

First over BLACK, a SEAGULL with a battle cry. Waves pound the levees, gently foreboding.

1 INT. JEAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT.

1

Hallucinatory CLOSE UPS flutter in and out of frame:

A TAP turns on filling a stained blue sink.

LATEX GLOVES peeled over gaunt, pale hands.

A TIN pops open, dust particles dancing in the light.

A PASTE forms, effervescent.

JEAN NEWMAN [32] stands in front of a vanity mirror, touching up her roots with a small wooden brush. Deliberate, precise movements. Almost surgical.

There's something gloriously enigmatic about our JEAN. Her short, blonde hair lends an almost translucent quality to her skin. She's both plain and alluring, and all the gradations in between. As she steps back to inspect her handiwork, the mirror casts a ripple effect: one face, refracted out multiple times.

2 INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

2

The back of JEAN's head now caked with dye. The TV flickers beyond; some kitschy eighties commercial.

JEAN's house is functional, modest and ordered. A distinct lack of memorabilia.

A loud RUMBLE from outside, a car pulling up. JEAN's cat, PEGGY, leaps off the record player, dashing up the stairs. A dusty shard of light severs the room in two. *

JEAN puts down the remote, moving towards the kitchen. *

The SOUND of the car pulling away outside as JEAN reaches the window. She stands there for a moment, before padding back to the sofa. A familiar nasal bray engulfs the room. *

CILLA BLACK

Let's hear it for the lovely Mark,
ladies and gentlemen.

(studio applause)

But for now, come in *the girls*.
(studio applause)

Garish TV light ripples over JEAN's face.

2.

3 INT. JEAN'S BATHROOM, LATER.

3

Toxic chemicals trickle down the plughole. JEAN kneels over the bath, rinsing her hair. Reaching for a towel, she rubs dry newly white hair, stands and flicks off the light.

4 INT. JEAN'S CAR - DAY.

4

Low winter sun filters through threadbare trees as JEAN's Renault traverses the outskirts of the city. A set of NEWCASTLE FC dice swing from the rearview mirror. In the distance, a line of industrial buildings pollute the air with a thick black fug.

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BBC RADIO NEWS

*

NHS workers are staging their first strike in more than thirty years today. Staff including midwives, nurses, ambulance crews, porters and office workers are all taking part in the strike over wages. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher condemns the strike saying it will prolong wait lists and desert patients.

JEAN lights a cigarette and winds down the window.

5 INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY.

5

JEAN strides through labyrinthine school halls with purpose, a cassette player under one arm. Shrill voices waft down the drab corridor.

CHORUS (O.C.)

Give me courage when the world is rough, Keep me loving though the world is tough; Leap and sing in all I do...

HELEN [40s - blonde and svelte] stands on a step ladder creating a display of Sub-Saharan masks. She smiles as JEAN passes. JEAN smiles back but it's guarded, rehearsed even.

A feral, freckled redhead appears, stuffing a sheet of paper excitedly into JEAN's hands. SIOBHAN [15] appears older than her years, brooding with a sort of sultry sexuality. A gold crucifix glints over the collar of her shirt.

*

On JEAN, a different smile here, genuine and gently goading.

*

SIOBHAN

What?

JEAN offers her a moment to fess up, displaying her unique ability to remain aloof, yet humane in the same moment.

JEAN

I could forge your nan's signature better than this Siobhan.

SIOBHAN

But--

JEAN

Want me to call her?

SIOBHAN

No. Don't.

JEAN eyes on SIOBHAN as she weighs up how much to divulge, then thinks better of it. Silence. Then--

JEAN

If there's a problem at home, you can tell me you know.

(beat)

Can't have me star player missing any more matches, can I?

*
*
*
*

High praise indeed. SIOBHAN melts.

*

JEAN (CONT'D)

Anyhow, shouldn't you's be in assembly?

*

SIOBHAN flashes a naughty grin and disappears just as PAULA [50s - buxom, no-nonsense] pushes past JEAN into the office.

PAULA

You and your bloody fan club!

JEAN smiles awkwardly as she follows PAULA into the office.

INT. SPORTS HALL - DAY.

TEENAGE GIRLS, all talking over each other. A whistle between JEAN's teeth. Staccato bursts.

JEAN

There'll be plenty of time to gossip at break time.

*

JEAN has the air of a team captain rather than an authoritarian. As such she is listened to.

*

The U16 netball team swarm into frame. But we're fixed on JEAN, never acknowledging the girls in much detail.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Would you like to take the class
yourself, Carol?

*

*

Collective sniggers fade to silence.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Right... Can anyone tell me what
"fight or flight" means?

A sea of blank faces.

JEAN (CONT'D)
I'm not just talking about netball.
Fight or flight... Any ideas?

No response. Except CAROL RIDLEY [15] miming a blozza behind MINDY SINGH [15] a gauche, bespectacled girl with prolific eyebrows. JEAN sighs.

JEAN (CONT'D)
You can see me after, okay Carol?

JEAN bites down on the end of her biro, thinks for a second, then, without warning, lobs the ball out from under her arm towards the group. SIOBHAN catches it.

JEAN (CONT'D)
There you see. Instincts. I'm
talking about instincts.

*

*

SIOBHAN tries unsuccessfully to hide her satisfaction.

JEAN (CONT'D)
The body responds far quicker than
the brain.
(beat)
In the case of sudden danger,
hormones rush through our bodies
prompting us to stay and fight or
run away and flee--

*

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*

CUT ABRUPTLY TO:

INT. CHANGING ROOMS - DAY.

GIRLS in various states of undress apply makeup in the mirror. JILL, CHAR and ANOTHER GIRL [all 15] are taking things at a particularly leisurely pace. JEAN strides in holding a clip-board, keeping her eye-line vague. *

JEAN

This is not a beauty parlour. Get cracking please ladies. *

CAROL

(under her breath)

How would you know what a beauty parlour looks like?

O/C giggles.

JEAN

We were all young and dumb once, you know Carol.

Laughter. *Touché*. *

JEAN (CONT'D)

You did a good job out there Rachel, if you carry on like that you'll be able to take on the sixth formers by the end of term.

RACHEL, 15, smiling, coy. SIOBHAN glancing over, a hint of jealousy peeking through.

INT. SHOWERS - CONTINUOUS - DAY.

JEAN claps her hands as she passes by the showers, never stopping to linger.

JEAN

You's should be dressed by now, come along ladies.

CAROL (O.C.)

Ewww Miss. What are you looking at? Get out ya perv!

Unperturbed, JEAN tosses a towel in their direction.

An old fashioned SCHOOL BELL rattles through the corridors. THUNDEROUS footsteps as students decamp for lunch.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY.

JEAN sits alone at a table. A group of TEACHERS chat animatedly behind her. Rain lashes down on the windows, giving the impression her reflection is melting.

*
*

MRS LEA (O.C.)
 Martin's got me on this new diet,
 have you heard of it? It's called
SlimFast. Just pour one of these
 into a pint of milk, one in the
 morning, one at night. Martin says
 I'll be wasting away by Easter!

Raucous laughter from the group.

JEAN catches eyes with SIOBHAN, JILL and CHAR, who're sitting at a nearby table, mimicking the teachers' reactions so only they can see. The GIRLS laugh, grateful to be in on the joke.

INT. SCHOOL SHOWERS - DAY.

JOE [40s - a caretaker] kneels on the floor of the communal shower block, fiddling around in a clogged drain. JEAN stands above him, her hand over her mouth to mask the stench. After a while he pulls out a large, unidentifiable mass.

JEAN
 What *is* that?

JOE
 Hair, mainly. Looks like a plaster
 or two.

JEAN
 It's revolting.

Joe grunts.

JOE
 Don't I know it. Got three
 daughters, I have. Always asking
 how it's possible for a human being
 to produce so much bloody hair...
 Not you though. Your husband's a
 lucky man.

JOE laughs heartily. JEAN forces a smile.

The drain starts to gurgle. Something frothy and orange seeps out onto the tiles by JEAN's feet. She steps away.

11

INT. PE DEPARTMENT OFFICE - DAY.

11

In the phone booth, JEAN leafs through an address book. *

At the window nearby, DAVE [50s - vampiric, booze addled] and MICHELLE [20s - a spirited brunette from Derby] are watching something at the window, chatting in hushed tones. Even from afar, it reeks of gossip. JEAN stands, moving towards the window.

Outside in the playground, a TEENAGE GIRL glides into focus. She's playing football with a group of BOYS. This is LOIS JACKSON, 15. There's a contrariness to her spirit, apparent even on first sight. Bold and untamed, but at the same time vulnerable and somewhat incomplete.

JEAN follows her across the tarmac, quietly mesmerised. LOIS has an ease in her own body. And she's fast. Easily out-running the boys.

DAVE

It's a waste, in't it?

MICHELLE

Why's that?

DAVE

She won't be needing that footwork
on the netball court, will she?

JEAN

You could always sign her up.

DAVE

And you'll take the boys for
netball too will you?

JEAN

I don't see why not.

MICHELLE beams in agreement. But JEAN's already heading out the door, leaving a disgruntled DAVE in the office.

12

EXT. SCHOOL CAR PARK - DUSK.

12

JEAN throws a duffle bag into the boot of her car. A few metres away, LOIS emerges from the school entrance, closely followed by a gang of BOYS. They appear to be making fun of her. MICHELLE appears behind JEAN--

MICHELLE

Fancy a pint? Few of us are heading
down The Lodge.

But JEAN is watching LOIS.

JEAN
Sorry? -- Oh I can't. I'm minding
my nephew tonight.

MICHELLE
Friday night? Hope they're paying
ya!

JEAN smiles vaguely, looking back to where LOIS was. But she's gone. A flicker of disappointment.

13

INT. JEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

13

JEAN's wiry, half-naked frame on the bed, pulling on a pair of well loved 501's. She stands, reaching into a wardrobe organised with military precision. School on the right. Denims in the middle. The barely worn remnants of another life on the left. A portable radio crackles beside her bed.

RADIO VOICE OF IAN MCKELLEN (O.S.)
Mr Worsthorne actually thinks a
book can turn someone into a
homosexual... I don't believe that
anymore than a book could have
turned me into a heterosexual!

JEAN smiles and reaches for a thin silver chain, fastening it * around her neck.

PEREGUINE WORSTHORNE (O.S.)
I regard homosexuality as being a
great misfortune, the less frequent
it is in any society, the better.
It shouldn't be something that
anybody should be allowed to
encourage, or promote, certainly
not any schools that are funded by
local authorities that people have
to go to by law!

JEAN pulls on a jacket, checking herself in the mirror.

14

EXT. VENUS BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT.

14

JEAN stops at the entrance to a dive bar, checking both ways before heading in.

15

INT. VENUS BAR - NIGHT.

15

We follow JEAN down some stairs and into a dimly lit bat-cave teeming with dykes, cigarette smoke and booze. At the bar, JEAN greets ACE [20s - handsome] and ACE's girlfriend DEBBIE [30s - warm, leather clad].

Then another WOMAN appears handing JEAN a beer, kissing her on the mouth. This is VIVIAN HIGHTON [30s - hard on the outside, soft in the middle, like a Tunnock's Tea Cake] JEAN whispers something in her ear and they laugh. *

16

INT. VENUS - LATER.

16

Four shot glasses snatched off a pool table. JEAN eyeing hers suspiciously.

VIV
Aw, come on Baby Jean!

JEAN
Stop calling me that!

VIV
Suits ya.

VIV's accent is more acute than JEAN's, more working class. Flashing her infectious smile, she pinches the soft, infant-like flesh of JEAN's cheek.

JEAN
[LAUGHS] Get off!

ACE
Down it or I'll have it.

Outnumbered, JEAN holds her nose, grabs the shot glass and pours the disgusting clear liquid down her throat. She winces. The others *laugh*.

VIV
OK lightweight. Your shot.

JEAN places the glass on a window sill, wiping excess tequila from her mouth, lining up her shot slowly. Tuning out drunken input from the other three. *BAM*. She takes the shot. One ball -- then a second -- then a third.

Three dumbstruck faces. JEAN, quietly smug.

VIV (CONT'D)
That's my girl!

DEBBIE

[LAUGHING] OK, I'm bored.

ACE

Hey! It's not over till the fat lady sings.

DEBBIE

I'm the fat lady and I'm calling it. Someone get me another drink.

VIV grabs JEAN for a celebratory snog. JEAN, deftly overriding her own self-consciousness, kisses back. There's an energy between them which is hard to ignore.

ACE

Oh please. Get a room.

17

EXT. JEAN'S STREET - NIGHT.

17

An ordinary street of terraced houses. The SOUND of a dog barking into the nothingness. The blinding flash of HEADLIGHTS. JEAN's car pulling up, followed by the ROAR of VIV's MOTORBIKE.

Stepping out of her car, JEAN locks eyes with an elderly WOMAN poking her nose against the window of the next door house. This is ANNE [70s - haughty]. Somewhat shaken, JEAN heads inside.

18

INT. HALLWAY > LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

18

JEAN picks up a pair of abandoned shoes, placing them neatly on a shoe rack. A white tail pokes out from underneath the sofa. JEAN bends down coaxing out PEGGY, burying her face in soft white fur.

JEAN

Hey, hey. It's OK.

(then)

I think your bike really gets to her you know.

VIV

(closing the door)

It's not my bike, it's that dog. Does it ever stop?

JEAN ignores this, heading to the kitchen.

19 INT. JEAN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT. 19

JEAN sticks an invite for a child's birthday on the fridge and sets about making PEGGY's dinner. SAY YOU by COLOURBOX * suddenly *blasts* through the house.

20 INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT. 20

JEAN
(appearing at the door)
Can you turn that down?

VIV shushes her, handing over a glass of something neat and brown. Swaying to the music, she slinks round behind JEAN, pressing up against her back, daring her to join in. Eventually JEAN softens, reaching an arm round to grab VIV's neck, moving her hips to the music.

VIV
There she is.

