

DISCLAIMER
Chapter 7

Written by

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Based on
DISCLAIMER
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The different colours are used in the text to represent the multiple perspectives intertwined throughout the episodes.

In the show, each one of these perspectives will have its own cinematic style.

THE SOUND OF A SPOON STIRRING LIQUID -

Throughout Catherine's narrative, although visually we'll be witnessing her recollection of the events, with the exception of some sound effects and dialogue, the sound will remain in the present, as we hear the dialogue, breathing, and the sound effects from the interior of Stephen's kitchen, including the refrigerator's hum and rattle.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - HOTEL AUGUSTUS - FORTE DEI MARMI --
NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

Young Catherine, carrying her glass of wine, walks through the corridor that leads to her room. When she arrives at her door she juggles her glass as she slides the key in the lock.

She unlocks the door and enters the room.

INT. ADJACENT ROOM - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

Young Catherine enters the room carrying her glass of wine. She kicks the door closed behind her and moves on towards the connecting door to Nicholas's room. She peers inside the -

INT. TERRACE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

Nicholas is fast asleep, spread-eagle in his bed. He has kicked off his sheet and is lying with his arms up, hands against the pillow, in the way he did as a baby.

Young Catherine smiles and moves on to -

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

She shoves her shoes off her feet and walks towards the -

EXT. BALCONY - HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

It's already dark outside, she leans against the balustrade of the small balcony and looks at the world passing by, happily not wanting to be part of it.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

As soon as I got back to my room, the stranger immediately disappeared from my mind. I was happy.

She takes a sip of her wine.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I had had a special day with Nicholas. Robert hadn't been there, but I hadn't missed him that much.

The mild breeze carries the music from the trio on the terrace.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

The slight dread that I had felt when I'd awoken in the morning, of a long day ahead trying to keep Nicholas happy, had passed without even noticing, and I had slipped into just being with him.

She breathes deep, taking in the smell of the sea and the flowers.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I felt nourished and satisfied from a day of simple pleasures with my son.

Young Catherine smiles, taking it all in.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

A spoon stirs the tea in the dented mug, and when it's lifted, it forms a small swirl in the cloudy brown liquid. As the swirl subsides, six bubbles surface and spin around its centre.

CATHERINE (O.C.)

I do wonder if that was the last time I had been truly happy, if all the happiness after that has been a pretence.

Catherine looks into her mug, the bubbles slowing their spin. She looks at Stephen -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I was happy. Your wife managed to describe very accurately my hotel room, but she completely missed that simple fact.

Stephen is about to speak -

STEPHEN

Nancy-

CATHERINE

I'm talking!

Stephen is taken aback, he goes quiet like a scolded child. Catherine smiles and resumes talking, calm.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I've heard enough from you.

She sees the bubbles in her cup still floating on the surface of the tea.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

As I was saying, it's really impressive how the author got so many things right.

She takes the mug of tea -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Like your son's death.

Stephen looks at her with angry eyes.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- MORNING (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

The summer sun leaks through the gaps in the shutters, burning through surface in fragments, its bouncing light enlivening the dark room.

Young Catherine lays on her extremely disheveled bed, a badly wounded survivor, the bed and its chaotic linens the battlefield of an unjust massacre.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Your wife was right. I didn't sleep at all that night, and my whole body was aching.

4-Year-Old Nicholas enters, running from the adjoining room with more energy than the sun itself, he bounces on her bed -

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
Mummy! Mummy!

Young Catherine doesn't react, she lays inert, the bedsheets entangled around her.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
Nicholas was desperate to go to the beach. I didn't want to, I could barley move.

4-Year-Old Nicholas jumps on the bed and shakes her. She lays there pretending to smile, pretending to watch him.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
Is there a pool? I want to go to the pool. But not too deep.

YOUNG CATHERINE
(weak)
Hey, Angel...

Her angel's voice is like a hundred dentist drills rotating inside her head.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
Uhug... It smells yucky.

Young Catherine sits on the bed, every inch of her body in pain -

YOUNG CATHERINE
My tummy was funny last night. I think it was the pizza.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
Yes, it was the pizza. I farted too.

Young Catherine gets up feeling dizzy. She walks to the window and opens the shutters. She's assaulted by the intense blast of the sunlight that hurts her eyes.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- AFTERNOON
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

Young Catherine drags a small red and yellow plastic inflatable dinghy by a chord over the shallow surf that barely covers her calf.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

But we went to the beach, and the way I relented and bought Nicholas a dinghy.

4-Year-Old Nicholas captains the dinghy, excited by every bump that the arrival of each wave offers, chatting to himself, playing the part of all the members of the crew.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

A life-saver, I thought at the time. Keep him occupied so maybe I could rest. The night before had drained me.

It is very bright, the sun just past its zenith.

LATER -

Young Catherine drags the yellow dinghy through the sand up the beach. She reaches her tent at the first row of umbrellas.

She parks the dinghy under the shade and sits on the beach bed, suffocating in the heat. She reaches her arms out to her son -

YOUNG CATHERINE

C'mon, Angel. Time for a little nappy.

4-Year-Old Nicholas obliges and runs to his mother's arms. She takes him and places him on top of her. He opens his arms and embraces his mother. She caresses his hair.

The sound of the surf caressing the sand becomes sticky when traveling through the dense, hot and static air.

4-Year-Old Nicholas' body quickly grows heavier, and his head lolls against his mother's body, spit drooling from his open mouth. He has fallen asleep.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I was exhausted.

She closes her eyes.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I didn't mean to fall asleep. But I did.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine is lost in the past. She looks at the mug of tea that she holds in her hands, enjoying its warmth.

CATHERINE
I shut down.

Stephen looks at her, his arms crossed.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I closed my eyes and I fell asleep.

She looks at Stephen -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I only woke up because the wind had picked up, and I felt the sand that it carried piercing my skin.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- LATE AFTERNOON
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

The orange Lifeguard flag begins flapping, first slowly, but soon waving more aggressively, beaten by the wind. The umbrellas of the club also shake as the wind hits with more sand.

Young Catherine opens her eyes.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
Immediately I felt the lack of weight on my body.

She bolts upright and turns, looking for 4-Year-Old Nicholas -

YOUNG CATHERINE
Nicholas?

She stands up -

YOUNG CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Nicholas!

She looks around, along the umbrellas, but there's no sign of her son -

YOUNG CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Nicholas!

Then, she looks at the place where the dinghy had been parked. A light imprint over the sand makes a path down the beach. She follows it with her sight and discovers -

OUT AT SEA -

4-Year-Old Nicholas on the little red and yellow dinghy, floating in the shallows, happily being bounced around by the sea.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

The sea was rough, but Nicholas was still smiling. There were others in the water, but no one seemed aware of him.

BACK ON THE BEACH -

Catherine marches towards the water, anxiety building inside her, her eyes never leaving 4-Year-Old Nicholas. She walks fast, raising her arm and calling -

YOUNG CATHERINE

(shouting)

Nicholas!

OUT AT SEA -

The growing waves rock the boat back and forth, but still Nicholas is smiling, happy.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

He was lost in his own little world.

She runs towards the sea -

YOUNG CATHERINE

(shouting)

Nicholas! Nicholas!

OUT AT SEA -

But he doesn't look up. The wind comes up, and the once frisky waves grow rough, as they swell and tug at the boat, the sea pulling it out further, to where the ocean becomes dark.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
***The waves became bigger and the
boat was bouncing. He was being
pulled further out to the sea.***

BACK ON THE BEACH -

Young Catherine runs into the surf, splashing the water with
her every step -

YOUNG CATHERINE
(shouting)
Nicholas!

She runs further into the water, shouting -

YOUNG CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Help!

When the water reaches her waist and the treacherous currents
begin to make her body sway, she stops, thwarted by the sea.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
***When the water reached my waist, I
froze.***

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine pauses, embarrassed by her memory.

CATHERINE
I was scared. I'd always been
frightened of the sea and I was
certain that if I swam after him we
would both drown.

Stephen looks at her, his eyes judging.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Have you noticed how it is always
men who drown rescuing children?
Not women. Fathers not thinking
about themselves, just driven on by
blind courage.

Stephen is uninterested in agreeing with her or not.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
There must be women who have done
it, but I can't remember reading
about them.
(MORE)

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

So, I'm not quite alone in lacking
the bravery to have gone in after
my son that day.

A car cruises the street, its headlights travel through the
sitting-room walls.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I keep asking myself, if it had been a
burning building, or a madman pointing
a gun, would it have been different.
Would I have found the courage then?

The headlights expand to the ceiling, spraying the sitting-
room with shadows that stretch and dance.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Would I have run through fire? Or
jumped in front of a bullet for
Nick...? The sea thwarted me.

The lights disappear as the car roams away down the street.
The room is back in silence. Catherine looks straight into
Stephen's eyes -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

In any event, I didn't risk my own
life for my child. And that is
something I have to live with. I
put my life first.

She takes a small sip of her tea -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

And then I saw him.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- LATE AFTERNOON
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Young Catherine screams, shivering, terrified. She turns
around, lost in the waves. And sees -

JONATHAN. He's racing down the beach and keeps on running as
he reaches the sea, splashing water with every stride.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

**He was running down the beach
towards me, and as soon he reached
the sea, he dove into the waves.**

He brushes her aside as he runs past, and dives like a lifeguard into the waves.

YOUNG CATHERINE
(screaming)
No!!!

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine's face is pained as she recalls -

CATHERINE
The word left my mouth before I
could stop it. I didn't want it to
be him. Anyone but him.

Stephen listens to her, intrigued.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- LATE AFTERNOON
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan swims with powerful strokes, allowing the current to propel him, for every wave to take him further away from the beach.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*I remembered how strong he was, and
I knew he would make it to Nicholas.
There would be no stopping him. I
also knew that I would have to be
grateful to him.*

4-Year-Old Nicholas' boat is heading fast out to sea,
becoming a speck in the distance.

IN THE SURF -

A line of people have gathered around Young Catherine, all gripped by the sight of the little boy bobbing dangerously out at sea and the young man striking out to reach him.

