

# **“LETTING IT LIE”**

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## LETTING IT LIE - ABSTRACT

'Letting It Lie' is a three part television drama series that explores the pressures of modern society and the subsequent issues of control that follow. When Leila Mellor goes against her husband Rob's wishes and signs them both up for significant medical tests, she realises that the more she tries to hold her family together the further apart they become.

The key theme of *Letting It Lie* is the dilemma of the modern woman and trying to be everything to all people. This situation is clearly not unique to women however they are often expected to keep more balls in the air than their male counterparts. Leila is juggling a demanding, high-pressure career with the desire to be a good mother, manage the household and repair her relationship. This 'mental load' constitutes normal life for many women and the concept of having time to oneself or a spare moment during the day in which to sit down and switch off, is alien. Often, something has to give – be it health, relationships or mental well-being and life can become overwhelming. Unfortunately for Leila and her family, the effect of such pressure is life-threatening.

This series explores a very modern, serious and universal dilemma with warmth, humour and heart.

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

*I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.*

LETTING IT LIE

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**INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. DAY**

LEILA (36, well dressed, angular, uptight) and ROB MELLOR (34, jeans, t-shirt, trainers, slouching) sit opposite one another in a cold, clinical hospital corridor. Garish strip lighting highlights a noticeboard filled with thank you cards and photos of recovering children. Rob is jiggling one leg anxiously. Leila glares at it with frustration.

LEILA

Rob!

Rob looks at Leila questioningly. Leila glares at his jiggling knee again. Rob looks down at his knee, back at Leila and begins to jiggle even more ferociously.

Leila stares at Rob with contempt, about to blow up then checks herself. She breathes deeply, just as the door to the office in front of them is opened by a NURSE.

NURSE

Mr and Mrs Mellor?

She opens the door wide for them and smiles. Rob steps back to let Leila enter the consulting room first, just as her phone starts to ring. She hurriedly searches in her bag and mutes it.

ROB

Leila! For god's sake.

Leila shoots Rob daggers.

LEILA

I'm sorry, I thought it was on silent.

**INT. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

Paediatric Consultant MS MEHTAL (warm, kind eyes, mid 50's) stands up and shakes Rob and Leila's hands.

MS MEHTAL

Leila, Rob - good to see you. How have things been?

Rob glances at Leila who is lost for words. Rob looks confused - this is a first for Leila.

ROB

Theo's in good spirits. He seems to be doing well.

Leila nods.

Ms Mehtal holds up a file as if to verify this. She smiles.

MS MEHTAL

You're right! Theo's results are excellent. His heart appears to be functioning perfectly. We won't need to see him for another six months.

Leila and Rob let out a huge sigh of relief. They look a little shell-shocked.

MS MEHTAL

I am absolutely delighted for you all - although I appreciate that this news may take time to digest.

She leans across the table and takes each of their hands. This has clearly been a long road and a close acquaintance.

MS MEHTAL

Obviously we are here for you and Theo for the foreseeable future. But please do get in touch if you have any concerns - you know the score. It's been a long journey.

Tears in her eyes, Leila gets up to hug Ms Mehtal. Rob stands up and moves towards the door, hand outstretched.

MS MEHTAL

Oh Rob, there is one more thing before you head off.

(Pause)

I have been asked to talk to you both about a research project affiliated with the hospital and university that we would very much like you to involve you in.

Rob looks at her blankly. Leila nods.

MS MEHTAL

It's called RELIEVE. You'll know all about it, Leila. Rob?

Rob shakes his head. Ms Mehtal pushes some pamphlets across the table.

MS MEHTAL

Well I've prepared some reading for you. In the light of Theo's highly unusual condition, we would encourage you to take part but...

(she pauses)

...it is not compulsory.

LEILA

No, no - of course we will. It's the least we can do after the care we have been given.

She looks at Rob guiltily - she should have consulted him before responding.

LEILA

Rob?

ROB

I'd like to read about it first.

MS MEHTAL

Of course. Absolutely. There are two things that I would like you to consider carefully. One is the timeframe. Due to the nature of Theo's condition, they would like to include you in the current sample which closes next week. This means that we need to move quickly. It is an accelerated programme and should you sign up, the results would be returned within twenty eight days. The other thing to bear in mind is the two different options. The main findings will be relevant to Theo's illness and hopefully offer some sort of explanation.

Leila is nodding throughout Ms Mehtal's spiel, fascinated.

MS MEHTAL

The additional findings give a much bigger picture - for both of you. They look at genomic changes that cause serious or life threatening illnesses. And both parents would need to agree, it cannot just be one of you. We expect about one in a hundred people who take part to have one of these conditions.

ROB

You mean, you can tell us what serious illnesses we are going to get further down the line? Ultimately you can predict what can kill us?

Leila nods in awe. Rob looks uncomfortable.

LEILA

Isn't it amazing?

ROB

I'm not sure about that.

MS MEHTAL

You two go home, read the information, have a talk and a think. It is a big decision, I do realise that. But most importantly give that little boy the biggest cuddle in the world!

She gets up and opens the door. Leila and Rob make their way out, hugging Ms Mehtal again and thanking her as they leave.

3

### INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY

3

Leila is driving, uptight. Rob sits sprawled in the passenger seat, eyes closed.

ROB

Thank fuck.

LEILA

What do you mean "Thank fuck"

ROB

He's okay Leila. Theo is going to be okay.

LEILA

But now we've got the tests to worry about. It's not over yet.

ROB

Lei, we don't have to do it. We don't even have to take part. It's optional. Chill, enjoy the moment. This is an amazing day. Theo-is-okay!

LEILA

Chill?

Leila is incredulous.

LEILA

We owe it to the system. We owe it to the NHS. We owe it to the country. We owe it to the next poor little bugger like Theo. And we owe it to their parents.

Rob sighs. Right now he just wants to enjoy the moment and savour this breathing space that they have been granted.

LEILA

We have to do it.

Rob puts a hand on her arm. A moment.

ROB  
Leila, breathe.

Leila looks down at his hand, her face softens and she suddenly yanks the steering wheel and pulls off the road.

ROB  
What are you doing?

LEILA  
Come on, we need to talk about this. Look we'll make it quick, I want to get back to Theo too but we need to resolve this now. We can't just go back to home to your mother and Theo with everything up in the air. Let's walk and talk.

Rob does as he is told.

4

**EXT. WOODLAND PATH. DAY**

4

Rob and Leila walk through the woods. They are surrounded by bluebells, it is beautiful.

LEILA  
The bluebells are out!

Leila's shoulders drop. She inhales and breathes deeply.

ROB  
Wild garlic

Leila's phone rings, undoing all nature's good work. Rob grimaces. Leila mutes it crossly.

LEILA  
Sorry - it's work. It must be important.

Rob looks at her questioningly.

LEILA  
This is more important. The most important thing in the world.

She stops and turns to Rob and takes his hand without realising. He is surprised but leaves his hand in hers.

LEILA  
Rob, look - I'm sorry - you know how I get caught up in things. And today is the day we have been waiting for, hoping for - you're absolutely right.  
(MORE)

We need to go home and tell Theo and your mum. But we also need to discuss this genome testing whilst it's just the two of us. Otherwise we won't see each other for another couple of weeks and then it will be too late.

Rob nods. Leila looks down, suddenly self-conscious and drops Rob's hand.

LEILA

Sorry.

She moves on and Rob follows.

ROB

It's okay.

He tries to distract themselves from the awkwardness.

ROB

So what's to discuss? You say we have to take part and yes okay, I guess you're right. I'll read the info and then we can sign up for the main findings. If we can help other kids like Theo we should.

LEILA

But don't you think we should think about the other option?

ROB

Uh - no-

LEILA

Don't you want to know more about yourself and your body? I know that I certainly do.

Rob stops dead and looks at Leila.

ROB

Are you mad?

Leila is on a roll.

LEILA

Just think, we can pre-empt future illnesses and potentially extend our lifespan as a result of these tests! What a privilege. Medicine is developing and we are at the forefront.

ROB

Leila - listen to yourself. This is not work. This is us - your family. We've just gone through five years of hell with Theo. And that's how we've ended up...

He indicates them both and the distance between them

ROB

...here. Splintered. Fractured. Destroyed.  
(pause)  
And I don't know where we go from here.

He looks at Leila pointedly.

ROB

After the constant worry and relentless tests we're being given the opportunity to find normality - whatever that is. But you want to add even more drama to our lives. Even worse, you're trying to manipulate your own mortality. Can't you just let things lie?

LEILA

But Rob, that is exactly what this would enable us to do! We can plan and pre-empt and make the most out of the rest of our lives!

ROB

Lei, think where we would be without all this. Living with Theo together - and his little brothers and sisters. I wanted a family. I wanted you. I didn't for one minute think I'd be living with my mother at the age of thirty five.

LEILA

But-

ROB

YOU CANNOT CONTROL EVERYTHING. You have destroyed us.

He walks off, head down, dejected. Leila looks angry, then aghast. Tears slowly begin to run down her face as she walks slowly towards the car.

