

Burdens of the living

"Those who suffer most are the ones who survive"

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INT.ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

The hospital doors fling open, almost knocking a WOMAN into the wall.

The PARAMEDICS speed the gurney through the hospital corridors straight towards the emergency theatre.

One of the INTERN DOCTORS joins them on their mad rush through the hospital.

She is in her mid twenties, striking with dark brown hair and deep blue eyes.

The paramedics start rambling off MOS the status of the PATIENT, what treatment they administered and so on and so forth.

The patient is a young man with reddish hair and the vaguest impression of freckles on his skin which is now pale and sickly.

Madeline (the Intern Doctor) stares at him, not moving.

The paramedics keep on shouting out to her, calling her name but all sounds dwindle to a loud silence.

COUNSELLOR (V.O.)
Madeline.

INT.COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Madeline slowly turns her gaze to the COUNSELLOR sitting opposite her in the plush couch.

She is a forty-something, attractive blonde woman with an intelligent face.

COUNSELLOR
I want to know what happened
in the hospital this
afternoon.

Madeline just stares at the counsellor.

COUNSELLOR
I can't help you unless you
tell me why you froze in the
hospital today.

MADELINE
I didn't freeze.

COUNSELLOR
Then what happened?

MADELINE
Divine intervention.

COUNSELLOR
Madeline.

The counsellor leans forward in the chair.

COUNSELLOR

I don't think you realise the seriousness of this situation. That young man had overdosed on sleeping pills. You were on call. It was your responsibility to save his life. Now, if you didn't freeze.

The counsellor moves back slowly.

COUNSELLOR

Are you saying...

(A Beat)

Are you saying ... you wanted him to die?

Madeline just stares at the counsellor.

COUNSELLOR

Madeline, I know this has been a difficult year for you -

MADELINE

Time's up.

She stands abruptly.

COUNSELLOR

Madeline, if you were going to let that boy die, you could lose your license to practice medicine. Do you understand that?

MADELINE

Some people aren't meant to live.

INT.ST.ANNE'S HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Madeline leaves the counsellor's office, she finds a good-looking twenty-something MAN with scruffy black hair and dark blue eyes sitting on the bench waiting for her. He is tall with a canoeist's muscular shoulders and back.

JACK

Hey. You look tired.

MADELINE

That's because I am tired.

JACK

Cindy told me you were here.

MADELINE

Cindy has too much time on her hands, which is self-
(CONT'D)

explanatory since she's just a receptionist. What are you doing here, Jack?

JACK
I wanted to see you. To see how you're doing.

MADELINE
Bullshit.

JACK
Ok, but bear in mind that if it had been up to me I would never have stayed away. That's what you wished for, remember?

Madeline just stares at him.

JACK
I heard about Brett.
(A Beat)
I've been visiting him as well.
(A Beat)
Maddy, you told me you were fine. And I wanted to believe you. I really did.

MADELINE
I am fine.

JACK
You couldn't bring yourself to save Brett. You are far from fine, Maddy.

MADELINE
Don't call me that.

She strides off down the corridor.

COUNSELLOR
Excuse me.

The counselor emerges from her office.

COUNSELLOR
Yes, I'm talking to you.

JACK
Yes?

COUNSELLOR
I couldn't help notice you talking to Madeline. Are you two friends?

JACK

For my part.

COUNSELLOR

But you know the patient as well, Brett Cummings?

JACK

Yes. He and I used to be room mates.

COUNSELLOR

How does Madeline know Brett? I'm sorry for being so forward. I guess it's just my nature after so many years as a counsellor. It's just that ... Why - why would Madeline not want to save Brett's life?

JACK

She never told you what happened?

COUNSELLOR

No, when?

JACK

Hasn't Madeline been seeing you for the past seven months?

COUNSELLOR

No. This was the first time I've spoken to her as a counsellor.

Jack laughs.

COUNSELLOR

What's so funny?

JACK

I sometimes wish I could give up on that girl. Madeline told me that she's been visiting you on a weekly basis since the accident.

COUNSELLOR

What accident?

JACK

Oh shit. She's really pulled the wool over everyone's eyes, hasn't she?

COUNSELLOR

I don't understand.

JACK
How much time do you have?

7 AND ½ MONTHS EARLIER

INT.CAMPUS EXAM HALL - DAY

The hall is filled with about fifty or so STUDENTS all writing their examination.

The EXAMINER, a middle-aged man with an open, friendly face, looks at his watch and looks up from where he is seated behind the table at the front of the room.

Madeline gathers her papers together and looks at the clock.

It reads half past three in the afternoon.

EXAMINER
Pens down.

There is a rustle of paper as the students stop writing and gather their papers.

The examiner gets up from his chair.

EXAMINER
Make sure your name is on the
paper and all pages are
numbered accordingly.

The examiner walks down the row collecting papers.

As Madeline hands him hers, she grabs her bag from under the desk and packs away her writing materials.

She rolls up the exam questions and pushes them into her bag.

The examiner returns to his desk where he places the exams in a pile on top.

EXAMINER
If your paper has been
collected, you may go.

All the students move away from their desks.

Madeline gets up from her desk and moves towards the door.

She joins the queue of other students and a young MAN comes up beside her, holding his bag over his shoulder.

He is slender built with keen blue eyes.

ADAM
Hey, Madeline.

MADELINE
Adam.

ADAM
That was some exam, huh?
(A Beat)
I'm not sure I passed.

INT.CAMPUS CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Adam manages to regain Madeline's side in the CROWD.

ADAM
How do you think you did?

MADELINE
Pretty well.

ADAM
Of course. You have always
been the smartest in class.

MADELINE
Thank you, Adam.

ADAM
Um, what are you doing
tonight?

MADELINE
I have plans with my brother.

ADAM
Oh, that's nice. How is Ben?

MADELINE
Good, thanks.

ADAM
I hear he's going to England.

MADELINE
Yes.

ADAM
He's a great guy. Wish him
luck for me.

MADELINE
I'll do that. Thanks.

Madeline passes through the door.

EXT.CAMPUS GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Madeline walks across the lawn towards the road and a sportily built, dark-haired young MAN who is leaning on the bonnet of a red Corsa Chill.

MADELINE
I thought mom was picking me
up.

BEN

Well, I can leave if you want?

MADELINE

Would you?

BEN

Of course.

The young man gets up and opens the driver's door as if to leave. He suddenly gives Madeline a great hug before taking her bag and putting it on the back seat.

MADELINE

I worry about you, Ben.

BEN

How did the exam go?

Ben walks round to the passenger door.

MADELINE

It wasn't as bad as I thought.

Both Madeline and her brother climb into the car.

INT.BEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Madeline are sitting in the car.

BEN

Good. How about some coffee at my place before mom picks you up?

MADELINE

Is Stuart there?

BEN

No.

MADELINE

Then I'd love some.

INT.BEN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Madeline sits down on the bed and looks around the room covered in clothes and books.

She leans back on her hands when she feels the satin under her hand and picks up the pair of men's satin boxers with the Tasmanian Devil printed on them.

MADELINE

I can't believe you still have these.

Ben is busy folding clothes beside her on the bed.

MADELINE

Didn't mom give these to you
on your eighteenth?

BEN

Was it that long ago?

MADELINE

I always wanted them for
myself, you know?

BEN

Don't you have enough men's
boxers?

MADELINE

A woman can never have
enough men's boxers.

Ben laughs and snatches the boxers from her.

BEN

I thought it was that women
can never have enough men.

MADELINE

Please. What would I do with
a man?

BEN

What wouldn't you do? Which
reminds me.

He pauses on purpose.

MADELINE

Hello? Has senility set in
already?

BEN

Huh?

MADELINE

You were saying?

BEN

Oooooohhh, didn't I say it
already?

MADELINE

Ben!

He laughs, trying to slap her across the face with one of his socks.

She moves back rapidly and he misses.

BEN

You know that guy who's
moving in with Stu now that
(CONT'D)

I'm moving out?

MADELINE

No.

BEN

Well, he's quite interested in you.

MADELINE

And how can that be? Seeing that he hasn't even met me?

BEN

I told him about you.

MADELINE

Why would you do that? Are you trying to ruin my plans for spinsterhood?

BEN

He was looking through my photo album when he saw pictures of you and wanted to know who you were - so I told him.

MADELINE

And what else did you say?

BEN

That you were a fifth year medical student who loves Enya and hockey.

MADELINE

What don't you understand about this?

(A Beat)

Ben, please don't try to set me up with anyone?

BEN

I'm not trying to set you up. I was just answering his questions politely.

MADELINE

Whatever. I can't believe you're leaving tomorrow. Why London anyway?

BEN

Because I can make a lot of money in a year. Much more than I could make here. Don't you want to go to London?

MADELINE

London? No. Hawaii? Yes.

Ben zips up his bag.

BEN

Only one more to go.

He picks up the final bag lying empty on the floor and throws it onto the bed.

He packs his toiletries and underwear and Madeline throws the Tasmanian Devil boxers inside.

BEN

So, how do you think you did
in your exams?

MADELINE

The usual.

BEN

Oh, so, brilliantly then?

MADELINE

I worked hard, Ben.

BEN

I know. I'm not mocking you.
I'm proud of you. We'll
finally have a doctor in the
house so you won't have to
marry one.

MADELINE

Which is the sole reason for
me wanting to become a
doctor.

BEN

Of course! Hand me those
socks?

Madeline reaches behind her and gives him the socks on the bed behind her.

BEN

Kate's coming with tonight,
isn't she?

MADELINE

Ja.

BEN

Well, ask her about Jack.

MADELINE

Who's Jack?

BEN

The new guy who likes you.

MADELINE

Why would she know about Jack?

BEN

Because she met him at Varsity and just, by the way, she's very impressed with him.

MADELINE

Good for her. You should set her up with him.

BEN

He doesn't like her, Maddy.

MADELINE

Pig!

BEN

I'm telling you now, Maddy, he's very interested in you.

MADELINE

How can that be? He doesn't know that much about me.

BEN

Oh, he knows enough.

MADELINE

What is that supposed to mean?

BEN

Let's just say I told him a few things about you that I don't tell other people and it's only because he's such a great guy. He really is, Maddy. He's very decent and has only had one relationship, a nine month one where he decided she wasn't the right girl for him so he ended it.

MADELINE

Sounds wonderful. Really special.

BEN

That was in high school, Maddy. He's been single since so he's not one of those hop-from-one-relationship-to-the-next guys.

MADELINE

I believe you. Now, are you coming for supper tonight?

BEN

No. I'll have one last meal with my pals.

MADELINE

The Last Supper. How poetic! What time will you pick us up?

BEN

At about nine. Oh, and I'll be in Stu's car.

MADELINE

Don't tell me he's coming.

BEN

Okay, I won't.

MADELINE

He's coming? Just great. Anyone else I should know about?

BEN

Not yet.

MADELINE

Oh, so there is someone else?

BEN

There'll be plenty of other people we know at Crowded but no one else coming with us.

MADELINE

You're up to something, Benny Boy. I can tell. I'm just warning you not to try set me up because it will only blow up in your face.

BEN

Would I ever? Besides, who am I to destroy your dreams of spinsterhood?

MADELINE

Exactly! Just don't forget that, okay?

BEN

I never will, I promise. Now go away before I throw you out.

MADELINE

Fine.

Madeline stands.

MADELINE

Who wants your company
anyway?

She gives Ben a quick hug and then leaves the room with a smile.

MADELINE

See you later.

INT. THOMPSON'S HOUSE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The doorbell rings and Madeline jogs down the corridor to open the door.

Standing outside with a bag slung over her shoulder is a young, fair-haired and slim WOMAN.

MADELINE

Hi, Kate.
(Re the large bag the woman is carrying)
Did you bring enough stuff?

She admits the woman and closes the door behind her.

