

Gold Digger

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Episode Four

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Mainstreet Pictures / BBC One

Part One: 'Her'

1 EXT. SEA - SUNSET 17

1

The English Channel, fast travelled over - the endless blue giving way to -

2 EXT. BEACH - SUNSET 17, CONT.

2

A smear of sand, on to where pebble beach meets cliff base. And then we're tilting, vertiginous, as we race up the cliff face. The only sound we hear - Julia's voice -

JULIA (O.S.)
If I'd known then what was coming -

3 EXT. SOUTH WEST COAST PATH - SUNSET 17, CONT.

3

Emerge to find, right by the edge - JULIA, stunned into silence by the proposal from BENJAMIN. His hands still hold her shoulders. She opens her mouth, shuts it, opens it again.

JULIA (O.S.)
Who you really were...

Julia just looks at him. Benjamin waits expectantly. Fear, excitement - it all crosses his face.

JULIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I would never have said yes.

Still Julia can't find any words. Utterly thrown.

BENJAMIN
(trying to sound light)
You're not going to say no are you?

Seeing his bravado fail, face crumple has Julia shake her head. Anything to save his feelings.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
So, is that...is that a yes?

When she finally speaks, it's barely a whisper.

JULIA
I...Yes.

CUT TO: TITLES

4 EXT. VILLAGE - MAIN SQUARE - DAY 18

4

A tray of vintage engagement rings. Looking at them, through the antique shop's front window, stand Julia and Benjamin.

(CONTINUED)

JULIA

You don't have to get me a ring.

BENJAMIN

Yes I do. Otherwise how will everyone know you belong to me?

Julia gives a soft laugh.

JULIA

Very droll.

BENJAMIN

(in earnest)

I want to get you a ring. And I want to buy it.

She looks at him with affection. Turns her attention back to the rings - on the top row, the flashier row, her eye is drawn to a large ruby encased with diamonds. Big price tag.

JULIA

That...is quite something.

Julia turns to see that Benjamin - is eyeing the row below - the modest row. A very simple solitaire ring. He adjusts his gaze to see her expensive ring. Gives a tiny smile - clearly it's way out of his budget. Just as Julia goes to broach it she sees in the window's reflection:

Jogging through the festive bustle of the village, past the convivial turkey queue outside the butchers - come TED and MARSHA. In matching lycra, competitive. Abruptly, Julia turns, wanting to get out of here - but - they've been spotted. The pair jog up to them. Julia forces a civil smile.

MARSHA

Morning...Excuse the state of us.

Julia looks at Marsha - she's barely broken a sweat, lycra clinging in all the right places. Ted squares up to Benjamin.

TED

(competitive)

Out for a run.

JULIA

Yes. We can see.

Ted balks at the 'we'. Marsha sees this, tries to smooth it.

MARSHA

How are you both in this never-ending festive season?

BENJAMIN

(puffed up with it)

Actually, we're -

(CONTINUED)

JULIA

- In a rush. We're in a rush. Enjoy
your...exertions.

Julia all but pulls Benjamin away towards the post office.
Once they're alone, he looks at her.

BENJAMIN

He'll have to know eventually.

Julia nods. Knows. He waits for her to say more. Eventually -

JULIA

Truth is, I like it being...just
for us. It feels...
(with excitement)
Illicit.

BENJAMIN

Isn't that another word for wrong?

She shakes her head at him, then - kisses him. His doubts melt away. As the pair walk on, Julia can't help turning back. Sees: Ted twisting around to look at her as he jogs on - he fast twists away - not wanting to be seen. Julia does the same. As over we hear 'Down To Zero' by Joan Armatrading -

5 **INT. DAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 18** 5

The song plays on as -

Julia pulls the door to, a little guiltily. She makes her way past the Christmas tree (complete with perfectly wrapped presents already) over to the bookshelf. Retrieves a thick old photo album. Settles down with it on the sofa.

The cover reads 'Julia & Ted. Wedding Day. June 20th, 1982'. Julia takes in a few of the photographs but the one she rests on (and the only one we see) - is her hand, signing the register, Ted's hand resting on hers. Togetherness -

For Julia this feels like more than nostalgia. This feels like regret. She snaps the book shut - and the song cuts out.

6 **INT. DAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 18** 6

Julia lies unsleeping, staring at the ceiling. Benjamin drifting off. And then - she can't not say it any more.

JULIA

Why do you want to marry me?

BENJAMIN

(sleepy murmur)
'Cause I do.

Not good enough for Julia, she twists in to him, gives his arm a gentle shake to wake him. He comes to.

JULIA

No but really. Why? Why marriage,
why not just...us. As we are.

Benjamin looks at her, very awake now. Tries for a joke -

BENJAMIN

I knew I should have bought the ring there and then.

She's not in the mood. Just keeps her gaze on him. Waiting.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Okay. I...I want to marry you because of the only reason there is - I love you...And I want to know that it's us. Forever...Satisfied?

JULIA

Sorry I just, I think I'm still getting my head around it. Being asked. I didn't expect...

(a moment, then -)

I never thought I'd marry again.

BENJAMIN

I never thought I'd ask again, seeing as last time I'd barely got the question out before I was dumped.

JULIA

You do know I hate her for that.

A flicker of hurt, but Benjamin waves it away.

BENJAMIN

Point is, we have to be allowed to hope that things change...get better - else we're not moving forward, we're just...stuck - holding on to some shitty past.

She nods. A rush of emotion. Which she doesn't want to admit to, so goes for an eyebrow raise and a wry line instead.

JULIA

So wise for one so young.

BENJAMIN

Bugger off...Now can I go back to sleep please or do you have any more wobbles you'd like to share with the group?

(CONTINUED)

JULIA
Bugger off yourself.

He opens his arms, she lets herself snuggle in, lets herself believe she deserves this happiness. Allows her eyes to shut.

7 INT. DAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 19

7

Julia moves with efficiency through her tasks in here - directing Benjamin to tie the mistletoe above the door, as she arranges a bowl of chestnuts on the table, checks the last of her decorations above the windows. There's a satisfaction she takes in these tasks - in making it nice.

Her last task, removing homemade mince pies from Aga. As she sets them to cool, Benjamin sniffs them out - chances his luck - burns his fingers. She chuckles, then hears - a car pull in. He puts his arms around her, reading her anxiety.

BENJAMIN
They might surprise you with their reactions.

8 EXT. DAY HOUSE - DAY 19

8

Julia and Benjamin walk as a united front to greet the car, hand-in-hand, Julia grips tighter. Her nerves evident. EIMEAR gets out of the car first, from driver's side, in sloppy long drive clothes, hurrying to rear door with a backward wave.

JULIA
How was the drive?

EIMEAR
Dreamy until we came off the M5 and
Elsie totally lost her shit. She'll
be fine, she just wants the boob -

Eimear hauls the crying BABY out (now 9 months old), heads to the house - taking in an eyeful of Benjamin as she goes.

JULIA
Eimear this is Benjamin.

EIMEAR
Guessed as much. How you doing?

BENJAMIN
Yeah, I'm -

Whatever he was going to say is drowned out by the baby.

EIMEAR
Hold that thought, Benjamin -

Benjamin smiles, gallantly steps aside so she can pass.

(CONTINUED)

BENJAMIN

Please, crying baby definitely
trumps me.

EIMEAR

(disarmed by him)
I wouldn't say that...Be gentle
with my husband - office Christmas
party last night. Say no more.

Eimear walks on. PATRICK hauls himself out of car, stubbly,
shirt not done up to top for once, but in buoyant spirits.

PATRICK

Ignore her, I'm suffering no ill
effects.

EIMEAR

(calling back)
Yeah, 'coz you're still tanked.

Julia goes and hugs Patrick. Holds him tight. Into his ear -

JULIA

Missed you.

Patrick needed that, grips on. Then as Benjamin extends a
hand to him - Patrick disengages. The two men eye each other.
All British politeness to cover the festering resentment.

BENJAMIN

Good to see you, Patrick.

PATRICK

And you, Benjamin, and you.

LEO emerges from inside the house. Shaved head, barefoot,
thin vest on, as if it's not December. Eyes to Patrick.

LEO

The cavalry have arrived.

Julia reads his inference, a little stung by it.

PATRICK

Like the hair. Very...borstal.

Leo makes a ha ha face. Patrick, in a hungover show of
magnanimity, opens his arms for a hug. Leo holds tight.
Patrick breaks away, fishes out phone from trousers, cack-
handedly drops it. Julia picks it up for him. Sees he's
trying to call 'Heidi Work'. He quickly takes it from her.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

The land of no signal.

BENJAMIN

There's a spot, out by the field
where you can get three bars.

PATRICK

(exaggeratedly shocked)
There is, is there?

Leo snorts with laughter. Benjamin meets their rudeness with an easy smile. DELLA clammers out over the baby car seat. Julia does that thing mum's do. Forensically scans her child.

JULIA

Darling you look painfully thin,
are you eating?

DELLA

You always say that - however
rotund I am.

JULIA

You've never been rotund in your
life. And I'm just checking you're
okay, which I think is allowed.

Della's not okay, so she ignores this, hauls CHARLOTTE out of her car seat. Squeezes her tight before setting her down. Charlotte bounds over to Julia, gives her a hug around the waist. Julia bends down to her height, holds her close.

CHARLOTTE

I saw eighteen yellow cars, Granny.

JULIA

Did you? That's a lot of yellow
cars.

CHARLOTTE

Who's he?

Julia twists around and sees Charlotte's looking at Benjamin. Benjamin bends down too, holds out a hand to Charlotte.

BENJAMIN

Hello Charlotte. I'm Benjamin.