**EXT/INT. CAR. DAY**

Rob is leaning against the passenger door. Leila unlocks it remotely, Rob does not look at her as he gets in. As Leila puts the key in the engine her phone rings again. Rob sighs loudly and shakes his head. Leila answers it.

LEILA

Hi Alison.

(Pause)

Oh shit, I'm so sorry. Yep I'll forward it now.

(Pause)

Okay, sorry, sorry, sorry...

She hangs up then taps away at her phone forwarding an email, fighting tears. She talks to Rob, still tapping away.

LEILA

Sorry, sorry.

Leila turns to Rob.

LEILA

Sorry. It's work, I've missed something - I've really screwed up.

Rob visibly backs down. He can see the pressure she is under.

ROB

I'm sorry I shouted.

He is not used to seeing Leila cry. He takes her hand. A moment. Leila pulls her hand away and starts the engine.

LEILA

Let's go and see our son.

**EXT. LEILA'S CAR/ LEILA'S HOUSE**

Leila looks at the front door, trying to compose herself. Rob carries a balloon with 'WOW' written on it, a big bag of crisps, a bottle of milkshake and a huge bar of chocolate.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Leila and Rob burst through the door holding the treats.

LEILA

No more hospital! No more tests.

ROB

Where is he? My superstar!

Rob's mother PAM (mid 60's immaculate, fashionable) comes running, face full of concern.

ROB

Mum, he's got the all clear!

He lifts Pam in the air and twirls her round. Leila looks at them, trying not to feel left out. She spots a mark on the kitchen island and scrubs at it with the dishcloth.

PAM

That's incredible! Theo, Theo!

Theo walks in, head buried in his tablet. Leila is disapproving. Theo doesn't even look up. Pam hugs him.

PAM

Look, your mum and dad are back.  
See what they've bought you?

Leila tries not to push past Pam as she grabs her son.

LEILA

Clever boy!

She buries her head in his hair.

LEILA

You've done it baby. Good boy.

THEO

I'm not a baby!

He sits at the kitchen island with his tablet and looks up.

THEO

No more hospital?

Theo punches his arm in the air.

THEO

Yessssssssss.

Pam high fives him and Rob pats him on the back, keen to get close to his boy. Leila sits next to Theo and watches Pam put the kettle on, totally at home in their kitchen. Theo munches on the crisps, still immersed by the tablet.

PAM

Bed time in five minutes Theo. So you can get your head down again now can't you Leila? Sit your surgeon exams again perhaps?

Leila is taken aback. She was in the family zone so this throws her a little.

LEILA

Uh - yes. I suppose so.

(Pause)

I'd love to.

Pam makes three cups of tea and pours a glass of milk for Theo, frowning at the milkshake as she puts it in the fridge.

PAM

You've had to put your life on hold  
for the last five years haven't  
you, duck? Now it's your time.

Leila does not know whether to feel touched or suspicious.

LEILA

I guess so- but I need to get Theo-

Leila smells her hand, that cloth is rank! She grimaces and then gets up and puts the dish cloth in the bin.

PAM

Don't you worry about Theo, he can  
stay with us whenever. He'll love  
it. Thick as thieves, us.

Leila tries not to get irritated.

ROB

Mum, that would be great. That's so  
kind. Leila - isn't it?

He nods at Leila, to elicit an acknowledgement of gratitude.

LEILA

Yes, great - thanks. I'd just like -

PAM

Theo, love - bed time now. Come on,  
I'll take you up.

Leila looks at Rob questioningly. Rob chooses to ignore it.

ROB

Grandma'll take you up. I'll be  
there for a story in five minutes  
once you've brushed your teeth.

Leila opens her mouth to say something to her son then closes it again. Between them they've got it covered - it's as if she's not there. She empties her cup of tea down the sink and takes a half open bottle of wine from the fridge, pouring herself a glass. Rob frowns at her.

LEILA

Want one?

ROB

No thanks. I'll finish my brew  
first.

LEILA

Do you think your mum could be a  
little less.... dominant?

Rob shakes his head at her in disbelief.

ROB

Not this again.

Leila walks out.

7

**INT. LEILA'S DOWNSTAIRS TOILET. NIGHT**

7

Leila sits on the toilet staring at the ceiling. She pulls her knickers up, washes her hands then straightens the towel, *Sleeping with the Enemy* style. Removing a Tampax packet from a high shelf she reveals a cigarette packet and lighter.

8

**INT. LEILA'S FRONT DOOR/ EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. NIGHT**

8

Leila creeps out of the front door, round the side of the house and crawls in to Theo's playhouse. She shuts the door.

9

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

9

Rob is at the sink washing up. He clocks Leila and double takes. He shakes his head then goes to say goodnight to Theo.

10

**EXT/ INT. THEO'S PLAYHOUSE. NIGHT**

10

Leila's hand comes out of the window, tapping her ash outside. She scrolls through her work emails on her phone.

11

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

11

Rob and Pam dry the dishes. She is distracted by the sight of Leila's hand sticking out of the playhouse.

PAM

Is that Leila? In the playhouse?  
What is she doing? I didn't know  
she smoked!

ROB

Neither did I. Well I did, then she  
gave up when she was pregnant with  
Theo. But - it's been a while now.

PAM

She's a funny one. A complete maze  
of contradictions.

12.

12

**INT. THEO'S PLAYHOUSE. NIGHT**

12

Leila gives herself a talking to.

LEILA

Stop being such a bitch. She's trying to help. Grit your teeth and go back in there - and be nice!

She crawls out of the playhouse and steels herself.

13

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

13

Pam puts the tea towel down and picks up the 'RELIEVE' pamphlet, reading out loud to Rob.

PAM

Anyway. These genomes. You said they're something we all have?

ROB

Well - yes.

PAM

'Additional findings - adults can choose to find out whether they risk passing on serious genetic conditions to future children or grandchildren'. Would you honestly want to know that? Would you heck!

ROB

No mum -

Pam looks incredulous as she continues to read.

PAM

What nonsense! 'May get results several years later, as new genomic changes are discovered'. So everything is going swimmingly, until a letter arrives saying 'You're going to die on 3 August 2022'. Do you really want to know that, son? The world's gone mad!

14

**INT. LEILA'S HALLWAY. NIGHT**

14

Leila is searching for chewing gum in her handbag. She overhears the conversation from the kitchen.

15

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

15

Pam is still reading the pamphlet, Rob listens.

PAM

'May/ may not be curable, treatable or prevented'. Good to know! Don't get pushed in to this duck.

ROB

Mum -

Too late, Leila enters and gives them both death stares.

LEILA

So you've decided have you? After all, this is clearly your decision to make, nothing to do with me.

PAM

Well, you *clearly* aren't going to take part in this nonsense are you, so what's there to discuss?

Rob is desperately trying to placate the situation

ROB

MUM!

Leila stares at Rob, if looks could kill...

LEILA

I'm going to say goodnight to Theo.

As Leila storms out of the room Pam cannot resist calling after her

PAM

I think he's probably asleep by now.

LEILA

Please do not be here when I get back.

She looks at Rob too.

LEILA

Neither of you.

Leila slams the door behind her.

Leila creeps into Theo's bedroom and strokes his hair.

LEILA

Night night sweetheart. I love you.

THEO

Night mummy. Love you.

Theo is nearly asleep. Leila kisses him again, inhaling her son - drinking him in. Then she slowly leaves the room.

17

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

17

Leila enters the empty kitchen and sighs. She pours herself a glass of wine and looks at the RELIEVE pamphlet, putting her head in her hands. Picking up her phone she texts Rob "SORRY". He texts back. "See you at 8am".

18

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

18

Leila is in her running kit, eating a banana. There is a knock at the door.

LEILA

Come in

She hears the sound of the key turning. Rob walks in.

LEILA

I keep telling you, you don't have to knock.

ROB

It just doesn't seem right. What if you were -

They both look a bit awkward. Moving towards the door.

LEILA

We'll just do the usual route, I'll be back in an hour and a half.

She heads out of the door then turns around.

LEILA

Rob? Thank you.

She heads out once again then Rob hears the doorbell ring.

19

**INT. LEILA'S HALLWAY - FRONT DOOR. DAY**

19

Rob opens the door to Leila.

LEILA

Left my keys. I wanted to say - I'm sorry about last night.

She shifts awkwardly from foot to foot.

LEILA

I'll try to be less...controlling.

Rob's instinct is to hug her, which he does. Leila gratefully welcomes the hug but when it becomes slightly too long neither of them know how to end it. Leila sides steps, gives Rob a little nod then runs off.

20

20

**EXT. ROUNDHAY PARK. DAY**

Leila, JEN and LOU (both 36) jog around the lake.

LOU

That's bloody brilliant Lei, I'm so pleased for you all!

JEN

How did Theo react?

LEILA

Oh you know - pretty non-plussed.  
Head behind tablet. He was happiest about the treats he got!

She runs off and shouts behind her

LEILA

SPRINT FINISH!

Lou and Jen run after Leila. They round a corner and find her sprawled out on a grassy verge. They collapse beside her.