OUTLOOKER 1
Chiama il bagnino!

OUTLOOKER 2
Ha portato un bambino in clinica!

More people gather to watch the unfolding spectacle of a possible tragedy. An ENGLISH MOTHER puts her arm around Young Catherine.

OUT AT SEA -

Every new wave is about to tip over the tiny boat. Jonathan is getting closer to it, but he's attacked by waves going in different directions, hitting him in the face.

After many painful strides he finally reaches the boat and grabs its rope. He makes a fist around it and begins swimming back to shore.

IN THE SURF -

Young Catherine sighs, relieved. The PEOPLE around her cheer -

CROWD

Yay!

ENGLISH MOTHER

That boy is brave!

The English Mother squeezes Young Catherine's shoulder and smiles at her, but Young Catherine doesn't smile back, her eyes are locked on the action in the sea.

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan is swimming back, dragging the dinghy behind him. 4-Year-Old Nicholas sits rigid, gripping the boat handles as he's rattled about by the waves, staring towards the beach.

It is hypnotic.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine, holding her tea mug, speaks as if lost in her past
-

CATHERINE

I stood there, frozen. I watched him
swimming one-armed, pulling the boat
through the rough waves looking
heroic.

Stephen looks at her as she takes a sip of her tea, like a punctuation.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

But he was tired, and the sea had
become his enemy.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- LATE AFTERNOON
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan uses every muscle in his body to try to move
forward, but the current is no longer carrying him, it's
pushing him back instead.

IN THE SURF -

Around Young Catherine, voices raise with fear. A gabble of
Italian and then the English Father -

ENGLISH FATHER

He's in trouble, they need help!

Young Catherine witnesses in horror -

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan strokes and kicks but his immense effort is almost
futile. It seems as if he is swimming backwards, as if the
sea is adamant to keep her child.

IN THE SURF -

TWO ATHLETIC MEN in their late 20s join the group.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

***And then, two Italian men rushed
into the water and swam towards
them.***

As soon as they see what's happening, they rush into the
water and leap into the waves.

The crowd warns and celebrates -

OUTLOOKERS

*Bravo, ragazzi!... Stai attento,
Claudio!*

OUT AT SEA -

The Two Athletic Men stroke with vigour. They swim towards
the young man and the boy trapped in the sea.

One, a stronger swimmer, is ahead of the other. He is fast and the sea is helping him, sending him towards Jonathan and 4-Year-Old Nicholas.

The wind has joined forces with the sea and it whips the waves, bouncing the boat as if trying to tip 4-Year-Old Nicholas out.

The Strong Swimmer is approaching fast, swimming with uninterrupted strides.

Jonathan strides are growing weaker. He waves at the Strong Swimmer as his head sinks and he raises his arm. He comes up and takes a breath, coughing.

The Strong Swimmer finally reaches the boat and takes the rope from Jonathan's hand and, with no time for niceties, begins to pull the precious cargo towards the beach.

IN THE SURF -

For the first time, Young Catherine feels a sense of relief. The crowd cheers.

OUTLOOKERS (CONT'D)

*Bravo, Claudio!... Avanti,
Claudio!...*

OUT AT SEA -

The Second Rescuer meets the Strong Swimmer. He receives the cord from him and they swim together back to the shore, pulling the little boat.

IN THE SURF -

The LIFEGUARD comes from the club running and rushes into the water, he swims to join the rescue. OTHERS follow him.

OUT AT SEA -

The Lifeguard and the THRONG OF SWIMMERS have reached the Two Swimmers. They try to grab the rope, pulling the boat from them, but the Two Swimmers refuse, wanting to complete the feat by themselves.

IN THE SURF -

Young Catherine breathes relief as the swimmers reach the shallows, and the Lifeguard pulls the little boy out of the dinghy and carries him through the breaking waves toward the beach.

Young Catherine rushes through the water to meet the Lifeguard, she reaches out her arms for her son, but the Lifeguard keeps on striding towards the beach.

She follows next to him -

YOUNG CATHERINE
Nicholas!... Nicholas!...

When they reach the sand, the Lifeguard at last hands Young Catherine her son. She takes him from his arms -

YOUNG CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Nicholas!... Nick!... *Grazie...*
Grazie... Grazie...

Some people surround her as she goes to her knees and checks her son who cries inconsolably.

YOUNG CATHERINE (CONT'D)
It's OK... It's OK, my angel. Mummy
is here... Mummy is here...

LIFEGUARD
Stai Bene?... Good?

Young Catherine nods assertively, tears in her eyes. The Lifeguard leaves to join the Two Athletic Men that walk out of the water surrounded by a GROUP OF PEOPLE, celebrating and applauding -

OUTLOOKERS
Bravi, ragazzi!...

The Lifeguard approaches the Swimmers -

LIFEGUARD
Stai bene?

The Swimmers nod yes and collapse on the sand as soon as they reach firm land. They extend their arms up over the ground, recovering their breath after their heroic feat.

Young Catherine embraces her son, comforting him. People surround them smiling, speaking to her in Italian, stroking 4-Year-Old Nicholas's head.

Someone hands her a bottle of water, she pours some water on her hand and washes her son's face.

Then, she sees far off -

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan is almost a dot. The sea has pushed him further away, punishing him every time he tries to take a breath. He seems exhausted.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
Nicholas was safe on the shore.
Everyone was looking at him and the
two swimmers, no one was looking
at. They all assumed he was OK.

Jonathan RAISES his arm and waves to the shore but his head sinks down into the water. He tries again, desperate.

ON THE BEACH -

Without taking her eyes from the Jonathan at sea, Young Catherine caresses her son's head.

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan is loosing the battle against the waves.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine takes a new sip from the tea mug -

CATHERINE
Your wife was right, I did see your son struggling in the sea. And she was also right that I didn't say anything about it.

Stephen looks at her with bitter eyes.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- LATE AFTERNOON
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan is still raising his arm calling for help, the waves slapping him in the face,

ON THE BEACH -

Young Catherine keeps on looking at him.

OUT AT SEA -

Jonathan's diminished by the distance and the expanse of the sea. He screams for help -

JONATHAN

Heeelp!

ON THE BEACH -

Young Catherine looks at him, his screams are lost in the wind, the crashing of the waves and the chattering on the beach.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

*I saw your son struggling. His
screams were lost in the wind. And
I didn't do a single thing to help
him.*

OUT AT SEA -

Only the waves moving to their own rhythm.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine grows silent looking at her tea cup, remembering. Stephen looks at her, waiting for her full confession. Catherine looks up, at Stephen and -

CATHERINE

But only at first.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- LATE AFTERNOON
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

OUT AT SEA -

Nothing, except the sparkling waves. Then, two limbs re-appear with a splash.

ON THE BEACH -

Young Catherine raises her arm and points at the open sea -

YOUNG CATHERINE

There! Someone needs help!

But her screams are lost among the cheers of the people celebrating the prevention of a tragedy.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*My screams were lost among the
cheers of celebration.*

IN THE SEA -

The two arms in the distance appear to lose all strength.
Then, they disappear, again, into the water.

ON THE BEACH -

Young Catherine screams again, pointing.

YOUNG CATHERINE
Help! There!

The Woman next to her turns to look, and seeing Jonathan -

WOMAN
*Nel mare! Aiuto! Il ragazzo. Là!
Nel mare! Aiutalo!*

But the Men are busy with the Swimmers narrating their feat,
telling stories about the strong currents. The WOMAN runs
towards them, screaming louder, pointing into the sea -

WOMAN (CONT'D)
*Aiuto! Il ragazzo. Là! Sul mare!
Aiutalo!*

People turn and see Jonathan in the distance, fighting for
his life.

LIFEGUARD
La barca! Aiutami con la barca!

Everyone mobilises and rushes to the orange plastic boat
sitting on a stand next to the lifeguard's chair. They carry
it to the sea and push it through the waves.

The Lifeguard and two others jump into the boat and begin
rowing over the waves. A group of swimmers also follow and
the Lifeguard yells at them -

LIFEGUARD (CONT'D)
*Fermatevi! State indietro! State
indietro!*

The boat hurries into the sea.

Young Catherine kisses her son's face as she keeps on
watching -

OUT AT SEA -

The boat is rapidly approaching Jonathan who splashes, trying to stay afloat. Then, he disappears under the surface, as if swallowed.

The Lifeguard points in the direction where Jonathan disappeared, but he is nowhere to be seen.

A wave passes, and through its transparency the Lifeguard can see the body of Jonathan under the water. He points again, and the rowers follow his direction. Then -

The Lifeguard dives and disappears under the water. The two Rowers wait, expectant, but nothing seems to happen under the choppy surface.

ON THE BEACH -

Young Catherine watches in silence, the Crowd in expectation -

OUT AT SEA -

A few moments pass, marked by the splashes of the boat with every passing wave. Finally -

The Lifeguard resurfaces bringing Jonathan with him.

One of the Rowers throws him a rescue buoy, the Lifeguard takes hold of it while keeping Jonathan's head afloat. The Two Rowers pull the rescue buoy towards the boat.

ON THE BEACH -

The Crowd sighs in relief.

OUTLOOKER

Lo ha trovato!

OUT AT SEA -

When the Lifeguard reaches the boat, the Two Rowers lean over and pull Jonathan into the boat.

ON THE BEACH -

The Onlookers have followed every action and cheer -

OUTLOOKERS

L'hanno preso!... Lui sta bene!

Young Catherine also watches with a mix of relief and remorse. 4-Year-Old Nicholas chatters his teeth, his head buried in her chest.

Someone hands her a towel and she pulls it right up over her son's head, like a hood, protecting him.

OUT AT SEA -

The boat makes its way back to the beach, the rowers are strong and synchronised.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine takes a sip of her tea and continues her narrative. Stephen is all the time growing more impatient.

CATHERINE

So, they got him in the boat and they rowed back to the beach and everyone jumped into action.

