm aware.

IVY

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

RON

Ay.

IVY

And call me... if you can... if there's a problem.

RON

Ay.

I better go -  
IVY

It's early yet.  
RON

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

Is there something wrong with the car?  
RON

No.  
IVY

?  
RON

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

Just the two of you?  
RON

No - Sandra too -  
IVY

Bloody hell.  
RON

What?  
IVY

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

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

She kisses him on the head.

IVY (CONT'D)  
(sincerely)

You alright?

Ay, go to work.

RON

Ta-ra love.

IVY

Ta-ra.

RON

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)

Shit! Idiot. Bloody stupid idiot.

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?

RON

Who's asking?

CHLOE

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.

Shit.  
RON

I can stand here all day...  
CHLOE

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

And it's about -  
RON

Thomas. I have some information about Thomas.  
CHLOE

...  
RON

Thomas Davies - British / Army.  
CHLOE

He takes a deep breath

It's open.  
RON

She opens the door slowly.

Quick!  
RON (CONT'D)

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

What is it?  
RON (CONT'D)

Mr Davies - hello!  
CHLOE

Say it -  
RON

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 - CHLOE

What's that supposed to mean? RON

Nothing. CHLOE

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

Whose side are you on then? RON

What? CHLOE

You heard. RON

Ron studies her.

I... CHLOE

What do you have to tell me then? RON

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 - CHLOE

Do you have some information or not? RON

Yes - it's just... It's not easy - CHLOE

Saw the paper? RON

Today? CHLOE



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.

CHLOE

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 -

CHLOE

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?

RON  
 There's a greasy spoon -

CHLOE  
 I don't have any cash on me.

RON  
 I'm not giving you money.

CHLOE  
 I didn't ask / you -

RON  
 No, sorry. There's a park -

CHLOE  
 It's raining.

RON  
 Is it? She'll be back at four.

CHLOE  
 I should go -

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

Chloe looks on, damp, and somewhat pathetic.

RON (CONT'D)  
 You can wait here, in the kitchen.

They stand with each other for some time.

RON (CONT'D)  
 I have some things to attend to.

CHLOE  
 Don't you want to know - ?

RON  
 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!

She sees the mess she's made and grabs the tea towel again, and begins to sop things up a little.

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.

RON

That's my chair.

CHLOE

It's so comfortable.

RON

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.

Great!  
CHLOE

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.

What?  
CHLOE  
“Pip”  
Change it back!  
RON  
“Pip”  
I didn’t think you were watching...  
CHLOE  
Ron pushes Chloe out of the way and into the living room.  
Where’s the remote?  
RON  
“Pip”  
She joins him.  
I just had it...  
CHLOE  
Turn it off. We need to... Turn it off!!!  
RON  
“Pip”  
Is there a button on the -- ??  
CHLOE  
Where the hell is the button on this thing?  
RON  
They gather around the TV.  
“Pip”  
What about the plug?  
CHLOE



## 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...

RON

I pushed you -

CHLOE

I'm fine.

RON

I didn't mean to push you -

CHLOE

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?

CHLOE

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.

RON

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?  
 RON  
 Hello.  
 CHLOE  
 Didn't think you'd be back.  
 RON  
 Well, I did come all this way. What's that / noise?  
 CHLOE  
 Radio. I'm going to listen to some radio... if I can get a reception in the living room.  
 RON  
 Have you tried making a bigger aerial?  
 CHLOE  
 Ay, hanger.  
 RON  
 Oh... Maybe foil. You know, kitchen foil. Make the antenna bigger.  
 CHLOE  
 Won't work.  
 RON  
 I can help you, if you like.  
 CHLOE  
 It needs to be by the window - the aerial. Only place it'll work.  
 RON  
 We can do that. Do you have foil?  
 CHLOE  
 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’  
RON

Then let’s make it bigger.  
CHLOE

It won’t / work.  
RON

Are you always this defeatist?  
CHLOE

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.

Try tuning it!  
CHLOE (CONT’D)  
(from the kitchen)

This’ll never / work.  
RON  
(from the living room)

And so you have to turn the soil for the best results...  
RADIO VOICE #2

It works!  
CHLOE

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... CHLOE

No. RON

You only live once. CHLOE

I like Cheese and Onion and Salt and Vinegar. That's it. RON

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

She pushes the packet towards him, he takes one.

See what I mean? Very gravy. CHLOE (CONT'D)

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

Ron puts one of his crisps in his mouth.

Bloody spoilt the taste of cheese and onion now. RON (CONT'D)

Let's swap. CHLOE

No, no. The flavors, they don't go together. RON

I'm pregnant Ron. Everything goes together to me CHLOE

They swap crisp packets.

Oy, you've eaten more than me. CHLOE (CONT'D)

Too late. RON

Chloe smiles, comfortable and content.





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...?

CHLOE  
 On the train. Yesterday.

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

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

CHLOE  
 Awww...

IVY  
 Are you alright.

CHLOE  
 Yes, it's just a... Awww.

IVY  
 Where's the pain?

She indicates.

IVY (CONT'D)  
 Ron, wet a flannel for me - hot water.

CHLOE  
 It's fine. It happens.

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

CHLOE  
 Thank you.

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

CHLOE  
 Yes. I'm nervous.

(beat)  
 He said that I could rely on you Mrs. Davies.

IVY  
 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.

IVY (CONT'D)

Chloe you said?

(in a whisper)

How did you get in today?

CHLOE

Where?

IVY

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

CHLOE

Yes.

IVY

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

She lays the table, just like she always does.

IVY (CONT'D)

Ron, can you pass me another table placing?

He does.

And **three** bowls please Ron.

