

# **MAGDALENE SISTERS**

**A SCREENPLAY BY  
PETER MULLAN**

Darkness. We hear the first few lines of a sweet, traditional Irish lullaby. Fade up to reveal in slow motion a crucifix dangling at the end of a set of rosary beads, swaying gently from the pocket of its owner, who is singing. As we pull back, we see the packet of woodbine cigarettes nestling with the beads; nicotine-stained fingers conduct the band with a half-burned cigarette as baton. We follow the glass of whisky as it moves to the lips of the singer, the sweaty white collar and black shirt revealing it's a priest, his boozy, benign face glowing with the music.

Still in slow motion we see a young bride and groom are dancing in the centre of the church hall, encircled by wedding guests. His well-scrubbed hand rests gently on her unspoiled, white silk wedding dress. She is slightly embarrassed, he slightly drunk. As the song nears to a close they move to kiss one another. And so their lips meet, with the priest, arms outstretched, in the centre of the background. With the cheering and the applause we cut to real time.

We close in on Margaret, who applauds enthusiastically. The band immediately strike up an up-tempo ceilidh number. The newly-weds' parents take to the floor, followed by the other guests. As Margaret stands smiling, a young man, Kevin, comes over and speaks closely into her ear. From the way they speak to one another it's clear they know one another well. He gestures to her to come and see something.

**INT. A LARGE SPORTS CUPBOARD.**

The door opens and Margaret enters with Kevin following behind. She's very much in high spirits, but he seems almost melancholic. She looks round at the battered boxing gloves on the wall, the hurly bats, the flat rugby ball, the rusted netball stands, the beaten dartboard.

**MARGARET**

So what is it you were wantin' to show me?

Kevin suddenly pins her against the wall and starts to kiss her. Margaret pushes him away quite easily.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

Kevin! What d'you think you're doin?

He tries again. Margaret slaps him across the top of the head.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

I don't know what it is you've been  
drinkin' but you'd better behave  
yourself. And..

(she slaps him again)

..show your cousin some respect. What  
kind of a girl do you think I am?

Kevin is almost in tears. He can't speak. He mumbles something.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

What's the matter with you?

He shakes his head and leaves. Margaret stands bemused for a moment then fixes her hair before opening the door. But as her hand takes the handle, the door bursts open, sending her flying across the room. Within a few violently charged seconds, Kevin has Margaret on the floor, her hands pinned behind her back.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

Kevin, don't. Please. I'm beggin' you,  
don't.

#### **INT. MAIN HALL**

The dancing is in full swing. Kevin, neither calm nor agitated, cuts across the dance floor to the food table. He eats, and drinks some beer. Across the hall, Margaret takes a seat by two old ladies who clap and sing along to the music. As Margaret watches the dancers we see there are no tears in her eyes, just bewilderment and the deep aching sorrow of a dream turned nightmare. Theresa, her cousin (Kevin's sister) comes and sits beside her. We do not hear what is said as the music is too loud, but we see that Theresa is very quickly concerned at Margaret's silence. She persists in asking what's wrong. Finally

Margaret tells her what's happened, then instantly holds a shocked Theresa and demands she tells no-one.

Theresa glares across the hall at her munching brother, nods in agreement to Margaret, then breaks loose and storms across to her father who stands talking with a group of men.

Margaret sits in quiet horror as she observes events unfold. First her uncle hears the tale, looks to his son, then to Margaret. He move across to his brother, Margaret's father, and passes on the story. As soon as her mother hears this she comes rushing over to Margaret with Theresa. Uncle and father grab hold of Kevin. Other male relatives join in. As Margaret is being comforted, she sees the group of men lead Kevin up to the kitchen at the top of the hall. Before they close the door, the priest is ushered in. The bride has now come over and is hugging Margaret. Finally the kitchen door opens and Kevin is led out by his stern-looking father. They leave the hall, but not before the uncle has glared at Margaret with a look of utter contempt.

The bridegroom, who was also in the kitchen, takes hold of his bride and doesn't so much lead her away as drag her away. Margaret senses his hostility and looks to where her father stands staring at her, with the priest by his side. She begins to shake as she feels his disgust. He turns his back and talks closely into the priest's ear.

**INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM. DAWN**

Margaret lies sleeping. At the bottom of her bed lie her two young sisters. Across from her lies her younger brother, Eamonn, aged twelve. The peace is broken by their father as he stomps purposefully into the room and shakes Margaret.

**FATHER**

You. Get up. Get up.

Margaret, though half-asleep, instantly jumps out of bed.

**FATHER (CONT'D)**

Get dressed. Hurry up! I want you downstairs.

He goes. Margaret gets dressed as quickly as she can. Eamonn has woken up also.

**EAMONN**

What's happening?

**MARGARET**

Sonia leaps up, squats over the struggling Bernadette's face and sure enough farts in it.

**BERNADETTE**

(half choking)

Jesus, how the hell do you do that?

**AMY**

Where's the brush?

**BERNADETTE**

It's under me pillow.

Amy grabs under the pillow and brings out a gold brush.

**BERNADETTE (CONT'D)**

And you do my hair first. That's if it doesn't fall out with the stench of your bleedin' arse.

CUT TO:

**INT. DORMITORY. DAY**

Bernadette sits on the bed. First little girl kneels behind her, brushing her hair. Second little girl sits on the bed, enviously watching the procedure. The other girls in the dormitory are up and getting dressed, etc.

**SECOND GIRL**

My turn now.

**FIRST GIRL**

I'm only at eighteen. I've got two more.

**SECOND GIRL**

You're at twenty. I've been countin'.

As the second wee girl makes to take the brush, the first wee girl rushes two quick strokes, pulling Bernadette's hair in the process.

**BERNADETTE**

(in pain)

Owww!

Bernadette examines her hair. **BERNADETTE**

If you two don't stop fightin' I'll just  
do it myself.

First wee girl hands the brush to second wee girl, who  
begins gently brushing Bernadette's hair. First wee girl  
stares admiringly at Bernadette.

**FIRST GIRL**

Is it a sin to be beautiful?

**BERNADETTE**

(still examining her hair)

No. Look at the Holy Virgin Mary. She's  
beautiful, isn't she? It's a sin to be  
vain. Vanity is a sin.

She closes her eyes as the beauty treatment continues,  
allowing herself a faint smile.

**EXT. ORPHANAGE PLAYGROUND. DAY**

The inner-city street is all but deserted except for a shabby  
looking bus which trundles slowly down the road. We can hear  
the lunch-time horn from a nearby factory and see a few  
workers scurry quickly in it's direction.

Inside the playground the younger kids are running around  
playing whilst the older ones stand around chatting.

A group of poor looking local lads stand by the iron  
railings, eying the girls.

Mrs Barton, Assistant Principal of the orphanage, is walking  
through the gates and observes tightly their lustful  
adolescent faces. As she strides purposefully towards them,  
they take off. As she turns and goes through the gates, her  
eyes are fixed on their primary object of desire,  
Bernadette. As soon as she is through the doors, the lads  
return. Laughing, they gesture to the girls to come over.  
Most of the girls are too shy, but after some coaxing  
Bernadette glides boldly over to them. They talk, flirt,  
laugh.

Through a window overlooking the playground we see Mrs Barton  
and the Principal standing, observing this primitive mating  
game. Mrs Barton does most of the talking, though through the  
glass we never hear what's being said. When our two wee girls  
run to Bernadette and drag her reluctantly

away from the lads, their obvious affection for her seems to dismay our two principals even more than Bernadette's flirting. The Head Principal moves across to his desk and picks up a large black telephone.

**INT. ORPHANAGE DORMITORY -- DAY**

Amy and Sonia crawl under the beds as before. They get excited when they see the brush sticking out of the shoe-box. Sonia gets there first this time, but as she snatches it out we see that the handle has been broken. As they rise up we see the bed has been stripped of its blankets and sheets and all that remains is a cold, grey mattress.

**INT. HOSPITAL. MATERNITY WARD.**

A baby suckles on his mother's breast.

**ROSE**

(os)

He's beautiful, isn't he? Ma? Please would you just look at him. He's your grandson.

We cut back to reveal Rose feeding her baby. Sat beside her, looking straight ahead, stern and almost emotionless, is Rose's mother.

**ROSE (CONT'D)**

Ma, I've said I'm *sorry*. It was sinful what I done, but look at him. You can't blame him for something he had nothing to do with. Look, I know I've shamed you an' me da but.. but.. just look at him, Ma.

Rose's mother gazes straight ahead as before.

**ROSE (CONT'D)**

(suddenly fearful)

Will me da take me back? We've no place else to go. Would you say somethin', Ma? Anythin'. Her mother turns her head but not to look at Rose. She looks to the door of the ward. Rose follows her gaze. She sees her father.

(excitedly)

What's me da doin' here?

Not unkindly, her father beckons her to come over to him. Rose puts the baby into the cot by the bed and walks towards her father. When she reaches him, he leads her down the corridor a few yards to Father Doonigan, who sits on a bench, briefcase on his lap, some forms on top of it.

**FATHER DOONIGAN**

Sit down, Rose.

Rose does so.

**FATHER DOONIGAN (CONT'D)**

My name's father Doonigan. I work for the Catholic Adoption Agency. Your father and I have discussed your situation and we feel it would be better for the child if you put him up for adoption.

She stares at him blankly.

**FATHER DOONIGAN (CONT'D)**

A child born out of wedlock is a bastard child. Would you have him go through life as an outcast, Rose? Rejected and scorned by all decent members of society? It's a grievous sin you have committed.

**ROSE**

I know, Father. I'm sorry, I really am.

**FATHER DOONIGAN**

All the same, would you have the child pay for your sins? Your sins, not his, remember.

**ROSE**

(quietly)

No, Father.

**FATHER DOONIGAN**

Speak up, Rose, I didn't hear you.

**ROSE**

No, Father.

**FATHER DOONIGAN**



So you agree better he get a chance in life. That he grows up in a good Catholic home with a loving mother and father.

Rose nods meekly. He gives her the forms and a pen.

**FATHER DOONIGAN (CONT'D)**

Sign your name here and then here.

Rose looks to her father. He nods. Rose signs. Father Doonigan puts the forms in his briefcase.

**FATHER DOONIGAN (CONT'D)**

Now you wait here with your father while I get the baby.

**ROSE**

What, now? You're gonna take him now?

**FATHER DOONIGAN**

You wouldn't want to get too attached, would you, Rose?

Rose is too shocked to reply. Father Doonigan goes into the ward. There is a long silence between Rose and her father. Rose's mind is in quiet turmoil.

**ROSE**

Have you seen the baby, Da?

There is no reply.

**ROSE (CONT'D)**

Beautiful.

Suddenly she jumps up.

**ROSE (CONT'D)**

I think I'll tell him I've changed my mind.

Her father blocks her path.

**ROSE (CONT'D)**

Can't I change my mind? Can't we just tear up the forms?

**ROSE** (CONT'D)

Will you never speak to me again?

No reply.

Her mother comes out of the ward and walks swiftly in the other direction towards the exit.

**ROSE** (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Did you look at him, Ma? Isn't he beautiful?

Her mother exits.

**ROSE** (CONT'D)

(to her father) He is beautiful.

The priest comes out, followed by a nurse carrying the baby. Rose's maternal instincts suddenly kick in and she dives towards them. Her father grabs her and locks her in his arms.

**ROSE** (CONT'D)

(screaming)

I want my baby! I've changed my mind!  
That's my baby! That's my baby!

The priest and the nurse continue swiftly down the corridor towards the exit.

**ROSE** (CONT'D)

(weeping)

Please, Da, stop them. They're taking my baby. Please, Da, please. Don't let them take my baby.

Her father tightens his grip.

MUSIC AND CREDITS OVER THE FOLLOWING:-

**EXT. HOSPITAL. DAY**

A pile of dirty sheets, pillow slips, towels, etc are wheeled out and stacked into the back of a van. A young lad slams the back shut and jumps into the front of the van where sits an older man in the driving seat. They drive off.

**EXT. RESTAURANT. DAY.**

The van pulls up outside an expensive looking restaurant. The lad, Brendan, jumps out and runs around the back of the restaurant. The older man, Seamus, fills in an order form whilst looking in enviously at the well heeled diners. Brendan returns with a bag of laundry. He throws it in the back of the van, runs around to the front seat and off they go.

**EXT. HOTEL. DAY.**

Seamus sits in the van talking through an open window to the Hotel concierge. Brendan is at the back of the van loading huge bags of laundry, muttering to himself at the lack of help. When the last bag is in he slams the door shut. Seamus and the concierge continue talking regardless.

**EXT. ROAD. ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A CITY**

From inside the van Brendan bemoans the poor music on the radio, arguing for something more contemporary. The older man is growing increasingly agitated at the horse-drawn carriage driving in front. He beeps his horn. The cart moves slightly to the left. He overtakes and as he does so we see that it is Rose and her father in the cart.

**EXT. MAGDALENE. DAY**

The van goes up the driveway. We see the grey, large formidable building for the first time.

TITLE MAGDALENE

**EXT. MAGDALENE. DAY**

The van drives up to the gates.

**INT. VAN -- DAY**

Seamus hands Brendan a large key.

**BRENDAN**

What?

**SEAMUS**

Its a key for the gates

Right?

**SEAMUS**

Unlock the gates.

The penny drops. He leaps out of the van runs to the gates, unlocks them and runs back into the van and gives Seamus the key.

**SEAMUS (CONT'D)**

What the fuck..?

**BRENDAN**

What?

**SEAMUS**

Flap your arms.

**BRENDAN**

What?

**SEAMUS**

Flap your arms.

Brendan half-heartedly flaps his arms.

**SEAMUS (CONT'D)**

Now I hate to be the one to tell you this son, but men can't fuckin' fly!

**BRENDAN**

What you talkin' about?

**SEAMUS**

You're supposed to open the bloody gates!! How are we supposed to get in?!!

**BRENDAN**

You never said to open them!

He gets out in a huff and pushes open the gates.

**SEAMUS**

Of all the lads in Ireland I get the one with the brains of Daffy fuckin' Duck.