She's not sure about strangers so doesn't take his hand. It dents him. Della sees, instinctively wants to make it better.

DELLA

She takes a while to warm up.

PATRICK

With people she doesn't know. No
offence, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN

A wise policy, Charlotte.

Charlotte buries her head in Julia's shoulder. Julia goes to speak, to declare her news, but Patrick starts walking off.

PATRICK
Got to make a work call.

JULIA
(hesitantly)
I, we...we have news.

Patrick raps the VW's bonnet as he goes. A little too hard.

PATRICK
So I see. The poor old Volvo.

LEO
Ringing in the changes. Is Mum.

JULIA
(ignores this, to Patrick)
It was the same age as you.

PATRICK
Exactly. A classic vintage.

And Julia's chance to tell the kids straight away disappears.

9 **INT. DAY HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY 19**

9

Julia's dragged inside the house by an excitable Charlotte who can't wait to see: the Christmas tree in living room. She gives a gasp, hurries inside to see who all the presents are for. It brings Julia a simple joy, to watch her granddaughter. Della comes down the stairs, aggrieved.

DELLA
Leo says you've given my room away.

10 **INT. DAY HOUSE - BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - DAY 19**

10

Julia shows Della around. She's made it nice, new linen, flowers - but it has no character - and the boxes of Della's stuff don't help. Della now pretends she's fine with it.

JULIA
- Yours was the only south facing one, Benjamin's in there at his desk all hours - a Masters isn't the joke it was in my day...and before you ask who's paying for it - I am, but he's paying me back.

DELLA
I wasn't going to ask.

It embarrasses Julia. She nods about the room.

(CONTINUED)

JULIA

Honestly, I didn't think you'd
mind. You're hardly ever here.

DELLA

Mum, it's fine. Time to put away
childish things and all that.

Julia can see it's not fine. And the guilt takes her back -

11 **INT. DAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASH BACK 1**

11

Caption: Twenty-Four Years Ago

Everything fragmentary, as we enter the past to see -

A hand, emptying paperwork onto bed. A flash of Julia's swollen lip, eye closing up. Her packed suitcase. In her panicked rummage she finds - two passports. Snatches one: it's hers. Tucked inside it - falling out - a faded photo of: Young Della. A dead-eyed stare to camera with pudding bowl haircut. It fills Julia with sorrow.

She fast puts the photo safely back into passport, leaves the other (Ted's) behind, and shoves her passport into suitcase. Ready. An inhuman scream cuts across everything -

YOUNG PATRICK (O.S.)

Mum.

12 **INT. DAY HOUSE - BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - DAY 19**

12

A thud breaks Julia out of her recall - her eyes go to where - Della's giving a packed box of her stuff a kick.

DELLA

Festive trip to the dump I guess.

JULIA

But there's your old storybooks in
there...your level one sailing
certificate, grade three tuba -

DELLA

- Who would have thought with those
illustrious achievements I would go
on to accomplish so much.

Julia looks at Della, wants to touch her, hold her. Doesn't.

JULIA

Are you...is everything okay with
you and Emily?

DELLA

(defensive)

The town crier keeping you up to date I take it.

JULIA

All Leo said was that you were making a go of things.

Della can't cope with this question. Something clearly up with her and Emily so she does what comes naturally. Evades -

DELLA

What about you? Still in the honeymoon bliss of it all?

With Della shut off from her, Julia clams up, just nods. As Julia goes to leave, Della sags down onto the alien bed, stares at her childhood boxed up. Laughs, but it breaks. We go out with Julia, hearing this pain, unable to help.

13

INT. DAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 19

13

Julia has Charlotte on her lap plaiting her hair, as Patrick sets up a table for a board games competition. Shifting aside the Guardian Weekend and the Christmas Radio Times. There's everything from 'Articulate' to the really old 'L'Attaque'. Eimear ferries around a hat, and into this go pound coins fished from Della, Leo and Julia's pockets in turn. When it's Patrick's turn, he pulls Eimear close, gives her a big snog.

LEO

Grim.

PATRICK

Can't help it if you're not getting any, bro.

Leo throws a cushion at Patrick and it's this moment that - Benjamin walks into. It has the tray in his hands nearly tip. Full with Julia's mince pies and brandy butter.

JULIA

(to her sons, chiding)

Careful.

BENJAMIN

It's all good.

LEO

What a hero.

Benjamin lets it slide off him, goes to start offering the tray but everyone just snaffles what they want. A greedy elbows out culture. He's soon left with empty tray. Sets it down. Eyes Julia expectantly - they're all here.

(CONTINUED)

Julia looks about at the chaos of her family. Opens her mouth, then - shuts it. Saved by the cockiness of -

PATRICK

As reigning champion I pick first.

Patrick pulls out 'Monopoly', hands it to Della as if she's his skivvy to set the game up. She does so without complaint. Patrick takes the top hat, Della collects a wodge of money. All in a mess. Hands it up to Benjamin without looking -

DELLA

You alright to be Banker?

PATRICK

(before Benjamin can -)

Ah but can we trust him not to dip his hand in the pot?

A moment's silence. Then Benjamin just winks at Patrick.

BENJAMIN

Depends on the stakes.

Julia gestures Benjamin to sit beside her. Safety together.

JULIA

The grand sum of one pound...
Everyone puts in for each game.
There's ten rounds in total and at the end of Boxing Day if we haven't all got furious with each other and given up -

PATRICK

- Della-gate. 2009.

DELLA

One year, that was one year, and might I add it was in response to you doing a shitload of cheating.

JULIA

(covers Charlotte's ears)

Language -

EIMEAR

- Kind of lost that battle already.

Which Julia doesn't approve of but what can she do. Leo puts his feet up on the coffee table, delights in this next -

LEO

Anyway we play, we play some more, someone wins. Normally Dad.

Julia knows he's trying to get a rise out of her, out of Benjamin. She twists to Benjamin, a reassuring smile.

JULIA

We're not making it sound a lot of fun. I promise it is. Play. Please.

EIMEAR

Word to the wise, Benjamin - it's like a bloodsport. I much prefer to sit back, go old school with a Campari and orange, then watch them tear themselves to shreds.

BENJAMIN

(smiles at her)
Campari it is.

Not liking them getting along, Patrick interjects.

PATRICK

Make yourself useful -

Patrick tosses a scorebook at Benjamin. Its cover - 'Day Family Xmas Extravaganza'. Benjamin opens it. The page filled with scores and player columns: 'Dad, Mum, Patrick, Della, Leo'. Julia tries to find him a blank page but they're all the same. Until - '2017'. A marker has scribbled out 'Dad'.

JULIA

We should start a new scorebook.

Which Benjamin appreciates but then - Charlotte turns around -

CHARLOTTE

Granny it's not a plait if you let all the hair go.

JULIA

You're quite right. Brush.

Charlotte hands the brush over and Julia starts again, gently brushing her hair. Benjamin just watches - seeing Julia as a grandmother. A sight he's not seen before. It unnerves him.

Where the en-suite is classic white, this has bright tiles and kids bath toys. Knelt on the floor, changing the baby's nappy - is Eimear. Julia's perched on bath edge, dutifully watching Charlotte show off how well she can brush her teeth, which isn't very - she just sucks the toothpaste off.

JULIA

Not a lot of actual teeth brushing goes on, does it?

EIMEAR

Nope. Fluoride's her crack cocaine.

Julia takes the brush and shows Charlotte how to do it. Holds Charlotte's hair back as it falls into the tap on gargling.

JULIA

Go and pick a bedtime story.

Charlotte bounds out. Julia nudges the door shut with her foot. Tries to work out how to start. Then just starts.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Is Patrick alright?

EIMEAR

Last time I checked.

JULIA

How's he been with you going back to work?

EIMEAR

He's survived that body blow...what with living in the twenty-first century and all.

Julia gives a half smile. Let's her have that. And then -

JULIA

It's just, today, he's been very...

EIMEAR

And that has to be down to me, does it?

Julia bites her tongue. Eimear hoicks the baby up and starts clearing the mat away. The process of doing it has her calm.

EIMEAR (CONT'D)

We're good at the moment, we're actually better than we have been for a long while. Having date nights and everything - the barometer of true love.

JULIA

Good. You deserve it. Both of you.

Eimear's grateful for that. Dumps the full nappy bag in the bin. Goes to walk past Julia to leave, sees her need. Pauses.

EIMEAR

Honestly? He finds all this...hard. Last Christmas was...well, it wasn't what you'd call fun exactly.

Julia remembers.

EIMEAR (CONT'D)

He worried and worried about you
the whole drive back. That we'd
left you - that you were on your
own...That you were going to stay
miserable and furious forever.

JULIA

(wry)

Don't hold back will you.

EIMEAR

(a half-laugh)

Misery and fury you're allowed. If
it was me, I'd have ripped both
their faces clean off, but that's
the Irish in me.

Julia laughs, needing the release of it.

EIMEAR (CONT'D)

Now here we are, somehow at
Christmas again already and I think
Patrick...I think he's just
adjusting to the fact
everything's...different.

JULIA

It's different for me too.

EIMEAR

And how...I mean I'd heard plenty
enough about your man there, but
Patrick missed the part out about
him being a stone cold fox.

(can't help the last)

Worth the aggro, I hope.

Julia just looks at her, and then - a nod. Yes he is.

Julia emerges out onto her pride and joy, looking for
Benjamin. She sees through the greenhouse to where he's
standing, back to her, on the phone. His voice audible -

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

- I didn't tell you to upset you, I
told you because I didn't want you
hearing from anyone else.

Julia slows her pace, stays watching.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

No it's not gloating, it's called
common decency, Ally.

