

NORTHERN SOUL

Based on a True Story

A SCREENPLAY BY

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DRAFT FOUR.

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The screen is black. We hear gentle breathing – then a scratching sound; fingernails or claws over a rough surface. We see words on the screen:

YORKSHIRE 1968

1. DAY. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM

We're in the back bedroom of a council house. It's early morning; sun is streaming in through the curtains giving the room a feeling of bright and cosy warmth. We're slowly closing in on the sleeping figure in the bed; CAROL, a girl of thirteen. It's her breathing we have heard. Her room is abundantly pastel and rather untidy. As we move towards her, we see the nondescript old wardrobe covered in posters of horses and pop stars, her discarded clothes, a couple of old toys and her metal-framed bed. Her blankets are half on the floor and she looks cold in her polyester pyjamas.

We focus on CAROL'S sleeping face. She's an ordinary looking girl and in repose she's still very childlike. Her eyes are moving rapidly under their lids. She moans. Her breath catches. We hear the scratching noise again. It's impossible to tell if the sound is in CAROL'S dream or coming from somewhere in the room.

CAROL'S eyes flick open. She is instantly watchful, alert as if waking from a nightmare. She scans the room. Her eyes alight on the wardrobe.

Seconds later an electric guitar – played pretty badly – starts up at top volume. It makes CAROL jump. She sighs with weary frustration – but also seems relieved. She thumps on the wall:

CAROL:
PAUL! TURN IT DOWN!

2. DAY. INTERIOR. PAUL'S BEDROOM.

PAUL, seventeen years old, dressed in his y-fronts, is playing with more verve than talent in front of his mirror. He is impressed with what he sees – a vision of cool. He pays no attention to CAROL'S bangs on the wall.

3. DAY. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

CAROL gives up banging. She opens her curtains and stands for a moment, blinking in the light. Over the music, she hears the scratching sound. She listens carefully.

She stares at the wardrobe doors. It's as if something with long nails is trying to get out. CAROL hesitates, unnerved. She is holding a soft toy, so worn out it's hard to tell what it once was. Another long, wincing scratch. CAROL quickly leaves the room.

4. DAY. INTERIOR. PAUL'S ROOM.

PAUL begins to 'sing' along to his playing. Somewhere, there's an imaginary crowd, watching him. There's a knock on the door. He doesn't hear, his moves getting more and more fantastical. CAROL enters. For a moment, he doesn't notice her.

CAROL:
Paul?

PAUL spins round, embarrassed, annoyed.

Will you come and look in my wardro –

PAUL shuts the door in her face. CAROL blinks, holding her toy like a child.

5. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S KITCHEN.

KATE, CAROL'S mother, is busy frying eggs in her spotless kitchen. She's a fine looking woman but careworn. There's a determined set to her face; as if every day is a struggle to keep order. She nudges the volume of the radio up, to drown out Paul's guitar. For a moment the ballad that is playing carries her away. A romantic expression comes into her eyes. CAROL appears at the door.

CAROL:
Mum?

KATE jumps, not expecting CAROL to be there.

KATE:
You trying to gimme a heart attack?

CAROL:
No. Did you –

KATE:
Here.

She shoves a cup of tea towards CAROL.

Tek that to your dad.

CAROL:
Where is he?

KATE:
Where d'you think?

KATE turns back to her frying, her expression pulled into its hard set. CAROL'S face falls. She walks up the hall and opens the front door.

6. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE FRONT GARDEN.

A low privet hedge surrounds clusters of pansies, petunias and marigolds, all impeccably neat and well cared for. In the centre of the tiny lawn JACK, CAROL'S

father, is lying asleep – or rather collapsed – curled up, mouth open, drool falling onto the shoulder of his crumpled suit. CAROL put the tea down next to him.

CAROL:
Dad.

JACK doesn't move. CAROL shakes him. He wakes.

Tea.

JACK:
Oh... Ta.

JACK tries to sit. He can barely raise his head. CAROL doesn't like to watch. She goes back inside, shutting the door behind her. JACK blinks in the sunshine, wiping the drool from his mouth. He looks wretched.

7. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

CAROL goes through to the lounge and flops on the sofa. We are getting a sense of how pristine KATE'S house is. Every knick-knack – and there are many – is highly polished and in its own place. CAROL'S eyes roam over them; so familiar she barely sees them. China dogs guard the gleaming fireplace; the TV has an arrangement of silk flowers on it; the sideboard is bedecked with figurines, trinkets and photos. In pride of place are several ballroom dancing trophies. On top of an old wireless is a photo of JACK and KATE cutting their wedding cake. KATE looks madly in love; JACK looks wild. CAROL'S eyes rest on this image of her once handsome parents.

There is a single loud bang on the window. CAROL jumps.

She peers out through the net curtains. JACK is supporting his weight on the gate, hanging. He's unaware of the noise and of CAROL'S anxious face at the window.

KATE:
Carol? Come and set that table!

CAROL, still puzzled, turns to leave the window.

8. DAY. INTERIOR. THE DINING AREA.

KATE, CAROL and PAUL are eating their breakfast in total silence. PAUL has his head stuck in the NME. CAROL is reading the nutritional information on a cereal box. KATE is absorbed in the banal chat of the radio.

Her expression hardens as JACK comes in; instantly the messiest thing in the room. He's managed to pull an air of breezy confidence over his hangover. He heads for the teapot. KATE bristles. CAROL is consumed with dread.

JACK:
There some tea in that?

KATE:
D'you think you're sitting down here in that state?

JACK:
Aye.

JACK sits, pouring some tea.

KATE:
I can smell you from 'ere. You're like a stinking old beggar -

JACK:
Oh put a sock in it; you love me really.

KATE is livid. PAUL expertly winds the situation up.

PAUL:
He tekking you dancing tonight then Mum?

KATE looks directly at JACK. He momentarily meets her eyes.

JACK:
You think I've forgotten? We're gonna scorch the varnish off that floor. Best dancing feet this side o' Wakefield, your mum.

PAUL:
Right.

JACK:
Pure grace she is, under that rockface. Go on Katie, crack it with a smile.

KATE is stony.

Come on, show us your dentures. Light up my life.

KATE looks suddenly exhausted. Instead of smiling, she is fighting tears. CAROL perceives this and tries to change the subject.

CAROL:
There's summat in my wardrobe, Mum.

KATE recovers herself. JACK is looking at her guiltily.

Scratching. Like it wants out.

PAUL:
Must be them crappy frocks o' yours trying to get to t' jumble.

KATE:
Don't say crappy at this table.

PAUL:
Sorry. (*He takes another piece of toast*) I meant shitty.

JACK stifles a laugh.

KATE:
Oh grow up the lot o' you. You make me SICK!

KATE storms into the kitchen and starts furiously cleaning up. CAROL looks down at her plate, somehow ashamed.

9. DAY. INTERIOR. CAROL'S ROOM.

CAROL is brushing her hair. She hears an insistent scratching. She turns towards the wardrobe. The sound, coming from inside, is becoming excruciating. CAROL approaches. She puts out her hand to the door. The scratching suddenly stops. CAROL runs downstairs, troubled.

10. DAY. INTERIOR. THE HALL / FRONT ROOM.

CAROL struggles into a far-too-small pink coat. She picks up her school bag and peers into the front room at KATE, who is angrily putting the Hoover together.

CAROL:
Mum. I think there's summat weird in the house.

KATE:
(*Without looking up*) Yeh. Your dad.

CAROL:
My room keeps going cold. And summat's scratching in the –

KATE turns to face her; sees the little coat.

KATE:
You're not going out in that are yer?

CAROL looks down at herself, puzzled.

CAROL:
Why not?

KATE:
What is it wi' you, Carol? I bought you a nice anorak.

CAROL:
I don't like it.

KATE:
In't it about time you grew up?

KATE turns her back. CAROL watches her battle with vacuum cleaner in her overall and slippers, a ladder in the back of her tights. She curls her lip. If that's being grown-up, she doesn't want it.

11. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE STREET OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

CAROL walks up the path. She hears a bang on the front window – almost forceful enough to crack the glass. She looks back, unnerved. She peers in. Her mother is vigorously hoovering non-existent cobwebs from the ceiling. As CAROL watches, the shadow of the sideboard moves, as if it's leaning over – but the sideboard is still. Then she sees something move. The wedding photo seems to have shifted its place. CAROL can't be sure. She's growing more and more unsettled. KATE continues to Hoover, oblivious.

CAROL hears a bus arriving and hurries across the street, running to the bus stop. She reaches it just as the bus pulls up. The street is busy with smalltown life - a scene of total ordinariness. It reassures CAROL. We see the view from the bus stop – the housing estate spread out. On the far horizon, dwarfing everything, a huge power station is belting out clouds of steam from its six gigantic chimneys. Around it, the Yorkshire hills stretch into the distance.

12. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S FRONT ROOM.

KATE is hoovering around the light fitting. She knocks against the ceiling, making as much noise as she can. It seems to satisfy her.

KATE:
Go on you rotten bugger. Shift it.

13. DAY. INTERIOR. JACK & KATE'S BEDROOM.

JACK is lying on the bed right above her, the sound of the Hoover thumping through his head. He pulls a pillow over his face.

14. DAY. INTERIOR. A SCHOOL CORRIDOR.

CAROL is walking alone in a throng of teenagers. She's accosted by GAYNOR and DAWN, two fashionably dressed thirteen-going-on-thirty girls. DAWN strokes the coat, in a mock-friendly gesture.

DAWN:
Ah, look at your dinky coat.

GAYNOR:
I had one like that. Wish I could still wear it but I'd never fit my knockers in.

DAWN laughs. CAROL tries to move. GAYNOR bars her way with an old holdall.

GAYNOR:
D'you like this bag? I found it in a dustbin. D'you want it to go with your coat?

CAROL:
No.

DAWN:
(*Pinching her, hard*) Yes you do; don't be rude!

GAYNOR:
Would you like a closer look?

CAROL:
Ow!

DAWN:
She's giving you a gift! Say thank you.

CAROL:
(*Near tears of humiliation*) Thank you.

GAYNOR:
There y'are then.

GAYNOR puts the bag over CAROL'S head and holds it down. She and DAWN give CAROL a shove and run off giggling. People pass, either amused or ignoring her. CAROL makes no attempt to take the bag off.

We see her POV from inside the bag; darkness. We hear her breathing.

The corridor has emptied. CAROL slowly takes the bag off. She drops it.

15. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S KITCHEN.

KATE has the radio on. The music seems to comfort her. She is loading the sink with washing up. She turns the tap on. Nothing happens. As she's trying the other tap, puzzled, JACK enters. He's on his best behaviour, dressed in a clean suit.

KATE:
Are the Water Board working on the mains or what?

The mundanity of her remark breaks the tension. They look at each other.

JACK:
We'll have a dance tonight. I mean it Kate.

KATE:
Do you?

JACK:
Put your gladrags on. Get your hair done. T' sight of you dressed up is good for my soul. (*By way of an apology*) It were Bernie last night. He had a big win and I couldn't get away...

KATE nods. She's heard it all before.

Here...

JACK puts some money on the side. KATE doesn't take it. She speaks tenderly.

KATE:
You'll kill yourself, Jack. Drink'll kill yer.

JACK:
Well,

JACK puts his hand through his hair.

I'll see you later then. Beauty.

KATE puts out her hand to take the money from the work surface. JACK puts his hand over hers. He looks as if he's about to kiss her. She waits, wanting to be kissed.

Water suddenly sprays forcefully out of the taps. KATE flinches, soaked. The moment is broken. JACK watches as KATE gets the taps under control. She wipes herself down with a tea towel, humiliated. JACK moves away. He goes.

16. DAY. INTERIOR. A CLASSROOM.

MR BEVAN, a young teacher, is standing in front of a diagram of female genitals. CAROL is staring at the diagram as if it's slightly distasteful. The rest of the classroom is trying to mask hysterical giggling.

MR BEVAN:
So... they find their way through the cervix and into the uterus. It's a long and dangerous journey.

DAWN maliciously flicks a piece of chewed up paper at the back of CAROL'S head.

Most of them will perish on the way, but a few will find their way up the fallopian tubes where they might encounter... what?

DOBSON, an undersized bigmouth, shoots his hand up. The giggles grow louder.

DOBSON:
An orgasm, Sir.

MR BEVAN:
You better watch it, Dobson!

The bell goes. People spring up from their chairs and head for the door. They clearly hold MR BEVAN'S authority to no account.

Who told you to go? Come back now or you're all in trouble!

CAROL looks at MR BEVAN with compassion as his pupils rush out. GAYNOR and DAWN bash into CAROL as they pass.

GAYNOR:
Can you smell summat?

DAWN:
Oh, it's revolting! Sir? Carol's let one off!

CAROL cringes with embarrassment.

MR BEVAN:
(*At the end of his tether*) Out!

GAYNOR:
Eurr you stinky cow; you've no manners.

CAROL:
(*Through gritted teeth*) Get lost.

GAYNOR:
What did you say?

CAROL:
Get lost...

DAWN:
(*In CAROL'S ear*) Right. We'll be waiting for you.

She and GAYNOR saunter away. Her remark leaves CAROL in a state of dread.

17. DAY. EXTERIOR. A MARKET SQUARE.

A noisy, colourful market. We focus on a pet shop at the edge of the square. Sacks of birdseed, sawdust and dog mix are under the awning outside. JACK is making his way through the crowd with an armful of wholesale goods. He is warmly greeted by a couple of STALLHOLDERS as he passes.

18. DAY. INTERIOR. THE PET SHOP.

PAUL, wearing a brown shop coat, is dancing to the radio – at high volume. He is tapping with a pair of pencils on the counter, as if they are drumsticks. He moves on to tins and jars and fish tanks. JACK comes to the door. He watches inscrutably. PAUL sees him; stops. JACK enters and dumps his supplies on the counter.

JACK:
Turn it off.

PAUL:
The fish like it.

JACK:
(*Turning it off*) The fish like Jim Reeves.

PAUL:
I've another two orders for hamsters.

JACK:
(*Handing him a box*) There you go then. Stick 'em in t' pen.

PAUL:
The buggers are selling like hot cakes. I don't know what folk see in them but – Dad, (*He pulls out a rat*) this is not a hamster.

JACK:
Yeh, well they were out o' hamsters. But they were practically giving them away so I bought fifteen.

PAUL:
This is a rat.

JACK:
That's right, lad. That grammar school education paid off din't it?

PAUL:
This is vermin, Dad; what am I supposed to do with it?

JACK:
(*Emptying the till of cash*) Sell it. Only difference 'tween a hamster and a rat is that a rat is more affectionate and more intelligent. Hamsters do nowt but sleep all day and shit on your hand.

PAUL:
Why would anyone buy a rat?

JACK:
Tek it as a challenge. Call it learning the trade. Two and six each, and chuck in a week's supply o' straw.

JACK stuffs the money from the till in his pocket.

PAUL:
Where are you tekking that?

JACK:
Bank.

He does a ballroom dancing shimmy to the door and leaves.

PAUL:
Bollocks.

19. DAY. INTERIOR. A HAIRDRESSERS.

RITA is doing KATE'S hair. She's a dainty, diminutive woman, who even manages to look attractive in a nylon overall. She's warm and compassionate towards KATE.

KATE:
Jack says I'm going to Hoover them carpets away. But I like the marks the Hoover makes on them, Reet. You know, nice straight lines like a lawn. So I do 'em twice a day.

RITA:
Well... a woman's got to do what a woman's got to do, an't she?

KATE:
I just think that if the house's tidy, that's one part o' my life that in't going to go fall apart, you know.

RITA:
It pays off, Kate. Best house on the street, yours. Everyone says.

KATE is flushed with pride.

Be just like old times tonight. You and Jack; me and Douglas. 'Cept it were always you two won all t' prizes.

KATE:
Oh, he danced me off my feet, that man. Danced me senseless...

RITA:
Now then. Mind your eyes.

RITA sprays KATE'S hair with vicious looking hairspray.

There. A hurricane won't shift that.

20. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE SCHOOL GATES.

CAROL is walking through a crowd towards the gates, still wearing the pink coat. She sees GAYNOR and DAWN on the look-out for her. She turns on her heels to avoid them.

21. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.

CAROL makes sure no one is watching. She climbs with difficulty over the school fence, tearing a hole in her precious coat. She examines it, dismayed. She looks in both directions and walks away down the rough street. She turns a corner and almost knocks into undersized DOBSON and his lanky friend, CARTER.

CARTER:
Hey it's Looby Loo.

DOBSON:
D'you want to reproduce wi' me?

CAROL:
Get stuffed.

CAROL runs away. She makes it into the next street before the lads catch her up.

DOBSON:
Go on. We got taught nowt in that class. Nowt proper.

CARTER:
Yeh, he didn't even mention tits.

CAROL is hurrying past a row of dingy houses. One of the front doors is open on mess and squalor within. A girl, TANYA, sixteen, attractive in a rough way, is smoking a fag on the doorstep. She overhears.

DOBSON:
It could be homework; like a practical. We could work out them diagrams. I bet you don't know where your clitoris is.

CARTER:
(*Becoming more insistent*) It's your zone of erogeny.

CAROL:
You make me puke.

DOBSON:
I could find it for yer. All you'd have to do is sit on my -

TANYA grabs hold of DOBSON from behind. She twists his arm.

TANYA:
What did you say, shortarse?

DOBSON:
(*In pain*) Nowt.

TANYA:
Are you being filthy to my friend?

DOBSON:
Sorry, Tanya I'm sorry!

CARTER is running away.

TANYA:
You'd better be. Now piss off 'til your testicles drop or I'll pull 'em down for yer!