They stay like this for a moment, bound together, breathing each other in. A spell only broken by the SOUND of the TELEPHONE. Before JEAN has a chance to decide what to do, VIV reaches over and hangs up the phone. *

On JEAN, unnerved yet thrilled by this transgression. *

JEAN
You're bad.

VIV
How bad?

JEAN
Bad.

On VIV, smirking suggestively. That glint in her eye visibly thawing Jean.

VIV chases JEAN up the stairs growling like a wild animal. They collapse in a heap at the top, giggling like teenagers.

21 OMITTED 21

22 INT. JEAN'S BEDROOM - LATER. 22

JEAN and VIV post coital. Faces close but not touching. Breath shallow and uneven. Shockwaves of pleasure pulsating through their bodies.

They hold each other like this for a while, kissing each other intermittently. JEAN appearing lost in a peacefulness so big it dazes her.

Then, out of nowhere, she rolls away, uneasy with the level of intimacy.

She turns to flick on a cassette player by the bed.

VIV

Oh, please no. Not again.

JEAN

I need it.

VIV

You're sick in the head, you know that don't you?

The machine whirs into life.

SLEEP AID CASSETTE (O.C.)

Choose a point out in front of you, and allow your eyes to focus upon it. Now, take a deep breath in, and as you let it out, allow your eye lids to close.

VIV pretends to suffocate herself with a pillow. JEAN laughs.

23

EXT. WHITLEY BAY, NORTH SHIELDS - DAWN.

23

The North Sea, as immense as it is black. SEAGULLS loom above the swash, circling breakfast. An epicene figure appears, jogging along the boardwalk. That hair ever distinctive against the mottled pink sky. *

At a junction she slows, wiping away sweat with the back of her hand. A peeling BILLBOARD reads - "IS THIS LABOUR'S IDEA OF A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION?" A textbook emblazoned with the words: "YOUNG, GAY AND PROUD" -- "TAKE THE POLITICS OUT OF EDUCATION. VOTE CONSERVATIVE." Remnants from the previous year's election.

JEAN disappears down an alleyway, past a row of neglected back gardens, absorbed by the SOUNDS of a city waking up.

24

INT. JEAN'S BATHROOM - DAY.

24

The bathroom fogged with steam. JEAN engulfed by warm water.

13.

24b INT. JEAN'S KITCHEN - DAY.

24b

In a mint green towelling robe, JEAN eats from a bowl of cereal, staring out of the window. The neighbour's DOG is pissing up against her car, leg cocked. JEAN observes with a curiously even-tempered rage. ANNE appears at the window, beside an inconspicuous 'Neighbourhood Watch' sticker. A beat as they lock eyes.

25 OMITTED

25 *

26 EXT. SPORTS HALL - DAY.

26

Rain hammers down on the roof of the hall, gushing in torrents from neglected guttering.

27 INT. SPORTS HALL - DAY.

27

Year ten BOYS and GIRLS filter into the hall. JEAN stands near the entrance holding the register. MICHELLE is there too, organising equipment.

JEAN
Abigail Dawson? Mindy Singh?

VARIOUS
Here, Miss.

JEAN
Lois Jackson?

Silence. JEAN cranes her neck amid titters from the class.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Anyone know where Lois is?

Blank expressions. Don't know. Don't care.

JEAN (CONT'D)
(making a note)
Right... Siobhan?

SIOBHAN
Here.

JEAN reaches into her pocket and pulls out the newly signed permission slip, handing it to a confused SIOBHAN. As she opens it her mouth twitches. Unequivocal pleasure.

*
*
*
*
*

*

LOIS appears in the doorway, unbrushed tendrils of dark hair covering half her face. Something in her attitude appears a touch rehearsed. But her attempted bravado isn't enough to hide the prickling in her cheeks.

JEAN
Lois?

She nods. All eyes on this alien creature. Studying.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Come on in. I'm Miss Newman. Have you got your kit yet?

LOIS
No.

JEAN
Right, that's OK. We'll find you something. Michelle--?

LOIS
Can I just watch?

SIOBHAN sniggers. Two of the BOYS gawp, eyes on stalks. LOIS glares back at them.

JEAN
Something funny Mike?

MIKE
[LAUGHING] Nah Miss.

JEAN
Right then. Grow up.
(then, to LOIS)
OK, look. You can sit this one out.
But in future it's not really optional, okay?

LOIS nods. By now the class are all whispering like excitable bunnies. *If she's watching, I want to... etc.*

JEAN (CONT'D)
Enough. Right. I need you in two teams. Jimmy, get over here.

BODIES charge across the hall. Two kids stand like goalies in the middle. These are the BULLDOGS. It's their job to catch the others before they reach the other side.

Slowly tracking through this mass of bodies, we locate LOIS, sitting on a bench, keenly observing JEAN as she does her thing on the sideline beside MICHELLE.

MIKE *slams* into JILL who squeals.

MIKE
British Bulldog - one, two, three!

MICHELLE
That's it Mike!

The game continues. Screams and yelps of delight and frustration echoing round the room. JEAN turns her attention to LOIS.

JEAN
If you come by the office tomorrow
I'll sort you out with some kit,
alright?

She turns back to the game, then--

JEAN (CONT'D)
Have you thought about joining the
netball team?

LOIS shakes her head.

JEAN (CONT'D)
We're midway through the season but
you could come along later and get
a feel for it if you like. *

Almost no reaction from LOIS. SIOBHAN looks over from across the hall. Sensing competition. Then--

JEAN (CONT'D)
Have you played before? *

LOIS
No.
(beat)
But I know you can't run when
you've got the ball.

JEAN
(vaguely amused)
I reckon you'd be good at it you
know. *

LOIS considers the offer.

LOIS
Thanks, but you're alright.

*

A bell sounds and LOIS stands.

JEAN
Let me know if you change your
mind.

*

Half a nod as LOIS heads towards the door. JEAN watches her go. Her expression one of genuine empathy.

29

INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER.

29

JEAN and VIV are eating pot noodles in front of the TV. A couple of half drunk tinnies sit beside a brimming ashtray on the coffee table.

JEAN is a careful eater, wrapping each mouthful slowly round her fork, placing it purposefully into her mouth. VIV's the opposite. Noisy. Messy. Paper towels everywhere. After a particularly loud slurp, JEAN turns.

VIV
What?

JEAN
Nothing.

VIV
No really, am I distracting you?

JEAN
[LAUGHS] You're just quite loud.

VIV
Oh yeah? How loud?

JEAN
(playful)
Sounds like you're snoring.

VIV
No it doesn't!
(JEAN shrugs)
Come on. Show us what it's like?

JEAN does an impression. It's not flattering.

VIV (CONT'D)
[LAUGHS] Wow. Okay.

JEAN laughing, clearly enjoying mocking VIV in this way.

CILLA BLACK (O.S.)
In a moment we'll find out how Anna and Kevin enjoyed their blind date in Denmark, and meet the man who has to choose from one of these three lovely girls!

VIV picks up the remote and flicks over to another channel.

JEAN
Hey!

VIV

JEAN tries to snatch back the remote back but VIV waves it round the air just out of reach.

VIV (CONT'D)
(in a sirup sweet voice)
Oh but Kevin, if you fall for me, I
promise to suck your cock every
week and never, ever, ever
emasculate you in front of your
friends.

JEAN laughs begrudgingly.

VIV (CONT'D)
You do realise they flood our tellies with this 'ere to distract us from what's really going on.

JEAN
Always the conspiracy theorist.

VIV
I'm telling you.

JEAN
Not everything's political.

Of course it is. **VIV**

A moment between them. VIV melting JEAN. Then JEAN puts her pot noodle down and wraps herself around VIV, feeling her way up her back to take off her bra. She wrestles with it for a second, smiling awkwardly.

VIV hoists herself up onto her knees and takes off her T shirt. A moment with them there, breathing each other in.

Then -- THE DOORBELL. *

JEAN
Who's that?

VIV
How would I know? *

The door goes again.

JEAN
Okay, hang on. *

JEAN padding over to the door, peering through the peep hole. On the porch are SASHA [30] blonde and wholesome and a little boy in striped pyjamas, SAMMY [5]. *

JEAN (CONT'D)
[SOTTO] Shit.

JEAN fumbling. BLIND PANIC. *

VIV
Hey! Calm down. It's okay. *

SASHA (O.C.)
Jean? Are you there?

VIV
What's going on??

JEAN
It's my sister. Can you just-- *

On VIV, swallowing this, T-shirt landing on her face.

JEAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)
One sec!

JEAN opens the door. *

SASHA
Sorry Jeany, I tried ringing but-
Tim's mum's been taken to hospital.
They think she might have had a
stroke. Could you watch Sammy? I
don't think it would be--

JEAN

Course, yeah - that's fine.

SASHA

Really? -- Thank you so much,
you're a star.

JEAN

We'll be okay won't we Sammy?

Nothing.

SASHA

Don't go all shy on us. Say hallo
to Aunty Jean.

Nothing...

JEAN

Maybe I'll let you watch a bit of
telly before bed...*
*

A microscopic change of expression from SAMMY.

SASHA

Thank you, thank you.

31

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

31

VIV pulling on her t-shirt as SAMMY bounds up onto the sofa,
the mood now shattered.

JEAN

[SOTTO] His gran's just been rushed
to hospital. They didn't want to
take him--*
*

SAMMY

(cutting her off)

Who's that?

JEAN

That's my friend Viv. Viv, Sammy.

*

SAMMY

Oh.

VIV

Hiya.

JEAN

You can watch telly for five
minutes, okay? Then I'll take you
up to bed.

*

SAMMY leaps onto the sofa, grabbing the TV remote.

*

32

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER.

32

VIV tossing pot noodle remains in the bin. JEAN appearing
behind.

JEAN

Sorry.

*

VIV

(light)

Friend is it?

JEAN

(a beat, then)

He's five.

VIV

And?

JEAN

Don't.

VIV

(still playful)

Don't what?

*

JEAN

Don't tell me how to be with my own
family.

A loaded beat.

VIV

Okay.

(then)

I'll call you tomorrow then.

JEAN

Okay.

VIV goes to kiss JEAN, but ends up planting a half kiss on
her cheek. It's awkward and both of them feel it.

*

*

VIV

Enjoy your cartoons.

*

JEAN, picks at the wood around the fridge as VIV makes her way outside. It splinters onto the floor.

JEAN winces as VIV's motorbike ROARS into life.

33

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

33

On the sofa, SAMMY picks his nose with intense focus.

FEMALE CONTESTANT (O.S.)
Well Jason, this date sounds a bit fishy to me, but if you pick me tonight, the only question you'll be asking is, "Is it your plaice or mine?" [nasal canned laughter]

SAMMY cocks his head, confused.

JEAN (O.C.)
Come on then Sammy. Bath time.

SAM
It's not finished!

JEAN
I don't care.

SAMMY shakes his head solemnly.

JEAN (CONT'D)
(switching off the TV)
Come on.

SAMMY gets up without a word, head hanging.

34

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT.

34

SAMMY in the bath now, playing solemnly with a toy airplane. JEAN sits next to him on the bathmat, PEGGY pawing at the carpet by her feet.

All of a sudden, SAMMY starts rocking back and forth with his entire body, sending a tidal wave over the sides of the bath and onto the carpet.

JEAN
Hey! Stop that!

SAMMY doesn't listen. Huge, lapping waves slosh over the side, soaking JEAN, scaring off PEGGY.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Stop it!

JEAN jumps to her feet, grabbing SAMMY roughly, lifting him clear of the water. A beat between them, steely stubbornness on both sides. Then JEAN softens, checking herself.

JEAN (CONT'D)
 Hey, it's okay.
 (she hugs him tight)
 Let's go read a story.

SAMMY lets his body go floppy, dropping the plane which PLOPS into the bath with a splash.

Sitting him down on the toilet seat, JEAN dries SAMMY's hair with a towel and helps him with his pyjamas.

JEAN (CONT'D)
 (gentle, with feeling)
 I'm sorry Sammy. I should'na yelled
 at ya.

SAMMY doesn't respond.

35 OMITTED 35

36 OMITTED 36

37 OMITTED 37

38 INT. JEAN'S UTILITY ROOM - DAY. 38 *

JEAN washes SAMMY's pyjamas in the sink. Wringing them out she hangs them up on the line.

JEAN lights a cigarette, leaning back against the counter. The SOUND of VIV's motorbike rips through the house. JEAN watches from the window as she dismounts.

39 INT. JEAN'S HALLWAY - DAY. 39

JEAN opens her front door, revealing VIV.

VIV
 Hi.

JEAN
 Hi.

JEAN takes a drag of her cigarette. VIV peers into the house.

JEAN (CONT'D)
What?

VIV
Just checking you're not on nanny
duty today. *

JEAN
Sasha picked him up this morning.

There is a slackening as they stand there, looking at each other. A fondness returning. An unspoken apology.

40

INT. CHIPPIY - DAY.

40

JEAN and VIV sit opposite each other, hungrily devouring a plate of chips. It's quiet in here. They are the only customers. The OWNER sits on a table not far away smoking a cigarette. Music from the radio transitions into a news bulletin.

NEWS REPORTER (O.C.)
A gay teacher was suspended in Bradford City Centre today. Dr Austin Allen, 37, who teaches Maths at a secondary school in Bradford, West Yorkshire was accused by the city council of an "error of judgement" following an earlier warning that he should not discuss his own sexuality or homosexuality in general at school.

VIV coughs, almost choking on a chip. She takes a swig of coke to wash it down.

NEWS REPORTER.
This news follows an earlier announcement that the government is to ban the promotion of homosexuality in schools. CLAUSE 28 will make it illegal for schools and local councils to promote homosexuality and pretended family relationships.

VIV
What does that even *mean*, "pretended family relationships"?

Despite her outrage, VIV keeps her voice to a level only JEAN can hear. JEAN wipes her mouth with a napkin, slowly, deliberately.

JEAN
 I found myself lying the other day. *
 I had to call one of the kid's *
 parents. And I got, I dunno- *
 (a beat, then)
 I told her I was me boss. *
 (beat)
 I didn't plan it or anything. But I *
 felt like if I told her it was me, *
 she might think-- *

VIV
 Something was going on between yous *
 two. *

JEAN
 Yeah. It's stupid. *

VIV
 It's not stupid.
 (then)
 It's what they want though. You *
 know that?