Julia can't help reacting to that name.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
(softening)
Look I don't want to fight, not
with you.

And she can't bear to hear it any more. Turns to go - but in the process kicks a stray plant plot and so alerts Benjamin to her presence. He twists from where he's standing in the garden, sees her through the glass. Fast covers - gives a jovial wave to Julia, changes his tone into phone -

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Anyway, I should go...Look after
yourself, okay?

He hangs up, walks to Julia with a smile. She pretends she isn't interested in the phone and who was on it.

JULIA
We're sitting down to eat, I
couldn't find you.

BENJAMIN
Sorry...

Julia waves it away. The pair start heading inside. A tense silence until Benjamin lifts his phone up, casually -

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
That was Ally by the way. I called
her. Wanted her to know.

Julia acts like this is fresh information. Oh?

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
It's good news - I want to share
it.

JULIA
(defensively)
I will tell them.

Benjamin puts his palms up - of course.

BENJAMIN
No pressure from me.

He takes her hand. Julia can't help the question -

JULIA
How did she take it?

Benjamin pauses, gives a soft shake of his head.

BENJAMIN

I didn't expect it but she, she was gutted...Funny how things turn out.

Julia's insecurity flares, he brings her hand to his lips, kisses it, we go close on this moment -

16 INT. DAY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 19

16

Julia's face all we can see. All certainty gone from it. Into view comes - a carving fork. Gripped in her hand. As the fork plunges into hot ham - go into her view on it all:

The family assembled, Patrick at the other head of the table well on his way to drunk and laughing too loud at whatever Eimear's said. She's in a jumpsuit, hot pink lipstick. Della's sat opposite, looking tired. Then either side of Julia - Leo, heaping his plate high with potatoes, and - Benjamin, determinedly doing his best to charm the family.

As everyone talks, Julia's eyes forensically take them in, one by one. Their voices seem louder, more abrasive.

PATRICK

I can carve, Mum.

LEO

Which is code for - give yourself the biggest portion.

DELLA

(of the size of the ham)
You're hardly going to go hungry.

PATRICK

Go ahead, be my guest, Leo. Be the first work you've done all year.

Eimear sets to defusing the siblings, turning to Leo.

EIMEAR

I don't know where you put it, if I ate as much as you I'd be the size of a house. Well, a modest semi.

BENJAMIN

Hardly. Look at you.

Before Patrick can react, Leo jabs his fork at his brother.

LEO

I'll have you know barwork is actually very taxing.

PATRICK

Mum said they fired you.

LEO

Thanks Mum, and they didn't fire
me...There weren't enough shifts.

PATRICK

What with Christmas being such a
quiet time and all.

EIMEAR

I think we need the red down here.
Benjamin - will you do the honours?

BENJAMIN

'Course.

Benjamin stands and goes to top up Eimear's wine.

PATRICK

I can top my own wife up.
(as if friendly)
But thanks. You're a real gent.

Julia watches Patrick grab the bottle from Benjamin. Male ego's bristling. It has the words blurt from her -

JULIA

We're getting married.

All turn to her. A splutter of disbelief from Patrick, fast controlled. The serving spoon in Leo's hand clattering down.

Julia takes a breath. Sets to resuming carving. Benjamin sits beside her, relieved. It gives her the strength to carry on.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Benjamin proposed. And I said yes.

Leo forces a laugh. It dies when he realises it's alone. Leo looks to his older brother. For Patrick it's like everything smashes in at once. He takes a slug of wine. Sets it down. Doesn't say anything - can't seem to form a sentence. Leo twists his attention to Della. Who is looking at her lap.

LEO

Sorry, are you two on Xanax or
something?

DELLA

Because we're not behaving like
children?

LEO

It's called caring. Fuck me.
(back to Julia, upset)
What about Dad?

JULIA

What about him?

LEO

Er. You only got divorced five minutes ago.

JULIA

I'd say your father gave up any right to have his feelings considered when he slept with my best friend.

A moment's silence. No one can rebut that. Exhausted by it, Julia removes the carving fork from the ham and sits down.

LEO

So - when's the big day?

BENJAMIN

We haven't talked about it yet, but hopefully -

JULIA

(trying to reassure them)

- Not for a while I'm sure.

And she can feel Benjamin deflate. Can't cope with it right now. She directs her gaze down the table at her first-born.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I'm sure you have something to say.

LEO

Apparently not. Patrick has decided now's the perfect time to stop telling everyone what to do for once. What better moment, ey?

EIMEAR

Go easy, Leo, won't you? It's hardly bog-standard news.

She squeezes Patrick's hand. It brings him around. He looks at Eimear's hand on his, can't bear it - removes his hand.

PATRICK

You're getting married.

JULIA

Yes.

PATRICK

You're getting married to him.

BENJAMIN

(trying to keep his cool)

I am sitting here you know.

But Patrick ignores this. The edge in his voice growing -

PATRICK

You are getting married to that man.

BENJAMIN

(losing it)
Easy.

Patrick pushes back in his chair - walks out without even looking at Julia. Hurt courses across her face. After a moment, Eimear folds her napkin, follows him. Her loyalty forbids her making it okay for Julia even if she wants to.

A silence settles on the room.

JULIA

It'll be getting cold. The ham.

But she doesn't move to start carving again, hasn't the energy. Benjamin takes the carving fork - stands and starts carving. Leo rocks back in his chair - slow claps -

LEO

Oh very good. Man of the house.

And Leo too turns, walks out. Julia's now fighting with all her might to hold herself together. Only Della left.

JULIA

Della?

DELLA

I'm fine for ham.

JULIA

No, I meant...what do you think?

Della just looks at her. Sees the need there, but can't help.

DELLA

(bleakly)
I think...I think I don't
understand why anyone gets married.

Julia just absorbs the latest blow. Right.

The lonely space that is a cellar. All dark corners and cobwebby boxes. Crouched, Julia takes in the family's forgotten items - Patrick's old teenage rugby boots, Della's recorder, Leo's toddler pottery. At the back: a box marked 'Xmas'. Julia pulls out a tangle of stockings, which is what she came for. Underneath the stockings, an old card:

A sketch of a lurid green Christmas tree. Atop it, instead of a star, is a stick woman.

17 CONTINUED:

An arrow to it - 'Mum' in neat handwriting. Julia opens the card. Inside - a baby's squiggles (Leo) and: 'You're the best Mum in the world xxx'. Signed 'Patrick' (the neat writer), a scrawl for 'Della'. A sob chokes out of Julia.

18 **INT. DAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 19**

Utterly drained of emotion, Julia lies in bed, twisted to her side, duvet clamped about her. Benjamin's on his back.

BENJAMIN

It's not often that I'm grateful
I've got no family...

This unnerves her, cuts through her gloom. She twists to him.

JULIA

No one has no family...Well, apart
from in Dickens novels.

He forces a shrug.

BENJAMIN

Sure there's cousins and aunts and
all that, but I'm talking close
family. The ones that make you
feel...smaller.

She won't stand for criticism of her children, even now.

JULIA

It's a lot for them to take in.

Julia turns on her side, yanks off bedside light. Stays firmly twisted from him. Slowly he draws her into him.

BENJAMIN

You're right, of course you are and
however...car crashy it was...at
least we can console ourselves with
the fact the worst bit's over.

In the darkness we can just make out Julia's face. Looking very much like the worst is still to come.

19 **INT. DAY HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING 20**

Julia quietly picks up her car keys from the dresser. Scrawls a note - 'Benjamin' - then pauses. Conflicted. Before adding - 'gone to get turkey. J x '- and then she's moving, off, out -

20 **INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - MORNING 20**

We only know it's a lie as we pull out from a diamond encrusted reindeer to see Marsha's stark un-festive kitchen.

Julia stands utterly rigidly by marble island, facing an impeccably dressed Marsha - nodding upstairs.

MARSHA

He's just out the shower.

An involuntary grimace from Julia. As if she can picture it.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

Can I tempt you with caffeine?

JULIA

I'm not staying.

(sees her deflate, tries-)

The brood demand constant feeding.

MARSHA

Point them in the direction of the microwave.

Julia can't hide her amusement at this, which cheers Marsha.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

How's Benjamin enjoying his first Christmas in the madhouse?

Julia flounders. Just as Marsha goes to push it, Ted enters. Hair still wet, clothes pulled on. Julia swallows. Not ready.

A cherub spews water from its mouth. Beside this fountain, stand Julia and Ted. The house behind them - Marsha just visible 'keeping busy' but really scrutinising whatever's going on out here. Julia's waiting for Ted to finish -

TED

- I hope you're not wanting to change our arrangement for tomorrow because you know it *is* customary for a father to see his children on all the major holidays.

JULIA

I'm not changing any arrangement.

TED

Good...Good. Last year, I...it wasn't the same - not seeing them.

JULIA

That was their choice, not mine.

TED

If you say so.

Julia tries not to rise to the bait.

(CONTINUED)

JULIA

What I came to tell you, is...

(a moment, then -)

Benjamin and I are getting married.

He just looks at her. Has no words. Shakes his head, roots gaze to the ground. When he looks up he's seemingly composed.

TED

Well it's obvious why he'd want to marry you.

JULIA

Oh yes. Why's that?

TED

For your money.

And whatever brief hope Julia had that he'd be good about it, shatters. She just nods to herself.

JULIA

I forgot I was utterly devoid of other charms.

TED

Why you'd say yes, that's the bit I can't fathom.

JULIA

I don't want another row.

TED

Who said anything about rowing?

We're having a *conversation*. A perfectly civil one. Remind me, is it, three or four months since the divorce came through?

Julia just looks at him. He meets her gaze, even smiles.