He drives through and stops. Brendan jumps back into the

**BRENDAN**

What?

**SEAMUS**

Now you've got to lock them again.

**BRENDAN**

Why?

**SEAMUS**

Because otherwise some of the girls might get out and run away.

**BRENDAN**

Why?

**SEAMUS**

Because they clapped eyes on your dumb ugly fuckin' face. Now lock the fuckin' gates.

**BRENDAN**

(opening the van door)  
Jesus, nobody told me this job was gonna be so fuckin' complicated.

**EXT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

The van reverses back to the loading area.

**INT. VAN -- DAY**

**BRENDAN**

And are they all hookers and whore that work in there?

**SEAMUS**

You don't look at them. You don't talk to them. You understand me?

Seamus gets out of the van. Brendan watches him through the wing mirror knock on the door. Brendan takes out his comb and starts combing his hair in the rear view mirror.

**BRENDAN**

I don't want to look at them and talk to them. I just want to fuckin' ride them.

Brendan looks to the rear view mirror and sees some of the girls coming out. He gets out of the van and walks round to the back.

**EXT. LAUNDRY - LOADING BAY -- DAY**

Brendan is unloading the baskets and bags of laundry. The girls take what they can carry and go. Whilst keeping an eye on Seamus as he fills in forms and hands money over to the nun, Brendan sneaks a smile at one of the girls. She doesn't respond.

**EXT. LAUNDRY - LOADING BAY -- DAY**

As the last girl goes inside Brendan slams the back doors shut and tries to sneak a look inside the laundry. He only gets a glimpse however as the nun shuts the door.

**EXT. MAGDALENE -- DAY**

As the van drives away, the horse and cart come out of the main entrance, minus Rose. The van stops.

**INT. VAN -- DAY**

Seamus bangs the steering wheel in frustration.

**SEAMUS**

Not the fuckin' culchie again! No wonder this country is so fuckin' backward when eejits like him clog up the fuckin' roads with a horse and fuckin' cart.

But Brendan's not listening. He's watching Patricia being led by two nuns into the Magdalene.

**SEAMUS (CONT'D)**

Jeesus! It's nineteen sixty fuckin' four. We're living in a modern fuckin' country!!

**INT. MAIN DOOR, MAGDALENE -- DAY**

Rose is led inside and the door is closed behind her and locked.

**INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY**

A nun leads Margaret, Bernadette and Rose along the corridor. They are dressed in drab brown uniforms, each carrying a box with their clothes in them.

**INT. STAIRS - DAY**

They climb the stairs to the top.

**INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BERNADINE'S OFFICE - DAY**

The nun chaps on the door. She steps briefly inside before telling the girls to put their boxes down and enter. She closes the doors behind them, picks up the boxes and goes.

**BERNADINE**

(os)

The philosophy here at Magdalene is a very simple one. Through the powers of prayer, cleanliness and hard work, the fallen may find their way back to Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Saviour

**INT. BERNADINE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Close up on Bernadine's long white fingers expertly counting money with a pale rubber thimble

**BERNADINE**

Mary Magdalene founder of the Magdalene Convents, herself was a sinner of the worst kind, giving of her flesh to the depraved and the lustful for money.

**INT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

As she continues speaking we see the following. The nun lays the three boxes outside the disinfectant room. As we follow her we see the darkened laundry and the sweaty sullen faces of the penitents. An old woman shuffles along pushing a trolley of linen. No-one speaks, no-one smiles. All they seem to do is work. With two nuns sat on either side overseeing everything. It is not so much a vision of hell on earth as just another day in the life of God's sweatshop.

**BERNADINE (V.O.)**

Salvation came only by paying penance for her sins, denying herself all pleasures of the flesh including food

and sleep, and working beyond human endurance so that she might offer up her soul to God and so walk through the Gates of Heaven and live in everlasting life. In our laundry they are not simply clothes and bed-linen - these are the earthly means to cleanse your very soul, to remove the stains of the sins you have committed. Here you may redeem yourself and, God willing, save yourself from eternal damnation. Breakfast is at six, prayers at half-past six, work begins at seven, lunch is at...

**MARGARET**

Excuse me, Sister.

**INT. BERNADINE'S OFFICE - DAY**

**MARGARET**

Excuse me. I think I should go. I don't think my father meant for me to be here.

Sister Bernadine looks up. We see her piercing blue eyes, her face sharp, and glowing white habit. She stands up and walks over to Margaret.

**MARGARET (CONT'D)**

You see, my father was very upset...

Sister Bernadine, who has been looking at her with a mixture of bemusement and contempt, suddenly slaps her across the face. Hard. Rose and Bernadette are visibly shocked.

**BERNADINE**

(almost smiling)

Don't ever interrupt me, girl. Did no one ever teach you that it's bad manners to interrupt? Or were you too busy whoring it with the boys to listen? Is that what it was?

**MARGARET**

No Sister.

**BERNADINE**



Then are you simple-minded? Is that what it is? Are you a simpleton? I decide when or if you're allowed to leave. And I think I can safely say it could be quite some time. What's your name?

**MARGARET**

Margaret, Sister.

**BERNADINE**

Margaret what?

**MARGARET**

Sullivan.

Bernadine stares at her. (Much of her power comes through these long silent looks, leaving the victim in no doubt as to her chilling contempt.)

**BERNADINE**

(to Rose)

Yours?

**ROSE**

Rose Flanagan.

**BERNADINE**

We have a Rose. What's your middle name?

**ROSE**

I don't have one, Sister.

**BERNADINE**

Well, perhaps not on your birth certificate, but I'm sure your parents will have thought of one or two names for you now. Rose, eh? What's your confirmation name?

**ROSE**

Patricia.

The long stare once again. Rose nervously returns it.

**BERNADINE**

Then you may call yourself Patricia.

Pause.

**BERNADINE** (CONT'D)

Thank you, Sister.

**ROSE**

Thank you, Sister.

**BERNADINE**

And you?

**BERNADETTE**

Bernadette Haffie.

The long stare.

**BERNADINE**

From St Mary's?

**BERNADETTE**

(surprised) Yes,  
Sister.

**BERNADINE** (

pleased with herself) Now  
how would I know that?

**BERNADETTE**

I don't know, Sister.

**BERNADINE**

Is it that Principal McLaglen is a very  
good friend of mine and he's told me all  
about you? Or is it that after many years  
in charge of this convent I know a little  
temptress when I see one?

**BERNADETTE**

I don't know, Sister.

**BERNADINE**

Blessed Mary, two simpletons in one day.  
Well, I'm sure we'll find out in the  
course of time, won't we?

Pause.

**BERNADINE** (CONT'D)

Now, come with me.

**INT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

Bernadine leads the girls into the laundry. She stands them by the disinfectant room, calls over Sister Clementine,

and leaves. Sister Clementine tells them their different tasks and they go off in different directions. We stay on the doorway as a girl in the disinfectant room empties the girls' boxes into a pile in the middle of the floor, douses them with disinfectant, then stirs them together with a stick.

**INT. DORMITORY -- NIGHT**

The girls stand at the bottom of their beds. Each has a long ankle length night dress on and are changing underneath them. Sister August stands by the door.

**SISTER AUGUSTA**

Prayers.

The girls kneel, cross themselves and bow their heads. Sister Augusta says the prayer. The girls say "Amen" together.

**SISTER AUGUSTA (CONT'D)**

Bed now.

The girls stand and get into their beds. Sister Augusta turns out the light and leaves. Outside she locks the door.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

Patricia is kneeling by her bed wearily praying as if she's been doing it for hours. She stands up but almost immediately falls onto Bernadette's bed. Bernadette jumps up.

**PATRICIA**

I'm sorry.

**BERNADETTE**

Are you all right?

**PATRICIA**

Could you help me to the toilet, please?

Bernadette gets out of bed, takes Patricia's arm and they

**INT. TOILET -- NIGHT**

Bernadette helps Patricia to the sink, runs the tap and spoons some water with her hand to Patricia's mouth.

**PATRICIA**

It's so painful.

**BERNADETTE**

What?

Patricia moves her hand towards her breasts.

**PATRICIA**

Here. So painful. I think I'm going to faint.

She stumbles. Bernadette hurriedly helps her to sit down on the floor. Patricia slowly brings her hand to her breast and tries gently to squeeze, but the pain is too great.

**JOSEPHINE (os)**

Don't touch it.

Bernadette turns to see Josephine sitting on the pan watching them.

**JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)**

(to Patricia)

Is your milk clogged up?

**PATRICIA**

I don't know. I think so.

**JOSEPHINE**

Then don't touch it. The milk will just keep comin' if you work it and you'll end up leaking all over the place. And the nuns go crazy if you start leaking. Best take the pain. It'll be over in a couple of days.

She wipes herself with some brown paper and stands up.

**JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)**

You better get back to bed. If they catch you two being friendly they'll skin you alive.

She goes.

**BERNADETTE**

What do you want to do?

Patricia shakes her head.

**PATRICIA**

Sleep.

Bernadette helps her to her feet.

**INT. DORMITORY. SAME NIGHT.**

Margaret lies watching as Bernadette helps Patricia to bed. She closes her eyes, turns over and curls into a ball.

**INT. DORMITORY. MORNING**

Sister Jude comes storming into the dormitory, followed by a harassed-looking Sister Augusta.

**SISTER JUDE**

Everyone out of their beds! Come on, come on. Hurry up.

The girls leap out of their beds and stand by their sides.

**SISTER JUDE (CONT'D) (**

marching towards the toilet)

Who's in the toilet?

She bangs on the toilet door.

**SISTER JUDE (CONT'D)**

Who's in there?

A muffled reply comes from inside.

**SISTER JUDE (CONT'D)**

I want you out here now!

A beat, then the door opens. Out comes a bemused-looking girl, Jemima.

**SISTER JUDE** (CONT'D)  
(pointing to the corner)  
Stand over there. Over there!

Jemima shuffles over to the corner and stands there anxiously. Sister Jude walks into the toilet, briefly looks around, then comes out again. She begins checking the windows to see if they're locked, which indeed they are. She then takes her position at the far end of the dormitory and addresses the girls.

**SISTER JUDE** (CONT'D)  
Has anyone seen Una O'Connor?

The girls offer a mixed array of physical but silent "no's".

**SISTER JUDE** (CONT'D)  
Did anyone hear anything during the night?

The same silent reply.

**SISTER JUDE** (CONT'D)  
Did anyone see her leave?

This comes as real news to the girls, but they know instinctively that real trouble will follow, so stare en masse, neither shaking their heads nor nodding. Sister Jude glares at them all then suddenly turns to look at Jemima, who almost wets herself. After what seems like an eternity for poor Jemima she turns to the others.

**SISTER JUDE** (CONT'D)  
Breakfast.

She leaves, in the same bombastic manner as she entered, with Sister Augusta shuffling behind. Without betraying anything of what they may be feeling, the girls quickly get dressed.

**INT. CORRIDOR - DAY**

The girls stand waiting in line while the nuns cross and enter the dining room.

The girls then walk, turn the corner and enter by another door.

Bernadette sits beside Patricia and Margaret at the long table and looks dolefully at the stale bread and thin porridge which constitutes breakfast. At the top of the table stands Josephine, who between surreptitiously putting lumps of bread in her mouth reads prayers monotonously from the Prayer Book. The nuns' table, although in the same room as the girls is separated by a trellised wooden screen. Bernadette looks through it and sees the fresh fruit, the huge loaves of bread, the fried bacon and sausages. She nudges the other two, who look across in disbelief before going back to eating. Bernadette eats also, but keeps looking across at the nuns. She notices that there seems to be an argument going on between them. Suddenly Sister Bernadine slams both hands onto the table. The whole dining room falls instantly silent. Shamefaced, the nuns lower their heads. After a few moments, Sister Bernadine returns to eating her breakfast, Josephine reads the Prayer Book and the girls eat.

**BERNADETTE**

(quietly, but loud enough for  
the other girls to hear)  
God bless Una O'Connor, whoever she is.

She looks around the table and to her quiet amazement several of the girls are smiling. One even crosses herself and repeats Bernadette's line.

**GIRL**

God bless Una.

Suddenly, and for the first time, the girls seem genuinely excited.

**EXT. LAUNDRY ROOM. MORNING**

As the girls file into the laundry, they pass by the door leading out to the yard. An elderly locksmith stands by a stern-face Sister Bernadine.

**LOCKSMITH**

It's an old-fashioned type of lock,  
Sister. I'd need to order one special so  
it would take a couple of days. You see,  
she must have forced it with this..

(he holds up an iron bar)  
And it's shattered it completely.

The girls go inside.

**INT. LAUNDRY ROOM. DAY**

The girls are all working. One of the nuns leads old Katy to one of the overseer's chairs. Katy, in her seventies, tends to talk a great deal when she's agitated or excited, and just now she's both.

**KATY**

Don't you worry, Sister. I'll keep a close eye on all of them. I worked in here for forty years so I know all the tricks. Believe me, Sister, I know what they get up to. Will I sit down now, Sister?

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

(walking away)  
Certainly, Katherine.

**KATY**

(laughing and shouting over to her)  
Katherine! Katherine! Sure nobody's called me that in a long time, Sister. Even me mother, calls me Katy. Katherine! Katherine!

She chuckles to herself once again and sits down, only to stand straight up again.

**KATY (CONT'D)**

I'm sitting down now, Sister!  
(she sits down, then to herself..)  
Always been Katy. Always.

She smiles, then in a split second puts on her fiercest face, as if suddenly realising the gravity of her task.

Bernadette is scrubbing at one of the sinks, in between Margaret and Crispina. Crispina picks up a small pile of priests' dog collars, etc, with a pair of wooden tongs and places them on Bernadette's pile. Bernadette looks at her.

**CRISPINA**



I don't do these. Ask any of the girls.  
I don't do them.

**BERNADETTE**

So I've to do your work as well as me  
own? Away with ye.