TANYA shoves DOBSON away. He runs off, humiliated. CAROL looks at TANYA gratefully, admiringly.

TANYA:
(*Not unkindly*) Come on, you prannet. I'll walk you home.

22. DAY. EXTERIOR. A STREET BY AN ICE CREAM VAN.

TANYA has just bought CAROL a Screwball. CAROL tucks into it while TANYA smokes. They walk up the hill. CAROL is sweating in the tight coat.

TANYA:
Can you breathe in that?

CAROL:
Not really.

TANYA:
It's vile, Carol.

CAROL:
No it's not. I used to love it.

TANYA:
Yeh but it dun't fit. You look like a spakker. Christ, no wonder you get picked on.

CAROL looks crestfallen. TANYA takes pity on her.

You been doing diagrams o' todgers then?

CAROL nods.

What d'you mek of 'em?

CAROL:
(*Shrugging*) Dunno. Boring...

TANYA:
They're the best fun you'll ever 'ave.

CAROL looks at her, shocked.

So I hear... Go on then; ask me.

CAROL:
Ask you what?

TANYA:
Have I done it yet?

CAROL:
(*Reluctantly*) Have you done it –

TANYA:
None o' your business, you cheeky slag! (*She grins.*) Course I haven't. Everyone thinks I have but I'm saving myself. It's got to be someone I'm mad on. (*She takes a drag*) How's your Paul?

CAROL:
(*Understanding her drift*) Not him? He's a pillock, Tanya.

TANYA shrugs, with a secretive smile.

TANYA:
Has he said owt about me?

CAROL:
He never talks. Unless he's telling me to get lost.

TANYA:
Well I'll see him down the club later anyway.

CAROL:
Can I come down your club?

TANYA:
(*Smiling at the idea*) Carol, you're too young. You'd never get in

CAROL:
I could dress up.

TANYA:
Yeh but it's right chic; you'd never handle it.

CAROL:
(A splodge of ice cream on her upper lip) I would.

They have reached CAROL'S house. SALLY ANNE, a girlish eleven year old, approaches on a bright pink bike.

SALLY ANNE:
(To CAROL) Are you ready for My Friend Flicka?

CAROL:
(Embarrassed) I'm busy.

SALLY ANNE:
 I've made t' stable in our yard. I'll be Flicka; you can muck me out.

CAROL:
 I don't play games like that any more, Sally Anne.

SALLY ANNE:
 Yes you do! You mended my lame hoof on Sunday.

TANYA:
(Amused) Keep out o' trouble, kid. I'll leave you to your mucking.

TANYA saunters off. CAROL looks at SALLY ANNE accusingly.

CAROL:
 You stupid baby.

She goes inside and shuts the door. SALLY ANNE is insulted.

23. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S HALL / KITCHEN.

CAROL puts her coat on a hook in the hall. She looks at it then hugs it, mournfully. She hears a loud single rap on the kitchen window. An unaccountable fear takes hold of her. She goes to look.

The tap is dripping slowly. As CAROL approaches, she sees a BOY'S hand come up to the window and knock, once. She drops her ice cream and hurls herself out through the back door, furious.

24. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE BACK GARDEN.

DOBSON is hiding beneath the kitchen window. When he sees CAROL he yells and runs off, laughing. CAROL is incensed. She chases him.

CAROL:
 You MORON!

He stumbles over and goes sprawling. CAROL flings herself on top of him. She grabs his tie and pulls it, hard.

DOBSON:
All right, all right! I din't mean owt!

CAROL:
You stupid SOD! How many times have you done that?

DOBSON:
I never! OWWW! Only then.

CAROL:
(*Pulling harder*) You liar!

DOBSON:
Honest, just now!

CAROL:
It's been going on for days you stupid (*Slapping him*) TWAT!

DOBSON:
Jesus, it was a joke! I only came round to say sorry!

CAROL relents. DOBSON senses it. The moment grows longer. CAROL is looking at him – intrigued.

Can I snog your tits then?

CAROL gets off him, disgusted, disappointed.

CAROL:
I'd rather snog a dead body.

She kicks him. DOBSON cries out. He retreats, looking at her as if she's dangerous.

DOBSON:
You shitty looney.

This stings CAROL, who rapidly turns away.

25. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

CAROL is making herself up. She has applied lipstick, a wobbly line of liquid eyeliner - a sort of Cleopatra effect – and is liberally dusting herself with blusher. She surveys herself in the mirror. She pouts, trying to be sultry. She whispers:

CAROL:
You're so chic...

She starts to unbutton her school shirt. Something moves in the reflection behind her. She spins round. Nothing is out of place in the room. She turns back to the mirror, her expression now totally different – fear. Her breath vaporizes, steaming in the sudden cold. She looks into her own eyes – and then closes them, too afraid to move. It's as if something is touching her.

The front door opens and slams shut. We hear PAUL thumping up the stairs. CAROL fumbles her shirt back up, overwhelmed with relief.

PAUL:
(Off) Hey Carol! Where are yer? I got yer a –

He sees her in KATE'S bedroom; clocks her appearance.

Present.

CAROL is facing the mirror, totally still. PAUL laughs.

What're you doing?

CAROL can't speak.

PAUL:
Fucking hell it's Danny La Rue.

PAUL approaches her, at last sensing that something is wrong.

What's up?

CAROL:
There's summat in here.

PAUL:
What d'you mean?

The atmosphere seems to have reverted to normal. CAROL looks around, puzzled.

CAROL:
(To PAUL) I dunno... Don't go out. Stay here 'til mum gets back.

PAUL:
Fuck off, I'm late. I just came home to give you this.

He holds out a box. CAROL takes it. She pulls out a RAT. She's really thrilled.

CAROL:
A rat.... Wow.

PAUL:
It's a right sophisticated pet that, right intelligent.

CAROL:
Oh Paul... He's gorgeous...

PAUL:
You'll have to hide it from Mum. She'll blow her wig off.

CAROL:
Oh he's fab... I love him.

PAUL:
Eh and wash all that crap off your face. You look like a clown.

CAROL:
No I don't.

PAUL:
Yes you do.

CAROL:
Don't go!

PAUL:
(*Already going*) See yer.

He's gone. CAROL looks down at the rat. She brings it up to her face. She kisses it, as if it were a fluffy kitten.

CAROL:
Hello...

26. EVENING. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

CAROL has washed her makeup off, leaving darkish rings under her eyes. She's putting the rat in an empty fish tank on her dressing table. There's some straw in it, and a couple of items of Sindy furniture. She coos at the creature, girlishly.

We hear a scratching coming from the wardrobe. CAROL looks at it apprehensively. She approaches, this time determined to open it. She puts her hand out to the handle and braces herself. As she touches the doors, they both bang wide open.

CAROL steps backwards, her breath choking with shock. She stares in. Everything appears normal; a row of neatly hung clothes. Then, out of the corner of her eye, CAROL sees something move at the bottom of the wardrobe. A shoe.

Did she really see it move? She peers closer. For a moment there's nothing but the sound of her own breathing; then unmistakably, the shoe moves again. CAROL picks up the rat and bolts down the stairs, just as:

27. EVENING. INTERIOR. KATE'S KITCHEN.

KATE and RITA, dressed to the nines in their dancing frocks, are helping RITA'S mother, MRS SKIDMORE in through the back door.

RITA:
There y'are, Mum.

MRS SKIDMORE is in her seventies, the victim of a stroke. She's used to people treating her like a child, and stoically puts up with it. She's actually a bright, observant woman who sees far more than people think. She has a small notebook and pen on a dainty chain around her neck – her only means of communication.

KATE:
That's it, Love. Mind the step...

The cold tap comes on, spraying her and KATE. MRS SKIDMORE'S expression changes as water soaks right through her sleeve. KATE leans over to turn it off.

This bloody thing!

CAROL appears in the hall doorway, white with fear.

CAROL:
Mum -

KATE:
Been coming on full pelt for no bloody reason. (*Loudly*) That's it Mrs Skidmore; don't get wet.

CAROL:
Mum!

KATE sees the rat. She screams loudly, freaking everyone out.

KATE:
What the hell is that?

CAROL:
Mister Sherlock. Paul gave him me.

KATE:
A rat?

CAROL puts the rat up to her face, protectively.

Did it come from your dad's shop?

CAROL nods, determined to fight her corner.

Well it's going back there in the morning. God! First a lizard, then a bald parrot, now a filthy blinking rat.

CAROL:
I'm going to keep him.

KATE:
Are yer? Is that a fact?

CAROL nods. KATE holds her eyes.

Well we'll talk about it later... Now, you're going to look after Mrs Skidmore so Rita can come out dancing, OK?

CAROL:
(*Outraged*) What?

28. EVENING. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

KATE and RITA are sitting MRS SKIDMORE on the sofa. CAROL watches, moody.

KATE:
Carol's going to fetch you some supper in a while, all right? You used to baby-sit her and now she can baby-sit you, can't she?

MRS SKIDMORE is quite humiliated by this.

RITA:
Let me pop this cushion here. And if you need t' toilet write a note.

KATE:
(*Taking CAROL aside*) That kitchen wants a mop. And if you think you're keeping that rat you've got another think coming. I'll murder that Paul for bringing it into my house.

CAROL:
It's not yours; it's t' council's.

KATE:
Very funny. I want no messing about tonight; just behave yourself.

KATE and RITA are finally ready to go.

RITA:
(*To CAROL*) What's up? You look like your bra just burst.

KATE:
Oh, she's that moody these days you wouldn't know her.

RITA:

Cheer up, buttercup. (*Striking a pose with KATE*) Well?

CAROL:
Well what?

RITA:
How do we look?

CAROL:
(*Surveying them*) Like them dolls that sit on toilet rolls.

RITA'S face falls. MRS SKIDMORE is most amused. She chuckles. CAROL meets her eye and at last feels she's found an ally.

29. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. A STREET.

KATE and RITA are click-clacking down the hill in their heels.

KATE:
She's that rude I could swipe her sometimes.

RITA:
It's her age. She's got all them hormones and that raging round.

KATE:
Thirteen.

RITA:
Jesus... she's got it all ahead of her an't she.

30. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S KITCHEN / LOUNGE.

CAROL is making a snack in the kitchen while MRS SKIDMORE watches telly. Sherlock's tank is on the worktop beside her.

CAROL:
You used to mek this for me when I were little. D'you remember?

MRS SKIDMORE is concentrating on her quiz show (University Challenge), not listening. CAROL is disappointed. In her line of vision, one of the gas rings suddenly ignites. CAROL watches the blue flame, increasingly disturbed. It burns brighter.

Mrs Skidmore?...

The blue flame goes out. MRS SKIDMORE looks up at her, expectantly. CAROL reconsiders what she is about to say.

Do you like cheese spread?

31. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE TORCH CLUB.

An irresistible soul beat. PAUL is on the dancefloor in a no-fuss, low-lit cellar thronging with high-spirited young people. A manic, skinny DJ is playing 45's at full volume on a fairly basic system, which thumps the sound out. As he lines the next track up, he pops a small pill. The dance floor is heaving. People are sweating, laughing, flirting, dancing with euphoric high energy. PAUL has completely abandoned himself to the music (which forms the soundtrack to the next few scenes).

TANYA sees him and grins. She shoves her way determinedly through the crowds and pinches him on the bum. He turns round.

TANYA:
HIYA.

PAUL:
LOOK AT YOU. YOU SCRUB UP GORGEOUS!

TANYA:
WHAT?

PAUL:
YOU LOOK FAB!

TANYA:
(Wiping her ear) DON'T YELL! YOU GOT FLOB ON ME!

She pretends to be annoyed with him, clearly flirting. They start to dance. They're good partners. People clear space. Their dancing is vibrant, sexy, euphoric.

32. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE SOCIAL CLUB.

KATE is watching RITA and her husband DOUGLAS - a dapper man with a pencil thin moustache - as they quickstep by. DOUGLAS is a technically perfect but soulless dancer. RITA is much more alive and passionate. KATE'S eyes drift towards the door - no sign of JACK. She sips her drink, hiding her growing disappointment.

33. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE TORCH CLUB.

PAUL and TANYA are still whooping it up on the dance floor. Their movements are more and more outrageous. TANYA'S flaunting everything she's got. At last it's all too much for PAUL. He grabs TANYA, takes her off the dance floor and pins her up against a wall. They start snogging, passionately.

34. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S KITCHEN / LOUNGE.

CAROL is cooking a weird looking snack under the grill. She looks into the lounge and stops short. There is a fine, white powder falling from the ceiling. MRS SKIDMORE'S eyes are closed; her head has fallen to one side.

CAROL:

Mrs Skidmore?

CAROL walks into the lounge. It's eerily cold. Her breath is making vapour. There's a fine layer of powder over everything, including MRS SKIDMORE.

Are you asleep?

CAROL catches some of the powder on her hand. She examines it. She notices that the powder isn't coming from the ceiling; it's coming from mid air. CAROL raises her hand above it. She shivers, cold. She notices MRS SKIDMORE again.

Wake up.

The old lady makes no response. CAROL becomes worried. Is she asleep, or...?

Wake up!

CAROL shakes her, roughly. MRS SKIDMORE wakes with a jolt, frightening CAROL and herself. She notices the 'snow'.

I don't know what it is. I just looked in here and...

There is a growing fear and unease in MRS SKIDMORE'S eyes. She opens and closes her mouth trying to say something.

What should I do? I don't know what it is.

MRS SKIDMORE looks towards the kitchen. CAROL follows her gaze. There is smoke coming from under the grill. CAROL rushes in and pulls out her ruined snack.

35. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE SOCIAL CLUB.

KATE is dancing with DOUGLAS, looking stiff and tense. There's a commotion at the door. JACK and a crowd of his MATES are loudly piling in. KATE sees JACK, flushed, drunk, beer spilt down his tatty suit. Her face crumples with disappointment.

JACK:
Katie! KATE!

MATE:
Here y'are love! We dragged him out the pub for yer!

All the dancers are now looking over in disapproval. JACK comes sliding across the dance floor like a lad of twenty-one. His MATES rowdily urge him on.

JACK:
Way-heyyyyy!!

DOUGLAS:
Are you all right, Kate?

JACK:
(Elbowing him out) Course she's all right, smartarse!

KATE:
(To DOUGLAS) Sorry -

JACK takes hold of her and twirls her away.

KATE:
(Calmly, trying to extricate herself) I'm not dancing wi' you.

JACK:
 Course you are. Let's show these sods what we can do!

JACK, despite his dishevelled appearance, is a fantastic dancer. He takes control, moving KATE away before she can protest any further. KATE is too upset to argue. She stops resisting and accepts his lead. JACK is so good, they move so well together, so passionately, that he almost succeeds in charming her. The rest of the dancers are aware of the new competition in their midst. DOUGLAS looks at JACK, sneering at his clothes, jealous of his dancing.

JACK:
 You're the best looking woman here.

KATE:
 Don't try.

JACK:
 I don't have to try. Never have.

JACK really does float across the floor.

Are yer ready?

KATE:
 No, Jack -

JACK lifts; KATE resists. He loses his balance, trips, and pulls KATE down on top of him, her skirts in the air. Instead of being mortified, he starts to laugh. KATE pulls her skirts down, close to tears of humiliation. DOUGLAS has a smug smile playing on his lips. JACK'S friends laugh and cheer, finding him hilarious.

KATE picks herself up and walks away, leaving JACK lying on the dance floor. He is crying, crying with laughter.

36. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

CAROL is wiping powder off MRS SKIDMORE with a tea towel. There's a loud thump from upstairs. CAROL and MRS SKIDMORE look at one another. There's

another thump. Then a strange scuttling noise as if a long-clawed creature is running over the ceiling. It stops.

CAROL:
I'll just go and –

MRS SKIDMORE grabs CAROL'S hand with surprising force. CAROL looks at her. She's being told not to go.

CAROL:
It's all right. Maybe a cat got in or summat.

CAROL extricates her hand from MRS SKIDMORE'S grip. She goes into the hall.

37. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE HALL / LANDING.

CAROL stands at the bottom of the stairs looking up into the darkness. Silence, then two loud bangs. CAROL flicks the landing light on. She climbs the stairs.

There is a long-clawed scratching coming from behind her bedroom door. She braces herself, then flings it open. The landing light goes off, plunging her into darkness. She's lit only by streetlight coming through the windows. We hear her sharp intake of breath, the thump of her heart. We cut away, just as she is about to scream.

38. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. A STREET OVER A CANAL BRIDGE.

TANYA moans with pleasure. She and PAUL are on an exposed bridge indulging in some very heavy petting. A car goes past beeping its horn, men whooping out of the window. TANYA pushes PAUL away, breathless.

TANYA:
You're supposed to be walking me home.

PAUL:
I am.

TANYA:
I've to be in by eleven. My dad thinks I'm working in the chipshop.

PAUL:
Come on then.

He jumps over the stile that leads down to the canal tow-path.

Short cut. Bit of privacy.

He pulls TANYA after him. She teeters down the muddy path to the water.

TANYA:
I don't like it down here; there's rats.

PAUL:
Nowt wrong wi' rats.

They snog. TANYA pulls away again.

TANYA:
I might tread on a slug. Or dogshit.

PAUL:
No you won't. I won't let yer.

He picks her up in his arms and staggers; she's heavy. TANYA is giggling, delighted. PAUL stops near a bench.

I'm mad about you, Tanya Sutton. I think you're gorgeous. I think you're sex on legs.

TANYA:
(*Thrilled*) D'you mind? That's derogatory.

PAUL:
Honestly, you're driving me mad.