EXT. BEACH - BAGNO PIERO - FORTE DEI MARMI -- LATE AFTERNOON (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

ON THE SHORE -

As the boat returns, people move into the shallows to receive them. From the boat, the Lifeguard yells at them -

LIFEGUARD

Chiamate l'ambulanza!... Chiamate l'ambulanza!

Two Onlookers race to the club.

Young Catherine follows every action as the boat arrives in the shallows and the Lifeguard steps out of the boat. Then, with the help of two Onlookers, they carry Jonathan's body to the beach.

OUTLOOKERS

*Apri un po' di spazio! ...
Spostatevi tutti!*

They carefully lay Jonathan on the sand and the Lifeguard immediately tries the kiss of life. He blows into his mouth and follows by pumping his chest.

ON YOUNG CATHERINE -

An English mother presses against Young Catherine's ear and whispers -

ENGLISH WOMAN
Don't let him see.

Young Catherine turns her body, shielding 4-Year-Old Nicholas from the view.

ON JONATHAN -

The Lifeguard keeps on blowing into Jonathan's mouth and pumping his chest.

People, mostly men, surround them, curious. Hopeful to witness a tragedy.

ON YOUNG CATHERINE -

Other people, mostly Women, have joined to form a barrier and protect the child from seeing the body of the man who just saved him.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
You're hurting me.

Young Catherine realises how hard she is pressing her son against her. The English Woman touches Catherine's arm -

ENGLISH WOMAN
(whispering)
You should take him back to your hotel.

Young Catherine nods.

ENGLISH WOMAN (CONT'D)
Where's your stuff?

She points to her tent, and the woman goes to gather the stuff. Young Catherine talks to her son, calm, as if nothing had just happened -

YOUNG CATHERINE
Shall we go and see if the hotel
will do you a hot chocolate?

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
Yeah.

Through the legs of the Women shielding them Young Catherine sees -

A FEW METERS AWAY -

The Lifeguard still trying mouth-to-mouth and pumping Jonathan's chest again. And again. And Again.

There is silence. Only the omnipresent sound of the waves admonishing the world of the sea's indomitable might.

A Man stands behind the Lifeguard and rests his hand on his shoulder. The Lifeguard tries to resuscitate Jonathan one more time and the Man shakes his shoulder -

MAN

Maurizio...

The Lifeguard STOPS and looks up, defeated and confused. Perplexed by his own powerlessness. The Crowd gasps, overwhelmed by Death's deep shadow.

ON YOUNG CATHERINE -

Young Catherine gets up with her son in her arms. She thanks the people gathered around her -

YOUNG CATHERINE

Grazie... Grazie...

She walks up the beach carrying her son. She looks over her shoulder one last time and sees -

Jonathan lying on the sand, his face turned up and his mouth open. He is covered with two towels. Dead.

Young Catherine keeps on walking, holding tight to her 4-Year-Old son.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Later that day, all that Nicholas said about the event was that he was freezing, but he didn't seem to be aware that he could've drowned.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine reflects on this -

CATHERINE

He never said he was scared. But I was. I still am.

Stephen listens in silence, anger and indignation brewing inside him.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Perhaps he just felt cold and he'd wanted to get back to the beach, then, a stranger came and rescued him. Simple as that.

She sips from her tea -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

He never mentioned the incident again. Ever.

Stephen's anger builds in his eyes -

STEPHEN

I don't care about what your son felt. I don't care if he was cold. My son was dead.

Catherine nods and puts the mug back on the table -

CATHERINE

Yes. He was dead.

Stephen jaws tenses as an answer. He explodes.

STEPHEN

What kind of monster are you? How could you just walk away like that, feeling nothing after all you...

He tries to get up but -

SLAP!

Catherine slaps the table with great force, shaking the mugs splattering some of the coffee -

CATHERINE

Sit down!

The frail old man is startled, he goes back to his seat. Catherine takes a breath and resumes talking, calmly -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I'm not finished.

She takes her cup and takes a sip.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You have to to understand what happened the night before.

She puts the mug back on the table and speaks directly to Stephen -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Your wife based her book on a few
photographs.

She speaks with ardent conviction -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
But photographs are not reality.
Photographs are a point of view, a
minuscular fragment of time and space.

She looks at Stephen eyes -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
A photograph's meaning depends on
the story the viewer tells.

EXT. BALCONY - HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Young Catherine takes a last long breath of warm air,
finishes her wine and goes back into the room

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*The night before your son's death,
I was happy. More than happy,
joyous*

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Young Catherine closes the balcony doors behind her. It is
dark with the shutters closed, the only light comes from one
bedside table.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*When I got back to my room I was
ready for a shower, and falling
asleep reading my book. It was
still early, but I was tired.*

She begins pulling off her top. She has just pulled it over
her head when she sees something out of the corner of her eye
-

*CATHERINE (V.O.)
I smelled him before I saw him. His
aftershave was revolting. Aggressive.*

She turns to look, her arms half-in, half-out of the sleeves, held in front of her like a straitjacket -

Through the darkness she can see someone standing in front of the shut door. Tall and broad, with a rucksack over his shoulder: Jonathan.

She hears the jangle of a key in his hand.

*CATHERINE (V.O.)
I realized that I must have left
the key in the door when I opened
it, trying not to spill the wine.*

She pulls her arms out of the sleeves and holds her top in front of her, trying to cover herself.

Before she can shout his large hand is over her mouth.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine is looking straight into Stephen's eyes looking back at her suspiciously -

CATHERINE
I could taste his sweat. I can
still taste his sweat.

Catherine's tone is different now, there's anger in it -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I don't know what it tasted of....
Fear, probably it was excitement.

She takes a sip of her tea.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Young Catherine tries to hit him, but Jonathan's other hand grabs her hand. Her top falls to the floor.

She struggles, trying to pull her hands away, but he pulls out a PENKNIFE and puts his finger to his lips as he glances at the open door to Nicholas's room.

Young Catherine freezes, terrified.

Jonathan rests the point of the knife over her breast and runs it over her bra until it reaches under the cup, then he presses it lightly.

Young Catherine gasps, but Jonathan's other hand grabs her by the throat and he drags her with him towards the door of Nicholas's room and closes it.

He presses his hand on her throat -

JONATHAN

If you make a sound, I will slash
your face and then your son's.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine is looking at Stephen, but her eyes are living in the past -

CATHERINE

I was surprised when I heard him
speak.

Her awareness returns to the room -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Earlier that day, when I had been
aware of him looking at me, and
when he smiled at me, I had
imagined his voice different.

She looks at Stephen -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I thought it would be gentle.

Stephen tries to grasp what she's saying.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

And I felt ashamed. Shame of me for
assuming that I was being admired. I
was so stupid. I had assumed that his
desire was harmless. Playful even.

Catherine's face fills with regret -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

But it wasn't desire. It was hate.

Stephen is impatient, skeptical -

STEPHEN
But the photographs...

Catherine looks at him -

CATHERINE
Yes, we're getting there, you dirty
fuck. To the photographs...

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Jonathan takes the knife and runs it down the inside of his arm - a straight line, then he follows it with another line forming a cross, clean and red.

Then, he holds his arm out to Young Catherine. She turns her face away, but he grabs her by the hair and puts her mouth on the bloody cross -

JONATHAN
Lick it, you bitch!

Then, he pushes her away towards the bed and walks over to the door leading to Nick's room and leans against it.

Young Catherine looks at him in despair, his blood smeared on her face.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Undress.

He moves away from the door and walks across the room, his eyes never leaving her -

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Take it off.

He points to her bra with his knife. She's paralysed.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Take it off!

She's startled. She pulls down the straps slowly, trying to delay the action. Then, as she reaches behind to undo it -

She LUNGES for Nick's door and tries to get to the other side, but Jonathan grabs her by the shoulder and turns her around and -

He SLAPS her across the face, HARD. She falls to the floor.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*I had never been hit like that
before. I was stunned, my teeth
crunched and my ears were ringing.*

Jonathan grabs her by the hair and cowers. He brings his mouth close to her ear -

JONATHAN
If you try to do that again, or you
scream, I'll fucking slash you and
your fucking son. I'll mark your
fucking faces for life.

Young Catherine is terrified, tears running down her eyes.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Do you understand, you little
bitch? And I don't give a fuck if
I'm caught.

Young Catherine nods, suppressing a scream. Then, a small voice -

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS (O.C.)
(from adjacent room)
Mummy? Mummy?

Jonathan grabs Young Catherine by the hair and lifts her up holding his knife, point up, under her chin.

JONATHAN
You better get him back to sleep.

Young Catherine hesitates, then -

YOUNG CATHERINE
It's OK, darling. Ssh, go back to
sleep.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS (O.C.)
(from adjacent room)
You promised to keep the door open,
Mummy...

4-Year-Old Nicholas is getting upset.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS (O.C.) (CONT'D)
(from adjacent room)
So open the door.

Jonathan presses his knife against her chin and hisses in her ear -

JONATHAN
Shut him the fuck up.

Young Catherine takes a t-shirt from the chair and goes towards the door, Jonathan stays hidden against the wall, next to it. She opens the door towards the -

INT. ADJACENT ROOM - HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT
(2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

She enters and tries to shut the door behind her, but Jonathan quickly jams his foot in the doorway.

He's concealed behind the door, but she can see him watching. She walks towards 4-Year-Old Nicholas's bed and sits down next to him. She strokes his hair.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
What's that smell?

YOUNG CATHERINE
Oh, just some smelly stuff from the hotel. I had a shower.

She kisses his forehead.

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS
Pooh. Stinks.

She tries to smile.

YOUNG CATHERINE
Go to sleep, darling. I'm here. I'm going to bed now too.

4 YEAR OLD NICHOLAS
You said you'd keep the door open.

She can feel the door opening behind her, pressing her to get 4-Year-Old Nicholas back to sleep.

YOUNG CATHERINE
Yes I know. I'm sorry. Look. It's open now.

He fights to keep his eyes open. She turns and sees Jonathan at the door looking at her. He shows her his knife. She presses on -

YOUNG CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Shh, ssh, sweetheart, go back to sleep.

