

Ondine

by
Neil Jordan

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
in Order of Work Performed)

2nd Draft
Neil Jordan

Name (of company, if applicable)
Address
Phone Number

ONDINE. A FAIRY TALE.

EXT. SEA BY CLIFFS. TRAWLER. DAY.

Syracuse, a man with a sweet, dreamy face, is working a small trawler.

Drawing in the line on a winch.

Gulls, wheeling around the water about him, waiting to dive at whatever he pulls up.

He leans over the edge of the boat. Sees the seaweed riddled line coming towards him out of the water.

Then notices something below. The net, coming up towards him out of the deep.

UNDERWATER.

The net, as it is pulled upwards. Mackerel flapping, caught in the mesh.

And something else. A woman's hand, two fingers protruding from the mesh of the line.

Something else falling from her, covered in seaweed, towards the ocean floor. The camera retreats with it, until the bouncing sunlight covers everything.

EXT. TRAWLER. DAY.

Syracuse, watching the net come towards him. And he has noticed something now. He presses a button on the winch, slowing its ascent.

He can glimpse a white shape, among the heaving fish.

SYRACUSE

Jesus...

And as the line pulls the net clear of the water, we see it. A young woman's body is caught inside his net.

The winch pulls the net up, inexorably. And as it breaks the surface, and the seaweed cleaves away, we see it all. The body, perfect skin, hair matted with brine, in some kind of maroon dress.

The net continues to rise, as his face drains itself of colour.

He stares at it, stunned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The winch is set to dump the net into a chute, at the end of the trawler, for processing the fish. And Syracuse suddenly runs to the controls.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

No --

He presses a button, turns a lever. So the net comes to a halt at the level of his face.

He can see the face of a young woman, trapped inside the net. The tails of trapped mackerel are flapping against it, moving the hair slightly.

He manipulates the lever, so the arm of the winch swings directly over the boat. Then the line lowers the net towards the deck, with its surreal catch.

He turns off the mechanism. Walks to the net, so tangled now he can barely distinguish what's inside it.

He undoes the clasp of the net, freeing it from the rope.

The net spreads out on the deck, the fish flapping. The body of the young girl on top of them.

He bends, turns her face.

Her skin is perfect. She has a mole on her left cheek. Her hair is matted over her eyes. There are no signs of physical trauma, or damage.

He backs away from the sight, terrified. Goes to his tiny cabin, where there is a CB radio. He grips the talk mechanism, presses the button.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Anyone out there... need some help...

There is just a hiss of static from the radio.

And he stops. He has heard a low groan from the net.

He turns.

He sees the woman's arm is moving. Mackerel still flipping round her, gasping for air.

The woman's arm feels her face. Feels down her breast, presses the sodden dress between her legs.

He is drawn forwards. Walks towards her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

You're alive...

Her body shudders. Syracuse reaches down, touches her face.

Her eyes open.

Suddenly she retches and sea water comes out of her mouth.

ON THE CB PHONE -

Dangling. Static coming from it. Maybe a voice, maybe not.

BY THE NET -

She is struggling for breath, coughing up more water.

He lifts her bodily, jerks his arms in round her stomach. More water vomits out.

And her face is turning blue now, as she tries to inhale.

He turns her over, puts his lips to her wet mouth. Blows in, hard.

ON HER LIPS -

His forefinger and thumb forcing them open.

His lips meet hers again. Forcing air in...

And she takes air in now, in great, transforming gasps.

It is as if she is coming alive for the first time, being born.

Her eyelids open and close, rapidly.

Her fingers wrap themselves round his, and hold tight.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

You're alright - now - your going
to be alright -

And her eyes open and meet his.

GIRL

What -

Syracuse reaches out and touches her shoulder. Those huge shudders are still going through her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SYRACUSE

Can you breathe?

She takes in one more breath and nods.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

It ok - you're alive - I've got
you -

GIRL

What do you mean - you've got me -

SYRACUSE

I mean you're going to live -

Her hand grips his and clasps it tightly.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Can you stand.

Her eyes meet his. She nods.

GIRL

I can try.

SYRACUSE

Hold onto me.

He steadies his arm. She clutches it. He draws her
upwards, gradually.

GIRL

Do you know...

Syracuse stares, amazed that she is even talking. She has
a foreign accent.

SYRACUSE

What?

GIRL

...where I am...

SYRACUSE

On a boat. My boat.

GIRL

How... did I get here...

SYRACUSE

Maybe you can tell me that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GIRL
I remember... hitting the water.
Going under.

SYRACUSE
When?

A long time ago.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
You're not making sense.

GIRL
I was dead. I was sure of that.

SYRACUSE
But you're not. You're alive now.

GIRL
Why? Why am I alive?

SYRACUSE
I don't know. You were in my net.

GIRL
Why was I in your net?

SYRACUSE
I've no idea.

He shakes his head.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
You were drowning. You swallowed
water. You sank. Don't ask me how -

She shivers.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
Are you cold?

She gulps in air.

GIRL
Yes. Very cold.

He goes to the cabin. Takes out an old jacket. Wraps it
around her.

SYRACUSE
Here. Keep warm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

He looks at her, shivering in the old jacket. She is as real as him.

He looks at the CB, and through the static we can hear a voice, trying to get through.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

You need the hospital.

GIRL

No...

SYRACUSE

Why not?

GIRL

Because I feel fine.

SYRACUSE

You have to see a doctor - after a thing like that -

She looks at him strangely.

GIRL

No, I don't. Don't want to see anyone.

SYRACUSE

Will I just disappear then?

GIRL

I don't mind seeing you.

SYRACUSE

You... don't mind seeing me. That's nice.

GIRL

Say again?

SYRACUSE

Most people do.

GIRL

Well I don't.

SYRACUSE

Why not?

GIRL

Because... you fished me from the water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

SYRACUSE

Oh. Okay.

Another boat is coming towards them now. She hears the engine, looks up and ducks down.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

You really don't...

She sits instantly at his feet. Her hand plays with a flapping mackerel, on the deck.

GIRL

Don't what -

SYRACUSE

Want people seeing you --

Blood, on the trawler's floor, from the dying fish.

GIRL

They're dying.

SYRACUSE

Yes. They should be dead.

GIRL

Like me...

SYRACUSE

I would have gutted them by now.
If you hadn't...

He shakes his head at the weirdness of it all.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Come along...

He waves at the oncoming boat.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

What's your name?

He turns off the CB radio, shutting off the static.

GIRL

I don't know.

SYRACUSE

You lost your memory in the water?

GIRL

Maybe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

SYRACUSE
I've heard it happens.

GIRL
Does it?

SYRACUSE
People knock their head. Forget
the lot. Then it all comes back.
Suddenly, like.

GIRL
What's your name?

SYRACUSE
My name's Syracuse. But people
call me Circus.

GIRL
Why?

SYRACUSE
To let on - you know - that I'm a
clown.

GIRL
A clown in a circus?

SYRACUSE
Something like that.

GIRL
I think I'll call you Syracuse.

SYRACUSE
Ok then.

He is touched, oddly. He smiles, as he guides the boat
into a small bay.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
And I'm taking you to a hospital.
I've a car on the shore.

GIRL
No...

SYRACUSE
You can cover your face.

He gestures with his hand.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
Like, what's it called, purdah

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

GIRL
Purdah...

SYRACUSE
Like those arab women. If you
don't want people...

GIRL
No...

SYRACUSE
Seeing you...

GIRL
Let me go then. Swim away...

She moves to the edge of the boat, and it seems she would do just that. Syracuse grabs her arm.

SYRACUSE
You'll die if you go back in
there...

GIRL
Can't die twice.

SYRACUSE
You'll die once. For real.

GIRL
Please. I don't need a hospital.

He can see from her face that she means it.

SYRACUSE
I know a place. Where people won't
see you...

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. DAY.

A small bay with a few decrepit boats moored there. There is an old caravan by the shore.

Syracuse is guiding his trawler towards it.

EXT. CARAVAN. DAY.

Syracuse walks up the shore with the girl, towards the caravan door. He pulls it open.

INT. CARAVAN. DAY.

A dust covered bed. Some blankets.

GIRL
Who's is this place?

SYRACUSE
It was my mam's.

He walks inside.

GIRL
She lived here?

SYRACUSE
On and off. She was a kind of...
loner...

GIRL
A loner?

SYRACUSE
Like you. She didn't like
people... much...

She follows him inside.

GIRL
Why not?

SYRACUSE
She was a kind of... gypsy...

GIRL
Where is she now?

SYRACUSE
She's with her maker.

GIRL
You mean... she's dead.

SYRACUSE
Yes.

GIRL
I'm sorry. Like me.

SYRACUSE
You're not dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL

No but I... maybe should have been.

He shakes the dust of the blankets.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He has a paper bag in his hand, which he holds out to her.

SYRACUSE

Here's some sandwiches.

She takes them.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

My lunch. With all the strange fishing today I forgot to eat it.

She nibbles at the corner of one of them.

GIRL

Thank you.

SYRACUSE

You're a stranger.

GIRL

I suppose.

SYRACUSE

We should be nice to strangers.

GIRL

Yes?

SYRACUSE

So the bible says.

GIRL

Does it?

SYRACUSE

I heard that. Somewhere.

She nods. Sits on the small fold out bed.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Can I leave you now?

GIRL

If you have to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SYRACUSE

I do. I've got to be somewhere.

GIRL

Okay.

Syracuse stands there for a moment, expecting her to say something else. When she doesn't, he abruptly leaves.

EXT. CARAVAN. DAY.

Syracuse, walking towards the car. He says to himself.

SYRACUSE

Okay?

EXT. BUNGALOW. DAY.

Syracuse drives up to a small bungalow. A woman, Maura, comes to the door to meet him. Maura has the reddened eyes of an alcoholic.

MAURA

You're late.

SYRACUSE

I know. I'm sorry. Something came up.

MAURA

The appointment's for six. She gets upset.

SYRACUSE

I know. I'll make it up to her.

MAURA

Jesus -

SYRACUSE

I promise.

He walks into the house. There is a girl, Annie, sitting in a chair in the hallway, a wheelchair beside her.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

How is my baby --

He lifts her into the wheelchair.

EXT. SMALL HOSPITAL. DAY.

Syracuse, wheeling Annie in the wheelchair from the car to the hospital door.

SYRACUSE
Anything strange or wonderful?

ANNIE
Why do you always say that?

SYRACUSE
I don't know, Annie. It's a kind of wish.

ANNIE
A wish.

SYRACUSE
That something strange or wonderful might... you know... happen...

ANNIE
No, da, nothing strange or wonderful.

SYRACUSE
Ah. Well that's good then.

INT. DIALYSIS UNIT. DAY.

Annie is being attached to a dialysis unit. She has a kidney complaint.

SYRACUSE
Is doctor Hannon here?

NURSE
No. Just missed him.

SYRACUSE
Oh. I thought...

NURSE
Something came up. In Cork.

SYRACUSE
How long this time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE

Same as usual. Forty minutes or so.

The nurse fiddles with some attachments.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Does she have a book?

SYRACUSE

Do you have a book, Annie?

Annie shakes her head, weakly.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

No book. Maybe I'll tell her a story.

The nurse turns on the machine. It quietly hums. The nurse goes to the door.

NURSE

I'll be in the office if you want me.

She closes the door on them.

Syracuse sits with his daughter, while she goes through the painful process.

ANNIE

Well, go on.

SYRACUSE

What?

ANNIE

You said you'd tell me a story.

SYRACUSE

Okay. Once upon a time...

ANNIE

Does it always have to be once upon a time?

SYRACUSE

Stories begin that way.

ANNIE

And a very good time it was...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SYRACUSE

Yeah. It was a good time... and a bad time...

He pauses. Tears come into his eyes.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

How are you feeling love?

ANNIE

It always feels... like I'm... going away somewhere. But then. I get better. Go on...

SYRACUSE

Once upon a time... a fisherman... was pulling in his nets...

INT. CARAVAN. EVENING.

The girl, sitting. Rocking backwards and forwards, looking at the seething sea through the open caravan door.

INT. HOSPITAL. EVENING.

The dialysis, almost finished. Syracuse is stuck, in the story.

ANNIE

And?

SYRACUSE

And what?

ANNIE

What was she?

SYRACUSE

What was she?

ANNIE

Was she a mermaid?

SYRACUSE

No, she wasn't a mermaid.

ANNIE

Was she a selkie, then?

SYRACUSE

What's a selkie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

A kind of seal woman. You hear them singing out on seal rock.

SYRACUSE

Who told you that?

ANNIE

Teacher. She comes out of the sea. Loses her seal coat. Lives on the land. Until the sea calls her back.

SYRACUSE

But she hadn't got... a seal coat... whatever that is. She seemed to remember... drowning...

ANNIE

And?