He lays her down on the bench.

Look, it's private here. You can lie on this.

She resists, unsure. PAUL is undoing his flies.

TANYA:
What're you doing? Paul, what're you – ?

PAUL:
Come on... you've kept me holding on all night. I'm dying for yer.

He puts his hand between her legs. She resists.

TANYA:
No. Paul –

He tries harder. TANYA cries out, whacking him.

PAUL:
Ow! Jesus!

She's looking at him, totally shocked.

TANYA:
I don't believe it.

PAUL:
(*Unsure what he's done*) What?...

TANYA:
Did you think I'd do it just like that? On a bench like an old slapper? Is that what you think I am?

PAUL:
No.

TANYA:
(*She's almost in tears*) I've been mad on you for ages. You tosser. It stinks down here. I should chuck you in.

PAUL:
(*Trying to stop her from going*) Tanya, come on. I didn't mean –

TANYA:
I'M WORTH BETTER!

She shoves him out of her way. We hear TANYA'S heels echoing under the bridge as she walks furiously away. PAUL sighs with frustration.

39. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. THE STREET OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

KATE and RITA are approaching KATE'S house. It's in total darkness.

KATE:
(*Puzzled*) The place looks deserted...

40. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S HALL / LOUNGE.

KATE enters and presses the light switch. Every single light in the house comes on. KATE and RITA exchange a glance. They go into the lounge. Everything is covered in the weird dust. RITA shivers.

KATE:
What's this mess?

RITA:
Where's my mother? She's got angina. I hope your Carol an't been messing her about...

KATE:
(*With rising anger*) CAROL?

She goes into the kitchen. She can see a light coming from the garden shed.

I don't believe it.

41. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. THE GARDEN SHED.

KATE opens the door. MRS SKIDMORE is on a garden chair with a blanket over her knees. CAROL is next to her, clutching the rat.

KATE:
You. Indoors.

CAROL:
I haven't done owt.

KATE:
Now!

42. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

CAROL is on the verge of tears, KATE outraged. RITA is examining the dust. MRS SKIDMORE wants to back CAROL up, but no one is looking at her.

KATE:
A what?

CAROL:
I don't know. A *thing*. I could *feel* it.

KATE:
Are you bonkers?

CAROL:
It were freezing; all cold against me.

KATE:
Carol, that is hysterical. We're on the floor, laughing.

CAROL:
Well if you don't believe me, ask her!

KATE:
How could you put her out in the shed? She's an OLD LADY!

MRS SKIDMORE rolls her eyes. She starts to write something in her book.

RITA:
She's got angina, love. You really shouldn't have.

CAROL:
(*Starting to cry*) Well what was I s'posed to do? I wan't gonna leave her in here; not for a million pound!

KATE:

This is just the perfect end to the perfect day, d'you know that?

CAROL:

It's not my fault. There's something here.

KATE:

Oh, go to bed.

CAROL:

I'm not going up there on my own!

KATE:

Now! Or you'll find you're not too old for a bloody good slap!

CAROL:

(In tears:) Well GET YOU!!

She leaves the room, banging the door.

43. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

CAROL stands at the bottom of the stairs. She looks up. All the lights are on, but the landing still scares her. She backs into a corner and sits. She starts to cry in earnest.

44. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

KATE is moodily wiping the dust off her nick-nacks. RITA helps. They have overalls on over their frocks.

KATE:

A thing... What does she take me for?

MRS SKIDMORE indicates that she has written a note. RITA reads it aloud.

RITA:

'She's telling the truth. There was something.'

KATE:

Was what?

RITA:

What was it, Mum?

KATE:

Was there someone else here? I mean what are you saying? Have we had a break-in or what?

MRS SKIDMORE shakes her head once more. She writes. She tears the paper off and gives it to RITA, who reads:

RITA:
'A cold presence.'

MRS SKIDMORE is still writing. She tears off another piece and hands it to KATE, who reads:

KATE:
'It felt dangerous.'

KATE looks at MRS SKIDMORE, flabbergasted.

What are you talking about? Rita, is she OK?

RITA:
Of course she's OK!

KATE:
Then what's she on about?

RITA:
I think she's trying to say that... you know... it's obvious.

KATE:
Obvious what?

RITA:
Well... you're haunted.

KATE laughs derisively. She looks at MRS SKIDMORE, who is staring back at her with a direct, concerned gaze. KATE'S face slowly falls.

45. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

PAUL enters. He heads for the bottom of the stairs on tip-toe.

CAROL:
(*Whispers*) Paul.

PAUL jumps about a mile in the air. He turns. CAROL is still huddled in the corner.

PAUL:
You scared the frigging pants off me!

CAROL:
Can I sleep in your room wi' you?

PAUL:
(*Going upstairs*) No way, pervert.

CAROL:

(Following) Please. There's summat bad in the house. It went cold and all the lights went off and I felt something and I'm really scared.

She is clinging to his coat. PAUL has reached the landing.

PAUL:

Carol. Don't be a nob.

He goes into his room and shuts the door. CAROL is left, isolated on the landing.

46. NIGHT. INTERIOR. PAUL'S BEDROOM.

PAUL is flinging his clothes off. There's a single knock at his door. He opens it. There's no one there. He walks to CAROL'S room. She's huddled in bed with the covers up to her eyes.

PAUL:

Mess me about and I'll brain yer.

He returns to his room and shuts his door. As he does so, one of the strings on his guitar twangs loudly. PAUL approaches it, looking for an explanation. The string is still reverberating. He puts his finger on it, silencing it. He begins to undress. He gets down to his underpants. He looks at himself in the mirror, posing, still consumed with desire. His hand is on its way into his pants.

All the guitar strings are simultaneously pulled, making a loud dischord. PAUL turns, completely unnerved. This time he doesn't need to silence them. One at a time, the strings fall silent, as if an invisible finger has touched each one.

PAUL jumps into bed. Like CAROL, he pulls the covers right up to his eyes.

47. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S KITCHEN / LOUNGE.

It's very late. KATE finishes polishing. She looks at the tidy room, tired but satisfied. Once more, order reigns.

CUT TO:

KATE taking a final look around the kitchen. She turns the light off. She walks through the lounge and turns that light off.

The kitchen light comes back on. KATE walks back across the lounge and turns it off. She is now in darkness. She starts to retrace her steps. The kitchen light is turned on. KATE spins round. JACK is standing in the kitchen doorway, his hand on the light switch. He's carrying a bag of meat, smiling stupidly, so drunk he can barely stand.

JACK:

I got you this. *(He holds the bag out)* Meat.

KATE:
Meat?

JACK:
Bernie thought it might help you see the funny side. We went to his cold store. Topside. And some tongue.

KATE considers him, coldly.

KATE:
Goodnight, Jack.

She walks away.

48. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

KATE enters. A photograph has fallen over on her dressing table. She picks it up. Her younger self stares back. She's holding baby CAROL. Young, handsome JACK is next to her with toddler PAUL. She puts it back in its place, gazing at it, as if she hasn't seen it for a long time. She unzips her dress.

JACK enters, staggering and throws himself on the bed. KATE turns away, filled with an angry disgust. She hears the photograph land with a crack on the floor. KATE turns. The glass in the frame has shattered. It looks like the young, smiling family has been threatened in some way. KATE instantly blames JACK.

KATE:
You careless bugger...

There's a sudden draught. The door closes. KATE stares at it, unsettled.

JACK:
(Already half asleep) You're a cold-hearted woman, Kate. An ice-queen, you are...

49. NIGHT INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

CAROL is asleep, with the curtains tight shut. Despite the cold, her sheets and blankets are all on the floor. She moves, spreading herself out, dreaming. Her breath is vapourising. Her hair seems full of static electricity. We hear a faint sound; the release of a sigh, a whisper in an unknown tongue. Then another rougher, more familiar sound. That of the curtains beings pulled back.

CAROL wakes, sitting bolt upright as if shocked out of a dream. She's disorientated. Her curtains are still settling as if they have been roughly pulled. CAROL looks at the streetlit window, puzzled. Why are her curtains open? Who did it?

There's the shadow of a leafy tree on her bedroom wall. We're not even aware of it until the leaves begin to move. It's as if the wind is rustling them. The whole shadow beings to shimmer and flutter. CAROL glances out into the street. The tree is

unmoving and yet in her room, there's a beautiful play of light. The very substance of the shadow is moving, glinting. CAROL is so amazed at the beauty of it that she forgets to be afraid. We hear the strange sound again; the release of sighs, unrecognisable whispers. CAROL watches and listens, entranced.

50. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S KITCHEN.

Bright sunlight, the comforting normality of 'I Who Have Nothing' by Shirley Bassey on the radio. KATE is frying eggs. There are three left in the box. She cracks two of them. Her hand reaches out for the third. It has gone. She looks for it, puzzled.

51. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

PAUL walks in, still disturbed by the night before. He gets out his comb to tidy his hair and stops short. A smashed egg is running down the mirror.

PAUL:
Mum?

KATE enters. She sees the smashed egg. Her face falls.

Who did that?

At that moment, CAROL runs down the stairs. KATE and PAUL look at her. She's the only possible suspect.

52. DAY. INTERIOR. THE KITCHEN / DINING AREA.

KATE, PAUL and CAROL are at the table. Breakfast is silent. CAROL is sulking.

KATE:
Well who else could o' done it?

CAROL:
It!

PAUL:
Mum, there is summat funny going on. I mean last night summat banged on my door and then my guitar started playing by –

KATE:
Are you two in this together, trying to drive me mad?

CAROL:
You never listen to anyone, do yer?

This stings KATE. She turns to her other business.

KATE:

Paul, you can tek that rat back to the shop. And don't ever bring vermin in my house again.

CAROL:
(Aghast) No!

PAUL:
Ah mum, can't you let her have it? She'll look after it.

KATE:
I don't know how you dared bring it here. It's disgusting.

CAROL:
It is not!

CAROL rises.

You never let me have anything! You tek it all away, like you HATE me. That's MY RAT and I love him. It's NOT FAIR!...

CAROL flings herself on the sofa. KATE is taken aback

KATE:
I don't hate you.

CAROL:
Yes you do! You all HATE ME!

CAROL bursts into sobs. KATE is utterly shocked by the vehemence of her reaction. Simultaneous to the outburst, PAUL hears something in the kitchen. He taps KATE'S arm and indicates the kitchen window. There's a smashed egg running down it.

53. DAY. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

CAROL is hugging her pink coat. She puts on an ordinary anorak. She looks up and sees that KATE is watching her from the kitchen doorway.

KATE:
We'll have a trial of one week. It stays in your room, you keep it clean and if it escapes I'm gonna poison it. Am I clear?

CAROL looks at KATE. She nods.

CAROL:
Thanks.

She half-smiles. KATE half-smiles back.

KATE:
Everything OK? At school and that?

CAROL nods, inarticulate. She leaves.

54. DAY. INTERIOR. THE LOUNGE.

KATE is Hoovering. She has moved the armchairs and the sofa out of the way and is going up and down over the shagpile carpet in straight lines. It's a meticulous job. KATE looks around. She turns the vacuum cleaner off in surprise.

The hoovered carpet behind her seems to be full of a strange electrical charge. The strands are moving as the wind would move through a field of wheat; rippling. KATE is shocked. She finds it disturbing, unnatural. She jumps on an armchair not wanting her feet to touch the floor. KATE rescues the vacuum cleaner, pulling it on to the chair with her, holding it tight, as if she finds some comfort in its touch.

Out in the hall something moves. CAROL'S pink coat has fallen from its peg. It's lying half upright on the carpet. It's an odd position; not quite natural, as if the coat is semi-animate. KATE closes her eyes, full of fear. She calms herself. By the time she opens her eyes, the pink coat is back on its peg.

55. DAY. INTERIOR. THE SCHOOL LOOS.

CAROL comes out of a cubicle. Her heart sinks; GAYNOR and DAWN are waiting for her. CAROL walks to the sinks to wash her hands. They join her.

GAYNOR:
Can you smell summat funny?

DAWN:
Yeh, a right ronk.

GAYNOR:
Like old jamrags in't it?

DAWN:
And tramp's armpits. D'you think it's her?

GAYNOR:
Must be. I bet she's not had a bath since her pubes grew.

DAWN:
Mark Dobson said he snogged her the other night.

CAROL:
(*Outraged*) He never!

DAWN:
Said she chased after him, tumbled him on the ground.

GAYNOR:

No.

DAWN:

He said she were all over him, trying to shove her tits in his mouth and that, but he couldn't bear it 'cause she smelt like pissed-in knickers and her breath was like dung.

CAROL:

(Vehemently) Fuck off!

GAYNOR and DAWN are so taken aback that for a moment they're speechless.

GAYNOR:

What did she say?

CAROL:

You heard. You thick slags.

GAYNOR:

Right. You're fucking getting it now.

DAWN:

You need a wash.

GAYNOR and DAWN attack. CAROL fights back furiously but is soon pinned down. GAYNOR kicks the back of her legs so her knees buckle. DAWN pushes her head under the tap. CAROL is resisting like a wildcat, screeching with rage and fury.

A high-pitched whistle blows. The girls stop and turn. MISS TYLER, a middle-aged games teacher is watching them, aghast.

MISS TYLER:

What's going on?

CAROL looks at her adversaries. They have suddenly lost their nerve; afraid of MISS TYLER, dreading discovery. CAROL boldly decides not to shop them.

Detention; all three of you. We'll sort this out then.

56. DAY. INTERIOR. THE BATHROOM.

A small but spotless room. KATE is polishing the bath taps. Suddenly a pot plant falls from the windowsill, covering her in soil. She brushes herself down, swearing under her breath.

CUT TO:

KATE plugging the Hoover in to clean up the mess. She switches it on. No response. She looks around suspiciously.

57. DAY. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

KATE comes down the stairs and tries the hall light. Again, nothing. She opens the cupboard under the stairs. She picks up a torch and shines it on the fuse box. She walks right into the cupboard. She starts to try all the fuses. She doesn't notice the door closing behind her.

She sorts out the fuse and turns to go. The door won't budge. Her breath is starting to vaporize; it's freezing cold. Quelling rising panic, she puts her shoulder against the door. It still won't budge. Gathering all her strength, she heaves herself against it.

The door opens with no resistance. KATE goes flying across the hall. She lands on her hands and knees, completely shocked. She's just beginning to calm when in the kitchen, the radio suddenly comes on; a laughing, jokey DJ. The volume rises higher and higher. KATE doesn't move; galvanised with dread.

58. DAY. INTERIOR. A CAFE.

KATE is sitting with RITA cradling a mug of tea. She's finishing her tale, still shivering with cold.

KATE:

I mean tell me I'm mad Rita, 'cause nothing sensible that I can think of can do all that...

RITA:

Me and my mum; we've been right taken up with it, Kate. Since the other night she's sat looking over at yours, like she's trying to figure summat out. She asked Douglas for books from t'library and she's been talking to me - well, writing, you know - and she's told me a whole load o' stuff I never knew. She used to go to t' Spiritualists during the war, when she lost my dad.

KATE:

Oh, they're a right con them. They should be banned.

RITA:

I knew you'd say that. Anyway, she said that she saw a few things in her time that made t' hairs stand up on the back of her neck but she an't ever seen or heard anything like what's round at yours. So we started reading up on it - don't look at me like that, just listen - and Douglas fetched this book about, you know, things Strange But True. And it starts with this chapter on poltergeists.

KATE:

Who?

RITA:

They're like, you know, not exactly ghosts more kind of *beings* - I mean no one quite knows what they are but they like move things

about and bang. They affect matter; it's a classic symptom. They done an experiment on one in a lab and it tapped on a polystyrene beaker.

KATE snorts derisively.

Well whatever, that's what we reckon you've got. A poltergeist.

KATE:

So what do I do? How do I get rid of it?

RITA'S face falls as she realises she has no practical advice.

'Cause I can't just call Rentokil, can I?

RITA:

We're reading on Kate. We're only on chapter two.

59. DAY. EXTERIOR. OUTSIDE TANYA'S HOUSE.

PAUL neatens his hair. He knocks on the door. TANYA'S DAD, who looks like a wrestler, opens it. He's in his vest and pants, vast, unashamed. Behind him, the chaos of the house is visible. A TODDLER sits on the kitchen floor, covered in food.

PAUL:

Hiya. (*No response*) Is Tanya in?

TANYA'S DAD looks at PAUL, distinctly unimpressed. He shouts:

TANYA'S DAD:

Tanya! T' Avon Lady for yer!

PAUL grimaces. TANYA'S DAD leaves the door open and walks into the gloom. He picks the toddler up, surprisingly gently. We get a view of his arse; huge.

He disappears. PAUL waits, amazed at the level of chaos in the house. TANYA walks down the stairs, neat, clean, cleavaged – and angry. She drapes herself on the door.

TANYA:

What?

PAUL sheepishly holds out a plastic bag with a couple of goldfish in it.

What's that? T' cat's dinner?

She takes the bag. Holds it up to the light, watches the fish. Looks back at PAUL.

PAUL:

I'm sorry. I'm a twat.

TANYA nods, still unforgiving. She shuts the door on him. PAUL waits, unsure what to do. He's just about to go when TANYA opens the door again. She moves towards him. PAUL thinks he might just get thumped.

TANYA kisses him sweetly, tenderly, longingly. She backs away, smiling slightly. She goes inside and shuts the door. For a moment PAUL is dazed, then he beams a delighted grin. He's done it. He starts to run home.

60. DAY. EXTERIOR. OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

CAROL is home from school, her arms round all her belongings. She looks up at the house. It seems silent, sinister. She hesitates. SALLY ANNE rides past on her bike.