LOU

How's Rob?

Leila sits up and straightens her pony tail, brushing the grass off her top.

LEILA

Um - up and down. We've got a pretty big decision ahead of us. Come on, let's get a coffee.

21

**EXT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY**

21

Jen and Leila are seated outside a coffee shop.

LEILA

And obviously I want the additional findings but Rob is determined to bury his head in the sand and stick to the main ones because he's Rob.

Lou plonks three mugs down in front of them.

JEN

But why rock the boat? You've got through what is hopefully the hardest thing you'll ever have to face. Now you can get things back on track. Your son's health. Your career. Maybe even your relationship if you want?

Leila looks thoughtful.

JEN

You have a nice house, a great job - not to mention the sheer goddesses that are your two best mates! Can't you just live for the moment?

Leila sighs and hesitates before speaking

LEILA

Because -

Lou takes her hand

LOU

Think about this from Rob's point of view. He wants a bit of peace and quiet for a while. If things are getting better between the two of you - the three of you - why not have some breathing space?

LEILA

...he wants another child. And I want Rob.

Leila looks surprised by what she has just put in to words. Lou and Jen look at each other.

LEILA

I want him back.

LOU

Oh love, I hear you, I really do.

Leila unloads her confused brain.

LEILA

A baby was the last thing on my mind until yesterday. And how would I have a baby and do my exams? And what if it had what Theo has? We can't do that again.

LOU

No love. You can't.

LEILA

But this test could tell us. We could find out whether a baby would have the same thing as Theo...if that's what Rob wants.

LOU

If it's what YOU want Lei. This must be right for all of you.

JEN

You're playing God, Leila. You're playing with fire.

LEILA

I didn't say that I'm going to have a baby for Rob. But I'd like to explore the option - and this seems like a sensible way of doing so. And knowing if it is a possibility.

LOU

You *both* need to make the same decision. Why not get the main findings for now and see how things go with Rob? Then if after a while you *both* want to think about another child you could ask for the additional findings.

Leila stands up stiffly, not quite sure what to think or say. She regains her composure and sets off at a gentle jog.

LEILA

Come on, I need to get back to my healthy, happy boy.

JEN

(to Lou)

I hope she doesn't do a Leila.

She rolls her eyes and they both run after her.

Theo is dipping soldiers into a boiled egg. Rob is pouring coffee into a travel mug, his bike helmet and rucksack next to him. Leila walks in and kisses Theo. She looks at Rob hesitantly then plants a kiss on his cheek too. He smiles.

ROB

Good timing! Your egg's done.

He serves it up to Leila.

ROB

Would you like me to slice your  
soldiers for you madam?

Leila laughs

ROB

Gotta run. Well bike.

LEILA

Where are you rushing off to?

ROB

I've got a year eleven revision  
session. What are you up to?

He gives Theo a hug and smiles at Leila before rushing out.

LEILA

Not sure yet.

Leila turns to Theo who shrugs.

LEILA

Now then my best boy, what do you  
fancy doing today?

ROB (O.S)

Well have an ace time, whatever!

23

**EXT. SCARBOROUGH SEAFRONT. DAY**

23

Theo and Leila sit on a bench eating fish and chips looking out to sea. On Theo's other side is an enormous dolphin soft toy and a bucket and spade. They are happy and content in each other's company.

LEILA

How is it?

THEO

The best!

LEILA

Hooray! How are you feeling? Okay?

THEO

Good. Can I have an icecream after?

LEILA

Sure thing! Ninety-nine with sauce  
and sprinkles?

THEO

YEAH!

They watch a FAMILY walk along the seafront in front of them. MUM holding the YOUNG BOY'S hand, DAD pushing a pram.

THEO

Mum?

LEILA

Yes sweetie?

THEO

I'd really like a little brother.  
Or sister even. Eddie Selway has  
just had a little baby brother.  
He's pretty cool.

LEILA

And you'd like one too?  
(under her breath)  
It's a conspiracy!

THEO

Yes please.

LEILA

I'll see what I can do. Right we'd better finish off that sandcastle.

24

**EXT. ICECREAM VAN. DAY**

24

The ICECREAM MAN hands Leila and Theo a 99 cone each and they head back to their picnic blanket. Theo gobble down his ice cream then busies himself filling the moat with water. Leila lies on the blanket and reads her Kindle, one eye on Theo.

25

**INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE. DAY**

25

Theo sleeps on Leila's shoulder as she checks her work emails on her phone, attempting to balance the huge dolphin across their laps. She looks out the window thoughtfully then texts Rob "Got plans tonight? Would you like to come for tea? X"

26

**EXT. LEILA'S GARDEN. NIGHT**

26

Leila is mowing the lawn in the twilight. Rob pushes his bike through the garden. Leila shouts above the noisy mower.

LEILA

Theo's probably still awake if you want to say goodnight to him.

Rob nods and goes inside. Leila continues to mow in her very precise manner. Rob returns and feeling like he ought to help, attempts to strim very badly. After observing him critically for a few moments Leila stops the mower.

LEILA

Why don't you go and get a beer?

As soon as Rob has gone Leila goes back over his handiwork.

27

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN/ EXT LEILA'S GARDEN. NIGHT**

27

Rob spots the dinner ingredients carefully laid out and chops an onion whilst drinking his beer. He watches Leila out of the window perfecting the lawn. She enters, washing her hands meticulously. Leila takes a bottle of wine from the rack and pours two glasses before heading out of the room with hers.

LEILA (O.S.)

Don't forget the parsley!

Rob inhales deeply. His phone rings. He balances it between his shoulder and ear whilst he adds various ingredients to the pan. We can hear a loud voice on the other end of the line but the words are indistinguishable, he whispers.

ROB

Hi mum.... Yep, I'm at home -  
Leila's....I'm not whispering...  
she's upstairs. They've been to  
Scarborough....yes I think so...  
he's asleep ... just some dinner.

He hears the sound of Leila coming down the stairs.

ROB

Look mum, I've got to go. Love you,  
bye... yes tomorrow, fine.

Rob hangs up as Leila enters, she has changed her top and put on some make-up. She stirs the dinner and adds a sprinkle of oregano, Rob stands to the side then goes to set the table. Leila moves the huge dolphin out of the way and sits down. She begins to fill in the hospital paperwork.

LEILA

How was your day?

ROB

Yeah - you know. A revision session. In a hot classroom on a Sunday. Not the best.

Leila looks sympathetic.

ROB

Who's this fella?

Rob gestures towards the dolphin.

LEILA

Oh that's Harry Kane from  
Scarborough. I was trying to get  
Theo to go for something  
alliterative you know, Dora, Dolly,  
Dean - but no, Harry Kane.

ROB

Amazing, I never won anything at  
those places as a -

He stops as he sees Leila absent-mindedly straightening the table settings and grits his teeth.

ROB

(under his breath)  
Want to get your set square out  
whilst you're at it?

Leila looks up, she hadn't noticed what she was doing. She continues to fill in the form and Rob goes back to cooking.

LEILA

Sorry?

ROB

Nothing... How was Scarborough?

Leila looks up from the form and smiles at Rob, engaging with him properly for the first time since he arrived.

LEILA

Really lovely. Theo was so happy.  
We had fish and chips and ice  
cream. Built a sandcastle. He said -  
he said he wants a little brother.

She scrutinizes Rob's face. He sets Leila's plate down in front of her, sits down with his own and nods. Leila looks surprised. There is an awkward silence and they begin to eat.

ROB

I'd like that too, Lei - if we can  
work things out.

He puts his knife and fork down.

ROB

In fact I'd really like it. You  
know I've always wanted a big  
family. Two parents one child is  
overkill - just look at mum.

He laughs. Leila smiles but Rob has clearly touched a nerve.

LEILA

But what if we were to have another  
child with the same thing as Theo?

ROB

Don't you think that's jumping the gun a bit? There's lots to talk about first. We need to remember what life was like before Theo got ill. Remember 'us', have some fun.

Leila gets up and opens a cupboard.

LEILA

Surely it's a reason to go with the additional findings though? To see whether it actually would be a risk or if we're safe to go ahead?

She returns to the table with the pepper and salt and seasons her food. Rob looks put out.

ROB

What if we find out that one of us has a fatal illness? Do we just sit back and count down to the end? I'd honestly rather not know. Would you really want to find that out?

LEILA

YES! That's exactly my point - I want to know so we can plan our lives - our lives together - and make the most of every millisecond. We've already wasted the last five years. Not a minute more!

Rob goes quiet. He looks exhausted, pale, beaten. He gets up, grabs his plate and moves to the sink.

ROB

Lei, you know I'm not one for ultimatums. But I'm telling you - I - cannot - cope - with - this. It would be the last straw for me, if you do this then that is it.

Leila looks taken aback by the force of Rob's outburst.

LEILA

Okay, okay. I'm sorry. I get it.

She moves gently over to him, she wants to hug him but is unsure whether this is acceptable. He embraces her. Silence.