She carries on stroking his hair until, at last, his eyes win and they finally close.

Jonathan moves behind Young Catherine, standing over her and 4-Year-Old Nicholas, looking down at the small boy. Then, he comes closer to Nicholas and moves his knife over his sleeping eyes.

Young Catherine is terrified, she holds her breath, desperate as Jonathan moves his knife from left to right, the blade hovering over the little boy's lashes.

She gently places her hand on his arm and looks at the other room, as if signaling him to come with her. Then, she stands up and moves towards the door.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine's distress over recounting the events is obvious -

CATHERINE

If Nick had woken... I don't know what your son would have done.

Stephen looks at her, angry.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

So, I was relieved when he walked out of Nick's room and I felt your son following me.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Young Catherine exits the adjacent room and waits for Jonathan to exit it as well, then -

YOUNG CATHERINE

(softly)

Shut the door.

He smiles and closes the door. Then, he walks closer to her -

JONATHAN

That's better. Now where were we?

She waits, pondering her next move. He takes out his camera from his rucksack on the floor and hangs it round his neck, always looking at her.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
(as if remembering)
Yes. Take the shirt off.

She begins pulling her T-shirt off, slowly, trying to buy some time.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*When he took out the camera, I
remember thinking: "is he was
planning to blackmail me?".*

As she pulls her T-shirt over her head she hears the click of the camera. She freezes.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*I wanted to win him over. I didn't
want him to hurt Nicholas. I thought
maybe he just wanted to look. But I
didn't know what to do. Was I
supposed to pose?*

She stands in her knickers, plain white and modest covering her breasts with her arms.

He brings his camera down and looks at her, disappointed. He goes over to the chest of drawers and opens the top drawer and rifles through it.

He takes out a set of red underwear.

JONATHAN
Put these on.

He throws the set onto the bed. She looks at the red bra and knickers on the bed, mortified.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Now!

She takes the bra first and turns around. She puts it on keeping her back to Jonathan.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*I was appalled. He chose the
underwear that Robert had bought me
for the holiday.*

Then, always giving her back to Jonathan, she quickly slips down her white knickers and, faster still, she pulls up the red ones.

JONATHAN
Turn around!

She turns, her arms covering her breasts and groin.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Sit down on the bed.

She sits down on the bed, afraid. He places his eye behind his camera's viewfinder -

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Sit back a bit. Relax.

She leans back and puts her arms behind her, her knees locked.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Open your legs.

She doesn't want to.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Open them!

She opens them, tentatively. He looks up from the camera with angry eyes -

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
More!

She opens her legs further.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Grab one tit.

She brings one hand to her breast.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Under the bra!

She slips her hand under it.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Pinch your nipple.

He sits down on a chair and looks at her.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Are you pinching your nipple?

Young Catherine shakes her head yes.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Good. Now, put your hand in your
knickers.

Young Catherine's takes a big breath, her face decomposes,
she closes her eyes and shuts her lips. Humiliated she puts
her hand inside her pants.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Be nice to yourself.

She begins to move the hand inside her pants. Jonathan puts
his eye to his camera and waits.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Put your fingers inside.

Jonathan shouts behind his camera -

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Are your fucking fingers inside?

Young Catherine wants to cry, she nods yes.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Move them faster. Make yourself
come.

She moves her fingers faster under her pants.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
*But I pretended to move my fingers
inside myself. He put his eye to
his camera and I heard the click,
click, click begin, and the whine
of the zoom as he came closer.*

Jonathan, his eye behind the viewfinder, clicks the camera
over and over as he operates the zoom.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK...

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine speaks, angered and ashamed of her memories -

CATHERINE
I didn't fight. I did exactly what he
asked.

(MORE)

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I parted my lips, gasped, bit my top lip, groaned and moaned, hoping that he would believe me.

Stephen looks at her, resisting believing her words -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Then I heard a groan and a sigh and I waited, I was afraid to move.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Young Catherine's head is tilted back and her eyes are shut. The clicks of the camera stop, instead a dying moan.

Young Catherine waits with her hand inside her pants, not daring to move, hearing Jonathan's sighs that turn into heavy breaths.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

And I thought that's all he wanted.

Slowly, she takes her hand out of her pants and cautiously turns to look at him.

He is sitting down on the chair, he looks relaxed, spent. The camera is hanging round his neck but there's no sign of the knife.

Young Catherine swallows and speaks with a broken voice -

YOUNG CATHERINE

Please. Please go now. Please.

And suddenly, Jonathan's expression changes, his relaxation gives place to rage and he gets up.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I'd made a mistake. I shouldn't have said that. I should've pretended it was what I'd wanted too.

Young Catherine looks with alarm as he takes his knife and walks towards her. He grabs the side of her pants and pulls it with force and cuts it with his knife.

Instinctively, Young Catherine holds the fabric from falling, but he grabs her hand and pulls it, shoving it down the front of his shorts. His pants are wet.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine's eyes are filled with disgust.

CATHERINE

His smell was disgusting. He grabbed
my hand and shoved it down his pants.
He was wearing those green shorts
your wife describes in the book.

Stephen reacts in shock.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

And I felt him getting hard again,
and I knew it wasn't over.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Jonathan forces Catherine by her hair to look at him. Then,
he smiles at her as he pulls her hand away.

JONATHAN

Not yet.

She looks at him, distressed.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Turn over.

YOUNG CATHERINE

No, please don't...

Jonathan looks at her, waiting.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

*I felt sick with terror. Panic.
Fear for my little boy, but also
for myself.*

She starts to cry.

CATHERINE

*I hoped that somewhere he would
feel pity for us.*

But Jonathan walks over to the door adjoining Nick's room.

JONATHAN
Shall we play noughts and crosses
on your little son's face?

Panic rushes over Young Catherine and she stops her tears -

YOUNG CATHERINE
No, no, no. Please. I'm sorry, I'm
sorry.

He stands next to Nicholas's door and touches the door knob,
always looking at her.

YOUNG CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Please. Please, come back.

He looks at her as if pondering, then, he smiles and walks
back to her.

JONATHAN
Turn over.

Young Catherine complies and lays, face down, over the bed.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
On all fours.

Young Catherine closes her eyes with a sense of dread she has
never felt before, and, slowly, she gets on her hands and
knees. Her pants are only hanging by a thread.

He approaches her from behind and pulls them off.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Turn around so I can see your face.

She turns her head.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Smile.

Young Catherine feigns a smile.

Jonathan takes a picture of her. Then, he drops his camera on
the floor and pulls his shorts down.

He grabs one of Young Catherine's hands and pulls it over her
back, holding it there, pushing her. Her face falls over the
bed and -

She groans in pain as she feels him transgressing her body,
crushing her dignity, her soul.

With every push he makes, her face is squeezed against the bed. With every push, a groan charged with ignominy, humiliation and pain.

*CATHERINE (V.O.)
And in the midst of it all, all I
could think was: how do I get him
away from Nick.*

Until she goes quiet, as if dead.

JONATHAN
Why have you stopped?

He pushes into her harder.

*CATHERINE (V.O.)
I didn't realized I had. And then I
heard this sound, like an animal,
and it was me.*

Young Catherine groans in pain.

*CATHERINE (V.O.)
My wrists were aching, I felt pain
all over my body.*

And he pushes again, and again. Faster all the time.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine's eyes are filled with rage. She stares impassively at Stephen who looks at her in stunned silence.

CATHERINE
Then, he turned me over and kissed
me. I could taste his teeth and his
spit, they were bitter and revolting.
I could also smell his aftershave.
Disgusting and thick.

She looks at Stephen and speaks to him, accusatorially -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
The same after shave I smelt on you
at the hospital.

Stephen is taken aback and lowers his eyes, guilty, self conscious. Catherine looks at him for a moment, then, she takes her tea from the table.

Stephen follows the cup as she lifts it, brings it to her mouth and takes a small sip.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Then, he pressed his knee really hard into my thigh and pushed into me again, hard. And it was quickly over and he collapsed on top of me.

She leaves the cup back on the table.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

He stayed there on top of me, and I was trapped. I couldn't move and I was thinking; "Please god, let it be over"

She pauses for a moment. The siren of an ambulance howls in the distance.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

But he started again.

She looks straight at Stephen, straight at camera -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Did I fight? No. Did I scream? I couldn't.

Catherine's eyes go back to her painful past.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

All you need to know is that he raped me again. And then, again.

The ambulance howl fades in the distance as she feels every word she says.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

For three and a half. He brutalised me for three and a half hours.

She looks at Stephen who looks back at her guiltily.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

And finally, he had had enough.

Two cats begin fighting a few gardens away.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - HOTEL AUGUSTUS -- NIGHT (2001)

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Jonathan lays on top of Young Catherine on the completely unmade bed, there's blood smeared on the bedsheets. He is panting, recovering his breath.

She's completely still, her eyes open, but catatonic.

He separates from her and sits at the table, he pulls his shorts up. Catherine rolls to one side and curls her legs in pain.

The SOUND of cats fighting in the distance.

Jonathan picks up his camera from the floor and walks to Young Catherine's side and rolls her onto her back. She seems lifeless, like a puppet.

He points his camera at her face -

JONATHAN
Look at me... smile!

Young Catherine half opens her eyes and her mouth, she is lost in a universe of grief.

Jonathan takes the picture. And takes Young Catherine's hand and smiles at her -

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Thank you. That was nice.

Then, he leans down, and kisses her on her forehead.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
And I wanted him to die.

He calmly walks away and exits the room.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine challenges Stephen with her eyes, and her words -

CATHERINE
Yes, that night I would have given
anything to watch him die.

He looks at her, anxious. On the street, the cat fight still goes on.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
So, when he drowned, I walked away.
That is the truth. I can't pretend
to be sorry for that.

STEPHEN
I don't believe you.

CATHERINE
What is what you don't believe?

Stephen gets agitated.

STEPHEN
You're lying! You have no proof!

Catherine just looks at him, challenging him -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
If what you're saying is true, why
didn't you tell Nancy when you met
her?