MADELINE

You do know it's only for
tonight, right?

KATE

To be honest, I don't know if
I've got enough. I haven't a
clue what to wear.

MADELINE

You and your clothes.

The two of them head off along the corridor when Madeline's mother, MRS. THOMPSON, passes them with a basketful of clean washing.

MRS. THOMPSON

Hello, Kate.

KATE

Hi, Mrs. Thompson.

MRS. THOMPSON

How are you?

KATE

Well, and you?

MRS. THOMPSON

Good, thank you. Are you two
going out tonight?

MADELINE

Yip.

MRS. THOMPSON

Going in your car, Maddy?

MADELINE

Nope. Ben and Stuart are picking us up?

MRS. THOMPSON

Oh, do you think they'll be staying for dinner?

MADELINE

I doubt it, ma. What's for supper anyway?

MRS. THOMPSON

Fish and chips.

MADELINE AND KATE

Slim food.

The girls laugh and go to Madeline's room, closing the door behind them.

INT.MADELINE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kate drops her bag onto the floor and flops down on the bed.

KATE

God, I'm glad exams are over.

MADELINE

Me too.

KATE

How do you think you did?

MADELINE

I'm sure I passed. And you?

KATE

Don't know and right now I don't care.

Madeline sits next to Kate and unzips Kate's bag.

KATE

Do you think Jack will be there tonight?

MADELINE

Jack?

KATE

You don't know Jack?

MADELINE

No, but I know how to save a

(CONT'D)
person's life. Is that as
important as knowing Jack?

KATE
Jack's your brother's new
roommate. And he is oh so
fine.

MADELINE
And I bet he knows it too.

KATE
No, he's not like that. He's
very nice. Well-brought up
and friendly and kind and ...
Very dreamy.

Madeline pulls out a white top from Kate's bag.

MADELINE
This is nice. What pants did
you bring?

KATE
My black ones.

MADELINE
You don't want to look like a
waitress. Why don't you
borrow my red ones if I can
wear your black ones with my
red shirt?

KATE
I feel funny in red pants.
Besides yours are too tight
for me.

MADELINE
Okay, can I wear your white
shirt then and you can wear
my red one?

KATE
Sure. Do I look okay in red?

MADELINE
Of course. You can wear my
red lipstick if you want.

KATE
And look like I should be
standing on a street corner?
I don't think so.

Kate unpacks her makeup.

KATE
What time is your brother

(CONT'D)
picking us up?

MADELINE

Nine.

EXT.THOMPSON'S GARDEN - LATER

Ben closes the door to the house.

BEN

Bye mom!

Ben walks with Madeline and Kate to a red Corsa Chill parked in the street.

BEN

You ladies are looking lovely tonight.

KATE

Thanks. Who's in the car?

BEN

Stu.

KATE

Eeagh!

BEN

He's not that bad. Just a little confused over the meaning of personal hygiene.

Ben opens the gate for the girls and closes it after them as they walk to the car.

EXT.STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ben opens the door for Kate and Madeline to climb into the back and then climbs into the driver's seat.

INT.BEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

STUART is sitting in the passenger seat. He is a dark-haired, greasy-looking thirty-something.

He has chest and back hair growing up from under his t-shirt and a small pony tail greased into a hair band.

He is always chewing gum and always smoothing his hair with his right hand. He does this so often, in fact, that he has a permanent bluish-green stain from the hair gel on his hand.

STUART

Hey babes!

MADELINE

Will you accept a groan in place of a greeting?

STUART
Always the bitch, Maddy.

MADELINE
Well, you know the reason.

Ben starts the car.

STUART
(To Ben)
You know, I don't think I
know of anyone who carries a
grudge this long.
(To Madeline)
How long has it been?

MADELINE
Ten years, three months and
seventeen days.

STUART
You're psycho.

Ben smiles at his sister and steers the car onto the road.

Kate sits forward between the seats.

KATE
Um, Ben.

BEN
Yes, Kate.

KATE
Is Jack coming out tonight?

BEN
He said he would be.

STUART
So we like Jack, do we?

Kate leans back.

STUART
No need to be shy, Katie.
Just a word of advice. Jack's
very much a rich, snobby type
of guy. I mean, he appears
nice and all, but really, who
can be that nice all the
time? He's a guy and all
guys only want one thing.

MADELINE
In your case, you don't want
what you need, Stu.

STUART
Oh and what's that?

MADELINE

A lobotomy.

STUART

Is that a prescription, Doc?

MADELINE

You have got to be the most obnoxious pig alive. And just because you have a one track mind, doesn't mean every other guy does too.

STUART

Ja, like you know so much about men and relationships. When was the last time you had a boyfriend, Ice Bitch?

MADELINE

Unlike other people, I don't want a boyfriend because it's the latest fashion accessory.

STUART

Right. You're looking for Mr. Perfect.

MADELINE

Well, I'm not looking for the other kind. You should know which kind I'm talking about. After all, you're the poster-boy for the Mr. Wrongs of the world.

STUART

(To Ben)

Can't you teach your sister to shut up?

MADELINE

Can't you take a bath?

STUART

Hey, shut up!

MADELINE

Great comeback there, Stu. Definitely gotta write that one down.

BEN

Okay, I think that's enough for tonight. Can we all just be civil until we reach Crowded and everyone can go their separate ways. Deal?

Madeline and Stuart fall silent.

INT.CROWDED HOUSE NIGHT CLUB - LATER

The club is pounding with music and flashing lights when they arrive at the entrance and filled with PEOPLE.

Ben, Stuart, Madeline and Kate pay the two BOUNCERS to get in and go inside, each receiving an empty glass.

STUART

I still don't see why guys
pay more than girls to get
in.

MADELINE

It's a gentlemanly thing to
do.

STUART

A what?

MADELINE

If you don't understand
simple English, I really
can't talk to you.

Madeline and Kate follow Ben.

When Ben sees his friends, he throws up his arms.

BEN

Hey!

He approaches two young MEN and claps one on the back.

BEN

Maddy, Kate, I want you to
meet Jack and Brett.

Ben indicates Jack first and then Brett, an average-looking young man with red hair.

BEN

Guys, this is my sister
Madeline and her friend,
Kate. And of course you know
Stu.

JACK

Hey Stu.

BRETT

Hi.

JACK

(To Madeline)

So you're Ben's little
sister?

MADELINE

Yes. It's nice to meet you,
um ...

(To Kate)

Should we get some drinks?

JACK

I'll get them. What do you
want?

MADELINE

Kate?

KATE

Oh, I'll have a, um, what are
you having, Maddy?

MADELINE

I'd like a vodka and orange
juice, please?

KATE

Same for me, thanks.

MADELINE

Single tot.

JACK

Okay, two vodka and orange
juices coming up.

Stuart hangs his arm over Jack's shoulders.

STUART

Getting anything for the rest
of us?

JACK

Sure, what would you like?

STUART

Castle.

BEN

Oh, you don't have to get for
all of us. You don't even
have to get for my sister.

MADELINE

Cute, Ben.

BEN

I'll come with you, Jack.

(To Brett)

Brett, you want anything?

BRETT

Brandy and coke.

BEN

Okay.

Ben walks off with Jack.

As soon as they leave, Madeline grabs Kate's hand.

MADELINE

Let's go dance.

KATE

But our drinks?

MADELINE

We'll see them come back.

Madeline leads Kate to the dance floor where they start dancing.

Jack and Ben wait at the bar when a BAR LADY comes up to them.

JACK

Two vodka and orange juices,
one Castle, one brandy and
Coke and two Heineken's,
please?

Ben is looking about the club at the teenagers there.

BEN

There are more and more
school kids coming out.

JACK

Makes you wonder what they
tell their parents?

BEN

Probably the truth. Parents
these days don't seem to give
a damn.

JACK

So, you're going to England
next week.

BEN

Ja. A little nervous. First
time out of the country and
all.

JACK

How long you planning on
staying?

BEN

Not sure yet. I'll see if I
like it and if I can get a
job.

JACK
Apparently it's not that hard
to get one. Most Brits these
days aren't well educated.

BEN
And we're supposed to be the
third-world country.

The bar lady comes back with their drinks and Jack hands her money.

JACK
You can keep the change.

Jack and Ben pick up the drinks and start pushing their way through the crowd.

JACK
Madeline's very pretty.

BEN
Sorry?

JACK
Your sister, Madeline, she's
very pretty.

BEN
Oh, ja. She's a little anti-
men at the moment.

JACK
Oh? Why?

BEN
I don't know. She's a little
odd. Her friend Kate likes
you, though.

JACK
Ja, she's nice.

The two men reach Stuart and Brett and start handing out the drinks.

Kate and Madeline are dancing.

KATE
So?

MADELINE
So what?

KATE
What do you think of him?

MADELINE
Who, Jack?

KATE
Ja.

MADELINE

He's quite nice.

KATE

Quite nice! He's gorgeous!

(A Beat)

Do you think he likes me?

MADELINE

Katie, he doesn't really know you. Give the guy a break.

He's just met you.

KATE

I know but still. Do I look pretty tonight?

MADELINE

You look gorgeous!

KATE

I hope Jack thinks so.

MADELINE

Why don't you forget what Jack will think and just be yourself? If you relax and aren't so nervous, you'll probably find you two will talk more easily. And remember, he's not a god, just a guy.

KATE

That's a matter of opinion.

MADELINE

That was fast.

KATE

What?

MADELINE

They're back.

Kate follows Madeline from the dance floor back towards the table where the guys are waiting with their drinks.

BEN

Where the girls?

Madeline and Kate arrive just then.

MADELINE

Here we are.

Jack and Ben hand the drinks to the girls.

MADELINE

Thanks.

KATE

Thank you.

JACK

Should we get a table?

STUART

You guys can. I see someone
I want.

Stuart leaves them and moves off through the crowd.

Madeline follows Kate and the men to a table where Jack fetches a chair from the table beside them.

JACK

So what do you do, Madeline?

MADELINE

I'm studying.

JACK

Oh. What, may I ask?

MADELINE

Medicine. I'm studying to be
a surgeon.

JACK

Wow. That must be a lot of
work. What surgeon do you
want to be?

MADELINE

Not quite sure. I was
thinking of working in the ER
or maybe as a neuro-surgeon.

JACK

That's impressive.

MADELINE

Well, it's not as creative as
what Kate's studying.

JACK

Oh? What are you studying,
Kate?

KATE

Um, interior decorating.

JACK

That's a great job. Maybe
you can do my hotel one day?

KATE

You own a hotel?

JACK

Not yet. But I will. I'm studying the hospitality industry.

MADELINE

What do you do, Brett?

BRETT

I work at a Surf shop.

MADELINE

Which one?

BRETT

The one at Victoria Centre.

MADELINE

Oh. Do they have nice bikinis and baggies there?

BRETT

Ja.

MADELINE

Well, now that summer's here I know where to go shopping.

BRETT

Do you surf?

MADELINE

No. Do you?

BRETT

When I get the chance. If you wanna learn, though, ask Jack to teach you.

MADELINE

(To Jack)

You surf?

JACK

Only on weekends. I could teach you, if you want?

MADELINE

Um, maybe but you know Kate's really the one who loves to surf and stuff. Don't you, Kate?

KATE

Um, sure.

There is a moment's uncomfortable silence.

MADELINE

I'm going to the bathroom.

(CONT'D)
You coming, Kate?

KATE
Okay.

Madeline and Kate leave the table and walk to the bathroom where FOUR OTHER GIRLS are waiting their turn.

MADELINE
What is wrong with you?

KATE
What are you talking about?

MADELINE
You're not talking.
Specifically to Jack, the guy
you like, remember?

KATE
Well, I can barely get a word
in, what with you and he
talking.

MADELINE
Haven't you noticed me trying
to always steer the
conversation to you? But I
can only do so much.