A bell rings as ANNE enters the chippy. A sudden energy shift. ANNE's eyes travel to VIV. Her tattooed hands. Her clothes. The OWNER stands.

OWNER
 What can I get you love?

JEAN watching ANNE, watching VIV. Clocking this little Mexican standoff, VIV waves emphatically back at ANNE, then turns back to JEAN.

VIV
 She's friendly.

The colour rises in JEAN's cheeks. She reaches for her wallet, pulls out some coins to cover the chips.

VIV (CONT'D)
 What are you doing? I haven't *
 finished. *

JEAN tosses them onto her napkin and heads towards the exit. VIV is left standing by the table as JEAN stride away down the pavement.

41 OMITTED

41

42 INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

42

JEAN sits alone on her sofa smoking a cigarette, barely illuminated. The TV is on.

MET POLICE OFFICER (O.C.)
 I obviously don't want children
 taught that the gay and lesbian
 lifestyle is natural or normal.
 It's not. It never has been. And it
 never will be.

Music builds as we slowly begin to track in on JEAN's face, frozen in a sort of stare.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIEST (O.C.)
 I hesitate to use the word
 perversion. But let's face up to
 the truth of this situation, that's
 what it is.

CUT directly off JEAN's stare to--

43 INT. SPORTS HALL - DREAMSCAPE.

43

LOIS. Doubled over in the centre of the hall, wearing a look of absolute determination. Opposite her - a pack of crazed TEENAGERS, poised to take down their prey.

That music building here still--

JEAN raises a whistle to her lips and LOIS propels herself forward. Darting this way and that, one hand on the ground to spin out of a near miss. Eventually the wolves descend. Scrabbling over each other. Spitting and SNARLING. All eager to be the one to make the kill.

LOIS's torso smashes against the wooden floor and she looks up at JEAN, a helpless child now. JEAN reaches down a hand to pull her up, as the rest of the kids high five each other.

JEAN
 You made that look easy.

JEAN smiles encouragingly, but LOIS, unused to this kind of flattery, tries desperately to hide her flushing cheeks.

SIOBHAN watches this exchange through gritted teeth.

Panting and puce, the year tens leave the hall.

44

INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY.

44

An answerphone flashes red. JEAN presses play. *

ANSWER PHONE (O.S.)
 Jeany? It's your mother
 calling. It's eleven fifty-two on
 Wednesday--

JEAN's finger hitting stop on the message. *

A lighter flicks on, billowing smoke appears. Then JEAN's feet, padding across the room. Her hand, reaching for the phone, dialling VIV's number. *

VIV (O.S.)
 Hello?

A pause.

JEAN
 I'm sorry.

VIV (O.S.)
 Oh yeah, what for?

JEAN
 For being an idiot. *

VIV
 Right. *
 (a beat, then)
 Meet me by the holiday park on
 Blyth Road in half an hour?

JEAN
 Why?

But the line is dead. JEAN, rattled, hangs up the phone.

45

EXT. COAST ROAD, LAYBY - LATER.

45

JEAN looking very pale as VIV clips a motorcycle helmet under her chin. VIV laughs and pulls down the visor.

VIV
 You're not backing out now.

VIV throws her leg over the bike. JEAN's fingers grip onto VIV as the engine fires up. VIV grins and kicks the throttle.

46

EXT. COAST ROAD - DUSK.

46

The bike pelts up the coast road. VIV turns to look over her shoulder.

VIV
(muffled)
You okay back there?

A hint of a smile from JEAN. Then--

JEAN
Look at the road!

VIV laughs, turning back to face the front. Then she reaches down and squeezes JEAN's hand.

47

EXT. DIRT TRACK - DUSK.

47

The motorcycle headlight clicks on, illuminating the hedgerow. Their pace a little slower now as VIV navigates a bumpy track.

JEAN tilts her head back, closing her eyes, allowing herself to enjoy the sensation of the wind on her face. VIV smiles as she watches JEAN in the side mirror.

The bike skids to a halt on the edge of the dunes and JEAN leaps off, helmet still on, charging towards the sea.

VIV
[LAUGHING] Wait for me!!

VIV sprints across the sand, no match for JEAN.

A lone DOG WALKER turns, smiling as these two unidentifiable lovers kick off their shoes, frolicking in the sand.

FADE TO BLACK.

48

INT. VENUS - A FEW DAYS LATER.

48

The bar is alive with the heady energy of women on the pull. ACE, DEBBIE and VIV are consumed in animated conversation with JONI, 30s. JEAN hands out badly pulled pints of Slalom D, taking a seat next to VIV.

ACE
(reading aloud from THE
PINK PAPER)
"BEV, 18, is looking for friends.
(MORE)

ACE (CONT'D)
Lonely lesbian seeking to correspond with others who share the same interests, including looking after animals and gardening. I don't go to nightclubs but enjoy walking in the countryside. Eagerly awaiting your replies!" -- Awww bless you Bev Clarkson from Leeds.

Rapturous laughter from the group.

JONI
Poor sod.

VIV
[LAUGHS] Aw, you're such a cow!

JONI winks provocatively at VIV. JEAN cautiously observing.

ACE
Oh my god. Stop. This one. "Gay white female is lustng for sweaty butch athletes, pumped for bristling bodybuilders, and handsome, hot women in uniform to quell the ache in my loins and soften my perpetually erect clit."

The whole table bursts into hysterics.

VIV
Who the fuck has a perpetually erect clit?!

JONI
You do, I seem to remember.

A loaded beat. All eyes on JEAN.

VIV
(to JONI)
Really--??

JONI flashes an unapologetic smile. JEAN looks from JONI to VIV, unsure what to do with this information.

DEBBIE
Read another one babe.

JONI
Oh come on. We all fucked each other. That's what we did!

ACE
Speak for yourself.

VIV turns to JEAN, tries to take her hand. JEAN pulls away.

JONI

What, you've lost your memory now
you're married, is that it?

They continue bickering, but JEAN gets up. VIV makes to follow, but DEBBIE raises her hand.

DEBBIE

Maybe leave her for a minute.

On VIV, unsure whether to follow.

VIV

(to JONI)

What the fuck was that?

JONI

I didn't know we had to watch
language round the teacher.

VIV

Her name's Jean. And if you can't
be nice why don't you just piss
off?

VIV glances over to the bar where JEAN takes a seat, embroiled in a cloud of cigarette smoke.

AT THE BAR -- JEAN scans the dance floor. A mass of writhing, sweaty bodies. The DJ changes track. Brit-funk classic MELODIES OF LOVE. The dancers switch up a gear. Her eyes fall on a pair of lovers entwined in a passionate embrace. Taking a long drag of her cigarette, she contemplates their uninhibited sexuality.

Turning back, she tries unsuccessfully to grab the BARTENDER. Beaten to it by a familiar face, one that takes a moment to place, here, out of context.

It's LOIS paying for a beer. She's alone, wide-eyed and way out of her depth.

BARTENDER (O.C.)

What can I get you?

JEAN, blinking in a numbed daze, doesn't respond. Blood pounds in her ears. Slipping off her chair, she disappears into the crowd.

49

INT. VENUS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER.

49

JEAN on the toilet now, head hanging. The SOUND of her pee hitting the bowl. She looks up slowly, studying the various obscenities adorning the walls. Things like - "Lesbians are fucking everywhere" and "Resisting the shame regime"

Someone BANGS on the door.

50

INT. BATHROOM - LATER.

50

JEAN scrubbing her hands in the sink like she's trying to remove a layer of skin. LOIS appears in the reflection, smiling hesitantly. An uneasy stillness descends as they lock eyes. But then, without a flicker of acknowledgement, JEAN moves to the dryer, dries her hands and leaves the bathroom.

On LOIS, confused and wounded. A group of WOMEN bustle into the toilets, shoving her as they go.

50b

INT. VENUS STAIRCASE - NOT LONG LATER.

50b

VIV approaches JEAN at the bottom of the stairs.

VIV

You OK?

JEAN

I think I'm gonna go home.

*

VIV

Home?

JEAN

Yeah, sorry.

VIV

Because of her?

JEAN

No.

VIV

She likes to shock people. That's just what she does.

*

(then)

Don't you think you're over-reacting a little bit?

*

JEAN

It's nothing to do with her. I just want to go home.

VIV

Okay. I'll come with you.

JEAN

No stay.

VIV

No, let's go.

JEAN

I think I just want to be alone.

A beat.

VIV

Fine, whatever.

VIV, annoyed, heads through the double doors back into the bar.

51 OMITTED

51

52 INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

52

JEAN sits in a tight, upright position beside an overflowing ashtray. The phone rings but she ignores it. The rumble of a car pulling up outside, headlights penetrating her space.

*
*
*

She rises to shut the curtains, putting her water glass down on a table as she goes. She stands there, very still, the tectonic plates beneath her beginning to tremble. Eventually the car pulls away.

*
*
*
*53 INT/EXT. JEAN'S CAR - THE NEXT DAY.

53

JEAN sits in her car outside nondescript grey buildings. THWACK! A knock on her window. A kid on a skateboard whizzing by, late for assembly. JEAN's entire body jolts.

54 INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY.

54

Malevolent LAUGHTER lingers in JEAN's ears as she walks. She seems somewhat feverish. Teachers pass, smiling good-naturedly, but in JEAN's heightened POV, they appear somehow threatening. An unsettling prop for the school production is wheeled across her path.

55 OMITTED

55

56

INT. SPORTS HALL - LATER.

56

JEAN alone on court, placing coloured cones in a line. The SOUND of the door opening. She turns, the hairs on the back of her neck going up. It's LOIS.

An interminable moment. Wild animals sizing each other up.

LOIS's expression, though unwavering in its stoicism, betrays the faintest hint of hope. Hope that she might be included. This hint of vulnerability cuts through JEAN.

JEAN

Changed your mind then?

LOIS

Maybe.

JEAN

Okay. Well I'll have you shadow Siobhan today, help you get to grips with the basics.

LOIS nods. The rest of the team flood into the hall, eyeing her curiously, put out, down right annoyed in some cases.

JEAN (CONT'D)

(then, to LOIS)

Take that jumper off please.
Uniform only on this team.

LOIS pulls off her jumper and jogs over towards the others.

57

INT. SPORTS HALL - NOT LONG LATER.

57

TWO GIRLS poised at the centre. JEAN blows a whistle and the ball descends. A match ensues for a few moments until CAROL catches the ball and LOIS bats it easily out of her hands.

JEAN blows her whistle, this time barely audible above a cacophony of voices. The class are in *UPROAR*. Throwing blame around like a hot coal.

JEAN

That's enough! We do not speak to each other like that on this court.
Now, which one of you is going to show Lois how we defend *without* contact?

A sea of reluctant faces.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Siobhan, Mindy, come here.

SIOBHAN, furious, shuffles over.

LOIS retreats towards the bench, hands in pockets, tuning out JEAN's voice. Prickling, she focuses her attention on the physicality of the scene-- watching as JEAN, like a master sculptor, sets about creating perfect lines with the players bodies.

JEAN places her hands on SIOBHAN's hips -- The curve of SIOBHAN's lower back -- Her tilted pelvis -- That mane, grazing the nape of her neck.

A WHISTLE breaks the spell.

SIOBHAN, keen to prove a point, easily dodges past MINDY, throwing the ball out of play.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Okay. Well done. Lois? Want to give it a try?

LOIS hesitates, she wasn't listening.

JEAN (CONT'D)
It's OK. We'll go slowly.

Not ready to concede, LOIS jogs over.

It's LOIS vs SIOBHAN. A palpable, uneasy tension between them. The ball drops, but it's all over very quickly. SIOBHAN dodging easily to the side, throwing the ball to MINDY and sprinting past. LOIS is frustrated and it shows.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Give it another go, come stand here. If you position yourself more like this...

JEAN hesitates as she reaches out to position LOIS's body. Then checks herself for hesitating. A fizzy, three-way energy. JEAN's hands on LOIS's shoulders. LOIS's eyes on JEAN's hand. SIOBHAN's eyes trained on JEAN as she encourages LOIS. Every look, every movement loaded with an uncomfortable, unbridled intimacy.

JEAN drops the ball. SIOBHAN snatches it, but this time LOIS defends with every cell of her body. SIOBHAN turns left, *BAM* - she's there -- right, *BAM* - she's there.

Eventually SIOBHAN prevails, passing to MINDY, whom she high fives, victorious.

But LOIS's performance is enough to renew her confidence. SIOBHAN throws LOIS a territorial glance. *A war is brewing here.*

A BELL GOES in the distance. JEAN collects the bibs, calling out instructions about their upcoming match.

LOIS hands her bib back, looking up at JEAN with those big hopeful blue eyes. JEAN battles her instinct.

JEAN (CONT'D)
See you back here tomorrow then.

58

INT. P.E DEPARTMENT OFFICES - DAY.

58

Later, JEAN at her desk, working on a lesson plan.

PAULA
Call for you Jean.

JEAN
Who is it?

PAULA (O.C.)
Didn't say.

JEAN pushes out her chair, making her way towards the phone.

JEAN
Jean Newman speaking.

VIV (O.C.)
Why hello, Jean Newman.

On JEAN, experiencing some kind of brain freeze.

VIV (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Hello--? Jean--?

JEAN, flushing, looks around the office, her hand over the receiver. DAVE isn't far away, sipping coffee by the photocopier. Without giving anything away, JEAN reaches over and hangs up the phone. DEAD TONE.

With one last sheepish look around, she resumes her work.

PAULA appears behind. JEAN tensing, awaits the Spanish inquisition. BUT--

PAULA
Spoke to Baldock this morning. He approved the proposals you put forward.

On JEAN, taking a moment to register.

PAULA (CONT'D)
I know, I couldn't believe it
either.

CLOSE on JEAN registering this small victory, as PAULA barrels out of the office.