CAROL:
Eh up, Sally Anne!

SALLY ANNE:
I'm not speakin' to you.

CAROL:
Do you want to come in?

SALLY ANNE:
Why should I?

CAROL:
(*As a kind of a dare*) 'Cause our house is haunted.

SALLY ANNE climbs off her bike and lets it fall on the pavement, excited.

SALLY ANNE:
Oh eh!

61. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

SALLY ANNE is so animated that she doesn't notice that some of the ornaments and photographs are balanced upside down. CAROL is looking at them, registering everything. The room is freezing cold; their breaths making vapour.

SALLY ANNE:
'Cause I've seen a ghost, right.

CAROL:
I have too. When I was little. I saw a grey lady at my Nan's house. It were standing outside her bedroom door. It wan't doing anything; just looked at me.

SALLY ANNE:
I saw one that had a head like a Wilkinson's razor. There's loads o' them round here. Most o' them are harmless but our Gary says some

of them want to jump in your mouth and suck your blood out - and if that happens, they use your body as a hollow shell and you die.

CAROL:
This one just makes things cold...

SALLY ANNE slowly notices how cold the room is. It's a dreadful realisation.

SALLY ANNE:
There's no such thing really, is there?

CAROL:
No.

SALLY ANNE notices all the upside down photographs and ornaments. It's as if they're being held in place by an invisible hand. There's a stillness and a silence in the room that's somehow overwhelming.

SALLY ANNE starts to breathe faster. She's becoming frozen in terror. She whispers:

SALLY ANNE:
What is it?

CAROL:
I don't know. It's been watching me for days. Like it's waiting. It wants summat, I think. But I don't know what.

SALLY ANNE:
Get me out.

She moans, too frightened to scream. She whimpers. CAROL perceives her terror.

CAROL:
(*Gently*) Come on then; you're all right.

CAROL makes a movement towards SALLY ANNE, wanting only to take her hand. All the ornaments instantaneously fall, as if the spell has been broken. The windows bang open, releasing pressure.

A terrible scream erupts in SALLY ANNE'S throat. She screams and screams, completely hysterical. CAROL goes to help her but SALLY ANNE bats her away petrified, as if CAROL is the source of her fear.

CAROL:
It's gone now. Sally Anne it's gone. Come on...

CAROL can't calm her.

SALLY ANNE:
It's you! It's you!

CAROL:
No, no!...

SALLY ANNE is scrambling out, screaming, sobbing, screaming.

SALLY ANNE pulls at the front door frantically. The lock won't budge. KATE appears on the other side of it. She opens the door.

KATE:
What's going on?

SALLY ANNE:
Get me out!

SALLY ANNE is sobbing uncontrollably. She clings to KATE.

CAROL:
It's *it*. It scared her.

SALLY ANNE:
Get me out!

KATE:
What have you done to her?

CAROL:
Nothing!

KATE is leading SALLY ANNE out.

KATE:
Sally Anne, there's no such thing as ghosts, pet.

SALLY ANNE:
I WET MYSELF! LET ME GO!

KATE:
Sally Anne, wait, it's OK!

SALLY ANNE pushes KATE away and runs up the path. Her gait is affected by her wet knickers. She picks up her bike and rides away, sobbing with distress.

(Turning on CAROL) How could you?

CAROL:
It wan't me!

KATE:
She's just a little girl; you're so mean!

CAROL:
It made the ornaments fall over.

KATE:
 Oh what codswallop!

CAROL:
 Well go and look! They're all upside down.

KATE goes into the lounge. The ornaments are all the right way up. The atmosphere is completely normal. KATE gives CAROL a withering look.

CAROL:
 It's put them back...

KATE:
 And I'm Shirley Bassey.

KATE goes into the kitchen, having successfully ignored the reality of the situation. CAROL looks as if she's furious with *it*.

KATE:
 Poor little kid. We'll prob'ly have her mum traipsing round to give us a mouthful and I don't blame her. Fancy making her wet herself!

KATE starts to unpack her shopping.

CAROL:
(In a terse whisper) Show her. Do summat...

KATE:
 How could you be such a bully? I don't know what's come over –

A pan flies off the top shelf, misses KATE by a fraction and lands noisily on the floor. KATE is completely shaken. She looks round at CAROL. CAROL is shocked, amazed. It's as if the ghost has listened to her. At that moment, PAUL comes banging in through the front door.

PAUL:
 Hiya!

He runs straight upstairs and goes into his room.

62. DAY. INTERIOR. PAUL'S BEDROOM.

PAUL enters. There are loads of magazines lying open on his bed, forming a geometric shape. Closer inspection reveals them to be pornographic. There's an empty box on the floor, pulled out from under the bed. The lid is lying off it. PAUL, at first puzzled, is growing furious. He runs back down the stairs.

63. DAY. INTERIOR. THE KITCHEN.

CAROL is watching as KATE puts the fallen pan away. PAUL grabs her and pulls her out into the hall.

PAUL:
What you been doing in my room?

CAROL:
Nowt!

PAUL:
You leave my books alone.

CAROL:
What books? I an't touched any books!

PAUL:
Yes you have, you little cow. They're none o' your fucking business, all right?

CAROL:
(*Realising what he means*) Have you got mucky books up there?
Paul! I'm telling mum.

PAUL:
Don't you dare.

CAROL:
Eurrr you dirty bugger!

PAUL:
(*Pushing her against the stairs*) Shut up!

CAROL:
OW!... It found them. *It*, not me. *It* thinks you're a dirty bugger too!

PAUL releases her. He storms back upstairs.

64. DAY. INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS.

PAUL returns to his room. He stops short. The magazines have gone. The lid is back on the box. PAUL removes it. The box is empty. He starts frantically searching. He looks under the bed, in the wardrobe – everywhere that the magazines could be. They're nowhere to be found. PAUL goes out on to the landing. He sighs, trying to quell his rising panic. As he turns, he notices KATE'S bed.

He goes into her room. All the magazines are laid out on the counterpane. PAUL is too afraid to go near them – but he can't call for help. He steels himself and grabs one, sick with dread.

65. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE KITCHEN / DINING AREA.

KATE, PAUL and CAROL are eating a silent tea. The TV is on in the background. JACK enters, holding a bunch of Dahlias. He holds them out to KATE.

JACK:
Der-ner!!

KATE is unimpressed. She fetches him a plate. JACK sheepishly puts the flowers down. He sits and joins them. Silence but for the telly.

Your mother's put me in the doghouse, Paul. I'm persona non grata. D'you know what that means?... Means I can fuck off. Isn't that right, my lovely darling?

KATE puts his meal in front of him.

KATE:
Eat that.

JACK:
What's this?

KATE:
Bacon bake.

JACK:
What happened to that joint of beef?

KATE:
What joint of beef?

JACK:
The joint o' best topside that I put in t' fridge.

KATE:
There's no beef in there.

JACK:
I put a joint o' best topside in. And some tongue!

KATE:
Well you must've took it out. Either that or you made it up.

JACK scrapes his chair back, furious. He goes to the fridge and opens it. CAROL is gripping the table, staring at her plate.

JACK:
What've you done with it?

KATE:
Oh come on, Jack. You were dead drunk; you just imagined it

JACK:
(*On the brink of a full-blown row*) I know what I did!

KATE:
No! You don't know! That's the whole point, i'n't it? You get rat-
arsed, you behave like a pig –

JACK:
I put a fucking joint of beef in there!

KATE:
And you don't remember any of it. So you're not sorry; you're not
even responsible –

JACK:
Not sorry? (*Brandishing dahlias*) What d'you think these are for?

KATE:
The compost heap I should think, 'cause I don't bloody want them!

CAROL storms out. She goes through the kitchen and slams the back door.

JACK:
Now look; you've upset her.

KATE:
(*So livid she can hardly speak*) You Pathetic Man.

With as much control as she can muster, she takes the dahlias, goes into the kitchen,
stuffs them in the bin and exits, after CAROL.

PAUL:
The ghost took it. Your beef.

JACK:
You what?...

PAUL:
We've got a ghost. It can move things round. Like it's playing with
yer. It's a real bastard.

JACK:
(*Laughs*) Don't be a prat.

PAUL:

(Exasperated) Dad, I think you'll find that you're the prat.

PAUL leaves the table. JACK is alone, bewildered. How did it go so wrong?

66. EVENING. EXTERIOR. THE BACK GARDEN.

CAROL is leaning over the back gate, brooding. KATE approaches her. A pause.

KATE:

You know... your dad and me never mean it when we row.

CAROL:

I'm not stupid.

CAROL walks back into the house, leaving KATE alone.

67. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE TOILET.

JACK is in the tiny, pristine toilet, reading the paper. The door is half frosted glass and from the landing, we see his opaque silhouette.

We move into the toilet itself. There's a faint fluttering sound on the toilet window, as if it's being brushed with the wings of hummingbirds – or moths. JACK turns round, craning his neck.

He looks back to his paper, irritated. We see him from behind. We get closer and closer to his back, as if we're breathing down his neck. Suddenly JACK slaps his hand on the back of his neck, as if something has brushed it. He stands and turns.

68. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE LANDING.

We see the silhouette of JACK struggling, as if he is batting away hundreds of invisible moths. He hurls himself against the walls and the door, trying to keep at bay whatever it is. A scream rises in his throat and erupts. He starts to throw his weight against the door – desperate to escape. The door won't budge.

PAUL comes running up the stairs, alerted by JACK'S scream. JACK cracks the glass in the door with the force of his struggle. He cries out in horror.

PAUL pulls the door from the other side. It opens. CAROL is rushing up the stairs, followed by KATE. JACK falls on to the landing. It's a moment before he can speak.

JACK:

Jesus.

KATE:

What happened? Jack? What was it?

JACK is white with shock.

JACK:
Nothing.

KATE:
What?

JACK:
It was nothing, all right? Look (*He gestures into the empty loo*)
Nothing!

JACK sees the frightened faces of his family. He tries helplessly to explain.

I just... I thought it were moths.

KATE:
There's no moths here Jack.

JACK:
That's why I said it were nothing. All right?

He walks downstairs and straight out through the front door.

KATE:
Where are you going? Jack –

The front door slams. He's gone. CAROL runs out after him.

69. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. THE STREET.

JACK is walking away from the house, still in shock. CAROL catches him up.

CAROL:
Dad, there's summat there, in't there?

JACK stops, steadying himself against a lamp post.

You can sense it. It pulls at you. Did you feel it?

JACK:
What are you talking about?

CAROL:
It! You felt it, din't you.

JACK:
It were just moths. You know what I'm like wi' moths.

CAROL:

It can do things, Dad. It made Mum's ornaments move all at once and it made the light and shadow dance so you couldn't tell which was which. And sometimes you don't know it's there and it's like walking through a great big freezing cold jelly.

JACK:

Carol, what's going on? 'Cause you sound like a flipping nutcase.

CAROL:

(Stung) Forget it.

CAROL turns back to the house.

JACK:

Hey! I said what's going on?

CAROL:

(Rudely) Nothing. We got moths.

JACK:

Carol!

She ignores him. JACK watches her enter the house. He stares at it long after CAROL has gone inside, shaken to the core.

70. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S ROOM.

CAROL comes into her room. She goes to the rat's tank. It's empty.

CAROL:

Mister Sherlock...

71. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE BATHROOM.

PAUL is brushing his teeth. CAROL comes in, accusatory.

CAROL:

What've you done with my rat?

From PAUL'S expression, she realises that he has done nothing. Her face falls.

72. NIGHT. INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS.

KATE and CAROL are in Carol's room searching. CAROL is close to tears of worry.

KATE:

I knew this would happen. They're sickening filth, rats! They can eat their way through floorboards the rotten, stinking parasites.

PAUL puts his head round the door.

PAUL:

It's not in my room. And I've gone right through the airing cupboard. This is freaking me out, Mum. I wanna go out.

KATE:

Don't be pathetic – you're as bad as your dad.

This hits home. KATE goes into her own room. CAROL and PAUL follow.

(To PAUL) You look in that cupboard. I'm going round every inch o' this skirting.

CAROL:

There's summat in the bed.

KATE and PAUL follow CAROL'S gaze to the bed. There's a lump under the sheets, a small patch of blood beginning to appear on the counterpane. CAROL starts to cry.

CAROL:

Mister Sherlock...

PAUL:

Jesus...

KATE:

Shut up!

KATE takes hold of the edge of the counterpane. She braces herself. She drags it off. There's a bloody joint of topside lying in the middle of the bed.

73. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE KITCHEN.

KATE is running the meat under the tap, her lip curling with disgust.

CUT TO:

KATE wrapping the joint in greaseproof paper.

CUT TO:

KATE putting the wrapped joint on a plate in the fridge. She slams the fridge shut. She turns round and stares all around the kitchen. She speaks under her breath.

KATE:

Don't you dare.

74. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S ROOM.

CAROL is kneeling on the floor, as if praying a desperate prayer.

CAROL:

Please bring him back. Give him back. She'll poison him. Please...

75. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

KATE, dressed for bed is looking at her reflection in her mirror. It depresses her. She gets into bed and stares numbly at the wall. She closes her eyes, exhausted.

76. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

The early hours. We hear a kind of music; plaintive, haunting, eerie, played on no recognisable instrument. We're hovering above CAROL'S sleeping face. Her breath is vaporizing. She suddenly wakes, alert. Her bedclothes are all over on the floor. She gets out of bed. She looks into the tank. The rat is shivering in a corner. CAROL drops to her knees, again as if she's praying

CAROL:

Thank you... Thank you...

The strange, melancholy 'music' begins to move her.

77. NIGHT. INTERIOR. PAUL'S BEDROOM.

PAUL too can hear the music. It seems to be coming from the landing. He switches his lamp on. There's no electric. His curiosity overcomes his fear and he gets up, moving across the room in the darkness.

78. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE LANDING.

PAUL opens his bedroom door. KATE is standing in her doorway, CAROL in hers. KATE has a torch. She shines it around, looking for the source of the sound. The beam goes over CAROL. She looks rapt, transported.

KATE:

(In a whisper) What is it?

PAUL'S amazement is so great that he forgets to be afraid. He goes to the radiator.

PAUL:

It's the radiator... like a harp...

KATE approaches.

KATE:

What's the smell?

CAROL:

Like a perfume. It's beautiful...

PAUL looks behind KATE, to her bedroom door.

PAUL:
Mum... Look.

KATE shines the torch behind her. Tied to her door handle is an intricate bow, made out of toilet paper. Each door on the landing has something similar - an incredible rococo bow. For a moment, everyone is too amazed to speak.

KATE:
They're like what you get in a flower shop. I couldn't have tied a thing like that. (*Peering closer*) There's something in it.

She shines her torch into the centre of the bow. PAUL puts his hand in and takes something out. He's utterly bewildered.

PAUL:
(*Holding it up*) It's a Dairylea cheese triangle.

KATE:
My God...

PAUL:
(*Speaking for them all*) What Is It?

KATE:
I don't know.

PAUL:
(*Beginning to panic*) What's it doing in our house? I mean why's it here? What does it want? It's a fucking *freak*.

The music suddenly stops.

CAROL:
(*Accusingly*) You've stopped it.

PAUL:
I did not. I did nothing!

CAROL looks bereft. PAUL, consumed with dread, goes back into his room.

KATE:
I'm gonna clear this lot up.

CAROL:
Don't.

KATE:
I have to, Love.

CAROL:
Why can't you just leave them?

KATE:
(*Begins to undo a bow:*) 'Cause it's not taking over my house.

Suddenly a bottle of shampoo comes flying out of the bathroom at a dizzying speed. It misses KATE'S head by a fraction, hurtles down the stairs and bashes into the front door, disgorging its contents in a violent, sticky spill. KATE is flabbergasted. She looks at CAROL. CAROL is staring innocently back.

CAROL:
Perhaps it wants you to leave them.

79. NIGHT. INTERIOR. PAUL'S ROOM.

We seem to go right through PAUL'S bedroom door, into his room. PAUL is sitting huddled in bed, staring at the door, petrified. We come right up to him, watching as his eyes close in terror and his breath start to steam.

Suddenly a guitar string is plucked. It twangs discordantly. Then another. PAUL leaps out of bed and tries to pick the guitar up, to save it. He receives an electric shock. He drops the guitar, whimpering in pain. The guitar is making feedback with the amp. A horrible cacophony results.

PAUL has had enough. He fumbles into his trousers.

80. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE LANDING.

KATE is pulling off the bows and stuffing them in the bathroom bin.

KATE:
Paul! Stop that flipping racket!

81. NIGHT. INTERIOR. PAUL'S ROOM.

PAUL opens the window. He swings himself out, petrified, holding his shoes and his coat. The guitar continues to feedback and reverberate.

82. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

The guitar noise is so loud that CAROL has her hands over her ears.

83. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. THE STREET OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

PAUL is getting on his scooter. He starts it up, drowning out the noise.

84. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE LANDING.

KATE is shoving another bow in the bin. The feedback reaches a crescendo, a truly dreadful sound. KATE pulls the last bow off the door and rips it to smithereens.

KATE:
PAUL! ENOUGH!

85. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

CAROL can't bear the noise any more. She speaks to *It*.

CAROL:
Stop it, please...

86. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE LANDING.

A terrible snapping sound. Then silence. KATE opens PAUL'S bedroom door.

87. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

CAROL is amazed at this silence. Again, the ghost seems to have done as she's asked.

88. NIGHT. INTERIOR. PAUL'S BEDROOM.

The guitar is lying on the bed, all the strings broken. KATE looks at the open window, aghast. She goes to it and sees PAUL riding away. Her son has fled.

89. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

A different noise starts, much quieter - more a kind of tapping. The tapping flits from one side of the house to the other. CAROL listens, fascinated. KATE enters, ashen.

KATE:
Y' all right?

CAROL nods.

D'you wanna come in wi' me?

CAROL shakes her head. KATE is disturbed at her cool self-possession. She can't keep her own fear out of her voice.

I could stop in here with you if you like...

CAROL:
There's not room.

KATE:
Well... if you want me just call, OK?

CAROL nods. Not knowing what else to say or do, KATE leaves.

90. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S ROOM.

KATE gets into bed. She stares around the silent room, alone with her fear.

KATE:
Jack... where the hell are you?

91. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE PET SHOP.

JACK splatters in with an almost empty bottle of whisky. He's half singing, half mumbling, deep in his cups. He rattles the rats' cage. They start scurrying, squealing.

JACK:
Eh up you buggers. Daddy's here.

He opens up a sack of straw, tips it out behind the counter and collapses on it.

92. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S ROOM.

CAROL has opened her curtains, letting the room fill with moonlight and streetlight. She's rolling a marble along the windowsill. It stops. It rolls back to her. She rolls it away again. It stops. It rolls back. CAROL smiles, fascinated.

93. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. OUTSIDE TANYA'S HOUSE.

PAUL is throwing stones at TANYA'S window.

PAUL:
Tanya! Tanya!...

The window clunks open. TANYA pokes her head out.

TANYA:
What are you doing here?

PAUL:
I had to see you. Can I come in?

TANYA:
Are you joking? What for?

PAUL:
Please. I don't wanna do owt. Just let me in.

TANYA hesitates. PAUL realises something else is needed.

My mum. She's chucked me out. We had a row.

TANYA:
No...

PAUL:
She... I didn't know where to come.

TANYA:
(*Moved*) Oh Paul... Climb up on the bin.

CUT TO:

TANYA helping PAUL in through her window. He makes a noise.

TANYA:
Shhhhh! If my dad catches you in here he'll rip your tackle off and
chuck it to the dog.

PAUL acknowledges this warning.

CUT TO:

PAUL sitting next to TANYA on her bed. In the moonlight we see a sea of pop
posters brightening up the knackered furniture.

PAUL:
She said I were useless like my dad. She said I'd end up pissed in a
ditch like him.

TANYA:
(*Taking his hand*) But you won't. Jesus, you're freezing; you're
shaking. Come here.

TANYA gets him into bed. She curls herself round him, warming him. PAUL sighs,
desperate to touch her.

PAUL:
I won't do owt, Tanya, I promise.

TANYA:
What caused it? This terrible row?

PAUL has to think quick.

PAUL:
I told her about you.

TANYA:
(*Shocked.*) What did she say?

PAUL:
She said you weren't good enough. She said you were common.

TANYA is outraged.

But I said if she couldn't handle it I'd go. I said you were pure gold.
I said there wasn't no one in the world about to tell me who I could
fall in love with.

PAUL realises what he has said; the scale of the lie. But these are the words that
TANYA needed to hear. She's moved almost to tears. Suddenly, she's kissing him,
passionately. PAUL responds. In no time at all, they're about to make love.

PAUL:
Are you sure?

TANYA:
Yes, yes –

94. DAY. INTERIOR. DOWNSTAIRS.

We see an iron going backwards and forwards over a shirt. KATE is ironing
impeccably, but she is tense, as if expecting something bad to happen any minute.

The shirt is finished. She whips it off the ironing board, puts it on a hanger like the
rest - and takes them all upstairs.

95. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

KATE is in her bedroom, putting the shirts away in the wardrobe. She's about to close
the wardrobe doors when she notices something. It's the sleeve of her wedding dress,
kept under plastic. It seems to have been torn by something. KATE pushes the shirts
out of the way. She lifts the plastic. She chokes back her shock. Her wedding dress is
ruined. She pulls it out of the wardrobe. There are holes in it everywhere. What can
have done this? She looks down at the floor. She cries out with disgust.

Falling from the dress are hundreds of tiny maggoty worms – moth caterpillars.
KATE is distraught. She drops the dress with a sob, finding it too repugnant to hold.
A triumphant scuttling and thumping starts up in the attic. It's almost like laughter.
KATE'S fear and distress is overtaken by fury.

KATE:
You *bastard*.

She grabs her torch from the bedside table and goes on to the landing. She gets the
stepladder out. She puts it up under the loft hatch. The scuttling seems to be right over
her head. She climbs the ladder and bangs the trapdoor open.

96. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S ATTIC.

The thumping stops. KATE pushes herself up and shines her torch around. It's
extremely cold. She hears a rat-like noise in a corner. She approaches it, forcing
herself on. The noise seems to be coming from the back of an old cot. KATE shines

her torch on it. There's a female mouse there, sitting over her pink, blind young. The mouse picks them up one by one and starts to move them out of the light.

KATE watches repelled but almost moved, as the mouse tries to protect its litter. She kneels down.

Suddenly, there's a massive bang. The trapdoor slams shut. KATE drops her torch. Darkness. She scrabbles around on the floor frantically searching for the torch. She whimpers, too afraid to scream. Then she hears RITA calling from downstairs.

RITA:

Are you there, Kate? Your back door was open; I let myself in!

KATE:

(Almost crying with relief) Up here, Reet! I'm in the loft!

She finds the torch and turns it on. It casts a ghostly light on her face. We can see how terrified she is. She looks down. The mouse and all its young have gone.

97. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

KATE is on her knees with a dustpan and brush scraping the seething mess of caterpillars into it. It's a horrible task. RITA is examining the dress.

RITA:

I don't know what to say...

KATE:

There's nowt to say, is there? It's out to get me – simple as that.

RITA:

Suppose it – . This is gonna sound really daft.

KATE:

Go on.

RITA:

Well, suppose it's doing all this stuff, you know all the banging and the wrecking and the weirdness – suppose it's trying to get your attention, you know, like a child would.

KATE:

I'd thrash a child who did this. I'd put 'em in a Borstal.

RITA:

I know but suppose it's some kind of a trapped spirit – you know, an entity stuck on the wrong plane –

KATE rolls her eyes.

Please don't be sceptical Kate because this might be the only thing that helps you. What if it's trying to make you understand its plight?

KATE:
All right, what if?

RITA:
If you speak to it, you might find out what it wants. And if you know what it wants, you can help it.

KATE:
So I just start talking to it?

RITA:
Through a proper channel... My mother says she'll do a ouija board.

KATE:
Oh get away!

RITA:
It might find the light. And if it finds the light, it won't bother you any more, will it? It'll go into t' next dimension.

KATE:
Suppose it dun't want the light? Suppose we conjure it up and...

The bedroom door slams shut. KATE is silenced. She tips the seething dustpan into a bin liner. RITA is completely spooked.

RITA:
Look... you could always come and stay with us for a while.

KATE:
It's not driving us out, Reet; we're staying put. This house is everything to me.

RITA:
Where's your Jack? He should be here, Kate!

98. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE LABOUR CLUB.

JACK is centre of attention at the bar. DOUGLAS is sitting nearby.

JACK:
And I'm not kidding. It were cold as the grave...

JACK knocks his scotch back. He slams the glass on the counter, authoritatively.
NORAH, the barmaid, pours him another.

NORAH:

Ohh, Jack, that's mekking me go all funny. T' hairs are standing up on the back o' my neck.

JACK:

It's broken things, it's lost 'em; it's got our Kate crawling up the walls. A right bag o' nerves, she is.

DOUGLAS:

So you've left her there all alone?

JACK:

I don't remember asking you to join this circle, Douglas.

DOUGLAS:

Well you'll be glad I did, because I know a bit about this.

JACK:

Oh yeh?

DOUGLAS:

Our Rita's been reading up on it and I could offer you a word or two of enlightenment.

JACK:

Could you now?

DOUGLAS:

One o' your kids is causing it. They've attracted a wandering polterghost. They often turn up in houses where there's unhappy, neglected children,

JACK:

You what? –

DOUGLAS:

Especially teenage girls.

JACK:

I don't like what you're saying, pal!

DOUGLAS:

Don't get snappy. I'm just sharing some pertinent facts. And if you ever spoke to your wife and kids you might find out I was right.

JACK lashes out, punching DOUGLAS. For a moment, DOUGLAS is taken aback. Then he throws himself on JACK. Spectators gather, eager to enjoy a fight.

99. NIGHT. INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS.

CAROL is lying on her bedroom floor with a pair of pointy sunglasses on, playing with the rat. She's got him in a Sindy car. She's singing to herself, happy. The car is suddenly pulled from her hand by an invisible force.

CAROL:
D'you mind? I'm playing with my rat, OK?

Her bedroom door slams shut. CAROL looks worried, realising she has offended *it*.

100. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

PAUL opens the gate and takes a few steps up the path. The front door suddenly bangs open, as if inviting him into the empty hallway. PAUL hesitates, looking up at the darkening house, full of fear. He turns on his heels and goes.

101. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. TANYA'S HOUSE.

PAUL is throwing pebbles at TANYA'S window. She opens it and smiles. He climbs up. They kiss, a long, lingering kiss.

PAUL:
I never wanna go home again. I wanna be here, wi' you.

102. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S ROOM.

CAROL is curled up, half asleep. Suddenly her breath starts to vaporize.

CAROL:
(*Whispers*) There you are...

She stretches out, languidly.

103. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.

Early morning light; the beginning of a beautiful day. Birdsong. The POSTMAN is delivering mail. He's a young man, humming as he goes. He reaches KATE'S house. JACK is lying collapsed in the garden.

POSTMAN:
Eh up Mr Patterson.

The POSTMAN steps over him, sorting through the mail as he walks up the path. As he nears the house, something makes him fall silent; a kind of pressure. He looks up, suddenly feeling cold. There's no birdsong. He shoves the letters in the box. He hurries back up the path and looks at JACK, unnerved. He shakes him. JACK moans aggressively. The POSTMAN goes, relieved. As he walks on the birdsong reappears.

104. DAY. INTERIOR. THE BATHROOM.

CAROL is running a bath, a towel wrapped round her. While the water runs, she is at the mirror – which is rapidly steaming up – putting her hair up in clips. She suddenly notices something strange about the steam. It's moving around her, forming swirling patters, wrapping her in an ethereal shroud. She's spooked but mesmerised. She breathes deeply, as if drinking the sensation in. Then she lets her towel fall to the floor. She remains still, letting herself be 'touched'.

The bath is almost overflowing. CAROL notices and rapidly turns the taps off. She looks at the surface of the bath. The water is forming swirls and ripples. She puts her foot in. There's a corresponding sound of another foot being put in. CAROL looks to the other end of the bath and smiles. She puts her other foot in. Again, the sound repeats itself, and ripples swirl out in the water, as if someone else is getting in.

CAROL sits down. She's breathing deeply, excitedly. At the other end of the bath, bubbles and gurgles start to come up through the water. CAROL puts out her hand. The surface stills all around it. CAROL laughs, almost flirtatiously.

105. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S ROOM / LANDING.

KATE is in her room, making the bed. She hears the strange noises coming from the bathroom – splashes and CAROL'S laughter. She walks out on to the landing. There's a loud splash. CAROL shrieks and starts to giggle. She hears voices whispering, CAROL'S – and another.

KATE:
(*Anxiously*) You all right, Love?

All is suddenly silent in the bathroom.

Who're you talking to?

CAROL:
Nothing! Go away.

KATE, suspicious, opens the bathroom door.

KATE:
What's going on?

CAROL sits up rapidly, furious at being disturbed.

CAROL:
Get out Mum! I'm not a kid any more!

She chucks a wet flannel at KATE, who rapidly exits. It splats against the door.

I want my privacy, all right?

KATE remains on the landing, shaken. She puts her ear to the door. All she can hear is whispering. The whispers don't seem to be in CAROL'S voice.

Then there's a great thump on the back of the door, as if something else – something much heavier – has been thrown. KATE backs away. We hear CAROL again:

(O/S) I know you're still there, Mum! Go away!

106. DAY. INTERIOR. DOWNSTAIRS.

KATE comes down to the kitchen, disturbed, anxious. She glances at the perfectly set table and absently puts a fork straight. She goes to the cupboard to get condiments.

When she turns back, everything on the table has been moved. The whole thing is now arranged in a fabulous pattern, fanning out around one sitting, as if all the cups, plates and cutlery are just for one. One of the chairs has been pulled out. Slowly KATE conquers her shock and sits down in the chair opposite, facing her adversary. She stares into the emptiness where a human form should be.

KATE:
What do you want?

We hear a high-pitched ringing sound. There's something teasing about it, something insolent. It becomes maddening. KATE finds the source of the sound; the rim of a glass of milk. She slowly, firmly puts her hand down on it, silencing it.

No more.

For a moment there is ominous silence. Then the whole table heaves backwards, away from KATE. KATE starts, but quickly recovers herself. She stands, taking hold of the table, determined to pull it back to its rightful place again.

As she prepares to pull, the table slams forwards with vicious force. It hits KATE, knocking her backwards. She cries out, thumping her head on the doorframe. She slides to the floor. The table is vibrating, shaking. KATE clutches her head, fighting to control the panic and the pain. She very nearly starts screaming – but she controls herself. She bleeding from her forehead, dizzy, too terrified to move.

She sees something flying towards her. She moves her head by a fraction – just in time. A fork embeds itself deeply in the doorframe, terrifyingly close to her. KATE curls up on the floor and lies with her arms protecting herself. She waits, helpless, for the next attack, breathing in choking sobs of fear.

JACK:
What's going on?

JACK is looking down at her. He's dishevelled, sporting a black eye. The atmosphere in the room has returned to normal. The table is back in its usual place, set just as KATE left it – all bar one fork, still impaled in the doorframe. KATE can do nothing but crawl into JACK'S arms and sob. JACK is bewildered.

Katie... what is it?... It's OK...

CAROL comes downstairs, ready for school. She sees her parents in their intense embrace and is curious, as if she's hardly ever seen them show affection for one another. She watches them, finding it almost distasteful. Then she leaves.

107. DAY. INTERIOR. A SCHOOL CORRIDOR.

CAROL is walking down a crowded corridor. She sees GAYNOR and DAWN coming towards her. She stops in front of them, deliberately barring their way.

GAYNOR:
You're in our way, mong.

DAWN:
We got detention because of you.

CAROL:
So what you gonna do about it?

GAYNOR:
You're a weird little runt Carol Patterson.

CAROL:
And you're a fucking troll with a brain the size of a walnut.

DAWN:
You're asking for it now.

CAROL:
Do you think I'm scared of you? Do you think you could ever, ever frighten me?

She spits. GAYNOR and DAWN are taken aback. They exchange a glance.

GAYNOR:
Spastic.

CAROL strikes. She hurls herself on GAYNOR with such ferocity that DAWN steps back in shock. CAROL is lost in fury; exhilarated. She holds nothing back.

A crowd gathers; not the usual kind of school fight-crowd; one actually taken aback by the level of violence. GAYNOR'S head cracks down on the floor. She stops resisting. CAROL turns and looks at DAWN. DAWN steps away. She is not going to fight. A smile of triumph begins to play on CAROL'S face. MR BEVAN is forcing his way through the crowd.

MR BEVAN:
What's going on?

DAWN:

Nothing...

CAROL:

Gaynor fell over. I was just helping her up.

CAROL puts out her hand. GAYNOR takes it. She stands. MR BEVAN is suspicious but with no accusations there's nothing he can do.

MR BEVAN:

Go on, get out of here, all of you.

The crowd begins to disperse. CAROL hasn't released GAYNOR'S hand. She won't let it go. She waits until MR BEVAN is out of earshot.

CAROL:

Say thank you to me for helping you up.

GAYNOR:

Thank you...

CAROL smiles, triumphant.

108. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S HALL.

JACK, now smartened up, is putting his tie on in front of the mirror. He's depressed at the sight of his black eye. He hears something; metal on glass. He looks down. A penny is spinning on the glass shelf beneath the mirror. It shows no sign of slowing down. JACK is paralysed with terror. The extent of his fear seems out of all proportion. It makes him furious and ashamed, but he simply cannot move. KATE approaches. She looks at the penny, then at JACK. She puts a finger on the penny.

KATE:

Jack, there's no shame in being scared of it...

JACK:

Why doesn't it show itself? If it came and stood in front o' me, I'd punch its fucking lights out!

KATE:

I know you would.

She puts her arms around him. JACK is taken aback. He embraces her, tenderly.

We can't go on like this, can we?...

JACK:

What d'you mean?

KATE:
There must be some way we can get rid of it. There must be summat
we can do...

JACK is relieved. He assumed that KATE was talking about their relationship.

JACK:
I'm gonna phone the council; ask for a move.

KATE:
You mean run away?

JACK:
Kate, it's just tried to stab you with a fucking fork. What if it really
hurts yer? What if it –

KATE:
Do you think it could? Really?

JACK:
It only missed you by a fraction!

KATE:
But that's the point. It always misses.

JACK:
Look at your head!

KATE:
Yeh but I did that, not *it*. I bashed it on the doorframe 'cause I was
scared. Jack, it throws stuff but it always just misses. You know
what I think? I think it's impotent. It's all sound and fury but it
couldn't hurt a fly – not a single living fly.

JACK and KATE are each aware of a silent presence. KATE'S bravado falters.

JACK:
I'll come home tonight. I'll not go out. I'll stay in and –

The front door suddenly bangs open, as if the ghost is impatient for JACK to leave.
He panics, unable to hide his terror.