ROB

It's alright. I really want to try and make this work Lei. But you're going to have to let go a bit.

Rob untangles himself and clears the table. Still processing the conversation, Leila puts on her apron and marigolds and begins to stack the dishwasher in a regimented manner.

ROB

Look, why don't I ask mum to babysit tomorrow night and we can go out - we could go to Alonso's, we've not been there in years.

Leila smiles

LEILA

That would be nice. But I really think we need some space from your mother, Rob. Let's get a babysitter and have some you and me time that is not top and tailed by Pam.

Rob looks a bit miffed.

LEILA

Don't get me wrong, I'm so grateful for everything she does for Theo - but to quote Princess Di '*there are three of us in this relationship*'.

Rob smiles. And then Leila does too. A moment of relief.

LEILA

Seriously though, she needs to butt out. She cannot be our Camilla.

Leila looks at Rob in mock horror.

LEILA

And that would also be weird.

Rob laughs, a little freaked out. He takes Leila's hand. She laughs as she is wearing marigolds.

ROB

I'll talk to her....again. But you know what she's been like since dad died. She throws herself in to things-

LEILA

I know - but she needs to find another interest. And allow us some space. To give us a chance.

ROB

Yes. Okay.

Rob takes Leila in his arms and kisses her. He expects her to protest but she responds passionately, still in rubber gloves and apron. They become intimate, it still feels very natural. They have missed this closeness and clearly need each other.

28           **INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

28

Rob is asleep. Leila awakes to the sound of Theo crying.

29           **INT. THEO'S ROOM. NIGHT**

29

Leila sits on the side of Theo's bed and soothes him until he falls back to sleep. She strokes his face and kisses his forehead gently then leaves the room. Her face is thoughtful.

30           **INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

30

Leila switches the light on and sits down. She removes the form from the envelope, ticks a box then replaces it. Sealing it, she places her hands on top, not quite believing what she has done. Switching the light back off she heads to bed.

31           **INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

31

Leila wakes to see Rob tiptoeing around, retrieving his clothes.

LEILA

Are you trying to sneak out like a  
dirty stop out?

They both laugh.

ROB

I thought it would be better if  
Theo didn't know I stayed.

LEILA

Why?

ROB

I just thought -

LEILA

But if we both want to give things  
another go then what's the worry?

She clammers out of bed wrapped in the duvet and pulls him underneath it. They both giggle and shriek. Theo enters to see a wriggling duvet on the floor.

THEO

Mum? What are you doing?

Rob whispers, muffled, from under the duvet.

ROB  
Uh-oh. Sprung!

LEILA  
Nothing, darling. Go and get  
dressed and I'll be right with you.

THEO  
Daddy, is that you?

32

INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY

32

Rob is cooking bacon. Leila is in her dressing gown making sandwiches looking happy, relaxed and a little disheveled. The envelope lies on the kitchen island. Theo enters wearing his school uniform, his jumper back to front.

THEO  
Bacon, yippee!

Rob and Leila look at each other, relieved. Rob hands out the sandwiches, wrapping his in foil.

ROB  
Right, I'm off - got a staff  
meeting before registration.

He kisses them both, picking up his rucksack and bike helmet.

THEO  
(grinning)  
I knew you'd be back.

Rob reaches out and takes the envelope.

ROB  
Oh good, you've done it. I'll post  
it on my way.

Leila looks panicked, she'd temporarily forgotten her midnight activities.

LEILA  
Don't worry, I can -

ROB  
It's no bother, really.

He gives Theo a big hug.

ROB  
Good luck today mate. Smash it!

He kisses Leila again then leaves the room. She looks at once on top of the world and tortured.

33 INT. LEILA'S HALLWAY. DAY

33

Dressed smartly and immaculately made up, Leila stands at the door; work case, school bag and water bottle in hand.

LEILA

THEO! We can't be late on your first day back! How many times?

Theo comes running. He shouts like a protesting teenager.

THEO

Okaaaaaaaaaay

34 EXT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY

34

Leila opens Theo's door for him and shepherds him in to car.

35 EXT. THEO'S SCHOOL. DAY

35

Leila holds Theo's hand tightly and gives him a huge hug as she hands him to the teaching assistant, MRS FAY (late 40's, brilliant with children but terrible with adults)

LEILA

Have a good day darling.

She smiles anxiously at Mrs Fay who nods at her with little reassurance.

36 INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY

36

Leila drives fast and efficiently. She calls Rob.

LEILA

Hi - it's me. I just wanted to say... yes he went in no problem. He didn't seem bothered at all! He's such a trooper isn't he?  
(pause)

Yes okay. So I just wanted to see if you had chance to post that letter?...Oh great, you did.

She pulls in to her work car park.

LEILA

Rob, I need to - oh okay, bye.

The phone is cut off abruptly

LEILA

I need to tell you that your wife  
is a complete twat but she loves  
you. Please remember that.

Frustrated, she hurls her phone to the floor of the car.

37

37

**EXT. ROUNDHAY PARK. NIGHT**

Leila sees LOU and JEN in the distance and sprints to catch up with them.

LEILA

Sorry, sorry - we were running an hour behind today.

LOU

You need to be stricter with them, you can't let work rule your life.

LEILA

Yes - but if anyone knows what it's like Lou, it's you. And right now I need to prove myself.

LOU

Humph.

JEN

The only way to have it all is to be a hard-assed bitch. Like me.

They laugh as they run.

LOU

How's Theo? How's he got on with his first full week back at school?

LEILA

It's like he'd never been off. He waltzed right in!

JEN

That's ace. Superstar Theo.

LOU

And have you and Rob had chance to properly discuss the tests?

JEN

Like grown ups?

Leila rolls her eyes. Then hesitates.

LEILA

Um, kind of.

Leila steps up the pace somewhat, intentionally. Lou struggles to keep up. Jen races after her.

JEN

Don't try that trick missy. Under  
15's cross-country champion 1997,  
remember?

Leila laughs.

LOU

Have you agreed to the tests?

LEILA

Yes

LOU

The main findings?

LEILA

No

LOU

What? You haven't, have you Leila?

Jen grabs Leila's arm and slows her to a halt.

JEN

Lei, you know how serious this is.

She guides Leila to a nearby bench and she and Lou sit on either side of her like concerned bouncers.

LEILA

I know, I know..... I don't know.  
There's just been so much  
uncertainty - and this is something  
we can be certain about.

LOU

Yes but you cannot make that  
decision for him Leila. That's not  
right. Nor moral.

LEILA

Is it right or moral that he can  
make the decision for me? One of us  
has to lose out here. It's fifty  
percent my decision after all.

JEN

Think what's at stake! You're just  
getting back on your feet Leila.  
With a lot to lose. It's a huge  
gamble.

LEILA

I know I shouldn't have. I tried to tell him - then I thought - maybe I don't need to? There's no reason for him to find out... is there?

Jen gets up and stretches her legs, She waits for a family who have been feeding the ducks to pass.

JEN

For fuck's sake, Leila.

Jen looks at Leila angrily before walking off. Lou follows.

Leila stays, staring stubbornly ahead at the ducks swimming around in the lake, mundanely bickering about bread.

38

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

38

Leila hands a prescription to MRS WRIGHT and opens the door.

LEILA

Let's see how that goes then Mrs Wright. All the best.

Shutting the door, Leila picks up her phone and texts Lou and Jen: "You're right. I'm telling him. Love you XX"

She picks up her mobile and dials Rob's number.

LEILA

Hey, have you got an hour later?  
Theo's with Pam and I need to talk to you...Brill, park cafe at 4.30?

As she hangs up she notices a missed call from an unknown number before she is distracted by the buzzer.

39

**INT. CAFE IN THE PARK. DAY**

39

Leila spots Rob in the far corner of the cafe, a cup of tea and a slice of carrot cake waiting for her. She smiles.

ROB

What's up?

LEILA

This is nice. Thank you.  
(stalling)  
How was your day?

Rob looks at her quizzically.

ROB

(formally)

Fine thanks Leila, how was yours?

Leila takes the cue and uses it to stall further.

LEILA

Theo was hilarious this morning. He was going through the alphabet - you know phonetically *a* is for *apple* and so on - and guess what he said when he got to *l*? *L* is for *lady bits*. How embarrassing!

Rob laughs.

LEILA

What do you do? If you tell him not to say it he'll say it more, but if we don't, he'll say it at school.

ROB

Could be worse.

LEILA

True.

ROB

So -

LEILA

This morning was relentless, all the usual suspects, you know.

Rob nods, utterly confused. What is he here for?

LEILA

Then I grabbed a sandwich at my desk and ate it whilst catching up on the morning's notes.

ROB

And what did you drink?

LEILA

Drink? I had a coffee.

She realises that Rob is being facetious and checks herself.

ROB

Lei, as nice as this is -

He indicates their surroundings

ROB

We don't do this. What are we doing here? You said it was important.

Leila steals herself. She moves closer to the table and grabs Rob's hand. This is her chance and she must do it now.

THEO (O.S.)  
MUMMY! DADDY!