TED (CONT'D)

Let's see the ring then.

She finds herself slipping her hand behind her back.

TED (CONT'D)

Don't be shy. I bet it's quite the rock he's got you...Three months salary, that's what I spent on yours. I know Benjamin's basically still in school, but for an occasion like this, I'm sure he pushed the boat out.

JULIA

You really are such a child.

TED

Says the woman marrying one -

And before he can contain himself, he's taking her arm, so he can see her hand. She flinches at his touch, yanks herself free of him. He laughs on seeing that - there's no ring.

JULIA

I didn't come to ask for your blessing, I came to tell you. Which - I've done. So. I'm going to go.

TED

I'm trying to help you out here, Julia. Believe it or not. I don't want you made a fool of.

JULIA

Anymore than you did?

A short bark of a laugh from Ted.

TED

And there we have it...that's what this is really all about, isn't it? You - getting revenge on me.

JULIA

(inflamed)

Shut up. Just...shut up.

Which to Ted - proves his point. He just grins at her.

TED

It would be easier - and a lot cheaper - just to admit...you're still in love with me.

For a moment we don't know whether Julia's going to cry, nod, kill him. She tries to keep the wobble from her voice -

JULIA

Do you remember how happy we were that day? You with your terrible mullet, me -

(squeezes fingers tight)

This thin, with a smile as wide as my face...Looking like, like nobody else mattered. Like it was just us.

It takes Ted back. An instant softening.

TED

I remember.

Julia steps in close to him - close enough to kiss him. Their lips only inches apart, then she puts her mouth to his ear -

JULIA

If I'd known then what was coming -

Now we know where we are. Hearing her words from the opening.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Who you really were -
(spits this last)
I'd never have said yes.

Snaps her head back. So she can see the blow land. It does.

JULIA (CONT'D)

But for the kids. So don't for one
second think this has *anything* to
do with you.

Julia paces off towards the house. We go with her, blood up,
trying to keep herself together. Not turning back, not seeing-

TED (O.S.)

(calls out, all mockery)
Where do I send the flowers to?

Julia manages to keep face first. Walk on.

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

On second thoughts - I'll hold off.
You and I both know you'll never be
able to go through with it.

She just keeps walking, closer and closer, almost through us -

22 INT. JULIA'S VW / EXT. DAY HOUSE - DAY 20

22

Julia's face all we can see. Jaw set with fury. As all we can
hear - the blare of car horn. Again. Again. Again. Now see
where it's coming from - her own hand jamming against
steering wheel. Watching as from the house spill the family
to see what the noise is. They're thrown to see the source.
Looking drawn, Patrick sends Eimear back in with Charlotte.
Julia now climbs out of the car. Stands in front of it.

LEO

What the fuck, Mum - I was
asleep.

BENJAMIN

Are you, is everything
alright?

JULIA

I need you to hear me.

PATRICK

The neighbours too?

Della just looks at Patrick - don't. Julia won't be cowed.

(CONTINUED)

JULIA

Last night I found myself wanting to apologise - as if I'd -
 (nods to Benjamin)
 We'd, done something wrong. We haven't. We're in love, however difficult or...absurd you might all find that. And as a consequence we're getting married. It's really quite simple -

LEO

- Yeah we got the memo -

JULIA

(viperish)

- Do not interrupt me.

Which has the words disappear from Leo. He looks to his siblings for support, but everyone's having their own individual experience of this. And it's Julia we care about.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I made out like it would be a long engagement because I didn't want you all to feel worse than you clearly already did. But I am sixty years old, and I may be your mother, but that's not all I am...
 (looks between her kids)
 I refuse to waste any more of my life doing what's best for other people. I want to get married this September. And do you know what...
 (looking about, the house)
 I want to do it here.

Julia looks at Benjamin - his joy is clear. The faces of her kids are a different matter. She manages to persevere.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Your support would be...lovely, but in the absence of that I'd ask one thing of you - which frankly, isn't very fucking much. I'd ask you, please, to keep your mouths shut.

Julia twists, walks with as much poise as she can manage to the back of the car. Pops the boot. And pulls out - a huge turkey - which she then carries past her stunned offspring.

Julia deposits the turkey on the shelf, almost collapses onto it. All her bravado draining away now she's alone. The latch goes - she expects Benjamin - but is thrown to see - Della.

DELLA
Mum that was...

Julia knows - almost goes to apologise -

DELLA (CONT'D)
That was seriously cool.

JULIA

Really?

DELLA
Yeah. Pure She-Ra.

A surprised laugh bursts from Julia. Before it gets awkward, Della comes to her side and inspects the turkey. A prod.

JULIA
Will you help me stuff her?

DELLA
Why is she always a her?

JULIA
Okay, will you help me stuff him?

Della half-smiles at her mum. Nods. Julia inspects the cavity of the turkey as Della struggles to say the next.

DELLA
Last night I...

Julia looks up at her daughter. Della can't handle the direct eye contact so does what she always does - addresses an inanimate object rather than the person she needs to hear it.

DELLA (CONT'D)
I should've just done what a normal person would do and said congratulations, given you a hug, but I didn't, 'coz... 'coz I'm so supremely shit at commitment of any kind that I can't see past myself. So I... I'm sorry. And - I - congratulations, mum.

The most honest thing Della's ever said to her mother.

DELLA (CONT'D)
But can we skip the hug part?

And through glittering eyes, Julia laughs.

The family are gathered for the next round of games. Patrick trying to fish out a segment from a 'Trivial Pursuit' pie, slamming it down, but what we're really focused on is: Julia drawing up a new scorebook. No column for Ted.

CONTINUED:

Benjamin has his own column now. He comes up behind her. Gives her a kiss on the top of the head, not caring for her kids feelings.

EXT. DAY HOUSE - DAY 21

Dressed in their Christmas Eve best, Patrick shepherds his family into the car doing a bad job of disguising his ill temper. Della carries a badly wrapped present under arm. Leo has nothing but is wearing a shirt (unpressed) for the occasion. Julia and Benjamin are outside, seeing them off.

DELLA

What should we say to Dad, about,
you know...your nuptials?

Before Julia can work out how to answer, Leo gets in there -

LEO

I wouldn't worry. Mum's already
dropped that particular bomb.

Julia turns to Benjamin - sees his surprise. And then looks back at Leo - stirring up trouble. She doesn't let it slide.

JULIA

Thank you, Leo.

PATRICK

Della if you're getting in, get in.
Leo - sorry mate - no room at the
inn.

LEO

(hurt, acts like he's not)
I was going to cycle anyway.

Leo gets his bike, Patrick gets in the car. Reverses. Leo pedalling to beat him - the two in competition to leave first. The minute they're alone, Benjamin turns to Julia.

BENJAMIN

When did you tell him?

JULIA

Yesterday morning.

Benjamin just nods to himself - a moment where he's working it out in his head. When he does, his brow furrows.

BENJAMIN

So when you came back, all guns
blazing, saying we'd get married
next year...When you made me feel
for the first time like you were
properly excited about it...

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

(with distaste)
You'd come from his.

Julia sees the challenge there. Doesn't back down.

JULIA

The two things aren't related.

BENJAMIN

(sarcastic nod, then -)
Like when you wanted us to make a
go of it, *right* after your divorce
came through.

Throwing Julia.

JULIA

That's not how it was.

BENJAMIN

Really? Because I can't help
wondering if you actually want to
marry me. Or whether this is just
some fucked up way of getting back
at Ted.

Julia just stares at him. A moment. Then she speaks -

JULIA

I could ask you the same. Rushing
to tell Ally. What, so she can
regret her mistake, come running
back?Fury clouds Benjamin's features. He turns for a second - his
back to her - when he turns back, his face is composed.

BENJAMIN

I want this. I'm just not sure you
do.He heads in. Julia tries to find the words, but as she opens
her mouth - he's closing the door. She fights for composure.
Fights against the truth of what he's said. Stood stock still-**EXT. VILLAGE - MAIN SQUARE - DAY 21**All movement and decisiveness, Julia strides past VILLAGERS
giving her festive nods. She doesn't acknowledge them.
Wherever she's going she won't be thrown off course.**INT. DAY HOUSE - GARDEN ROOM - DAY 21, LATER**Julia walks in to find: Benjamin passed out in a comfy chair,
reading glasses askew, '1946' by Victor Sebestyen open. She
kneels, nudges him. He jolts awake. Out of a nightmare.

(CONTINUED)

It takes him a moment to work out where he is. Seeing Julia, he sits up, not wanting to be vulnerable. But she reaches a hand for his - with her other - produces a gift-wrapped small box.

He takes it questioningly. Inside: the simple solitaire ring Benjamin had wanted to buy her. He can't speak for a moment, looks from it, to Julia.

JULIA

I do want this.

And she kisses him, in a way that makes everything disappear.

EXT. MOORS NEAR WIDECOMBE - EVENING 21

The ring on finger, hand clamped around Benjamin's. They're at the front of the pack - the family braving the moors as the light fades. The village church in the distance.

Charlotte runs ahead of them, arms outstretched to the wind. Benjamin makes one last go of charming her - gives chase in a goofy way. And - Charlotte giggles.

Once he's caught up with her, she slips her hand into Benjamin's. Affections now won. Julia smiles, catches up with them, takes Charlotte's other hand and -

JULIA

One...two...three -

Julia and Benjamin swing Charlotte. She shrieks delightedly.

PATRICK

Mum, can I borrow you?