59 OMITTED

59

60 INT. JOHN STREET HOUSING CO-OP - NIGHT.

60

JEAN ascends a dilapidated spiral staircase. Low lighting. Walls plastered with political posters. *Stop the Clause. Take Back the Night. Gay & Lesbian Switchboard.* The door is open when she knocks. After a beat she pushes the door--

60b INT. JOHN STREET CO-OP, LIVING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

60b

JEAN steps cautiously into an epic co-opted space. ACE is lying across DEBBIE on a sofa on the far side of the room. They don't notice JEAN come in. Something simmers on a camping stove nearby. JEAN lingers awkwardly, far from home in this space.

ABI [late 20s] appears from behind a screen.

ABI
Oh, hiya!

JEAN
Hi.

ABI
You alright?

JEAN
Yeah, I'm... Is Viv around?

ABI
Yeah, she's just--

VIV appears at a door to the left. ABI grins, before registering the animosity blistering between them.

ABI (CONT'D)
(leaving)
I'll be...

And she disappears back behind a screen.

VIV studies JEAN, waiting for an explanation.

JEAN
(lowering her voice)
You can't call me at work. I told
you that.

VIV
You didn't call me back last night.
I was worried.

JEAN
I told you not to call me there.

VIV
(after a beat)
Why d'you have to be so uptight?

JEAN
(turning to leave)
You know what, I don't need this.

VIV reaches out to stop her--

JEAN (CONT'D)
You have no idea what it's like for
me.

VIV
(Grabbing JEAN with both
hands)
Hey.

VIV stares into JEAN's eyes until she softens.

VIV (CONT'D)
I won't call you at work.
(a beat, then more
playful)
Can you just shut the door? You're
letting the draft in.

JEAN
It was open when I got here!

VIV
No it wasn't.

JEAN
It was!
(then)
How d'you think I got in?

VIV

Oh shut up and come here.

VIV grabs JEAN and kisses her. JEAN kisses back.

61 OMITTED

61

62 OMITTED

62

63 INT. VIV'S BEDROOM, LATER.

63

VIV's room is cosy, if a bit of a state. Piled to the ceiling with memories and keepsakes. JEAN perches herself on the edge of the bed wrapped in a towel, loosely drying her hair. VIV climbs onto the bed, straddling JEAN.

VIV

Are you hungry? I made pasta.

JEAN

(hesitating)

Er, no, I'm fine.

VIV

Okay great.

VIV kisses JEAN and she kisses back.

VIV (CONT'D)

I called you uptight. You're not
uptight.

*

(a beat)

Well, maybe a little.

They laugh and JEAN kisses VIV, with more urgency, hoping sex might provide some respite from the muddled chaos of her mind. VIV slowly unravels JEAN's towel, kissing her ribs and caressing her thighs, finally disappearing between her legs.

For a second JEAN's there, in the moment, breath quickening, back arched. Then her mind wanders to the SOUND of ABI laughing and clattering around on the other side of the door. Every muscle in JEAN's body stiffens.

On JEAN, trying desperately to detach. But the gap between pleasure and anxiety only seems to expand. Eventually she grabs VIV, gently guiding her up till their faces meet.

VIV (CONT'D)

What's--?

JEAN

Nothing. Come here.

They lie on their backs for a moment, breathing heavily. VIV, hurt, looks to JEAN for an answer. JEAN doesn't have one.

DARKNESS -- VIV under the duvet now, facing the wall. JEAN reaches over and switches off the light.

64

INT. VIV'S COMMUNAL LIVING SPACE, LATE NIGHT.

64

The steady thrum of an ancient storage heater. A LARGE BROWN MOTH flutters half heartedly, trapped in the lamp.

JEAN sits alone in a wide open frame, reading the back cover of a weatherbeaten copy of THE WELL OF LONELINESS, picking at a bowl of pasta.

A yellow NEWSPAPER CLIPPING falls into her lap as she turns the page. Wiping away sauce from her mouth, she unfolds it to reveal an ancient review. Some words have been highlighted: *"I would rather give a healthy boy or girl a phial of prussic acid than give them this novel."*

JEAN starts as ABI enters wearing nothing but a pair of mangey boxer shorts.

ABI

Sorry, did I frighten ya?
I'm a bit nocturnal.

JEAN

It's okay.

ABI flicks on the kettle.

ABI

Be a good one for your students
that. You read it?

JEAN

I haven't. Says here it was banned
for obscenity? *

ABI

Yeah. They thought it would lead to
an epidemic. *

JEAN

An epidemic of what?

ABI

Lesbianism!

ABI laughs at the look on JEAN's face, then she opens the fridge, pulls out a carton of milk and starts glugging. JEAN attempts to refocus on the page.

65

INT. CHANGING ROOM - DAY.

65

YOU'RE A WOMAN by BAD BOYS BLUE blasts out of JEAN's ghetto blaster. SIOBHAN, much to the amusement of the other girls, performs a disturbingly sexual dance routine.

LOIS sits by her locker, unsure where to look. SIOBHAN locks eyes with her, grabbing her tits and shaking her ass. LOIS stares back, a deer in the headlights.

JEAN marches in, turning the volume down.

JEAN

Save it for the match why don't ya,
Siobhan?

SIOBHAN

Ah, just having a bit of fun Miss.

66

INT. SPORTS HALL - NIGHT.

66

Two teams battling it out. JEAN running down the sideline, muttering under her breath every now and then. LOIS sits on the bench, keenly observing beyond a mass of wiry limbs.

SIOBHAN weaves in and out of the opposing team. Light on her feet. Easily dominating. Then she trips, falls, twisting her ankle. The whistle goes and MICHELLE helps SIOBHAN off court, limping. JEAN turns towards a hesitant LOIS.

JEAN

You're on.

LOIS isn't sure.

JEAN (CONT'D)

(so only LOIS can hear)

You'll be fine. Try not to think
too much.

She hands LOIS a bib and ushers her onto court.

CUT TO:

LOIS scores in the final minute amid cheers from her teammates. JEAN smiles from the sidelines. Conflicted but pleased. LOIS stands a little taller as she snatches a segment of orange from a silver bowl.

*

SIOBHAN looking furious as CAROL pats LOIS on the back.

67

EXT. WHITLEY BAY, BOARDWALK - NIGHT.

67

JEAN and VIV walk side by side down the boardwalk. The SOUND of waves crashing. JEAN wraps her coat tighter, battling the wind. VIV reaches down to take her hand, but JEAN pulls away.

VIV

There's no one here.

JEAN

(giving over her hand)

Sorry.

VIV

You're freezing!

VIV rubs JEAN's hand between hers, breathing life into it.

VIV (CONT'D)

I wish you'd let me come to one of your games. You wouldn't have to talk to me. I'd just like to be there.

JEAN throws her a look as she pulls away to unlock her car.

VIV (CONT'D)

What you don't think I'd blend in with the other parents?

A half smile from JEAN.

JEAN

Stick out like a sore thumb, more like.

VIV

Hey, that's not kind.

(then)

Anyway, I bet there are loads of lezzas on your team.

JEAN ignores this, climbing into the car.

68

INT. JEAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS.

68

VIV

Well??

JEAN

Well, what?

*

VIV

Oh come on.

JEAN

I don't ask them who they're
sleeping with.

*

VIV

No, but you can just tell!

JEAN

I haven't thought about it.

VIV

(shaking her head)

You're from another planet, you.

*

JEAN

[LAUGHS] Is that right?

JEAN flicks on the headlights and the car pulls away.

69

INT / EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE/ ANNE'S HOUSE.

69

ANNE's POV from the window as JEAN and VIV stumble, a little drunk, towards her front door. They're laughing, hands entwined. ANNE shuts her curtain and disappears.

*

70

INT. PE DEPARTMENT OFFICE - A FEW DAYS LATER.

70

JEAN enters, heading for the coffee station. Something's up with the energy today and she can feel it. In the corner, JEAN's colleagues are huddled round the TV. JEAN moves through to get a better look--

TV NEWS REPORTER (O.C.)

Three women gay rights protesters caused pandemonium in the House of Lords last night when they abseiled from the public gallery onto the floor of the chamber. The women were protesting CLAUSE 28 which bans schools and local councils from promoting or normalising homosexuality and pretended family relationships.

*

Another voice now--

LORDS PEER (O.C.)
 We on this side of the committee
 care *first and foremost* about
 children.

Echoes of agreement.

STILL as a HUNTED DEER, JEAN registers no reaction.

LORDS PEER (CONT'D)
 We care about the perpetuation of
 the heterosexual, normal family as
 the basis of civilised society here
 and in other countries.

JEAN still rooted to the spot, others gossiping around her.

DAVE
 Wouldn't wanna run into them
 women in a dark alley -
 they'd 'ave ya guts for
 garters, they would.

PAULA
 I've been saying this was a
 good idea for years. Young
 people have such vulnerable
 minds.

71

INT. STAFF TOILET - CONTINUOUS.

71

JEAN lets herself into a cubicle and sits down, safety now, between these walls. She takes a breath. Then reaches a hand between her legs, pulling it out to reveal a thick globule of blood clinging to her fingers. She groans, reaching for the toilet roll, accidentally smearing blood across the dispenser, sending it into a spin.

Reams of white paper mounting on the floor. Bloody finger prints. Leaving tracks.

72

INT. SPORTS HALL - A FEW DAYS LATER.

72

The U16's running drills. Two by two, up and down.

LOIS hopping around, catching her breath. JEAN catches her eye briefly from the sideline but looks away. SIOBHAN scowls, sensing her hard won crown slipping.

LATER-- JEAN picking up cones at the end of practice.

A few girls huddled by the door, collecting their belongings. LOIS is there slightly outside the group, watching JEAN.

Fragments of their conversation at first--

CAROL
 Oh no, gross!

JILL

Gross?

CAROL

So gross!

SIOBHAN

You're mental, you are.

CAROL (CONT'D)

You're bloody mental!

SIOBHAN (CONT'D)

What about you Lois?

LOIS looks up, surprised.

SIOBHAN (CONT'D)

What's your type?

She mimes a blow job. Awkward beat on LOIS.

SIOBHAN (CONT'D)

No, wait. You like 'em a bit more--

SIOBHAN grabbing her tits, jiggling them in LOIS's face.

LOIS

Fuck off.

Sniggers from the rabble. LOIS tries to stay calm.

SIOBHAN

Or is it the mannish ones that do
it for ya?

Hostile laughter from SIOBHAN's steadily building entourage.

LOIS

Whatever.

LOIS turns to leave. BLOCKED by SIOBHAN.

SIOBHAN

Oh, come on. We've just been saying
what we like. Now it's your turn.
Fair do's.

JILL

Yeah, come on.

The blood rises in LOIS's ears.

SIOBHAN

What I don't get is how two girls
actually, you know. I mean. I know
there's a lot of this--

Mimes licking a V shape.

SIOBHAN (CONT'D)

But how do you actually--?

The others collapse into uncontrollable giggles. LOIS grabs her towel and tries to barge past SIOBHAN, but she's blocked in. Their faces desperately close now.

SIOBHAN (CONT'D)

No denying it then? Ooo.

JILL

Maybe she's a virgin.

Pantomime surprise from SIOBHAN.

SIOBHAN

Probably.

LOIS

Am not.

SIOBHAN

Why are you going red then?

LOIS

I'm not.

CHAR

Liar.

CHORUS -- "She's going REEEEDDDD"

LOIS shakes her head, rage *effervescing*.

SIOBHAN

Do you think I'm sexy?

She's really close to LOIS now, running her hands seductively down her gyrating body. 360 LAUGHTER fills LOIS's ears. Blood boiling, she shoves SIOBHAN.

SIOBHAN (CONT'D)

Don't touch me, you fucking dyke.

JEAN turns, whistle in mouth, to see LOIS shoving SIOBHAN again, this time to the ground. A WHISTLE sounds like a panic button.

JEAN
Get off!! -- Get off her! Now!

JEAN wrenching LOIS and SIOBHAN off each other. A messy scramble of limbs.

JEAN (CONT'D)
[TO LOIS] My office, now.
[TO SIOBHAN] You can stay here and explain to me what just happened - alright? No talking back, d'you hear me?

LOIS
Whatever.

JEAN
Go. Now.

LOIS storms off court. SIOBHAN inspecting her elbow, playing the victim.

73

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY.

73

JEAN pacing down the corridor, losing a grip on her cool exterior. Flinging open the door to the office, letting it slam loudly behind her. A mask from the display comes unstuck, slipping down the wall onto the floor.

74

INT. PE DEPARTMENT OFFICE - DAY.

74

LOIS sits in a swivel chair, staring listlessly out the window. JEAN rummages through a first aid kit at her feet. A clock ticks overhead. With a gauze between her teeth, JEAN rolls down LOIS's sock.

JEAN
You've a chance to really succeed
on this team.

JEAN applies antiseptic to a gash in LOIS's knee. She barely flinches.

LOIS
D'you even care what happened?

An olive branch. JEAN considers it. But--

JEAN
Just ignore them.

LOIS

[LAUGHS] Is that what you did?

On JEAN, her jaw pulsating. She bites off a piece of surgical tape between her teeth.

JEAN

I'm not talking about me.

LOIS, daring JEAN to engage. A dull violence in her eyes. A beat, eyes locked. Something is tempting JEAN to share with this girl. She checks herself.

JEAN (CONT'D)

I think you need to be careful is what I'm saying. If it comes to it, your word against hers, you know who they'll believe don't you?

LOIS

[LAUGHING] So it doesn't even matter what happened.

JEAN

Look, I could get you thrown out permanently for that kind of behaviour. I know it seems unfair, but I am trying to help you. If you want this, fight for it. Not against it.

But LOIS is distracted by something else. It's SIOBHAN poking her nose up against the glass, craning to see. LOIS flips her a finger.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Hey. Hey.

MICHELLE barrels into the office. SIOBHAN no longer anywhere to be seen. A beat as she takes in the scene. The air THICK with things unsaid. Then, clocking the first aid kit--

MICHELLE

Oh no, what happened?