KATE
Thanks a lot.

MADELINE
I'm trying to help.

KATE
I'm not a charity case,
Maddy.

MADELINE
Then stop acting like you
are. Now this is the plan.
I'm going to get Ben to come
dance with me and you will
stay with Jack and talk.
Okay?

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

They move into the bathroom.

KATE
You're going to leave me?

MADELINE
With Jack, yes. Isn't that
the idea, for you two to be
alone?

KATE

I'm a little shy.

MADELINE

Pretend you're talking to Ben.

KATE

Ja, 'cause I can easily put Ben in Jack's place.

MADELINE

What's that supposed to mean?

KATE

Nothing. It's just Ben's Ben. He's always been there. He's like my brother. Jack's like... Well, Ben's like Matt Damon and Jack's like Brad Pitt. I mean it's your classic case of Boy-next-door and Super-hot dude.

MADELINE

Right. Well, try and see Jack as Matt, okay?

KATE

Not really.

A stall door opens and a GIRL comes out.

Another GIRL steps up to Madeline and Kate.

GIRL

You going?

MADELINE

No, go ahead.

(To Kate)

Katie, if you like this guy and you want him to like you, you're going to have to talk to him.

KATE

I know. I know.

MADELINE

Okay, then. You ready?

Kate nods and Madeline leads her out of the bathroom.

INT.CROWDED HOUSE NIGHT CLUB - LATER

Madeline is dancing with Ben and Brett while Kate and Jack sit talking at a

table.

MADELINE
 (To Ben)
 I'm going to the bathroom.

Madeline leaves the dance floor.

INT.BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Madeline enters the girls' bathroom.

She goes into a stall and closes the door.

She wipes the toilet seat with toilet paper before sitting down on the toilet and holds her head in her hands.

MADELINE
 (To herself)
 Another hour, Maddy.

The door to the stall alongside her stall suddenly slams shut and Madeline hears a girl gagging.

Suddenly something hits the wall and vomit starts dripping on the floor.

Madeline reaches for the toilet paper.

She flushes the toilet and opens the stall door.

As she stands washing her hands at the sink, she looks at herself in the mirror and scowls.

She dries her hands under the hot air dryer.

INT.CROWDED HOUSE NIGHT CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Madeline leaves the bathroom and walks straight into Jack.

MADELINE
 Jack!

JACK
 Hi.

MADELINE
 Hi.
 (A Beat)
 Where's Kate?

JACK
 She's on the dance floor. I actually wanted to speak to you.

MADELINE
 About Kate?

JACK
 No. About you.

MADELINE

Um, Jack, I'm sure you're a great guy, it's just that I really don't want to be dating at the moment. I like being single and besides, Kate likes you.

JACK

And I like you.

MADELINE

That's a problem.

JACK

I have nothing against Kate. She's really nice but I've heard a lot about you from your brother and I want to get to know you better. If you don't want a boyfriend, that's fine. But could we start as friends?

MADELINE

Of course. Um, why was my brother talking about me?

JACK

'Cos I saw photos of you and I wanted to know more about the girl with the cute smile and gorgeous eyes.

MADELINE

Are you flirting with me?

JACK

Just telling you what I see when I look at you.

MADELINE

Friends, Jack. Friends.

JACK

Yes, I know but you have to know something and I may not have the courage to tell you this any other time soon but I saw your picture and I swear I thought I knew who you were.

(A Beat)

I know you won't believe me because this sounds like one of the pickup lines doing the rounds at the moment but I know I have seen you before and I've been racking

(CONT'D)
 my brains for the past
 couple of weeks since I saw
 your photograph and I think
 I saw you in a dream.

TWO GIRLS walk past them and Jack moves closer to Madeline, until her back is against the wall.

JACK

It doesn't really matter if
 I did because I'm seeing you
 in my dreams now.

(A Beat)

Madeline, we're going to end
 up being civil and nice to
 each other but I'm way too
 attracted to you to be your
 friend. And I know that
 statement has probably
 alienated you from me
 forever but I can't keep a
 truth like that inside. I
 owe it to myself and to you
 to let you know. So far,
 everything I know about you
 is everything I've been
 looking for.

MADELINE

You have to stop talking.

JACK

I'm not sure where we go
 from here but I will not
 pursue you and will not make
 you feel this uncomfortable
 again and I will abide by
 any wishes you have. I just
 don't want to go the rest of
 my life without having you
 in it, even if you're only a
 small part in it.

MADELINE

I think I am not sober
 enough for this
 conversation. Let's go
 dance.

Jack follows her through the crowd.

When Madeline and Jack join the others on the dance floor, Kate pulls Madeline aside.

KATE

What did he say to you?

MADELINE

Nothing much. He just wanted

(CON'T)
to know where I was.

KATE
I knew it.

MADELINE
Knew what?

KATE
He likes you.

MADELINE
He likes you too.

KATE
So he told you he likes you?

MADELINE
Kate, calm down. He's a
guy. They like all girls.

KATE
No. He likes you more than
me.

MADELINE
Well, I don't like him. In
that way. And I told him
and he's fine with that.

KATE
No one ever likes me.

MADELINE
You're not going to cry, are
you?

Kate turns away and covers her eyes.

MADELINE
Ah, sweetie, you always do
this when you're tired and
drunk.

KATE
I know, but I can't help it.

MADELINE
Do you want to go home now?

Kate nods.

MADELINE
Okay, let's go home.

Madeline starts leading Kate to Ben and the guys when Kate stops.

KATE
Let me get freshened up.

(CONT'D)
I'll meet you back here.

MADELINE
Okay.

Madeline nods.

MADELINE
(To Ben)
Where's Stu?

BEN
Gone home with some girl,
apparently. Why?

MADELINE
Oh, great.

BEN
What's up?

MADELINE
Kate and I want to go now.

BEN
Okay, I'll see what I can
organise. Where's she?

MADELINE
Bathroom.

Ben nods and walks over to Jack where they talk MOS.

They call Brett into the conversation.

Brett stumbles and Jack catches him.

Ben returns.

BEN
Brett can give us a lift.

MADELINE
Are you sure? Because Kate
and I have to go to Drummond?

BEN
He says it's fine.

Brett is swaying unevenly to the beat of the music.

MADELINE
Is he okay to drive?

Ben looks back at Brett and shrugs.

BEN
It's either Brett or five in
the morning when mom gets up.

MADELINE

Kate's in quite a state over
this Jack thing.

BEN

What Jack thing?

MADELINE

Well, she likes Jack and
apparently he likes me.
Besides, she's a little tipsy
and I'm not feeling so lucid
myself.

BEN

God, you remember the word
'lucid'. Maddy, you're still
sober.

Kate arrives back from the bathroom.

KATE

So?

MADELINE

We have a ride.

EXT.PARKING LOT - LATER

Jack, Ben, Kate and Madeline stand hunched against the cold while Brett
fumbles with his keys alongside his white Fiat Uno in the parking lot outside
of Da Vinci nightclub.

MADELINE

Are you sure you're okay to
drive, Brett?

Brett gives a small laugh before opening the car door.

He unlocks the passenger door behind the driver's door.

BRETT

Sure. I probably drive
better drunk than I do sober.

BEN

If you're drunk, I can always
drive.

BRETT

I'm fine. Geez, you people
sound like my parents.

They all climb into the car.

INT.BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack gets into the front seat and does up his safety belt.

Madeline sits behind Brett with Ben in the middle and Kate on the end.

KATE

Hey, what's wrong with this door?

Kate tries to close the door but finds that it won't latch closed.

BRETT

Oh, ja, it's a little loose. You have to lock it or it doesn't close. Just lock it and hold the handle just in case. I've had the damn thing open when I'm on the highway.

BEN

I'll sit there, Kate. You sit in the middle.

KATE

Thanks.

She climbs from the car and she and Ben swap places.

Ben slams the door closed, locks it and holds onto the handle.

Brett starts the car and the radio blasts out loudly.

BRETT

Fuck!

He turns down the volume.

KATE

What's wrong, Maddy?

MADELINE

I'm not happy with him driving.

BRETT

I'll be fine. Chicks!

EXT. PIETERMARITZ STREET - CONTINUOUS

Brett pulls out of the parking lot and turns into Pietermaritz Street and stops at the robots.

INT. BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

JACK

(To Brett)

We're going to Drummond, Brett.

Brett stares at him blankly.

JACK

So, we turn left towards

(CONT'D)
Durban.

Brett steers the car into the left turning lane and behind them they hear a car hoot and screech to a halt.

JACK
Jesus, Brett! Are you sure
you're okay to drive? I
mean, I can drive if you
want.

BRETT
Would you stop fucking asking
me if I'm okay? It's my God-
damned car. I'll drive.
Jesus Christ!

EXT. PIETERMARITZ STREET - CONTINUOUS

The robot turns green and Brett pulls off, wheels spinning round the corner.

INT. BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Madeline and Kate look for backseat seatbelts and find none.

EXT. N3 HIGHWAY - LATER

They drive along the N3 highway out of Pietermaritzburg in the Durban direction.

INT. BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack talks MOS with Brett and the girls start to relax slightly in the backseat.

EXT. HAMMARSDALE TURN OFF - LATER

Brett takes the Hammarsdale turn off from the highway and slows at the yield sign.

INT. BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kate leans forward between the two front seats.

KATE
(To Brett)
You turn left here and then
right almost at once.
I'll...

Brett pulls off and Kate falls back against the chair and Ben and Kate fall onto Madeline.

JACK
Take it easy, Brett.

BRETT
I take this right?

KATE

Yes.

EXT.HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Brett takes the tight corner fast and has to counteract quickly to avoid hitting the pavement.

INT.BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack is gripping the dash board.

JACK

Slow down, Brett.

Brett blinks frequently and the Uno speeds rather quickly along the winding road, moving from the left side of the road, to the right and back again.

MADELINE

Brett, maybe you should pull over.

BRETT

I'm fine.

MADELINE

I know, but these roads are unfamiliar to you.

BRETT

Would you shut up? Jesus, you've been telling me how to drive since we left town.

JACK

We're just concerned, Brett. But if you've got it...

BRETT

I got it.

Brett takes a corner fast and the Uno veers onto the right side of the road.

MADELINE

Brett, you're on the wrong side of the road.

BRETT

Would you shut up! I don't need a fucking back seat driver.

Just then, lights appear round the corner just ahead of them.

JACK

Brett, look out!

EXT.HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Brett swerves dramatically to the left to get off the right hand side of the

road and miss the vehicle coming at them.

The other vehicle goes right and the Uno hits the side of the other vehicle.

INT.BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Everyone jolts forward.

EXT.HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Uno slides over the one side of the other vehicle's bonnet and turns in mid air onto its left side.

INT.BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

All is suddenly cast in darkness with the vehicle's lights spiralling away into sky and tar and bank.

Kate screams when she feels herself falling towards the left door, which is hanging open.

Ben is missing.

EXT.HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Uno lands on its left side on the tar and slides diagonally across the left lane.

There is an awful grating sound of metal against the tar.

INT.BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

A roaring nightmare of darkness and flashes of light and a screaming metal creature sliding along the tar road, tearing pieces off its side as it goes.

EXT.HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Uno slides off the road and down an embankment where it tips onto its nose before falling back onto its left side.

It finally stops.

INT.BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car interior is cast in darkness.

JACK
Is everyone alright?

There is silence and Jack struggles to loosen his seatbelt.

He looks across at Brett, who is conscious but dazed, a bleeding gash on his forehead where he has hit the steering wheel.

JACK
Is everyone alright?

Jack undoes his seatbelt and looks into the back seat.

JACK

Madeline?

Madeline blinks a couple of times at him and then immediately turns to Kate.

MADELINE

Kate, Kate! Are you
alright?