Catherine looks at him, surprised.

CATHERINE
Why I didn't tell your wife that I
had been raped by the son that she
had lost?

Stephen is taken aback by this -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
What would have been the point?

He looks at her, surprised.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I haven't told anyone. In fact,
you're the first person I've ever
told any of this too.

She focus on him to emphasise -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
And the only reason I've told you
is because I want you to stop. I
want you to leave me and my son
alone.

She allows her statement fall on Stephen. He recoils.

STEPHEN
I-

CATHERINE
I can tell you the forensic
details, if you want.

Catherine takes her coffee mug -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
After he left, I emptied out a pot
of face cream and I pressed the jar
against my vagina. I pushed his
disgusting glob out of my body and
I screwed on the lid.

Uncomfortable, Stephen takes a sip of his tea.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I also took photographs of the
bruises on my thigh and the bite on
my neck, in case the police needed
it for evidence.

On the street, the cat fight delivers one last wild shriek
and goes quiet.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I didn't want to expose Nicholas
any further, and I didn't have the
strength to go to the police yet.
But I knew I had to, even if I knew
they would put in question every
single thing I told them. So I
postponed it for the following day.

Catherine pauses.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
But then he died.

Stephen looks at her, hoping to hear some redemption.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Thank God, I thought. He is dead. I
wouldn't have to prove myself
innocent to anyone. I don't have to
talk about it, to relive it if I
don't want to.

She takes a sip of tea -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I don't have to stand up in court
and be called a liar.

Catherine is upset -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

To be told that I had enticed this young man into my room. That I had known him. That he'd bought a drink in the hotel bar for me. That I had flirted with him. Just like your despicable book suggested.

Stephen looks down ashamed. She recalls with regret -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

So, I threw away the pot filled with his smegma, and when I developed the film of our holiday, I destroyed the photographs of my injuries and kept only the happy snaps of Nicholas, Robert, and me.

Catherine quickens her pace, summing up the rest of the events.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

And, if you must know, when I was back in London, I discovered that I was pregnant.

Stephen reacts with surprise at this.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

It could've been Robert's baby, and we wanted another child so badly, but not knowing if the child's father was the man who raped me, I terminated.

Stephen is wounded by the last comment.

Catherine takes a long sip from her tea and, as she begins to bring the cup down, she freezes with the awareness of her own dizziness.

She looks at her cup, and then at Stephen -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

What did you put in my tea?

Stephen looks at her and remains quiet. She tries to put the cup back on the table but it falls on the floor smashing into pieces.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

What did you put in it, you crazy fuck?

She grabs the knife and pushes herself up. She manages to stand, knocking back her chair. She fights her grogginess, holding herself up with the table and -

She charges against Stephen, but after two steps, she drops the knife and collapses to the floor, hitting her head on the table's edge as she falls.

Stephen gets up and walks over to her. He looks at Catherine on the floor for a moment, then, he holds onto the table as he cowers down.

He examines Catherine. She is semi-conscious and anxiously mumbling, a string of blood runs down a small cut on her forehead. He picks up the knife.

He goes to the sink and drops the knife there. Then, he takes a kitchen towel and goes back to Catherine. He cowers down again and places the kitchen towel against her cut.

Catherine looks at him with groggy eyes, mumbling.

STEPHEN

Shhh. Don't fight it. You're going to fall asleep, but you'll be fine.

Stephen wraps the towel around her head -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I'm going back to the hospital.
Now.

Catherine looks at him, terrified under her drowsiness.

CATHERINE

(fainting)

No.

He makes a knot in the towel and, holding a chair, he gets up. He leans against the counter to regain his breath and looks at Catherine laying on the floor next to the table -

STEPHEN

Yes. I'm going to finally put an end to all of this.

CATHERINE

No!

He takes his phone from his pocket and dials a number as he walks towards the -

INT. ENTRANCE - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Stephen has his phone against his ear. He turns on the light in the small corridor that leads to the front door.

STEPHEN
Hello? Could you please send a cab
to 35 Wellington Road?... E17
6LS... Thanks.

He takes his jacket that is hanging on the wall, picks up his keys from the small entrance table and opens the door to exit.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- DAWN.

Stephen exits his house and closes the door behind him. Then, he walks to the edge of the street and stands there, waiting.

After a moment, the headlights of a mini-cab appear from the corner and it drives towards him. He lifts his arm to make himself be seen.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- DAWN

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

Catherine is laying on the floor. The towel wrapping her head trickles a stream of blood that drips down, creating a small puddle over the floor.

She opens her eyes, she's awake but her lids are heavy, she stays like that for a moment and then -

She pushes her arms and tries to get herself up, fighting unconsciousness -

CATHERINE
Ahhhggg...

She makes a renewed effort and gets up on all fours. She takes a moment to balance herself and then she takes hold of a chair. She pushes herself up until she gets to her knees.

Catherine takes hold of the table and stands up, leaning on it for support, she's exhausted.

She gathers all her courage and begins walking. She bounces off walls and cabinets, making objects fall to the floor. She finally reaches the open door to the -

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- DAWN

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator continues.

As soon as she goes into the small cubicle, she collapses down to her knees in front of the toilet. She brings two fingers deep into her throat and makes herself gag until -

SHE VOMITS.

INT. ROOM - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- DAWN

Doctor and Nurse 1 are standing around Nicholas's bed.

NURSE 1
He's coming around.

DOCTOR
Nicholas, can you open your eyes?

Nicholas opens his eyes and blinks, confused. Doctor holds his hand -

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Can you squeeze my hand?

Nicholas gives a weak squeeze to the Doctor's hand.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Good. Are you Ok?

Doctor shows a thumbs up. Nicholas gives the Doctor a feeble thumbs up.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
That's good. Nicholas, you have a tube in your mouth and you can breathe through it. Should we get this out for you?

Nicholas nods.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Let's do that.
(to nurse)
Let's extubate him.

Nurse 1 disconnects tubing from the machine and deflates the tube from a smallest one attached to it with a syringe.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Ok. Nicholas, we're going to take it out now.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

When I tell you to cough, I'd like
you to cough for me. You
understand?

Nicholas nods.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Ok. 3, 2, 1... and cough.

Doctor and Nurse 1 begin to pull the tube out of Nicholas
mouth. As this happens, Nicholas begins coughing. He gets
agitated.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

It's ok. Stay calm, it's coming
out. Cough for me.

Nicholas doesn't need an instruction, he keeps on coughing.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Keep coughing.

Doctor pulls the tube out of Nicholas's mouth -

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Breathe.

Nicholas breathes in. As he exhales accompanied by some coughs.
Doctor and Nurse 1 observe him. Nicholas coughing stops.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

How do you feel. Ok?

He looks confused and disoriented, his voice is horse and
drowsy -

NICHOLAS

What's happened? Why am I here?

DOCTOR

Basically, Nicholas, you had a clot
in your brain. You were brought
here and we kept you asleep on
medications to make sure there was
no permanent damage.

He looks at them with confused eyes.

NURSE

Well, good morning, handsome.

INT. BATHROOM - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- DAWN

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

Catherine is kneeling in front of the toilet after having emptied her stomach. She's exhausted but she gets up, and -

INT. GROUND FLOOR - KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- DAWN

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

She ventures back to the kitchen. She's very groggy and she has to fight every step to stay up. She manages to land her elbows on the kitchen counter next to the sink.

She opens the tap and, taking off the towel wrapped around her head, she pours cold water over her face, rubbing it, trying to wake up.

She takes a moment there to recover, her face is clean but new blood begins flowing from her small cut. Then, she reaches for the kettle and presses down its button.

Then, she opens the cabinet's door and pulls out a plastic jug, causing glasses and cups to fall down. Some break against the counter, some shatter on the floor.

INT./EXT. MINI CAB - STREETS OF LONDON -- DAWN

The soft blue light announcing the imminent morning radiates over the city, but is still too dim to overcome the streetlights and lamps.

The TOGOLESE DRIVER is having a loud and animated conversation in Kabiye over the phone, he's seated over a wooden-beaded seat cover.

The street lights dance over Stephen who looks anxiously out the window, unfazed by the discussion in a language he can't understand.

A car cuts in front of them and the Togolese Driver has to brake hard. The sudden stop pushes Stephen forward, but the seat belt keeps him in place.

The Togolese driver opens his window and shouts -

TOGOLESE DRIVER
(heavy accent)
What the fuck you think you're
doing! This is my lane!

He closes the window cursing in Kabiye. He resumes driving, justifying to Stephen -

 TOGOLESE DRIVER (CONT'D)
 (heavy accent)
 You see that? He cut into me as if
 I don't exist. People don't know
 how to drive!

Stephen nods, uninterested. The Togolese Driver gets back on the phone and his conversation in Kabiye, probably describing what just happened.

INT. KITCHEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- DAWN

The hum and rattle of the refrigerator.

Catherine pours the kettle's boiling water into the plastic jug, then she grabs the coffee jar and pours all its content into the water.

The brown powder sinks to the bottom of the jug and she stirs it with a large wooden spoon. Then she walks, wobbly, to the refrigerator and opens the freezer door. The rattle stops.

She takes two plastic ice trays and pulls them out, as soon as she closes the freezer door, the rattling resumes.

She goes back to the counter and tries to push the ice out of the trays into the jar but she's too weak for it, so she dips one whole ice tray into the jug.

The boiling water soon dissolves the ice that slides out from their plastic compartments. She takes the second tray then does the same. Then -

She drinks the coffee, directly from the jug, taking big gulps one after the other.

Coffee spills down her mouth and onto her clothes, but she doesn't care, she keeps on drinking until she empties the whole jug.

She takes a breath and looks at the counter where the dead cockroach still lays mummified under the glass.

EXT. WESTWAY -- DAWN

The road is almost empty, the mini-cab cruises the overpass surrounded by modern buildings that stand tall against the end of dawn sky.

INT./EXT. UBER - WESTWAY -- DAWN

Stephen looks at the street intently, as if by doing this his destination will be reached sooner.