LOIS looks expectantly at JEAN, waiting to see how she's going to handle this.

JEAN

Just a graze.

MICHELLE

Aw, you alright pet?

LOIS
 [GETTING UP] I'm fine.

LOIS locks eyes with JEAN on her way out.

MICHELLE
 Poor love.

JEAN
 She's OK.

JEAN moves to the kitchen, pouring herself a glass of water.

MICHELLE
 All sorts of rumours flying round
 about that one... Not sure she
 helps herself though.
 (a beat)
 Everything OK with you?

JEAN
 Yeah, fine. Long day.

MICHELLE
 Take it you don't want to come for
 a pint then?

JEAN painting on her best apology face.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 One day! One day I will crack you
 Jean Newman. And when I do, Fergus
 Shelton will be a very happy man.

75

INT. JEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

75

JEAN in bed, wide awake. VIV's tattooed arm draped over her body like a shield. Removing herself from under VIV, she pads out into the corridor, switching on the hallway light.

76

INT. JEAN'S KITCHEN - LATER.

76

Sporting a pair of marigolds, JEAN scrubs the kitchen sink with bleach, her warped reflection swirling back at her from the stainless steel surface.

FADE OUT.

A slender man in conservative attire carves a chicken at the head of the table. This is TIM, SAMMY's dad [30s] - beside him, SASHA arranges a limp nut roast with her perfectly manicured fingers.

SASHA
Here y'are Jeany.

She places the nut roast on a place mat in front of JEAN.

SAMMY
Can I have that?

A look between SASHA and TIM.

SASHA
You won't like that sweetheart.

SAMMY
But I want it.

On JEAN, vaguely amused.

TIM
Just eat what you're given, okay
Sammy?

SAMMY
But why--?

TIM
Aunty Jean is-- allergic to
chicken. But we're not.

SASHA and JEAN share a conspiratorial smile as TIM puts a plate down in front of SAMMY which he promptly bats onto the floor.

TIM (CONT'D) SASHA
That's enough Sam! Sammy!

TIM is up like a shot. Hauling a terrified SAMMY out of his chair.

SASHA and JEAN sit on opposite sides of the table, smiling awkwardly as TIM scolds SAMMY audibly next door.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Sorry about this.

JEAN

It's okay.

*

A long beat. Then SASHA picks up the carrots and begins serving herself.

78

INT. SASHA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER.

78

A cosy den, surrounded by fluffy animals. SAMMY snuggles up to JEAN as she reads.

JEAN

"Who are you?" Said the Caterpillar. -- This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, "I - I hardly know, sir, just at present - at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then..."

JEAN inhales an imaginary pipe. SAMMY smiles up at her.

TIM appears at the edge of the den, watching for a moment. Something about the cosiness of this set up irks him.

TIM

Come on Sammy, let's go and play outside.

SAMMY

But--

TIM

You've been inside all day.

SAMMY pulls an angry face.

TIM (CONT'D)

I'm going to count to three.
One... Two...

SAMMY, his face now pleading.

JEAN

(nudging Sammy)

We'll finish it another time, OK?

SAMMY begrudgingly obliges, scampering off after TIM. JEAN gets to her feet slowly, weighed down by insidious family dynamics.

Through a set of double doors, SAMMY and TIM play football in the garden. JEAN stands with her back to us by a fireplace, smoking a cigarette.

SASHA (O.C.)
Can I show you something quickly,
while they're out there. I bought
something for Tim for our
anniversary and I really need a
second opinion--

JEAN
I thought I asked you to get rid of
this?

She plucks a silver frame from a crowded mantelpiece. In it, a YOUNG JEAN beams up at us, barely recognisable in a lacy bridal gown. Her hair darker, longer.

SASHA
(guiltily)
I love that one.

A loaded look between sisters.

SASHA (CONT'D)
You look so happy... I know, I
know...

JEAN
Please?

SASHA
I don't have any recent ones. And I
miss your hair like that.

JEAN
You sound like Mam.

*

SASHA
(too quick)
How would you know? You never go
and see her.

A beat - JEAN, trying to ignore the spite in SASHA's tone.

JEAN
I don't like seeing it there.
(then)
What?

SASHA

I don't know... Well, it's just --
It's not as if everything that came
before -- you know, is a lie.

JEAN

What are you talking about?

SASHA

I don't think it's right that you
want to erase part of your life.
That you expect us to.

JEAN

I thought I just asked you to
replace one photograph.

SASHA

You know what I *mean*.

JEAN

I don't actually.

SASHA

You're trying to erase your
marriage.

JEAN

Am I now?

SASHA

Don't be a child.

A prolonged look between them. They're regressing into an age
old pattern here and they can both feel it. Then--

SASHA (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me you weren't
alone the other night?

Beat.

JEAN

What?

SASHA

Sam told me you had a woman there.

(beat)

Look, what you do in your own home
is your business. You know I'm
supportive of -- it. But Sam's
five. It's confusing for him. He
wet the bed. He never wets the bed!

JEAN

His grandmother had just been
rushed to hospital!

SASHA

I just don't think it's fair for
you to put me in that position.

JEAN

She actually left right after you
dropped him off.

SASHA

Okay. But, d'you see--? It's hard
for me to -- well, to trust you.

On JEAN, digesting sinuous subtext.

SASHA (CONT'D)

So... Come on, who is she then?

JEAN takes a drag of her cigarette, cringing, throwing SASHA
a look that says "drop it".

As if on cue, SAMMY bursts through the door, SQUEALING. TIM
in hot pursuit, growling like a grizzly bear. The epitome of
"HANDS ON DAD". So joyous is he, playing with his son we
almost forget what came before. He comes for JEAN who plays
along, but her heart's not in it.

80

INT. JEAN'S CAR - MOVING - DAY.

80

JEAN drives away past a row of immaculate houses with
perfectly manicured lawns. In the rearview, she watches as
the whole family wave her off. A fifties family portrait.

The SOUND of feet thudding on tarmac melts through the
transition.

81

EXT. STREET - DUSK.

81

JEAN sprints past the illuminated windows and neon fish and
chip signs of Whitley Bay, barely looking as she crosses a
the road. Screeching TYRES. Angry HORMS.

82

INT. VENUS - A FEW NIGHTS LATER.

82

JEAN jogs down the stairs into the bar. At the bottom she
surveys the scene--

ACE is with VIV at the bar, handing over money for a round of drinks. They haven't seen JEAN yet. Next to the pool table, LOIS chats to DEBBIE with another girl, AIMEE [21]. JEAN visibly tightens, the muscle in her cheek beginning to spasm. But VIV has now spotted her and is waving her over.

LOIS's eyes flick up briefly acknowledging JEAN. She appears to have grown in confidence since her last visit.

VIV
(kissing JEAN)
Hey.

JEAN
Hi.

VIV
(handing JEAN a beer)
What's wrong? You look stressed.

JEAN
Thanks.

VIV
[LAUGHS] Here.

She passes JEAN a cigarette and lights it. *

LOIS eyes JEAN curiously, the music is too loud for her to hear what she's saying.

VIV (CONT'D)
What's going on?

JEAN
Nothing.
(then)
Just work. *

VIV
That bad is it?
(beat)
Maybe we should go away. The girls and I were actually talking about taking a trip down to Hebden Bridge. They do this women's disco once a month.

On JEAN, still distracted.

VIV (CONT'D)
Is that a no, is it?

JEAN
No, I'm just--

ACE appears.

ACE
Hey lady.

JEAN
Hiya.

ACE gives JEAN a sort of half embrace.

ACE
Wow you seem tense!

VIV
That's what I said!

DEBBIE
Leave her alone, you lot.

Behind them, LOIS picks up a cue and fires a shot, easily potting a ball.

ACE
(laughing)
The kid's good.

LOIS smiles modestly, appearing taller every second.

ACE (CONT'D)
Wanna play? Jean here is unbeaten.
(then)
You can be on my team.

LOIS
I dunno.

ACE
Nah, come on. It'll be fun.

VIV laughs, oblivious to the fizzing energy between LOIS and JEAN.

JEAN
I don't really--

ACE
Ahh - she can't take the heat!

On LOIS now, unsure what to make of the situation as ACE hands a cue to JEAN. They lock eyes for a moment.

CUT TO--

SNAPSHOTS OF A POOL GAME IN FULL SWING:

SHE CAN'T LOVE YOU by CHEMISE blasts through the speakers. A strobe light does it's thing. For a while it's close. LOIS pots a ball, the others cheer. Then JEAN pots one in its place. And so on.

Then there are only a couple of balls left on the table. JEAN lines up her shot, cautiously eyeing LOIS who is sharing a cigarette with AIMEE. ACE and DEBBIE dance raucously by the side of the table.

A steely look on JEAN's face. She takes her aim -- but misses and pots the white.

VIV
Oh no! It's all over!

JEAN registers no emotion, handing the cue to LOIS, who appears suddenly cautious, as if the teacher student dynamic has suddenly realigned. She pauses for a moment before passing the cue to ACE.

LOIS
You can take it.

ACE
No way. Finish her off!

LOIS eyes JEAN uncertainly. But the others cheer her on and she's forced to take her shot, easily potting her final ball and then the black.

Fists drum the side of the pool table amid cheers from the others. LOIS doesn't join in, instead, she sets down her cue and makes a pointed exit towards the toilet.

Placing a cigarette in her mouth, JEAN fishes around for a lighter. FLICK, FLICK, FLICK -- nothing. JEAN places it purposefully on the bar, all the while watching LOIS as she disappears into the bathroom.

LOIS enters a toilet cubicle, turning to shut the door. But JEAN's behind her, grabbing the door, forcing her way in and locking it behind them.

LOIS

Hey!

LOIS looking at JEAN like she's lost the plot.

LOIS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

JEAN

You need to leave.

LOIS

Why?

JEAN

You know why.

(beat)

You can do whatever you want,
wherever you want. But not here,
OK?

Beat.

LOIS

Why do you care so much?

JEAN's jaw pulsates.

JEAN

You're fifteen. You shouldn't even
be in here.

LOIS

So what?

(then)

I haven't told anyone, have I?

OUTSIDE - a WOMAN bangs loudly on the door.

WOMAN

Some of us are bursting out here!

VIV appears at the back of the queue.

Back INSIDE - a held look between JEAN and LOIS.

JEAN

[SOTTO] Go. Otherwise you're off
the team.

LOIS

What?!

JEAN opens the door, revealing a queue of WOMEN waiting to use the toilets.

VIV's there. Frozen in disbelief. She looks from JEAN to LOIS, waiting for something. Then she turns, storming back into the bar. JEAN follows, pushing past the queue of women, chasing VIV out of the bathroom and up the stairs.

84 OMITTED

84

85 EXT. VENUS, FIRE EXIT - NIGHT.

85

JEAN, out of breath now, catches up with VIV on the street.

VIV

Just tell us what you were doing in there, so I know.

JEAN

She's one of me students... She's on the team.

*

A beat as VIV processes this.

VIV

What?! -- Are you --?

JEAN

No. Of course not.

VIV

Then why didn't you say something?

JEAN

I don't know.

VIV

You're lying.

JEAN

I'm not - look, it's complicated.

VIV, waiting for more information.

JEAN (CONT'D)

I was asking her to leave.

VIV

In the toilet?

JEAN nods.

VIV (CONT'D)

Why?

(beat)

Why were you asking her to leave?!

JEAN

I don't want my students knowing
every part of me life.

*

VIV

Every part of your life?

JEAN

Yeah.

VIV doesn't believe her.

JEAN (CONT'D)

I don't know what you want me to
say.

A long beat.

JEAN (CONT'D)

You have to create boundaries, as a
teacher. It's part of the job. If
anyone finds out I'll never work
again.

*

VIV

That's quite a stretch, don't you
think?

JEAN

No. It isn't.

VIV

(after a beat)

And what about her?

JEAN

Who?

VIV

That girl. How old is she? What
Sixteen?

*

JEAN

Fifteen.

VIV

What kind of example are you
setting for her?

Beat.

JEAN
That's not fair.

VIV
None of this is fair.

JEAN
Just because I don't parade my
sexuality around like a badge of
honour.

VIV
Oh, and I do, is that it?
(beat)
How is that girl ever going to
learn she has a place in this
world, if you, of all people, tell
her that she doesn't?

JEAN
What makes you think she has a
place in this world??

The words tumble from her mouth before she can stop them.

VIV shaking her head slowly, beginning to understand. Then--

VIV
I can't do this.

JEAN
Wait, Viv. Please. *

JEAN, desperately reaching.

VIV
No. Get off.

And she's gone. JEAN left alone on the pavement, *trapped in time*.

JEAN driving, numb. The radio plays loud classical music. She lights a cigarette with the car lighter, filling her drunken lungs with that much needed hit. The lights up ahead MELT into each other. That familiar rocking motion setting in. JEAN's steering becomes erratic. TYRES SCREECH.

CUT ABRUPTLY TO:

87 EXT. LAY BY - NIGHT.

87

TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK. Hazard lights bleep. The Renault parked in a lay-by. Cars whizzing by.

JEAN, knelt in the undergrowth, puking her guts out. That music drifting out into the freezing night air.

88 INT. JEAN'S BEDROOM - LATER.

88

JEAN in bed, wide awake. Light from a nearby streetlight throws geometric shadows on her face through net curtains.

She reaches over and switches on the SLEEP AID. But the sound is jumbled. Like a voice exposed to helium. She rewinds. Presses play again. Same issue. Wrenching herself up, she opens the machine. Inside, the tape is completely fucked. Sinewy ribbons flooding out into her hands.

The SOUND of an ALARM CLOCK fused into that OLD SCHOOL BELL. Night time seamlessly rolling into morning in one hallucinatory blur.

89 OMITTED

89

90 EXT/ INT. PE DEPARTMENT OFFICE - DAY.

90

JEAN as the coffee machine does its thing.

At her desk, JEAN reaches for her ruler and begins measuring out a table with a blue pencil. Precise, perfect lines intersecting. STAFF MEMBERS chat by the coffee machine. JEAN looks around cautiously.