Madeline searches for her friend in the darkness.

Kate is lying on the ground inside the car, the left back door missing.

Kate groans slightly and tries to move as Madeline moves towards her.

As Kate regains consciousness, she cries out in pain and Madeline grabs her hand.

MADELINE

Kate, where are you hurt?

JACK

What's wrong with her?

MADELINE

We have to get out of this
car.

Madeline tries to lift Kate.

JACK

I'll help.

Jack climbs into the back seat and slips his arms under Kate's.

Kate starts crying out in pain again and Madeline puts a hand on Jack's shoulder.

MADELINE

Wait! Kate, can you feel
your legs?

KATE

Yes.

MADELINE

Where do you feel pain?

KATE

I don't know.

Kate starts crying again and Madeline moves between Jack and Kate and searches Kate's body until she finds blood oozing from a wound on her side where a piece of root has penetrated her.

MADELINE

Kate, listen to me. We have
to get you out of the car.
Your side's been hurt but I
don't think it's anything

(CONT'D)
serious. This is going to
hurt but you have to be
brave and you have to be
strong. Okay?

KATE

It hurts!

MADELINE

I know but it won't be for
too much longer. I'm going
to help you. Jack, can you
get her out of here?

JACK

Sure.

Jack slips his arms under Kate's again and starts manhandling her upwards.

Kate cries from the pain and Madeline and Jack manage to get her onto her feet.

Jack winds down the window of the door on Madeline's side above them and hauls himself up through it.

He kneels on the side of the car, reaches back down inside and Madeline helps Kate to him.

Jack takes Kate's arms and pulls her upwards.

She cries in agony and as she is pulled through the window, Madeline sees the piece of root lodged in her side and the blood on her clothes.

EXT. EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Madeline pushes Kate up and Jack slides from the car, reaching up for Kate, who slips into his arms and he carries her away from the car and lays her in the grass.

JACK

Madeline?

INT. BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside, Madeline notices Brett and she crawls over to him and places a hand on his shoulder.

MADELINE

Are you okay?

He looks ahead dazedly.

MADELINE

Brett! Are you okay?

He turns slowly to look at her, his eyes wide and his face pale.

MADELINE

We have to get out the car.

EXT. EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jack leaves Kate and climbs back up onto the car.

He looks in through the window and sees Madeline and Brett.

JACK
Madeline, is everything
okay?

MADELINE
Brett's in shock. Can you
help me get him out?

JACK
Sure. Wind down his window.

INT. BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Madeline reaches across Brett and winds down his window.

EXT. EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jack maneuvers himself into position and reaches inside for Brett.

Madeline pushes and Jack pulls until they drag Brett free.

Jack helps Brett off the car and leads him to Kate, where he lowers him to the ground.

He looks back but still doesn't see Madeline emerging from the vehicle.

JACK
Madeline?

He returns to the car and climbs onto it once again.

MADELINE
Take these.

Madeline holds out a bottle of Vodka, a toilet roll, a lighter and a dirty cloth.

Jack takes them from her and lays them beside him to reach back down for Madeline but she is already pulling herself through the window.

They both climb down from the car and Madeline takes the Vodka and toilet paper from him.

MADELINE
Have you found Ben? His
door is completely missing.
I think he may have fallen
out.

JACK
I'll check on the road.

MADELINE
And the other driver. We
need to check on him.

JACK
Okay. You can manage here?

MADELINE
Yes, thanks.

Jack jogs up the embankment to the road and Madeline kneels beside Kate, who is shivering uncontrollably, her face as white as a sheet.

MADELINE
Hey, Kate. It's going to be
alright.

KATE
I'm scared.

MADELINE
I know.
(A Beat)
You ready?

Kate nods.

Madeline lifts Kate's tattered shirt up where she can see the wound better.

All of Kate's skin on her left side is stripped away, ground off from the tar.

The flesh is raw and bloody and covered in dirt.

Wedged at an angle through her side and onto her back is a piece of wood - almost like the root of a tree or bush.

Kate tries to see what Madeline can see but she can't lift her head far enough to see her side.

KATE
Is it bad?

MADELINE
I've seen worse.

Madeline soaks the filthy cloth with Vodka and rubs a bit onto Kate's side.

Kate screams and squirms away from Madeline.

KATE
What are you doing?

MADELINE
Kate, I have to clean this.
You have a piece of wood in
your side. I need to clean
away the sand and dirt so
that I can see it clearly
enough to remove it if I
can.

KATE

What? I have a root in my side?

MADELINE

You're going to be fine. I won't let you die. But you have to lie as still as possible and I know this is going to hurt but if I don't do this, things could get worse for you.

KATE

Why are you saying these things to me?

MADELINE

Because it's the truth.

KATE

But you're so cruel. I'm your friend.

MADELINE

Yes, you are. But I can't be your friend while I do this. I need to concentrate on your injuries without getting emotional about it. Do you understand?

Kate nods.

MADELINE

Okay.

Madeline pours some more Vodka onto the cloth and wipes at the dirt to loosen it.

She pours Vodka over the skin and wound, washing the dirt away, revealing the raw meat underneath and the entry and exit points of the root.

Madeline looks closely at the wound in the dark, trying to discern what organs it has passed through.

She sits back on her haunches.

KATE

What?

MADELINE

I can't remove the root.

KATE

Why not?

MADELINE

I'm hoping that it missed

(CONT'D)
all your organs and it looks
like it did but if it
didn't, I could kill you by
removing it.

KATE

What?

MADELINE

I'm going to leave it where
it is for the time being.
And we're going to keep an
eye on you. If your stomach
starts swelling then you
have internal bleeding and
that's a problem. But for
now we don't need to panic
and I'll wrap this tightly
so the root doesn't move and
when the ambulance gets here
then you'll be fine. We'll
take you to the hospital and
run a scan and look at your
injury in the light and then
we can operate.

KATE

So, I'm going to be fine?

MADELINE

So far, I think so.

Kate lies back in relief, still trembling from shock.

Madeline tears a piece of cloth from her own shirt and wraps it about Kate's midriff, holding the root securely in place.

Madeline rolls Kate over onto her uninjured side and bends her one leg to place her in the recovery position.

Madeline pulls off her jacket and covers Kate with it.

She tries to tuck her in as much as possible and looks at Kate's pupils.

MADELINE

You drank a lot tonight.

Madeline gets up and runs back to the car.

She grabs the top and pulls herself onto the side of the car.

INT.BRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Madeline drops back inside the Uno and rummages around in the front seat until she finds Jack's jacket.

EXT.EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

She pulls herself back up out of the car and returns to Kate.

MADELINE

Here.

She lifts Kate's head and puts the jacket under it.

Madeline looks up the embankment to the road where Jack has disappeared a little while ago.

She turns to Brett, who is sitting hunched over in the grass alongside Kate.

MADELINE

Brett, wait here with her.

Brett stares blankly back at Madeline.

MADELINE

Brett?

She notices the bleeding gash on his forehead and picks up the dirty cloth and Vodka bottle.

She moves towards him and pours some Vodka onto the cloth.

She gently wipes his forehead with the cloth.

Fresh blood runs from the wound.

Madeline takes Brett's hand and pushes the cloth into it.

She lifts his hand with the cloth against his wound and presses it down on the bleeding.

MADELINE

Keep this in place, Brett.

Madeline looks at him for a while to make sure his hand is going to stay in place.

She gets up and goes to find Jack.

As she approaches the bank, Jack appears at the top of the bank and comes quickly down it towards her.

MADELINE

Did you find him?

Jack remains silent.

MADELINE

Did you find him, Jack?

When he fails to answer, Madeline pushes past him but he grabs her and tries to stop her.

She wrestles him and finally manages to break free.

She runs up the embankment onto the road.

EXT.HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The first thing Madeline sees is the other vehicle ploughed headlong into the bank on the other side of the road.

Her gaze sweeps back across the road, taking in the horrific metal scrapings gouged into the tar as the Uno had skid across it.

Then she sees Ben.

Jack comes up behind her.

She slowly walks towards Ben.

As she reaches him, her legs give way and she drops to the road.

Ben's torso is lying face down on the road, his head to one side, his right arm stretched before him.

His spine has been snapped near the bottom and his legs are twisted almost right round.

His broken left arm lies sprawled and torn on the tar.

His clothes and skin have been scraped from his body by the car that had slid over and crushed him.

The force of the car landing on him has flattened his body and his internal organs have burst, spewing their contents out of the sides of his body.

Blood and fluids are still leaking out of his ears, nose and mouth.

His eyes are pushed out from their sockets.

In his right hand is the door handle of the Uno.

Madeline breaks into silent tears, her body shaking uncontrollably.

Still, she can't take her eyes off the crushed corpse of her brother.

Jack lowers himself beside her and takes her in his arms but she pushes him away.

Jack tries to pull her close again but she shoves him off and staggers to her feet, wiping the tears from her face.

JACK

Madeline.

MADELINE

We have to get him off the road. I need to check on the other driver.

She walks to the other vehicle but before she reaches it, she can see the DRIVER is dead.

Madeline approaches the driver's side of the car.

The driver is a middle-aged man dressed in a business suit.

His blue eyes stare out blankly at her.

His windscreen has shattered and glass covers his head.

He hadn't been wearing his seatbelt.

The steering wheel is pushed right into his chest and the front of the car is crumbled against the dashboard.

Madeline wrestles his blazer off.

She looks into the backseat through the back window but sees nothing.

She looks over the driver at the briefcase lying on the passenger seat.

She reaches across the dead man and pulls the case from the car.

She removes the keys from the ignition and unlocks the boot.

She stops when she sees the baby car seat in the back, covered with pale blue material, patterned with ducks and clouds.

She removes the blanket from the boot, slamming it closed.

Madeline walks past Jack standing in the road beside Ben's mangled body and walks down the embankment to where Kate is lying.

EXT. EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Madeline puts the briefcase beside Kate and covers her with the blazer.

Madeline looks up at Brett, still sitting in exactly the same position she had left him in, cloth pushed against his forehead.

Madeline stands and returns to the road.

EXT. HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Madeline walks across the road to Jack and stops beside him.

MADELINE

Let's get him off the road.

JACK

Madeline.

MADELINE

We'll put him in the backseat
of the other car.

Madeline bends over and slips her arms under Ben's.

She looks up expectantly at Jack, who hesitates before lifting the legs.

Together they carry Ben to the other car in silence.

Blood and bile and stomach acid and other fluids drip from Ben's body as they carry him across the road towards the other car.

Jack opens the back door and helps Madeline manoeuvre the body into the back

seat.

INT.DRIVER'S CAR BACKSEAT - CONTINUOUS

Tears stream silently down Madeline's cheeks as she looks upon the face of her brother.

She slides back out and closes the door.

EXT.HAMMARSDALE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Madeline doesn't look at Jack.

MADELINE

We need to call for help.

She turns and walks across the road and Jack follows at a slight distance.

EXT.EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Madeline and Jack walk down the embankment and find Brett looking at the bloody cloth in his hand.

The wound on his head has stopped bleeding.

His gaze follows Madeline to Kate's side where she checks on her friend.

Kate is sleeping quietly.

Jack takes out his cellphone and makes a phonecall. He speaks MOS about the accident and needing an ambulance.

Madeline feels along Kate's head and neck for any bumps or signs of head trauma.

Brett looks at Jack and then behind him towards the road before turning his gaze back to Jack.

BRETT

Where's Ben?

JACK

Ben's dead.

(A Beat)

So is the other driver.

BRETT

Ben's not dead. He can't be.

(A Beat)

You're lying.

Brett stands and starts stumbling towards the road.

Jack intercepts him with a hand on his shoulder.

JACK

Ben's dead, Brett. Let it go.

BRETT

He's not dead!

Brett pushes Jack's hand from him and tries to move forward.

Jack stays him.