INT. CORRIDOR - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- DAWN

Robert speaks with a DOCTOR, they're standing in the corridor next to the I.C.U. room.

DOCTOR
He woke up and he's relatively aware, so that's very good news.

ROBERT
Yes, he's talking.

The Doctor interrupts, there's more -

DOCTOR
However, he is still a bit sedated. He doesn't seem to have any obvious deficits or weakness. We're still treating him for endocarditis. There's the risk of this happening again if he continues to inject drugs.

Robert is eager for good news -

ROBERT
I understand. But, is he going to live?

DOCTOR
Again, the fact that he woke up and is aware, is very positive.

Robert's phone BUZZES.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Tomorrow we'll do some new tests. For the moment he needs to rest.

Robert checks his iPhone -

ON iPHONE screen -

CATHERINE IS CALLING.

Robert rejects the call.

ROBERT
Can I talk to him?

DOCTOR
Yes. But don't tire him out.

ROBERT
Understood. Thank you, Doctor.

The Doctor smiles at Robert and walks away.

INT./EXT. UBER - STREETS OF LONDON -- DAWN

The city lights pass by the windows as Catherine listens to the pre-recorded answering message playing on her iPhone -

O2 VOICE RECORDING (ON PHONE)
... is unable to take your call.
Please leave your message after the
tone. To re-record your message key
hash at any time. BEEEP.

Catherine talks, her tone urgent and alarmed -

CATHERINE
Robert, please pick up your phone.
It is important. Stephen Brigstocke
is on his way to the hospital. You
should not let him near Nicholas at
any time.

Catherine notices her distraught tone and speaks more calmly -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Please Robert, this is important.
He's very dangerous.

EXT. STREET IN ACTON -- DAWN

The mini-cab slows down as the avenue's three lanes merge into one to allow heavy machines to refresh the street's pavement.

INT. MINI-CAB - STREET IN ACTON -- DAWN

Stephen looks as the Togolese Driver comes to a full stop and cars negotiate their merge into the only open lane.

INT. ROOM - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- DAWN

Nicholas is on the bed, awake but drowsy. He's quiet and there's a troubled sadness on his face. Robert is seated at his side looking at him.

ROBERT
(whispering)
I was so scared, mate. I can't tell
you how happy I am that you're
back. We're going to get through
this.

Robert reaches for his son's hand and tries to hold it, but Nicholas rejects it.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(whispering)
It's OK, Nick. On your time.

Nicholas closes his eyes.

Robert looks at his son, the relief of his son's awakening has turned into the anxiety of rejection.

Nurse 1 arrives next to Robert -

NURSE 1
You should get some rest.

ROBERT
I'll just stay a bit longer.

NURSE 1
He needs rest. He's going to be
fine. Get and get some air.

He gets up and whispers to Nicholas -

ROBERT
I'll be back in a bit. I'm proud of
you.

He walks to towards the ward entrance.

INT./EXT. MINI-CAB - STREET IN ACTON -- DAWN

The mini-cab is finally reaching the end of the road construction and the cars begin moving faster.

Stephen anxiously looks through the windshield until the single lane turns into three and the car speeds up down the road.

EXT. WESTWAY -- DAY BREAK

The road is almost empty, the Uber cruises the overpass surrounded by modern buildings that stand tall against the end of the dusk sky.

INT./EXT. UBER - LONDON STREETS -- DAY BREAK

Catherine looks at the road intently, as if by doing this her destination will be reached sooner. Her iPhone buzzes, she checks it -

ON iPHONE -

MESSAGE FROM ROBERT -

Nick is awake.

Catherine looks at the message and takes a deep breath of relief. Behind her, the early sun breaks through the gaps between the buildings.

She dials a number and waits -

O2 VOICE RECORDING (ON PHONE)

*The person you're trying to reach
is unable to take your call. Please
leave your message after...*

She hangs up the phone -

CATHERINE

Fuck!

The driver looks at her through the rear-view mirror. She writes a message -

ON iPHONE -

MESSAGE TO ROBERT -

Thank god!

*Stephen Brigstocke is on his way there. Don't let him near
Nicholas under any circumstances.*

SHE SENDS IT.

INT. CORRIDOR - I.C.U. HAMMERSMITH HOSPITAL. -- EARLY MORNING

Robert exits the I.C.U. ward and walks through the long corridor towards the exit. He crosses in front of the Nurse's Station -

ROBERT
I'll be back in a moment.

NURSE'S STATION NURSE
Sure.

He walks towards the doors when his iPhone BUZZES. He checks its screen -

ON ROBERT'S iPHONE -

CATHERINE'S MESSAGE -

Thank god!

Stephen Brigstocke is on his way there. Don't let him near Nicholas under any circumstance. I'm on my way.

Robert rolls his eyes and sets his iPhone on "Silent".

INT./EXT. MINI CAB - HAMMERSMITH HOSPITAL -- EARLY MORNING

The Togolese Driver is still talking on the phone, he makes a turn into the hospital's driveway and stops in front of the entrance.

EXT. HAMMERSMITH HOSPITAL -- EARLY MORNING

Stephen steps out of the mini cab and waits for the car to drive away. Then, he stands looking at the building, summoning up his courage.

After a moment, he makes his way into the hospital's green fluorescent light.

INT. UBER - WESTWAY -- EARLY MORNING

Catherine leans against the front seat -

CATHERINE
Can you go any faster?

UBER DRIVER
There are cameras everywhere.

CATHERINE

Please. It's a hospital emergency.

UBER DRIVER

Sorry, I can't get any more points
on my license.

INT. I.C.U. CORRIDORS - HAMMERSMITH HOSPITAL -- EARLY
MORNING

Stephen walks through the heavy atmosphere of the hospital in
the late hours.

The corridors are almost empty and everything is quiet,
Stephen's lethargic footsteps resonate over the hum of the
fluorescent lights and the distant traffic.

His steps may be slow, but there's a fierce determination on
his face.

INT. UBER - ACTON/ ROAD WORKS -- EARLY MORNING

The Uber slows down as the avenue's three lanes merge into
one to allow heavy machines to refresh the street's pavement.
The Uber comes to a full stop and Catherine anxiously looks
through the windshield.

Ahead, cars slowly negotiate their merge into the only open
lane.

CATHERINE

How long will this take?

UBER DRIVER

Who knows.

Catherine opens the door and rushes out of the car. The Uber
Driver is surprised -

UBER DRIVER (CONT'D)

Hey!

INT. CORRIDOR - I.C.U. - NURSE STATION HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL
-- DAWN

Stephen walks towards the Nurse Station. Nurse's Station Nurse
looks at him -

NURSE'S STATION NURSE

You're back?

STEPHEN
Is Mr. Ravenscroft here?

NURSE'S STATION NURSE
He just stepped out.

STEPHEN
Ah. Thank you.

Stephen begins to walk towards Nicholas's ward, Nurse's
Station Nurse stops him -

NURSE'S STATION NURSE
I'm sorry, visitor's time is 8 to
8.

STEPHEN
Robert asked me to sit with him.
Just for a moment?

NURSE'S STATION NURSE
Just for a moment. But double check
with the I.C.U. nurses if it's ok.

STEPHEN
Of course. Thank you.

Stephen begins to walk towards Nicholas's ward, slowly, a
very fragile old man going to see his ailing grandson.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE -- EARLY MORNING

Catherine runs through the bridge that crosses over the
motorway. It's very early in the morning and the bridge is
empty, only the sun that rises, showering its first rays of
yellow light.

INT. ROOM - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- EARLY MORNING

Stephen enters the ward and walks slowly through the
corridor. The nurses are busy tending to a patient connected
to a ventilator.

He walks towards Nicholas's bed, slowly, ominous. He arrives
at the foot of his bed and stands there.

Nicholas is asleep, all the tubes going into his mouth are
gone, and only IV catheters remains connected to his arm and
neck.

He reaches into his coat's pocket and pulls out the syringe
and comes closer to Nicholas, when -

NURSE 1 (O.C.)
You shouldn't be here.

Stephen freezes and conceals the syringe under his jacket.
Nurse 1 approaches him from behind -

NURSE 1 (CONT'D)
You should be resting, my dear.

She stands next to him.

STEPHEN
I'm so sorry, but I couldn't sleep.
I've been so worried, I don't think
I could bear it if...

NURSE'S STATION NURSE
Nicholas just woken up.

Stephen's sigh of relief quickly covers the flicker of his
disappointment -

STEPHEN
Oh, thank god! It is a relief to
hear this.

Nurse 1 smiles at him, touched -

NURSE'S STATION NURSE
It is, my dear.

The two look at Nicholas, Nurse 1 touches Stephen's arm
affectionately -

NURSE'S STATION NURSE (CONT'D)
Stay just for a moment, ok? He
needs to rest.

Stephen looks at her and smiles, genuinely grateful.

STEPHEN
Of course, thank you. You're a good
woman.

She smiles at him and goes back to check on other beds.
Stephen is relieved.

EXT. PARKING LOT - FRONT - HAMMERSMITH HOSPITAL -- EARLY
MORNING

The early morning sun grazes the hospital building, the
windows it touches comes alive reflecting its lights.

Catherine enters the parking lot and rushes through the covered passage that lines the face of the building until she arrives to the front entrance.

INT. CORRIDORS - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- EARLY MORNING

Catherine frantically runs down the empty corridors.

INT. ROOM - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- MORNING

Stephen looks at Nicholas breathing rhythmically. He pulls out the syringe from under his jacket and removes the needle's protective cover.

His hands are trembling, a drop drips from the needle's tip.

He leans closer to Nicholas and brings the syringe next to the catheter feeding his neck, his face very close to Nicholas's face.

Nicholas senses a presence and opens his eyes and inhales smelling Stephen closeness, and his voice breaks the silence, a whimper of fear -

NICHOLAS

Mum? What's that smell? I'm scared.
Mum?

Stephen stands back, startled by the young man's voice pleading for his mother.

Nicholas looks at Stephen, an old man holding a syringe looking down at him.