SYRACUSE

That's all. For the moment.

ANNIE

That's a shite story.

SYRACUSE

Maybe.

The nurse comes back in. Checks the machine.

NURSE

Alright?

SYRACUSE

I'll bring a book next time...

The nurse takes the needles from Annie's veins.

NURSE

Gently, now...

She helps Annie to rise.

NURSE (CONT'D)

And I've got something to show you, little girl. Remember that things we ordered from the CRC?

ANNIE

What thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NURSE

Come here. Follow me.

The nurse leads Annie into another room. We see a brand new motorised wheelchair sitting there, as if waiting for her.

Annie walks forwards. Sits in it.

NURSE (CONT'D)

You should rest as much as possible. Until we sort you out.

Annie presses a lever. To her delight, the wheelchair moves of its own accord.

SYRACUSE

Now you've got juice, Annie.

ANNIE

Juice.

She turns it in a circle.

EXT. BUNGALOW. EVENING.

Annie, motoring her wheelchair up towards her mother's door.

ANNIE

This is more fun than walking.

SYRACUSE

That's good, love.

ANNIE

Though I can walk fine.

SYRACUSE

You shouldn't. It tires you out.

ANNIE

Yeah. It does.

She is at the front door. A man opens the door. He has long greasy hair, and a scottish accent.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Look at this, Alex.

ALEX

Wow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She zaps it up to the doorjamb. It stops, abruptly.

ANNIE

Doesn't do bumps.

She gets out. Alex lifts in the new wheelchair. We can see a television on in the background, Maura sitting at it.

ALEX

Did your daddy buy you that?

ANNIE

No. The CRC.

ALEX

It figures. How's the fishing Circus?

SYRACUSE

It's Syracuse.

ALEX

Syracuse. How's the fishing?

SYRACUSE

The same.

He bends and kisses Annie.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

See you.

ANNIE

When?

SYRACUSE

Tomorrow...

And now Maura is walking, unsteadily, through the hallway. She looks at Alex carries in the new wheelchair.

MAURA

Did she see the doctor?

SYRACUSE

He wasn't there.

MAURA

You were late, you fool.

SYRACUSE

Clown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAURA

You clown. Come here, Annie.

She takes Annie's hand, who listens, head bowed, to her diatribe.

SYRACUSE

Get him next time.

MAURA

He's been doing tests, Circus. She needs a kidney. Something about... what's the word...

SYRACUSE

Compatibility.

MAURA

You understand what that means?

SYRACUSE

It has to be the right fit.

MAURA

Blood group, you fucking clown. You were to ask him. Had he news. Goodbye.

She turns abruptly and closes the door.

INT. SYRACUSE'S. NIGHT.

Syracuse, watching TV in a small cramped bungalow, in which he obviously lives alone. He eats from a plate on his knees forking beans into his mouth.

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. DAY.

Syracuse parks his car, on the road above the caravan.

He can hear singing coming from it. The singing is in a foreign language, strange eastern vowel sounds.

He walks to where his boat is moored, begins to pull it towards him on the line.

The singing carries across the water. A heron flaps its wings, and rises.

Then he sees the girl walk from the caravan, in the early morning light, down towards the shore. She is wearing a large, graceless coat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She waves to him. They talk across the water.

SYRACUSE

Still here.

GIRL

You thought I'd be gone?

SYRACUSE

No. Thought I'd dreamed it.

GIRL

You dreamed you fished me from the water.

SYRACUSE

Something like that.

GIRL

Maybe you did. But I woke up and I touched my face and I was real.

SYRACUSE

Well. That's good then.

GIRL

I suppose.

SYRACUSE

That's my mother's coat.

GIRL

I know. I was cold.

SYRACUSE

Doesn't suit you.

GIRL

No?

SYRACUSE

No. She was large, my mother. And kind of awkward.

GIRL

Awkward?

SYRACUSE

Yes. Not like you.

GIRL

I can be awkward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SYRACUSE

So can most of us.

He starts the engine on the boat.

GIRL

Are you going fishing?

SYRACUSE

Yes. Thought I might catch another.

GIRL

Another girl like me?

SYRACUSE

Yes. Maybe the sea is full of them.

GIRL

You trying to be funny?

SYRACUSE

I'm not succeeding?

GIRL

Maybe.

He unleashes the line.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Can I come?

SYRACUSE

No.

GIRL

Why not?

SYRACUSE

Thought you didn't want to be seen.

GIRL

I can hide again.

SYRACUSE

And it's bad luck.

GIRL

A girl on a boat?

SYRACUSE

For the fishing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GIRL
Have you been having good luck
lately?

SYRACUSE
No.

He looks at her, elfin in the large coat. Then he decides something, and guides the boat towards her.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
Ok then. Get in -

INT. BOAT. DAY.

Syracuse and the girl, as he guides the boat out of the bay.

SYRACUSE
You want to get yourself some
clothes.

GIRL
I know.

SYRACUSE
There's a shop in town that sells
everything from wellington boots
to...

GIRL
To what?

SYRACUSE
You know. Women's things.

GIRL
I've no money.

SYRACUSE
Ah. That would be a problem. And,
you don't want people seeing you.

GIRL
No.

SYRACUSE
And, you don't remember who you
are.

GIRL
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

So, if somebody comes up to you
and says, hello, my name is Mrs
Treacy, you can't say, my name
is...

GIRL

My name is what?

SYRACUSE

...whatever...

GIRL

That's a good name. Whatever.

SYRACUSE

No, it's not. You can't call
someone whatever.

He stops at a buoy in the water, and begins to pull up
some lobster pots.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

What was that song you were
singing?

ONDINE

Just a song.

SYRACUSE

But you remembered it.

GIRL

I must have, mustn't I?

He draws a series of pots on a line from the water. They
are all empty.

GIRL (CONT'D)

You can call me Ondine.

SYRACUSE

That's nice. What's it mean?

GIRL

She came from the water.

SYRACUSE

Ondine means... she came from the
water...

GIRL

No. Ondine was a girl who came
from the water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SYRACUSE

When?

GIRL

A long time ago.

SYRACUSE

You want to help? Load those pots over there.

She begins to stack them as he draws them in.

ONDINE

They're empty.

SYRACUSE

So they are.

ONDINE

Did someone rob them?

SYRACUSE

Hope not.

There are crabs in one of them. He tears off their claws, and tosses the armless crab back in the ocean.

ONDINE

Ouch.

SYRACUSE

Don't worry. They grow back.

ONDINE

Still, but. Ouch.

He continues to draw the pots. She leans over the edge of the boat and sings her song to the waters. She seems to be enjoying herself.

And the next pot that comes up has a magnificent lobster inside.

SYRACUSE

My god.

ONDINE

What?

SYRACUSE

You're playing games with me.

ONDINE

No I'm not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SYRACUSE
What did you just do?

ONDINE
I sang.

SYRACUSE
Yeah, I know.

He draws another pot. Two lobsters in this one.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
Help me, will you? Tie their
claws.

He shows her how to do it - his knees securing one arm of the lobster, while he wraps a rubber band round the other.

ONDINE
What do you do with them?

SYRACUSE
What do you think?

ONDINE
Eat them?

SYRACUSE
No. Sell them.

Another pot comes up. Two more.

ONDINE
You always catch this much?

SYRACUSE
No. Almost never.

He looks at her, shaking his head.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
It wasn't your song, you know. It
couldn't have been.

ONDINE
No.

SYRACUSE
They were already in the pots.

She begins to sing again, softly, to herself. He draws another pot. Another lobster inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

But you bring me luck.

ONDINE

Luck?

SYRACUSE

I haven't had much.

ONDINE

Everyone needs luck.

SYRACUSE

They do. Not everyone gets it.

ONDINE

Maybe it's your turn.

SYRACUSE

That would be nice. Nice, and very unlikely. Luck and me... weren't born for each other...

And he draws another pot. Another lobster inside it.

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. DAY.

Syracuse is drawing up a large storage lobster pot, with a cement filled base. He places two of the largest lobsters he has caught inside.

ONDINE

Why you put them back?

SYRACUSE

For a rainy day. We sell the rest.

He lowers the pot back down.

EXT. CARAVAN. DAY.

Syracuse and Ondine, walking from the boat to the caravan. He has two buckets filled with caught lobster in each hand.

SYRACUSE

You should let me drive you into town.

ONDINE

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

You need stuff. Clothes, food...

ONDINE

I've no money.

SYRACUSE

We'll get something for these...

He nods at the lobster in the pots.

ONDINE

We?

SYRACUSE

Your share of the catch.

When she says nothing.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

You did sing.

ONDINE

Don't want to meet anyone.

SYRACUSE

You've met me.

ONDINE

You're the only one.

Syracuse stares at her. Shakes his head.

SYRACUSE

Okay...

INT. FISH CO-OP. TOWN. DAY.

A local woman weighs Syracuse's catch.

WOMAN

You're doing well Circus.

SYRACUSE

Yes. For a change.

WOMAN

And they say there's no lobster left.

SYRACUSE

They do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She pays him.

INT. SPAR SUPERMARKET. DAY.

Syracuse, paying for two bags of supplies that he has bought. On impulse, he takes a bouquet of flowers from the counter and adds them to his pile.

SUPERMARKET GIRL

Flowers, Circus.

SYRACUSE

Flowers. How much?

The girl rings them up.

INT. TOWN DRAPER'S. EVENING.

Syracuse, in the kind of shop that sells everything from Wellington boots to push up bras.

He is looking at a slim, flower-patterned dress. Beside it is a bikini.

The young assistant comes behind him.

ASSISTENT

Do you need help, Circus?

SYRACUSE

Yes. Would this go near you?

ASSISTENT

You want me to try it?

SYRACUSE

Okay.

She goes into the small booth. While she is gone, he notices the bikini. Rapidly stuffs it in the pocket of his jacket. Follows it with some packets of tights.

The assistant comes back out. She stretches her arms.

ASSISTENT

It's a bit tight, around here...

SYRACUSE

It's Okay. I'll take it.

ASSISTENT

For who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

For Annie.

ASSISTENT

This'd never fit Annie.

SYRACUSE

It will. Someday.

EXT. SCHOOL. DAY.

Kids spilling out of the local school. Among them is Annie, on her motorised wheelchair. Despite her weakened state, she is a feisty little thing.

ANNIE

There you go Circus.

SYRACUSE

That's not my name.

ANNIE

Da.

The other kids give them a wide berth.

SYRACUSE

Do they give you a hard time?

ANNIE

No. They're jealous.

SYRACUSE

How are they jealous?

ANNIE

How many of them has their own set of wheels?

She presses the button on the wheelchair and does maneuvers with it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Motorised...

She drives it down towards his waiting car.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Where are we going?

SYRACUSE

I was going to drive you home..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

I'll race you...

She points her wheelchair towards town and trundles down the pathway.

EXT. TOWN. DAY.

Syracuse, driving alongside Annie, who is making her way along the pavement in her wheelchair. He has the window down, is talking to her. It is a comical sight.

ANNIE

So what's the story?

SYRACUSE

Oh. She sings.

ANNIE

Who sings?

SYRACUSE

The woman in the story I told you about.

ANNIE

With the fisherman?

SYRACUSE

Yeah. She sings to the fishes. And he catches them.

ANNIE

Are you sure you're not dreaming, da?

SYRACUSE

Dreaming?

He is beginning to blush. She pretends not to notice.

ANNIE

Are you sure this isn't some weird wish-fulfillment kind of thing?

SYRACUSE

Where did you learn words like that?

ANNIE

I go to school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

And I didn't.

ANNIE

No. Let's be honest. You didn't.
You move your mouth when you read.

SYRACUSE

Is that bad?

ANNIE

No. But it means something. So,
she sings, does she?

SYRACUSE

Yeah. A song in a language he has
never heard.

ANNIE

Aha. That would be Selk.

SYRACUSE

Selk?

ANNIE

Kind of seal talk. And you know
why she sings?

SYRACUSE

Why?

ANNIE

That's the way they communicate.
Underwater. They don't speak. They
sing...

SYRACUSE

Ah. So the lobster hear her
singing.

ANNIE

What lobster?

SYRACUSE

What I mean is... under the water.
They hear her singing.

ANNIE

The denizens of the deep. Yes.

SYRACUSE

Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

She's a seal. She's not human.

SYRACUSE

She looks human.

ANNIE

In the story?

SYRACUSE

Yes. In the story.

ANNIE

Who's story is this?

SYRACUSE

It's mine.

ANNIE

You're making it up?

SYRACUSE

Yes. For you.

They have reached her mother's house.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Come here.

He opens the door. Annie motors over the wheelchair towards him.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Give me a kiss.

She leans forwards, awkwardly, and gives him a kiss.

ANNIE

You smell of fish.

SYRACUSE

Doesn't everybody? Here...