Julia turns, sees Patrick and Eimear. Eimear jogs to take Julia's place in the game - Benjamin and her making a natural pair. Julia walks past the smoking (on his way to stoned) Leo, and Della, back to Patrick. She doesn't look receptive.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Just hear me out. Please, Mum -

And he puts a desperate hand on hers. It takes her back -

INT. DAY HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT - FLASH BACK 1

Caption: Twenty-Four Years Ago

YOUNG PATRICK's small pink hand clamped around Julia's - pulling her downstairs. Hurried. Sobbing so much his words are lost. Julia's fear grows - fingers grip tighter to his -

30

EXT. MOORS NEAR WIDECOMBE - EVENING 21

30

Julia looks down at Patrick's hand on hers. Back in the now.

PATRICK

Read it before you say anything.

He produces an envelope from his coat. Hands it over. She pulls out a thick document. Gives a shocked laugh at seeing what it is (we don't). Hands it back without reading on.

JULIA

For your sake, Patrick, I'm going to pretend that didn't just happen.

PATRICK

Pre-nuptial agreement's are standard practice in many -

JULIA

- Your father put you up to this, didn't he?...

(shakes her head)

When the two of you are united, that's really something.

PATRICK

He didn't. I want you to be protected. If Benjamin's intentions are good, he won't object.

JULIA

You can't seriously believe that? If I ask him to sign, it means one thing - I don't trust him. And it's over. Which...is what you want.

She starts walking off. He's beaten a moment then jogs after.

PATRICK

This isn't some attack on Benjamin.

(but she keeps walking)

No one goes into a marriage thinking anything other than it'll last forever. It's all love, and plans and endless time. But then...

He falters, which has Julia stop, twist to him. See his hurt.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

People change. Their intentions get...corrupted. They let you down.

Julia just looks at him. Can't fight her maternal concern.

JULIA

So this is about you.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK

I didn't say that.

JULIA

You didn't have to...Tell me what's going on.

Pinned to the spot, Patrick is furious to realise - his eyes are filling. He roots them to the ground, but Julia's seen.

PATRICK

Nothing's going on,
everything's...everything's fine.

JULIA

I'm your mother. That means I know when you're lying.

PATRICK

I...I...

(looks up, of the pre-nup)

I really need you to do this. If not for yourself, then...for me?

Julia just looks at him. Shakes her head. Disappointed.

JULIA

Not fair, Patrick. Not fair.

But she - takes the envelope.

Julia sits on the bed, wrapping up stocking fillers, then stuffing each of her kids tired stockings in turn. Satsuma first. But she's not focused on her task, mind consumed with everything. The pre-nup just visible in her bag.

Off in the en-suite can be heard - Benjamin running the tap, readying for bed, humming happily to himself. Normally it would make her smile, but tonight - it cuts Julia up. After a moment, he bounds in, in just pj bottoms. Sees what she's doing. Warmed by it. Sits by her - peeks inside a stocking.

BENJAMIN

Wish I'd had a mum like you.

Which jolts Julia. The great unsayable taboo. How desperately unsexy too. He chuckles at her slightly horrified reaction.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Oh come on, I'm not getting all Oedipal. You can breathe again.

Julia gives a weak smile.

CONTINUED:

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

I just mean...You. You're so giving
 and warm and, well...
 brilliant...I've never had someone
 on my team this much.

Shaming Julia.

INT. DAY HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT 21

Julia has the pre-nup gripped between her hands. See now, she's standing by the shredder. She tries to unpick the staples that fasten the pre-nup. Can't. Opens her desk drawer, rummages for a suitable tool. What she finds has her stop. Julia pulls the item out, in her hands:

Her old wedding band inscribed with the words: 'Julia - forever yours - Ted'.

Emotion floods her. The past. The damage. She sets the band down on desk. Stares back at the pre-nup and - grabs a pen. Signs. Before she's quite computed what she's doing, she's - forging Benjamin's signature too. The names side-by-side as Julia's eye is drawn back to her old wedding band, Ted -

SNAP TO BLACK:

Out of the darkness, a caption appears:

'Part Two: Her Ex-Husband'

EXT. DEVON ROADS - MORNING 20

Ted's face all we can see. Teeth gritted. Hair sweat-slick under helmet. As over we hear his words -

TED (O.S.)

I've loved her for over half my
 life.

And now we see his cycling shoes, clipped into place, going so hard and fast we can't tell one from the other -

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

I haven't always liked her...

Finally we see his hands, gripping onto handlebars - twisting his wrist so he can see his fitness stats on his watch. It's never good enough for Ted, he pushes himself more -

EXT. DEVON HILL - MORNING 20

Now we see the whole of Ted, bent forward over his bike, going hard at the climb. One seemingly unending stony ascent.

(CONTINUED)

TED (O.S.)

Been understood by her...But she...

EXT. DEVON HILL - PEAK - MORNING 20

Ted reaches the summit. All but falls off his bike from the feat of it. Unclips his shoes. Takes in the view: phenomenal. Devon countryside unfurling beneath him and yet - it's not peace or satisfaction he feels. It's emptiness.

TED (O.S.)

She is, was, my one.

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - MASTER EN-SUITE - MORNING 20

Post shower, towel around his waist, Ted stares in the full-length mirror. Tries to admire himself, stands sideways on. Sees his paunch. Inhales, holds his paunch in. Allows himself to believe this is his true reflection. Over the silence we hear - the click, click of heels. Sound rushing back in. It throws him, has him exhale. Marsha peers around the door.

MARSHA

Julia's here. To see you.

EXT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - GARDEN - MORNING 20

Ted's face sags - registering whatever's just been said to him by - Julia. She snaps her head back so she can see his face. However quickly Ted tries, he can't hide his injury.

JULIA

- But for the kids. So don't for one second think this has anything to do with you.

Now we know where we are. But this time, it's Ted we stay with, not Julia as she shakes her head and walks away from him. Ted just watches her departing figure for a moment. All words leaving him. And then - his lip curls in disdain and he calls after her in a tone of mockery -

TED

Where do I send the flowers to?

To his irritation, Julia doesn't turn, doesn't stop. So he finds himself shouting this last - desperate for a reaction -

TED (CONT'D)

On second thoughts - I'll hold off. You and I both know you'll never be able to go through with it.

But he seemingly gets no reaction. Julia walks on, out of view. Left alone, Ted just stares at the space where she was.

(CONTINUED)

His bravado ebbing away. In its place - sadness - as over we hear the strains of 'White Room' by Cream begin to play -

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - GYM - DAY 20

Ted's face, all we can see, jaw clenched as he does pull-ups. A state of the art home gym, song playing loud from Bose system. We see what he sees from his elevated angle: a cobweb in one corner, moving up and down with every pull-up. Stay with him for a while, music thumping, trying whatever he can to drown out his feelings. Until - in walks Marsha.

MARSHA

(loud, to be heard)

Dare I ask?

Ted keeps doing his pull-ups. So - Marsha turns the music down. Ted's cue to stop, drop down to the ground.

TED

She's marrying him.

MARSHA

She's...?

(a laugh rips through her)

Didn't know she had it in her.

Ted just grabs a towel from the perfectly ordered shelving unit - swipes at the cobweb. Gone. Then bins the towel. Goes to a bench to do his stretches. Marsha watches him, warily.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

And you're...

TED

Fine. It's...non-news.

Marsha just looks at him.

MARSHA

The two of you were married for decades, literally decades. It's natural to be upset -

TED

- I'm not. Upset. I'm really not.

MARSHA

The lady doth protest too much.

Irritation flashes across Ted's face. He bends to do his hamstring stretch so he can obscure his reaction. Calm himself. After a moment, he straightens up, comes to Marsha.

TED

We made a deal. No more worrying about them, about her -

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED:

38

TED (CONT'D)

(takes her hand)

Me and you are what matters.

There's definite relief in Marsha's face. Ted leans in, kisses her. She pulls back, repelled and aroused.

MARSHA

That is a criminally sweaty upper lip.

But he doesn't care. Kisses her again. Marsha goes with it -

39

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 20

39

Above the bed looking down as: the pair fuck. It's that, not making love. Ted on top, arms clenched from the strain. And then - we see his face. Jaw tight with fury, eyes shut -

40

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - DAY 20

40

Ted's eyes staring at us. Something beyond us. And now we see what - he's standing in front of the fridge, in his lycra, eyes fixed on: the beers on top shelf. Far outnumbered by the Voss water below but that's not the point. Ted doesn't move. More than just a wobble, this is a struggle for survival.

His phone rings - jolting his entire body. He fumbles in his pocket, pulls it out. 'Leo'. Ted shoves the fridge closed, jabs at the answer button as if a lifeline. Has no words.

LEO (O.S.)

I have some seriously batshit news - and don't shoot the messenger - but Mum's...she's engaged.

Ted grips the phone so hard his fingers whiten.

TED

It's good to hear from you.

LEO (O.S.)

Are you listening, Dad? Mum is getting remarried. To that...to him.

TED

I know. She told me.

LEO (O.S.)

She did?

Ted leans his head back hard against the fridge.

(CONTINUED)

TED
But thanks...
(vulnerable)
You always have my back don't you?

LEO (O.S.)
Obviously. You're my Dad.

Leo can't know how much it means to Ted in that moment.

41 OMITTED

41

42 **INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - LIVING / DINING ROOM - DAY 20**

42

A selfie of Julia and Benjamin, beaming, a Devon vista behind them. It's on Ted's phone, which lies forgotten beside him. He's sat at the dining table, gazing at - the same image on laptop. Part of Leo's Facebook.

Below the photo, Leo's written a sarcastic post - 'Nothing says Happy Yule like...Young Love. Hashtag wedding bells.'