JACK
Just let it go, Brett.
There's nothing you can do
now.

BRETT
Let me go!

Brett hits Jack in the chest and punches him in the face.

Jack stumbles back and then suddenly flies at Brett, punching him in the face and knocking him to the ground.

Jack continues to punch Brett's face while he lies on his back.

JACK
You drunken son of a bitch!
You fucking asshole! You
killed him!

Jack continues beating Brett when Madeline grabs him by the shoulders and tries to pull him off.

JACK
You arrogant drunk fuck!

Jack comes loose and stumbles backwards, standing with hands on hips and looking up at the road.

Madeline sits down beside Kate and hugs her knees to her chest.

LATER

As the morning grows lighter with the dawn, two police cars and an ambulance come screaming onto the scene.

NOW

INT.COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE.DAY

The counsellor sits in silence, staring at Jack in disbelief.

COUNSELLOR
She never said anything.
This is why she wouldn't help
Brett.
And what about everyone else?
What has happened to everyone
else? You, for example?
Have you sought counseling?

JACK
I did go to one session
afterwards because it's the
right thing to do. But

(CONT'D)
 afterwards, I never felt the
 need to go anymore and
 neither did my counsellor.

COUNSELLOR
 Why is that?

JACK
 Because shit happens. We
 were thrown into a traumatic
 situation but car accidents
 happen everyday, people die
 in them everyday.

COUNSELLOR
 But how are you doing?

JACK
 I'm okay. Really.

COUNSELLOR
 And what about Kate? How has
 she been?

7 AND A ½ MONTHS EARLIER

INT.ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

The theatre doors open automatically as the gurney is pushed through them,
 Kate lying down, her hand gripping Madeline's.

KATE
 Please don't leave me, Maddy.

INT.THEATRE PREP - CONTINUOUS

Kate is rolled into the theatre prepping area.

MADELINE
 I won't, Katie.

Madeline's hand slips from Kate's as she disappears into the theatre.

INT.HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Madeline sits down on the couch but she can't stay sitting for long.

She stands and paces the corridor restlessly.

She looks at the clock on the wall.

She walks over to one of the windows and looks out into the rising sun.

She reaches into her pockets for some change and finds they are empty.

She walks to the reception area.

INT.RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

A petite blonde RECEPTIONIST is manning the switchboard behind the desk.

MADELINE
Hi. Would I be able to use
your phone for a personal
call?

RECEPTIONIST
Sure. But keep it brief.

MADELINE
Okay, thanks.

Madeline pulls the phone towards her and picks up the receiver.

She dials the number and waits while the phone rings, looking at her watch.

It is quarter to seven in the morning.

A WOMAN picks up on the other side.

MRS. CAMPBELL (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Kate?

MADELINE
No, Mrs. Campbell. It's
Madeline.

MRS. CAMPBELL (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Oh, Madeline. Where are you?
Is Kate there?

MADELINE
Mrs. Campbell, I'm at St.
Anne's Hospital.

There is silence on the other side of the phone.

MADELINE
We were in a car accident.

MRS. CAMPBELL (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Kate?

MADELINE
She's alive but she was
injured and is in surgery
now.

MRS. CAMPBELL (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Oh my God. What happened?

MADELINE
We hit another car and our
car flipped onto its side.
Kate has a piece of root

(CONT'D)
stuck in her side but I'm
pretty certain that it missed
all her vitals. She's just
in a bit of pain.

MRS. CAMPBELL (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Oh, my God.

Mrs. Campbell starts crying.

MRS. CAMPBELL (O.S.)
(Filtered)
I'm on my way, Madeline. What
ward?

MADELINE
We're at casualties.

MRS. CAMPBELL (O.S.)
(Filtered)
I'll be there now.

The line goes dead as Kate's mother hangs up.

Madeline slowly puts the receiver down.

INT.WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Madeline returns to the waiting room.

She sits down and stares at the air in front of her.

LATER

MRS. CAMPBELL rushes into the waiting room still in her tracksuit.

Mrs. Campbell looks an older version of Kate, except with brown eyes and graying hair.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Madeline.

Mrs. Campbell's eyes are swollen from tears and her face white with worry.

She hugs Madeline immediately.

MRS. CAMPBELL
How is she? Where is she?
Have you heard anything?

MADELINE
She's still in surgery. But
she was lucid when she went
in.

At the sound of that word 'lucid', Madeline falls silent.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Are you okay?

Madeline nods.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Was it just the two of you in
the car? Whose car were you
in?

MADELINE
A friend of a friend. He was
driving drunk and hit someone
else.

MRS. CAMPBELL
And who else was in the car?
Ben?

Mrs. Campbell looks about the hospital for Madeline's brother.

Try as she might, Madeline can't bring herself to say her brother's name and the longer Kate's mother looks at her expectantly, the harder it gets for Madeline.

JACK
Madeline.

Both women turn at the mention of her name to see Jack walking towards them down the corridor.

He stops beside them and places a hand on Madeline's shoulder.

JACK
How you doing? How's Kate?

MADELINE
Kate's fine. She's in
surgery at the moment.

JACK
(To Mrs. Campbell)
Hi.

Jack extends his hand to Mrs. Campbell.

JACK
I'm Jack.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Mrs. Campbell, Kate's mom.

JACK
Hi. I'm so sorry you have to
go through all this but
Madeline here did a good job
looking after all of us.

MRS. CAMPBELL
I'm sure she did.

JACK
(To Madeline)
Have you phoned your mom?

MADELINE
No.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Where's Ben?

Madeline turns and walks off down the corridor.

JACK
Ben was killed in the car
accident, Mrs. Campbell.

Kate's mom puts her hand over her mouth in shock and sits back heavily in the chair.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Oh my God! That's awful!
How did this all happen?

INT.HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Madeline walks along the corridor, swallowing her tears in gulps, trying desperately not to cry.

She reaches the end of the corridor where there is a window.

She leans her head against it and takes deep breaths, almost choking on the air.

She isn't there long when Jack comes to find her.

JACK
Madeline?

She immediately straightens at the sound of his voice.

JACK
Would you like me to call
your mother?

MADELINE
I can do it.

She walks past him towards the receptionist's desk.

INT.RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Madeline walks up to the receptionist.

MADELINE
So sorry to bother you again
but can I please make one
more phone call?

RECEPTIONIST

Okay, but keep it brief.

Madeline reaches for the phone.

Jack stands behind her a little way off, watching her.

Madeline's mother picks up the phone.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

Hello.

MADELINE

Mom.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

Maddy? Is everything
alright? How was your night
out?

MADELINE

Mom, I have to tell you
something.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

What is it?

Madeline can't talk.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

Maddy, what's wrong?

MADELINE

There was an accident. We hit
a car this morning in
Drummond.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

Oh, my God! Is everyone
alright?

MADELINE

Mom.

Jack takes an instinctive step closer.

MADELINE

Ben's ...

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

Madeline? Madeline?
Madeline?

Jack steps immediately to the phone and tries to take the receiver from

Madeline's hand but she is gripping it so tightly he has to pry her fingers loose.

She is trembling uncontrollably and stands shaking against the reception desk.

JACK

Mrs. Thompson?

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

Yes. Who's this?

JACK

My name is Jack. I'm a friend of Madeline's.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

What happened? Where's Maddy?

JACK

She's here with me at St. Anne's hospital.

Jack looks at Madeline who is ashen and trembling quite violently now.

JACK

Mrs. Thompson, we were all involved in a car accident this morning and Ben was killed.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

No.

Madeline suddenly turns and flees.

JACK

Mrs. Thompson? Are you going to be okay? Do you need anything? Would you like me to arrange someone to fetch you?

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

No.

She cries softly O.S.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)

Where's my daughter?

JACK

She's very upset, Mrs. Thompson. If it's okay, I'd like to go find her. I will

(CONT'D)
get her home to you as soon
as I can.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Where's Ben's body?

JACK
It's here at the hospital.
I've spoken with the
pathologist and we can come
in within the next three to
four days to make the
arrangements.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Who are you again?

JACK
Jack, Mrs. Thompson. My name
is Jack Keagan.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Thank you, Jack.

JACK
I'll speak to you later.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Thank you.

JACK
Bye.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Bye.

He hangs up the phone and turns towards the corridor down which Madeline has run.

INT.HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jack finds Madeline huddled in the corner at the end of the corridor, her body crumpled into a little ball.

He kneels down beside her.

At his touch she stiffens but he pulls her into his arms nonetheless.

They are interrupted by a NURSE behind them.

NURSE
I'm sorry to disturb you.

Jack and Madeline look to her expectantly.

NURSE

But are you waiting to hear
about Kate Campbell?

JACK

Yes.

NURSE

Then come with me, please?

Jack and Madeline follow the nurse down the corridor towards the waiting area where the surgeon is already talking to Kate's mother.

Mrs. Campbell turns with tears in her eyes when she sees Jack and Madeline and hugs Madeline tightly.

MRS. CAMPBELL

She's going to be okay.
Thank God, she's going to be
okay.

INT. KATE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Madeline enters the room quietly.

KATE

You saved my life.

MADELINE

No, I didn't.

KATE

You did. The doctor said
that if you hadn't strapped
the root down, it would've
punctured my liver.

MADELINE

What are you talking about?

KATE

The tip of the root was just
over two millimeters from my
liver.

(A Beat)

You saved my life, Maddy.

Madeline walks to the bed and hugs her friend.

MADELINE

It's okay. You're okay now.
You're safe.

EXT.ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL.DAY

Madeline and Mrs. Campbell wheel Kate out of the hospital towards the car.

Kate suddenly screams and starts crying hysterically in the wheelchair.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Kate! Kate, what is it?

Mrs. Campbell grabs hold of her daughter's shoulders and tries to still her.
Kate is in a state, crying and trembling.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Kate, what's wrong? Are you
hurting anywhere?

Madeline looks at the car in front of them, the white Audi Kate's mother drives.

MADELINE
I think it's the car.

MRS. CAMPBELL
What do you mean?

MADELINE
I think she's terrified of
the car?

Mrs. Campbell looks over her shoulder at her car and then back at her trembling daughter.

She strokes Kate's face and then glances up at Madeline.

MRS. CAMPBELL
What do we do?

MADELINE
We're going to have to sedate
her.

They wheel Kate back into the hospital.

LATER

Mrs. Campbell and Madeline lift a sedated Kate into the backseat of the Audi.

INT.KATE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Madeline and Mrs. Campbell tuck Kate up in bed.

Kate's mother sits on her bed.

MRS. CAMPBELL
What are we going to do?

MADELINE
She'll need to go for
counseling to overcome her
phobia of cars.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Oh, this is a nightmare.

MADELINE

She's alive, Mrs. Campbell.
The worst is over.

MRS. CAMPBELL

You're a good friend to her,
Madeline.

Mrs. Campbell squeezes Madeline's hand.

MRS. CAMPBELL

I'm really sorry about Ben.

Madeline pulls her hand free.

MADELINE

I should be going. Let me
know when she's awake and
I'll come by for a visit.

INT.KATE'S COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE.DAY

Kate's COUNSELLOR is a middle-aged man with a bald spot and moustache.

Kate sits in the couch with the counsellor opposite her in a chair and
Madeline is seated between the two, slightly on the outside, in a chair.

Kate repeats the incidents of that night to the counselor MOS.

KATE'S COUNSELLOR

And now you are terrified of
cars.

KATE

Yes. I have nightmares of
that accident. I even have
nightmares of cars landing
on me and crushing me.

Madeline flinches at the description and the counsellor notices this.

He turns his attention back to Kate.

KATE'S COUNSELLOR

Well, we need to accustom
you to the safety of cars
once more, starting with you
sitting in a box and looking
through photographs and
pictures of cars. But that
we'll do next week.