She notices the clothes in the back seat.

ANNIE

I don't.

SYRACUSE

No. You smell like flowers.

Annie looks at the clothes, the flowers peeking from the supermarket bag. Decides to keep her counsel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

What are you doing for the weekend?

ANNIE

Practising. My new wheels.

She motors off up the driveway, towards her house.

We stay on Annie, as he drives off.

ANNIE (TO HERSELF) (CONT'D)

Curious.

She turns her wheelchair, heads back across the road, and down a side lane.

EXT. SYRACUSE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

Syracuse's car, driving past his house. But he doesn't stop. He drives on, towards Poulin harbour.

Annie's wheelchair comes into view, from the side lane. She motors off down the road, after him.

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. EVENING.

Syracuse's car pulls in by the caravan. He emerges, his arms full of the goods he has filched.

INT. CARAVAN. EVENING.

Ondine there, huddled in his mother's coat, by the ratty old sofa.

Syracuse enters, his arms full.

SYRACUSE

I got you some things.

ONDINE

What things?

SYRACUSE

You know... messages...

ONDINE

Messages...

SYRACUSE

Food and stuff. And clothes...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He lays the clothes out on the small, rickety table.

ONDINE

You know my size?

SYRACUSE

The girl in the shop. She looked like...

She stands, holds the dress up against herself.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

...your size...

She walks towards him and kisses him.

ONDINE

Thanks...

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. EVENING.

A small lane above the harbour. Annie motors down it on her wheelchair. Sees the car parked there, the light inside.

ANNIE (TO HERSELF)

Curioser and curioser...

INT. CARAVAN. EVENING.

After the kiss. Syracuse is trying to hide his embarrassment.

SYRACUSE

Well, I better be off then.

ONDINE

Yes. I suppose you have to.

SYRACUSE

Well don't I?

He moves towards the door.

ONDINE

Can I -

He stops, his hand on the handle.

SYRACUSE

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE

Can I clean up this place?

SYRACUSE

I suppose. How long are you...
staying...?

ONDINE

Depends I suppose.

SYRACUSE

On what?

ONDINE

On you.

SYRACUSE

On me? If it depends on me, you
can stay for ever.

ONDINE

For ever.

SYRACUSE

For ever. Happily ever after. Once
upon a time.

She looks at him, confused.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

I've been telling my daughter a
story. About you. A fairytale.

ONDINE

Does she believe it?

SYRACUSE

So far.

And he goes.

EXT. LANE/POULIN. EVENING.

Annie watches, as Syracuse emerges. Says to herself.

ANNIE

So what's the story, Da?

And she motors back up the lane.

INT. CHURCH. EVENING.

Syracuse, kneeling in church, by the confessional. A woman emerges from the confessional door and he walks in after.

INT. CONFESSIONAL. EVENING.

A priest there. He slides the grille back when he hears the presence of someone.

SYRACUSE

My name's Syracuse and I'm an alcoholic.

The priest sighs.

PRIEST

I've told you before Circus, the confessional is not a chapter of AA.

SYRACUSE

Well, there's none in this town father. I've been sober two years, seven months and eighteen days.

Pause.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

This is where they all clap father.

PRIEST

In the movies?

SYRACUSE

Yes.

The priest claps, softly.

PRIEST

So, tell me.

SYRACUSE

I wished she was dead twice yesterday, father. Once today.

PRIEST

We spoke about these feelings Circus -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

Syracuse.

PRIEST

You've got to stop these thoughts
Syracuse, just because you have
your differences doesn't mean
she's a bad woman.

SYRACUSE

Isn't she, father?

PRIEST

I don't imagine so, Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

She's still drinking, father. And
I'm afraid something bad will
happen with Annie.

PRIEST

Perhaps you should talk to
someone, Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

I'm talking to you.

PRIEST

I mean a counsellor. I'll put you
both in touch with one, if you'd
give me permission.

SYRACUSE

You have no permission. The only
reason I talk to you is its
secret.

PRIEST

Well, when you feel able to, tell
me, and I'll set it in motion.
Until then, try and control your
feelings. Anything else?

SYRACUSE

I suppose there is. Yeah, I stole.

PRIEST

What did you steal, Circus?

SYRACUSE

Some ladies clothes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRIEST

I don't like this, Circus. This is a bad development.

SYRACUSE

No. It's not what you think. There was a reason.

PRIEST

What was the reason?

SYRACUSE

I stole them because... I was embarrassed to be seen buying them...

PRIEST

And why did you want them?

SYRACUSE

They were for a girl I met.

PRIEST

And where did you meet this girl, Syracuse?

SYRACUSE

I pulled her out of the water in my net.

PRIEST

In your net?

SYRACUSE

In my fishing net.

PRIEST

You're joking, surely, Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

No. Not joking. Dreaming, maybe. But I went back to my boat this morning, and there she was.

PRIEST

Did she... spend the night in your boat, Syracuse?

SYRACUSE

No.

PRIEST

So... where did this girl sleep?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SYRACUSE

I'm not telling you, father.

PRIEST

Well, I can't force you to Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

No. And you can't tell anyone, either.

PRIEST

My lips are sealed. But will you keep me informed of developments, Syracuse?

SYRACUSE

Certainly father.

PRIEST

Will I see you at Mass on Sunday then?

SYRACUSE

You know you won't father.

PRIEST

I suppose I do. You only avail of the confessional, because...

SYRACUSE

Because there's no AA chapter in this town. And we have to say the prayer now.

PRIEST

God, the father of mercies absolve Syracuse -

SYRACUSE

No. The serenity prayer.

PRIEST

That's not my territory. You go.

SYRACUSE

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change...

EXT. LIBRARY. EVENING.

Annie, emerging from the library. She has a pile of books in her hand.

INT. MAURA'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Annie sits in the kitchen, going through her books. They are all books of fairy tales, with illustrations of selkies and sea creatures. She turns the pages, going through different versions of the myths, and comes upon a french version of the tale, with eighteenth century illustrations. It is titled ONDINE.

Maura comes through with her coat on.

MAURA

I'm going out for a while. If you need anything ask Alex -

ANNIE

No.

MAURA

No what?

ANNIE

Don't leave me with him.

MAURA

What are you sayin', love?

ANNIE

I'm saying nothing. Don't go.

MAURA

I have to go. I said I'd help Janie with the leaflets for the -

She sits down beside Annie, pulls back her hair from her face.

MAURA (CONT'D)

Have you something to tell me, Annie?

Annie looks down at the picture of Ondine and shakes her head.

MAURA (CONT'D)

You'd tell me, if there was something wrong, wouldn't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She nods her head.

MAURA (CONT'D)
Or you'd tell - Circus -

ANNIE
Syracuse -

And Maura dismisses the conversation, kisses her daughter. Leaves.

Annie's finger moves over the illustration of Ondine. Alex now enters, picks up a bottle of the same. He places his hand on the nape of Annie's neck.

ALEX
What are you reading, Annie?

ANNIE
For school. Selkies.

ALEX
Selkies... they're scottish...

ANNIE
This one isn't...

She moves away from his hand.

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Ondine, trying on the different clothes Syracuse bought her. Her body is compact and beautiful. She slips on a skirt, which fits her perfectly. Then opens the packet of tights, lies back and pulls them on over her long legs.

EXT. SYRACUSE'S HOUSE. MORNING.

A bank of lobster pots outside Syracuse's house. He is mending the holes in them, with plyers and fishing line.

Behind him we see the motorised wheelchair passing.

EXT. ROAD ABOVE POULIN. MORNING.

Annie, zipping along in her wheelchair. She has a plan.

EXT. CARAVAN. MORNING.

Annie's wheelchair, trundling down the stony lane towards the caravan.

She guides it silently towards the front door, then hears the sound of movement inside.

She rapidly zips round the side of the rusted structure, vanishes from view.

The door opens. Ondine emerges, a towel wrapped round her.

Ondine walks down, barefoot, towards the water. She lets the towel drop, by the shoreline, wearing the underwear Syracuse bought for her. She steps into the water, finds her depth, then plunges her head beneath it, swimming into the bay.

BY THE CARAVAN -

Annie guides her wheelchair gingerly towards the water's edge.

ON THE WHEELS -

Popping the bubbles on the dead seaweed.

UNDERWATER -

Ondine takes a breath, swims down like a water creature, then heads for the surface once more.

ONDINE'S POV -

As she comes to the surface.

The bay. The shoreline. And a small creature, sitting in a black wheelchair. Annie.

ANNIE

Curioser and curioser.

ONDINE

What's that?

ANNIE

What Alice said to the white rabbit.

ONDINE

Come again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She swims back towards the shore.

ANNIE
Curioser... and...

ONDINE
Curioser...

ANNIE
You see, I knew you were real.

ONDINE
I was real.

ANNIE
Yes. I knew it wasn't a story.

ONDINE
What wasn't a story?

ANNIE
The fisherman. The girl in the net.

ONDINE
Ah.

ANNIE
My da. He told me a story. About you.

ONDINE
Your da is... Syracuse.

ANNIE
The fisherman. So, do you have magic powers?

ONDINE
Do you?

ANNIE
You know I don't.

ONDINE
Okay. You don't.

ANNIE
I'm sick. I've got kidney failure. He told you that, didn't he?

Ondine says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I can walk. But I'm meant to take it easy. Until I find one that's compatible.

ONDINE

One what?

ANNIE

One kidney. I do dialysis every week. They change my blood. I'm meant to rest in between.

ONDINE

What's your name?

ANNIE

Didn't he tell you?

Ondine smiles again. She comes out of the water.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's Annie.

ONDINE

Annie. I'm Ondine.

She holds out her hand. Annie takes it.

ANNIE

Ondine.

On Ondine's hand, as Annie's fingers probe it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I'm examining it for webs.

ONDINE

Well. Do I dissappoint you?

ANNIE

Ondine is French, isn't it? What's a french Selkie doing here?

ONDINE

I'm trying to figure that out...

ANNIE

You got lost, did you?

ONDINE

Yes, I suppose I did get lost.

She shivers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANNIE

You cold?

ONDINE

Suddenly.

ANNIE

Cause you're on land now. Your natural habitat is the water, you see.

ONDINE

You seem to know a lot about me.

ANNIE

Yes. I've been reading... researching...

Ondine grips the handles on the wheelchair.

ONDINE

Can I help you through the seaweed?

ANNIE

No. I've got my own juice.

She guides the wheelchair back towards the caravan. Stops by the open door.

ONDINE

You want to come inside?

ANNIE

If I walk across the threshold, will you put a hex on me?

ONDINE

I'd never put a hex on you.

ANNIE

Okay then.

She gets out of the wheelchair. Ondine holds her elbow.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Thanks. I can walk all right, but my body gets inordinately tired. Specially coming up to Monday.

ONDINE

What happens on Monday?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANNIE

Dialysis.

INT. LIBRARY. MORNING.

Syracuse walks into the tiny library. The librarian recognizes him.

LIBRARIAN

Can I help you, Circus?

SYRACUSE

It's Syracuse.

LIBRARIAN

Of course. Syracuse. Can I help you?

SYRACUSE

You have any books on Selkies?

LIBRARIAN

We have actually. But strangely enough, they're all out.

SYRACUSE

Out.

LIBRARIAN

Yes. And if you want to read them, your daughter has them.

SYRACUSE

Annie.

LIBRARIAN

Annie. She was doing a project, she said.

SYRACUSE

Yes. I was trying to help her... get ahead of the game.

INT. CARAVAN. MORNING.

Annie stands at the caravan door.

ANNIE

Maybe underwater feels better.

ONDINE

Better than what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Than this. On land. You see. Some days I'm sick all the time. Does it feel better underwater?

Ondine walks through, her eyes misting up. She bends down to her height, pushes the hair out of her eyes.

ONDINE

I'm not sure I know what you mean...

Annie sighs, exasperated. She enters and sits down on a chair.

ANNIE

Oh come on. Let's not try and fool each other. We both know the truth and if we're not straightforward there's no point in being friends.

And she blushes a little.

ONDINE

Aha. So we're to be friends then?

ANNIE

We could be. If we play our cards right.

She sighs, as if talking to a recalcitrant child.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

So I need you to be specific. Does it feel better in that home of yours under the waves?

Ondine smiles.

ONDINE

The strange thing is, I suppose, that when it's rough up here it's often calm down there.

ANNIE

Do you ever get thirsty?

ONDINE

Yes. But there's underwater springs and things like that.

ANNIE

Is there a village?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ONDINE

Yes. There are houses made of
seashell with seaweed lawns.

ANNIE

Do you have pets?

ONDINE

We have...little pet sea horses.

ANNIE

Instead of cats?

ONDINE

Instead of cats and dogs.

ANNIE

And I know. You don't talk down
there. You sing.