A moment of realisation for Ted. It's real. And it crushes him. Unable to handle his emotions, he slams his laptop shut - walks out of here with purpose. To what end we can't be sure -

43 **INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - CALI'S BEDROOM - DAY 20**

43

A simultaneous knock and entry from Ted but the door only opens a slither. Bean bag wedged against it. Thrown, CALI jerks up from where she's sat on the floor, wrapping homemade soap with twine. Tags read 'Mum', 'Ted'. She quickly hides the presents under her bed. Her room stuck in the late teenager period, posters still up, book shelves rammed with classics. Ted gives the door a shove. In. It irks Cali -

CALI
D'you mind?

TED
I knocked. Anyway I don't have
time, for, for...

He thinks better of finishing that sentence, smiles at her instead. Pulls out his wallet. A wodge of notes. Counts them.

TED (CONT'D)
Fifty quid.

CALI
(suspicious)
And in return..?

TED
You make yourself scarce tonight.

44	OMITTED	44
45	OMITTED	45
46	EXT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 20	46

Arms about a dozen white roses, a crisply dressed and determinedly cheerful Ted goes to meet Marsha as she pulls into the drive in her Aston Martin. She buzzes the window down. Taken aback at the sight. Can't resist a joke.

MARSHA

This is very...stalkery.

Ted opens the car door for her - ever the gent.

TED

I forgot. Romance is lost on you.

MARSHA

That's what I like people to think -

As she climbs out, she takes the flowers, grins.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

Secretly -

(whispers up into his ear)

I fucking love it.

47	INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - NIGHT 20	47
----	---	----

Ted just looks at Marsha's face expectantly. Waiting for her response to - the candles on every surface, the table set to a red theme, napkins folded into roses. Basically overblown romance. Marsha appreciates it but sees only two settings.

MARSHA

Cali not joining us?

TED

I, I tried to persuade her but she muttered something about plans with a friend.

MARSHA

A male friend?

TED

Let's hope so for all our sakes.

MARSHA

I happen to enjoy having a chaste daughter, thank you very much.

(CONTINUED)

Ted gallantly pulls a chair out for Marsha to sit. Then he goes to the sideboard and brings over - shucked oysters, mignonette sauce, lemons - Marsha gives a delighted clap.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

I taught you well.

He puts up a finger, wait - then goes to the fridge, pulls out a bottle of Dom Pérignon, pops it, pours a single glass for Marsha. Then pours himself a fizzy elderflower. Raises his glass to hers, and we'll clock - his hand shaking -

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT 20

A hand. Snapping lock shut. It belongs to Ted, coming to sit on the lid of the toilet. Every fitting in here is brushed brass, every surface mirrored. It's intense. Ted faces a hundred different reflections of himself. Looks away, down - fumbling in his pocket and pulling out - a ring box.

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 20

The state of the candles and the fact Marsha's moved on to brandy tells us we're near the end of dinner. Just a neat dish of truffles left on the table.

MARSHA

I think you've given me gout, or diabetes, I'm not sure which yet.

And still - she pops a truffle in. Ted decides it's now. 'Drops' his napkin. Gets down on the floor to retrieve it, pulls ring box out. Marsha's not paying attention, massaging her stomach and deciding which truffle next. Ted shifts onto one knee. Clears his throat. Marsha looks, utterly thrown.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

He opens up - the ring box. Inside, a glittering ring.

TED

Marsha, will you do me the honour of being my wife?

Horror twists up Marsha's face.

MARSHA

Put it away. Put the ring away.

Ted can't compute it. Looks down to the ring.

TED

Don't you, do you not like it? We can get another - anything you want - I, just, it's my mother's -

(CONTINUED)

MARSHA

(all furious sarcasm)

- I know it's your mother's, which given she can't stand me, really makes this all the more perfect.

The hurt shows on Ted's face. He doesn't put the ring away. Marsha hisses at him as if they have company -

MARSHA (CONT'D)

Get off the floor you look ridiculous.

Still, he doesn't put the box away, just pushes to standing. Slips onto his chair. Tries to hang onto his composure.

TED

I don't understand.

MARSHA

Really? You don't understand?

TED

I thought...I thought it was a nice thing. You'd be happy.

MARSHA

Why today? Why not all the other days?

Ted flounders at this.

TED

Because, because...

MARSHA

(spits it)

Because of her. Julia. Always Julia.

Gut punching Ted. Marsha pushes back in her chair. Walks out. He doesn't have the strength to stop her. Hears her grab her keys - then the slam of front door - and ripped from him -

TED

It's nothing to do with Julia -

But of course no reply comes. And before he knows what he's doing, Ted's swiping Marsha's brandy glass and draining it -

Light pours in, showing: Ted's face, squished to counter. Passed out. He wakes with a splutter. As he lifts his head, we see what he sees: nubs of candles left, wax everywhere - and empties. The bottle of brandy. A scattering of beers. His gaze goes down to take in himself, stiff with - drool.

Ted pushes off his chair, looks at the chaos. It's a catastrophic moment for him. Taken back -

51 **INT. TED'S CAR/INT. DAY HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT - FLASH BACK 151**

Caption: Twenty-Four Years Ago

Darkness. The only light we have is from car stereo - as 'Sh-Boom' by The Crew Cuts plays loud. Just make out Ted, splayed on driver's seat. He lurches his head to the right, to check -

The pipe. Still jammed in the crack of open window -

(NB: for compliance reasons we are *never* to see the pipe connected to the exhaust)

Ted's face twists up in a smile. Pleased he's done a good job. His hand fumbles then finds - the key in ignition. The rumble of engine under the music. And Ted - shuts his eyes -

52 **INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - MORNING 21**

52

Ted's eyes snap open, wanting to be free of the memory. Reality's just as hard. He could cry but for - the bleep of phone. Alarm reminder. 'Kids, 12pm'. Guilt. Shame. He lurches to action, through crushing hangover, beginning the clear up.

53 **EXT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - MORNING 21**

53

Ted emerges barefoot and dishevelled into the crisp morning. Hands about a clinking black sack. He walks to the bins, thinks better of it - crunches across the painful gravel - to his electric car. Opens the boot. Boxes of luxury Christmas crackers in there. He moves them, shoves the evidence in. Unfurls a picnic rug to cover it. Slams the boot shut -

54 **INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING 21**

54

The bedroom door, tentatively pushed open by Ted.

TED

Marsha?

But there's no Marsha, the bed's not slept in, strewn rose petals undisturbed. He hasn't been discovered. His relief is fast followed by self pity - she stayed out last night.

55 **INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - DAY 21**

55

No sign of the carnage that occurred here. Ted inhales - bleach - gets a scented candle on the go. The smell of which, mingling, is enough to have him retch in the sink. Hearing a car pull in, he relaxes - she's back. It's okay.

(CONTINUED)

He checks about the room again - plumps up the pillows on the sofa. Makes a Nespresso coffee, nice saucer, biscuit. Moments later, Marsha walks in. It's the first time we've seen her not put together. Same outfit from last night, no makeup. Ted doesn't speak a moment. For fear of giving himself away.

TED

Where did you...

She doesn't explain where she was. He lifts the coffee.

TED (CONT'D)

I made you a...

Marsha waves it away. Doesn't want it. He sets it back down.

TED (CONT'D)

I would have got you flowers -

MARSHA

- I don't want flowers.

Dejected, Ted flounders around for what to say next.

TED

I, I can see...how it might have
looked and I...

(can't ever say sorry)

It was a poor decision.

Which is less than Marsha expected, or deserves. She turns, to walk out again. It makes Ted desperate, lurch forward.

TED (CONT'D)

Where are you going now?

MARSHA

(without turning)

Shower.

As she reaches the door - with more need than he'd like -

TED

Are we, are we okay?..I really need
to know we're okay.

Now she turns. Her upset clear. Tries to hold it together.

MARSHA

It's Christmas. We have to be.

TED

(with need)

And...after?

She just gives a tired shrug. Doesn't know.

56

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 21

56

Ted wrangles a battered suitcase out of a cupboard. Its wheels are gone so he has to hold it to him like an oversized baby. From the sofa area comes the sound of -

CLAYTON'S MOTHER (O.S.)
(a thick Kenyan accent)
- You have work yet?

CALI (O.S.)
Bibi it's Christmas you're not
allowed to ask that.

Ted finds himself walking closer to get a vantage point. Sees: mother and daughter sat on the sofa, Skyping on a laptop. Having an intimate, exclusionary, moment. CLAYTON's MOTHER (80's) has her face right up to her desktop camera.

MARSHA
She's your Bibi, she's allowed to
ask anything.

Clayton's mother laughs. A warm rolling one, which has Ted step closer, to be a part of it.

CALI
You've got the same laugh as Dad.

CLAYTON'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Maybe it is his way of saying - my
girls, I am still here, and you are
still as foolish as ever.

It has a sad laugh come from Marsha. Ted just looks in at his partner, feeling remote from her and her pain. He leaves their family scene undisturbed, hauls the case on -

57

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 21

57

The case unzipped. Inside: a neatly folded Santa outfit. Ted looks at it, flooded with the past. He gently pulls out the mass of white that is the beard and wig, a half smile for this, and then - the faux fur red coat. It's worn, patches where Julia sewed it up over the years. And he starts to cry.

58

OMITTED

58

59

INT/EXT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - DOORWAY - DAY 21

59

A beaming Santa Ted opens the front door, already with a -

TED
Yo ho ho who have -

(CONTINUED)

But it's not Charlotte. It's Patrick and Della. The rest of the words die on Ted's lips. They both take the outfit in.

PATRICK

We're not kids any more.

Breaking the attempt at magic. Ted deflates. His kids walk past, inside. Leaving Ted with a view of the Range Rover parked right outside, Eimear in the front, baby to boob. He awkwardly doesn't know where to look, stays in the doorway.