Stephen stares back at Nicholas connected to the IV, helpless, like a child adrift in the sea.

They study each other under the low light and the constant hum of the machines in the room.

Suspended in time, until -

Something catches Stephen's eye -

ON THE WINDOW SILL -

The photograph of a happy family, Catherine, Robert and an 11 year-old-Nicholas, mother and son looking at each other lovingly.

He looks back at Nicholas helpless face, and whatever was left of Stephen's certainty crumbles.

He puts the cap back over the needle and shoves the syringe back in his coat's pocket. When -

Robert enters the ward, he sees Stephen standing next to Nicholas's bed and a shiver of fear cuts through every cell of his frame -

ROBERT

Mr Brigstocke, what are you doing here?

Stephen turns to look at Robert as he hurries towards him -

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I thought we were going home. Its really late-

Stephen intercepts him -

STEPHEN

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

ROBERT

Sorry, about what?

Robert is confused.

STEPHEN

I was wrong. I was so wrong.

ROBERT

Wrong about what?

STEPHEN

About everything. Your wife...

ROBERT

I don't under-

STEPHEN

Your wife

ROBERT

Yes

STEPHEN

... She was telling the truth... My son...

Stephen looks at Robert, his eyes lost in an abyss of contrition. He looks for the strength to say the words, and -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

My son... He was a monster.

Robert looks at him, and it doesn't take long for the full understanding of Stephen words to decimate all of his certainty.

A dark cloak of guilt falls over him, encasing his self, suffocating him.

INT. CORRIDOR - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- MORNING

Catherine exits the elevator and rushes towards the ICU. She crosses the Nurse Station when she sees -

At the end of the corridor -

Stephen exiting the ICU ward.

Catherine slows her run and stops, frozen in fear.

Stephen stands in the corridor, looking at her, his face discomposed.

STEPHEN

I'm sorry

Then, Robert walks out of the ICU ward, his face ashen. He looks at Catherine.

CATHERINE

No.

Fear makes her legs falter, she falls on her knees, her eyes in tears.

Robert hurries towards her.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Noooo!!!!

ROBERT

I'm so sorry.

CATHERINE

(to Stephen)

What did you do to him...! What did you do to my son!!! My beautiful son!

Robert kneels down and holds Catherine -

ROBERT

I'm so sorry. This is all my fault.
I'm so sorry...

CATHERINE
No! Nicholas! Nicholas!

Stephen comes closer and stops a few meters away from her,
his face broken, his eyes drowning in contrition -

STEPHEN
I'm sorry, Mrs. Ravenscroft. I'm
terrible sorry.

Stephen looks at Catherine -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Please forgive me... I'm so
sorry... I'm so sorry...

Catherine explodes crying -

CATHERINE
Nicholas! Nicholas!

Robert looks at her, confused.

ROBERT
No, Nick is safe. He's fine, he
woke up.

Catherine looks at him, trying to understand -

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Mr Brigstocke told me the truth

CATHERINE
What? Nick is awake?

ROBERT
Yes, he's ok. I'm so sorry Cath.

As soon as Catherine absorbs the words, she gets up and darts
towards her son's room.

INT. ROOM - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- MORNING

Catherine enters the room and rushes to Nicholas's bed.

As she approaches her son's bed, she slows down her pace,
fearful of what she'll find.

She reaches the foot of the bed and stops, she looks at him
and her eyes explode in tears and cries. It's a quiet cry, a
cry that releases years of a lifetime of suppressed fear.

Nicholas is breathing peacefully. Catherine breathes relieved -

CATHERINE
(softly)
Hello, my darling.

And then -

Nicholas opens his eyes. He looks straight at her and doesn't answer, he just looks at her.

She sighs. She knows that Nicholas can see her and a wave of happiness sweeps through her and smiles.

After a short moment, Nicholas closes his eyes again.

Catherine walks to his side and sinks to her knees. She takes Nicholas's hand and leans into him -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I'm here, Nick. I'm here.
Everything is going to be all
right, I promise you. You're safe
now. I love you more than my life,
more than anything I could ever
love...

EXT. HAMMERSMITH HOSPITAL -- MORNING

The very early sun bounces its light on the sphere of blue sky. Stephen, a defeated figure, walks out of the building. He's about to cross the driveway when -

ROBERT
Wait!

Robert is rushing after him. Stephen stops and waits. As soon as Robert reaches him -

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Why didn't you tell me before? Why
didn't you say anything before?

STEPHEN
I didn't know until today. I hadn't
met your wife before.

ROBERT
And you're sure she was telling you
the truth?

STEPHEN
Yes. I know she was telling the
truth. Why do you doubt this?

ROBERT

But you were so sure that...

STEPHEN

No one wants to believe that their son is capable of doing such a thing.

ROBERT

But the photographs...

He stops. His understanding turns into rage -

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I felt sorry for you. I was grateful to your fucking son...

Robert grabs Stephen by his lapels and shoves him. The old man shakes like a puppet and Robert is stunned by Stephen's frailty and lets go of him.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You sent your fucking book to my wife. And to my son. You sent me those photographs. Jesus Christ!

Stephen waits. Robert insists -

ROBERT (CONT'D)

How could you not know? You just admitted that your son was capable of it, so why didn't you question it?

Stephen looks at him for a moment before he curtly says -

STEPHEN

No, Mr. Ravenscroft. Why didn't you?

Robert is shocked by Stephen's answer -

ROBERT

Why didn't I question it?

Stephen looks at him with disdain.

Robert brings his hand over his mouth, horrified by the realisation of what he has done, of what it reveals of himself.

Stephen looks at him for a moment and then, he turns around and crosses the driveway.

STEPHEN (V.O.)

*You know that you can't comfort
him. There is nothing you can say
that can ease his guilt or take
away the image of his wife reading
that vile book you wrote and
feeling as if she was being raped
all over again.*

Stephen reaches the avenue and walks towards the bus stop.
Behind him, Robert stands at the curb in front of the
hospital entrance like a ghost made of guilt and remorse.

STEPHEN (V.O.)

*You have no business there anymore.
What you had done was done.*

Through the buildings, the sun shows its first warm rays.

INT. ROOM - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- MORNING

Catherine is still on her knees next to the bed holding
Nicholas' hand. Robert enters the room and walks quietly
until he reaches his son's bed.

Catherine looks at him for a moment and stands to her feet.
Robert steps next to her and takes her hand -

ROBERT

(softly)...

Nick. We're here. We're both here.
It's going to be OK.

Nicholas opens his eyes and looks at his parents looking down
at him. Robert squeezes Catherine closer to him.

There is bafflement in Nicholas' eyes as they move from one
to the other. And then, he closes his eyes again.

Catherine let's go of Robert's hand and shoves off his
embrace.

EXT. KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON

Stephen walks through a corridor of graves. The sky is blue,
the sun is bright and low and the shadows are long.

He pants with the effort of every step, the air is cold and
small plumes of steam come out of his mouth with each breath.

He arrives in front of Nancy's and Jonathan's headstones and collapses onto his knees. He places his hand over his son's grave -

STEPHEN

I know that I have never felt as proud of you as I should have. It shames me to recognise that I never believed in your courage.

He takes a breath -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

But I can't recall a single time when you put yourself before anyone else. Not once. So why then? Why did you try to save that child? Was it just reckless impulsiveness?

He takes his hand back as his anger builds -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I don't know if you raped before, but I do know that something sent your girlfriend Sasha running home to her parents. Something happened in Italy that caused her mother to make that angry phone call.

He turns to Nancy's grave -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Did you know, Nancy? Did you suspect?

Tears fill his eyes -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I'm sure you did, but you always dressed up our son into someone he wasn't.

His mouth ejects spit with every word he says -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

And I colluded with you in covering up all the clues that should have made us uneasy about him.

He embraces himself as if trying to contain an unbearable pain -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I am as guilty of delusion as you
were. I turned you and Jonathan
into someone you were not.

The pain of the failure that was his life -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I wasn't brave enough.

He looks at them, his eyes drowning in tears -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

My only defence is that I did it
from love. I guess we both did. But
it isn't much of a defence.

His head collapses between his shoulders and he begins to
weep.

The weeping turns to sobs and he falls forward, on all fours,
as if prostrating himself at Nancy's and Jonathan's graves.

A HAND touches his shoulder -

JOGGER

Are you OK?

Stephen looks up, A JOGGER with a LABRADOR RETRIEVER on a
leash is standing next to him. Stephen kneels back up.

The JOGGER reads the two headstones in front of them -

JOGGER (CONT'D)

Your wife and son?

Stephen nods, the JOGGER studies the dates on Jonathan's
headstone.

JOGGER (CONT'D)

He was young. How did he die?

There is no prurience, it's just a gentle question. Stephen's
mouth is full of spit and tears as he struggles to get the
words out -

STEPHEN

He drowned. He was nineteen.

JOGGER

How terrible. That's too young to
die.

Stephen agrees. He elaborates -

STEPHEN

He was trying to save a child.

The JOGGER catches his breath.

JOGGER

That's incredibly brave.

He makes a small pause and then asks -

JOGGER (CONT'D)

And did he? Did he save the child?

STEPHEN

Yes, he did.

JOGGER

What a brave young man he must have been.

Stephen looks at his son's headstone.

STEPHEN

Yes, he was.

The JOGGER offers Stephen his hand and helps him up.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

The JOGGER smiles at him and jogs away with his dog.

Stephen looks at him for a moment and then, he walks towards the doggy bin on the main path. He opens it.

He reaches inside and takes out a black bag holding it between his finger and thumb, and he walks back to his son's grave.

He unties the bag and -

He HURLS THE CONTENTS over Jonathan's grave -

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You fucking little shit!

He looks one last moment at the two graves, now spoiled with dog's stools, and walks away through the corridor of dead.

INT. WAITING ROOM - I.C.U. - HAMMERSMITH'S HOSPITAL -- LATE AFTERNOON

Two weak coffees sit in styrofoam cups on the laminated top of a table. The green fluorescent light radiates over them with their incessant hum.