Ron brings her the bowls.

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

IVY (CONT'D)

What the hell is that?

RON

For better signal.

CHLOE

An antenna.

She follows the trail to the living room.

IVY

What happened to the telly?

RON

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 -  
(sees 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.  
(sees 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)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

(beat)

We used to call him Taff.

RON

Used to call me that too -

CHLOE

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

RON

Bloody English.

CHLOE

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

RON

No.

CHLOE

Ok.

IVY

So your family are all in Manchester?

CHLOE

Mostly.

IVY

Is that where / the father is?

RON

It’s none of our business Ivy.

IVY

Quite right.

CHLOE

Had to come up sooner or later.

IVY

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

CHLOE

I was really hungry.

IVY

I can see that.

CHLOE

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

IVY

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

CHLOE

It was a Sunday.

IVY

Where did you see him?

CHLOE

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

IVY

Of course! Ron.

Ron gets her the water

CHLOE

Do you have any magic towels for headaches.

IVY

Ron, fetch a cold flannel will you?

RON

I'm trying to / eat.

IVY

Go.

Ron gets up again.

IVY (CONT'D)

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...

CHLOE

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.

CHLOE  
Thank you.

IVY  
Are you done love?

CHLOE  
Yes.

IVY  
Ron take that bag up to our room --

CHLOE  
I can take it.

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

RON  
A word?

Ivy goes into the hallway with Ron.

RON (CONT'D)  
One night.

IVY  
Ay.

RON  
I know how you are.

IVY  
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.

RON  
We don't have the room. One night.

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

RON  
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?

From her. RON

She smokes? IVY

She went to get them. RON

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

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? RON

Of course I did. IVY

8. The walkman.

I won't bother with the CD's. RON

Why not? IVY

You heard what she said. RON

Go on. Pop them in. IVY

Chloe comes into the kitchen doorway and watches.

IVY (CONT'D)

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 jobs!

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	*
Bull!		*
	IVY	*
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.		*
	IVY	
What is it?		
	CHLOE	
Awww.		
	IVY	*
Are you alright?		*
	CHLOE	*
Yes -		*
	She has another...	*
	IVY	*
Sit down.		*
	RON	*
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!		*
	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	
No game.		*
	(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.		*



What did he say? IVY \*

You're listening to this? RON \*

What did he say? IVY \*

He didn't say anything! She's making it up! RON \*

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

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. CHLOE (cautiously) \*

Ivy extends her hand and carefully holds Chloe's. \*

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

Awww. CHLOE (CONT'D)

Ron! IVY \*

Get out of my house. RON \*

He pulls her arm.

You're hurting me! CHLOE (shouts) \*

Don't do this -- IVY \*

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

Awww....

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.			
Yes.	CHLOE	No.	RON
			*
Yes!	CHLOE		*
	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! \*

He lets her go.  
(methodically)  
I'm sorry about my husbands 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.

Did I wake you?

IVY

No, she did.

CHLOE

Good morning.

IVY  
(to the belly)

Chloe smiles.

Where's Ron?

CHLOE

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

IVY

Didn't hear a thing.

CHLOE

You must have been tired. Hot water?

IVY

Lovely.

CHLOE

I want you to make yourself at home today alright.

IVY

\*

What time is it?

CHLOE

Six.

IVY

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 goes into her bag and pulls out a twenty.

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 - IVY \*

If you don't believe me I wish you would just say it. CHLOE \*

I do. IVY \*

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. CHLOE \*

Please! IVY \*

I never learn. CHLOE \*

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. IVY \*

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... CHLOE \*

It's probably that. Love? Have you told your parents about the baby? IVY \*

Yes. CHLOE

And? IVY

She doesn't understand - CHLOE

Love, you'd be surprised how much a mother understands. IVY

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?

CHLOE

Yes.

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.

CHLOE

Ivy?

IVY

Yes.

\*

CHLOE

I was at the ceremony in Coventry. I didn't see you there.

\*

\*

IVY

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.

CHLOE

But they did contacted you about the ceremony in May?

\*  
\*

IVY

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.

IVY (CONT'D)

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.

RON

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.

CHLOE

Sleep well?

RON

(re the clothing)

What's this?

CHLOE

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

5 That went well.

5 \*

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 tray 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?





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!

RON

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!

RON

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	
Nooooooooow!!!!	(beat)	
	Ron runs to the hallway and calls 999. He picks up the phone, he puts it back down, he does this a few times.	*
Ambulance.	RON	
	He put the phone down.	*
What are you doing?	CHLOE	*
		*
I'm trying!	RON	*
		*
	He picks up the phone again.	*
Ambulance.	RON (CONT'D)	*
		*
	He puts the phone down.	*
Awww...	CHLOE (pain)	
I can't...	RON	*
		*

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 -



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 than 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.	*
		*
	RON	
Why didn't you tell me about these?		*
	IVY	*
There's nothing to tell.		*
	RON	*
There's twelve letters Ivy!		*
	IVY	*
We need to go to the girl!		*
	RON	*
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.		

RON

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!

(beat)

The first one came, and I just put it away... and then another one came, and then another one, and another one!

\*

\*

(beat)

You've been doing so well...

RON

Don't put this on me.

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.



RON \*  
I read them all. Every letter. \*

(beat)  
You should have showed me!

IVY  
And then what? / This is all -

RON  
They had a funeral for him.

IVY  
/ No -

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

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

RON \*  
/ Ivy - \*

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! \*

RON  
No.

IVY \*  
See love? It's all wrong... you can't burry 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? \*

RON \*  
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.

\*

IVY

They'll come back.

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.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

IVY  
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.

IVY  
/Oh Ron...

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.