ONDINE

Yes. Singing travels better
underwater.

ANNIE

What about the cold?

ONDINE

You get used to it.

ANNIE

Oh of course. You have your seal
coat, don't you?

ONDINE

My seal coat?

ANNIE

Look, there's no point in beating
round the bush. I do know about
these things. I've been studying
them.

ONDINE

So tell me about my seal coat...

ANNIE

You lose it when you get out of
the water and you can't go back in
until you find it again.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And if you do find it and bury it on land you can stay for seven years and you cry seven tears but then when the crying's done your kind of folk can often find happiness with a...

She stops and looks at Ondine strangely.

ONDINE

Are you lost for words?

ANNIE

What's it called? A landlubber, that's what. Selkie women often find unexpected happiness with a landlubber.

She stops again.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And that's all I know.

ONDINE

Does your father know all of this?

ANNIE

Are you trying to keep it a secret?

ONDINE

Should I?

ANNIE

I don't know. Maybe. I have to think about it.

She looks around.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

This was my grannie's place. He misses her. Misses my mam too, though I don't know why.

ONDINE

And you live with your mam?

ANNIE

Yes. And it's not underneath the waves.

She shivers.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And I better go now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Ondine takes her arm to help her out the door.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I can do it on my own.

She makes it to the wheelchair. Sits in it. Ondine bends down and kisses her on the cheek.

ONDINE

See you again.

ANNIE

Your cheek is wet. Is that one of the seven tears?

ONDINE

Maybe.

ANNIE

You've only six left...

And she motors back towards the road.

EXT. HANDBALL ALLEY. DAY.

Annie, motoring past the handball alley. A group of school kids are there, kicking stones.

EOIN

Where you been Annie?

ANNIE

Been with my friend.

EOIN

You got a friend, Annie?

ANNIE

Yes. I've got a special friend.

EOIN

You want to give us a go?

ANNIE

A go at what?

EOIN

Your wheels.

ANNIE

You're too big. You'd break it.

Another girl, Katie, pipes up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

I wouldn't.

Annie is doubtful.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Ah come on. I'll give you half me
twix.

She holds out a half eaten chocolate bar.

ANNIE

There's only half left.

KATIE

Half of half.

ANNIE

That's a quarter.

KATIE

Okay, take it all then. Just give
us a bleedin' go -

HANNAH

We know you can walk. We've seen
you -

Annie gingerly gets out of the chair. Takes the chocolate
bar.

ANNIE

Okay. But only in a circle.

Katie sits in the wheelchair, begins to do rapid figures
of eight.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You're going too fast -

KATIE

Does it do ramps?

She heads it straight towards a cement ramp.

ANNIE

I wouldn't -

And the wheelchair turns, and falls. Katie tumbles down
the ramp. There is blood on her knuckles, and the back
wheel is twisted.

KATIE

Fucking thing -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She kicks it. Looks at her bloodied knuckles.

KATIE (CONT'D)

That's your fault...

The wheelchair slides back down the ramp, towards Annie.

EXT. CARAVAN. DAY.

Syracuse, outside the caravan with Ondine.

SYRACUSE

You want to come again?

ONDINE

Fishing?

SYRACUSE

Yes. Only if you want, like.

ONDINE

You promise I'll see nobody but you?

SYRACUSE

You'll see nobody but me.

ONDINE

Excellent.

SYRACUSE

Maybe you're imaginary.

ONDINE

Maybe. Maybe I dreamt you pulled me in your net.

SYRACUSE

Was it a good dream?

ONDINE

So far...

She takes his arm and heads down towards the boat.

EXT. STREETS. DAY.

Annie, driving her buckled wheelchair towards her home. There are tears in her eyes.

EXT. BAY. DAY.

Syracuse guides the boat towards the open sea.

EXT. HEADLAND. DAY.

A man in dark clothes, standing on the headland, watching the boat go out to sea.

He has a few shells in his hand. Periwinkles. He picks the meat out of one of them with a safety pin. Eats it.

As the boat heads towards the open sea, he turns and walks back, towards a small harbour in the distance.

EXT. OCEAN. DAY.

Syracuse has mechanized lines pulling mackerel from the water. He has a fishing rod in his hands.

ONDINE

So your luck holds.

SYRACUSE

Don't need luck to find mackerel.

ONDINE

No?

SYRACUSE

No. Sell them by the kilo.

And suddenly his line bends.

ONDINE

Well...

He reels, and reels. The line bends almost to meet the water.

SYRACUSE

Start singing, will you -

Something large nears the surface.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Grab that net -

He gestures with his head towards a net on a pole. She lowers it and pulls a hefty salmon upwards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Salmon. That's weird.

ONDINE

What's weird about it?

SYRACUSE

On a line... not a net...

ONDINE

Curioser and curioser -

He pulls the salmon in. Looks at her quizzically.

SYRACUSE

Where did you hear that?

ONDINE

Alice said it...

SYRACUSE

To the white rabbit. Annie says it too.

ONDINE

Annie -

SYRACUSE

My daughter...

INT. ANNIE'S HOME. DAY.

Annie opens the door. The buckled wheelchair stands on the steps. Alex is making toast by the kitchen table.

ANNIE

Is mam up yet?

He looks at her and shakes his head. She pulls the wheelchair into the hallway, awkwardly.

ALEX

Something up?

ANNIE

What do you think?

He walks forwards and looks at the wheelchair, chewing on the toast.

ALEX

Did you fall?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

No. Someone else did.

He walks back to the kitchen, takes up a wrench and begins to bash on the wheel.

ALEX

Try it now.

When she seems hesitant, he lifts her bodily and places her in the chair.

ALEX (CONT'D)

There. I don't bite.

He rolls the wheel backwards and forwards. As he does, his hand brushes off of her knee. There is still a slight bend in it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Up.

She gets up, as he bends to the floor, trying to find the kink in the wheel. He gives it one more whack.

She looks down at his eyes, looking up at her.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You're afraid of me, aren't you?

His hand reaches up to her knee. He guides it back, so she is sitting in the wheel.

ALEX (CONT'D)

No need. Ask your mother.

EXT. HARBOUR. BEARE ISLAND. DAY.

A few cars, parked by the harbour. A small ferry is driving towards it. The man walks towards a car, takes out his keys, gets in. Waits for the ferry to reach him.

EXT. BOAT. DAY.

A group of large salmon, flapping on the deck beside the mackerel. Syracuse is pulling in another.

And suddenly a loud siren sounds behind them. She nearly jumps out of her skin.

A fisheries board inflatable is coming towards them, siren wailing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

Fuck.

ONDINE

What?

SYRACUSE

It's the fisheries board. For the
quotas.

INT. ANNIE'S HOME. DAY.

Alex with the wheelchair. Annie sitting in it.

He rolls it back and forwards.

ANNIE

You said you had selkies in
scotland.

ALEX

We invented selkies. In the Isle
of Sky.

ANNIE

You mean you made them up?

ALEX

No. They're a scottish thing.

ANNIE

She doesn't speak like you.

ALEX

Who?

Annie clams up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Got secrets, have we, little girl?

His hand large hand grips her jaw.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You could say thanks.

ANNIE

Thanks.

And he kisses her. On the edge of the lip.

ALEX

You're welcome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And a groan, from upstairs now.

MAURA

Al...

He winks at her and walks upstairs.

EXT. BOAT. DAY.

The fisheries board men have come aboard the boat.
Looking at the catch of salmon he has on the deck.

MAN

Show us your net, Circus.

SYRACUSE

Didn't use a net.

MAN 11

You caught all of these salmon
with a line?

SYRACUSE

Yes.

MAN 11

You expect us to believe that?

SYRACUSE

No. But it's true.

Ondine is sitting in the cabin, with her back to the
scene.

MAN

Who's that in there?

SYRACUSE

She's nobody...

MAN

Nobody?

SYRACUSE

She's my lucky mascot.

MAN

Could you step out, please ma'am.

Ondine steps out, unwillingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN (CONT'D)

And I suppose you'll back up his story? He caught all this salmon on a line?

ONDINE

Yes, sir.

MAN

George is the name, ma'am.

ONDINE

Yes, George.

MAN 11

Your going to have to show me your nets, Circus.

SYRACUSE

Gladly.

He opens a hatch and pulls out his neatly folded nets.

The boardmen examine the nets.

MAN 11

They're not wet.

SYRACUSE

I know.

MAN 11

How did you dry them?

SYRACUSE

Didn't. I told you. Didn't use them.

MAN

You want us to believe in magic, Circus.

SYRACUSE

Yes. I do.

MAN

Since when.

SYRACUSE

Since about a few days ago.

They look at each other, step back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAN

If we catch you netting salmon,
you're finished.

SYRACUSE

You won't. I promise.

MAN

We'll be watching.

They get back into the inflatable. Syracuse and Ondine watch them go.

SYRACUSE

So. They saw you. Is that alright?

ONDINE

No...

SYRACUSE

It's a relief in a way. Means
you're not in my mind.

ONDINE

Means they'll talk.

SYRACUSE

Of course they'll talk.

ONDINE

What will they say?

SYRACUSE

Circus is pulling salmon. With a
girl on his boat.

ONDINE

Hardly a girl.

SYRACUSE

What are you then?

He begins to guide the boat back.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

I'm going to the harbour. You want
me to drop you off?

She shakes her head.

ONDINE

It's done now, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SYRACUSE

What's done?

ONDINE

I've been seen.

EXT. FERRY. DAY.

The man, sitting on the bonnet of his car, as the ferry heads towards Castletownbeare.

He can see Syracuse's boat, heading towards the harbour. Syracuse and Ondine, plainly visible.

EXT. HARBOUR. CASTLETOWNBEARE. DAY.

Syracuse guiding his boat in. Fishermen on other boats stare.

SYRACUSE

It's a small town. Everybody stares.

Ondine, looking at them looking at her.

ONDINE

They sure do.

SYRACUSE

What's so bad about being seen? Tell me.

She takes his arm.

ONDINE

Do I look good?

SYRACUSE

Real good.

As the fisherman continue staring.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Go on you fuckers. The clown has a girl on his boat.

ONDINE

Circus the clown.

SYRACUSE

Got seven salmon on the deck. Work that one out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE
Syracuse the fisherman.

INT. CAR. FERRY. DAY.

The man, call him Vladic, driving from the docked ferry towards the harbour. He can see Syracuse's boat, tying up among the other trawlers.

INT. CO-OP. DAY.

Syracuse presents his salmon catch.

CO-OP WOMAN
I'm going to have to declare these, Circus.

SYRACUSE
They've already seen them.

CO-OP WOMAN
Who?

SYRACUSE
The fisheries.

The woman looks through the window at Ondine, waiting outside, soaking up the stares of the fishermen.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
They're fine. Believe me.

EXT. CO-OP. DAY.

Syracuse comes out, with a fistful of notes.

SYRACUSE
Can I buy you a present?

ONDINE
Clothes. But can I choose this time?

SYRACUSE
You didn't like the dress -

ONDINE
I loved it. The underwear could be improved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

It was a swimming suit. A bikini.

ONDINE

Tight around the edges.

SYRACUSE

You have edges?

ONDINE

I have many secret edges.

EXT. THE CHURCH. DAY.

The priest, emerging from the church doors. He sees Syracuse walking down the street, Ondine on his arm.

EXT. THE MAIN STREET. DAY.

Annie, coming out of the Spar with Maura. They almost bump into Syracuse and Ondine.

ANNIE

I knew it wasn't a story.

Maura stares at Ondine.

MAURA

What wasn't a story.

SYRACUSE

Hello Maura.

ANNIE

You're such a shite storyteller anyway. I knew it had to be true.

MAURA

Watch your language Annie.

ANNIE

Ma, this is Ondine. Ondine, my ma.

ONDINE

Pleased to meet you Maura.

ANNIE

Thought she'd have webbed fingers. But she doesn't. And do you know why ma?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAURA

Why doesn't she have... webbed
fingers...

ANNIE

Because she's made the transition.

MAURA

The transition?

ANNIE

From one state to another.

Syracuse turns to Ondine.

SYRACUSE

Have you made the transition,
Ondine?

ONDINE

Yes.

She says it simply and mysteriously at the same time.

Maura grabs the arms of Annie's wheelchair.

MAURA

Come on now love -

ANNIE

No, ma. I'll follow you home.

MAURA

I said come on -

ANNIE

And I said no.

She guides her wheelchair towards Syracuse.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

What are we doing?

Maura, humiliated, turns on her heel.

ONDINE

Buying clothes.

SYRACUSE

Maybe you should -

ANNIE

She's buying clothes, Da, can't do
that on her own -

INT. TOWN DRAPER'S. DAY.

Annie wheels her chair past the displays of wet gear, woolly jumpers and wellington boots.

ANNIE
This town is what you could
call...