KATE:
You see what I mean? Sound and fury.

JACK:
Kate, I can't leave you here...

KATE:
Go on, get to work. Let's try and be normal.

JACK goes.

Jack... I'm not afraid.

He turns back, sees KATE standing stoically in the hall. He walks on, moved.

109. DAY. INTERIOR. TANYA'S BEDROOM.

PAUL is dressing. TANYA is lying lazily in bed, pleasurably watching him.

TANYA:
You should sort it out with her.

PAUL:
Hmmm?

TANYA:
Your mother.

PAUL:
Oh, leave it.

TANYA:
Why don't we go round yours tonight and put her right? Just tell her
I am good enough and we're together whether she likes it or not.

PAUL:
Let her stew.

TANYA:
What's t' matter? You're not scared of her are you?

PAUL:
(*Insulted*) Get away.

TANYA:
Then let's show her.

PAUL:
(*Raising his voice*) Stay out of it, Tan, all right?

TANYA is hurt. PAUL senses it. He gently kisses her.

Tanya, I love it here... Why can't we just stay here? Beauty.

He lets himself out of her window. TANYA continues to think.

110. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S HOUSE. UPSTAIRS.

KATE is making her bed. She hears a faint rustling sound. She tries to identify it. It's coming from CAROL'S room. She goes to investigate. Something is moving on CAROL'S bed. Sandwich bags have been put one inside the other and tied in a knot.

Inside the bags, suffocating, is the rat.

KATE is aghast. She picks the bags up, trying at the knot. She can't undo it. She tears into the plastic, uttering cries of disgust. The rat is dying.

At last she gets it free. She drops it into the fish tank. It writhes and kicks. She realises that there's something round its neck – a wire bag tie. She fumbles with it. It's horribly tight. The rat in its distress, bites her. KATE shrieks, releasing it. The rat is writhing in its final death throes. She watches helplessly.

KATE:
No, no!

KATE rushes into the bathroom, rummages for a pair of nail scissors, returns to Carol's room and quelling her revulsion, she picks the creature up and cuts the wire.

She drops it back into the tank. It breathes. KATE watches the creature until she's sure it'll live. She's shaking, traumatised. The ghost has shown her it can kill.

111. EVENING. INTERIOR. KATE'S HALL / KITCHEN.

The rat is in its tank on the side, sleeping. KATE glances at it as she puts sausages under the eye-level grill. CAROL comes in.

CAROL:
What's Mister Sherlock doing in here?

KATE:
Carol...

KATE finds herself close to tears even in the retelling.

It were on your bed tied up in plastic bags.

CAROL:
What?...

KATE:
I heard this rustling noise and I and went to see. It were suffocating.

CAROL:
(Stricken) No...

KATE:
In layers and layers o' bags. I tore at 'em and I got it out but there were something round it's neck, one o' them wire bag ties –

CAROL grabs the rat from its cage. She is looking at her mother in horror.

I tried to get it off but it bit me so I ran in t' bathroom and got the scissors and I managed to –

CAROL:
You did it...

KATE:
No! I saved its life –

CAROL:
You said you'd poison him!

KATE:
(*Helplessly*) Carol, that's not true...

CAROL:
You tried to kill my rat!

KATE:
No, no! *It* did it!

CAROL:
You liar!

Blue flames leap out of the grill pan in a great fireball. KATE throws herself out of the way, protecting her face with her arms.

CAROL is shocked out of her tears. KATE turns to her, trembling, ashen. CAROL can't believe what has just happened.

KATE:
Carol, I swear to you on my life and soul, I didn't hurt your rat.

CAROL cannot acknowledge this. She picks up the tank.

CAROL:
I'm taking him upstairs.

KATE:
I'll come with you.

CAROL:
Leave me alone. I don't believe a word you say!

CAROL carries the tank down the hall. KATE takes a step after her. CAROL turns and gives her a black, venomous look.

KATE watches helplessly as CAROL goes upstairs. The doorbell rings. There's a figure standing on the other side of the frosted glass. KATE tries to collect herself.

She goes to answer it. Upstairs, we hear CAROL'S bedroom door slam. The noise makes KATE start. She opens the front door. TANYA is standing on the threshold, ready for harsh words. KATE looks at her, puzzled.

KATE:
Hello?

TANYA:
I'm Tanya Sutton.

KATE is completely blank. She finally recognises her.

KATE:
My God you've grown up... I used to know your mother.

TANYA is taken aback. This is not what she's expecting.

I heard she passed away. I'm very, very sorry love. She were only young and that should never have happened.

TANYA finds herself choked. She pulls herself together.

KATE:
What can I do for you?

TANYA:
I've come about Paul.

KATE:
(Smiling) Are you his girlfriend?

TANYA nods.

You know I figured he must've been seeing someone. He an't been home in an age... Not that I can blame him.

TANYA:
He din't tell you about me?

KATE:
No.

TANYA:
You din't argue?

KATE:
No...

TANYA is shocked to the point of tears. KATE hesitates before asking:

Would you like to come in?

112. EVENING. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

KATE and TANYA are sitting by the fire, a tray of tea between them. TANYA is wiping her eyes.

KATE:
He told you I said that?

TANYA:
(Nods) I know people think it. They all think I'm a slag or summat.
He said he stood up for me. He said you threw him out.

It's KATE'S turn to be shocked.

But it's not what you think, is it? It's what *he* thinks.

KATE:
I can't believe it... What a rotten, little –

The front door opens. KATE involuntarily starts. PAUL comes in, calling out:

PAUL:
Mum, have I got any clean –

He sees TANYA and KATE. He stops short, mortified.

KATE:
Well look what's turned up. What've you got to say for yourself?

PAUL:
Tanya...

TANYA:
You lied.

PAUL can't reply.

I feel sick. I want t' bathroom.

KATE:
Top of the stairs, Love.

PAUL:
Tanya...

KATE:
You – get out of her way.

PAUL stands back. TANYA rushes past him. KATE is glaring at PAUL.

KATE:
I'm ashamed of you. More than ashamed; I'm disgusted.

113. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE BATHROOM.

TANYA is crying in front of her reflection. She looks at her running mascara and overdone lipstick – feeling humiliated. Something moves behind her. She turns.

114. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE LOUNGE.

KATE is still haranguing PAUL.

PAUL:
I din't mean it like that. You don't understand!

KATE:
I bloody do. You lied your way into her bed! I don't understand how a son o' mine could be such a –

We hear TANYA scream. She screams bloodcurdling screams.

115. NIGHT. INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS.

CAROL is in her bedroom, tending to her rat. She jumps with shock at TANYA'S screams. She heads straight for the bathroom. TANYA is cowering, petrified.

CAROL:
Tanya... What's up?

TANYA looks up at her. She's almost forgotten about CAROL'S existence. She can barely get the words out.

TANYA:
Summat... were touching me.

CAROL:
Leave her alone!

The bathroom door slams shut - on PAUL, who is rushing up the stairs. TANYA is even more shocked at CAROL'S apparent control. CAROL tries to reassure her.

It's all right. It dun't mean to hurt you...

The door handle starts going up and down.

TANYA:
What?

CAROL:
It...

PAUL:
(O/S) Open the door will yer?

TANYA:
Carol, summat touched me and there wan't owt there...

PAUL starts banging on the door

PAUL:
(O/S) Unlock it, come on!

CAROL:
(*Nods in reply to TANYA*) It just dun't know what else to do.

TANYA is completely aghast. It suddenly occurs to her what might be happening to CAROL – the same thing that the ghost has just done to her. The idea horrifies her. PAUL heaves himself against the door.

PAUL:
TANYA! For FUCK'S SAKE!

CAROL calmly opens the door, revealing a completely panicked PAUL.

CAROL:
(*To PAUL*) It wan't locked, stupid.

She coolly returns to her room. TANYA and PAUL look at one another.

PAUL:
I'm sorry...

TANYA bolts past him, down the stairs, past an anxious KATE and out of the house. PAUL sinks to his knees. He puts his head in his hands.

116. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S ROOM.

CAROL is ready for bed. She's watching a moth flying around her lamp. She puts out her hand, cooing and coaxing. The moth lands on it; its wings spread out. CAROL peers at it, marvelling at its furry body, its curled tentacles and the beauty of the intricate pattern on its wings. She's completely absorbed.

117. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S HALL.

JACK is creeping in, trying very hard to appear sober. He tries the light; no electric. He looks in the mirror on his way past and for a split second he sees the face of a ravaged, jaundiced old man – a real image of death. It horrifies him. He blinks and he is back. He climbs the stairs, shaken.

118. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

JACK presses the light switch; again nothing. He takes his jacket off, swaying slightly. He's about to collapse on the bed when he looks down at the sleeping KATE. There's something on her cheek. He struggles to focus, peering at it more closely; it's a moth. There's another on her hair. He brushes them away in disgust. Then he sees another moth crawling up his own wrist. He shudders, swatting it hard with his other hand. Now there's one crawling up KATE'S chin towards her slightly open mouth. JACK pulls back the sheets.

KATE is covered in hundreds and hundreds of crawling moths. JACK screams. He begins to bat them away from KATE. She too wakes. Her screams join JACK'S. The moths take to the air in a dizzying cloud. JACK gets one in his mouth. He chokes and spits. KATE is struggling, fighting to get away, screaming. JACK holds her close, beating moths away from her, hoarse with distress.

The door opens. The bedroom light is flicked on. CAROL is standing on the threshold in her nightdress. She looks like an angry parent.

CAROL:
What's going on?

JACK looks around in disbelief. In the harsh electric light there is not a single moth in sight. He cannot speak. CAROL slaps her hand impatiently on the dressing table.

JACK:
There were moths. Hundreds of 'em...

CAROL rolls her eyes.

CAROL:
D'you mind? I were fast asleep.

She goes, firmly shutting their door. KATE looks at JACK.

KATE:
I thought you were attacking me...

JACK:
There were moths... everywhere. They were crawling on you. I was getting them away...

JACK looks almost broken.

KATE:

Jack... It'll kill yer. It'll send you mad, then kill yer.

JACK:
What will?

KATE:
Drink. You sad bastard.

She turns her back on him and lies down. JACK whispers in her ear.

JACK:
Kate... it weren't the drink.

JACK has a moth trapped between his fingers. He lets it go in front of her face. it flutters. KATE cannot bear to acknowledge it. She closes her eyes.

119. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

Hours later. KATE is in a deep, exhausted slumber. JACK is having a nightmare, tossing and turning. We hear strange, distant whispers, distorted like underwater sounds. JACK moans out loud, as if he is trying to scream.

He wakes. He sits sweating, breathless, traumatised. He hears the distant whispers again, clearer, sharper. He gets out of bed.

120. NIGHT. INTERIOR. DOWNSTAIRS.

JACK is in the streetlit hall, going through his coat. He brings out a half bottle of whisky. He opens it; slugs it back, lets it flow through him. He hears the whispers once more. He looks into the kitchen.

He starts. There's a white figure in there.

It's CAROL in her nightdress, her back to him, her hair loose. JACK approaches. CAROL is staring at the gas cooker. The gas is flaring up, first on one ring, then on another. All the rings but one go out, then start again. One of them flares up into a eerily beautiful blue flame. Then another. CAROL watches them dance, transfixed. She slowly raises her hand. She's going to put it into one of the flames.

JACK:
Carol.

The ring burns low. CAROL turns to her father. She's white with cold. A drop of blood runs from her nose. She smiles a heartbreakingly radiant smile.

CAROL:
Look, Daddy....

She turns back to the cooker. The flames dance beautifully. CAROL puts her hand towards them once more. JACK is deeply shocked.

JACK:
Come away, love. Come away.

JACK puts his arm around her and pulls her away. The flames go out. The magic in the kitchen seems to have gone. CAROL looks bereft.

You're freezing, freezing. Come with your dad.

He takes her up the stairs.

121. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S ROOM.

JACK puts CAROL into bed next to KATE. He sits, keeping vigil. He finds himself shaking uncontrollably. He brings the whisky up to his mouth and drinks. He looks at his wife and daughter as they sleep, filled with love, aching with guilt, blurred with alcohol. He waits, half-broken, for the dawn.

122. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S BEDROOM.

KATE wakes to find CAROL next to her. JACK fallen asleep where he is sitting; the empty bottle still in his hand. KATE looks at him; he's a pitiful sight. She shakes CAROL. CAROL wakes, surprised to find herself next to KATE.

CAROL:
What am I doing in here?

KATE:
I don't know. Come on; school.

CAROL:
I'm too tired. I'm not going in today.

KATE:
Yes you are.

CAROL:
Why should I? I'm not well.

KATE:
'Cause you're not staying in this house on your own. Now come on.

123. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S HALL.

KATE is helping CAROL on with her anorak.

KATE:
Listen Love, if you get home first go to Rita's, OK?

CAROL:

Why?

KATE:
Because.

CAROL:
You're gonna do something to my rat, aren't you?

KATE:
No!

CAROL:
I'm gonna come home and find it gone!

KATE:
Oh for God's sake. I'll cook it for your tea, all right?

KATE bundles CAROL out and shuts the door behind her. CAROL presses up against the frosted glass.

CAROL:
You're a stupid COW!

The light bulb above KATE explodes. She puts her arms up to protect herself. She gets a shard of glass embedded in the back of her hand. She pulls it out, wincing.

JACK:
So it can't hurt you, eh?

She looks up. JACK is staring down at her from the top of the stairs.

We've got to leave here, Kate. I'm going to the council to get us a move.

He disappears into the bathroom. KATE runs up the stairs and follows him.

124. DAY. INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS.

JACK is splashing his face with cold water. KATE approaches him.

KATE:
I'm not sure it'd mek any difference.

JACK:
What d'you mean?

KATE:
Jack... I'm beginning to think it's... connected to her.

JACK:

What?

KATE:

When she gets angry, it... It's like it's answering her or summat.

JACK:

How can you say that?

KATE:

Just supposing we upped and went... and it came with her?

JACK gets himself a shirt and starts putting it on.

JACK:

Jesus... You've always had it in for that girl. You've been nagging her since the minute she was born.

KATE:

That's not true!

JACK:

And now you're saying – what? She's evil?

KATE:

No!

JACK:

She's never been good enough for you. No wonder the poor kid's an oddball!

KATE:

She's an oddball because her dad's an embarrassment who sleeps in the street and pisses himself and never has two words to say to her!

JACK, refusing to listen, grabs his tie and goes downstairs putting it on.

Running away in't going to do it. You've been doing it all your life and it's never worked yet!

JACK picks up his jacket, opens the door and he's gone. Before KATE can calm herself the loft hatch bangs violently open on the yawning dark of the loft. KATE backs away. She goes downstairs. She grabs her shopping bag and coat. She goes.

125. DAY. INTERIOR. THE SHOP.

PAUL is sitting listlessly behind the counter. TANYA comes in. She's carrying a plastic bag with two goldfish in it. She puts them on the counter before PAUL.

TANYA:

These are yours.

TANYA waits for PAUL to say something. He doesn't lift his eyes; too ashamed to speak. TANYA goes, disappointed. PAUL looks up, ready to speak. She's gone.

PAUL sticks a pencil into the side of the plastic bag. He watches as the water pours over the counter. The fish begin to struggle for air. PAUL starts to cry.

126. DAY. INTERIOR. A COUNCIL HOUSING OFFICE.

JACK, unshaven, reeking of alcohol, is waiting for a CLERK to read his emergency housing form. The CLERK looks more and more disbelieving as he reads. At last he puts the form down and looks wearily at JACK.

CLERK:

Nothing in this form fulfils the criteria for an emergency.

JACK:

Then you'd better mek a new criteria an't you? Put it on your list 'cause I'm telling you that haunting *is* criteria and we need a new fucking house!

The CLERK isn't going to take this and JACK isn't going to budge. A confrontation is inevitable.

CUT TO:

Security throwing JACK on to the pavement. As he stands, pulling his shredded dignity together, he sees a pub across the road.

127. DAY. INTERIOR. A PUB.

JACK begins to calm as the first gulp of the pint hits the back of his throat.

128. DAY. INTERIOR. A CHIP SHOP.

It's a busy lunchtime. PAUL is in the queue, TANYA serving.

PAUL:

I need to talk to you.

TANYA:

I'm busy. If you don't want chips you can piss off.

PAUL:

I'll have chips then. Large.

TANYA reluctantly serves him. PAUL tries to keep their conversation intimate.

I know I lied. But I was scared shitless and I couldn't tell you why 'cause you'd not have believed me. So I said anything, anything just

to get in your room and at the time I didn't care but then, after... I fell for you. And now it's too late and you think I'm a shit but I mean it now. I think you're pure gold.

TANYA stops, mid-wrapping. She has her own agenda.

TANYA:
Do you know what that thing did to me? It *touched* me.

PAUL:
What d'you mean?

TANYA:
It's been doing the same to your Carol. And you haven't given her a moment's thought. I don't care what you think about me, Paul – 'cause this is what I think about you. You're a coward.

PAUL is stunned.

129. DAY. EXTERIOR. OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

CAROL is walking up the path finishing a bag of sweets. The front door slowly opens for her. She stops. An expression of profound exhaustion comes over her; as if she's simply had enough. She sighs the saddest sigh. She goes inside.

130. DAY. INTERIOR. THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

JACK is patrolling the shelves. He picks out a Bible. He makes sure no one is watching and he sticks it in his pocket. There's a book next to it. He leafs through it. It seems to be what he wants. He hides it under his arm. He walks out, winking insolently at the ageing LIBRARIAN.