**CRISPINA**

We can swap if you like.  
She leans across Bernadette's pile.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

Have you any bloody ones? I'll do them  
for ye. Some of the girls hate the  
bloody ones, but it doesn't bother me.  
There ye go.

She brings out two bloodied sanitary towels and puts them  
close to Bernadette's face.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

I'll do these for ye.

Bernadette, who hadn't been aware that they were in her  
pile, steps back in disgust.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

A lot of the girls put them first into  
hot water but you have to soak them in  
cold first. I tell them but they don't  
listen.

**BERNADETTE**

I believe you. Right, you can have  
them...  
Katy comes between them

**KATY**

And what are you two talkin' about, eh?  
You know there's no talkin' allowed. (  
shouting)  
Sister! They were talkin'. But I'm  
givin' them a row for it. All right,  
Sister?

Sister Clementine, who has been busy, nods in apathetic  
approval.

**KATY** (CONT'D)

There's no talkin' allowed. What were you talkin' about?

**CRISPINA**

(holding up the sanitary towels)

I was just tellin' her how to wash these.

**KATY**

For the love of Jesus get them away from me! You're a disgustin' girl, you know that. Now get back to work. I was forty years workin' in here. I know all the little tricks. I've got my eye on you two.

She goes back to her seat, makes to sit down, then scurries back.

**KATY** (CONT'D)

(suddenly conspiratorial)

Poor Sister Augusta. She got into terrible trouble with that girl runnin' away. They've asked me to sit in for her as her nerves are all shot to blazes.

(shouting to Sister Clementine)

I'm givin' them a right earful now, Sister! All right?

Clementine nods this time without looking up.

**KATY** (CONT'D)

That's the problem with youse. You're completely selfish. Never cross your mind that some poor Sister might lose her position because of youse.

(conspiratorial again)

She fell asleep on night duty. Poor thing was exhausted. Just fell asleep. Sister Bernadine tore her to pieces. Mark my words, she'll end up in Africa workin' with the lepers.

She returns to her seat and this time sits down. After a moment..

**KATY** (CONT'D)

Quiet now!

Sister Clementine nearly jumps out of her skin. Katy smiles then snaps back into her "fierce" face.

**BERNADETTE** (

to Margaret)

Have to get out of this madhouse.

Margaret does not respond but continues scrubbing.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

A nightdress lies crumpled on the floor beside a pair of shoes. A girl's hand comes out from under the sheets and picks up the shoes. As we follow this, we see that someone is under the sheets, changing. After a moment, the sheets are slowly pulled back to reveal Margaret. She slides out of the bed dressed in her brown uniform. As she stands up, she nervously looks around, making sure all the girls are asleep. She walks slowly but steadily towards the door. Suddenly she can hear a man's voice, shouting. She turns and runs to her bed, pulling the sheets up to her neck just before the door bursts open and a man throws a hysterical young girl into the centre of the dormitory. She lies prostrate on the floor, her face bleeding. All the girls have bolted upright and watch the proceedings, terrified.

**MAN**

You will stay here, you little whore! Do you hear me? You'll stay here until the day you die!

**GIRL**

(crying)

I just wanted to come home, Da! I just wanted to come home.

**MAN**

You have no home. You have no father. You've nothing, you little slut. You broke your mother's heart. You broke mine.

Sister Bernadine comes in behind them and stands by the door.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Mister O'Connor, I think you should go now. We'll look after Una.

**UNA**

Don't leave me here, Da, please. I hate it here. Please, Da.

Mr O'Connor struts towards her and ferociously begins to beat her with his hands and fists. The more Una screams, the more he beats her. Some of the girls begin to cry.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(not moving from where she stands)

Mr O'Connor. Please. I think you should go.

O'Connor stands up, tears in his eyes, his voice choking.

**O'CONNOR**

You ever run away from here again an' ah' ll find you an' ah'll cripple you so's you can't even walk let alone run. No matter where you go, ah'll catch you.

(to Bernadine)

That's a promise, Sister. An' that goes for all of you little whores. You've shamed your families an' they're not gonna forget it. Every father in Ireland, every brother, will come after you. An' you'll wish to God you'd never been born.

He turns to go.

**O'CONNOR (CONT'D)**

(to Bernadine)

God bless you, Sister.

He goes.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Stop your crying, now, Una. Get to bed and I'll deal with you in the morning.

Now, the rest of you lie down and go to sleep.

She goes. In the darkness, Una sobs, brings herself to her feet and staggers over to her bed. Margaret pulls back the sheets and gets out of the bed. Slowly she takes the nightgown which she had hidden under her pillow, lays it out on the bed and begins to undress.

**EXT. DRYING GREEN. DAY**

The girls are hanging up clothes on the clothes lines. Patricia looks towards the gates and sees a young woman waving, then pointing to Crispina. Patricia nudges Crispina, who looks up only to stop suddenly and look around to see what Sister Clementine is doing. Gleefully, she sees Clementine is involved in deep conversation with the older driver. She waves back frantically.

**CRISPINA**

It's me sister!

She waves again. The sister disappears for a minute behind the wall, only to return with a little girl aged two. Crispina begins jumping up and down uncontrollably.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

That's me little one! That's me little one!

She casts a quick glance to Clementine, who fortuitously is still in conversation.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

Isn't she big? Isn't she the biggest girl you've ever seen in all your life?

Patricia nods.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

She's only two. And the size of her!

She takes hold of her medallion and signals her sister to do the same. Her sister then takes hold of a similar medallion around the little girl's neck and presses it to the little one's lips. Crispina has another look to Clementine, closes her eyes, then whispers quietly to the medal.

(trying to be grave, but her  
concentration wandering)  
Blessed Virgin, may you and...and... St  
Christopher, St Christopher look out...  
and...God bless and look after this  
child. God bless you and everyone.

She opens her eyes, only to see that her sister and child  
have gone. She turns and sees Clementine walking towards  
them.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

Stop hanging around, you two.

They go inside, Crispina (for the first time) looking  
painfully sad.

**EXT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

The van is parked outside, girls are going in and out with  
baskets of washing.

Brendan, standing inside, attempts his best seductive smile as  
Bernadette approaches. She hands him a pile of washing. He  
takes it, bringing his ridiculously grinning face towards her.  
Bernadette scowls at him.

**BERNADETTE**

Are you a spastic or what?

**BRENDAN**

(through grinning teeth)  
This is me friendly face.

**BERNADETTE**

Well, get it away from me an' shove it  
up yer not so friendly arse.

The grin disappears in an instant.

**BRENDAN**

Jaysus, an' they told me you lot were  
right into the fellas.

Much to her surprise, this remark actually hurts Bernadette.  
So much so that she doesn't have a smart reply. She sullenly  
hands him more washing. Brendan, of course, completely  
misinterprets this silence as meaning she agrees.

**BRENDAN (CONT'D)**

Isn't that right? That you lot are in here cos you liked to give it out to the lads? Liked to get the old knickers off, an' that?

Bernadette, though raging with hurt and anger, can't think of what to say.

**INT. LAUNDRY ROOM. DAY**

Patricia stands scrubbing beside Crispina. Patricia wants to say something, but the whole subject is very sensitive to her. However..

**PATRICIA**

What's your name?

**CRISPINA**

Crispina

**PATRICIA**

Crispina?

**CRISPINA**

It means girl with the curly hair.

Crispina's hair is poker straight.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

But its not my real name. Sister Bernadine gave me it. She took one look at me and said "you're a Crispina". She's a laugh isn't she?

**PATRICIA**

(Deadpan)

Hilarious. What's your real name?

Crispina thinks for a moment, then pulls a face - she can't remember.

**PATRICIA**

What's your wee girl called?

**CRISPINA**

God, you've got a real thing about names haven't you? What's yours?

**PATRICIA**

Rose.

**CRISPINA**

We've got a Rose.

**PATRICIA**

I know. I used my confirmation name.  
suppose you should call me Patricia.

**CRISPINA**

What made you choose Patricia?

**PATRICIA**

It was my mother's name.

She tries to move the conversation away from herself.

**PATRICIA (CONT'D)**

So what's your wee girl called?

Crispina shrugs.

**CRISPINA**

Don't know.

Patricia takes this to mean that Crispina doesn't want to talk about it, so she just nods and carries on working.

**EXT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

Bernadette hands Brendan the last pile of washing. Brendan looks to see if Clementine or his gaffer is around, then

seizes his chance. He brings his head down to hers and speaks quietly in her ear.

**BRENDAN**

Two shillings if you suck me dick. What  
d'ye say?

Bernadette glares at him for a moment then snaps. With both hands she digs her nails deep into his face. He screams in pain and pulls himself away, falling into the clean white linen. He looks down to see they've been spattered with blood.

**BRENDAN (CONT'D)**



(about his face as well as the  
sheets)  
Christ, look what you've done, you mad  
fuckin' bitch!

Bernadette, trying desperately hard not to cry, turns and  
goes.

INT. LAUNDRY - DAY

Patricia and Crispina continue scrubbing

**CRISPINA**

(checking that Clementine  
isn't looking)  
When my baby came out of me they gave  
her to me sister right away. And she  
can't come here. And can't talk to me,  
y'know. So I don't know her name.

Then, excitedly holding up the medallion -

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

But me auntie who's the richest woman in  
the world gave us both this. An' me  
sister, me sister..me sister brings her  
to the gates sometimes an' we talk on  
this.

She giggles.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

This is a...a.... a... holy...  
holy...holy

She tries to think of the word but can't. She screams.  
Then turns to Clementine.

**CRISPINA**

I'm sorry, Sister. I'm sorry. What's  
the word? What's the word?

Sister Clementine walks across.

**CRISPINA**

Sorry, Sister. I just can't think of  
the word.

You know there's no talking allowed. So  
back to work.

Crispina just stares at her.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE** (CONT'D)

I said back to work Crispina just  
stares.

(firmly)

I'm not going to tell you again. Back  
to....

**CRISPINA**

(screaming)

Telephone!

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

(shocked)

In the name of God...

Just at that moment an angry, tearful Bernadette marches  
straight up to Sister Clementine.

**BERNADETTE**

I want to see Sister Bernadine. Now!

**INT. CORRIDOR. DAY**

Clementine marches Bernadette and Crispina by the hair then  
throws them up against the wall outside Bernadine's office.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

You two wait there.

She chaps on the door then goes inside. Crispina and  
Bernadette stand silently. Crispina is terrified and though  
Bernadette is still angry enough to remain determined, her  
resolve is starting to crack a little. After a few moments,  
the door opens and Clementine beckons them inside.

**INT. BERNADINE'S OFFICE. DAY**

As they come inside they see Bernadine stood by a chair with a  
set of hair-clippers in her hand. Sat on the chair with three-  
quarters of her hair shaved off is Una, her face still bruised  
and bleeding from the night before. Though she tries her best  
to disguise it, Bernadette is deeply shocked. Una, with the  
look of someone who has woken up to find there's no-one  
inside, stares ahead impassively.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(clipping off the hair and  
without looking up)  
I'll send them along when I'm finished  
with them.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

Thank you, Sister.

She goes. Sister Bernadine continues shaving Una's hair.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

I understand that you two have been  
disobedient.

**CRISPINA**

Sorry, Sister.

**BERNADETTE**

(almost despite herself)  
I only asked if I could see you, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You didn't ask anything, girl. You  
demanded. Now, who in the name of God  
gave you the right to make demands?

**BERNADETTE**

I just wanted to know why I'm here,  
that's all. I've not committed any  
crime, I've not been with any lads,  
ever. That's the God's truth.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

But you'd like to, wouldn't you?

**BERNADETTE**

I'm a good girl, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

No. You're arrogant. And ill-mannered.  
And stupid. And that'll be why the boys  
liked you. So much low intelligence makes  
it easier for them to get their fingers  
inside you. Isn't that right, Crispina?

**CRISPINA**

Yes, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

And what did I just say?

**CRISPINA**

I don't know, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

That all men are sinners and therefore  
all men are open to temptation.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

And in any God-fearing country if you  
want to save men from themselves you  
remove that temptation.

(Then, directly to Bernadette)  
You understand me, girl?

**CRISPINA**

Yes, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

I wasn't asking you.  
There is a long silence as Bernadette considers her reply.

**BERNADETTE**

I understand you, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Good, then I won't have to explain it  
again. Ever. Now is that understood?

**BERNADETTE**

Yes, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You sure now? There were a few words of  
more than one syllable there.

**BERNADETTE**

I understand you, Sister.

Sister Bernadine has now finished cutting Una's hair. She  
lays the clippers on the table and picks up a long, thin rod.  
Una lowers her head slowly to look at the pile of hair which  
lies around her feet.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Now, disobedience will not be tolerated.  
So lift your skirts up and face the wall.

They both turn and hitch their skirts up to the top of their thighs.

Sister Bernadine walks quietly towards them and delivers four rapid, scything blows each to the backs of their legs.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

(calmly)

Now. Go on. The three of you back to your work.

Bernadette and Crispina both lower their skirts and with the tears streaming down their faces leave the room. Una crouches down and begins picking up piles of her hair.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Una! Have you completely lost your mind? Your hair's no good to you now. Put it down. We'll pack it away later and sell it to O'Brien's. Give the money to the black babies, all right? Now stop acting so foolish and off you go..

Una does as she's told, puts it down and leaves.

**INT. LAUNDRY ROOM. DAY**

Bernadette and Crispina walk towards their sinks. Patricia looks to Bernadette and tries to touch her hand sympathetically. Bernadette pulls hers away and starts scrubbing furiously. As Una enters the laundry all eyes look up at her sad, beaten face and shaven head. She ignores everyone and gets to work. Crispina kisses her medallion then holds it across to Bernadette.

**CRISPINA**

St Christopher. He...he...helps the pain go away. He does. I promise ye.

Bernadette looks at it for a moment then suddenly spits on it. Crispina gasps, crosses herself then washes it instantly. Bernadette carries on working.

A furious Sister Bernadine enters with Brendan and the older driver, Seamus.

She picks up a pair of metal tongs and raps them loudly against one of the large metal vats where they boil the white washing.