Theo comes rushes to bear hugs his parents. Pam follows.

PAM  
What are you two doing here? Oh -

She senses that something is up.

PAM  
Theo love, do you want to come and choose your icecream?

Leila seizes the opportunity.

LEILA  
No Pam, don't you worry. I'll get it. Come on Theo.

Leila grabs Theo's hand. Rob looks utterly bemused.

ROB  
Leila?

LEILA  
It's alright Rob, we can talk about it later.

She leads Theo over to the counter. Pam looks at Rob and raises her eyebrows.

40

**EXT. PARK CAR PARK. DAY.**

40

Leila waves to Pam and Theo as they drive off. Rob cycles after them, pulling faces at Theo. Leila opens her car door and sits down heavily, head on the steering wheel.

LEILA  
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

41

**EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. DAY**

41

Theo kicks the tyres of the car, school bag in hand.

THEO  
Muuuuuuummmmmmm! Come on, we're going to be late.

Leila comes running out of the house and slams the door. She unlocks the car and they both jump in. She notices another missed call but has no time to think further on it.

LEILA  
Sorry, sorry, sorry

42

**INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

42

Leila is focussing intently on the road ahead, willing the cars to get out of her way. Her son will not be late in his second week back at school. Theo tries to get her attention.

THEO

Mum, I need a dolphin costume.

LEILA

What's that?

THEO

A dolphin costume. I'm playing the dolphin in Aesop's Fables.

LEILA

I don't remember a dolphin in Aesop's Fables.

THEO

There is one, just ask Mrs Fay.

Leila smiles as she pulls up outside the school.

LEILA

It's okay sweetie, I believe you!

She hurries Theo out of the car.

43

**EXT. THEO'S SCHOOL. DAY**

43

Leila kisses Theo, passing him his bag, lunch and drink bottle. Mrs Fay hands her a letter.

MRS FAY

Don't forget it's the reception play next Wednesday and Theo will need a dolphin costume.

THEO

I told you.

Leila laughs and gently nudges him through the door.

LEILA

Wednesday?

MRS FAY

Yes, you will have received a text and an email.

LEILA

Oh. Shit.

She puts her hand over her mouth and surveys the small children surrounding her. Mrs Fay gives her a death stare.

LEILA

Sorry.

Layla runs, if she had a tail it would be between her legs.

44

**INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

44

Leila drives furiously, her phone rings on hands free.

LEILA

Hi Alison..... Yes I know, nine fifteen. I'll be there.

She looks at the clock. 9.11.

LEILA

Two minutes.

She puts her foot down even more.

LEILA

Newcastle? Next Wednesday? Oh shit.  
Is there anything we can do?...Just  
pulling up now. Okay, bye.

Leila screeches into a parking space and runs in to work.

45

**INT. LEILA'S WORK RECEPTION. DAY**

45

Leila leans over the desk pleading with ALISON the department receptionist (60's, Scottish, unimposing in stature but ferocious in attitude - born to be a gatekeeper)

LEILA

It's Theo's first school play Ali,  
I can't miss it. Can I just go to  
the next one instead?

ALISON

You know the departmental policy  
Leila. Sue's been so understanding  
over the last few years -  
understandably - but I really don't  
think you can get out if it again.

Leila nods.

LEILA

Understandably understanding, sure.  
Look what if I just go for the  
morning?

ALISON

As far as I'm aware you'll be there  
for the whole day.

She winks and nods at a patient nearby.

ALISON

You're getting a death stare from Mr Corbett, any longer and I actually think he will bore right through you in to me then who'll be left to keep you from the lions?

Leila laughs, picks up her clipboard from the desk, puts on a smile and turns to survey her patients.

LEILA

Mr Corbett? Please follow me.

46

**INT. GYM/INT. ROB'S WORK. DAY**

46

Leila is on the cross trainer in the gym on the phone to Rob who is packing up his things in his classroom.

LEILA

I thought you were doing bed time tonight Rob, why's Pam there?

ROB

I got caught late at work.  
Emergency meeting about Paul Pratt.  
You know, psycho cat killer.

LEILA

Yes I know the one. But it's only Theo's second week back at school and your mum is already putting him to bed. If I'd known I'd have skipped the gym. I thought we were trying to establish a normality.

ROB

Leila. It was an emergency.

Leila clocks the impatient tone of his voice and takes a mental step backwards.

LEILA

Sure. Okay. Well I hope everything's alright.

Rob waits for the sarcastic remark. None follows.

ROB

I'm on my way. I'll be home in twenty minutes.

LEILA

Okay, I'll be back in a couple of hours. I'm going for a drink with Lou and Jen... thank you.

ROB

You're welcome. I'll leave some tea  
as you'll be either hungry,  
hammered or both, knowing you.

Leila laughs.

ROB

Have a good night, see you later.

LEILA

Rob - you're welcome to stay over -  
if you want - that is.

She hangs up, smiling shyly to herself.

47

**EXT. BAR. NIGHT.**

47

Leila and Jen are sat at an outside table with a bottle of wine, three glasses and three cocktails. Leila rushes up, hot and sweaty from the gym.

JEN

Oh jeez you're that active wear  
mum. Do we have to sit with you?

LOU

Why didn't you get changed?

LEILA

I left my clothes at work by  
mistake. God, I'm such a state...  
Is this for me?

She gestures towards a cocktail and takes a swig.

LEILA

Thank you.

JEN

Happy Hour.

Lou knows that it is not like Leila to be so disorganised and flustered so she tries to help calm her down.

LOU

You're fine. Here take my make-up  
and go to the toilet. Have a bit of  
a wash, bob's your uncle.

Leila looks at the lip gloss Lou is proffering.

LEILA

Jen, lend us your make-up will you?

Lou pretends to be insulted and they all laugh as Jen passes Leila her huge handbag.

JEN  
Just take the whole thing.

Leila gratefully departs with the huge bag after downing the rest of her cocktail.

LOU  
So, guess what? A tattoo shop has opened on my street! Shall we?

Jen laughs.

JEN  
What. You want us to get matching tattoos?!

LOU  
Just small ones, it'd be fun.

JEN  
Midlife crisis anyone?

LOU  
Mind you, the guy specialises in Clint Eastwood apparently!

She scrolls through her phone to find a photo and shows Jen.

JEN  
Wow, that's awesome. Who else can he do? Not sure I want Clint, how about someone more... current? Tom Hardy or Ryan Gosling?

LOU  
Ooooh yes. But are they lifers? You will have their mugs on your arm - or wherever...

She gestures downwards and giggles

LOU  
...for life, so you need to choose a classic face who will age with you and never fall out of favour.

JEN  
True.

Leila returns, a bit calmer, carrying two bottles of wine.

LEILA  
Happy Hour, woohooo!

She tops up their glasses and takes a swig.

JEN

Leila, here's one for you. Tattoo -  
arm - famous man - GO!

LEILA

Patrick Stewart of course.

JEN

Really?

LOU

I forgot you were a Trekkie!

Jen turns to Leila abruptly.

JEN

Have you told him?

LEILA

Who, Patrick Stewart?

JEN

No, your husband. About the form.

Lou sighs and shoots Jen a look - she doesn't have to be quite so brutal. Jen shrugs it off. Leila refills her glass.

LEILA

No.

Jen looks at her questioningly.

LEILA

I tried -

JEN

It's been two weeks Leila.

LEILA

I know, I know. You're right. I will do it, I promise.

She downs her glass then refills them all.

LEILA

Can we talk about something fun now?

Leila falls out of a taxi outside her house. She gets up and brushes herself off. Wobbling, she manages to shut the door and let herself in. Spotting a pile of unopened post on the side she leafs through it. One official looking letter is addressed to them both. Leila knows exactly what this is.

She walks in to the kitchen to sit down and open it but instead she about turns to the bin and forces the envelope down inside angrily. She then wobbles back out of the door.

49

**INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. DAY**

49

Leila wakes up to find the room spinning and a cup of cold tea and toast by her bed. Theo is jumping on her.

THEO

Mummy!

LEILA

OUCH!

THEO

Come on Mummy, wake-up!

Leila realises that Theo is fully dressed in his school uniform and looks at her phone.

LEILA

SHIT! It's eight thirty!

Leila jumps out of bed and looks in the mirror. She has panda eyes and is still in her sports bra, knickers and socks. Hearing a loud noise she looks out the window. It's the bin men. A horrible thought crosses her mind as she watches one of them approach her drive. She rushes from the room.

THEO

Mummy! Where are you going?

50

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

50

Leila runs to the kitchen bin. It's empty.

51

**EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. DAY**

51

Leila is running along her road after the bin men dressed only in sports bra, knickers and trainer socks. She winces, her head pounding from the excesses of the night before.

LEILA

STOP! PLEASE! STOP!

A bin man is just about to load her wheelie bin on to the truck. He turns to look at her.

LEILA

Number seven - I need it!

She catches up with the bin man and lorry.

LEILA

Sorry. Please may I have my bin?