EIMEAR

You're a very dapper Santa.

(of sleeping Charlotte)

She'll love it. I'd wake her but she gets...feral.

Softening Ted, more so when he clocks Charlotte in the car.

TED

Della was the same.

(wistfully)

Probably still is.

She just nods. Neither know what to say. Relieved to see Leo cycle into view. He hops off bike, checks watch, dip snaps -

LEO

Eleven minutes six seconds. Boom.

Then gives his Dad a hug. Ted holds on tight.

Ted carries in the baby's change bag and emergency supply of toys for Charlotte, Santa beard making him overheat, hangover come back. Leo stays outside, gesturing to his rollie - shuts the door. Ted starts heading to the kitchen, sees through to:

Della and Patrick having painful first interactions with a glammed up Marsha, and Cali. Marsha's made extra effort - as if determined to make this okay for everyone. There's salmon blini's, beetroot tartines, flutes for fizz. Cali offers the food up awkwardly. Della eats so as not to have to talk.

PATRICK

I didn't know you were a cook.

MARSHA

Please. I'm not. They're your father's handiwork.

So as Cali offers them up to Patrick - he declines.

PATRICK

Mum made a big breakfast. The works.

The dig, subconscious or not, lands with Marsha.

DELLA
How's uni, Cali?

CALI
I graduated. In the summer.

DELLA
Sorry, I'm crap, that was -

CALI
- No, it's fine, thanks for asking.

The conversation dies. Marsha tries to connect with the kids.

MARSHA
It means a lot to him. You coming.

PATRICK
It's for Charlotte's sake.

MARSHA
(swallowing her ire)
Right. Well. You're here now.

Ted's full of emotion at Marsha's support. He drags off his beard and wig, itches his skin. The front door opens, Leo flicking his rollie into a plant pot as he goes.

LEO
Lottie's waking up, so you best
Santa that shit right up, Dad.

Instead of an actual Christmas tree, there's some minimalist wall installation of one. Santa Ted is sat beside it on an uncomfortable looking pouffe with Charlotte on his knee, already having torn through the presents in his sack. Ted focuses on Charlotte, unable to cope with the wider room:

Patrick standing in doorway barely able to look at Ted, Eimear holding his hand in moral support as the baby crawls over bespoke furniture, leaves handprints on the walls. Marsha has to stop herself wiping up after it. Della's awkwardly perched on sofa arm, Leo splayed - the only adult who's relaxed as he pats the space by him for Cali.

Stay with Ted, this is his story. He sticks his head right inside the present sack.

TED (O.S.)
(in a Santa voice)
Afraid that's it.

He pulls his face out. Sees his granddaughter's lip tremble.

TED (CONT'D)

But I did hear from one of my
elvish spies that your Grampa and -

Ted looks to Marsha, trying to connect with her.

TED (CONT'D)

Granny Marsha got you something.

Marsha forces a smile. Appearances everything. Ted allows himself to believe it, gently shifts Charlotte off his lap. Stands. Makes an exaggerated clutch of his belly.

TED (CONT'D)

Too many mince pies.

Charlotte giggles. Ted goes behind the door, carries out - a big box. Charlotte bounds over, starts ripping at the paper. To reveal: a top-of-the-line pink kids bike. Complete with pink basket, pink bell. Charlotte gives a shriek of delight.

PATRICK

She already has a bike.

CHARLOTTE

Not a pink one, Dad.

PATRICK

(muttered)

Deliberately.

TED

(ignores it, bends to her)

Thumbs up or thumbs down?

And the response is a giddy double thumbs up from Charlotte -

Charlotte's thumb tings the bell over and over. She pedals around the garden with Patrick hovering close behind - ready to catch her. Beyond, Eimear's doing laps with the buggy, Leo and Cali are sat on the swingseat and Marsha stands marooned, smoking to hide her discomfort. There's no sign of Della.

Pull back, realise we're seeing this all from - Ted's vantage point. Coming out of the house. Dressed back as himself.

CHARLOTTE

Grampa -

Ted half-jogs down to Charlotte and Patrick, despite what this does to his pounding head. Forces a smile for Charlotte.

TED

I heard I missed Santa.

CHARLOTTE

He was funny.

Which provides genuine cheer to Ted. Patrick goes to walk off-

PATRICK

Show Grampa how good you are -

TED

- We can both...

But Patrick's already walking off to join Eimear. Ted turns his attention to: Charlotte. Her non-judgemental beam. It moves him. He looks up, casts his gaze about for his daughter-

Ted rounds the corner following the murmur of noise to see: Della, up on his trainer bike, not pedalling. On the phone. Whoever she's talking to, she's het up, fighting back emotion-

DELLA

I didn't say a break. I said 'time out'. They're very different things.

(hears the reply, then -)

I wanted to hear your voice, hear how you were, I don't know - maybe even dispense some festive wishes -

She's cut off by the sound of upset. It hurts Della.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Please Em, please don't, I hate it when you get upset -

Ted clears his throat, Della twists, sees him. Hating being caught - she lowers her voice to all but a whisper into phone-

DELLA (CONT'D)

Em, I have to go. I, I'll -

The line goes dead before she can end the call. It stings.

TED

Who was that?

DELLA

No one.

Ted just looks at her. Okay then. Tries again, jovial -

TED

What are you doing hiding in here?

Della dismounts the bike without elegance. Upset and angry but determined to show neither to her father.

(CONTINUED)

DELLA

I'm not, I'm admiring your
gymnasium. I don't remember it
being quite so...pimp.

TED

We kitted it out. When we...

Della gives a long nod. When we shacked up together, when you left my mum. Swallows her retort. Ted hurries in with -

TED (CONT'D)

You're welcome to use it whenever.

She just gives an empty nod. Both know this will never happen. Della goes to leave. Ted can't bear it.

TED (CONT'D)

Don't go...Please.

And Della halts. He will always hold the cards with her.

TED (CONT'D)

How are you?..Work, life, love?

DELLA

Yes, to all of the above.

The shutters coming down. Despite this, Ted perseveres.

TED

I'd really like it if you and I -

DELLA

- Sorry Dad, I need a wee.

As Della goes to walk past, ire flickers on his face. Can only take so much rejection. A firmness comes into his voice.

TED

Get the others. There's something I want to discuss with you all.

Ted faces his children. Leo swivelling on stool, shovelling blini's into his mouth. Della unconsciously stands close to Patrick, needs him but he's somewhere else entirely. Neither older child drinks their flute of fizz, Leo does. Off can be heard the merry giggles of Charlotte outside running riot.

TED

When they were dating it was...it was one thing, but *marriage*...What do even know about this boy?

PATRICK

What does anyone know about anyone?

LEO

(guffaws)

The philosopher's in the building.

DELLA

We know he makes mum happy. And he's hardly a boy - the man's older than me.

Ted's look to Della says - you're still a girl to me. Never happy when his Dad's attention is elsewhere, Leo intervenes -

LEO

You're right, Dad, we know sweet FA...Patrick, tell him about your digging.

Patrick doesn't volunteer it, doesn't want this to involve Ted. But Ted just looks at him firmly. And waits. Until -

PATRICK

There's nothing online. Incriminating or otherwise. The only red flag was an eviction notice. But now he's made himself comfortable in our house -

TED

(can't hear it)

- Did you tell your mother?

PATRICK

Yes. And like all things Benjamin related, she quickly explained it away.

TED

Well you obviously weren't firm enough. I should take over.

Which incenses Patrick. All his pent-up fury coming out.

PATRICK

Sorry, and this is to do with you, how?

Ted takes a breath. Needing calm. Keeping an equable tone.

TED

Hard as you may find it to believe, I care about your mother and I want her to be okay. Most importantly - I want you all to be okay.

Patrick gives a snort.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK
You want us to be okay?

LEO
(defensive)
That's what he said isn't it.

TED
Have you thought what it actually means? Marriage?..Besides having someone barely older than you as your stepfather?

Through a mouthful Leo makes a big nod, like good point. Della wants to disappear. But Patrick, who this is really for - just looks past Ted, out to the garden. Jaw clenching.

TED (CONT'D)
It means Benjamin gets half of everything. Half of the house I worked my whole career to pay off, half of the savings, half of the lot. So when he leaves your mother, which he will...he'll be leaving with your inheritance.

No one says anything a moment. Patrick computing it all.

DELLA
I don't care about the money.

TED
You will when it's gone and you're stuck forever renting in whatever shoebox you end up in.

Della feels the criticism. It silences her. Patrick turns from the view of the garden, all steel to his father.

PATRICK
What do you suggest we do? That's the part I'm not hearing.

TED
I, I haven't got that far. I wanted to sound you all out first. Check we're...in agreement.

LEO
Yep, we are.

TED
Della?

DELLA
(shakes her head)
Leave me out of it.

LEO

Why are you always so obstructive?

DELLA

Why are you always such a dick?

Which injures Leo, but Ted just looks past to - his eldest. Patrick takes a moment to reply, weighing everything up.

PATRICK

You don't think the train has kind of left the station?

TED

We're hardly talking about someone with an iron will here.

PATRICK

(low, furious)

Don't. Don't talk about mum like that.

Ted puts his hands up. Okay. Clears his throat. And then -

TED

Bottom line. I just want all of you, your mother included, to be protected against this man.

Patrick just looks at Ted. Nods. Then with bitterness -

PATRICK

Our father. The great protector.

It's a body blow for Ted. Instead of showing this, he puffs himself up. Steps closer to Patrick. His son doesn't back down. It's up to Della to intervene. She taps Patrick's arm.