She stops at a tailor's dummy with a dress on it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...sartorially challenged...

ONDINE
What does that mean?

ANNIE
A supermodel's nightmare...

She looks at the dress.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
You like it?

Ondine shakes her head.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I agree...

INT. CHANGING BOOTH. DAY.

Ondine, trying on a series of blouses, dresses etc.
Annie's hand reaches through the curtain with another.

EXT. BOOTH. DAY.

Annie, with Syracuse, the shop assistant.

ANNIE
I'm not suggesting she buy them
all da. Just a...

She stops at a display of underwear.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...selection...

She fingers a black lacy bra.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Do Selkies do lingerie?

Syracuse shrugs, embarrassed.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Why not?

She chooses.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
They wear seaweed knickers and a scallopy bra...

She buzzes off back to the booth.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
But that's underwater. Won't do here...

INT. BOOTH. DAY.

Annie's hand pushes through the curtain, with her selection of underwear. She winks at Ondine.

EXT. BOOTH. DAY.

Ondine emerges, in a thin blouse and a skirt.

ANNIE
What do you think?

She turns to Syracuse.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Or should I say - what do they think?

Through the window, behind Syracuse, we see half the town watching.

BY THE CASH REGISTER -

The same assistant rings up the purchases. There is a poster, stuck to the wall behind her, of a rock jutting sheer out of the Atlantic.

Annie whispers to Syracuse.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
See that island?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

What about it?

ANNIE

It's a sanctuary. For her kind.

The assistant looks up.

ASSISTANT

Her kind?

ANNIE

Yeah. The well dressed kind.

EXT. ANNIE'S HOME. EVENING.

Syracuse, with Annie by the door. Maura answers.

SYRACUSE

She wants to come out on the boat
with me tomorrow.

MAURA

So the clown has got himself a
girlfriend?

ANNIE

Ma...

SYRACUSE

Just a friend.

MAURA

Where's she from, Circus?

SYRACUSE

You know... one of those places..

ANNIE

She's from the water ma -

MAURA

What kind of fairy tales are you
spinning Circus -

SYRACUSE

She means over the water. Don't
you love?

ANNIE

That's what I said. From over the
water -

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. DAY.

Ondine, making tea in the caravan. She sings the same song as the kettle boils. Hears movement by the open door and sees little Annie there.

ANNIE

You going swimming again today?

ONDINE

Maybe.

ANNIE

You going to swim out of here and not come back?

ONDINE

How would I see you then?

ANNIE

You wouldn't. It'd be goodbye.

ONDINE

And it's too early for that.

ANNIE

I certainly hope so.

ONDINE

Can you swim, Annie?

ANNIE

No. There's no pool in the town and I've never had lessons.

ONDINE

I imagine it would relax you a lot. Unless you have a fear of water.

ANNIE

I wouldn't have a fear of water with a water creature round me.

ONDINE

Ok then.

Ondine gets a towel.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

What'll I wear?

And in one movement, Ondine pulls off her dress. She is wearing the underwear Annie chose for her.

ONDINE

What do you think?

Annie looks at her beautiful body.

ANNIE

They'll get wet.

ONDINE

I'll dry them afterwards.

Annie looks doubtful.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Come on. Stand up.

Annie stands.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Hold up your arms.

And as she does so, Ondine pulls her dress off.

EXT. SEASHORE. DAY.

Annie and Ondine, ankle deep in the water. Ondine takes her hand, draws her in deeper.

ONDINE

Come on. The water's just like air that wraps around you.

ANNIE

Easy for you to say.

ONDINE

Duck yourself in.

Ondine does that, swims out a few strokes.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

See?

ANNIE

I told I can't swim.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE

But you can float. I'll hold you.

She puts a hand at the small of Annie's back.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Lie back now.

And Annie does this. Is floating, supported by Ondine.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

See? It's simple.

ANNIE

It is simple.

ONDINE

You're a sea creature.

ANNIE

You think?

ONDINE

I know.

She guides her in deeper.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

I'm going to let go now -

And she releases her hands. Annie is floating on her own.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

If you feel panicked, you just stand up.

ANNIE

Ok.

Annie floats, staring at the clouds above. She is in heaven.

UNDERWATER -

Annie floating, Ondine standing. The camera pans down her feet, to the sea floor. They bump off something, covered by seaweed.

ABOVE WATER -

Ondine looking down. She has seen something.

ONDINE

My God.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And she plunges then, dives down beneath.

UNDERWATER -

Ondine, swimming towards the seaweed, four feet down.

ABOVE WATER -

Annie begins to panic.

ANNIE

Ondine...

And Ondine comes to the surface.

ONDINE

I've got you -

But she has got something else too. Some kind of package, wrapped in seaweed, in her hand.

ANNIE

Thanks...

ONDINE

Tell me when you're tired.

ANNIE

That'd be now...

And Ondine leads her in towards shore. As the water gets shallower, the package in her hands comes clear of it, covered in seaweed.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

What's that?

ONDINE

Just... something I found.

They reach the shore. Ondine reaches for the towel, places the seaweedy package on the sand.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Here, let my dry you.

She begins to rub her dry. And Annie's eyes are always on the mound of seaweed, by her feet.

ANNIE

You found your seal coat.

ONDINE

Maybe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANNIE

Let me see it.

ONDINE

No.

ANNIE

Am I not allowed?

ONDINE

No.

ANNIE

Because I'm a landlubber?

ONDINE

Maybe.

ANNIE

Are you going to bury it?

ONDINE

Do you ever stop the questions?

ANNIE

No. Can I dig the hole?

ONDINE

Do you want me to bury it?

ANNIE

Yes. Because it means you'll be here for seven years.

ONDINE

Would you like that?

ANNIE

Certainly.

ONDINE

But then I'd have to cry seven tears.

ANNIE

Six. You've already cried one.

ONDINE

And will I find... unexpected happiness with a... what did you call it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANNIE

A landlubber. Maybe. But only if you bury it.

ONDINE

We better bury it, then, do you think?

ANNIE

Absolutely.

EXT. BEHIND CARAVAN. DAY.

Annie, fully clothed now, digging a hole with a small sand spade.

ANNIE

Is it deep enough?

ONDINE

Maybe deeper. Has to last seven years.

Annie digs, furiously.

ANNIE

How about that?

ONDINE

Looks good.

ANNIE

Do we leave the seaweed round it?

ONDINE

Definitely. To remind my coat -

ANNIE

Of where it came from? Good idea.

Annie bundles the seaweed into a ball, round the package, and places it in the hole. Shovels furiously to cover it. Places clods of earth above it.

ONDINE

Will I remember where it is? In seven years time?

And Annie places one foot in front of the other and walks towards the caravan.

ANNIE

Eleven footsteps to the back axle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE

But your footsteps will be bigger -

ANNIE

In seven years time. You think of everything, don't you? You walk it then.

Ondine paces it. Seven footprints.

ONDINE

Seven.

ANNIE

Seven. That makes sense.

ONDINE

And it's our secret. We tell nobody.

ANNIE

Not even da.

She hears the sound of a car approaching. Looks up and sees Syracuse's car coming down the small road.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

We've got a choice. Regatta, or sanctuary.

ONDINE

Sanctuary?

ANNIE

Sacred place. Protected. For your kind.

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. DAY.

As Syracuse guides his boat out of the harbour, random boats pass him, going the opposite direction.

SYRACUSE

Regatta starts at three.

EXT. THE SKELLIGS. DAY.

Syracuse is guiding his boat towards the island, which sticks like a needle out of the Atlantic. Flocks of gannets wheel above them, and plummet down into the surface of the ocean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

Seal Rock.

There is a tourist boat, already moored in the swelling water. There are numerous seals, warming themselves on the rocks.

ANNIE

So the story so far is...

SYRACUSE

I fished her from the water.

ANNIE

Introduced her to your daughter.

SYRACUSE

That rhymes.

Annie looks at the seals by the rocks.

ANNIE

Can you sing to them?

Ondine shakes her head.

ONDINE

You're asking too much of me.

ANNIE

You know that if she buries her seal coat, Da, she stays seven years on land?

ONDINE

Annie -

ANNIE

No. I'm telling no secrets. With a...

She turns to Ondine.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

What's it called again?

ONDINE

A landlubber.

ANNIE

A fisherman.

SYRACUSE

Make up your minds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

The same thing, aren't they?

EXT. ON THE SKELLIGS. DAY.

Ancient stone steps, leading up to a series of small, beehive huts. Isolated groups of tourists make their way up and down. A guide, leading a group of Germans, explains the history.

GUIDE

Early christian monks lived in these huts all the year round.

GERMAN

What did they live off?

GUIDE

What they could catch. Gulls eggs. Whatever vegetables they could grow.

Annie, Syracuse and Ondine, coming up behind.

ANNIE

What about the seals, mister?

GUIDE

Well, the island has been a seal colony for as long as records have been kept. It's wildlife are protected site, under the European Heritage act...

She whispers to Ondine as they ascend.

ANNIE

Sure he knows nothing.

INT. BEEHIVE HUT. DAY.

They sit, eating sandwiches in a beehive hut, which looks out onto the sheer Atlantic. The wind creates a magical hum inside the hut.

ANNIE

This is her sanctuary, da. Where she's safe from all distress.

SYRACUSE

You sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Yes. It's the perfectest place.

ONDINE

Safe from what?

ANNIE

From her Selkie husband. When he comes to claim her back.

ONDINE

I don't have a husband.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Maybe you don't remember. But you do. All selkies do.

SYRACUSE

What will he look like?

ANNIE

Dark hair. Dark eyebrows. Dark coat.

SYRACUSE

And how does he claim her?

ANNIE

He finds her coat.

SYRACUSE

I saw no coat.

ANNIE

No. There is no coat. Is there, Ondine?

ONDINE

No coat.

She wraps her arms around Annie.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

How are you feeling, darling?

ANNIE

Fine. Better than ever.

SYRACUSE

You've got dialysis tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

I know. It just gets better and better.

EXT. BOAT. EVENING.

The boat, heading back through a magnificent sunset.

ANNIE

And the last thing is, da, she can make a wish come true.

ONDINE

Please, Annie.

ANNIE

If you're a selk you can.

ONDINE

Then I'm not a selk.

Annie looks at her, thinking.

ANNIE

Okay. You're a not a selk.

As they come through the harbour, there is the sound of a band playing.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

The regatta. We going?

EXT. CASTLETOWNBEARE HARBOUR. DAY.

The harbour crowded with every boat imaginable for the regatta.

Syracuse is tying his boat off by the dock.

Annie takes Ondine's hand in one hand, and with the other buzzes through the crowds with her wheelchair.

ANNIE

See them chasing the duck...

EXT. PIER. DAY.

Crowds, around the edge of the pier.

Athletic swimmers, in the water, vainly chasing a duck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wrestlers wrestling on a greasy pole, above the water.
Every now and then one falls in the water and the crowd
roars.

Annie and Ondine make their way towards the spectacle.

ANNIE

So, you're not a selk.

She presses the lever on her wheelchair.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Prove it.

And she zips the wheelchair straight towards the edge of
the pier.

ON THE POLE -

A wrestler falls, hits the water.

ON THE EDGE OF THE PIER -

Annie propels the wheelchair over.

IT SAILS THROUGH THE AIR -

Falling downwards - hits the water -

And the weight of it takes her under.

The crowd gasps -

And Ondine runs, to the edge - dives - hits the water and
vanishes from sight.

BY THE BOAT -

Syracuse hears the gasp. He hasn't realized what has
happened.

BY THE PIER -

For an age... nothing happens. An impossible age.

Then, Ondine comes to the surface with Annie in her arms.

And now Syracuse sees them both.

SYRACUSE

Annie - what the fuck -

AFTERWARDS -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Annie, in a heat blanket, Syracuse holding her. Crowds staring.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
What the hell did you think you
were doing?

Her wheelchair is being winched from the water.

ANNIE
The brakes went.

Ondine, sleek and wet, walks through the crowd. They part, as if fearful of her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
And I was lucky, wasn't I?

She takes Ondine's hand.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
That she breathes underwater -

EXT. ANNIE'S HOME. EVENING.

Maura watches as Syracuse wheels Annie up to the doorway. Annie is wrapped in the heat blanket.

MAURA
What happened?

SYRACUSE
She was chasing the duck.

ANNIE
The brakes went ma, by the pier.
She saved me.

Maura takes Annie in her arms.

MAURA
The water baby?

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

The door opens and Ondine enters. Syracuse stands outside.

SYRACUSE
The brakes didn't go, did they?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE

No. She did that herself.

SYRACUSE

Why?

ONDINE

To test me, maybe.

She holds the door open.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Come in.

He slowly enters.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

To see how much I'd do for her.

INT. ANNIE'S. NIGHT.