131. LATE AFTERNOON. INTERIOR. CAROL'S ROOM.

CAROL is lying on her bed, in a kind of trance. It's freezing cold but she doesn't seem to feel it. PAUL opens the door.

PAUL:
Carol... are you OK?

CAROL makes no response. She's as white as a ghost.

Carol?... Carol!

PAUL shakes her. She opens her eyes.

What's going on? Y'all right?

CAROL:
(*As if coming back from far away*) Yeh...

PAUL:
What're you doing?

CAROL:
It's so beautiful, Paul. It can make light where everything is dark.

PAUL:
Jesus.

PAUL picks CAROL up and puts her over his shoulder.

CAROL:
HEY! PUT ME DOWN! TELL HIM, TELL HIM! PUT ME
DOWN!!

PAUL carries CAROL down the stairs.

132. LATE AFTERNOON. EXTERIOR. OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

CAROL is struggling as PAUL carries her down the street.

CAROL:
Put me down you PIG! PAUL, LET GO! I were only talking to it!

PAUL drops her on to the pavement.

PAUL:
Talking to it? It's fucking DEAD!

CAROL:
You don't know anything! Why don't you LEAVE US ALONE?

PAUL:
IT'S FUCKING EVIL CAROL! FOR GOD'S SAKE!

CAROL is running away. PAUL turns back to the house.

133. LATE AFTERNOON. INTERIOR. THE HALL / LANDING.

PAUL comes in and heads straight upstairs, a determined expression on his face.

PAUL:
You bastard! You just stay away from –

A dart flies out of his bedroom door and impales itself in the wall opposite. PAUL stops short. He slowly approaches. He examines the dart in the wall. It's buried up to the hilt. Another dart hits the wall, millimetres away from his head. PAUL turns. He can see the dartboard on the far side of his room; one dart left in it. He stays rooted to

the spot for a moment too long. As he moves, the third dart hits him in the shoulder. He cries out with pain, bolting for the stairs.

134. LATE AFTERNOON. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

KATE is at the standing at the bottom of the stairs, bags of shopping in her hands. PAUL runs past her, terrified.

KATE:
Where are you going?

PAUL stops on the path. He pulls the bloodied dart out of his shoulder, wincing with pain. He holds it out to KATE. She looks at it, horror-struck.

PAUL:
I'm not coming back, Mum.

KATE:
Paul...

PAUL:
Why are you still here? It's destroying us!

KATE blinks back her shock.

Go and stay wi' Rita. Take Carol. Just get her out of 'ere!

KATE watches PAUL run off. A noise makes her turn towards the kitchen. She can see a saucepan lid spinning in the middle of the floor – gleefully. It makes her livid.

KATE:
Out! OUT!

She screams with fury. She picks up the saucepan lid and hurls it at the wall, smashing her kitchen clock. She is maddened, raging.

KATE:
GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!! LEAVE MY FAMILY!! GET OUT!!

She picks up the lid again and smashes it, hurling it around. She doesn't care what she destroys in her wake. She shoves everything off the work surface and on to the floor, screaming, hysterical, mad with rage. The kitchen is soon in a state of chaos. KATE doesn't stop wrecking until she's exhausted.

The minute she stops, her radio comes on; laughter from a quiz show. She picks it up and hurls it through the window pane. She stands breathless in the middle of the mess, shocked at what she has done.

A piece of broken china starts rocking too ad fro; again mocking her. She slams her hand down on it with such force that she gashes herself. The pain finally stops her.

135. EVENING. RITA'S GARDEN.

MRS SKIDMORE is watching the sunset with a blanket over her knees. CAROL is perched on a prissy garden seat next to her.

CAROL:

Everyone's wrong about it. They think it's evil just because it's cold. But you can feel it aching, like it's so lonely. Do you know what I think it wants?

MRS SKIDMORE is extremely disturbed by what CAROL is saying.

CAROL:

It just wants to be warm.

MRS SKIDMORE is writing a note. She holds it out. It says:

IT WANTS YOU TO BE COLD.

CAROL reads it, aghast.

CAROL:

What're you talking about?

MRS SKIDMORE grabs CAROL'S wrist. She's trying very hard to say something. CAROL tries to prize her wrist away. MRS SKIDMORE won't let go. CAROL pulls away, hard. She sprints off distressed.

136. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

CAROL comes in. She's aghast at the mess in the kitchen. KATE is sitting in the middle of it like a zombie.

CAROL:

Mum? Mum...

KATE doesn't respond. She's clutching her bleeding hand, looking into space.

Mum? Talk to me!...

KATE is lost. It's as if she's tipped over the edge. CAROL kneels down by her. She looks into KATE'S eyes. KATE whispers:

KATE:

Blood...

KATE has her hand tightly gripped round a piece of broken crockery. She unclenches it. It's a mess of blood. CAROL is horror-struck. She shouts into the air:

CAROL:
What have you done? What have you done to her?

A great banging starts upstairs. CAROL heads towards it.

137. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE LANDING.

The banging is deafening. CAROL keeps to the walls, avoiding the loft hatch.

CAROL:
Will you stop it? Stop it!

She gathers all her resolve.

I'm TALKING TO YOU!

There is silence. The suddenness of it unnerves CAROL. She goes to her bedroom.

I'm sorry but I want you to go. Do you hear me? You've got to go.

A shadow moves in CAROL'S mirror. She spins round, sensing a presence behind her. For the first time in ages, she's really afraid. She musters her shaken authority.

I mean it. Get out.

All the glass in the room suddenly shatters; the rat's tank, the mirror and the frosted lampshade. CAROL covers her face with her hands and cowers, terrified.

For a moment she is still. She has protected her face, but blood begins to trickle down from her hairline. CAROL is shaking with shock. She rises. She catches her reflection in what's left of the mirror; a distorted expression of fear. Another sound begins to intrude on her; a rat-like scrabbling. She looks to Sherlock's tank.

The little creature has glass embedded in his flesh. He is writhing, dying. CAROL lets out a cry of grief. She picks him up, her hands covered in blood.

CAROL:
(*She howls*) MUM! MUMMY!...

She continues to scream for her mother.

138. EVENING. INTERIOR. DOWNSTAIRS.

CAROL'S anguished cries rouses KATE from her stupor. She goes into the hall to see CAROL coming down the stairs, the rat in her hands.

KATE takes CAROL into her arms at the bottom of the stairs. She holds her.

CAROL:
It killed him...

KATE:
Come on. (*To It, screaming*) GET AWAY FROM US!

CAROL:
It killed him... It hates me...

CAROL starts sobbing in KATE'S arms. KATE can do nothing but hold her. Together, they sink to the floor. They have come to the end of something. They share their fear, their grief, their exhaustion. A shadow slowly falls over them.

CAROL:
It's coming! IT'S COMING!

KATE looks up, sick with dread. RITA is standing in the open doorway, her face full of concern.

139. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE PET SHOP.

PAUL closes the door and walks towards the counter. JACK is behind it, banging a nail into a piece of wood.

PAUL:
Where've you been?

JACK:
In the fucking library, where do you think?

PAUL:
Been looking for you. Every pub in town I've been in.

JACK:
What're you doing 'ere?

There's a half bottle of whisky on the counter. PAUL clocks it.

PAUL:
Well I can see what you're doing. Just what you always do when there's trouble. What you've done all my life; hide and drink. Why aren't you at home wi' them?

JACK:
Because I'm here.

PAUL:
You should be there, you spineless sod!

JACK punches him. PAUL reels backwards.

JACK:

I've had enough o' your fucking insolence.

PAUL:

That's your solution for everything in't it? If you don't like it, hit it. Well come on old man, hit me again. (*Shoving him*) Hit me again and it'll be the last time you ever do.

JACK:

Get out.

PAUL:

(*Shoving him*) You miserable cowardly bastard. Come on, hit me. (*Shoves him again*) Hit me again!

JACK, sufficiently provoked, raises his hand to hit PAUL. PAUL grabs it. They struggle, falling over the rat's cage. It breaks. They wrestle each other on to the floor. The rats run over them, squealing. JACK, repelled, loses his concentration. PAUL lands a good couple of punches.

There. You useless sod. There.

JACK starts to get the better of him. He almost has PAUL on his back.

JACK:

You're just like me, son. Are you blind?

PAUL fights back, venting all his fury and frustration.

You're lazy, feckless; you failed your fucking grammar school; you're a pisshead in the making! You'll be stuck here selling dog feed 'til you draw your pension, just like me!

PAUL:

NO!!!!

PAUL hits and punches for all he is worth. He gets on top of JACK. JACK suddenly stops fighting back. He curls up in defence and takes all the damage PAUL can give him. PAUL pummels him until he's spent his rage.

Then he realises that JACK is sobbing. He stops. He stands, unable to believe his eyes. JACK is racked with horrible dry sobs, those of someone who never cries.

JACK:

I'm useless

He is inconsolable. PAUL is suddenly humbled. He doesn't know what to do. He fetches the whisky bottle from the counter. He holds it out to JACK.

PAUL:

Here... Come on dad, drink it.

JACK waves the bottle away, humiliated. PAUL drinks. JACK slowly recovers himself. He sits.

PAUL:
(*Starting an apology*) I din't –

JACK:
Leave it. It dun't matter. (*Turning to face him*) You should get out of here, son. Do summat wi' your life.

PAUL:
I am. I'm in business with me dad.

PAUL is trying to tell JACK that he loves him. He can't – but it's written all over his face. JACK senses it. The moment is held – then PAUL looks down. He sees the wood on the counter.

PAUL:
What's that?

JACK:
I were making it. Prob'ly stupid.

PAUL:
What's it for?

JACK picks it up. It's a wooden crucifix. PAUL realises exactly what it is for. He slowly nods. JACK has found an ally.

140. NIGHT. INTERIOR. A CHURCH.

The church is moonlit and very old. PAUL walks slowly up the aisle. JACK is staring at the altar, moved by the beauty.

JACK:
They ought to make these places more secure, you know. Any
bugger could break in. (*He sighs*) Right. Give us that bottle.

PAUL hands it over. JACK takes a swig. He holds the bottle out.

We'll split the dregs, eh?

He hands it back to PAUL, who finishes it. JACK takes it from him and goes to the font. He submerges the bottle.

JACK:
Holy Water. I like the sound o' that, don't you?

PAUL:
Do you think it still works if you've nicked it?

JACK:
God sees our motivation.

PAUL:
I thought you didn't believe in him.

JACK:
Aye. I didn't believe in t' devil either. 'Til he moved in.

141. NIGHT. INTERIOR. RITA'S FRONT BEDROOM.

CAROL is in an exhausted sleep in RITA'S spare bed. RITA, KATE and MRS SKIDMORE are keeping vigil by her side.

KATE:
You're safe now. You're safe...

RITA leads KATE out of the room.

RITA:
Come on. You need rest too.

MRS SKIDMORE puts her hand on CAROL'S forehead. She closes her eyes in concentration. Her face is full of deep concern.

142. NIGHT. INTERIOR. RITA'S LANDING.

KATE and RITA look out of the window at the dark, silent house.

KATE:
All this time, I thought it were after me. I thought it were my fight; me against it. But it's been eating away at her right under my nose.

She leans on the windowsill.

I feel sick...

RITA puts her arm around KATE. She draws her away, just as JACK and PAUL arrive on the street outside. They see KATE but she doesn't see them.

143. NIGHT. EXTERIOR. OUTSIDE KATE'S HOUSE.

JACK and PAUL are looking up at RITA'S house.

PAUL:
I said to mum before I left to tek Carol over there.

JACK:
Good.

They turn to face their own house. It looks dark and foreboding.

PAUL:
It's got this thing about her, dad.

JACK:
Aye...

PAUL:
Like it wants her, you know.

JACK nods slowly. If he needed any more resolve, this gives it to him. Together, he and PAUL approach the door.

144. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S HOUSE.

JACK and PAUL enter. The house is quiet, all darkness and shadows. PAUL flicks the light switch. Nothing happens. He flicks it again.

JACK:
(*Under his breath*) Come on... give us some light...

Out of the corner of his eye he sees a candle on an occasional table burst into flame. They go into the lounge.

So you're listening then...

PAUL:
It's intelligent, in't it.

JACK:
Aye, it's cunning.

The lounge door clicks shut behind them, of its own accord. PAUL is trying not to falter. One or two of KATE'S ornaments begin to vibrate on the shelves. JACK gets the holy water out of his pocket. He spears a hole in the lid with his penknife.

JACK:
Come on then. Get this.

PAUL holds out the crucifix.

PAUL:
(*Raising his voice*) In the name of the Lord, leave this house!

JACK throws holy water over the candle. It bursts into a roaring flame, as if it has been doused with spirits. The vibrating ornaments fly off their shelves and smash into

smithereens. The candle splutters out. The smashed ornaments slowly stop shuddering, as if they're experiencing death throes. Silence.

JACK:
You don't like it, do you?

The handle on the lounge door goes down, as if someone is trying to enter – or leave. JACK and PAUL turn to face it. The door handle starts to move more emphatically up and down. An ear-splitting, slow scratching starts up on the door.

PAUL:
In the name of the Lord -

JACK flicks the water at the door.

JACK:
Get out!

The door starts to steam and fizz as if someone has sprayed it with acid. The scratching becomes more high pitched and agonised – almost a screech. The door suddenly bangs wide open, and then falls silent and still – as if the spirit has left it.

JACK and PAUL go out into the hall. At first nothing seems amiss. Then PAUL thinks he sees something move.

PAUL:
Her coat.

CAROL'S pink coat is off its peg, half standing at a strange angle, under all the other coats – as if it's hiding. It's absolutely still. JACK is about to grab it.

JACK:
Don't you touch owt of hers!

PAUL holds him back. JACK collects himself.

JACK:
In the name of Christ

PAUL:
Leave this house!

JACK throws the water. The entire coat rack bursts into flames. The men back away. PAUL runs into the kitchen. JACK watches an illusion of CAROL'S struggle beneath the flames. He's mesmerised. PAUL arrives with a bucket of water, douses the fire. Black smoke fills the hall.

PAUL:
It could burn the place down.

JACK:
No. It's scared o' water.

The light bulb on the landing comes on, swinging to and fro.

PAUL:
(*Whispering*) Upstairs...

JACK:
We've got it on the run. Hold that cross up, lad.

PAUL braces himself. They begin to climb the stairs.

PAUL:
In the name of the Lord, leave this house!

JACK flicks water at the walls. The water starts to fizz. Tiny patches of fire leap out from nowhere. JACK bats them out with one of the coats. Neither of them like being under the loft hatch or the swinging light bulb. Sweat is pouring down JACK'S face, despite the intense cold. An alarm clock starts up right behind them – feeding their panic. The light bulb swings faster. It seems triumphant.

PAUL:
In the name of the Lord... FUCK OFF!

JACK flicks as hard as he can. A huge surge of electricity seems to pass through the light bulb. It explodes, leaving the fitting burning. The alarm clock falls silent. JACK and PAUL are plunged into darkness. As their eyes adjust, they hear something walking across the beams in the ceiling. Something agile, something heavy – and nothing human about it. Dust begins to fall from the loft hatch. JACK and PAUL look up. PAUL is losing his bottle. His voice shakes with panic:

PAUL:
Dad ...

JACK takes PAUL'S shoulders. He looks into his eyes. PAUL begins to calm.

145. NIGHT. INTERIOR. THE ATTIC.

JACK has a torch. He is helping PAUL up behind him. PAUL stands, literally clinging to the crucifix. A hideous scratching. JACK shines the torch around, looking for the source of it. The atmosphere is oppressive - freezing terror. The noise stops. It starts up again behind them. They spin round.

JACK:
Where are you, you bastard?

PAUL:
Just do it, Dad.

JACK:
Out! Out! OUT!

JACK showers the attic with holy water. There is a freezing draft all around them, blowing their hair and their clothes. Dust rises, stinging their eyes. There's a distorted vocal sound, like a great beast in pain.

JACK continues to flick the water. He screams - but it is more like a war cry than a scream of terror. PAUL joins in. They channel all their fear into this aggressive sound. It gives them strength. The wind is growing in intensity. JACK flicks the last of the water. It lands sizzling on the skylight, which bangs open. The wind rushes out through it, taking dust and rubbish with it. The skylight bangs shut. Stillness. Silence, but for JACK and PAUL'S breathing.

PAUL:
Has it gone?

JACK:
I don't know; I don't know...

PAUL:
Dad... I think we did it.

JACK drops to his knees, exhausted.

146. THE NEXT DAY. INTERIOR. RITA'S FRONT BEDROOM.

CAROL wakes. She looks at her strange surroundings. She goes to the window. She peers out. She sees JACK and PAUL lying in the front garden amid a sea of beer cans. The front door is open. CAROL runs out as fast as she can.

147. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

CAROL runs up the path. PAUL is waking.

CAROL:
What've you done?

PAUL:
Reckon we got rid of it.

CAROL:
You what?

PAUL:
(*Showing her the cross*) We exorcised it. It's gone. We've been here all night, keeping guard. Not heard a peep.

CAROL is simply amazed.

148. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE FRONT GARDEN.

Ten minutes later. JACK and PAUL are telling KATE and CAROL their tale. CAROL is looking up at the house. As JACK and PAUL continue, she walks towards the open front door. She's puzzled.

JACK:
So we knew it were in the attic then,

PAUL:
And Dad said fetch the ladder and I swear to God I nearly shat myself. It were like scratching round – horrible – like you din't know where it was,

JACK:
And Paul stood there like a rod and held that cross in its face.

PAUL:
It din't 'ave a face.

KATE:
(To CAROL) Don't go in, Love.

CAROL:
It's all right. It feels different.

CAROL steps over the threshold into the house.