Catherine and Robert sit alone in the room, across from each other.

ROBERT

Cath.

He whispers, but Catherine is unresponsive.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I am so sorry.

He looks for words -

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I'll never be able to forgive myself, Cath. How could I have believed you would have done that to us? I'll never forgive myself...

Catherine looks at him, only exhaustion in her eyes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me?

He whispers, but she remains silent, Robert waits. She sighs, exhausted, then, she takes a moment and then begins speaking, slowly -

CATHERINE

I don't know. I wanted to... I tried to...

He looks at her, waiting for her explanation.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

There were times when I nearly did. I don't know, Robert. When you have kept something like that - and never said it - and never told anyone - it becomes more and more difficult to.

Robert feels the need to justify himself. He pleads -

ROBERT

But the book, and the photographs.
They entered our lives. Why didn't
you tell me then?

CATHERINE

I tried. But you felt so hurt. You
felt so betrayed. You were so
angry. You said such horrible
things about me. You said it was
because you felt you didn't know
me, that I had become a stranger to
you.

She stops. She takes a breath and -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I thought that when Jonathan died,
I would never have to tell anyone;
that I would never have to prove my
innocence. You made me feel that I
had to.

She looks at him, directly to his eyes.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have had to persuade
you, I shouldn't have had to
convince you that I was telling the
truth. You were so quick to believe
a stranger's truth.

She makes a long pause, considering her next words -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I know I need to forgive you.

Robert looks at her, finally hopeful -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

But I can't.

Robert looks at her, appalled.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I can't forgive you because you
forced me to see those photographs.
Because you saw pleasure where
there was pain.

Robert lowers his gaze -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

And I can't forgive you because I have watched you over the last few weeks and I can see how you now manage the idea of me being raped so much more easily than you had managed the idea of me having an affair.

Catherine can't stop the tears of anger that flow. Robert attempts to avoid her eyes.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Given the choice, you would rather I had suffered than to have enjoyed a burst of illicit pleasure.

Catherine looks at him, every word she says a rock that buries him deeper under the heavy mountain of his own shame.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

When you looked at those photographs of me being tortured, you saw pleasure. You missed the savagery I was being subjected to. You only saw lust.

Catherine concludes, matter of factly -

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I could never, I will never forgive you for that.

They stay there, seated under the green pulsating glow of the fluorescent lights.

Robert is left speechless, tears now in his eyes. Catherine stays quiet, she doesn't feel the need to say anything else.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

***We both cried, but it was too late.
I knew that we should have cried
together years ago.***

Robert buries his head between his arms. Catherine closes her eyes and breathes deep.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

***All I wanted was to be able to
sleep at last, with the knowledge
that finally the truth had broken
free.***

EXT. GARDEN - STEPHEN'S HOUSE -- DUSK

Orange flames roll in ever-changing waves of torn tufts, rumble, flicker and crackle as they swallow, lick and gnaw on the air and matter that they absorb.

Stephen stands in front of the barbecue stand, its warm glow radiating on his face. He's lost in the dance of the fire that consumes three printed copies of *The Perfect Stranger* over the burning wood.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
***You have left nothing more than a
trace of pain behind.***

Their pages spread out, their covers blister before bright red rings expand over them, devouring them.

The sun has gone behind the horizon taking with it all of its colours, the dark blue sky spreads its last soft cool light.

He unbuttons the stretched out cardigan that he's wearing, Nancy's cardigan.

He pulls it off and drops it on the floor. He takes a 5 litre metal canister and soaks the sweater in petrol. Then, he picks it up and -

Tosses it into the flames.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
***Ahead of you there's nothing, only
the void awaits.***

Stephen stares as the flames feast on the broken wool like a swarm of moths coughing red ambers that whirl into the air.

Several notebooks, stacks of paper and orange envelopes are piled next to him on the ground.

He takes one of Nancy's notebooks and, spreading their pages first, tosses them, one after the other, into the blaze. The leather contracts and curls, darkens and smoulders as it burns, the paper hungry to swallow the flames.

He watches Nancy's handwriting dance before him as the pages are consumed into ashes and smoke.

He picks up the Kodak yellow envelopes, takes out the NEGATIVES and dumps them into the flames -

They recoil like thin snakes as they melt.

He empties the PHOTOGRAPHS out of the envelopes and throws the yellow Kodak envelopes into the fire. They turn brown, and then black as they're swallowed by the flames.

Finally, he throws the PHOTOGRAPHS, all in a bundle, into the flames.

IMAGES of Italy, Jonathan, Sasha and Young Catherine begin BURNING in red flames. He looks at the fire, relishing witnessing the destruction.

ONE PHOTOGRAPH that is just starting to catch fire calls his attention -

ON THE SMOULDERING PHOTOGRAPH -

Young Catherine in her underwear, one hand under her bra grabbing her breast, her other hand down the front of her tiny lace knickers, her head is back and her eyes closed, lost in an unbearable agony is slowly consumed by the fire.

He takes the barbecue tweezers hanging on one side of the stand and retrieves the photograph.

He grabs it with his fingers and blows at the burning corners extinguishing the incipient flames leaving only some embers and smoke.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
***You know you'll never find
forgiveness. Nothing can atone a
wasted life.***

He puts his eyeglasses on and studies the image more closely -

ON THE SMOKING PHOTOGRAPH -

In the background, behind Young Catherine, there's a closet, and on its door, a mirror.

In the mirror is reflected the opposite wall of the room where a door is open and A SMALL FIGURE IS STANDING, looking into the room like a little ghost. A grainy smudge, an almost unrecognisable blur -

4-YEAR-OLD NICHOLAS.

Stephen looks at the photograph and throws into the fire. He recoils horrified.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
***All that is left of you are corrupt
fragments that are shored against
your own decrepit ruins.***

ON THE BARBECUE GRILL -

THE PHOTOGRAPH is consumed by the fire, smouldering Young Catherine's tortured face.

Stephen takes the canister and pours its remaining contents over his head and body, the petrol permeating his hair and clothes. He keeps on pouring, until the canister is completely empty.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
***Nothing can purify them, nothing
can absolve you.***

Then, his hand approaches the bonfire -

His HAND reaches into the FIRE and the flames expand over his fingers, and for a moment it clings like an aura floating close to his skin -

STEPHEN (V.O.)
Not even the fire.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - NEIGHBOURHOOD - WALTHAMSTOW -- DUSK

A EXTREME WIDE VIEW FROM ABOVE -

The SOUND OF WIND and the distant MURMUR of the CITY.

The fading sky spreads its soft cool glow over the rows of almost identical houses separated by streets forming a grid of green and orange lights.

Hundreds of windows twinkle with the promise of warmth and, on the back of every house, a small garden, all of them dark. All, except one where -

A bonfire burns with a red pulsating intensity that pierces the darkening twilight and illuminates the frail silhouette of a man standing next to it.

The red glow of the bonfire spreads onto the silhouette's hand that swings in the air like playing with a ball of fire.

Then, it expands it into the arm that sways and waves, spreading the flames with every shove, until the whole body is engulfed in fire.

The blazing body twists and quivers in the small garden until it falls to the ground in a convulsing orb of fire.

After a few moments, the ball of fire gradually goes still and the flames begin to dwindle.

The city is oblivious. The neighbouring gardens are indifferent and unperturbed by the two red mounds of purging fire that slowly fade into the incipient night's darkness.

Everything is QUIET.

Only the SOUND OF WIND and the distant MURMUR of the CITY. Indifferent.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

It's a crisp and fresh London afternoon, the sun shines low and bright and the tree leaves are green.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Nicholas was discharged from the hospital two days later. There was still a long path of recovery with treatments, therapists, and support groups ahead of him.

Catherine's house stands clean with an unpretentious elegance.

INT. BEDROOM - CATHERINE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

The sun enters the window and radiates the room with a luminous atmosphere.

Fresh flowers in a jar adorn the desk and the Catherine's clothes are spread over the chair.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I announced to Robert that I would take care of our son. Robert moved to a hotel while we decided on the final arrangements of our divorce.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - CATHERINE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

The room is smaller, but the sun graces it as well with its radiant warmth.

Nicholas's stuff is neatly placed on the chest of drawers, on the side table, packets of medicine and fresh water.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I decided not to go back to my previous work.

There is also a jar with fresh flowers here.

INT. LOWER LEVEL BEDROOM - CATHERINE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

The afternoon sun enters through the windows brightening the space with warm light.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
I am uncertain if I'll keep on
making the films that were part of
the simulation in which I lived for
so many years.

Catherine and Nicholas are seated, next to each other, on the sitting room couch. Another bouquet of fresh flowers sits in a jar on the coffee-table.

Nicholas's face is pale and he has lost weight but he listens to Catherine with focused attention. When Catherine finishes talking he weighs her words for a moment and then -

NICHOLAS
Did he save my life?

CATHERINE
Yes, he did.

NICHOLAS
Why?

CATHERINE
I don't know.

She genuinely doesn't know. Nicholas ponders this.

NICHOLAS
He felt guilty?

CATHERINE
I don't know, darling.

NICHOLAS
After what he did to you?

She pauses, wondering how much more he can take.

CATHERINE
Perhaps. We'll never know why.

She rests a hand on his shoulder and his head droops and she sees a tear fall down his cheek. She reaches over to pull him towards her, but he stiffens.

NICHOLAS
I don't remember it... I don't
remember anything.

CATHERINE

I'm so sorry, Nick.

She puts her hand over his, as tears gather along his eyelashes. He's trying hard not to cry, holding his breath and swallowing down a sob.

NICHOLAS

No. I'm sorry for what happened to you, Mum.

She reaches over, expecting him to resist, but he comes into her arms and rests his head against her chest, allowing his tears to flow.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

***I know that my future is uncertain
but I doesn't mind it. I'm not in a
hurry to decide anything now. It is
the present I want to concentrate
on.***

He allows her to stroke his back and hold his head.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

***I'm overcome with gratitude for the
chance my son is giving me to fully
embrace his love.***

End of series