Annie in the bath. Steam everywhere. Maura by the open door.

MAURA

Who is this woman, Annie?

Alex walks by, outside, a drink in his hand.

ALEX

She's from the Isle of Skye. Swam round the coast to here.

ANNIE

What if she was?

ALEX (CONT'D)

Imagine she'd be a bit wet in the scratcher though - a bit cold round the thighs -

ANNIE

Stop him ma - close the door -

ALEX

Though your clown of a husband wouldnae notice -

ANNIE

Close the door ma -

And she does, finally.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAURA

Someone was looking for her -

Annie freezes. Says softly.

ANNIE

Who?

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Ondine and Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

How much would you do for her?

Ondine comes close to Syracuse.

ONDINE

Are you testing me too?

SYRACUSE

No. Sorry.

He touches her face.

ONDINE

Why do they call you Circus the clown?

SYRACUSE

Because I was one for years. I drank.

ONDINE

And what made you stop?

SYRACUSE

Annie. I came back from a week on the trawlers, found her unconscious. Her mother on the piss. I got sober. She threw me out.

ONDINE

You couldn't take Annie with you?

SYRACUSE

That doesn't happen here.

INT. ANNIE'S HOME. NIGHT.

Maura by the closed bathroom door. Annie in the bath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAURA
A man -

ANNIE
A dark haired man?

MAURA
Yes -

ANNIE
You didn't tell him -

MAURA
What's her name?

ANNIE
Ondine -

MAURA
He didn't call her that -

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Ondine and Syracuse

ONDINE
She didn't want a clown?

SYRACUSE
Does anybody?

ONDINE
I do.

She kisses him.

SYRACUSE
You want a clown?

ONDINE
I want Syracuse

INT. ANNIE'S HOME. NIGHT.

Annie is going white. Some kind of seizure.

ANNIE
And you told him -

MAURA
Why wouldn't I tell him -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

You want to ruin it, don't you.
You want to ruin it all -

MAURA

You alright love -

ANNIE

No I'm sick. And you know it -

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Syracuse and Ondine make love.

INT. ANNIE'S HOME. NIGHT.

Maura and Annie.

MAURA

Make sense for a change will you?

ANNIE

He'll take her back -

MAURA

Back where -

ANNIE

Under the water -

And she pushes her face under the soapy waters of the bath.

Maura tries to pull her head out.

When Annie stays below, she panics. Pulls the plug.

On Annie's face, going blue, as the waters cleave away from it. And finally she takes a tortured breath.

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Afterwards.

SYRACUSE

You said you died. In the water.

ONDINE

Died again just there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

You can't just come... from
nowhere... and do that to me...

ONDINE

Yes, I can. I can do anything I
want.

And she does it again.

INT. CHURCH. MORNING.

The grille is pulled aside. The priest there. Syracuse on
the other side, hiding his face.

SYRACUSE

My name's Syracuse and I'm an
alcoholic.

PRIEST

And you've been sober for two
years, seven months and -

SYRACUSE

Twenty eight days.

PRIEST

You're doing well, Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

It's about the girl, father.

PRIEST

Yes. The one you... met... out
fishing. I saw you with her.

SYRACUSE

I drew her up in a net, father.

PRIEST

She looked pretty real to me,
circus.

SYRACUSE

Syracuse.

PRIEST

Sorry. Well, what about her.
You've sinned with her.

SYRACUSE

Of course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIEST

And you want absolution.

SYRACUSE

No.

PRIEST

So why are you here, Syracuse?

SYRACUSE

Because I have to tell someone.
And I know you can't repeat it.

PRIEST

How can you be sure I can't repeat
it?

SYRACUSE

If I murdered someone and told
you, you couldn't say a damned
word.

PRIEST

So tell me...

SYRACUSE

She brings me luck, and I don't
know why. And I'm afraid, father,
because I'm beginning to hope.

PRIEST

Hope for what?

SYRACUSE

For... the future, I suppose.

PRIEST

We should never lose hope,
Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

She was drowned, father. And my
net brought her back to life.

PRIEST

That doesn't make sense, Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

I know. None of it makes sense.
That's why I'm afraid. I know
something's going to happen.
Something wonderful. Or terrible.
Because she's that kind of person,
father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRIEST

No-on's that kind of person.

SYRACUSE

Well she is. And I'm only telling you because I know you can't talk. I'd tell an old tree or a piece of wood. But they can't listen. So I'm telling you.

He gets up to go.

PRIEST

Syracuse - you forgot the prayer.

SYRACUSE

You go.

PRIEST

Don't know it yet -

SYRACUSE

God grant me the serenity to...

EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

Syracuse comes out of the church and is getting into his car when he hears a voice.

VLADIC

Hey -

The dark-haired man we saw on the headland, by the quays. He has an unlit cigarette in his mouth.

VLADIC (CONT'D)

You Syracuse?

SYRACUSE

Yeah.

VLADIC

Syracuse the fisherman?

SYRACUSE

You from the fisheries board?

VLADIC

Maybe.

He crosses the road.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIC (CONT'D)

You got a light?

Syracuse shakes his head.

SYRACUSE

I caught those salmon with a line.
You've got nothing on me.

VLADIC

The girl on the boat. What do you
call her?

SYRACUSE

My mascot?

And he gets into his car and drives off.

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

Annie, by the dialysis machine. Syracuse beside her.

SYRACUSE

You were upset last night.

ANNIE

Not so much.

SYRACUSE

Your mother said you were.

ANNIE

Well. She imagines things.

She looks at the machine.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's going to end, someday, isn't
it circus?

SYRACUSE

What?

ANNIE

All of it. This. The whole story.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

Syracuse talks to Dr Hannon, a female country doctor.

DR HANNON

Nothing's different. It's down to
luck.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR HANNON (CONT'D)

If one with her blood type becomes available, she's first in line. Otherwise, I'm afraid, this is it. I'm sorry Syracuse I can't be more definitive.

EXT. ANNIE'S HOME. NIGHT.

Syracuse driving Annie home. The house is dark. The door locked.

SYRACUSE

Where is everybody?

ANNIE

In town for the Regatta.

SYRACUSE

The Regatta...

ANNIE

There's bands playing. Late night opening. Mam told me, I forgot...

SYRACUSE

You have a key?

ANNIE

I left it inside...

She turns her wheelchair and heads for the town.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Come on -

Syracuse leaves his car, walks beside her.

SYRACUSE

You can't.

ANNIE

Yes I can. I've done the blood. Done me homework. I feel fine...

EXT. MAIN STREET. NIGHT.

Fairy lights from the poles. Crowds of people going from pub to pub. Music spilling from them onto the street.

SYRACUSE

Where do they drink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Mccarthys...

She guides her wheelchair towards it, an old fashioned bar.

INT. MCCARTHY'S. NIGHT.

Some godawful band of Germans playing amplified traditional music in the corner. Fishermen, locals, tourists, drinking.

He pushes through the bar with Annie, but can't find them anywhere.

ANNIE

Smoking section -

She pushes through to the rear, past the toilets, into the back beer garden.

EXT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Ondine, by the water. Distant music pumping from the town. She is looking at the moon, reflected over the bay, a pair of car headlights stroke across the scene.

She turns. Expecting, maybe Syracuse. But the car is not his.

She backs behind the ruined hull of a boat.

Vladic, the dark man, is driving. He parks the car, stops. Gets out.

He walks towards the caravan. Calls out.

VLADIC

Ondine...

When there is no reply, he walks towards the caravan.

Ondine stares, in the moonlight. There is no way of knowing what she thinks.

Vladic pushes the open caravan door.

VLADIC (CONT'D)

Hey you...

EXT. BEER GARDEN. NIGHT.

A crowd of smokers, Maura and Alex amongst them. Annie pushes her wheelchair through.

ANNIE

Done it, ma -

MAURA

You good thing you -

Syracuse comes close, but is uncomfortable in these surroundings.

MAURA (CONT'D)

Be careful. They don't serve knackers here -

SYRACUSE

Just give us the keys Maura, I'll take her home -

MAURA

She'll be fine for a few hours. A bar never hurt anyone.

SYRACUSE

Please Maura -

MAURA

You've cleared a few in your time -

SYRACUSE

She's coming to my place -

ANNIE

It's okay, da -

MAURA

She's not. Go back to your fucking caravan -

ANNIE

Da, really -

MAURA

Home to your mermaid Circus -

A few guffaws. She warms to it.

MAURA (CONT'D)

Got himself a water baby -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

More laughter. Annie is getting distressed.

ANNIE

I'll be fine. You just go, Circus -

And he has no option. He goes.

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

The door hanging open to the bay. Clothes thrown around, scattered on the floor. Another pair of car headlights stroke the scene.

EXT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Syracuse walking from the car. He sees the door, half open. Quickens his step.

INT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Syracuse enters. Sees the clothes on the floor. Calls out.

SYRACUSE

Ondine ---

EXT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Syracuse, searching round the caravan. Calling out.

SYRACUSE

ONDINE!!!!!!

No reply. His voice echoes back to him, over the water.

He makes towards his car.

EXT. ROAD ABOVE POULIN. NIGHT.

The man, Vladic, parked on the breen where Annie drove her wheelchair. He can see Syracuse, heading towards his car. When Syracuse drives off, he follows.

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

Syracuse, driving, down the small country back roads. His headlights penetrating into the fields beyond.

INT. VLADIC'S CAR. NIGHT.

Vladic, following Syracuse.

Suddenly, a tractor with night lights pulls out between them. Vladic has to jam on. The tractor driver waves a meaty arm, to apologise.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

Syracuse swings left, down towards a small strand. His headlights illuminate the moonlit water.

And then, they find her. Down by the phosphorescent shore, her feet bare, her legs bloodied by brambles.

He pulls the car into a muddy layby, walks towards her.

SYRACUSE

You leaving?

ONDINE

Don't I get seven years?

SYRACUSE

That's what Annie told me.

ONDINE

Did she tell you about the Selkie man?

SYRACUSE

The husband.

ONDINE

Well. He's here.

SYRACUSE

In his selkie coat?

ONDINE

Yes.

SYRACUSE

And he's taking her back?

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

Vladic, behind the tractor with night lights. Moving at a snail's pace. He honks his horn. The driver waves another meaty arm, then swings left into a field.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vladic hits the gas, powers down the night road.

EXT. STRAND. NIGHT.

Ondine and Syracuse.

ONDINE

If I had a wish, I'd wish he
wouldn't.

SYRACUSE

Wish then.

ONDINE

I can't.

SYRACUSE

You can grant a wish.

ONDINE

But I can't wish one.

He turns her round, brings her face close.

SYRACUSE

Okay then. I'll wish. I wish she'd
stay. Wish Annie'd get a cure.
Stay with her.

ONDINE

That's two wishes.

SYRACUSE

Not allowed? Okay, I'll wish for
one of them.

ONDINE

Which one?

SYRACUSE

Not telling. Come on. I'll take
you back.

ONDINE

I can't go there. He's been.

SYRACUSE

That's alright. Come home with me.

ONDINE

How strange. I've never been.
Don't know where you live.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

Let me show you...

He takes her by the hand and leads her back to the car.

INT. VLADIC'S CAR. NIGHT.

Vladic, driving fast down the dark country roads. He has lost Syracuse. He passes a turn, jams on, reverses, then swings left down it.

INT. MCCARTHY'S. NIGHT.

Maura dancing with Alex, to some maudlin ballad. Her head falls drunkenly on his shoulder.

MAURA

I'm done, you know that?

ALEX

That time again?

She turns, sees Annie asleep in her wheelchair, in the beer garden.

MAURA

I'll get the car. You get her...

ALEX

You drivin'?

As he turns, he knocks over a beerglass.

MAURA

Are you?

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

Vladic, driving. The lights of the town approach, in the distance. He hits the gas.

EXT. MCCARTHY'S. NIGHT.

Annie asleep in the back seat. Alex fits the folded wheelchair in beside her.

ALEX

Could have took her home in this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAURA

You want a go, do you?

ALEX

Too big for it.

MAURA

The wheelchair?

She turns the keys as he gets in beside her.

She swings out into the road as -

INT. VLADIC'S CAR. NIGHT.

He sees her swing out, in front of him. He tries to swerve.

Too late.

He smashes into the car, crushing the passenger seat, pushing the crushed car into the window of the sweet shop opposite.

INT. SWEET SHOP. NIGHT.

The plate glass window crashing down as the car is piledriven in.

Alex is quite dead in the mangled front seat.

INT. VLADIC'S CAR. NIGHT.

The airbag exploding. His face whacks forwards into it.

INT. SYRACUSE'S CAR. NIGHT.

Syracuse, driving.

SYRACUSE

Maybe it's all a lie. Maybe you walked into the sea to get away from a bad marriage.

ONDINE

Would you believe that?

SYRACUSE

I did it once.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE

And what happened?