The girls immediately stop working.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Now, I don't know what kind of madness is going on here today, or where it's coming from, but I'm going to put a stop to it right now. Do you understand me?

**GIRLS**

(in unison)  
Yes, Sister!

**SISTER BERNADINE**

One of you attacked this young man. For no good reason, attacked him. Now whoever did this will step forward.

No one moves. There is a long, long silence.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Your punishment will now be twice as severe. Now, unless you want it to be twice as much again, you will step forward.

Again no one moves. Again the long silence.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

I'm disappointed but not surprised. Any girl that can behave in such a fashion would undoubtedly be as much a coward as a vicious little animal.

(to Brendan)  
Go and find her.

Brendan walks down the aisle, looking carefully at all the girls. He stops when he sees Bernadette, but as she looks at him with her bloodshot eyes his resolve vanishes and he walks on. As he turns to walk back to Bernadine and Seamus he knows he's in trouble. He tries his best to seem genuine as he stands beside Seamus.

**BRENDAN**

I can't see her, Sister.

**SEAMUS**

What are you sayin', you can't see her?  
You told me you knew exactly who it was.

**BRENDAN**

I thought I did but they all look much  
the same to me. Let's just forget about  
it. It's only a scratch.

Bernadine smells a rat.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

What's your name, boy?

**BRENDAN**

Brendan, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You wouldn't be lying to me now, would  
you, Brendan?

**BRENDAN**

No, Sister.

**SEAMUS**

He would never do that, Sister. I'd beat  
the crap out him for that, Sister. And  
he knows that, don't ye?

**BRENDAN**

Course. Maybe I took it the wrong way, y'  
know. Cos I was bendin' over at the time  
an' maybe the girl tripped over an'  
accidentally caught me in the face.

**SEAMUS**

You told me she dug her fingernails  
right into you.

**BRENDAN**

(confidently)  
But I didn't say she meant it. I think  
it was just an accident.

**BRENDAN**

In fact the more I think about it that's what it was.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(coldly)

If it was an accident why didn't she step forward and say so?

**BRENDAN**

I don't know, Sister. Maybe she was frightened or somethin', I don't know.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

And what would she be frightened of?

**BRENDAN**

(knowing he's blown it)

I don't know, Sister. Maybe she wasn't frightened. Maybe she didn't even know it was her. Y'know, maybe she just tripped and thought she caught her hand on something else, y'know. And walked away without even knowin' it.

There is a long pause as Bernadine stares through him.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Well, that all sounds perfectly feasible, wouldn't you say so, Seamus?

**SEAMUS**

I wouldn't know, Sister. He lost me a mile back.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

So what you're telling me now, Brendan, is that you weren't actually attacked but you were accidentally mauled in the face by a girl who wasn't even aware she was doing it?

**BRENDAN**

Sounds stupid, I know, Sister, but I think that's what happened. And I'm really sorry for wastin' your time but it was the pain in me face, y'know. Sorry, Sister.



**SISTER BERNADINE**

Oh, don't apologise to me. I think it's  
the girls you should apologise to.

Brendan looks sheepishly at the girls, then quietly...

**BRENDAN**

I'm sorry.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

They would never have heard that,  
Brendan.

**BRENDAN**

(louder)  
I'm sorry!

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You know, I wonder what God would make of  
all this. Will we try one more, Brendan?  
This time for Jesus Christ Our Lord. As  
loud as you can, now.

Brendan takes a deep breath.

**BRENDAN**

I'm sorry!!

**SISTER BERNADINE**

And we'll all pray that he heard you.

She goes. Brendan steals a glance at Bernadette, who to his  
dismay shows no sign of appreciation.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

Bernadette and Patricia are whispering in bed.

**PATRICIA**

So where would you go?

**BERNADETTE**

I've a cousin in Dublin. She's a  
hairdresser. I've only met her once but  
I'm sure she wouldn't turn me away if I  
asked her to help me. You want to come  
with me?

**BERNADETTE** (CONT'D)

Why? What in the name of God have we done to deserve this? We're not slaves. We're not criminals. What have we done?

Patricia says nothing.

**BERNADETTE** (CONT'D)

Having a baby is not a crime.

**PATRICIA**

Having a baby before you're married is a mortal sin.

**BERNADETTE**

All the mortal sins in the world wouldn't justify this place. But I tell you this. I swear to God I'll commit any sin, mortal or otherwise, to get me the hell out of here.

With that, she turns her back and makes to go to sleep, leaving Patricia to ponder on what she's just said.

**EXT. OUTHOUSE. DAY**

Brendan and Bernadette are kissing. Both are stood on a corner hidden behind some bushes. Brendan, fag still in hand, has his back to the wall. Bernadette suddenly breaks off.

**BERNADETTE**

Don't do that again.

Instantly Bernadette launches back into the methodical head-rolling kiss of before. After a few moments she breaks off again. This time she looks round the corner anxiously. Satisfied that no one is around to see them, she returns to the kissing. Again, she breaks off after a few moments.

**BERNADETTE** (CONT'D)

God, it's borin' isn't it?

**BRENDAN**

It's okay.

**BERNADETTE**

Nah. It's borin'. (  
pause)

So what are we goin' to do?

**BRENDAN**

I don't know. Maybe we could just not do the kissin' but just feel each other. Instantly he sees the anger in Bernadette's eyes.

**BRENDAN (CONT'D)**

Or we could just talk.

**BERNADETTE (**

after a long pause)

You want to run away together?

**BRENDAN**

I don't know. Where would we go?

**BERNADETTE**

We could go to England or somethin'. Or America, even.

**BRENDAN**

Have you got any money?

**BERNADETTE**

Do I look like I've got any bloody money?

**BRENDAN**

Well, I thought you might have saved up some of your wages, or somethin'.

**BERNADETTE**

What wages? We don't get wages. What, you think I'm here cos I answered an advert in the papers?

**BRENDAN**

No, but I thought you might get somethin'...

**BERNADETTE**

We get nothin'.

She looks around the corner.

**BERNADETTE (CONT'D)**

So, are we gonna do it or not?

**BRENDAN**

Do what?

**BERNADETTE**

Run away together.

**BRENDAN**

How can we run away together. We got no money, nowhere to go and anyway, Jaysus, we don't even know each other.

Bernadette stares intensely at him. Then after a moment she hitches up her skirt.

**BERNADETTE**

You can look. But if you try and touch I'll have to kick your teeth in. All right?

As she lowers her drawers Brendan gets down on his hunkers, trying to seem nonchalant by still smoking his cigarette, but looking very much like an eight-year-old playing doctors for the first time. He slowly exhales.

**BERNADETTE (CONT'D)**

(looking down)

Mary Mother of God! It's not a fuckin' chimney!

Brendan apologetically waves away the smoke, all the time gazing between Bernadette's legs.

**BERNADETTE (CONT'D)**

You've got the keys to the back door of the laundry?

**BRENDAN**

(like a man hypnotised)

No. Seamus has them.

**BERNADETTE**

But you can get them?

**BRENDAN**

I think so.

**BERNADETTE**

Then come back tonight, open the back

**KATY**

(00V)

Oh dear God in heaven!

Bernadette and Brendan turn to see Katy standing there, shocked. As Bernadette hoists up her drawers and Brendan leaps to his feet, Katy scurries off.

**BERNADETTE**

(very scared and very anxious) You've got to be there tonight. Please promise you'll be there.

**BRENDAN**

(who genuinely wasn't listening earlier)  
Tonight?

**BERNADETTE**

You've got to be now. She'll tell an' they'll kill me.

**BERNADETTE**

Please, I'm beggin' ye. You've got to be there.

With that, she runs off in pursuit of Katy.

**EXT. LAUNDRY. DAY**

Bernadette runs up to Katy who is pushing a trolley into the laundry.

**BERNADETTE**

Katy?

**KATY**

Get away from me. You're a disgustin', disgustin' girl.

**BERNADETTE**

Were gonna get married. Honest to God.

**KATY**

He'll never *marry* you. Never.

**BERNADETTE**

He is, I swear to God. But Katy, if you

an' we'll not be able to get married an'  
then that will make me a sinner. You don'  
t want me to be a sinner?

**KATY**

I'm tellin' Sister Bernadine. You're  
disgustin'. They should keep you here  
forever. Pay for all your disgustin'  
sins.

Bernadette grabs hold of Katy.

**BERNADETTE**

Please, I'm beggin' you, don't tell  
Sister Bernadine. I promise you I'll  
never see him again. I'll stay here.  
I'll work hard.

**BERNADETTE**

I'll pray every waking moment. Pray for  
forgiveness of my sins. Don't tell Sister  
Bernadine!

**KATY**

I have to tell Sister Bernadine. I have  
to.

**BERNADETTE**

Fine. Go ahead. Tell her. But if you do,  
I'll kill myself. I swear to God. And  
you know what that means. Means I'll go  
straight to hell and so will you. Cos you  
made me do it. An' in the eyes of God  
that'll make you a murderer, same as me.

**KATY (**

somewhat unsure)  
That's not true.

Bernadette, knowing this to be her last chance, nods  
solemnly and goes.

**INT. INT . LAUNDRY. DAY**

Bernadette is scrubbing at her sink. She looks up to see  
Bernadine walking around the laundry, inspecting the girls  
as they work. Katy, carrying some towels, scurries up to

her, nods, then carries on walking. Bernadette can't believe her luck.

**EXT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

Brendan sneaks up towards the back door carrying his bicycle on his shoulders. He places it carefully against the wall and brings out a set of keys. Nervously he picks out a large mortice key and unlocks the door, making sure that it remains closed, however. Obviously agitated, he steps back from the door. He takes out his cigarettes, but just as he makes to light one, realises he might draw attention to himself and puts it away again. He waits.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

Sister Clementine walks briskly down the centre of the dorm, casually counting the girls in their beds. As she reaches the doors she turns out the lights. Through the square glass panel we see her lock the doors.

**EXT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

Sister Clementine walks off down the main corridor. After a few moments the door of a broom cupboard opens and out steps Bernadette, slowly.

**EXT. CORRIDORS, STAIRS ETC. NIGHT**

What follows is Bernadette sprinting along corridors, down stairs, etc. This is no WWII escape where the guards take their breaks at a precise moment and the escapees must be at certain points at certain times. Getting to that door is as much as Bernadette has planned, and this is just one mad rush towards it. As she runs she looks neither left nor right nor behind. She's a sprinter heading towards the line.

**INT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

Bernadette crashes through the doors and with the end in sight almost smiles victoriously. A second before her hand reaches the handle we hear the mortice lock. She pulls. Locked. She pulls again.

**EXT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

Brendan stands holding the key in the door. When he sees the door being pulled he takes the key out.

**INT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

Bernadette hears this.

**BERNADETTE**

Brendan? Brendan, it's me. Open the door.

**EXT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

**BRENDAN**

(highly agitated)  
This is madness. Christ, I don't even know your name. That's how mad all this is.

**INT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

**BERNADETTE**

My name's Bernadette. Bernadette. Now for the love of God open the door!

**EXT. LAUNDRY . NIGHT**

Brendan has picked up his bike.

**BRENDAN**

(apologetically)  
They'd know it was me, you know that, don't ye. I'd lose me job an' everythin'. They'd lock me up too. I've a brother doin' six years for stealin' apples from the convent. What would they give me? I'm sorry but I can't do it.

He runs off.

**INT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

Bernadette has her ear pressed against the door. She can hear him leave.

**BERNADETTE**

Oh dear God, no. Brendan! At least open the bloody door!



She looks around desperately, grabs a set of metal tongs and tries to prise the door open. She tries with all her strength but to no avail.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(os)

Bernadette.

Bernadette is not surprised to hear her voice. She turns and faces her. We see Bernadine, flanked by Sister Clementine, Sister Jude and a somewhat nervous-looking Katy.

**INT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE. NIGHT**

Bernadette struggles furiously as Sisters Clementine and Jude pin her to the chair and hold her down. Sister Bernadine moves in with the hair-clippers but Bernadette manages to strike out with her feet and kick them out of her hand. They smash against the wall. An enraged Sister Bernadine holds her wounded hand for a moment then races over to her desk and pulls out a large pair of scissors. With equal speed she dashes over to the chair, avoiding Bernadette's desperate attempts to kick out at her. She sticks the scissors into Bernadette's skull, cutting off a large clump of bloodied hair. Bernadette screams in agony.

**INT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE. NIGHT**

In extreme close-up we see cotton wool being dipped into some water then applied to an eye congealed with blood. It's dipped in again and applied to the other eye.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(os and sounding angry and exasperated)

Open your eyes now, girl. Open them.

Bernadette forces her eyes open. She stares. Sister Bernadine holds up a mirror to Bernadette's face. We see what she sees - her hair shorn off, her head cut with scissor marks, little lines of blood running down her face. Sister Bernadine rests her chin on the top of the mirror which she holds. The sweat runs down her face

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

I want you to see yourself as you really are. Now that your vanity is gone and your arrogance defeated, you're free.

Free to choose between right and wrong.  
Good and evil. So now you must look deep  
into your soul. Find that which is pure  
and decent then deliver it up to God.  
Then, and only then, will you find  
salvation.

Bernadette hears none of this, trying as she is to recognise  
who it is looking back at her from the mirror.

FADE TO BLACK

**INT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

Father Fitzroy stands with Holy Water obviously blessing  
something. Behind him stands Sister Bernadine, the nuns and  
the girls. We reveal that what he is blessing are two large,  
pristine industrial dryers. When he's finished the break into  
spontaneous applause.

**INT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

The girls are working furiously.

**EXT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

Three vans are loading and unloading laundry.

**INT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

The industrial dryers are emptied and immediately filled  
again.

**INT. DINING HALL - DAY**

The girls eat their food quickly and are ordered back into  
the laundry.

**INT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Three large biscuit tins packed with money lie on Bernadine's  
table. She pushes the lid down on one of them, then with  
the other hand seals it with sellotape.

**INT. LAUNDRY. EVENING.**

We see only the girls bare feet running frantically around  
the cold concrete floor. We hear the collective panting and

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

Keep going! Keep going! Get those  
knees up!