Madeline giggles and both Kate and the counsellor turn to her expectantly.

KATE'S COUNSELLOR

You find something funny,
Madeline?

MADELINE

You're going to make her sit

(CONT'D)
in a box?

KATE'S COUNSELLOR
Yes.

MADELINE
I'm sorry. But how is that
going to help her overcome
her fear of cars?

KATE'S COUNSELLOR
She needs to be comfortable
within a small space for
that is the space she takes
up in a car.

(To Kate)
Once you are comfortable in
the box and looking at
pictures of cars we will
then move you into
children's cars and go-carts
and so on until we can
finally put you inside a car
and drive with you. We're
also going to do various
exercises involving flashing
lights and darkness. In
this way, we're going to
recreate the circumstances
of the accident but not the
actual events, thereby
allowing you to no longer
fear elements of the
accident and that night.

MADELINE
And you're comfortable this
is going to work.

KATE'S COUNSELLOR
Absolutely.

MADELINE
Okay.

KATE'S COUNSELLOR
Are you seeking help as
well, Madeline?

MADELINE
Why?

KATE'S COUNSELLOR
You have also lived through
a very traumatic event and
the death of a loved one.
You will need to come to
terms with this and deal
with your grief and in my

(CONT'D)
 opinion you don't seem to be
 doing that.

MADELINE
 Well fortunately for me,
 your opinion doesn't matter?

THREE MONTHS LATER

EXT.CAMPBELL'S GARDEN - DAY

Jack pulls his car into the driveway and parks his car under the only tree in the garden.

He climbs out and walks to the front door.

Two ridgebacks come running round the corner, barking loudly, their backs bristling.

JACK
 Woah.

He holds up his palms to the dogs.

The door opens and Kate's mother comes out.

MRS. CAMPBELL
 (To the dogs)
 Stop that!
 (To Jack)
 Jack? Right?

JACK
 Hello, Mrs. Campbell. How
 are you?

MRS. CAMPBELL
 Good, thanks. And you?

JACK
 Good.

MRS. CAMPBELL
 You're here to see Kate?

JACK
 Yes.

MRS. CAMPBELL
 Come inside.

INT.CAMPBELL'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Jack follows Kate's mother into the lounge.

The interior is very cosy, with dark, earthen colours and warm red cushions and throws.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Would you like something to
drink?

JACK
Some coffee, thanks.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Sure, how many sugars?

JACK
Two and milk, thanks.

MRS. CAMPBELL
I'll go get Kate.

She walks off.

Jack sits back in the couch and looks about the lounge.

He looks about the bookshelves, filled to bursting with books, many stacked on their sides on top of the rows.

His gaze follows the line of shelves until it comes to rest on the mantelpiece above the fireplace.

Frames of photos run along the length of the mantelpiece and Jack stands.

He comes to stand before the photos and looks at each in turn.

There are a few of family and Jack realizes that Kate is an only child and the older photos have pictures of a man in them which might have been her father by the way she holds him and the way her mother looks at him.

The rest of the photos are filled up with Kate and Madeline.

C.U. A giggling little girl Madeline standing alongside Kate.

C.U. A later picture of Madeline smiling broadly and bravely but the joyful abandon of the smile in the earlier photo is missing.

Jack picks up the latest picture of Madeline and Kate and he is again captivated at how beautiful she is.

C.U. The sorrow in Madeline's eyes: so prevalent.

KATE
Last New Year.

Jack turns at the sound of Kate's voice.

KATE
We were at someone's house.

Jack looks back to the photo in his hand.

He puts the frame back on the mantelpiece and walks forward to give Kate a hug.

Jack takes his seat once again in the couch.

JACK

So, how've you been?

Kate moves her fragile self to the couch opposite him.

KATE

Okay, I guess. Did Madeline tell you?

JACK

That you're seeing a counsellor? Yes.

KATE

So you still talk to her?

JACK

Very rarely. You're looking well.

KATE

I feel better.

JACK

So, how's the counselling going?

KATE

Very well, actually. I got into the car the other day.

JACK

Your mom's?

KATE

No, the counsellor's. Kay, so it's not the backseat yet but I'm getting somewhere.

JACK

Sounds like you doing very well.

KATE

I am and my counsellor's very impressed with me. He says I'm very brave.

JACK

He's right.

KATE

I had to tell him everything I remember about that night. And about the nightmares.

(A Beat)

Do you get them?

JACK
The nightmares?

Kate nods just as Mrs. Campbell walks in with Jack's coffee.

MRS. CAMPBELL
Here we go.

She puts the coffee onto a coaster on the coffee table between Jack and Kate.

JACK
Thank you.

He takes a sip of his coffee.

Mrs. Campbell smiles at her daughter and gives her a kiss on the forehead before leaving them alone again.

KATE
Yes. Do you get nightmares?

JACK
Sometimes.

KATE
About the accident?

Jack nods.

KATE
I'm really worried about
Maddy... especially now that
Ben is gone.

JACK
Why do you say that?

KATE
I know she's probably going
to hate me for telling you
this so just don't tell her,
okay?

JACK
Okay.

KATE
Now, you have to promise 'cos
she never told anyone, not
even Ben. And she wanted it
that way. The only reason I
know is 'cos she had nowhere
to go for help except to me.

JACK
I promise I won't say
anything.

KATE
Madeline doesn't hate Stuart

(CONT'D)
because he insulted her and
he's a jerk. She hates him
because he raped her.

JACK

What?

KATE

We were fourteen and there
was a party at someone's
house - I forget who - and
Madeline and I got totally
drunk and Stuart was
harassing us. Madeline went
to the loo and Stuart found
her there and he raped in the
toilet.

JACK

Jesus Christ. How?

KATE

He hit her and half-strangled
her. I remember she had
these terrible bruises on her
neck and thighs. She wore a
turtle neck and her hair down
for about a week and a half.

JACK

I can't believe this. Why
didn't she say anything to
anyone? Her mother? Ben?
He would've fucking killed
Stuart!

KATE

I don't know. I told her to
tell. I even begged her.
She forced me to promise to
keep quiet.

Kate shudders and rubs her arms.

KATE

Madeline has had a hard life
and her way of dealing with
things is to block them up,
to lock them away and throw
away the key. The deeper the
hurt, the further away she
crawls inside herself. Jack.

Kate starts crying suddenly.

KATE

You have to help her. I
can't reach her.

Jack rushes to her side where he hugs her while she weeps onto his shoulder.

KATE

Please, promise me you'll
help her.

JACK

I will find a way, Kate. I
won't give up on her.

INT.ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - EVENING

Jack is sitting on the couch.

Madeline marches down the corridor straight to the reception desk, still wearing her doctor's coat and greens.

Madeline talks to the receptionist MOS.

Madeline turns in the direction the receptionist indicates and sees Jack waiting for her.

She approaches him.

MADELINE

Was there something you
wanted?

Jack stands.

JACK

I want to take you to
dinner.

MADELINE

Are you kidding?

JACK

No.

MADELINE

I'm still on call.

JACK

Not according to the
receptionist.

Madeline turns and scowls at the girl in question.

JACK

Apparently your shift ended
two hours ago.

MADELINE

Fine. Give me a few minutes
to change and get my things.

She doesn't wait for a response and walks off down the corridor.

INT.STAGECOACH PUB - LATER

Jack walks with Madeline into the packed pub CROWD.

She looks over her shoulder at his hand.

He has it placed a little distance from her back in subtle protection.

MADELINE

I'm not going to fall over.
And even if I did, I doubt
very much you'll be able to
catch me with just the one
hand.

JACK

You'd be surprised how quick
I am to catch you should you
fall, Maddy.

Madeline leads the way to a table near the board and bar and takes a seat.

Jack sits opposite her.

A WAITER stops at their table and lays the menus down for them.

WAITER

What can I get you to drink?

MADELINE

Savannah.

WAITER

Light or Dry?

MADELINE

Dry, thanks.

The waiter turns expectantly to Jack.

JACK

Windhoek, thanks.

The waiter walks off to get their orders.

MADELINE

Okay, what?

JACK

What?

MADELINE

You've been staring at me
since the hospital and I'm
irritated.

JACK

I can't look at you?

MADELINE

What are you thinking? What

(CONT'D)
are you thinking when you
look at me?

JACK
Honestly?

MADELINE
Obviously.

JACK
I keep wondering how cruel
life is to make something so
beautiful and then to mar it
with such pain and sorrow.

MADELINE
What do you want from me,
Jack? What is it that you
want from me that you have
to keep harassing me?

JACK
You think I'm harassing you?

MADELINE
Just answer the question.

WAITER
Your drinks.

The waiter places the bottles in front of them.

Madeline pulls the slice of lemon from the bottle of Savannah and tosses it
back on the waiter's tray.

The waiter smiles politely and walks away in silence.

JACK
What do I want from you? I
want you to let me in.

MADELINE
Excuse me?

JACK
I want you to let me so that
I can find where you are.

MADELINE
What are you talking about?

JACK
I know you're hurting but
you're hiding from
everything. Let me in,
Maddy. Let me help you.

Madeline grabs her bottle of Savannah aggressively and empties half of it into
her mouth.

MADELINE

You don't know anything.

JACK

Then tell me. Tell me everything.

MADELINE

You're way out of your league.

JACK

Why do you say that?

MADELINE

Because you're not my friend.

JACK

That's a pity. Because you're my friend.

MADELINE

Thank you for the half a Savannah.

She gets up from the table.

JACK

Wait.

He grabs her wrist.

JACK

I'll drop it. I'll drop it.

She takes her seat once more and another deep drink from her bottle.

JACK

I saw Kate today. She seems to be doing well.

MADELINE

That's because she is.

JACK

You've been a good friend to her.

(A Beat)

I suppose you don't want to know what I've been doing these past few months.

MADELINE

No.

JACK

Then what are we going to talk about?

MADELINE

I don't really care.

JACK

You prefer to sit here in
silence.

MADELINE

I'd prefer to be at the
hospital working.

JACK

I know you don't want to be
here.

MADELINE

I don't want to be here with
you.

JACK

I know that.

MADELINE

So why did you bring me?

JACK

Because I want to be here
with you.

MADELINE

And it's all about you.

JACK

Tonight, maybe.

MADELINE

Why do you want to be here
with me?

JACK

Because I want to be
anywhere with you.

MADELINE

Why?

JACK

Because I like you,
Madeline.

MADELINE

Why?

JACK

Because I see the person
I've been dreaming about all
my life.

MADELINE

You've got to be kidding me.

JACK

Nope. She's right there.

He points directly at Madeline's eyes.

JACK

Behind all that pain. She's
in the photos I was looking
at today at Kate's house.

MADELINE

That person is gone.

JACK

I don't believe that.

MADELINE

Then you're a fool.

JACK

Then I'm a fool.

They stare at one another for a moment and Madeline downs the last of her
drink and catches the waiter on his way past.

MADELINE

(To Waiter)

Another, please?

He nods.

JACK

You want something to eat?

Madeline shakes her head.

They sit in silence until the waiter returns with Madeline's drink. She gulps
it down and orders another.

JACK

Are you trying to get drunk?

MADELINE

It's the only way I can stay
in your presence.

He takes another gulp of his drink.

MONTAGE

They sit opposite one another in almost complete silence, matching tot after
tot of Jack Daniels until the night has deepened and people are getting up to
leave.

END MONTAGE

LATER

The waiter stops at their table.

WAITER

Last rounds.

MADELINE

In that case, I'll have a double Vodka and orange juice.

JACK

Nothing for me, thanks.

MADELINE

What?

JACK

I was thinking that maybe you'd had enough.

She laughs.

JACK

What time do you need to be at work tomorrow?

MADELINE

My shift starts at seven.

Jack looks at his watch.

JACK

It's now twelve past two.

She shrugs.

JACK

I'll drop you at home after your drink.