149. DAY. INTERIOR. KATE'S HOUSE.

Despite the damage of the night before – the burnt coats, charred walls and shattered ornaments – it all seems bright and inviting. The doors and windows are open and the net curtains are billowing in the breeze. We hear the conversation from outside:

JACK (*Off*):
And we felt this wind, din't we, sort o' like a hurricane –

PAUL (*Off*):
And Dad were great –

JACK (*Off*):
Fuck off.

PAUL (*Off*):
He were like Peter Cushing I'm not lying, this holy water flying everywhere...

CAROL is trying to sense something. She walks into the lounge. The net curtains move in the breeze behind her. She turns to look at them. Something seems to move in the mirror. CAROL turns back. there's nothing there.

CAROL walks further into the room. A lace doily is blown off the coffee table. CAROL stops, full of apprehension. The very airiness of the house is oppressing her.

Something touches the back of her neck. She flinches – until she realises it's only a net curtain, billowing in the breeze. She goes through into the dining area.

CAROL looks carefully around. She senses something move. Her eyes are drawn to a clock face. Did the fingers just move? She looks at another clock. It's telling a different time.

She backs away and walks on. The kitchen is still the wreck that KATE left it in. The tap is dripping loudly. CAROL walks past the broken crockery, the knife board, the stack of pans, looking at all of them as if they are about to develop a life of their own. None of them do.

She finds herself back in the hall. She can see her parents and brother just outside the front door, relaxed in the sunshine. Again, their conversation filters through.

PAUL (*Off*):
And t' skylight banged open and it wooshed out.

JACK (*Off*):
That were it.

KATE (*Off*):
Well I don't know what to say.

The tap suddenly stops dripping. CAROL shivers. She looks back into the kitchen, then through into the lounge. Something is different. The breeze has stopped blowing. Everything is utterly still. She slowly raises her gaze to the top of the stairs.

CAROL:
You're still here, aren't yer?

As if in answer, a marble falls down the stairs and lands at her feet.

CAROL'S instinct to run comes a second too late. As she moves, the front door bangs shut. She heads for the back door. It too bangs shut. She belts through the kitchen, dining area and lounge. As she comes in sight of each window, it bangs shut on her.

She stands helplessly in the lounge. Her family have seen what's happened. KATE is looking at her, aghast. CAROL is utterly trapped. She can hear KATE scream as if it's coming from underwater or a long way away.

KATE:
CAROL!!!...

As her family run towards the house, CAROL runs back into the hall. She throws herself on the front door, trying frantically to pull it open.

CAROL:
MUM!... MUM!...

She opens her throat into a huge scream. But before she can utter more than a few seconds of it, she's suddenly pulled backwards by an invisible force. The scream becomes a choke. Her hands go up to her neck and she claws at her throat. She's being dragged towards the stairs. She resists with all her force, and for a second she breaks free, managing to hurl herself forward and grab the letterbox. She clings onto it for all she is worth, desperate.

150. DAY. EXTERIOR. THE FRONT GARDEN.

KATE flings herself against the front door. She can see CAROL'S fingers clinging to the letter box. She tries to grab them. The space is agonisingly small

KATE:
CAROL! I've got yer!

CAROL utters another terrible choking scream. JACK takes a stone and tries to smash the front door. It resists. He tries again. KATE cowers underneath him, trying not to let her grip on CAROL slip. PAUL is trying to lift the birdbath.

PAUL:
Dad –

JACK sees what he's trying to do and helps him. They heave the birdbath through the lounge window, which shatters. PAUL instantly tries to climb through. He cuts his face and cries out with pain. JACK knocks and kicks the glass out of his way.

Meanwhile, KATE is losing her grip on CAROL'S fingers. CAROL'S frantic nails are digging in to her.

KATE:
Don't let go! I've got yer!

CAROL finally loses her grip. She cries out. Her hands disappear.

CAROL!!!

KATE looks through the letterbox, anguished. CAROL is being dragged towards the stairs by the neck.

151. DAY. INTERIOR. THE LOUNGE.

JACK climbs through, followed closely by PAUL. JACK makes a bee-line for the hall but no sooner do his feet land in the room than the huge sideboard moves at incredible speed and blocks the doorway. JACK tries to pull it away with a yell of rage. KATE is now climbing through the window. PAUL runs into the dining room.

152. DAY. INTERIOR. THE HALL / LANDING.

CAROL is choking horribly. Red marks begin to appear on her neck. She struggles furiously, her feet scrambling and kicking. Again, she seems to break free for a second. She grabs one of the balusters. She screams a horrible choking scream.

153. DAY. INTERIOR. THE KITCHEN.

PAUL runs in, the cut on his cheek now freely bleeding.

PAUL:
CAROL, WE'RE HERE!

A single knife is suddenly hurled towards him with frightening accuracy. It embeds in the doorframe, inches from his face. PAUL cowers, too afraid to go on.

154. DAY. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

The baluster that CAROL has hold of snaps in two. She is pulled up further. She is now desperately trying to cling to the banister with her feet.

155. DAY. INTERIOR. THE LOUNGE.

KATE has joined JACK, trying to move the sideboard. The two of them pit their strength against the spirit. With a roar, JACK manages to move it a few inches.

JACK:
Go on through!

KATE scrambles over him and through the gap. The sideboard falls forward, trapping JACK'S arm. He yells in pain. He kicks against the sideboard in absolute fury.

156. DAY. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

KATE is in the hall at last. She flings herself at the stairs and grabs CAROL'S ankle.

KATE:
I've got you! I've got you!

The tread that KATE is on snaps with a sickening crack. She loses her grip on CAROL and has to use all her force to extricate herself. CAROL no longer screams. She can barely breathe, her face is red, her eyes roll backwards, her arms flail weakly. KATE lunges forwards and once more grabs her ankle.

PAUL crawling on his belly, reaches the hall just as JACK stumbles through from the lounge. KATE now has hold of CAROL'S legs with both arms. JACK grabs KATE. PAUL continues to crawl towards them.

KATE:
CAROL!!!

CAROL is now at the top of the stairs. The loft hatch is yawning above her like a black hole. We can hear the low vocal moan of a beast in raging pain. CAROL is going limp in KATE'S arms.

KATE:
Get off! GET OFF HER!

JACK and KATE hold on to her for all they are worth.

JACK:
Carol! CAROL!

KATE:
SHE'S MINE!

The fury of the invisible force reaches a crescendo - then abruptly lets CAROL go. She falls into her parents' arms, taking in huge mouthfuls of air.

JACK:
It's all right love; it's all right.

KATE:
We're here...

CAROL begins to cough and sob. JACK and KATE hold her. PAUL joins them. They sit on the stairs clinging to each other.

157. DAY. INTERIOR. RITA'S LOUNGE.

CAROL is lying on the sofa, her head in KATE'S lap. RITA is covering her in a blanket. MRS SKIDMORE is looking at CAROL, silently weeping. Everyone is too shocked to speak. We can hear banging coming from over the road.

158. DAY. EXTERIOR. KATE'S FRONT GARDEN.

DOUGLAS is helping PAUL and JACK board up the broken window – the source of the banging. The house is covered over – the ghost still inside.

DOUGLAS:
(To PAUL) You finish up here, lad. Me and your dad'll do the back.

JACK and DOUGLAS go round the side of the house. PAUL continues to work until he becomes aware of TANYA watching him. They look at each other.

TANYA:
What happened to your face?

PAUL turns away. He hammers in another nail.

PAUL:

I think I'm in love with you. You make me feel alive.

He's about to hammer in another. He realises TANYA is at his side.

TANYA:

I said what happened to your face?

She gently touches the cut, wiping the blood from it. They fall into an embrace.

159. DAY. EXTERIOR. RITA'S BACK GARDEN.

A day later. It's early evening, drizzling with rain. Both families, KATE'S and RITA'S, are standing around a small hole which JACK and PAUL have just finished digging. RITA is holding an umbrella over herself and MRS SKIDMORE. Everyone else, including TANYA, is getting wet.

CAROL is at the centre of the little crowd and everyone's concern seems to be for her. She is solemn and withdrawn, holding the shoebox; which she has covered with brightly coloured paper. On the top of it is written 'MISTER SHERLOCK'.

CAROL kneels down and puts the shoebox in the hole. JACK and PAUL cover it with soil. They both pat it down. CAROL puts a small decoration on top of it. She stands back. KATE puts her arm round her. CAROL acknowledges this, but she doesn't really respond. RITA hands her the umbrella. She and DOUGLAS take MRS SKIDMORE inside. JACK and KATE follow.

PAUL:

Are y'all right?

CAROL nods. PAUL and TANYA go inside. CAROL continues to stare at the grave.

160. EVENING. INTERIOR. RITA'S FRONT BEDROOM.

CAROL is gazing at the boarded up house across the road. It looms out of the gloom at her. A single light comes on in the front bedroom. She's being called. She looks out thoughtfully, putting her hand on the glass.

161. EVENING. INTERIOR. RITA'S LOUNGE.

MRS SKIDMORE is sitting at the table with RITA. KATE is watching them. MRS SKIDMORE has an old wooden box on her knee. She is opening it. She removes a set of cards wrapped in a large, silk cloth. She unwraps them. She fingers them, holding them. She closes her eyes, gathering strength, preparing herself. She gives the cards to RITA. RITA feels them; then looks up at KATE.

RITA:

I think we're ready.

162. EVENING. INTERIOR. RITA'S SPARE ROOM.

KATE comes in. CAROL is tucked up in bed, fast asleep. She bends down and kisses her with incredible tenderness. She leaves the room. CAROL opens her eyes, a determined expression on her face.

163. EVENING. EXTERIOR. THE BACK DOOR OF KATE'S HOUSE.

JACK crowbars the boarding off. He puts it to one side and unlocks the door. KATE, RITA, MRS SKIDMORE, PAUL and TANYA are waiting behind him. He looks into the wrecked kitchen apprehensively. It's a mess of rotting food. Flies are buzzing over the debris. He tries the light; nothing. He flicks a torch on.

JACK:
Right. Come on.

KATE and RITA help MRS SKIDMORE in. PAUL comes to the door with TANYA.

Are you sure you know what you're doing, bringing her in here?

TANYA:
Carol should be here too.

She and PAUL walk past him, hand tightly in hand.

164. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE LOUNGE.

RITA, KATE and MRS SKIDMORE are in the lounge. MRS SKIDMORE walks with them into the middle of the room. She closes her eyes, sensing the atmosphere. She nods, indicating that this is the place.

165. EVENING. INTERIOR. RITA'S HOUSE.

DOUGLAS is cradling a mug of tea, completely absorbed in *Come Dancing* on the telly. CAROL sneaks silently down the stairs. She peers in at DOUGLAS, creeps into the kitchen, jumps up on the work surface and lets herself out of the window.

166. EVENING. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

JACK, KATE, RITA, PAUL, TANYA and MRS SKIDMORE are at the table, which they have moved into the middle of the lounge. They are lit by candles. MRS SKIDMORE is laying out her cards; a series of ornate letters.

TANYA:
It dun't seem right doing this without Carol.

MRS SKIDMORE looks daggers at her. She falls silent.

RITA:
Are you ready, Mum?

MRS SKIDMORE slowly nods. She holds out her hands.

We must take hands. We're not to break the circle.

Hands are joined; JACK'S tightly with KATE'S.

167. EVENING. EXTERIOR. THE LANE AT THE BACK OF KATE'S HOUSE.

CAROL is staring up the garden at the open back door and the darkness inside. She turns around. The sun is setting over the playground. She can see SALLY ANNE and the KIDS playing in the distance. She looks down the hill, over the estate to the town and the great power station beyond. It all looks beautiful. She whispers:

CAROL:
I'm gonna live till I'm old...

She faces the house once more. She enters.

168. EVENING. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

MRS SKIDMORE has her eyes closed. She is breathing deeply – almost as if she is praying. JACK and PAUL exchange a glance with each other; they have their doubts about it working – until their breath suddenly starts to vaporize. It forms swirls above them, mingling with the candle smoke. MRS SKIDMORE opens her eyes and shoots a glance at RITA. She is ready.

RITA:
Spirit, what ever you are, what ever you may have done in your earthly life, we believe that you can find redemption.

Their breath and the candle smoke swirls, slowly moves, held in a circle above them.

We believe that you can find warmth and light. We're here only to help you, not to fight you.

169. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

CAROL makes her way up the hall. The lounge door is wide open. She keeps to the shadows; her back to the stairs, and hurries past.

170. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE LOUNGE.

MRS SKIDMORE lifts her head; thinking she's seen something move in the hall. She peers into the darkness; nothing.

RITA:
This is a circle of life. Through it, you may find release.

171. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE HALL.

CAROL is climbing the stairs. The broken tread opens beneath her. She steps over it. We hear RITA'S quiet, concentrated voice, as CAROL passes the broken balustrade.

RITA (O/S):

If there's something holding you here on this plane of existence,
speak to us through these letters and we'll try to help.

172. NIGHT. INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS.

CAROL has reached the landing. The loft yawns, dark and cold. CAROL makes her way towards her room. She opens the door. The last rays of daylight have washed it in an eerie light. CAROL is in a state of serene calm. She lies on the bed.

CAROL:

(Whispers) I'm ready.

She braces herself, as if for a fight.

173. NIGHT. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

RITA and MRS SKIDMORE are concentrating intensely.

RITA:

Spirit, we can help you out of the darkness into perpetual light.
Speak. What is it that you want?

MRS SKIDMORE suddenly struggles to her feet, an expression of horror twisting her face. She raises her arm, as if to pull the smoke towards her. She emits a terrible cry.

The atmosphere of concentration turns to panic.

174. NIGHT. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

A huge shudder goes through CAROL. Her breath catches horribly. She moves – a spasm – as if something has entered into her.

175. EVENING. INTERIOR. KATE'S LOUNGE.

MRS SKIDMORE'S position is held. She emits another cry.

RITA:

Mother!

MRS SKIDMORE'S hand falls forwards on to the glass. She moves it over the letters spelling. PAUL follows the letters:

PAUL:

T-h-e C-h-i-l-d

KATE:

What child? Where?

MRS SKIDMORE falls forwards, her strength gone, her breathing strained.

RITA:
Mother! MOTHER!

176. EVENING. INTERIOR. CAROL'S BEDROOM.

CAROL is holding on to the iron head of her bed. Her teeth are gritted, her eyes open, her expression fierce. Movements are heaving through her body – in waves. With every one, the bed makes a low thump on the floor. CAROL fights, fights for possession of herself.

A terrible pain and pressure seems to build in her head. She moans through her gritted teeth. Her nose starts to bleed.

177. EVENING. INTERIOR. THE LOUNGE.

RITA is trying to help MRS SKIDMORE, who is passing into unconsciousness.

RITA:
Kate... get help.

KATE:
(To PAUL and TANYA.) You. GO!

PAUL runs to the front door, opens it, and starts to break down the boarding from the inside. TANYA helps him. They force their way through and depart.

JACK and KATE stay rooted to the spot. They have heard something else, a low thumping coming from CAROL'S bedroom. They exchange glances with RITA, horror struck.

They listen to the terrible thump thump thump

And then silence.

KATE:
No, no...

JACK takes her hand and pulls her towards the stairs. They are both full of dread, clinging to each other as they climb.

They open the door to CAROL'S room.

CAROL is lying on the bed, pale as a ghost, limp as a rag doll, lifeless.

KATE rushes to take CAROL in her arms. JACK collapses to his knees.

KATE:
She's cold.

For a moment there is nothing but the parents' unspeakable grief and anguish.

Then CAROL'S eyes open.

The electric light comes on in the room, as if a power-cut is over, as if the house is once again an ordinary council house.

CAROL, holding her sobbing mother in a close embrace, looks straight at her father with piercing eyes.

CAROL:
I'm warm.

CAROL smiles a radiant smile.

178. DAY. INTERIOR. DOWNSTAIRS.

A new day, sunlight streaming through the window. There's some gentle music playing on the radio. The sideboard has been replaced. JACK and KATE are cleaning up the chaos. Order is slowly being restored. CAROL is standing by the kitchen door, watching. JACK approaches KATE, who is almost fierce with concentration. He takes hold of her, wanting to waltz her around. She resists, then gives in for a moment, moving across the room with him. She allows herself to smile - she's melting. She gently pushes him away and gets back to the serious business of reclaiming her home, but the smile stays put. JACK goes to CAROL. He tries to get her to dance.

JACK:
Let me have a dance with the world's bravest girl...

CAROL brushes him away, embarrassed. She goes into the kitchen.

TANYA and PAUL have put a big dustbin in the middle of the floor. TANYA is chucking mouldy food and broken crockery into it, wearing a big pair of rubber gloves. PAUL is hugging her from behind, not letting her go. TANYA is giggling.

Neither of them have seen CAROL. She lifts a pan and brings it down on the stove with a thump. TANYA and PAUL both start in fright. CAROL grins.

CAROL:
Just kidding...

PAUL:
Don't do that you little slag!

CAROL shrugs, hurt. She walks up the hall towards the stairs. PAUL follows.

I din't mean that.

CAROL nods. She climbs the stairs.

179. DAY. INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS.

CAROL walks into her room. She's crying. They are tears of loss. She looks around feeling utterly alone.

CAROL:
You've gone. You've gone...

CAROL opens the wardrobe doors. She climbs inside. She sits in the corner. She puts her hands over her heart.

You're in here now. With me...

We stay with CAROL in the wardrobe, as she pulls the doors closed. The outside world disappears. We hear CAROL'S gentle breathing, relaxing in the darkness.

THE END.