One of the girls slip on a wet patch. It's Bernadette.  
She's naked.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

Bernadette! Get your fat arse off the  
floor and keep running!

We see sister Clementine now. She is stood at the top end  
of the laundry with Sister Jude who is laughing  
hysterically. All the girls are naked, their clothes lain in  
neat piles at the far end of the laundry. They are running  
awkwardly in a circle. The more they fall or run into each  
other or stop the funnier the nuns find it. Eventually Sister  
Clementine claps her hands.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

Right, enough! Stand by your clothes  
down there and lets have a look at ye.

The girls shuffle exhausted to their respective bundles.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

There's nothin' like a little exercise  
before supper. Though by the look of some  
of ye, ye should be cuttin' down on the  
potatoes.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

Jemima, I haven't seen an arse as big as  
that since I worked on me fathers farm.  
An' I milked the cows!

She laughs. The nuns laugh. One or two of the girls try  
and cover themselves with their hands.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

Arms  
by your sides. Frances, you know I've  
never really noticed you before but not  
only do you have the tiniest little  
titties I've ever seen but you've got no  
nipples.

Sister Clementine turns to the other nuns.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

Do you see that? Now that can't be natural can it?

**SISTER JUDE**

Like somebody has bitten the cherries off her cakes.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

And worse still, the cherries were bigger than the cakes.

They laugh, Sister Clementine is enjoying herself.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

So we're all agreed that Frances has the littlest titties.

The nuns smile and nod.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

But whose got the biggest?

They stare at the girls.

**SISTER JUDE I'**

d say it was Patricia.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

No, she's just broad at the back.  
Patricia turn around.

Patricia turns round.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

Ye see. She's just big at the back.  
Patricia, you have a brickie's back. A couple of tattoos and ye could pass yourself off as a navy. No. Biggest titties have to go to Cecelia. Definitely Cecelia. Cecelia give yourself a round of applause for having the biggest titties. Go on now.

Cecelia slowly applauds herself.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

So we've covered biggest titties,  
littlest titties, biggest arse. So that  
only leaves us with hairiest....

The nuns squeal like embarrassed teenagers. Sister  
Clementine stares intently at their lower halves.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE** (CONT'D)

Crispina, step forward. And Bernadette  
step forward.

Crispina and Bernadette step forward.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE** (CONT'D)

Now stand next to one another.

They stand next to one another. With all eyes now staring  
at her groin Crispina covers herself with her hands.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE** (CONT'D)

Crispina! Don't you dare put your hands  
down there!! Not ever! Now get them away,  
get them away.

Crispina puts her hands by her side. Sister Clementine  
looks from one girls groin to the other.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE** (CONT'D)

Bernadette, you've got more hair down  
there than you do on your head but I  
have to say the winner  
is ..... Crispina.

The nuns applaud. Sister Clementine looks up delighted with  
herself but her expression darkens instantly when she sees  
that Crispina is crying.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE** (CONT'D)

Crispina. You've won. So why are you  
crying?

**CRISPINA**

I don't know sister.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

Neither do I. So stop it now.

Sister Clementine is angry and deflated. The fun is over.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)**

Get dressed all of you. It's time to eat.

Sister Clementine leaves followed by the other nuns.

**INT. TOILET. DORMITORY. NIGHT.**

A nightgown is placed in the sink and the cold tap is turned on. When it's thoroughly wet it is taken out and we see it is Crispina. She takes the nightgown and as quickly and as quietly as she can she puts it on.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

Crispina puts her head around the door to see if everyone is asleep. When she feels it is safe she scurries out, runs to her bed and gets in. Shivering, she closes her eyes to sleep.

**INT. DINING HALL. DAY**

The girls are eating breakfast. Crispina is sweating profusely, seated next to Margaret. As the girls stand up to take their dishes to the counter, Crispina collapses. The nuns look across as they hear the commotion. Sister Bernadine continues to eat her breakfast as Sister Clementine comes across. Margaret is cradling Crispina in her arms as the other girls stand around, watching.

**MARGARET**

(to Sister Clementine)  
She's very hot, Sister.

Clementine kneels down and feels her forehead. Crispina has regained consciousness.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

Crispina! Get up, now. Do you think you can walk?

**CRISPINA**

Yes, Sister. I'm sure I can. I'm sorry if I've caused any trouble, Sister.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

(to Margaret)  
Take her back up to bed. I'll have

Margaret helps Crispina out of the dining room. Sister Clementine returns to the nuns' breakfast table and the girls go about handing over their dishes. Bernadette, who noticeably did not respond to Crispina's fall but continued eating breakfast, finishes off, then just as she rises with her plate, notices something on the ground by her feet. She picks it up. It's Crispina's holy medal. She looks around and notes that no-one has seen this. She bends down and puts the medal in her sock.

**INT. DORMITORY. DAY**

Margaret is helping Crispina undress. Crispina is shivering.

**CRISPINA**

I think maybe I'm dyin'.

**MARGARET**

You're not dyin'. It's just a fever.  
Maybe you've got the flu or somethin'.

**CRISPINA**

You can die from the flu.

**MARGARET**

Old people die from the flu. Not young  
people.

Margaret pulls back the sheets on Crispina's bed. She sees the mattress is soaking wet.

**MARGARET (CONT'D)**

Dear God, did you lie in that all night?

Crispina shrugs.

**MARGARET (CONT'D)**

Did you wet the bed?

**CRISPINA**

(indignantly)  
I've never wet the bed in me life. Not  
even when I was little.

**MARGARET**

Then what happened? It's soaking wet.

Crispina shrugs once again. Margaret takes the sheets off and turns the mattress over.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

Well, at least it's not gone all the way through, thank God. Otherwise we'd have to tell the Sisters and you wouldn't want that, would you?

Crispina shakes her head.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

Right then. Jump into bed just now and I'll go and get you some clean sheets.

Crispina gets into bed and pulls the covers up. Margaret makes to go when suddenly Crispina screams.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

What's the matter? What's the matter?

**CRISPINA**

Me holy medal! I've lost it! I've lost St Christopher!

**MARGARET**

It's all right, its all right; it'll be around here somewhere.

Margaret quickly looks around the floor but sees nothing. Crispina is becoming more and more hysterical.

**CRISPINA**

Where is he? Where's me St Christopher?  
Oh, God help me!

**MARGARET**

It's all right, it probably fell off in the canteen. I'll go and find it for you. All right? You just stay in bed.

Crispina pulls the covers over her head and begins to mumble to herself.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

You stay in bed, now. I'll find it, don't worry.



Margaret goes. Crispina lies for a moment, then gets out of bed and drags the top blanket off with her hand and walks towards the toilet.

**OMITTED**

**INT. LAUNDRY. DAY**

Margaret is talking to Sister Clementine. Somewhat reluctantly, Sister Clementine nods. Margaret collects some clean dry sheets then dashes round the girls, all of whom shake their heads. She comes to Bernadette.

**MARGARET**

Crispina's lost her medallion. Have you seen it?

**BERNADETTE**

No.

Bernadette continues working.

**INT. DORMITORY. DAY**

Margaret comes in carrying the sheets. Crispina's bed is empty. Margaret puts the sheets on the bed and walks quickly to the toilet.

**MARGARET**

Crispina?

Margaret walks into the toilet. She sees Crispina standing on the sink, holding onto the electric wire of the lightbulb.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D) (

trying to remain calm)

Crispina, what are you doing?

Crispina, shaking badly, just shrugs.

**CRISPINA**

You'll never find my St Christopher.

**MARGARET**

I'll find it, don't worry. Now come down from there and get into bed.

**CRISPINA**

It's my punishment.

**MARGARET**

Punishment for what?  
Crispina shrugs again.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D)

Come down from there and I promise you  
I'll find it.

**CRISPINA**

Did you find it?

**MARGARET**

No. But I promise you I will. I  
promise. Now come down from there.  
After a moment Crispina comes down.

**INT. DORMITORY. DAY**

Crispina is in bed. Margaret is tucking the sheets under  
the edge of the mattress.

**CRISPINA**

If you died from the flu it wouldn't be  
your fault, would it?

**MARGARET**

No, it wouldn't, but like I said before,  
you can't die from the flu.

Crispina drags the sheets over her head and turns on her  
side.

**MARGARET** (CONT'D) I'

ll need to get back to work.  
No reply. Reluctantly Margaret leaves.

**EXT. DRYING GREEN - DAY**

Sister Jude stands by the door reading. Patricia and some  
of the other girls are hanging up washing. She happens to  
look towards the gate.

There stands Crispina's sister with the little one, smartly  
dressed and looking that one year older.

Patricia looks around to see if any of the nuns are watching. Seeing that there's none around, she walks a little to the side of the van and waves. When she sees she's got the sister's attention she tries to mouth "she's not well". Obviously the sister is too far away so she tries to mime "not well"; i.e., she shows sniffly nose, shivering, temperature, etc. Finally she gives up, knowing the sister is none the wiser but unable to think of any way of telling her. She waves goodbye. The little one waves back. Patricia turns to her trolley and goes back inside.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

The girls are sleeping. All except Margaret. She keeps popping up and looking along to Crispina's bed. Seeing that Crispina is lying there, she lies back down. She tries to close her eyes and sleep, but soon pops up again. Still there. Once more she tries to sleep. Longer this time. She pops her head up one more time before going to sleep. Crispina's gone. Margaret leaps out of bed and runs towards the toilets. She opens the door, and there above her is Crispina, dangling by the throat from the electric wire that comes down from the ceiling. She dashes forward and takes her full weight in her arms, hoisting Crispina upwards in the hope of stopping complete strangulation. Fighting to keep Crispina up and find her voice, she eventually manages to shout.

**MARGARET**

Help me! Help me in here!

Patricia is first out of bed and runs to the toilet. Immediately she helps Margaret hold Crispina up. As the other girls come in, Margaret desperately issues instructions.

**MARGARET (CONT'D)**

Somebody get it off her neck! Quickly!

The girls are in a panic. Crispina starts to writhe as the wire tightens.

**MARGARET (CONT'D)**

Jaysus, she's chokin'. Get it off her!  
Get it off her!

Jemima jumps up onto the sink and frantically tries to untie the knot.

**JEMIMA**

It's too tight! I can't get it off.  
Lift her higher!

The girls finally act in unison and lift her up higher. Jemima manages to get her fingers under the wire at the back of Crispina's neck. She manages to loosen it enough to pull it off over her head.

**JEMIMA (CONT'D)**

It's off, it's off!

To the relief of all concerned, they lower Crispina down. By the door, having watched all this, is Bernadette - a lonely figure of anger and guilt.

**INT. TOILET. SOME TIME LATER.**

Margaret is putting a cold compress around Crispina's neck. Close by, watching this, are Patricia and Bernadette.

**MARGARET**

But Crispina, why would you want to kill yourself?

**BERNADETTE**

Jaysus, that's a bloody stupid question to ask in this place!

**MARGARET (**

ignoring the remark)  
Why?

**CRISPINA**

I wanted to die from the flu, but you told me I wouldn't.

**MARGARET**

Crispina, you can't kill yourself.

**MARGARET**

It's the biggest mortal sin there is, you know that. You'd go straight to hell.

Crispina does not respond.

**PATRICIA**

I saw your wee one today.

Crispina's face lights up.

**CRISPINA**

Me little one? How was she lookin'?

**PATRICIA**

Lovely. You could tell she was really sad, though, when she didn't see you, you know. She missed you.

**MARGARET**

(immediately taking this up)  
There, you see? Just think how your little one would feel if she never saw you again.

**CRISPINA**

I want my St Christopher. Did you find it?

**MARGARET**

No. But believe me I'll find it.  
Though you have to promise me you're not going to try anything like this again.  
You promise?

Crispina shrugs.

**MARGARET (CONT'D)**

Look, I know this place would drive anyone crazy, but you've got to remember you're going to get out of here one day. Get to play with your little one.

**BERNADETTE**

When?

**MARGARET**

I don't know.

**BERNADETTE**

Then why are you tellin' her that, then?

**MARGARET**

Because it's true.

**BERNADETTE**

Then tell her when. Next month? Next

**MARGARET**

I don't know. Look, I'm tryin' to stop her from killin' herself.

**BERNADETTE**

I know what you're tryin' to do. I just don't know why you're doin' it.

Bernadette goes.

**CRISPINA**

I'm tired. I'm going to my bed now.

Crispina goes. An exasperated Margaret looks to Patricia, who can only offer a sympathetic nod before she too leaves.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT.**

Bernadette stands over Crispina's bed. She has the St Christopher medal in her hand. She puts it under the sleeping Crispina's pillow. As she does so she notices how peaceful the sleeping Crispina's face looks. She stares at her. After a few moments she lifts the pillow up again and takes back the medal. She goes back to her own bed and puts the medal under her mattress.

**INT. OUTSIDE SACRISTY DOOR. DAY.**

Crispina stands by the door holding the priest's freshly laundered garments. Father Fitzroy comes running down the narrow stairs. He unlocks the door.

**CRISPINA**

I've lost my St Christopher father.

**FATHER FITZROY**

Hurry up now. I'm late.

Crispina follows him inside. He quickly closes the door behind him.

**EXT. MAGDALENE CHAPEL. DAY**

The girls stand in twos outside the chapel, waiting to go in. Sister Clementine walks along the line, checking their appearance.

No talking now. You, straighten your skirt.

(then to Margaret)

Clean those shoes up.

(then to another girl further down the line)

And what are you laughing about...?

As she walks away, Margaret kneels down, spits on her finger and begins buffing her shoes. She glances down a few times at the basement window of the sacristy. She sees Crispina's head thrusting back and forth between Father Fitzroy's legs. He stands in a sweaty pre-orgasmic state. It takes a few moments for Margaret to realise exactly what she's seeing. The moment she does, she leaps to her feet as if she were caught spying. The line begins to move as the girls go inside. A stunned and shaken Margaret moves with them.

#### **INT. CHAPEL. DAY**

Una stands before the Alter dressed in black. She is "giving herself" to the Convent. The girls sit watching.