The man looks totally confused but pushes the wheelie bin towards Leila then hits the back of the lorry. It moves up the road as Leila scrabbles in her bin. She pulls out a bin bag and collapses on the ground next to it. She sticks her hand in and feels around, eventually pulling out the envelope covered in filth. There is a moment as she sits there staring at the envelope. Leila's rapture is soon broken by Theo.

THEO

MUM! What are you doing? We're going to be late!

Leila stands up and shakes herself, get a grip Leila. Theo is stood outside the front door, bewildered. She puts the bin bag back in the bin and returns it hastily to the drive. She runs in to the house, clinging to the envelope.

**INT/EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. DAY**

Theo stands outside; bag, lunchbox and water bottle in hand. Leila runs out of the house, clutching the envelope and looking exactly the same as before except for a dress, bag and a pair of trainers. They jump in the car and race off.

52

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

52

Leila sits, staring directly ahead, breathing deeply, hands on the desk. The envelope is in front of her unopened. She grabs it and tears it open. Shaking, she removes the letter, words jump out: 'CRITICAL', 'URGENT CONTACT', 'ROBERT MELLOR'.

LEILA

Rob?

Leila is in shock. The buzzer goes. We hear Alison's voice.

ALISON (O.S.)

Doctor Mellor, Mrs Howard is here.

53

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

53

Leila shuts the door behind her last patient and begins to search the internet, scrolling through serious medical terms. Her mobile rings, it's Rob. She takes a deep breath.

LEILA

Hey... yep a bit hungover. Thanks for the tea this morning, I needed it.....I honestly don't know what happened.... Yes Theo was fine...

She continues to scroll through the journals, staring stonily at the terrifying words in front of her. Her voice falters.

LEILA

How are you?...Oh that's - good.  
Are you coming over tonight?...Yes  
I'd like that.

The intercom crackles

ALISON (O.S.)

Ms Partington has arrived.

Leila stands up and moves towards the door.

LEILA

Look Rob, I've got a patient. But  
see you tonight, yes?

Leila hangs up and leans with her head against the door. She takes a deep breath before opening it.

54

**INT. LEILA'S HOUSE - LANDING/ HALLWAY. NIGHT**

54

Leila closes Theo's door quietly and tiptoes down the stairs. She takes her phone out of her coat and sees a text from Rob. "Sorry Lei, emergency - Paul Pratt/ Cat. Can't make it X".

Leila sits on the bottom step, relieved. She begins to laugh. Her laughter soon turns into tears of despair.

55

**INT. TRAIN STATION. DAY**

55

Leila races through the station and checks the departures board. She runs along the platform and spots Lou hammering on the train window. Jumping onboard, she collapses next to Lou.

LOU

You made it! But why have you got  
Theo's water bottle?

Leila looks down at her hand.

LEILA

No idea! Well other than the fact  
that I actually don't know my arse  
from my elbow right now.

Lou looks at her sympathetically.

LEILA

Lou, it's Rob.

LOU

What do you mean "it's Rob".... Oh.  
Rob? No.

Leila nods. Her eyes fill with tears. Now she has actually given words to the situation it all begins to come out.

LEILA

Lou, what have I done?

She cries, rummages in her bag and hands Lou the letter. Lou hugs Leila whilst reading the letter.

LOU

Oh shit. Leila honey, we have to do something about this. Now.

56

**INT. CONFERENCE CENTRE. DAY**

56

Leila and Lou file in to the lecture.

LEILA

Lou, will you tell him? Tell Rob? You're his GP after all.

Lou looks panic stricken and keeps walking.

57

**INT. LECTURE THEATRE. DAY**

57

Leila and Lou are sat amidst a sea of people.

LEILA

It could work perfectly. You call him in for a 'standard' blood test, get the results, then - tell him!

Lou looks at her questioningly - this is unbelievable.

LOU

Are you serious? You want me to break the news to your husband that he has a life threatening condition because you are too scared to?

Leila looks deflated.

LOU

Lei, can you put someone else first for once? It just might save Rob's life. What's more important? His life is literally in your hands.

Leila begins to cry again. Lou sighs and hugs her.

LEILA

Lou, if I tell him then - then it will be over. Without a doubt.

LOU

Leila, this is his life.

She sees just how helpless and vulnerable Leila is right now.

LOU

Let me think. I'm sure we can come up with something.

Leila looks at Lou gratefully.

LEILA

I'm going to head back in a bit for Theo's play. As far as you're concerned I was here all day.

Leila puts a finger to her lips and Lou elaborately mimics her. They are interrupted by an announcement.

SPEAKER

Welcome ladies and gentlemen to the fifth annual....

The voice drones on in the background and Lou pulls a face.

58           **EXT. CONFERENCE CENTRE. DAY**

58

Leila tries to hail a taxi in the rain, checking her watch anxiously. Finally one stops and she dives in. They race off.

59           **INT. TRAIN. DAY**

59

Leila checks her emails on the train. She receives a text from Lou: 'I promise I'll help you to tell him XXX'. Her eyes fill with tears as she stares blankly out of the window, the rain lashing down outside. She looks lost.

60           **EXT. THEO'S SCHOOL. DAY**

60

Leila runs through the door, still clutching Theo's bottle.

61           **INT. THEO'S SCHOOL HALL. DAY**

61

Leila sneaks in to the back of the school hall. The stage is filled with child ANTS and one in a splendid GRASSHOPPER costume. Once her eyes have settled she detects Rob in the darkness and slides in to the seat next to him. Pam is on his other side. Rob takes her hand. This is nice. For maybe one moment Leila will be able to forget... Rob whispers.

ROB

You've missed The Dog in the Manger. Now we're on to The Ant and the Grasshopper.

Leila smiles.

ROB

I've never known a school play like it!

Suddenly the child dressed as a GRASSHOPPER dramatically keels over on stage and the ants run around happily with an assortment of plastic food.

GRASSHOPPER

"It is best to prepare for days of necessity".

The audience clap, parents on their feet. The grasshopper and ants bow enthusiastically. Pam whispers loudly.

PAM

Prepare for days of necessity?  
They're only five! What on earth  
are they teaching them?!

Leila laughs and spots a DOLPHIN (Theo) and a MONKEY sidestep shyly on stage. They are followed by a SAILOR GIRL.

LEILA

Shhhhhh, it's Theo!

Pam claps loudly and Rob looks nervous.

SAILOR GIRL

A sailor took her monkey on a voyage.

The monkey follows the Sailor Girl around the stage.

SAILOR GIRL

There was a big storm and their ship was wrecked. Everybody had to swim for their lives.

The Sailor Girl swims dramatically to one side of the stage as the monkey thrashes around in the sea. Meanwhile, Theo is stood stock still at the edge of the stage looking on.

SAILOR GIRL

A dolphin saw the monkey and thought it was a man so went to help him.

Leila, Rob and Pam are all anxiously willing Theo on.

SAILOR GIRL

(whispering loudly)

Go on dolphin!

The monkey grabs Theo's hand.

MONKEY BOY

Now!

Theo hesitantly swims up to the Monkey. The Monkey tries to climb on his back and they collapse on the floor. The audience laughs. They stand up and glare at each other. The Monkey Boy and Sailor Girl gesture at Theo to speak.

MONKEY BOY  
I am a Citizen of Athens

Theo nods. The Sailor Girl gesticulates further at Theo.

SAILOR GIRL  
His family are rich and noble

Theo opens his mouth to speak but nothing comes out. She nudges him and whispers loudly.

SAILOR GIRL  
Ask if his family are rich and noble.

THEO  
(Robotically)  
Are your family rich and noble?

MONKEY BOY  
Yes, my family is one of the  
noblest in the city.

There is silence. The Monkey Boy hisses at Theo.

MONKEY BOY  
Piraeus

THEO  
Then you must know Piraeus?

PAM  
Piraeus? What is this?!

ROB  
Shhhh mum, you're as bad as the  
sailor!

The Sailor Girl nudges Theo and whispers in his ear.

MONKEY BOY  
Piraeus is my best friend. I play  
with him every day.

The Monkey Boy climbs on to Theo's back again and he carries him around the stage before dramatically dropping him on the floor and swimming off.

SAILOR GIRL  
The dolphin saw that he was  
carrying a monkey and dropped him  
in to the sea. He went to search  
for a human being to save.

The Monkey Boy looks up from the floor where he is lying.

MONKEY BOY

He died

SAILOR GIRL

Yes he drowned. Because he did not tell the truth.

Leila's face falls. Pam lets out a whoop and Rob claps loudly. The Monkey Boy flops back down on to the floor. Theo bobs around the stage in his dolphin costume before all three of them bow, the Sailor Girl remonstrating with Theo.

62

**INT. RESTAURANT. DAY**

62

Theo, Pam, Leila and Rob eat burgers. Theo is buzzing. They feel like a happy family unit, the first time in ages.

THEO

And then I said "Then you must know Piraeus"

Leila and Theo nod.

PAM

Yes we heard you, love. You were brilliant. You all were.

THEO

Who is Piraeus?

PAM

Why have they got five year olds acting out Aesop's Fables? This new head teacher is from the dark ages! Wouldn't have happened in my day.