SYRACUSE

I got wet. Got sense. Got sober.

ONDINE

That's not the story, though...

SYRACUSE

What is then?

ONDINE

Like Annie says. I'm a Selk.

SYRACUSE

I know. That's the truth. The only
one that makes sense -

And he suddenly jams on the brakes. He can see the
upended truck, blocking the streets. Flashing lights.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Something up. A crash -

He gets out of the car, walks forwards. As he clears the
rear of the truck, he can see the Maura's car, crushed
into the plate-glass window. The priest bending over
someone in the front seat.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

No, Annie, no...

And he begins to run.

Crowds around the scene try to pull him back.

The priest blesses himself and rises. He sees Syracuse's
grief stricken face, as he tries to push through the
crowds.

PRIEST

Talk to me, Syracuse, come here
and talk -

SYRACUSE

Tell me father -

PRIEST

We don't know yet -

SYRACUSE

Tell me all of it father -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He goes to push past the priest, who pulls him back.

INT. HOSPITAL. NIGHT.

Maura, on a life-support system, her neck in a brace. One of those oxygen masks round her throat. She is unconscious.

Annie next to her. She is sedated, but vaguely awake. Syracuse enters. Says to the nurse.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Can I hold her?

The nurse nods.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

You wore your seat-belt love?

Annie looks at him, shakes her drowsy eyes.

ANNIE

What happened?

SYRACUSE

We don't know yet.

NURSE

We're moving her to another room.
You want to carry her?

He nods.

INT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

Syracuse follows the nurse through the corridor, carrying Annie. Doctors, medics, townspeople among them Ondine and the priest.

ONDINE

So she's alright.

The priest nods.

PRIEST

The Lord giveth and the lord
taketh away.

Two paramedics wheeling another trolley down the corridor.

Vladic is on it, his face black and bruised from the airbag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His eyes catch Ondine's as he is wheeled past.

ONDINE

Blessed be the name of the lord.

The priest looks at her, quizzically.

INT. OPERATING THEATRE. NIGHT.

A team of doctors there. Syracuse doesn't know what is going on.

NURSE

Lay her on the bed there...

He lays Annie down.

Doctor Hannon puts a hand on his shoulder.

DR HANNON

Can we talk in private, Syracuse?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. NIGHT.

Dr Hannon enters the featureless room, with Syracuse.

DR HANNON

Alex Beauford had a donor-card,
Syracuse...

SYRACUSE

Alex is dead.

DR HANNON

Yes. And he was an organ donor -

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THEATRE. NIGHT.

Syracuse comes out, still trying to work it out. He sees the priest, sitting across from Ondine.

PRIEST

Sit down, Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

You heard what's happening?

The priest nods.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Ondine, have you met the father?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She nods.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
Father - Ondine.

He nods.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
Just don't make a wish.

Ondine is crying now.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)
You might get what you wish for -

INT. OPERATING THEATRE. NIGHT.

Annie, being operated on by a team of doctors.

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ondine and Syracuse, lying on a small bed together.
Neither of them can sleep.

ONDINE
It's what she needed.

SYRACUSE
Yes.

ONDINE
What you wanted.

SYRACUSE
Yes.

ONDINE
And I'm sorry it happened this way.

SYRACUSE
So am I.

ONDINE
But it wasn't me.

SYRACUSE
Who was it?

ONDINE
Some things just happen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

Like I found you in the water.

ONDINE

Yes.

She turns her face towards him.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

I should go away.

SYRACUSE

Where will you go?

ONDINE

Back where I came from.

SYRACUSE

Can you wait till she comes
through it? She'll want to see you
when she wakes...

INT. EMERGENCY UNIT ROOM. MORNING.

Annie, sleeping in the a bed attached to drips, monitors
and a dialysis machine.

Syracuse is above her, with a nurse.

NURSE

We wait to see how the kidney
kicks in. Begins to process the
blood. Then, she never sees that
machine again.

SYRACUSE

How long?

NURSE

Eleven, twelve hours...

Annie opens her eyes.

ANNIE

Where's Mam?

SYRACUSE

She can't see you now. But she
will soon -

ANNIE

Where's Ondine?

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM. MORNING.

Ondine, wandering the corridors. She sees Vladic, lying on a trolley in a small room.

She walks inside the door.

VLADIC

Close it.

She closes it behind her.

VLADIC (CONT'D)

I thought you were dead.

ONDINE

So why are you here?

VLADIC

I live in hope.

He smiles.

VLADIC (CONT'D)

It's the last thing to die, you know that? An old woman told me.

ONDINE

I wished you were dead.

VLADIC

None of us are that lucky. So the sea spat you out, did it?

ONDINE

It can swallow me again.

VLADIC

We don't belong here, do we?

ONDINE

So. Go home.

VLADIC

I can't. Police want to talk to me.

ONDINE

About what?

VLADIC

She came from nowhere. Drunk. They should talk to her. Not me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE
You tell them that.

VLADIC
I will. Then you'll tell me -

A nurse enters. He clams up.

ONDINE
Nothing.

She leaves.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM. DAY.

Ondine, Syracuse and Annie.

ANNIE
You know how the story ends?

ONDINE
It ends with you getting better.

ANNIE
Yeah. I get that bit. But the other story.

She takes Ondine's hand.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I had a dream. You were sad,
somewhere far away.

SYRACUSE
How far?

ANNIE
But it was near too...

ONDINE
You should rest -

ANNIE
I've been resting all my life.

EXT. GRAVEYARD. DAY.

A coffin, being lowered into a grave. A crowd of townspeople gathered.

Maura is in a wheelchair now. Syracuse stands beside her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAURA

He had a wife and three children
in Scotland.

SYRACUSE

And where are they now?

MAURA

They said we're welcome to him.

SYRACUSE

I'm sorry it happened like this.

MAURA

I can't take it in.

SYRACUSE

I know. It's hard. Why aren't you
blaming me?

MAURA

Because for once you had nothing
to do with it.

SYRACUSE

Why do I feel as if I did?

MAURA

Because you're circus. You get
everything wrong.

As the service finishes, people come up to shake Maura's
hand.

MAURA (CONT'D)

I'm the official widow now. How
about that, Circus?

They shake his hand too.

SYRACUSE

What does that make me?

MAURA

Take Annie home, when she's
stronger. Till I get out of this
thing. I can't cope.

SYRACUSE

Okay.

MAURA

It's what you always wanted, isn't
it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SYRACUSE

Yes.

MAURA

So. You've got it. But I don't
want that woman there.

She tries to turn her wheelchair.

MAURA (CONT'D)

And take me to his wake now.

SYRACUSE

I can't.

MAURA

I insist.

She tries to turn her wheelchair. Circus takes the arms.

MAURA (CONT'D)

No motors for me, huh?

INT. PUB. DAY.

Syracuse pushes Maura's wheelchair into the crowded pub.

MAURA

Two jemmys and ice.

SYRACUSE

I don't -

MAURA

For old time's sake -

The barman pours. Maura takes both glasses. Hands one to
Syracuse. As she drinks.

MAURA (CONT'D)

Get rid of her, circus.

SYRACUSE

Who?

MAURA

Your water baby. She brings good
luck. Then bad.

He stares at his drink. Then downs it.

SYRACUSE

You think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAURA

I know. Two more, Tommy -

And Syracuse is away.

EXT. CARAVAN. DAWN.

Syracuse stands outside the caravan, with a half empty bottle in his hand. He has been drinking all night.

SYRACUSE

My name's Circus...

He throws the bottle into the sea. Goes up to the caravan door.

INT. CARAVAN. DAWN.

Ondine, sleeping on the pull out bed. The crash of the opening door wakes her.

ONDINE

Syracuse.

SYRACUSE

That's my name.

ONDINE

Why are you looking at me like that?

SYRACUSE

Because you're a selkie. And I'm an alcoholic -

He grabs her by the hand.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Come on.

ONDINE

Where are we going?

SYRACUSE

Home.

EXT. BOAT. MORNING.

The boat is ploughing through the early morning waves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

It's where we met.

ONDINE

What?

SYRACUSE

It's called the Mackerel bank.

He points. His mind is frazzled with the night's drinking.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

That your home? Down there?

He looks at a dark patch in the water, speeding by.

ONDINE

No.

SYRACUSE

Only kidding. I know where your home is. What did Annie call it? The most perfect place?

The finger of seal rock, jutting out of the ocean, in the distance.

ONDINE

Perfectest -

SYRACUSE

The sanctuary. You can sing your song.

ONDINE

Who'll I sing it to?

SYRACUSE

To me.

He pulls her close to him.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Go on. Make the seals dance.

ONDINE

I can't.

SYRACUSE

Why not?

ONDINE

Because you're drunk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He guides the boat on.

SYRACUSE

You can sing it in the morning.
I'll be sober then.

EXT. SKELLIG ROCK. DAY.

He is guiding the boat towards the Skellig Rock. We see the colonies of gannets wheeling, the seals lying on the low rocks above the water.

SYRACUSE

No tourists today. Have it all to ourselves.

As he puts the boat into reverse, edges it towards the landing dock.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

I fished round here for years,
never knew this Selkie stuff. Just
saw the gannets hitting the water.
The tourists, climbing the rock.

He helps her step onshore.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

So you're safe here, is that
right?

ONDINE

So your daughter says.

SYRACUSE

Safe from prying eyes. From your
gentleman.

He stays on the boat.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

And if you see my net coming
towards you again, give it a wide
berth...

ONDINE

What do you mean?

SYRACUSE

I mean your kind and our kind
weren't made for each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And he grips the line, places one foot back on the boat and shoves it away. As it lurches off from the dock, Ondine grasps what's happening. Too late.

ONDINE

No, Syracuse...

SYRACUSE

I'm sorry. It didn't work out.
It's not how fairytales end.

He guns the boat, away, leaving her there. She screams.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

But this one does...

He drives the boat through the waves, tears in his eyes. We can see her diminishing behind him, eventually indistinguishable from the colonies of seals on the rocks.

INT. SYRACUSE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

He wheels his daughter into his own house. He is blissfully happy and heartbroken at the same time.

ANNIE

Why are you crying?

SYRACUSE

I'm not.

ANNIE

Yes you are.

SYRACUSE

Maybe because you're back on the road again. You're here.

ANNIE

Where's Ondine?

SYRACUSE

Ondine... had to go away for a while.

ANNIE

That's why you're crying.

SYRACUSE

It's not. I swear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Did her husband come?

SYRACUSE

He must have.

ANNIE

Because she's gone. On sea
business.

Annie smiles, to herself, with some secret knowledge.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But she'll be back, you know.

SYRACUSE

You think so?

ANNIE

I know. She left something here.

SYRACUSE

What?

ANNIE

Her coat.

And Annie shakes her head slowly.

INT. BEEHIVE HUT. SKELLIG ROCK. NIGHT.

Ondine, lying on the stone floor. She is shivering.
Outside, the wind howls over the Atlantic.

INT. SYRACUSE'S HOUSE. MORNING.

Syracuse, waking on a improvised couch in front of the
television. He walks inside to his bedroom, where Annie
is sleeping. Finds her already awake.

SYRACUSE

Did you sleep?

ANNIE

Like a baby.

She gets up, walks into the livingroom.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But I'm not a baby, am I?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

You're meant to rest.

ANNIE

I'm fine. You have a remote?

EXT. BEEHIVE HUT. DAY.

The guide, leading another group of tourists up the ancient steps.

GUIDE

Were talking round the seventh,
eighth century. The monks lived
spent their lives here, in these
bee hive huts -

They peer in the entrance at -

ONDINE.

Asleep on the stone slabs.

TOURIST

What did they live on?

Ondine wakes.

GUIDE

Eh, you now. Fish... and...

ONDINE

Gull's eggs.

GUIDE

Those too...

INT. SYRACUSE'S KITCHEN. EVENING.

Syracuse, in the kitchen. Cooking something.

SYRACUSE

You want cheese with it?

INT. LIVINGROOM. EVENING.

Annie on an improvised bed on the couch, playing with a remote.

ANNIE

Cheese is good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She is flicking through the television channels. An icelandic group comes on one of the music channels, singing a song.

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING.

Syracuse hears the song. It is the song that Ondine sang. Then it abruptly stops, to be replaced by something else.

SYRACUSE

Annie - that song -

He walks into the livingroom, two plates in his hand.

ANNIE

What song -

She is already on another channel.

SYRACUSE

Just a minute ago -

She flicks back. The song floods the room.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

It's real...

ANNIE

Course it's real. It's Sigur Ros.

SYRACUSE

Sigur Ros.

ANNIE

From Iceland.

SYRACUSE

Iceland.

ANNIE

The country...

SYRACUSE

Okay...

He hands her the plate. He tries to hide what he is thinking from her.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Look, I have to go out for a while. I'll take you to your mother's -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

No.