Margaret pays no attention as she stares across at Crispina.

#### **INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

The girls are kneeling in front of the Priest waiting for Communion. Margaret, in a near state of panic, watches them open their mouths, close their eyes and put out their tongues for Father Fitzroy. When he comes to her she cannot do it.

#### **FATHER FITZROY**

Body of Christ

Margaret stares at him then looks to the Eucharist

#### **FATHER FITZROY (CONT'D)**

Body of Christ

Slowly she opens her mouth, and he places the Eucharist on her tongue.

#### **EXT. GARDENS. DAY.**

Sister Clementine and Sister Jude sit frozen on the bench like two statues as the camera roams around them.

**FATHER FITZROY (V.O.)**

Sisters, would you do something.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

(almost frightened to move her  
lips)

Like what?

**FATHER FITZROY (V.O.)**

I don't know. Get up walk about.

They slowly get up and begin walking like robots.

**FATHER FITZROY (V.O.)** No

sisters. Relax. Try and look  
natural.

They look to one another. What's natural? They remain  
rooted to the spot. We hear Father Fitzroy sigh and the  
camera is switched off.

**EXT. GARDEN. DAY.**

Father Fitzroy stands looking through his 8mm camera. He  
shouts instructions.

**FATHER FITZROY**

Now when I say go I want you all to walk  
straight past me. And I want you all to  
be happy. So you can talk and laugh but  
no looking at the camera. Alright now,  
out you come!!

The girls are in twos and come walking round the corner.  
One or two are smiling but they don't look terribly  
enthusiastic.

**FATHER FITZROY**

(Exasperated)

I want all of you talking and laughing!  
And that's an order!!

The girls immediately start babbling to one another,  
Margaret is partnered with Crispina.

**CRISPINA**

You said you'd find me St Christopher.



He is not a man of God. Remember that.

**CRISPINA**

(shocked)

What?

**MARGARET**

He is not a man of God.

As Margaret and Crispina walk past Father Fitzroy Margaret glares at him.

**FATHER FITZROY**

No looking at the camera, girl! And keep smiling.

**EXT. DRYING GREEN - DAY**

The girls are having a relay race. Sister Clementine and some of the other nuns join in. Sister Bernadine and the more senior nuns sit watching. Margaret waits for her chance and slips away.

**EXT. DISUSED OUTHOUSE. DAY.**

Margaret comes in and starts looking at the weeds and undergrowth that have sprouted through the broken floorboards. In a damp corner through some twisted metal she sees what she is looking for. She gets down on her knees and from under her skirt she brings out a handkerchief which she uses as a kind of mitten to pull the small shoots out of the ground. When she has enough, careful not to touch them with her bare hands, she rolls the handkerchief into a tight ball. She's about to leave when she hears someone whistling, heading in her direction. She panics and scurries into a corner,. Hiding behind a rusty, battered old pram.

The old gardener comes in, tosses a few bricks onto a pile and leaves. After a few moments Margaret gets up and runs out. She's all set to dash back to the main building when she suddenly notices something. Transfixed she walks towards it. It's an open door, set into the wall that leads onto the road. Just as she's about to walk through she stops and looks round to see where the gardener is. There is no sign of him. She gingerly puts her head outside assuming he's there. But no he's not outside either. She takes a single step through the door as if she were stepping

into a dream. The suddenness of it makes her feel faint. A car comes toward her. She wants to run back inside but to her own surprise she finds herself slowly raising out her arm and putting out her thumb. The car drives past. She expected it to. She is almost relieved. But it stops and reverses back to where she stands. The passenger door opens and a friendly faced young man leans across.

**YOUNG MAN**

Where you goin'?

Margaret wants to speak but she cant.

**YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)**

Are you wantin' a lift somewhere?

She shakes her head as if to say 'What made you think that?'

**YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)**

Then what, did you stop me for?

She shrugs defensively

**YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)**

You're from in there in't ya. Christ,  
they're taking in loonies now as well.

He closes the passenger door and drives off. She stares after the car until it's out of sight. Resigned to her fate as a life-time prisoner in Magdalene she goes back inside. As she does so the Gardener is stood there. For an instant she is frightened but slowly, silently, realises that his face is not one of anger, but bemusement at the choice that she has made. As she walks away, he closes and locks the door.

**EXT. DRYING GREEN - DAY**

Margaret joins the girls who are watching a tug of war - Sister Clementine single-handedly pulling against seven girls.

**INT. DINING HALL. EVENING**

The girls are eating. Crispina sits next to Margaret.

**CRISPINA (**

under her breath)

You said you would find me St  
Christopher. That's what you said. You  
shouldn't make promises you can't keep.  
That's what Bernadette says.

Margaret, who has seemingly been ignoring Crispina looks at  
her then glares across to Bernadette who pretends she's  
hearing nothing.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

Bernadette says someone here must have  
it. That they're keeping it from me.  
You said you would find it. You  
promised. I've a mind to tell the  
sisters what you said about Father  
Fitzroy.

Margaret suddenly stands up and for a moment Crispina is  
frightened. Margaret picks up her plate, asks one of the  
nuns if she can be excused and leaves.

**INT. DORMITORY. EVENING**

The girls enter. They wander up the aisle bewildered by what  
they see. All their beds have been turned over, their  
mattresses and blankets strewn everywhere. All except  
Margaret's and Crispina's. As Crispina nears her bed she  
screams..

**CRISPINA**

Me St Christopher!

She runs and picks it up, cradling it like it was a child.  
She looks across at Margaret, who is standing by her bed.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

You found me St Christopher! Oh, God  
bless ye!

She skips towards Margaret, her face beaming, but as she  
draws closer Margaret suddenly whips past her and attacks  
Bernadette. In a second they are kicking, punching and  
scratching one another. Patricia tries to pull them apart but  
their fury is such that there is no stopping them. Finally  
Bernadette manages to kick Margaret violently in the stomach.  
Margaret doubles over and falls to the ground. Bernadette, her  
face badly scratched, storms over to her and begins to put  
the mattress and blankets back on.

**MARGARET**

You're a wicked bitch, you know that! A  
thieving, wicked bitch!

(she speaks to the other  
girls)

She had her St Christopher under her  
bed! The only thing that girl had in  
the whole world and she took it!

**BERNADETTE**

(still making her bed)

If you or anyone else ever touches me  
again, I'll kill ya. So help me God,  
I'll kill ya.

The girls disperse to their respective beds. Crispina walks  
across to Margaret and gives her a huge hug.

**CRISPINA**

Thank you for finding me St Christopher.  
Thank you.

**MARGARET**

Didn't you understand what I was saying?  
(pointing at Bernadette)  
She stole it.

**CRISPINA**

(still smiling)

But you got it back for me. You'll go  
to Heaven now for sure.

Crispina skips back to her bed.

**MARGARET**

(to the girls)

Am I the only one here who finds what  
she did totally despicable? Have you  
lot not an ounce of feeling left in you?

The girls get ready for bed. Bernadette is already under  
the covers, icy looks having been exchanged with Patricia.

**MARGARET (CONT'D)**

Well, I still know when somethin' is  
wrong an' I'm not goin' to turn me back  
on it. And you lot can go to hell!

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

The girls are sleeping. All except Bernadette who lies staring at the ceiling. Patricia in the next bed looks at her.

**PATRICIA**

Why?

There is a long pause before Bernadette answers.

**BERNADETTE**

Because she doesn't suffer enough. We're penitents. We're supposed to suffer, remember. Now, fuck up and let me sleep.

Patricia turns her back on her. Bernadette continues to stare at the ceiling.

**INT. LAUNDRY. DAY**

From inside the large tumble drier we can see the priest's clothes and vestments rolling around. Margaret opens the door and tosses in the leaves we saw her taking from the outhouse. She watches as the leaves and the vestments roll together.

**EXT. MAGDALENE. DAY.**

Through the gates we can see 15 of the girls stood in lines of two dressed as if for a First Holy Communion. Included among them are Bernadette, Margaret, Crispina and Patricia. Two nuns open the gates and the girls file out. As we follow the out we see there are twenty police officers stood at either side of the road. As the girls walk away the policemen form a marching guard at either side of them. Sister Bernadine and some of the other nuns follow behind.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

The girls, police and nuns walk along the road with the Garda Sergeant in front of them. He sees something ahead and raises his hand for them all to stop.

**SERGEANT**

Rights! There's a whole heap of horse shite up ahead! So move in close together and follow me.

The girls, officers and nuns do as they are told and together they weave their way in and out of the horse manure. When the last one has passed the sergeant stops them once again.

**SERGEANT (CONT'D)**

(after having checked his shoes)

Alright? No casualties? Right then, onwards.

He turns but before he can take a single step further a horse turd hits him smack in the face, followed quickly by another and then another. Suddenly two young travelling lads leap out laughing from behind a hedgerow, and run off stopping only to mime obscenities at our Sergeant.

**SERGEANT (CONT'D)**

You filthy little tinker bastards! When I catch you I'll take it out on your heathen little arses!

Two officers make to chase after them.

**SERGEANT (CONT'D)**

Stay where you are. Move on.

They move on, the girls fascinated by the two lads brazen abandonment and clownish mischief.

**EXT. VILLAGE STREET. DAY**

The girls are marched through the street. The locals are all wearing their Sunday best and we see a range of

different reactions to the Magdalenes; curiosity, contempt, apathy, pity....

The girls walk past Father Fitzroy who stands holding the Corpus Christi chalice surrounded by other priests and altar boys. Father Fitzroy joins at the back behind the nuns and the locals join in behind him. The parade moves to a makeshift altar that has been erected in a nearby park.

**EXT. PARK. DAY**

The locals kneel on the grass. The girls are seated near the front with a ring of policemen around them.

Father Fitzroy is in the early stages of the Mass. The front two rows are taken up by the nuns. The priest steps up to read the Gospel. Almost as soon as he begins, he starts scratching. First his neck, then his chest, then legs. One or two of the girls titter. Margaret smiles wickedly and looks across to Crispina, who seems in a world of her own. A farmer comes across to the sergeant and whispers something in his ear. The sergeant nods and follows him. The farmer leads him to his tractor where, tided to the back are our two travelling lads. The Sergeant smiles sardonically at them. They respond with a smile and then pull faces and laugh. Just as he is about to beat them he hears Father Fitzroy scream. As he looks across at the Alter we see Father Fitzroy tearing at his clothes uncontrollably. Its as if they stay on for a moment longer, he'll explode. In seconds, like some screaming, crazed madman, he's naked bar his socks and shoes. The girls are shocked and amused. The nuns - just shocked. As he rolls around the floor, his body is covered in frightening-looking red and blue blotches. Margaret has had to cover her mouth with her hand to stop the sound of her laughing. This soon changes, as Crispina suddenly runs down the aisle screaming, scratching at her palms and the inside of her legs. She stops at Sister Bernadine.

**CRISPINA**

Help me, Sister. Help me!

Sister Bernadine glares at her as Crispina now begins to scratch between her legs. Suddenly, Crispina turns on the priest.

**CRISPINA (CONT'D)**

You are not a man of God, you are not a  
man of God, you are not a man of God,  
you are not a man of God, You are not a  
man of God....

Her mantra echoes through the now deadly silent crowd. Even the travelling lads have stopped laughing.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

The girls are sleeping. After am moment the doors are unlocked and in marches Sister Bernadine, with Sister Clementine and two male orderlies. They go straight to Crispina's bed.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Crispina, get up now. Crispina!

Sister Bernadine pulls back the covers, takes Crispina by the arm and begins to pull her out of bed.

**CRISPINA**

(half-asleep)

Where are we going, Sister?

**SISTER BERNADINE**

These two men are going to take you to Mount Vernon Hospital, where they can look after you better than we can here.

**CRISPINA**

Mount Vernon's for the maddies, Sister. I don't want to go there. I want to stay here.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You come along now, Crispina, and don't be giving me any trouble.

**CRISPINA**

I don't want to go. I want to stay here.

Crispina, now in a panic, grabs hold of the end of the bed as Sister Bernadine tries to push her over to the orderlies. The two men grab her round the waist but her grip is so tight that they drag the bed screeching across the floor. All the girls have woken up. Sister Bernadine is furious. Margaret jumps out of bed and runs across the floor to her.

**MARGARET**

She was telling the truth, Sister. I saw him do it.

Sister Bernadine lashes out and whacks Margaret across the face with the back of her hand. Crispina is screaming.

**CRISPINA**

Help me, Margaret. Help me!

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(to Margaret)



What did you say, girl? Tell me now.  
because these gentlemen have room for  
more than just one. What did you just  
say?

**MARGARET**

Nothing, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You said something. What was it?

**MARGARET**

Sorry, Sister. I was confused. Forgive me.

With that, Margaret scurries back to bed.

**CRISPINA**

Margaret! Please help me!

Sister Bernadine thumps her fist down hard on the back of  
Crispina's hand. Crispina yells in pain but Bernadine  
continues to strike until she lets go.

As soon as she does, the two men pin her face down on the  
floor, one of them producing a well-worn straitjacket. In  
seconds she's trussed up and marched out through the door,  
screaming.

**INT/EXT. MAGDALENE. NIGHT**

Crispina is being marched out of the door and put into the  
back of a battered old ambulance. As they sit her down, she  
turns to Bernadine.

**CRISPINA**

I'm frightened, Sister. Can I go back  
to me bed please?

**SISTER BERNADINE**

No, You'll be fine.

With that, the doors are slammed shut and the ambulance  
drives off.

**INT. VAN - NIGHT**

A crushingly vulnerable Crispina tries to get hold of her  
Saint Christopher with her teeth.

**INT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

Crispina's empty bed lies in the middle of the dormitory. The girls lie motionless. Gentle weeping.

**EXT. LAUNDRY - DAY**

Icicles hang from the roof, a broken basket lies frozen on the ground, a frozen sock hanging "Dali like" from its handle.

**INT. LAUNDRY. DAY**

Close up on a rather pathetic banner on the wall which reads MERRY CHRISTMAS. As we pull back we see that the place is completely empty.