The click of the door. PAULA entering O/C.

PAULA
Got a sec?

JEAN
Mhmm.

PAULA looks around to make sure they're alone.

PAULA
Just one of the kids playing a
prank I'm sure. But I found
something on your desk this morning
when I got in.

PAULA produces a copy of a GAY NEWS magazine, placing it on JEAN's desk. JEAN takes it in, her expression immutable.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Obviously with everything that's going on I didn't want anyone else to see it. But I thought you should know.

JEAN
Thanks.

PAULA
Do you have any idea who might have put it there?

JEAN
I've a few ideas.

PAULA sensing JEAN's prickly energy--

PAULA
Don't look so worried. I've had far worse in my time.

JEAN musters a half smile.

91

EXT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY.

91

STUDENTS mill around the place in groups, slurping juice boxes and munching digestives. JEAN looking beat, en route to her next class with MICHELLE.

MICHELLE
Simon wants *The Beach Boys*. Could you think of anything less romantic. He spent one summer in California, now he thinks he's fucking James Dean.

The BELL goes and the masses disperse. LOIS waits with MINDY outside a classroom.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I don't even want a first dance. I reckon most people just do it for the photos.

JEAN allows herself a single beat to look over. LOIS gives nothing away, catching JEAN's eye for a micro-second.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

(as if underwater)

Simon said we shouldn't have one at
all if it's going to stress me out.
But I'd never hear the end of it
from me Mam.

MICHELLE looks to JEAN for some kind of acknowledgement. When
she doesn't get one she tuts good-naturedly.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Everything alright hun?

JEAN

Sorry, can you, one sec--

JEAN paces down the corridor, marching up to LOIS.

JEAN (CONT'D)

I need to talk to you for a sec.

On LOIS, uncertain. The class taking their places inside.

MINDY heads into the classroom and the door swings shut.

LOIS

Let me guess, I'm off the team?

JEAN

No. Look. I need this to stop.

LOIS

What?

JEAN

All of it. It's not a game, okay
Lois? It's my job. My life.

LOIS looking up at JEAN, almost daring her to explode.

LOIS

What is it that you think I've
done?

JEAN

You know exactly.

A beat on JEAN, just about holding her rage.

LOIS

Are you married or something?

JEAN

You think you're so brave don't you?

Something snaps in LOIS. Her physicality morphing into something bolder before our eyes. Then, in a tone that deftly flattens JEAN's childish accusation--

LOIS

You don't know anything about me.

She turns, disappearing into the classroom.

A TEACHER wearing a lab coat stands a few metres away, staring at JEAN. He gathers himself and continues walking.

On JEAN, knowing she's crossed a line here.

INTERCUT WITH:

92

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS, DAY.

92

MINDY at her desk, watching, glasses ever so slightly fogged. SIOBHAN larking about with a bunsen burner. Clocking JEAN. Intrigue building. Elbowing JILL.

The door opening suddenly. LOIS entering, face like thunder.

MRS LEA (O.C.)

Good of you to join us Lois.
Perhaps you'd like to tell us how
many elements make up the Periodic
Table? -- No? -- Anyone? Yes Sarah?

LOIS pulls out her chair roughly.

SIOBHAN

[SOTTO] What did she want?

LOIS

She's got a massive crush on me and
she won't drop it.

LOIS visibly gaining power here. SIOBHAN put back in her place, unsure where to take this.

MRS LEA

Have you got something you'd like
to share with the class Lois?

LOIS

No Miss.

93

INT. SCHOOL DINING ROOM - LATER.

93

JEAN sits alone, pushing food around her plate. DAVE and some other teachers are gossiping on the next door table. JEAN turns to focus on the trees outside.

*

From behind, the titters escalate into something more threatening. JEAN's pulse sounds louder and louder in her ears -- until, finally, she turns...

*

A group of staff are indeed gossiping, exchanging hushed titbits and conspiratorial glances. But it has nothing to do with JEAN... Outside in the playground, LOIS is standing alone with a bag of netballs. Her aim isn't perfect, but she wears a look of absolute determination.

JEAN gets up and leaves the room, leaving her half eaten lunch on the table. Curious heads turn.

94

INT. CHANGING ROOM - DAY.

94

JEAN wearily enters the changing room, not a trace of her usual vigour. The last slacker races to tie up her shoelace. She doesn't bother hurrying her, instead, bending down to pick up a pair of abandoned socks from the floor. She looks at the name-tape. LOIS JACKSON. *Of course.*

Then, the SOUND of a shower turning on. GIRLISH SHRIEKS.

JEAN frowns and checks her watch, her footsteps unusually loud as she makes her way towards the showers. A strip light FIZZES above her head.

She stops dead just shy of the end of the corridor, peering in. SIOBHAN and JILL fighting over the shower nozzle, giggling and squealing, spraying each other in the face. Their naked backs immediately visible.

There's nothing unusual or sexual about it, but JEAN steps back, hyper-aware of her implied position as voyeur. The tussle continues as she tiptoes out into the corridor.

95

OMITTED

95

96

INT. JEAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT.

96

JEAN's face, distorted beneath the surface of the bath. Breath held. Perfectly still. Lifeless.

In the distance, a flurry of adolescent voices swell and merge into one irrepressible HUM. JEAN wrenches her head through the surface of the water, gasping for breath.

97

INT. SPORTS HALL - DAY.

97

JEAN stands with her clipboard taking the register. Swarms of * U16 players filtering in around her.

Then PAULA enters.

PAULA
Thought I might sit in on practice
today. If you don't mind?

JEAN absorbs this. What it might mean.

JEAN
Of course.

PAULA nods, smiling in a vaguely threatening kind of way.

Quick cuts as JEAN gathers herself and rallies the group into their warm up.

First the group sprints up and down the court.

Then a goal shooting exercise.

All the while JEAN glancing intermittently towards PAULA, but her face betrays no emotion.

After the warm up, it's time for a game.

JEAN watches as the U16's snatch bibs from a pile on the floor. LOIS picks up GA, pulling it over her head.

PAULA
What's your line up for the game
against Marden Bridge?

But JEAN's focus is taken by something unravelling behind PAULA. SIOBHAN appears to be in some kind of altercation with LOIS.

LOIS
I got it first.

SIOBHAN
It's my position. Miss!

JEAN
What?

SIOBHAN
She took my bib.

JEAN
You'll have to sub in for each
other at half time.

SIOBHAN
But it's my position.

JEAN
It's just practice Siobhan.

SIOBHAN
Give it back.

LOIS
Piss off.

SIOBHAN grabbing at the bib, trying to physically remove it from LOIS. JEAN takes a beat, deciding how to handle this, but PAULA gets in there first, blowing her whistle.

PAULA
Enough! Both of you on the bench
now.

SIOBHAN
But!! LOIS
But--!!

PAULA
(to LOIS)
You answer back to me and you're
off the team. Okay?

LOIS
Me?? What about her?

PAULA
Both of you on the bench. Now.

LOIS looks to JEAN for support but JEAN turns away, blowing her whistle to start the game.

LOIS and SIOBHAN begrudgingly take their seats on opposite ends of the bench. They sit there for a while, brooding, as the game begins, then LOIS gets up and heads for the showers.

LOIS, hot and pissed off, stands under the shower in her swimming costume, letting the water consume her. For a moment it's just her and the water. But then, a hand on her shoulder. LOIS starts. It's SIOBHAN.

LOIS
What are you doing?

But SIOBHAN doesn't respond, instead pressing her torso against LOIS who looks back completely bewildered.

The shower clicks off and SIOBHAN edges closer, her lips a whisker away from LOIS now.

SIOBHAN
It's OK.

SIOBHAN reaches down, softly taking LOIS's bitten fingers in hers. LOIS moves away just a fraction, her eyes darting down the corridor.

SIOBHAN moves LOIS's hand to her shoulder, pulling out her scrunchy with her other hand. That hair, flicking down around her neck, brushing against LOIS's face, whipping her into a frenzy.

SILENCE now. The usual cacophony of high-pitched voices somewhat muted.

LOIS, breath shallow, KNOWING this is a trap. Knowing it's not what it seems. But perhaps the same part of her wants it. Spellbound by this possible transgression.

She inches a fraction closer, looking briefly to SIOBHAN for approval. When she doesn't flinch, LOIS closes her eyes. Helpless. A netted bird caught by desire.

Their lips touch, properly this time. LOIS inhaling SIOBHAN. SIOBHAN kissing back. TONGUE on TONGUE.

INTERCUT WITH:

JEAN, walking down the damp corridor, from this perspective the showers appear empty.

Then she sees it, just for a second -- SIOBHAN and LOIS, partially obscured, clamped together, devouring each other with intense fervour.

Then SIOBHAN, leaping away from LOIS. A high pitch scream engulfs the shower area. LOIS's face contorts with horror.

JEAN stands there frozen, head spinning.

101 OMITTED

101

101b INT. CHANGING ROOMS - CONTINUOUS.

101b

PAULA runs in, followed by a gaggle of other girls.

PAULA
What's going on?

SIOBHAN, now in a towel runs to squat in the corner of the room, real tears forming. JEAN's face, taut and pale. CAROL and JILL rushing in to tend to SIOBHAN with a towel on the floor.

PAULA (CONT'D)
(throwing a towel to LOIS)
Can someone tell me what's going on
please? Jean??

JEAN struggles to form words.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Did you see what happened?

JEAN
I--

SIOBHAN
(quietly)
She attacked me.

PAULA
What do you mean she *attacked* you?
(then)
[LOUD] Can someone please explain
what happened?

JILL
She shouldn't be allowed in here!
Get her out!

CHANTING: OUT! OUT! OUT!

LOIS's POV - all eyes on her. She ignores them, hurriedly pulling on a pair of joggers over her wet costume. She grabs her bag and makes a run for it.

*
*
*

The MOB all fighting for PAULA's attention. JEAN at the centre of it all. Girls swarming round her. Faces drift in and out of focus. The sound clicks off as the BLOOD swirls, builds, erupts inside her head. Then--

PAULA

Jean! -- Can you hear me?! I need you to supervise this lot so I can get her out of here.

JEAN drifting back into the room, nodding.

PAULA leading SIOBHAN from the room like a sick child from a war zone.

Girls swarm in around JEAN, yelling, demanding answers. JEAN steps back, head swimming, knowing she's lost control. Then, trancelike, she exits the room, leaving the noise behind her.

The door swings on its hinges.

102

INT. PE DEPARTMENT OFFICE - LATER.

102

JEAN sits across a crowded desk from PAULA, staring at a photo on PAULA's desk. Her and her husband on their wedding day, exchanging vows.

PAULA (O.C)

She's saying this isn't the first time--? That there was a fight a few weeks ago that you didn't report--? She even went as far as to say there could be something going on between you two. You and Lois that is.

JEAN looks up slowly. Beyond PAULA, DAVE and MICHELLE are talking quietly in the far corner of the room. MICHELLE glances over.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Jean? -- Can you please tell me what's going on or am I going to have to take her word for it?

JEAN turns, looking almost directly into camera. A RABBIT in a trap. She opens her mouth to speak.

JEAN

Lois is-- she's become a little
over-attached, you could say.

*

PAULA

If that's the case, why didn't you
report it to me?

JEAN

I didn't think it was anything to
worry about. You know what they're
like. I've had worse.

The ease with which these words come surprises even JEAN.

PAULA

And the locker room? You were
there. Did you see what happened?

JEAN

I saw something, but--

PAULA

What? What did you see?

JEAN

I saw them together, and Siobhan
pushing Lois off.

PAULA sits back in her chair, digesting this.

103

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT.

103

JEAN letting herself out onto the fire escape, sitting down
on the step, pulling out a cigarette with shaky hands.

FLICK -- FLICK -- FLICK. The lighter won't work. She abandons
it, letting her head flop between her knees.

Footsteps on the fire escape. MICHELLE sitting down next to
her. A hand on JEAN's shoulder.

MICHELLE

You OK hun?

JEAN, nods, stoic.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Hey, hey. Come here.

JEAN rests her head on MICHELLE's soft, padded shoulder. All
those conflicting emotions cloistered up inside her,
threatening to free-fall.

JEAN

I gotta go Shell, I'll see ya
later, okay?

MICHELLE

Yeah you come find me, alright?
We'll be at the Lodge. I'll buy
you's a drink.

JEAN smiles sadly and lets herself inside.

104 OMITTED

104

105 INT. BALDOCK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS.

105

JEAN slips inside, emitting a sort of Death Row energy. She walks round the back of the desk to join BALDOCK and PAULA who're sitting opposite LOIS and SIOBHAN. LOIS doesn't look up as JEAN walks into the room. Eerie hush in here.

PAULA looks tenderly into SIOBHAN's tear-streaked face.

BALDOCK

Now Mis Murphy, it's very important
that we ascertain exactly what went
on between you and Miss Jackson
earlier today. We take these kinds
of accusations extremely seriously.
The perpetrators of sexual assault
have no place in this school.

*

(a beat, then)

I don't want to keep you long. I
just need you to repeat what you
told the PE staff earlier this
afternoon.

SIOBHAN's lip quivers. She seems uncertain as she looks
towards LOIS who's fiddling with a Tipp-Ex pen, staring at
the sole of her shoe.

SIOBHAN

I don't remember.

LOIS looks at JEAN, eyes wide, begging her to tip the balance
here. JEAN clocks her and looks away.

PAULA

Look, I know this isn't easy for
you. So let me try and help.
Earlier, if you'll remember, you
were very upset. I was in the hall
when I heard you scream.

(MORE)

PAULA (CONT'D)

I then ran into the locker room and found you in the corner, very distressed. I took you to my office where you told me that Lois had assaulted you. Is that right?

SIOBHAN doesn't answer, tears exploding silently.

LOIS

No, it's not. Tell them!

PAULA

Lois, I'll need you to calm down.

(then)

Just nod if that's what happened my love.

LOIS's knuckles turning white, gripping the chair.

JEAN watching her, drowning in moral turmoil.

A bell goes in the distance signalling the end of the day.

PAULA (CONT'D)

You just have to nod my love.