MADELINE

Such a gentleman.

JACK

So much for the dinner. I really was looking forward to a pleasant evening where we ate something at least.

MADELINE

Why?

JACK

Because I like you. And because I don't like to see you drunk and doing this to yourself.

MADELINE
Doing what to myself?

JACK
Never mind.

The waiter returns with her drink.

WAITER
Double Vodka and orange
juice.

He places it in front of Madeline.

JACK
Can we have the bill please?

WAITER
Certainly.

The waiter walks off.

Jack watches Madeline drain her glass of Vodka and orange juice.

The waiter returns with the bill and hands it to Jack.

MADELINE
How much is it?

JACK
I've got it.

MADELINE
I'm not a charity case.

JACK
I know but I invited you and
this is my treat.

MADELINE
Fine. Whatever.

She shrugs and looks over her shoulder at the empty pub.

MADELINE
Where has everyone gone?

JACK
They left about an hour go.

MADELINE
I suppose that means we
should be leaving then.

JACK
Let me get you home.

He walks over to her side of the table where he puts his arm under her arms and helps her up.

EXT.PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jack half carries Madeline to his car and helps her into the seat.

He fastens her seatbelt and then walks round to his side where he takes several deep gulps of the chill air to sober himself up a bit more.

INT.JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack climbs into the car and rolls down his window, fastening his seatbelt.

He looks across at Madeline and she has her head resting on the back of the seat facing him.

Her eyes are fixed steadfastly and almost child-like upon him as though she fully trusts he will protect her.

He strokes her forehead gently.

She closes her eyes and seems to drift off into an uneasy sleep as he starts the car and drives out of the parking lot.

EXT.OUTSIDE MADELINE'S GATE - LATER

Jack stops in front of the remote access gates.

INT.JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He puts the car into neutral and pulls up the handbrake while he rummages round in Madeline's handbag for the remote and keys.

Madeline wakes from her sleep and looks at him.

JACK
Where did you put your remote
for the gate?

She suddenly leans forward and kisses him.

Jack suddenly snaps out of it. He grabs her hand and pushes himself away from her.

He puts his elbow on the door and rests his head in his hand.

It is a few moments before he hears the access gate opening and looks up to see that it is indeed opening.

He looks expectantly across at Madeline and sees the remote and keys in her hand.

Jack puts the car into gear and releases the handbrake before driving forward.

EXT.PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jack drives through the open gate into the parking.

INT.JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack looks about the parking lot.

JACK
Where can I park?

MADELINE
There's a visitor's parking
bay at the end.

EXT.PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jack steers the car towards the end of the lot and parks in the bay which has the word "Visitor" painted in large yellow letters on the tarmac.

INT.JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He undoes his seatbelt and leans over to undo Madeline's but she has already released hers and is climbing from the car.

EXT.PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jack gets hurriedly from the car and runs around to Madeline's side to help her to her flat.

She holds up her hand to stay him but he follows her to her door, nonetheless.

He watches her unlock her door with surprising accuracy and grace and then she walks inside.

She turns at the entrance and looks back at Jack.

MADELINE
You can come in.

She carries on walking inside.

Jack is hesitant.

He watches her turn on the lamp in her lounge from the doorway and remove her jacket.

He breathes out heavily and walks into the flat, closing the door behind him.

INT.MADELINE'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Jack's gaze never leaves her as she moves about the lounge, hanging her keys on the key rail and putting her bag on the side table, hanging her jacket over the back of the couch.

Here she stops and leans her back against the back of the couch, studying him.

Jack can't move under her gaze.

Madeline steps forward and kisses him again.

They end up making love.

EXT.HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Jack pulls into the parking lot of the hospital.

INT.JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Madeline undoes her safety belt and reaches for the door handle.

Jack takes her arm gently.

JACK
What does this mean for us,
Maddy?

MADELINE
It means we have great sex.

She climbs from the car.

EXT.HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jack leans over her seat out the open window.

JACK
Can I see you tonight?

MADELINE
I'll call you.

She walks off into the hospital.

MONTAGE

Madeline and Jack go out several times after that.

They have dinner or go watch a movie or take a long walk through the park.

INT.DA VINCI'S NIGHTCLUB.NIGHT

Jack and Madeline are out at Da Vinci's CROWDED nightclub in town.

Jack can't seem to stop kissing her and he can't keep his hands off her.

Madeline is standing off to one side talking to one of the NURSES she works with at St. Anne's Hospital.

JACK
Just going to the little
boy's room.

He kisses her neck and reluctantly releases her.

INT.BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack flushes the urinal, washes his hands and leaves the bathroom.

INT.DA VINCI'S - CONTINUOUS

Jack returns from the bathroom when he recognises Stuart in the crowd of people.

As his gaze follows Stuart through the crowd he finds that Stuart has seen Madeline and has now approached her.

Jack shoves his way through the crowd, only vaguely aware of Madeline's snappy

retort to Stuart as he approaches them.

Stuart turns when he sees Jack coming and starts saying something to him when, without warning, Jack hits Stuart in the face.

Stuart stumbles back against a GROUP OF PEOPLE standing beside him.

STUART
What the fuck?

JACK
You sick, fucking bastard!

Jack pulls him up by the collar to punch him again.

This time, he knocks Stuart to the floor and Jack steps back, panting from rage and adrenalin.

He pulls Madeline into his arms.

MADELINE
Jack? What was that about?

She studies him.

MADELINE
She told you?

Madeline hurries from the club.

Jack runs after her.

EXT.OUTSIDE DA VINCI'S - CONTINUOUS

Jack catches Madeline outside and she pulls her arm free.

JACK
Maddy.

MADELINE
Don't call me that.

JACK
She's just trying to help
you.

MADELINE
I don't need any help! She
had no right! You had no
right!

JACK
Why? It's nothing to be
ashamed about. You did
nothing wrong.

MADELINE
Thanks for the counseling
session, Doctor.

JACK

Madeline.

He takes her arm.

JACK

Don't do this. Don't push me away. I just want to be here for you.

MADELINE

No. You just wanted to sleep with me so now that you have you can go on your merry way and leave me alone.

JACK

That's not true. I love you.

MADELINE

Fuck off.

She walks away.

INT.DA VINCI'S - CONTINUOUS

Jack marches back into the nightclub and the crowd parts as he makes his way to the slowly awakening Stuart.

Jack grabs him by his shirt and wrenches him off the ground.

Stuart puts his arms up in defense.

JACK

I know what you did to Madeline. And if you ever come near her again, I will beat you so badly your own mother won't be able to recognise you. Do you understand?

Stuart nods fearfully and Jack releases him, moving backwards away from him and pointing an accusatory finger right at Stuart.

JACK

(To the crowd)

This man raped a thirteen year old girl!

The music suddenly dies.

Once Jack is certain he has everyone's attention, he points at Stuart again.

JACK

(To the crowd)

He raped a thirteen year old girl.

(To Stuart)

I hope you burn in hell,

(CONT'D)
Stuart.

He leaves the silent, shocked nightclub.

INT.KATE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kate is sitting in her bedroom reading the latest Heat magazine when there is a knock at her door.

She looks up to find Madeline standing in the doorway.

She rushes over to hug her friend.

KATE
How've you been? I haven't
been able to get hold of you
on your cell or at work.

MADELINE
I know. I've been busy.

KATE
Do you want something to
drink?

MADELINE
No, thanks.

KATE
Let's go sit outside on the
verandah.

Kate leads Madeline from her room.

EXT.VERANDAH - CONTINUOUS

Kate and Madeline sit quietly on the verandah and look out at the myriad of birds fluttering about Kate's garden.

There are numerous bird-feeders stationed around the garden to attract the birds.

MADELINE
So, how've you been?

KATE
Same old, same old.
Treatment's going well.
I've even started driving
lessons again so, ja, things
are going well.

MADELINE
I'm glad to hear it.

KATE
Maddy, Ben's birthday is
coming up. You don't mention
him at all. It's like he

(CONT'D)
never existed.

Madeline continues watching the birds in silence.

KATE
He saved my life, you know.

MADELINE
That's a gorgeous sunbird.

Madeline points at the plum-coloured sunbird flittering amidst the jacaranda tree.

KATE
Madeline. Aren't you
listening?
(A Beat)
You wish I had died instead
of him, don't you? You wish
Ben and I had never swapped
places.

MADELINE
That's not true. I wish Ben
and I had swapped places.
(A Beat)
Now, drop it.

They sit in an uncomfortable silence.

KATE
How's Jack? You guys are
still going out, right?

MADELINE
No, Kate. We are not and do
you want to know why?
(A Beat)
Because you told him.

KATE
Maddy, he loves you.

MADELINE
Shut up!

KATE
He wants to help you and so
do I.

MADELINE
Shut the fuck up now, Kate.

KATE
We just want to help.

MADELINE
God dammit! I don't need

(CONT'D)
any fucking help! Why can't
you people get that through
your thick skulls? I have
forgotten it, okay. Why you
people can't just fucking
leave it alone, I don't
know! Just leave me alone,
okay?

KATE

Madeline, no one can forget
things like this. These are
life-changing events that
wound so deeply and leave
the most horrible scars for
the rest of your life. You
haven't forgotten them.
You've just buried them and
now they are rotting inside
of you.

Madeline stands and leaves.

Kate puts her face in her hands and weeps.

NOW

INT.COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE.DAY

The counselor and Jack are sitting opposite one another.

COUNSELLOR

And this was how long ago?

JACK

About three months. I hadn't
heard of or seen her since
today.

COUNSELLOR

And Brett? Do you know
what's happened to him?

JACK

Brett. Ja, I know.

7 AND ½ MONTHS EARLIER

INT.POLICE CAR - EARLY MORNING

Jack is sitting wrapped in a blanket in the back of a police car, which is
following another police car.

EXT.OUTSIDE POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

The police car reaches the police station and Jack climbs from the car,
watching as Brett climbs from the other police car.

INT.POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Brett give statements MOS to POLICE OFFICERS in separate rooms.

Jack comes out of the interrogation room as Brett is led from his room in handcuffs.

Jack rushes after him and is immediately stopped by a brawny POLICEMAN.

POLICEMAN

You can't go there.

JACK

He's my friend. Where is going now?

POLICEMAN

He's going to have his fingerprints and mug-shot taken and he's going to be booked.

JACK

For?

POLICEMAN

Reckless and negligent driving, driving while under the influence of an intoxicating substance and two counts of culpable homicide.

JACK

Jesus Christ. Does he get to phone someone?

POLICEMAN

He waived that right.

JACK

What?

POLICEMAN

He said he didn't want to phone anyone.

JACK

Well, can I call his lawyer?

POLICEMAN

Who are you again?

JACK

I'm his friend.

The policeman is undecided.

JACK

Well, can I at least phone

(CONT'D)
his brother?

The policeman nods.

JACK
What telephone can I use?

POLICEMAN
This one over here.

The policeman leads him to the public telephones.

JACK
I don't have any change.

The policeman rummages about in his pockets for some change.

He gives Jack two five rand coins and a two rand coin.

JACK
Thanks.

Jack inserts the coins and dials the number from memory.

It rings for quite some time before a man answers in a sleepy voice.

CRAIG (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Hello.

JACK
Craig?

CRAIG (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Ja?

JACK
It's Jack.

CRAIG (O.S.)
(Filtered)
Hey, Jack. How you doing?

JACK
Okay.

CRAIG (O.S.)
(Filtered)
What's up? Why you phoning
me so early?

JACK
Craig, Brett was involved in
an accident last night.

CRAIG (O.S.)
(Filtered)
What?

JACK

Craig, he was driving drunk
and two people were killed
in the accident.

CRAIG (O.S.)

(Filtered)

Jesus Christ. Is he all
right?

JACK

He's not hurt but he's in a
lot of trouble.