SYRACUSE

Can't leave you here on your own.

ANNIE

You can. Don't you get it? I'm better -

SYRACUSE

Are you sure?

She nods, looking directly at him.

ANNIE

Where are you going?

SYRACUSE

I have to check my pots. Take an hour. Maybe two.

ANNIE

I've got my remote.

SYRACUSE

Okay.

He kisses her.

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. EVENING.

Syracuse's car screeches to a halt beside his boat. He jumps from the dock onto the boards of the deck. Guns up the engine.

EXT. SEA. EVENING.

His boat plowing through the waves. They are white crested, getting bigger now.

EXT. SKELLIGS. EVENING.

The rock, seen through the haze of spray. No sign of her.

EXT. SKELLIG STEPS. EVENING.

He runs up the steps, calling her name. No sign of her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A piece of paper wrapping blows in his face. From the picnic.

INT. BEEHIVE HUT. EVENING.

He rushes in. No sign of her. He calls.

SYRACUSE

ONDINE!!!!

He walks out again. And then sees something - on a rock, way down, near the water. A shape. Runs down towards it.

EXT. ROCK. EVENING.

Ondine, lying on the rock, looking out to sea. Syracuse runs up behind her.

ONDINE

There were seals. Basking on the rock here. My kind, huh?

SYRACUSE

I didn't say that.

ONDINE

No. But you thought it. Then the storm came up. They slipped into the water, one by one. I was going to join them.

SYRACUSE

What changed your mind?

ONDINE

What changed yours?

SYRACUSE

She was switching channels on the TV. Your song came on.

ONDINE

Was never my song. Sigur Ros.

SYRACUSE

So tell me.

ONDINE

No. Take me home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYRACUSE

Where is home?

ONDINE

Where do you think?

EXT. BOAT. DAY.

He is guiding the boat back.

SYRACUSE

Can you tell me the truth now?

ONDINE

The truth is I'm a creature from the sea who buried her seal coat because she found a family she liked.

SYRACUSE

Liar.

ONDINE

Pants on fire. You don't want to know the truth.

SYRACUSE

Try me.

ONDINE

Okay. I'm a prostitute and a drug mule from Romania.

SYRACUSE

I said the real truth.

ONDINE

That's the real truth. I was in a boat, with a pound of heroin in a backpack. The coastguards intercepted us. Vladic made me swim for it.

SYRACUSE

Vladic.

ONDINE

My selkie husband. My cousin. My pimp.

UNDERWATER -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The sun, refracted through the swelling waves. A woman dives through from above. It is Ondine. Wearing the short maroon dress we first saw her in. She swims underwater, for as long as her breath holds.

ABOVE WATER -

An inflatable. Vladic, with his hand to the tiller. Coastguard boats surround it.

IN THE DISTANCE -

We see Ondine, coming to the surface. She swims towards the distant shore, in long, purposeful strokes.

ONDINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was always a good swimmer.
Trained for competition once. But
your Irish waves wore me down.

ON ONDINE -

Swimming, getting tired. The backpack is hampering her stroke. She twists herself out of it, holds it under one arm, swims a dog paddle.

ONDINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I could see the land, but I was
getting tired. Tired of
everything. I swam till I could
swim no more. Then I floated. Then
I sank.

UNDERWATER -

Ondine, slipping below the surface. Her face is almost peaceful.

ONDINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was almost a relief. My life
was horrible, till then. I said,
here goes, I die...

A net coming towards her. Packed with teeming mackerel. It looks like a curtain dividing one world from the next. The package slips from her hand, floats downwards...

EXT. SYRACUSE'S BOAT. NIGHT.

Syracuse and Ondine. Coming towards Poulin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE

And that's the truth. You brought me back to life. I found a caravan, a family. And now it's gone, okay?

Coming into Poulin, we see the caravan, nestling in the bay.

SYRACUSE

Caravan's not gone. It's going nowhere.

EXT. SYRACUSE'S PLACE. NIGHT.

Syracuse opens the door of the car for Ondine.

SYRACUSE

Annie's going nowhere either. She's with me for a while.

At the door, he stops.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Just tell her you were away on sea business, okay?

ONDINE

Sea business.

INT. SYRACUSE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Annie, sitting on the couch by the television, with the remote in her hand. Syracuse and Ondine enter.

ANNIE

I told them nothing -

SYRACUSE

You told who?

Vladic comes in from the kitchen. He has been making himself a sandwich.

VLADIC

Not true, little girl. You told us about the seven tears and the selkie island and how Ondine came out of the water -

ANNIE

But nothing important I swear -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIC

Seven tears are important, surely.
And the Selkie island. Still some
details I'd like to get clearer -

He holds out the sandwich to her.

VLADIC (CONT'D)

You want to eat some?

And Syracuse goes for him.

SYRACUSE

Fuck you -

Syracuse grabs him round the neck, thrusts him back into
the kitchen.

Another man, Kettle, emerges and puts a gun in Syracuse's
face.

KETTLE

Who the fuck are you?

VLADIC

He's Circus the clown.

KETTLE

We've got seals and selkie islands
and a clown. Will someone start
making sense here?

He pushes Syracuse back into the room.

Ondine holds onto Annie, and screams at Vladic.

ONDINE

Guns Vladic? Are you crazy? You
think I'm not going to give you
what you came for? You bring a gun
into a house with a sick girl?

Vladic hits her repeatedly across the face. In a way that
tells us he has done this before.

VLADIC

You want seven slaps? To bring out
the seven tears? Huh?

ONDINE

You won't make me cry again -

VLADIC

You sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KETTLE

She the swimmer?

ONDINE

Yeah I swim like a fish -

KETTLE

Is she the one that lost it?

ONDINE

You'll get it back. Put that thing
away -

But he doesn't. Presses the barrel into the back of
Syracuse's neck.

KETTLE

Where is it?

SYRACUSE

Where is what?

ONDINE

Not here.

ANNIE

He wants her seal coat, da.

Vladic smiles.

VLADIC

Yes. I want her seal coat.

KETTLE

What fecking seal coat -

ANNIE

Don't give it to them -

ONDINE

We have to.

ANNIE

Means you'll go.

ONDINE

We don't know that.

ANNIE

I know it.

Ondine looks to Vladic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ONDINE

Tell her.

VLADIC

Tell her what.

ONDINE

You don't care about me.

VLADIC

I don't care about you.

ONDINE

All you want is the coat.

VLADIC

All I want is the coat.

ANNIE

What's he saying?

ONDINE

It's not important. Let him up.
Put that thing away. I'll show you
where.

VLADIC

Where?

ONDINE

It's not here. Behind the
caravan.... isn't that right,
Annie?

ANNIE

Yes. She buried it there.

ONDINE

We did.

ANNIE

I dug. You buried.

ONDINE

That's right.

She looks round at Vladic.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

You want me to show you?

EXT. CARAVAN. NIGHT.

Behind the caravan. Vladic has a shovel in his hand.

ONDINE

How many paces was it, Annie?

Annie looks at her without expression. Says softly.

ANNIE

Seven.

SYRACUSE

Come here, Annie -

Vladic looks to Kettle.

KETTLE

It's okay.

Annie walks over to her father. Ondine paces. Vladic begins to dig.

On the hole, as he digs.

VLADIC

How deep was it?

ONDINE

Two, three feet.

He keeps digging.

There is nothing there.

KETTLE

What the fuck -

ONDINE

It was there, I swear...

She checks the parameters. Paces it out again.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Annie?

Annie says nothing.

ONDINE (CONT'D)

Did you move it?

Vladic moves towards her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIC

Look at me little girl - don't
make me bite -

And Syracuse goes for him. Whips him to the ground.

KETTLE

Hey -

Kettle has the gun to his head.

ONDINE

Tell him Annie -

ANNIE

When the selkie man finds where
his selkie wife has buried her
coat, he digs it up and she
doesn't stay for seven years then.
She goes, she just goes --

ONDINE

Tell me where you moved it to,
Annie, before they hurt somebody -

ANNIE

I don't want you to go -

Ondine bends down to Annie.

ONDINE

If you tell them where you moved
it, I'll stay. I promise.

ANNIE

How long?

ONDINE

As long as you want. I'll get a
job on the fishing boats, whatever
-

ANNIE

Cross your heart?

ONDINE

Cross my heart and hope to die.

Annie says softly.

ANNIE

The lobster pot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VLADIC

Where?

ANNIE

The one for storage. Out there...

She points to the water.

EXT. WATER. NIGHT.

The five of them, on a small row boat. Syracuse points to a buoy.

SYRACUSE

There...

He reaches it. Pulls it out of the water, with the rope attached.

KETTLE

Give us here...

He begins to draw the pot. And there, lying among a few snapping lobsters, is the canvas bag, wrapped in a mane of seaweed.

KETTLE (CONT'D)

Water...

VLADIC

It was vacuum wrapped...

Kettle opens the package.

Annie looks down at the rope. It is tangled round Kettle's boot.

ON THE BAG -

Kettle's hand, opening the canvas cover. Inside, we see two sealed bricks of brown powder.

KETTL

Thanks, daughter...

ANNIE

It's not yours.

KETTLE

No?

ANNIE

You're not a selkie...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And she chucks the rope.

Kettle goes over the side, the rope unwinding as he falls.

Vladic tries to stop his fall. Upends the boat.

UNDERWATER -

The cement based lobster pot, sinking towards the bottom. Kettle is dragged down after it.

ANNIE -

Her body plunges through. She struggles... goes down...

ONDINE -

Diving in. She courses straight towards Annie.

ON ANNIE'S FACE -

In the water. Calm, almost peaceful. Ondine's hands reach her. Clasp around her neck, draw her towards the surface.

ABOVE WATER -

Vladic, struggling with Syracuse.

VLADIC

Can't swim - please -

Syracuse punches him once, twice, three times, viciously, in the face. Vladic goes under.

ANNIE - comes to the surface, gulping for air, in Ondine's arms.

Syracuse hooks an arm under Vladic, begins to swim with him towards the shore.

EXT. SHORELINE. NIGHT.

The shore lit by police searchlights. Annie, Ondine, Syracuse, sitting there, blankets around them. A ban garda brings them mugs of soup.

ANNIE

Did you find her coat?

The Ban Garda is confused. Ondine covers for her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONDINE

They found it. They have to
examine it. They need it for...

As the Ban Garda give Annie a mug of soup.

GARDA

Evidence.

Annie takes the soup.

ANNIE

It wasn't a coat, was it?

ONDINE

No, it wasn't.

ANNIE

I could never really imagine it. A
seal coat. With buttons and all. I
mean if a seal shed it's skin, it
would be all yucky. With seal fat
and blood and seawater. But
everything else made sense.

ONDINE

Did it?

ANNIE

Yes. He fished you from the water.
You stayed for seven years. That
all made sense. The seal coat
thing was pushing it a bit.

GARDA

Pushing what, love?

ANNIE

The story...

She sips her soup.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But I believed it for a while.
Because I wanted to. Didn't you?

INT. CONFSSIONAL. EVENING.

Syracuse there, with the priest.

SYRACUSE

...seven years, three months and
seventeen days.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The priest claps.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

It's okay, father, you don't have to clap.

PRIEST

So this isn't an AA meeting?

SYRACUSE

I don't know. The thing is, she's in front of the judge next week.

PRIEST

And?

SYRACUSE

She's a non-national, father.

PRIEST

And?

SYRACUSE

This is the confessional, father, we're not talking gossip here?

PRIEST

My lips are sealed.

SYRACUSE

Her solicitor has said she'll get deported. Unless..

PRIEST

Unless what?

SYRACUSE

Unless she becomes a national, father.

PRIEST

So, she has to apply to the department of justice...

SYRACUSE

Or. She gets married.

PRIEST

So who will she marry Syracuse?

SYRACUSE

Well, it's not like there's a queue, father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRIEST

And she can't marry me.

SYRACUSE

You're a priest father.

PRIEST

So I suppose that leaves you,
Syracuse. Is that wise?

SYRACUSE

What do you think, father?

PRIEST

Just to make her a national?

SYRACUSE

There are other reasons.

PRIEST

Are they good ones?

SYRACUSE

Depends on what you mean by good.

The priest laughs.

SYRACUSE (CONT'D)

Why are laughing?

PRIEST

Because that was funny.

EXT. POULIN HARBOUR. DAY.

Syracuse, Annie and Ondine, pulling lobster pots, on the
boat, close to the shore.

SYRACUSE

He laughed.

ONDINE

Well, it was funny.

ANNIE

Look -

ON THE LOBSTER POT -

Coming towards the surface. A small arm protruding from
it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Syracuse pulls the pot on board. Pulls out a porcelain doll. A sodden white dress, like a wedding dress.

THE END.