SIOBHAN, desperate for an out, wipes a thick globule of snot from her face with her sleeve and nods.

PAULA (CONT'D)

(reaching over to squeeze
Siobhan's hand)

Well done.

The SOUND clicks off for a moment as LOIS turns to face SIOBHAN, searching her face.

BALDOCK shifts in his seat, out of his depth.

BALDOCK

I see.

(turning to JEAN)

And you were there Miss Newman, you saw it happen?

All eyes on JEAN now. LOIS's big blue eyes.

JEAN

I did, yeah.

BALDOCK

Right.

A beat as LOIS takes this in. Then--

LOIS
What's wrong with you?

BALDOCK
That's enough Lois. I'm afraid I'm going to have to call your father.

LOIS looks again to JEAN who avoids her gaze.

LOIS
(getting up)
Don't bother.

BALDOCK
Sit back down please.

LOIS
You know you haven't even asked me what happened? You've asked all of them, but not me.

JEAN
If you've got something to say--

LOIS
You're the worst of the lot and you know it.

She flings open the door and disappears. PAULA turns to BALDOCK and JEAN expectantly.

BALDOCK
Just let her go.

JEAN closes her eyes for a moment, digesting what just happened.

106

INT. THE LODGE - LATER THAT NIGHT.

106

JEAN sits in amongst a handful of colleagues in a quintessential northern boozer. MICHELLE appears with a tray of beers, grinning. JEAN appears smaller than the rest, chewing her lip, doodling on a napkin.

A photo of PAULA's grandchild is passed round. JEAN barely looks at it before passing it on.

MICHELLE
How old is he here?

PAULA

Oh two, three. I lose track.
Actually, no, I lie, he'd just
turned three there, cause it was
election night. Bill and I were
glued to the TV. Didn't notice him
puking all over himself.

Laughter from the group. But JEAN is somewhere else.

On MICHELLE, keen to snap her out of it--

MICHELLE

You never wanted kids?

JEAN contemplates the question.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Aw, you'd be a great mum. I see you
with the younger ones. They're
lucky to have you.

JEAN finds this hard to swallow.

MICHELLE clocks something behind JEAN, slipping into thinly veiled theatrics. FERG, 30s, a handsome, weather worn man with eyes like rain, is making his way over from the bar. He smiles self-consciously as he sits down next to JEAN.

FERG

Looks more like a Mr Whippy than a
pint of Guinness.

MICHELLE laughs a little too loudly. JEAN barely responds.

MICHELLE makes eyes at JEAN who begrudgingly turns to look into FERG's expectant eyes.

FERG (CONT'D)

Hiya.

JEAN

Hi.

FERG

Oh wait, you've, you've got--

He reaches for a paper napkin from the dispenser, shakes it free. Then, casually invading her personal space, gently dabs the napkin on JEAN's lip. JEAN doesn't flinch. FERG shows her a bloody mark.

107 OMITTED

107 *

108 INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT.

108

JEAN wearily lets herself into her house.

Slumping down onto the sofa, she reaches for the phone and dials VIV'S number. The phone rings through, hitting the answerphone. She hangs up, frustrated, stubbing her cigarette out in the already brimming ashtray. PEGGY leaps up onto the sofa and JEAN curls in around her.

SLOW FADE OUT.

109 INT. SPORTS HALL - DAY.

109

JEAN dolefully watches the year nine lads drag themselves up a series of ropes dangling from the walls. They're really trying, bless them. Someone calls her name. She barely registers.

110 INT. CHANGING ROOM - LATER.

110

CHORUS
 NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST. TYNESIDE
 IS THE VERY BEST. WATCH US RUN,
 WATCH US GO, WATCH US AS WE STEAL
 THE SHOW. T-Y-N-E----

JEAN peers in through the door of changing room where the girls are going wild. CLAPPING, CHANTING, WHOOPING. SIOBHAN has resumed her position as ringleader, the others moving in orbit around her. JEAN swallows a thunderbolt of shame.

111 INT. JEAN'S KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY.

111

JEAN opens a can of baked beans, pouring the contents into a saucepan. She fires up the hob.

RADIO (O.S.)
 Over twenty thousand men, women and children took to the streets of Manchester this morning for the largest gay rights protest ever held in the history of this country.

(MORE)

RADIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The protest was held in response to a new law that will make it illegal for councils to promote homosexuality, including a ban on schools teaching the 'Acceptability of homosexuality as A pretended family relationship'.

The toaster pops up, two slices of white bread. JEAN butters her toast. The sound of 20,000 people roaring through the TV.

112 OMITTED

112

113 INT. VENUS - THAT NIGHT.

113

LET THE MUSIC USE YOU by The Typewriters pulses through the bat cave. JEAN drinking alone at the bar, losing herself. Behind, a drag queen mid performance. Arms flailing like serpents. All gold diamanté and sequins.

*

*

On the dance floor, a young woman with thick, shoulder length hair like LOIS's dances with abandon. JEAN watches her from behind. For a moment time seems to slow down, lights melting into each other, drunken chatter warping. Then the girl turns, revealing a face we don't recognise. JEAN down another shot.

114 OMITTED

114

115 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY.

115

JEAN's car pulls up outside a pebble dashed house. It's bin day. Rows of putrid overflowing rubbish bins line the street. Chicken bones and Happy Meal boxes litter the road.

A washing line spins weakly behind her. The curtains are closed. She walks up to the door and knocks, causing a dog to go berserk.

A figure, distorted by dappled glass. The SOUND of a chain being put on the door.

LOIS (O.C.)

Go away.

A moment on JEAN, swallowing this. She turns to leave, then turns back, this time hammering on the door.

JEAN

I need to talk to you. Can you open
the door?

A beat - then the SOUND of the chain unlocking.

JEAN taking LOIS in. Her offbeat attire replaced by a navy blue uniform. She looks distinctly conformist, her inner fire now dimmed.

LOIS

I'm late for work.

LOIS steps out, pushing past JEAN.

JEAN

I can give you a lift.

LOIS

I'm fine walking.

JEAN reaches out to grab the sleeve of her sweatshirt.

LOIS (CONT'D)

(turning, eyes brimming)

Why won't you just leave me alone?!

They stare at each other. For a moment JEAN can see the damage she's done. JEAN nods, letting her go. But a few feet down the street, LOIS turns.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Do you actually think I attacked
Siobhan?

A beat, then JEAN shakes her head.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Then why?

JEAN doesn't have an answer.

JEAN

I know you want more from me. But
it's not-- I can't be that person
for you Lois.

*

*

LOIS

I never asked you to be anything.

JEAN

It's not about what you asked
though, is it Lois?

On LOIS, considering. But then she's gone, marching towards the bus stop.

116 OMITTED

116

117 INT. JEAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT.

117

In a tight frame, JEAN splashes water on her face at the sink, her hair caked with dye. Straightening her back, she does her best to avoid catching her reflection in the bathroom mirror. We follow as she pads out into the corridor, down the stairs.

118 INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

118

TV light rippling over JEAN's gaunt face.

'BLIND DATE' CONTESTANT (O.C.)
 My nickname is "Mumsy" because I'm
 very close to my mother. How much
 does this worry you, and why?
 (canned nasal laughter)

JEAN picks up the remote switching off the TV. Allowing herself a moment of quiet introspection.

FADE TO BLACK.

119 INT. CHIPPI - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

119

JEAN looking a little edgy in the corner, waiting. *

The RING of the door as VIV slips in opposite her. *

Palpable hurt and yearning on both sides. But also distance.
 Eventually --

JEAN
 Hi.

VIV
 Hiya.

JEAN
 Thanks for coming.

VIV
 Of course.

JEAN
How are you?

VIV
(despondent)
You know.

JEAN sensing she's lost her. Caught between a desire to reach out and that unrelenting feeling she's being watched. Her foot grazes VIV's leg.

VIV shifts awkwardly, closing her eyes for a moment, reaching for the courage to say what she wants to say. But instead--

VIV (CONT'D)
D'you want something to drink?

JEAN
Yeah, in a sec, thanks.
(beat)
Look, I'm really sorry.

Beat.

VIV
It's OK.

JEAN
It's not.
I should have told ya.
I should have done everything
differently.
Sick in the head, remember?

A flicker of a smile, but VIV's not taking the bait.

VIV
She reminded me a bit of you, you
know. When we first met.

JEAN
Who, Lois?

VIV
The girl, yeah.

JEAN
[LAUGHS] She's nothing like me.

VIV
Debs thought so too. Like a deer in
the headlights...

*

*

*

*

JEAN considers this discrepancy. Is it possible for her to see LOIS as something entirely different. Something fierce and brave. Something violent.

JEAN
I'm not a deer in the headlights,
am I?

VIV
Sometimes... You know. Skittish.

JEAN
Skittish??

She's trying to lighten the mood, but VIV doesn't reciprocate.

VIV
Anyway...

JEAN
D'you want something to eat?

VIV
I ate before.

JEAN
Okay. I might...

She reaches for the menu.

VIV
Sorry I didn't return your calls.

JEAN
It's fine.

VIV
No. It's not.
Look -- I've been here before. With
Donna. And I-- *

JEAN
Donna cheated on you with her
husband.

VIV
Yeah, but, -- it's the same, in the
end. She wasn't ready...
(beat)
And I can't do that again.

JEAN
I'm gonna quit me job. *

VIV

What? -- Why?

JEAN

Because.

JEAN leans in closer across the table. But VIV inches away.

VIV

I don't think you should quit your job. You love your job. You're good at your job.

JEAN

I did something terrible.

(beat)

That girl, from the club-- Lois. I dobbed her in, to get her off my case. She's been suspended. And I doubt she'll be back after this.

JEAN's eyes fill with thick wet gobs.

VIV stares at her for a moment, a hint of pity now.

VIV

You need to stop being so hard on yourself.

A hand across the table. A flicker of hope --

JEAN

I want to be with you, Viv... We could go away somewhere.

VIV

(retrieving her hand)

No, look. If we forget about everything that's happened, there'll be something else.

JEAN

No there won't.

VIV

Anyway, I don't want to go away. I'm happy here. Listen, this isn't what I wanted, but I can't keep doing this, it's not--

*

JEAN

You don't have to do this.

JEAN reaches a hand across the table, taking VIV's in hers. A big step for her. But VIV pulls away, looking into JEAN's eyes for a second. Whatever she sees is enough for her to know. She reaches for her coat.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Please, Viv, come on.

VIV
I can't do this.

With one more pained look in JEAN's direction, VIV gets up.

VIV (CONT'D)
Sorry, I can't.

JEAN slumps back in her chair. Filled with RAGE, mainly at herself. Under the table, she clenches and unclenches her fists. Then lights a cigarette, fumbling with the lighter.

WAITER (O.C.)
Ya canne smoke in here, pet.

JEAN
(pointing at the ashtray)
What are these here for then?

JEAN stubs her cigarette out roughly and stands to leave.

120

EXT. BOARDWALK - NIGHT.

120

JEAN strides down the boardwalk, battling gale force winds, eyes streaming.

SLOW FADE OUT.

121

INT. SASHA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY.

121

SASHA and TIM's living room decorated with full Alice in Wonderland regalia. The pinnacle of straight, white, middle class living.

A PUNCH & JUDY show has a group of children in fits of giggles. SAMMY sits on a little wooden chair dressed as the March Hare, his whiskered cheeks stained with tears.

A small cluster of PARENTS stand in the corner, sipping wintery punch from plastic cups. SASHA's there talking to LISA [29] JEAN stands awkwardly beside them, wearing a lime green dress that hangs limply from her androgynous frame.

LISA

Police Stations don't offer creches for their employees. Why should hospitals? It's a ridiculous idea. No. What the nursing profession needs is more men. If nursing were perceived as a male and female occupation, the same as say - teaching, or the civil service. Then there would be a stronger gut feeling - amongst the powers that be - to raise nurses salaries.

SASHA

I hadn't thought of it like that.

TIM

In the meantime what happens when our children get sick and they're picketing outside the hospital instead of doing their damned jobs?

LISA

Well, quite.

TIM

What's your take on all this Jean?

JEAN shakes her head in a non-committal sort of a way.

TIM (CONT'D)

You must have an opinion?

SASHA

Tim...

TIM

I'm just interested to know what she thinks. As someone on the front line of public services.

SASHA

I'm not sure the netball court is quite the front line--

JEAN

I think it's easy to forget that nurses have a duty to provide a certain standard of care. And if they can't provide that care, people die.

TIM

I'm not sure I--?

*

SASHA

No, come on, that's enough. Tim,
why don't you go and refresh the
punch?

TIM considers this for a moment. Then, under his wife's steely gaze, he leaves for the kitchen.

On LISA, attempting to change the subject--

LISA

God, half term really drags,
doesn't it. Feel like I'll need a
holiday to recover.

LATER--

JEAN looking around, skittish, moving towards the drinks table. Pouring herself a vodka, necking it in one.

Close by, TIM chats to CRAIG [30s - ruddy cheeked, cheerful] Catching JEAN in his periphery, CRAIG opens up the conversation.

CRAIG

I was just telling Tim about my
divorce proceedings.

On JEAN, blank for a moment.

CRAIG (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Bleeding me dry I tell you. You
women don't realise how good you
have it.

He laughs. Then, off JEAN's expression--

CRAIG (CONT'D)
That was a joke. Bad joke. Sorry.
No offence meant.

JEAN

None taken.

TIM

Jean went through all this a few
years back.

JEAN looking at TIM. *Thanks for that, you prick.*

CRAIG

Oh right. Sorry to hear that. Well
you're still in one piece, so that
bodes well.

He trails off, JEAN's energy devouring him.

JEAN
I quite enjoyed it actually.
Particularly the part where I bled
him dry.

AWKWARD laughter from the men. JEAN grins as if she's on
their team. She's not.

CRAIG
So, how do you and Tim--

Beat.

TIM
Jean is Sasha's sister. Older
sister. Craig and I used to work
together.

CRAIG
I never knew Sasha had a sister!
(beat)
So what do you do, Jean?