**INT. DORMITORY. DAY**

The beds are all neatly made up with an orange and a small present on each.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

The tables have been out along the sides of the walls. The girls sit on the rows of seats which have been places in the centre of the hall, facing the back wall over which has been hung a large white sheet. In the front row there is the Archbishop, a businessman, and two other local worthies. Sister Bernadine stands in front of the sheet.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

They say that confession is good for the soul. Well, in the presence of the Archbishop, Mr Lannigan, Mrs Simkas, Mrs McLaughlin, the sisters and indeed you all, I have a confession I wish to make. And I warn you now some of you will find it somewhat shocking. For many years, more years than I care to remember, I have had a secret love. In fact not just one but dozens. Since I have been thirteen years old I have been in love with the films.

The Archbishop, the worthies, the sisters and almost all the girls burst out laughing. So too does Bernadine - a surprisingly sweet, girlish laugh.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

It's true, it's true. My father used to take me. It was the old silent ones in those days and while he loved the comedies, I loved the westerns.

(she laughs again)

I'll never forget the look on my dear mother's face the day I told her that if I didn't get into the convent and give my life to God, then I'd be a cowboy instead.

Laughter once again.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Fortunately God gave me the calling, but I've never forgotten those old films. Now today, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ Our Lord, Mr Lannigan, one of Dublin's most respected businessmen, has brought along a projector and a film. For us! Isn't that wonderful!

She applauds. The girls applaud also.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Now like yourselves I don't know what the film is, but I'm told it's not a western - isn't that right, Mr Lannigan?

Lannigan nods ruefully.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Apparently they've changed a lot since my day and have gone the way of the devil like so much of the modern world. So, no less a person than the Archbishop himself has chosen the film for us tonight!

She applauds. The girls applaud also. The Archbishop stands up and takes his bow.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Sister Jude, would you turn the lights out, please?

**INT. DINING HALL. SAME**

The light of the projector cuts through the darkness. The title appears on screen. THE BELLS OF ST MARY'S. Sister Bernadine whoops in delight and leads the applause. The Archbishop smiles benevolently.

**EXT. MAIN DOOR, MAGDALENE -- DAY**

A young man rings the doorbell. After a few moments the shutter is pulled back to reveal Sister Augusta. He shows her a piece of paper. She studies it then opens the door.

**INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR -- DAY**

Sister Augusta leads him along the corridor. He starts opening doors as he passes them. Sister Augusta turns.

**SISTER AUGUSTA**

And what do you think you're doing?

He ignores her, walks swiftly past her opening all the doors on the way.

**INT. DINING HALL. LATER**

As Barry Fitzgerald's ancient Irish mother appears on the screen, we see the nuns' enraptured faces. Bernadette, Patricia and Margaret are unmoved by the film but utterly fascinated by the nuns' reactions to it. A shocked Bernadette nudges Patricia and nods in the direction of Sister Bernadine. There she sits, the tears streaming down her face. More remarkable is she makes no attempt to disguise it. Suddenly there is a shadow at the bottom of the screen. The shadow grows, firstly into a head, then shoulders and torso of a young man. The girls look round to see him walking down the aisle, stopping when he reaches the front. Firmly but politely he talks to Bernadine. After a few moments there is a brief but angry exchange, ending with Bernadine seemingly telling him to leave. He walks back up the aisle, as a furious Bernadine returns to watching her film. A few moments pass before the lights are turned on, rendering the image on the screen almost invisible.

**YOUNG MAN**

I'm looking for Margaret Sullivan!

The girls look round en masse. The Archbishop looks across to Bernadine, who stares straight ahead, her face revealing nothing. Margaret is deeply shocked and keeps her head down.

**YOUNG MAN** (CONT'D)

Margaret Sullivan!

He starts walking slowly down the aisle, staring closely at the girls' faces. He stops when he sees Margaret. Too frightened to hold his gaze, she keeps her eyes down.

**YOUNG MAN** (CONT'D)

Margaret? Margaret, it's me. Eamonn.  
Your brother.

Margaret looks at him for the first time.

**YOUNG MAN** (CONT'D)

Come on. I'm taking you out of here.

Margaret looks at Bernadine, whose eyes remain fixed on the screen.

**EAMONN**

It's all right. She knows. She can't  
stop me taking me own sister.

Margaret slowly gets up and walks through the other girls to her brother. He holds up a canvas bag.

**EAMONN** (CONT'D)

I've got some clothes for you in here.

They walk together towards the door. Suddenly Bernadine shouts.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

The lights, if you don't mind!

Eamonn puts off the lights by the door and they go.

**INT. DORMITORY. DAY**

The girls are opening their presents. Outside the door Eamonn stands, closely watched by Sister Clementine. The toilet door opens and out steps the newly-changed Margaret. She stands looking at them awkwardly for a few moments. The girls act at first as if there's nothing unusual about this

at all. Margaret looks first to Patricia, who manages to give her a brief smile. Then she looks to Bernadette, who steadfastly refuses to look back.

**MARGARET**

(apologetically)

Can you believe it's that simple? That a brother can just turn up and... Can you believe that?

There is a long, embarrassed silence.

**EAMONN**

(shouting from the door)

Margaret! Hurry up and let's get out of here!

Margaret suddenly explodes.

**MARGARET**

Don't you dare tell me what to do! Don't you ever dare tell me what to do! Where the hell have you been for four bloody years?

**EAMONN**

What you talkin' about? I was growin' up!

**MARGARET**

Well, you didn't grow up bloody fast enough, did ya?

Eamonn backs down. Silence. Margaret composes herself, gives a nod to no-one in particular then walks briskly to the door and leaves, followed by Eamonn.

**INT. CORRIDOR. DAY**

Margaret walks speedily ahead of Eamonn, who has lots to ask and say but knows it's best not to do so just now. Walking towards them is Sister Bernadine, the Archbishop, the worthies and Sister Clementine. They are talking politely to one another but move in a straight line. Unless one of them gives way, Margaret and Eamonn would have to turn back, as there are no recesses in which to stand. Margaret strides right down the middle on a collision course with Sister Bernadine. The line stops only as Margaret stands

her ground, finding herself inches from Bernadine. Bernadine, who was in conversation with the Archbishop, snarls.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You had better have something damned important to say to me, girl!

**MARGARET**

(after a moment as she suddenly finds herself almost unable to speak)  
May I get past, please, Sister?

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You had better be joking, girl. Because if I thought for a second that you would seriously expect one of the persons here to step aside for the likes of you, then brother or no brother I would punish such insolence most severely. Most severely.

There is a long silence as Margaret and Bernadine stare at one another.

**MARGARET**

(quietly)  
I'm not moving, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Fine. So you'll be staying with us, then?

Margaret turns to Eamonn, who nods for her to follow him back down the corridor where they can stand in a recess and let the line go by. She looks to Sister Bernadine, who has her traditional benign smirk of victory. Slowly, Margaret drops to her knees, closes her eyes, crosses herself and begins praying.

**MARGARET**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name....

The Archbishop sighs and looks to Sister Bernadine. For not even she could assault a girl who had knelt down to pray.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Sister, I've an appointment later on  
this evening. We really should move on.

With that, he begins walking. The others instantly follow,  
leaving Bernadine standing glaring over the praying  
Margaret. We move in closely on the face of Margaret. As she  
begins saying the Hail Mary there is a genuinely deep  
pleading in her voice.

When she finishes, she opens her eyes and lifts her head.  
There stands Eamonn.

Shocked, Margaret quickly jumps up and looks back down the  
corridor. They're gone. Eamonn smiles.

**EAMONN**

Well, you won that one all right.

**MARGARET**

You've no idea how many times I closed my  
eyes and prayed that that woman would  
disappear.

They go. **EXT.**

**MAGDALENE. DAY**

As the gates close behind Eamonn and Margaret they walk off,  
trudging through the snow.

**INT. LAUNDRY. DAY**

The place is like a furnace. The girls, sweat dripping from  
them, are busy working. Sister Clementine sits reading as the  
work goes on around her. Old Katy comes into shot and stands  
in front of her.

**KATY**

Excuse me, Sister.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE (**

without looking up) Yes,  
Katherine.

**KATY**

I'm not well today, Sister.



Right ye are, Katherine. It's very hot today.

**KATY**

I was wonderin' if I could go and lie down. I'm feelin' a bit dizzy.

Sister Clementine sighs and looks up at her. There stands Katy with blood pouring from her nose and ears.

**SISTER CLEMENTINE**

Holy Mother of God!

**INT. CORRIDOR. DAY**

Bernadette and Patricia are pushing trolleys of clean linen. They split at the end of the corridor, going off in different directions.

**INT. SICK ROOM. DAY**

Bernadette comes in with the trolley. There are three beds, with only Katy lying in one of them. Bernadette pushes her trolley to the bottom of her bed and takes two pillow cases from the top. She marches to the top of the bed and callously pulls the two pillows from under Katy's head. Katy has been staring at her the whole time.

**KATY**

Do you know I'm dyin'?

Bernadette begins changing the pillow cases.

**KATY (CONT'D)**

(quietly)

They wanted to take me to the hospital but I said no. I want to stay here, with the sisters and all me friends. This will break me mother's heart. She's ninety-two, y'know. She told me I shouldn't talk to soldiers. They were only after one thing. And we were so poor. My father said I was thick in the head. But I miss me mother cause she was very kind to me. She never laid a finger on me and had a great singing voice. Have you ever met me mother?

**BERNADETTE**

What are you rambling on about, you  
silly auld witch?

**KATY**

I thought she might come back for me, but  
she knows I'm happy here with all me  
friends. But it's a long time, y'know.  
And you work hard and you pray and you  
don't complain. I've never been one for  
complaining. But it's a bit of a shock,  
y'know, when they tell you you're dying.

**BERNADETTE**

I'm surprised that you shut up long  
enough for them to tell you. Lift your  
head up.

Katy tries to lift her head up but can't. Roughly,  
Bernadette lifts up Katy's head and stuffs the pillows  
underneath.

**KATY**

Wouldn't it be a terrible thing if you  
didn't believe in Jesus? Wouldn't that  
be a terrible, terrible thing?

Bernadette goes back to her trolley.

**KATY (CONT'D )**

I think the Sisters would want you to  
stay here just now. I don't think  
they'd want you to leave me alone.

**BERNADETTE**

The Sisters just want the work done, or  
have you not figured that one out yet?  
Your father was right. You must be thick  
in the head if you've not got that one.  
The Sisters don't give a toss abut you  
and neither do I. So just do them and me  
and the whole world a favour and shut up  
and die.

She pushes the trolley and leaves.

**INT. BABY-ROOM. DAY**

A young girl is putting a jacket on her baby. Patricia, changing the sheets on the next bed, can hardly take her eyes off them both. As she finishes, she pushes her trolley and stops beside them. The girl looks up at her. Patricia smiles.

**PATRICIA**

Could I hold him?

**GIRL**

No. I'm sorry, but no, you can't.

Patricia, somewhat embarrassed, continues with her trolley towards the exit. Before she gets there, Sister Jude comes in.

**SISTER JUDE**

Is he ready?

**GIRL**

Yes, Sister.

**SISTER JUDE**

Where's his things?

**GIRL**

(pointing to a little case at  
the end of the bed)

They're in there, Sister.

Jude picks up the case.

**SISTER JUDE**

Right. Give him to me.

The girl, though clearly heartbroken, quietly hands the baby to her.

**SISTER JUDE (CONT'D)**

Patricia, open the door for me.

Patricia pushes the door open with the trolley and stands there as Sister Jude strides out with the case in one hand and the baby in the other. Patricia looks sympathetically to the girl, who simply stares at an empty cot.

**INT. CORRIDOR. DAY**

We can hear a baby cry as Patricia continues on her rounds. As she passes the main door, she sees the baby being handed over to the adoption agent. The doors are opened. She leaves with the baby. Patricia continues with the trolley.

**INT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Sister Bernadine is searching her office looking for something. She becomes more and more anxious as she can't find it. There's a knock at the door. She ignores it. There's a knock again.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Come in!

Patricia comes in. Bernadine stands in the middle of the room scanning the floor.

**PATRICIA**

I'm very sorry to disturb you Sister,  
but I wanted to ask you something.

Bernadine pays no attention to her.

**PATRICIA (CONT'D)**

You see, its my son's birthday soon. He'll be four next week, and I was wondering if maybe I could send him a card. Now I know you can't tell me where he is but I thought if I gave it to you perhaps you could send it on to whoever.... whoever's looking after him.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(abruptly)

I want you to help me look for a key. Its about this size, its silver and fits in there.

She points to a metal safe which sits in the corner.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Go on. Start looking.

**PATRICIA**

It would just be a birthday card Sister. I wouldn't sign it or anything. He wouldn't know who it was from.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Well wouldn't that be bloody stupid! You'd send a card to a child and he wouldn't know who it was from. Now what kind of person would confuse and disrupt a child's birthday like that?

**PATRICIA**

But I'm his mother Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You're not his mother. A mother puts a child to bed at night, looks after him when he's sick. Feeds, clothes and educates him. You've done none of that. Would take credit for something you haven't done.

**PATRICIA**

No Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Then stop being so stupid and look for that bloody key.

Patricia starts looking around the room, Sister Bernadine sits down wearily, staring intently at the safe.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

(to herself)

I was going to put it on my chain. But it was too small. But why didn't I put it on a separate chain. Why? But I never wanted this.... thing. The biscuit tins were just fine.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

But I should have put it on a separate chain. All the money is in there. All the money.

She shakes her head, disgusted and angry at herself.

Meanwhile Patricia has been looking. She pulls a filing cabinet away from the wall and down behind it slips the key. She stares at it, then at Bernadine.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Have you found it?

**PATRICIA**

No Sister.

Bernadine lets out a genuinely heartfelt sign. Her eyes well up. She's very close to tears.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Sometimes I wish...

She drifts off somewhere very personal, somewhere unattainable, somewhere free. Patricia studies her. For a moment she thinks of leaving then bends down and picks up the key and walks over to Bernadine's desk.

**PATRICIA**

It was down behind the cabinet Sister.