ROB

Of course not mum! We just did musicals when you were head. Piraeus is a place and not a person Theo. That's how the dolphin knew the monkey was a liar.

PAM

See, the geography of Greece age five? Word play? She's nuts!

Leila smiles and hugs Theo. She studies Rob, he looks well. Maybe it's just a horrible mistake. Or a dream - she wishes.

63

**EXT/ INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

63

Leila gets in to her car which is parked outside the school, drives off and phones Pam on hands free.

LEILA

Pam? Hi it's me. Can I -

Leila checks herself.

LEILA

How are you? Did you enjoy last night?

She waits for Pam to respond and tries to remain patient.

LEILA

Oh good. Yes it was lovely wasn't it?... He the best dolphin ever! Look, I wondered...is there any way you could have Theo tonight? That's fab, thanks Pam. I'll Facetime him - you both later. Thank you.

Leila hangs up and dials Rob's number. There is no answer.

64

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

64

MS FINCH lies on the examining table, Leila looks at her leg.

LEILA

What's your occupation Ms Finch?

MS FINCH

I'm a counsellor

LEILA

If I advise you to rest as much as possible, and elevate the leg you can still do your job? Not that I'm advocating such a thing but I am realistic. If you can take a week off work by all means do!

MS FINCH

I should be so lucky! Mind you work is a holiday compared to home.

LEILA

Yes that's the tricky bit.

She helps Ms Finch to get up and passes her her crutches.

LEILA

Counsellor you say?

Ms Finch hobbles towards the door, nodding.

MS FINCH

That's right.

Leila runs to help her.

LEILA

Can I ask you a question?

Ms Finch looks a little surprised but shakes her head.

LEILA

If you have to break some news to someone, some *really bad* news, how would you do it?

65

**LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

65

Leila writes a prescription and hands it to MR OLIVER.

LEILA

There you go Mr Oliver. One pill three times a day for seven days.

Mr Oliver nods and stands up to go.

LEILA

Do you mind if I ask you a question? If you have done something that you know will upset Mrs Oliver how would you tell her?

MR OLIVER

Um?

LEILA

Say - crashed her new car.

MR OLIVER

She doesn't drive.

LEILA

Poisoned the dog.

MR OLIVER

We don't have a dog.

LEILA

Okay - well you lied to her - something big. How -

MR OLIVER

I never lie.

LEILA

Okay, thanks then.

Leila shows Mr Oliver out and shuts the door behind him.

66

**EXT. LEILA'S WORK HOSPITAL. DAY**

66

Leila is having a sneaky cigarette, trying to conceal herself from patients. She phones Rob but gets his answerphone. She looks a little anxious. An orderly, MAX joins her.

MAX

You okay Leila?

LEILA

Yes just trying to get through to Rob, he's not answering.

MAX

Probably with his other woman.

LEILA

I wish!

Max looks at her strangely, she realises how odd this sounds.

LEILA

I mean, it would be better than him being ill or something wouldn't it?

Max nods, still looking surprised.

MAX

Well yes, for sure.

Leila looks around her then moves closer to Max.

LEILA

Max, I appreciate this is a bit of a weird question but if you had something serious - really serious - that you needed to tell Rana - how would you do it? And where?

MAX

What's up Leila? Are you okay?

Leila shrugs and takes another drag on her cigarette. Max appreciates that some questions just need to be answered.

MAX

I would get a bottle of wine and a takeaway and tell her I loved her. And then spill.

Leila nods thoughtfully. She stubs out her cigarette.

LEILA

Yep, thought so. Thanks Max.

She hugs him then heads back inside.

67

**INT. OFF-LICENCE/ EXT. ROB'S WORK. NIGHT**

67

Leila chooses a bottle of wine whilst ordering a takeaway.

LEILA

Yes mixed starter for two, sweet  
and sour prawns, duck pancakes,  
special fried rice and prawn  
crackers. Seven thirty? Thanks.

She hangs up. The phone rings.

LEILA

Rob? Thank god. I was worried...

Rob is trying to put his helmet on whilst on the phone to Leila and balancing his bike against his legs.

ROB

Why?

LEILA

Well I called you earlier... twice.

ROB

Sorry Lei, it's been meeting after  
meeting today. You okay?

LEILA

Theo's at your mum's so you don't  
have to get him. And we're having a  
takeaway. Can you come over?

ROB

Oh - okay - what's the occasion?

LEILA

I just - thought it would be nice.

ROB

Alright. See you soon.

LEILA

Love you.

She hangs up leaving Rob staring at his phone in surprise.

68

**EXT. LEILA'S CAR/ EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. NIGHT**

68

Leila shuts her car door and lets herself in to the house.

69

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

69

Leila dumps her bags and gives the room a quick tidy. She puts on some music and lays the table. She checks her watch.

70

**INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

70

Leila changes her clothes and applies her make-up. She looks at Rob's side of the bed and then at the clock. Still no Rob.

71

**EXT. LEILA'S FRONT DOOR. NIGHT**

71

Leila smokes nervously. She tries to phone Rob but there is no answer. She sits down on the step and calls Pam.

LEILA

Hi Pam - it's me... all okay with you two? Thanks again... Listen, I was wondering, Rob hasn't popped in on his way home has he?...thought as much. Yes, I'm sure he'll be here any minute. Thanks, yes bye.

72

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.**

72

Leila tries Rob again. No answer. She scrubs some already very clean pans ferociously. Her phone rings. She runs to it.

POLICE VOICE (O.S.)

Leila Mellor?

LEILA

Yes

POLICE VOICE (O.S.)

I'm afraid your husband is in hospital. Can you come now? He's in Leeds General Infirmary.

LEILA

Yes. Of course.

Leila hangs up. Methodically she puts on her shoes and coat, remaining calm. She gets her handbag showing no sign of panic. She opens the door to find the TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN raising his hand to knock. She looks utterly bewildered.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN

Twenty-four sixty please.

Leila looks absolutely flummoxed and bursts in to tears.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN

You okay love?

73

**INT. TAKE AWAY DELIVERY VAN. NIGHT**

73

Leila grips the door handle as the Take Away Delivery Man drives fast. A tear silently trickles down her cheek.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
You alright love? Want some music?

He doesn't wait for an answer, keen to break the silence.  
Roxette's 'Must Have Been Love' comes on.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Hmmmmmmm...

He fiddles with the radio again and some thrash metal starts.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Perhaps not...

He turns the radio off. Driving fast, deliveries slide around in the back. He tries to distract Leila.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
So Theo, you said? Your son?

LEILA  
Yes

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
How old is he?

LEILA  
Five

The Takeaway Delivery Man jumps on this, a talking point.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Oh, so is he in reception? He might be in the same class as my niece.

LEILA  
Yes but he has a heart problem and hasn't been there much.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Shit. And now husband. You're going through the mill aren't you, love?

Rather than the floodgates opening, Leila starts to laugh and the delivery man joins in, relieved.

LEILA  
I guess you could say that.

They swing in to A&E, drawing up beside the ambulances.

LEILA  
Thank you, I am so grateful.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
No worries, that'll be twelve pounds please love.

Leila looks confused but puts her hand in her bag.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Only joking love! Take care -

He gestures to the hospital

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
And of him. And Theo.

Leila smiles, then gets out, terrified.

74

**INT. INTENSIVE CARE WAITING ROOM. NIGHT**

74

Montage: Leila paces the corridor. Reads the posters on the walls. Stares at the vending machine. Reorganises her purse. Picks up her phone and puts it down again several times.

DOCTOR GERRARD (late 50's, gravitas) enters.

DOCTOR GERRARD  
Mrs Mellor? Good news, your husband  
is doing really well.

LEILA  
The lymphoma?

DOCTOR GERRARD  
(confused)  
Lymphoma? No. Sprained wrist and a  
broken rib - he was really lucky.

LEILA  
Broken arm?

DOCTOR GERRARD  
Yes, from the bike accident. Has  
nobody told you?

LEILA  
No, the police just said to come  
here and I assumed -

She stops dead. Doctor Gerrard looks at her questioningly.

LEILA  
Is he okay?

DOCTOR GERRARD  
Yes he's just coming round now,  
he's going to be fine.

This time the floodgates open, Leila bawls. Doctor Gerrard hands her a tissue and beckons to a nurse.

75

## INT. HOSPITAL CAFE. NIGHT

75

Leila is at the tea machine. She spots Pam and gives her a big, very genuine hug. Pam is delighted and hugs her fondly. Barriers crumble left, right and centre. Pam does not ask a million questions, ten to the dozen as usual, instead she lets Leila talk. They appear unified for the first time.

LEILA

He's okay Pam. As soon as he comes round we're allowed to see him. The bastard who knocked him off just drove off. How could he?

Leila adds milk to two cups of tea. Pam shakes her head.

PAM

My boy. Like blooming Geraint Thomas on that bike he is. It was going to happen sooner or later I guess. And how are you duck?

LEILA

Me?