JEAN
I'm a teacher.

CRAIG
Fantastic. What d'you teach?

JEAN
P.E.

CRAIG
Right. That must be--
(then, realising has
nothing to add)
Which school?

JEAN
Tyneside.

CRAIG
That's a commute and a half isn't?

JEAN
It's OK.

CRAIG
You didn't fancy -- what's Sammy's
school called?

TIM
St Christopher's.

CRAIG
Yeah, St Christopher's?

A beat.

TIM
Jean actually used to teach at St
Christopher's.

CRAIG
Oh--?

JEAN
I did for a while, yeah.

CRAIG
What made you--?

JEAN
Got a bit sick of running into the
entire student body at the local
shop.

CRAIG
Fair enough! You know I've never
thought of that. Must be a right
pain! Although... Parent, teacher
evenings -- probably quite a good
hunting ground for the recently
divorced, am I right..?

CRAIG elbows TIM in the ribs and they *LAUGH*.

On JEAN, just staring at their drunken faces. Her stance is square, emboldened by neat liquor. Not even pretending to laugh. Just that smile of hers. A smile that says, if you have a heart attack right now, I won't dial 999.

Eventually they recover from their hysterics.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Sorry!

JEAN
That's okay.

CRAIG
Got a man on the scene at the
moment then have you, Jean?

TIM squints, bracing himself for the answer.

JEAN
No, I haven't no.

On TIM, unable to conceal his relief.

CRAIG
Ah, well. I'm sure--

JEAN
I'm a lesbian.

CRAIG snorts with laughter. JEAN's deadpan face really pushing him over the edge. TIM's eyes widen in horror.

CRAIG
(once again hysterical)
I'm sorry - I can't!

His laughter only begins to abate when he notices TIM's pained expression. Pin drop silence. JEAN now smiling like some kind of AI.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Sorry. Wow. I didn't--

JEAN
That's OK.

CRAIG
I assumed, because you said--

JEAN
It's fine.
(then)
You know what, Tim, I've actually got to head off, can you give this to Sammy?

She hands him a present, meticulously wrapped in blue paper.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Thanks for a great party. Love the--

She waves generally at the decor, trailing off. Then goes to kiss him on the cheek as if everything's A OK.

TIM
Wait, Jean--

But JEAN isn't listening. She's already striding through the room. Head high. TIM and SASHA exchange a fraught glance.

122

EXT. PAVEMENT - DUSK.

122

JEAN wanders down a suburban road, taking off her uncomfortable shoes. Out of nowhere, she BURSTS into hysterics. Deep, cathartic, belly laughter that won't stop. She sits down in the grass, her dress billowing up around her, slowly recovering. Laughter giving way to silent tears.

Nearby, a pack of unbroken HORSES bolt up and down a small, unkempt patch of green. Frisky and untamed. She watches them for a moment.

FADE OUT.

123

EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING.

123

JEAN scrapes ice from the windscreen of her car with renewed vigour, breath heavy from the exertion. MAGGIE hops over the wall but JEAN shooes her away with one swift, confident movement. The CLICK of a front door. JEAN turns to see ANNE inviting MAGGIE back inside.

JEAN

Morning.

ANNE

(after a beat)

Morning.

JEAN holds her gaze until ANNE is forced to break it, disappearing back into her house.

124

INT/EXT. JEAN'S CAR - MOVING - DAY.

124

JEAN drives through a run-down part of South Shields. It's deafeningly QUIET. A couple of YOUNG YEMENI KIDS are playing with a ball near an open fire. The smoke makes it hard for her to see. She strains her eyes.

125

INT/ EXT. STREET / JEAN'S CAR - DAY.

125

JEAN lingers in her car outside a restaurant named SILVER MOON. Customers come and go. After a while, LOIS dressed in uniform, exits the restaurant with a couple of rubbish bags. She spots JEAN's car. Shocked at first. That unnerving feeling of being watched. Then she scowls, heading back inside.

*

126

OMITTED

126

127 OMITTED

127

128 INT/ EXT. JEAN'S CAR/ STREET - NIGHT.

128

JEAN's feet on the dashboard. THE WELL OF LONELINESS in her hands. Something catches her eye and she tosses the book on the passenger seat, starts the engine and swerves into the road. The SOUND of her horn, once then again.

LOIS, embarrassed, turns. By now JEAN is only a couple of metres from her, she winds down the window.

LOIS
What are you doing?

JEAN
Can you get in the car?

LOIS
What? No. Why?

JEAN
Can you just get in?
(beat)
I want to show you something,
that's all. I'll drop you home
after.

LOIS
I'm grounded.

JEAN
Don't tell me you've been sticking
to that.
(then)
I don't even have to talk to you,
okay? Just please get in.

A beat on LOIS, considering.

LOIS
Okay...

She opens the car door.

JEAN
This is for you.

She chuck's the book in LOIS's lap. But LOIS throws it back like a hot potato.

LOIS
I don't want your fucking book.

JEAN

Okay.

(beat)

It's not very good anyway.

LOIS

I thought you weren't talking.

On JEAN. That wry smile of hers. LOIS, pulling her bruised knees up around her ears, stares out the window, brooding.

JEAN lights a cigarette and winds down the window.

LOIS (CONT'D)

My dad's gonna kill you. You know that, right?

JEAN smiles and mimes zipping her lips.

129

EXT. SLIP ROAD - NIGHT.

129

The Renault hurtles towards the city centre.

130

EXT. JOHN STREET HOUSING CO-OP - NIGHT.

130

JEAN's car grinds to a halt outside the Co-op.

131

INT. JEAN'S CAR - NIGHT.

131

LOIS de-fogs the window. Straining to see.

LOIS

Where are we?

JEAN, just staring off into the distance. Then--

JEAN

Look.

(long beat)

I'm-- damaged, okay?

In a way you're not... Or at least you don't have to be.

LOIS's eyes on JEAN. Narrowing. Contemplating.

LOIS

If I don't have to be, why do you?

On JEAN, outwitted.

JEAN

I don't know. Maybe it's too late.

I don't expect you to understand-- But I--

(beat)

People failed me... And now I've failed you.

(beat)

I'm not trying to get myself off the hook or anything like that.

(beat)

But I see you carrying this thing, and you don't have to.

I know. I know. I know what I did was wrong.

LOIS (CONT'D)

It's not right. *Pretending.*

You're right. I don't.

You're the one with the problem. Not me! I don't know why you think--

LOIS drinks up these words. Then--

LOIS (CONT'D)

You know it was Siobhan who kissed me? Not that it matters now.

JEAN, who has been staring blankly ahead, turns to face LOIS. She has no answer. She just sits there, holding LOIS's blame. Allowing it to wash over her, eroding a layer of skin.

Muted rage from both sides, then a flicker of understanding.

LOIS paws at the carpet with her shoe. JEAN reaches over and squeezes her shoulder gently.

JEAN

Shall we go?

132

INT. JOHN STREET HOUSING CO-OP - NIGHT.

132

JEAN and LOIS's heads just visible as they ascend the dilapidated staircase.

*

133

INT. JOHN STREET HOUSING CO-OP, LIVING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

A blue lava lamp illuminates LOIS's face as she takes in the scene before her--

A small gathering is underway. There's a casual, homely feel to the celebrations, people helping themselves to drinks in the kitchen, others camped out on a bed, smoking cigarettes. Others sprawled on the floor, passing slices of cake around. *

Feeling uncomfortable and uninvited, LOIS turns to JEAN.

LOIS
Why did you bring me here?

Before JEAN has a chance to answer, ABI bounds over, hugging JEAN warmly.

ABI
Hey! You came!

JEAN
(awkward)
Hiya.

ABI
(nodding to LOIS)
And who's this one?

LOIS
I'm Lois.

ABI
Hiya Lois. Welcome. You a friend of
Jean's then?

LOIS shifts her weight awkwardly.

JEAN strains her eyes, scanning the room. Looking for
something... *Someone.* *

There. On the far side of a buffet table is VIV, talking to a WOMAN with beautiful long hair. Your quintessential earth-mother. A BABY suckles her breast as they talk. VIV reaches down to stroke the baby's head. JEAN wrestles jealousy, lighting a cigarette. *

LOIS
What is this place? *

JEAN
(after a beat)
A housing co-op. *

LOIS
A what? *

ABI
A lesbian housing co-op. *

LOIS
Only lesbians live in this
building?

ABI
[LAUGHING] Er, more or less, yeah.

LOIS considers this.

A knife CHINKING on glass. ACE clearing her throat.

ABI stands on a chair, hollering.

ABI (CONT'D)
Speech!

Echoes of agreement from the rabble.

ACE
I just wanted to say that, as some
of you know, money has been a
little scarce this year. But thanks
to the heroic efforts of The Bog
Fund, we were able to throw a
little something together... So
Debs, my love.

(she reaches down to pick
up a box from the floor)
These are for you, from all of us.
Well technically not from us, but
they are for you. Love you babe.
Happy Birthday.

She hands over a box of Dr Martins to DEBS who puts them on
the floor and kisses ACE tenderly.

ABI
To the Bog Fund!

CHORUS
The Bog Fund! The Bog Fund!!

ACE
Right, now let's get fucked
uuuuuuup.

Applause, shrieks and jeering from the rabble. LOIS smiles,
swept up by the energy in the room.

LOIS
(to JEAN)
What's the bog fund?

Before JEAN has a chance to answer, ACE grabs her, enveloping her in a bear hug.

ACE
Hey lady. We missed you.

On LOIS, feeling a little out of her depth. ABI, noticing this, puts a hand on her shoulder protectively.

ABI
Say you get kicked out by your parents, or can't pay your rent or something. Or you need a new pair of shoes. You can go ask for money from the Bog Fund.

LOIS
(after a beat)
Wait, so anyone can ask for money?

ABI
[LAUGHS] Yeah. Well any poor lesbians in the North East!

ACE
[LAUGHS]
(then, to JEAN)
Babe you don't have a drink. Let's get you a drink.

And she drags JEAN away.

ABI
(after JEAN)
I'll keep an eye on her!

LOIS
Where does the money come from?

ABI
People like her.

ABI points at JEAN. But LOIS isn't following.

ABI (CONT'D)
Lesbians with "proper" jobs.
Teachers, lawyers or whatever, can put money in, you know, to help out those who're more hard up.

On LOIS processing, reassessing. ABI watches her, warmed by her reaction to all this.

ABI (CONT'D)
 How old are you anyway? Old enough
 for a drink?

LOIS nods, clearly bullshitting. ABI laughs and steers her towards the kitchen.

LATER--

THE LARKS' punk anthem 'MAGGIE MAGGIE MAGGIE, OUT OUT OUT!' blasts out of a speaker. ACE, DEBBIE and all their friends jump around madly, singing along.

JEAN sips her drink from an armchair in the corner, watching with a smile. We follow her gaze to the kitchen area where ABI is sitting on the counter, gesticulating, LOIS hanging off her every word.

VIV's there too, making a drink. A visible pang from JEAN. Then, as if sensing it, VIV turns and they catch each other's eyes for a second before both looking away.

ACE and DEBBIE collapse onto the sofa next to JEAN, talking nonsense, laughing.

DEBBIE
 (to JEAN)
 How did we look?

JEAN
 Err.

ACE
 Oi. We were stunning. Ignore her
 babe. She's all bitter and
 heartbroken.

JEAN finding it hard not to smile despite it all.

LATER --

We follow JEAN through the dance floor, where ABI and LOIS are throwing themselves around, uneven shadows crossing their faces as the lava lamp does its thing.

Hunched in a ball, JEAN puts a cigarette in her mouth, patting down her pockets for a lighter. Behind her, through the door into the party - hazy, fleeting tableaus. Then, a backlit figure heading towards the door. A familiar voice.

VIV
(sitting down next to
JEAN)
What are you doing out here?

JEAN turns, moved by this gesture. She looks into VIV's eyes, feeling her brain unravel.

JEAN
Hi.

VIV
Hiya.

JEAN
I'll be back in in a sec.

VIV
Okay.

VIV holds her gaze for a moment. All that familiarity flooding back into the space between them. Then she stands and heads back into the party. JEAN lights her cigarette and takes a moment to stare out into the darkness.

SLOW FADE TO
BLACK.

135

INT/EXT. JEAN'S CAR - MOVING - DAY.

135

Hazy sunlight catches JEAN's bonnet as she crosses The Tyne.

NEWS REPORT
Chaos on the roads this morning,
disrupting back to school traffic
on the A12 towards Gateshead.

At a junction she lights a cigarette and winds down the window. That billboard we know so well has been defaced by graffiti.

136

INT/EXT. SCHOOL CARPARK/ JEAN'S CAR - DAY.

136

JEAN pulls into the school carpark and cuts her engine. That familiar TIDAL WAVE of shrieking and laughter as the student body surge through the school gates.

We stay with JEAN for a moment.

A BOY on a skateboard whizzes by, slamming a hand on her bonnet as he swerves into the playground. She barely registers. Gathering herself, she opens the car door.

Through the car windscreen, we watch as JEAN strides across the playground towards school. Halfway, an eager YEAR NINE STUDENT appears, anxious for JEAN's help with something. Before long they're both swallowed up by the steady flow of students entering the building.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER THE CREDITS:

Archive footage of the Stop The Clause rally. Newcastle, 9th April, 1988. Backlit by the afternoon sun, BOB CROSSMAN speaks to ENRAPTURED CROWDS on the edge of The Tyne.

BOB CROSSMAN

When you go home to your communities tonight, wherever they may be. Hold up that mirror of truth to convince yourselves and the people you love. Because being lesbian or gay isn't catching. But perhaps being brave is... Remember that just by being yourself you are changing the world. You are the truth, and you are the mirrors which reflect reality. Carry on changing the world.

During his speech, the camera roams the crowd, picking out captivated faces, eventually landing on a YOUNG WOMAN with a thick mop of dark hair. It's not LOIS, but it may as well be.

She stands and wolf whistles. People around her all stand, cheering, whistling. Hope for a better future emanating from every face, every gesture, every smile.

THE END.