DELLA

Mum'll be waiting -

Which in itself shows Ted where he comes - second. Patrick nods at her, grateful. The pair walk out to the garden to collect the others. Leo comes to Ted's side.

LEO

(soft, means it)

I'm with you, Dad. Always.

But Ted has nothing to give his youngest son in that moment. All he craves is the love and support of his eldest son.

From inside the door, Ted waves goodbye to Charlotte, but she's disengaged now, gazing at iPad. Della deliberately roots her eyes away to her phone.

65 CONTINUED:

65

The wheels of the Range Rover spin and they're reversing off without even a nod from Patrick to his dad. Ted watches the car leave, exhaust spewing. The moment drags him back -

66 INT. TED'S CAR / DAY HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT - FLASH BACK 1 66

Caption: Twenty-Four Years Ago

Pitch black. 'Sh Boom' still loud. On repeat. The chug of engine. The snatch of breath. We blink into the semi-dark, realise we're in Ted's POV: what little he can see is blurring. He twists heavily around, to check the pipe, sees:

YOUNG DELLA staring in through the window. She doesn't move. Doesn't make a sound. Frozen. For what seems an age, until -

Lights blaze on. Spots appear in Ted's vision, blot Della's face out - as she's pushed aside, by - Julia. Hand gripped by a hysterical Patrick. Julia just looks in, right back at us -

Then she's yanking open car door - screaming something unintelligible to the kids who run out. Ted's eyes start to shut, Julia's face the last thing he sees before - blackness -

67 INT/EXT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - DOORWAY - DAY 21 67

Light blinking in, through fingers - and then the empty driveway is revealed. Ted just standing in doorway, alone, dragging his hands from his face. Hollowed out by the memory.

68 INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE - LIVING / DINING ROOM - DAY 21, LATER 68

Newly showered, hair neat, shirt and tie on - the picture of male composure - Ted walks in. Disturbing - Marsha on dance mat, eyes to Wii's 'Just Dance' on the wall mounted TV. Going at the moves to 'Daddy Cool' by Boney M with utter precision. Cali watches from the sofa, decimating a chocolate orange.

TED
(an olive branch)
Nice moves.

Which is enough to throw Marsha off her game, inhibitions back. She stops dancing, pauses the game and the music.

TED (CONT'D)
I'm going to pick up my Mum.
(hopeful)
You can come if you like.

MARSHA
She'll prefer if it's just you.

Olive branch rejected. Wounding Ted. Cali looks between them - picking up on the vibe. Ted turns to go.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

As he does - Marsha unpauses the dance, gets back to it, as if all's fine. At the door, Ted turns back, watches them. No place for him here.

69 OMITTED

70 EXT. TED'S ELECTRIC CAR / RECYCLING BANKS - DAY 21

Checking furtively about for humans, Ted removes the sack of empty bottles from boot. Set to do the recycling properly - when a car drives past. A jolt of fear and shame goes through him. He dumps the sack by the clothing bank. Drives fast off.

71 INT. HAZEL'S BUNGALOW - KITCHEN / DINER - DAY 21

Ted lets himself in - fixing a happy grin on his face as he does but it goes for nothing. Blinds still drawn, not a single nod to Christmas and - no Hazel. It sets Ted on edge -

TED

Mum?

No reply. And he somehow makes his limbs move, through -

72 INT. HAZEL'S BUNGALOW - BEDROOM - DAY 21, CONT.

Ted yanks the door back, relieved to see - Hazel, in her best outfit, sat at her dresser struggling to do up her pearl necklace. She's annoyed to be seen like this by her son.

HAZEL

Make yourself useful.

He does as bid. Goes to the dresser - on which we see two faded photos: one of the whole family - baby Ted, older brother, father, Hazel inside their tiny Devon cottage in the late 50's, the other - a recent photo of a man who looks like Ted (Raymond, the brother). He's standing proprietarily by a beach bar. Arm around a *much* younger blonde woman.

Ted averts his eyes, focuses on the clasp of the pearls. Seeing: his mother's ageing skin, wisps of hair caught in the clasp. He's repulsed and guilty all at once. He fast fumbles the clasp together. Tries to give a compliment. Can't. So -

TED

Where's your overnight bag and I'll
load it into the car.

Hazel goes to bedside drawer, obscures what she's doing from Ted - pulling out a sock, inside which is a roll of money. Ted tries not to get irritated with her intense privacy.

HAZEL

I'm not coming.

Which poleaxes Ted.

TED

What do you mean?

Hazel barely looks up from her task, which is counting out in five pound notes until she has fifty pounds laid on the bed.

HAZEL

Last year was too awful, pretending everything was normal when it wasn't...and that dreadful woman -

TED

(spluttered)

- You can't, she's my partner, you can't speak about Marsha like that.

Hazel tuts - clear she'll speak about her however she wants.

TED (CONT'D)

So you'd rather stay here instead. Spend Christmas Day alone. Lovely.

Hazel replaces her sock in the drawer, mindful that Ted doesn't see where her stash is. And then as if it's nothing -

HAZEL

I won't be alone. Julia's having me over.

A laugh of disbelief gets stuck in Ted's throat.

TED

You're going to Julia's for Christmas Day?

HAZEL

That's what I said.

TED

My ex-wife. You're going to my ex-wife's.

HAZEL

No fault of mine that, is it?

Ted feels the criticism. It gets his back further up.

TED

You didn't think to phone ahead, tell me not to bother coming to pick you up?

(CONTINUED)

HAZEL

We still have church and I'll need
running over to Julia's after.

Ted's outraged. It has the words blurt from him, needing
something resembling a victory.

TED

Told you her news, has she?

HAZEL

What news?

TED

So she's not so attentive after
all...Julia's engaged. To her...To
Benjamin.

Hazel's shock is evident and what Ted wanted to see.

TED (CONT'D)

That's right, mother - a divorcee.
Marrying again...I'm sure there's
something in the Scriptures about
that.

He waits for the Bible reference to come from her but Hazel
just - turns away so he can't see her expression. Grabs her
good purse from the dresser, puts the money in and sets it
into her handbag, then sets that on her shoulder.

HAZEL

All good wishes to them.

Ted can't believe it. Even his mother not on his side.

TED

All good wishes?

He shakes his head, upset and fury building. Words spewing -

TED (CONT'D)

This is the woman I *married*.

HAZEL

I'm not the one who forgot that.

TED

I, I've loved her for over half my
life.

And now we know where we are - back at the beginning.

TED (CONT'D)

I haven't always liked her...Been
understood by her...

(twisted up by it)

But she...She is -
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

72

CONTINUED: (3)

72

TED (CONT'D)

(fast corrects himself)

Was, my one.

He snatches at the air, to recover himself. His mother just looks at him. Doesn't speak a moment. And then -

HAZEL

Then you're even more of a fool
than I thought.

It punctures Ted. He looks like a little boy.

73

EXT. VILLAGE CHURCH - EARLY EVENING 21

73

Ted offers Hazel his arm as the pair head through the gate. She bats his assistance away, stubborn as they join the procession of other VILLAGERS walking in. We'll recognize faces - butcher, shopkeeper, their wives. They nod at Ted. He manages a smile back. And it's then that - Hazel takes his arm. Both him and his mother united in appearances mattering.

As they near the church door, Ted finds it harder to put one foot in front of the other. Judgement on the other side.

74

INT. TED'S ELECTRIC CAR / EXT. VILLAGE - EVENING 21

74

Ted looks in rear view mirror: the church receding into the distance. And he blows out his cheeks. His relief punctured by Hazel, sat in passenger seat, staring out of her window.

HAZEL

I prayed for you, you know.

The pain of it flickers across his face.

75

EXT/INT. DAY HOUSE - HALLWAY / ENTRANCE - NIGHT 21

75

Benjamin, loud Christmas jumper on. Beaming at: Ted and Hazel in the porch. Ted grips tighter to Hazel's overnight bag. Can't think what to say, just eyeing Benjamin before - Benjamin leans in, kisses Hazel on both cheeks.

BENJAMIN

Hello, welcome, welcome.

This cuts Ted up. His mother knows Benjamin. Enough to greet, be pleasant. Benjamin extends a hand to Ted but Ted just - thrusts his mother's bag into it. Turns to Hazel.

TED

I'll leave you to it then mother.

He gives her a very awkward kiss on the not-quite-cheek. As painfully distant as Benjamin's was easy.

(CONTINUED)

TED (CONT'D)
Happy Christmas I guess.

Hazel nods, can't handle this moment - the guilt she feels.

HAZEL
And you, son.

Hazel heads into the hallway, into the bosom of Ted's old life. Julia, dressed up and looking great, comes out from the kitchen to greet her (not hearing the following -)

BENJAMIN
Ted do you want to come in? Have a drink?

It incenses Ted. He gets in close to Benjamin. Low -

TED
Who do you think you are?
(spits it)
This is *my* house.

And Benjamin's mask drops. He steps even closer in to Ted.

BENJAMIN
(enjoying it)
Not any more.

It stuns Ted. Then Benjamin closes the door on his face.

Ted trudges away dejectedly from the house, the lights, his family. He hears steps, the crunch of gravel - turns around to see - Julia's followed him out.

JULIA
I want you to know - it wasn't my idea - to have your mother. I don't want you to think I'm...cruel.

It means a lot to him. That she came. That she explained.

TED
(nods, matter-of-fact)
She prefers you. Who can blame her.

As Julia brushes the hair from her eyes, Ted clocks: her engagement ring. It wrenches him apart.

He pulls her close, presses his lips against hers. A claustrophobic desperate kiss. Julia's frozen there for a second, before wrenching herself free. She staggers back. They just look at each other - where to now?

END OF EPISODE FOUR