CRAIG (O.S.)

(Filtered)

Where are you?

JACK

Cato Ridge Police Station.

CRAIG (O.S.)

(Filtered)

I'm on my way.

The receiver goes dead and Jack hangs up the phone and leans his head on his arm against the wall.

LATER

CRAIG marches into the police station.

Jack is dozing on the waiting bench.

Craig shakes Jack lightly on his arm.

CRAIG

Jack?

Jack looks up at Brett's brother.

He is dressed in an immaculate suit and carrying his brief case.

Craig is blonde with sparse brown freckles on his cheeks, attractive and solemn.

Jack climbs steadily to his feet and Craig gives him a quick hug.

Craig recognises the police captain as he exits his office.

CAPTAIN MZINZI is a black man in his mid-thirties with a stern-looking face and a generous girth.

CRAIG

Captain Mzinzi?

Craig shakes the captain's hand.

CRAIG
I'm Craig Kapel, Brett
Kapel's lawyer.

CAPTAIN MZINZI
And his relative?

CRAIG
Yes.

CAPTAIN MZINZI
This way.

The captain leads Craig to the holding cells at the back of the police station.

INT. BRETT'S HOLDING CELL - CONTINUOUS

Brett looks up in surprise when he hears the gate open and sees Craig standing there.

BRETT
What do you want?

CRAIG
I'm standing in as your
lawyer and I've come to get
you out of here.

BRETT
Just leave me alone.

Brett rolls over onto his side.

CRAIG
(To Captain Mzinzi)
Can I have a minute with my
client?

The captain nods, allowing Craig to enter the chamber.

Craig takes a seat on the bunk opposite Brett.

CRAIG
Brett, what happened?

Brett remains silent, his back still turned to his brother.

CRAIG
Jack told me you were
driving drunk.

BRETT
What are you doing here?

Brett suddenly swings round.

BRETT
Did Jack phone you?

CRAIG

Yes.

BRETT

He had no fucking right.

CRAIG

You need help.

BRETT

I'm beyond help.

CRAIG

Do you know what you're
being charged with?

Brett looks away.

CRAIG

You're being charged with
reckless and negligent
driving, driving while under
the influence and two counts
of culpable homicide. Do
you have any idea how much
trouble you are in?

BRETT

Fuck you!

CRAIG

Why do you resent me so
much?

BRETT

Why do you think?

CRAIG

I honestly don't know.

BRETT

Well, for a lawyer, you're
pretty fucking stupid.

(A Beat)

Because mom and dad love you
more than me. They only
wanted one child.

Craig starts shaking his head.

BRETT

I heard them one night when
I was twelve. They said I'd
been a mistake.

(A Beat)

Do you know that I got
straight A's all the way
through school? Do you know
that I finished Matric with
five distinctions? Nothing

(CONT'D)
I ever did was good enough
for them. They weren't even
there when I was awarded the
Dux.

CRAIG
I was. You remember that,
don't you?

BRETT
So what if you were there?
Where were mom and dad?
They didn't care, they never
cared!

CRAIG
I care.
(A Beat)
I've always cared about you,
Brett. I love you. You're
my little brother and I will
always love you.

Brett breaks down in tears.

Craig hugs his brother.

BRETT
I'm in a lot of trouble,
Craig.

CRAIG
I know. Look. Your license
will be suspended for your
driving under the influence
and your reckless and
negligent charge: I just
need to bargain with the
judge to get a minimal
suspension for that. My
main concern is the homicide
charges.

(A Beat)
You killed two people,
Brett.

The tears are streaming down Brett's face.

CRAIG
And there's very little I
can do about that. You will
have to pay the penalty.
But I want you to know that
I am going to be there with
you through it all and I
will do my very best to get
the minimum sentence and the
best prison I can find.

BRETT
I'm going to go to jail?

CRAIG
Yes.

BRETT
For how long?

CRAIG
Worst case? For life.

NOW

INT.COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE.DAY

The counselor and Jack are sitting opposite one another.

JACK
After the court case Craig had managed to have Brett's driver's license suspended for only eight years. But Brett was sentenced to twenty-five years for each person he killed in the car accident. He is going to jail for fifty years.

COUNSELLOR
And how did Brett get his hands on the sleeping tablets?

JACK
He asked for some from the prison nurse and she gave him the bottle without thinking. He emptied it into his mouth while lying on his bunk in the holding cell, waiting to be taken to Fort Napier prison.

COUNSELLOR
And what now with Madeline? She can't go on like this. She needs help.

JACK
I know.

COUNSELLOR
Do you love her, Jack?

JACK
Yes. And I'm going to find a way to help her.

EXT.THOMPSON'S GATE - DAY

Jack rings the bell at the gate and waits.

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered through the intercom)
Hello?

JACK
Mrs. Thompson?

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)
(Filtered through the intercom)
Yes?

JACK
It's Jack.

The buzzer goes and the gates open.

EXT. THOMPSON'S GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Jack steers his car into the driveway.

Mrs. Thompson has already opened the door when Jack climbs from his car.

He walks up the steps to the verandah where she hugs him.

MRS. THOMPSON
It's been a while.

JACK
I'm sorry.

MRS. THOMPSON
Come inside.

INT. THOMPSON'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Thompson leads Jack into the lounge.

MRS. THOMPSON
Something to drink?

JACK
Coffee, please?

She goes off to make it.

While Jack is sitting in the lounge, he notices photographs all around the lounge and living-room areas.

He gets up and approaches them.

They are all of Madeline and Ben throughout their lives and in a very few photos is a man.

The resemblance is unmistakable.

Mrs. Thompson enters the room again with Jack's cup of coffee and her cup of tea.

MRS. THOMPSON
 (Re photograph Jack is looking at)
 Oh, that was Ben and Maddy's
 father, Grant.

Jack joins Mrs. Thompson on the sofa and takes his coffee.

JACK
 Thank you.

He drinks some.

MRS. THOMPSON
 I can't help her anymore.

JACK
 I'm sorry?

MRS. THOMPSON
 Madeline. I can't help her.
 She's a very strange child.
 Whenever she gets hurt, she
 hides her injury.

She puts her cup of tea on the table.

MRS. THOMPSON
 I remember when she fell off
 her bicycle and scraped the
 skin off her knees and palms.
 She wore long pants and
 gloves for almost two days
 before I finally decided to
 ask her about them. It was
 Ben who then told me that
 she'd hurt herself.

She wipes the tears from her cheeks and smiles bravely at Jack.

MRS. THOMPSON
 Ben was the only one who ever
 knew her pains. He was the
 only one who could ever reach
 her when she was hurting.
 And he's not here now.

She looks back at the photograph of her husband and two children.

MRS. THOMPSON
 Grant was killed in a car
 accident when Madeline was
 only six years old. She and
 Ben had gone with Grant to
 the shops to get some milk
 and ice cream.

FLASHBACK

A YOUNG BEN and YOUNG MADELINE are driving with their FATHER.

A petrol tanker runs a red robot and smashes into the side of the car.

A fire starts.

Ben manages to wriggle free of his seatbelt and climbs into the back of the car where he gets Madeline.

She is screaming for her father and she is trying to wake him up.

Grant had smacked his head into the windscreen and he is dazed.

There is a piece of glass in his left eye.

Ben pulls Madeline out the car through the window and he shields her against the flames and the smoke.

Ben holds Madeline while she fights with him to get to her father still stuck in the truck.

END FLASHBACK

MRS. THOMPSON

Ben told me last year that
Madeline still had nightmares
where she could hear her dad
screaming for her.

Mrs. Thompson uses a serviette to wipe the tears from her eyes.

MRS. THOMPSON

Grant burnt to death in that
car and Madeline buried her
pain.

(A Beat)

I don't know why I'm telling
you this. Maybe because I'm
hoping you can do something.

JACK

I'm going to help her, Mrs.
Thompson. And I think I know
how.

She looks up at him.

JACK

Do you have a spare key to
her flat?

INT.MADELINE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Madeline returns home late and walks into a darkened flat.

She turns on the lounge lamp and hangs her keys on the wall above it.

As she is removing her bag from her shoulder and heading towards the bedroom she notices Jack sitting in one of the lounge chairs and she starts.

MADELINE

What the fuck, Jack? Are you stalking me now? How did you get in?

JACK

Your mom's spare key. And no, I'm not stalking you. I wanted to talk you and knew that you wouldn't let me in if I'd asked.

MADELINE

And yet, you still don't get the hint.

Jack stands and holds out a wrapped present to her.

JACK

I have something for you.

MADELINE

It's not my birthday.

JACK

I know.

She stares at the present as though it's a venomous snake.

MADELINE

I don't want it.

JACK

Open it and I'll leave.

She slips her bag off and tosses it onto the couch.

MADELINE

Fine.

She snatches the gift from his hands and tears the wrapping from it without even looking at it.

Her gaze remains fixed on him.

As she feels the smooth surface under her hand, she looks down.

She is frozen as she stares at the framed photograph of her and Ben.

MADELINE

Wha....

JACK

I noticed it was missing from your flat.

Madeline suddenly turns and runs into the kitchen.

INT.KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Madeline throws the photograph into the bin and claps her hands together in an attempt to wipe something dirty off of them.

She turns to find Jack standing in the doorway.

MADELINE

What the fuck is wrong with you! How dare you come into my house and do this! How dare you!

(A Beat)

I want you to leave.

JACK

It's Ben's birthday today.

MADELINE

Get out!

JACK

I wonder how he feels that you haven't been to visit his gravesite?

MADELINE

He doesn't feel. He's dead, you asshole!

JACK

You think he can't see you?

MADELINE

Don't.

She storms past him into the lounge.

INT.MADELINE'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Jack follows her.

MADELINE

Don't start saying that shit about how he's in heaven looking down at me. Just don't fucking say it. He's dead and he's never coming back.

JACK

So you're going to just forget him?

MADELINE

He's gone! *He left me.*

JACK

So that's it? You're going to blame him for dying?

MADELINE
You don't fucking get it!

JACK
Don't I?

MADELINE
Just leave me alone!

JACK
I know, Maddy.

MADELINE
You don't know anything.

JACK
You don't blame Ben for
dying.

(A Beat)
You blame yourself.

MADELINE
Don't.

JACK
You have saved so many
people's lives but you
couldn't save the person who
meant the most to you.

(A Beat)
Especially since he saved you
once.

(A Beat)
It's not your fault.

MADELINE
Please stop?

JACK
It's not your fault.

MADELINE
It is my fault.

JACK
It's not your fault.

MADELINE
I couldn't save him!

JACK
You can't save everyone.

MADELINE
I didn't want to save
everyone! I wanted to save
him!

Madeline throws the lamp across the room.

MADELINE

I wanted to save him!

She collapses in a heap on the floor and Jack catches her as she falls, holding her against his chest while she weeps.

MADELINE

It hurts so much.

(A Beat)

It hurts too much, Jack. I just want to forget. Let me forget.

JACK

I can't, Maddy.

MADELINE

Please?

JACK

I'm sorry, Maddy but we as the living all have a responsibility to the dead. If you love someone in life, honour them in death.

MADELINE

But I couldn't save him.

JACK

That's because it wasn't Ben's life that was to be saved that night.

(A Beat)

It was Kate's.

(A Beat)

And you and Ben saved her.

At this, Madeline breaks down completely.

Jack holds her while she weeps.

TWO DAYS LATER

EXT. BEN'S GRAVESIDE - DAY

Madeline stands staring.

Jack moves up beside her and puts a reassuring hand on her back.

JACK

You okay?

She nods, turning her gaze back to the gravestone in front of her.

She steps forward and kneels before the gravestone, placing a single lily on the grave.

She looks up at the engraving of Ben's name and his dates of birth and death.

MADELINE
Goodbye, Ben.

THE END