Bernadine looks down, sees the key and spontaneously grabs Patricia's hand.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Oh God bless you child. God bless you.

She is genuinely grateful. Patricia is genuinely shocked. Bernadine puts the key in the same and opens it. Patricia leaves.

**EXT. DRYING GREEN - DAY**

Patricia and some of the other girls are unloading the dirty linen from the van. She happens to look towards the gates and gasps.

**PATRICIA**

Holy Mother of God!

At the gate stands Crispina's sister and the little one.

**PATRICIA (CONT'D)**

They didn't tell her!

She steps forward and gestures vaguely.

**PATRICIA (CONT'D)**

She's not here. They took her away.

She knows Crispina's sister can't possibly hear what she's saying. Suddenly and without even looking as to where the nuns are, she begins walking towards the gates.

**PATRICIA** (CONT'D)

(as she's walking)

She's not here. They took her away almost a year ago. They should have told you.

Just as she gets to talking distance at the gates she's suddenly set upon by Sister Clementine who grabs her by the back of the hair and drags her back towards the laundry. Crispina's sister is none the wiser.

**EXT. SICK ROOM. DAY**

Bernadette walks past, pushing her now empty trolley. She stops, thinks for a moment, then opens the door. Katy lies motionless in bed, her eyes open.

**BERNADETTE**

You not dead yet?

Within seconds she knows that Katy is indeed dead. She steps inside and walks briskly to the bed. She stares hard at Katy's sad and lifeless face. There are still traces of tears on her face. Bernadette touches one of Katy's cheeks, feels how cold it is and instantly recoils.

**BERNADETTE** (CONT'D)

(defensively)

It's what you deserved.

**INT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE. DAY**

A nervous Patricia stands in the centre of the room. The door opens, and in walks Sister Bernadine, who heads straight for a drawer in her desk.

**PATRICIA**

I was only trying to tell Crispina's sister that she wasn't here any more. That's all I was...

Suddenly she is ferociously whipped across the face by a thick dark belt. She screams and is beaten into the corner

as blow upon blow rains down on her. This beating seems to go on forever.

**EXT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE. DAY**

As Bernadette makes to knock on the door it suddenly opens. Patricia is on her hands and knees. Sister Bernadine, sweating and exhausted, continues to whip her.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

I said get up! Get up now!

**BERNADETTE** (blurting it out) Katy's dead, Sister.

In a second she is whipped across the face. She stumbles back, holding her face with her hands. Sister Bernadine, now completely manic, follows through with blows to Bernadette's head and body.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

You say "Excuse me, Sister"! "Excuse me, Sister"!

Sister Bernadine stops the whipping and tries to recover her senses. After a few moments...

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Now, get your hands away from your face, girl.

Slowly, Bernadette lets down her guard. Her lip is bleeding.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**

Now what have you to say to me?

**BERNADETTE**

Excuse me, Sister, but Katy is dead.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

May she rest in peace.

She turns to Patricia, who has managed to pull herself to her feet.

**SISTER BERNADINE (CONT'D)**



Remember this beating, girl. Because if you ever speak to anyone outside of here again you will receive the same beating every day for a month. Do you understand me, girl?

**PATRICIA**

Yes, Sister.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

Now, both of you get back to your work.

They go. We stay on Bernadine who sits down exhausted.

**INT. LAUNDRY. DAY**

Patricia and Bernadette are back working at the sinks. A girl opposite them faints in the heat. Slowly Sister Clementine puts down her book, walks over to one of the sinks and soaks a cloth under the cold tap. She carries the cloth across to the girl and wrings the water out over her face. The girl comes round, gets to her feet and continues working. Sister Clementine goes back to her seat and continues reading.

**EXT. THE GARDENS - DAY**

The girls stand around Katy's grave. The Priest is finishing his sermon. Bernadette has her eyes on Bernadine who is talking business with Clementine. The sermon finished, Bernadine walks away and the others follow. Bernadette hangs back unnoticed as the gardener/handyman begins to fill in the grave. She's surprised to see that he is crying.

**BERNADETTE**

Did you know her?

**GARDENER**

(beginning to fill in the grave)

Well she's been here a long time like, y' know. Like ever since I've been here. I wouldn't say I knew her exactly. But I cried for all the others and I didn't really know them either. I'm just a big cry baby.

**BERNADETTE**

How many have you buried?

**GARDENER**

Well, now you're askin'. Must be at least, at least thirty. An' the fella before me swore he's seen off fifty odd.

Bernadette looks around her horrified.

**GARDENER (CONT'D)**

Aye, there's a lot of poor old souls round here, an' they're not all dead if you know what I'm sayin'.

Bernadette stares at him intently. He continues filling in.

**BERNADETTE**

Would you help us get out of here?

**GARDENER**

(still never looking at her)  
No, I wouldn't do that. No. But I'll tell you this. That door there hasn't been right for years.

Bernadette looks across at the door which is set into the wall.

**GARDENER (CONT'D)**

Half the time it doesn't lock at all. And when it does a child could pull it open. Y'know what I'm sayin'? Good luck.

Bernadette goes. He continues digging.

**INT. DORMITORY TOILET. NIGHT**

Patricia stands by the sink, dabbing her wounds with a damp cloth. She looks round as Bernadette stands by the door.

**BERNADETTE**

You know we're both gonna grow old and die in here. No-one's gonna come for me.

PAUSE

**BERNADETTE** (CONT'D)

I just don't want to become like one of them. And I am.

**BERNADETTE**

Nobody suffers enough as far as I'm concerned. Nobody feels as bad as me. And I don't want to feel like this for the rest of my life. I don't want to be one of them.

PAUSE

**BERNADETTE** (CONT'D)

So are you ready?

**PATRICIA**

Ready for what?

**BERNADETTE**

We have to go.

**PATRICIA**

Go where?

**BERNADETTE**

Out. Into the big bad world.

**PATRICIA**

Have you completely lost your mind? Look what she did to me. And that was just for talkin' to someone. What would she do to me if she caught me tryin' to run away?

**BERNADETTE**

It doesn't matter. She's gonna do it anyway. For somethin'. Or nothin'. It doesn't matter to her. We have to go now.

**PATRICIA**

But how? How are we gonna do it?

**BERNADETTE**

Do you think after all these years I don't have a plan?

**PATRICIA**

And do you?

**BERNADETTE**

Well, I know the first bit.

**EXT. DORMITORY. NIGHT**

The doors crash open and a bed, pushed by Patricia and Bernadette, comes flying through. The girls are startled out of their sleep by the noise.

**PATRICIA**

What now?

**BERNADETTE**

Now we run like fuck!

Bernadette and Patricia start running down the corridors. Like Bernadette's first attempt at escaping this is no delicate operation. Half-laughing, half-crying with the adrenaline and the excitement, they run down the darkened corridors like sprinters.

**INT. LAUNDRY. NIGHT**

They come running into the laundry and head straight for the back door (same as before). Only this time, Bernadette picks up a thin metal rod and quite expertly slips it into the lock. Patricia can hear the nuns running towards them

**PATRICIA**

Sweet Jesus, they're comin'! Hurry up,  
Hurry up!

In one huge final push, the lock snaps and the door bursts open. In that very second, however, both girls are suddenly swamped by four or five of the nuns, their struggling and cries engulfed in the darkness as the door is slammed shut.

**INT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE. NIGHT**

Bernadette and Patricia are pinned down on two chairs, two nuns either side of them. Sister Bernadine, a strange sight in her nightdress and minus her habit, which reveals her shaven head, stands over them. There is a long silence before she peaks.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

What will it take for your two to understand why you are here? You are here to save your immortal soul. The work, the prayers and the discipline are all part of your salvation. When you try and run away you're turning your back on God. You're insulting Him, and myself and the sisters. You're making a mockery of everything we do here. And I for one will not tolerate it. From tomorrow onwards you will work harder than you ever have before. And you will pray harder than you ever have before. And should you shirk those responsibilities, should you ever complain, or refuse such tasks as you are given, then the discipline will be more severe than anything you have ever experienced.

Sister Bernadine turns to her desk and picks up the scissors. The sight of this and the knowledge of what's to come suddenly turns Bernadette's terror into white-hot anger. She screams like a woman possessed, breaks free of the two nuns and smashes her chair against them before turning on the other two. Within seconds she has Sister Bernadine by the throat and the scissors in her own hand.

**BERNADETTE**

I could kill you, you evil bitch!  
could kill all of you!

She throws Sister Bernadine across the room. She runs round the desk and starts opening the drawers. She finds a set of keys.

**SISTER BERNADINE**

(badly shaken)  
It's the madhouse for you, girl. You're not right in the head.

**BERNADETTE**

Any of you come after us and I swear to God I'll stab ye.  
(to Patricia)  
Come on!

She and Patricia run out of the office.

**EXT. SISTER BERNADINE'S OFFICE. NIGHT**

They run down the corridor, soon pursued by two nuns. Bernadette turns, sees this and, screaming, runs towards them. They immediately about-turn and run back into the office. Bernadette kicks at the door, stabbing it with the scissors, all the time screaming like a mad-woman. She steps back, waiting for the door to open. When she's convinced that it won't, she runs towards Patricia.

**INT. MAGDALENE MAIN DOOR. NIGHT**

Frantically Bernadette tries all the keys in the door until suddenly they find the correct one. The door opens and they run out.

**EXT. MAGDALENE GATES. NIGHT**

Bernadette and Patricia try the keys once again, only this time none of them work. They run along to the wall. Patricia helps Bernadette scale it first. When she gets on top, she helps pull Patricia up. They jump down to the other side.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. NIGHT**

Bernadette and Patricia are running along the side of the road. They stop for breath. They can see car lights heading towards them. They hide by the roadside. The Garda car passes by, heading for Magdalene. They wait until it's safe and start running again.

**EXT. A DUBLIN STREET. MORNING**

A young woman walks towards a hairdresser's salon. She stops outside, searches inside her bag and brings out a set of keys. She begins to unlock the shutters. Watching this, from a shaded doorway across the street, are Bernadette and Patricia. They wait until the shutters are up before they run across. The young woman is initially shocked by their somewhat frantic approach and their appearance, until she realises it's her cousin Bernadette. She ushers them inside and pulls down the shutters.

**EXT. THE HARBOUR - NIGHT**

Bernadette is dragging Patricia to a nearby fishing boat.

**PATRICIA**

I don't want to go to England.

**BERNADETTE**

You have to go. They'll catch you and put you away for the rest of your life. And knowin' you, you'll let them.

**PATRICIA**

But I've no money. No place to go. What'll I do?

**BERNADETTE**

Don't know. Don't care. But if you don't get on that boat I swear to God that I'll throw you in the water and drown you meself.

**PATRICIA**

Why won't you come with me?

**BERNADETTE**

'Cause I've got a job. I'm going to be a hairdresser. Stay with me cousin. I'll be respectable. And they can't touch you if you're respectable.

**PATRICIA**

They can do whatever they like.

**BERNADETTE**

Not to me.

They've arrived at the boat. A fisherman puts his hand out to help Patricia on the boat. After a moment she takes it and steps onto the boat. He begins loosening the rope. Bernadette puts out her hand.

**BERNADETTE (CONT'D)**

Good luck.

Patricia shakes her hand. They say nothing but hold hands till the boat leaving pulls them apart.

**EXT. FISHING BOAT - NIGHT**

As the ship sails across the sea... Patricia looks out apprehensively at what lies ahead.

Patricia never returned to Ireland. She married in 1971 and had two children, both girls. She found her son in 1996, thirty-three years after he was taken. Throughout her life she remained a devout Catholic. She died in 1997.

**INT. BUS. DAY**

Margaret and Eamonn board the bus and take their seats. Margaret sits by the window and is wryly amused by the sight of a small excited crowd gathered round a shop window marvelling at the latest domestic appliance - the automatic washing-machine.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. DAY**

As the bus travels towards the hills ....

**CAPTION**

Margaret settled in Donegal, where she became a Primary School teacher. Today she's assistant headmistress.

**CAPTION**

She never married.

**INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD. DAY**

A barely-recognisable Crispina sits staring vacantly at a plate of porridge on the table in front of her. A nurse tries to put a spoonful into her mouth but she keeps her lips shut. Watching this from the doorway is her shocked and heartbroken sister.

**EXT. GRAVEYARD. DAY**

Crispina's sister and daughter (now aged 11) stand by the graveside as the coffin is lowered in...

**CAPTION**

Crispina, real name Harriet, died of anorexia in 1971. She was twenty-four years old.

**INT. HAIRDRESSING SALON. DAY**

Ruby lifts the hairdryer to reveal Bernadette with a



mirror and is delighted with the result. Ruby begins spraying it with hairspray.

**EXT. STREET. DAY**

A confident Bernadette strolls along the street. Two young men pass and smile at her. Suddenly the confidence disappears and she fixes her gaze firmly on the ground. When she lifts her eyes, two nuns are walking straight towards her. She freezes for a second then continues walking. She stares nervously ahead until she realises that they're walking past her. At the last second she catches their eye. They smile and continue walking. Bernadette is at first delighted that her respectability so obviously works. Suddenly she stops, however, and looks back at them. Her delight turns to anger and she begins to pull out the hairpins and madly run her fingers through her hair until it's as wild as wild can be.

We freeze on this image as....

**CAPTION**

Bernadette soon moved to England, where she opened her own salon. She was married and divorced three times. She has no children and, she says, no regrets.

**EXT. RETIREMENT CONVENT GARDEN - DAY**

An elderly nun sits with her back to us. Two younger nuns come up behind her and help her up. As they turn to walk towards us we see in the centre is an elderly Bernadine. As she nears us she thanks them with a huge beaming smile. Freeze

**CAPTION**

Sister Bernadine retired in 1984. She died peacefully in her sleep shortly after.

We move in on her clear blue eyes.

**CAPTION (CONT'D)**

It is estimated that as many as 30,000 women were detained at Magdalene Asylums throughout Ireland. There has been no compensation or retrospective wages to

any survivors. The last laundry closed  
in 1996.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END