Leila bites her lip, it's been a long time since anyone has asked that. She stirs the tea ferociously, fighting tears.

LEILA

I'm fine. Now I know Rob is. Come on, let's go and see him. Was Lou okay to have Theo?

PAM

Yes love, it's all in hand. Theo will be delighted to wake up to find Lou at the helm!

76

## INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

76

Dawn is breaking as Leila and Pam tentatively stick their heads around the door. Rob smiles weakly from his bed. Pam hangs back, giving them a moment. Leila sits next to Rob, overwhelmed, unable to speak. She takes his hand and begins to sob. Rob strokes her hair.

ROB

Hey, Lei? It's okay.

LEILA

I'm so sorry.

ROB

Why? It wasn't your fault that some pissed up twat mangled my new bike.

Leila sobs more. Rob looks helpless and Pam finds tissues.

PAM

It's okay duck, Rob's fine and the police will trace whoever did it. They have witnesses.

LEILA

It's not-

ROB

Honestly Lei, I'm fine.

He grimaces as he tweaks the rib awkwardly.

LEILA

I-

PAM

Now then Robbie, the food isn't up to much in here. What will you be having when I come in later? I'll rustle up something nice.

Leila looks deflated, the earth and everyone in it seem to be conspiring against her confession. A NURSE enters.

NURSE

It's time to give Rob a bit of a break. If you come back later, visiting hours are two til three. You two could do with a rest too.

Pam leans over to embrace Rob.

PAM

Bye duck, see you in a few hours. I'll bring a bag.

She winks at him. Leila lies gently down beside Rob and holds his good hand tenderly.

ROB

Give Theo a big hug from me and tell him I'll be out soon.

LEILA

I love you. Don't worry, I'll sort this. I will, I promise.

Rob looks confused. She kisses him then backs slowly out of the room, not wanting to take her eyes off him as she goes.

Leila wakes up fully dressed on the sofa, confused and groggy. It takes her a few seconds to remember why she is asleep at midday. She hears a noise in the kitchen.

Jen is wearing marigolds and washing up, a coffee next to her. Her laptop is on the side, emails ping as Leila enters.

JEN

Afternoon! How are you feeling?

Leila looks around her. She gestures at the washing up.

LEILA

Okay... Thank you. You didn't have to do the washing up! Where's Theo?

JEN

Lou dropped him at school this morning with the twins.

LEILA

You two are absolute godsends, I owe you -

JEN

You owe us nothing. You'd do the same. Anyway, an extra one isn't going to make any difference for Lou's taxi service. And I'm

She gesticulates inverted commas with her hands

JEN

"working from home"

Leila smiles gratefully. She starts to dry up.

JEN

So what happened?

LEILA

Afternoon?

Leila looks at the clock. Shit, visiting hours.

LEILA

Jen, would you mind driving me back to the hospital?

JEN

Don't be daft. Shove some clothes on and let's go.

Jen puts her foot down.

JEN

So how is he? Lou said that he got knocked off his bike. How?

LEILA

It was an accident. Completely unrelated. It's mad.

JEN

So - does he know? Do they know? Have you told them?

Leila steels herself.

LEILA

No, but I'm going to as soon as I get there. I promise.

Jen nods approvingly and takes her hand. Leila grips it hard.

80

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY**

80

Pam is already there, plying Rob with homemade lasagne and jelly. Previously this would have riled Leila but instead she smiles. She kisses Rob gently, he is pleased to see her.

LEILA

How are you feeling?

ROB

Yeah, a bit sore. How's Theo?

LEILA

Lou took him to school, I've not seen him. I'll get him after this though. Listen -

She is determined that this is the moment. She doesn't want to say her piece in front of Pam but she deserves her wrath.

LEILA

I need to tell you something. Now -

Doctor Bernard knocks gently on the door and enters.

DOCTOR BERNARD

Hi there, Mr Mellor? I'm Doctor Bernard.

ROB

Hi.

MS BERNARD

This is a little out of the ordinary. We've been looking at your records, Mr Mellor and I'm afraid we have some concerns.

Rob looks confused and Pam indignant. Leila simply puts her head in her hands.

MS BERNARD

According to our partners in the hospital research scheme RELIEVE they recently informed you of some rather serious findings. Mr Mellor, we need to get you in for some further tests immediately.

PAM

(Incredulously)

For a broken rib?

MS BERNARD

No. Mrs-

PAM

Mellor. Senior.

MS BERNARD

It's a bit more serious than that.

Pam is utterly confused. Rob stares at Leila as a hundred different emotions cross his face. Leila clutches Rob's hand.

LEILA

(whispering)

I am so, so sorry.

**END OF EPISODE 1**

## LETTING IT LIE - ABSTRACT

'Letting It Lie' is a three part television drama series that explores the pressures of modern society and the subsequent issues of control that follow. When Leila Mellor goes against her husband Rob's wishes and signs them both up for significant medical tests, she realises that the more she tries to hold her family together the further apart they become.

The key theme of *Letting It Lie* is the dilemma of the modern woman and trying to be everything to all people. This situation is clearly not unique to women however they are often expected to keep more balls in the air than their male counterparts. Leila is juggling a demanding, high-pressure career with the desire to be a good mother, manage the household and repair her relationship. This 'mental load' constitutes normal life for many women and the concept of having time to oneself or a spare moment during the day in which to sit down and switch off, is alien. Often, something has to give – be it health, relationships or mental well-being and life can become overwhelming. Unfortunately for Leila and her family, the effect of such pressure is life-threatening.

This series explores a very modern, serious and universal dilemma with warmth, humour and heart.

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

*I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.*

LETTING IT LIE

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**INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. DAY**

LEILA (36, well dressed, angular, uptight) and ROB MELLOR (34, jeans, t-shirt, trainers, slouching) sit opposite one another in a cold, clinical hospital corridor. Garish strip lighting highlights a noticeboard filled with thank you cards and photos of recovering children. Rob is jiggling one leg anxiously. Leila glares at it with frustration.

LEILA

Rob!

Rob looks at Leila questioningly. Leila glares at his jiggling knee again. Rob looks down at his knee, back at Leila and begins to jiggle even more ferociously. Leila stares at Rob with contempt, about to blow up then checks herself. She breathes deeply, just as the door to the office in front of them is opened by a NURSE.

NURSE

Mr and Mrs Mellor?

She opens the door and smiles. Rob steps back to let Leila enter the consulting room first, when her phone starts to ring. She hurriedly searches in her bag and mutes it.

ROB

Leila! For god's sake.

Leila shoots Rob daggers.

LEILA

Sorry, I thought it was on silent.

**INT. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

Paediatric Consultant MS MEHTAL (warm, kind eyes, mid 50's) stands up and shakes Rob and Leila's hands.

MS MEHTAL

Leila, Rob - good to see you. How have things been?

Rob glances at Leila who is lost for words. Rob looks confused - this is a first for Leila.

ROB

Theo's in good spirits. He seems to be doing well.

Leila nods. Ms Mehtal holds up a file as if to verify this. She smiles.

MS MEHTAL

You're right! Theo's results are excellent. His heart appears to be functioning perfectly.

(MORE)

We won't need to see him for  
another six months.

Leila and Rob let out a huge sigh of relief. They look a little shell-shocked.

MS MEHTAL

I am absolutely delighted for you all - although I appreciate that this news may take time to digest.

She leans across the table and takes each of their hands. This has clearly been a long road and a close acquaintance.

MS MEHTAL

Obviously we are here for you and Theo for the foreseeable future. But please do get in touch if you have any concerns - you know the score. It's been a long journey.

Tears in her eyes, Leila gets up to hug Ms Mehtal. Rob stands up and moves towards the door, hand outstretched.

MS MEHTAL

Oh Rob, there is one more thing before you head off.

(Pause)

I have been asked to talk to you both about a research project affiliated with the hospital and university that we would very much like you to involve you in.

Rob looks at her blankly. Leila nods.

MS MEHTAL

It's called RELIEVE. You'll know all about it, Leila. Rob?

Rob shakes his head. Ms Mehtal pushes some pamphlets across the table.

MS MEHTAL

Well I've prepared some reading for you. In the light of Theo's highly unusual condition, we would encourage you to take part but...

(she pauses)

...it is not compulsory.

LEILA

No, no - of course we will. It's the least we can do after the care we have been given.

She looks at Rob guiltily - she should have consulted him before responding.

LEILA

Rob?

ROB

I'd like to read about it first.

MS MEHTAL

Of course. Absolutely. There are two things that I would like you to consider carefully. One is the timeframe. Due to the nature of Theo's condition, they would like to include you in the current sample which closes next week. This means that we need to move quickly. It is an accelerated programme and should you sign up, the results would be returned within twenty eight days. The other thing to bear in mind is the two different options. The main findings will be relevant to Theo's illness and hopefully offer some sort of explanation.

Leila is nodding throughout Ms Mehtal's spiel, fascinated.

MS MEHTAL

The additional findings give a much bigger picture - for both of you. They look at genomic changes that cause serious or life threatening illnesses. And both parents would need to agree, it cannot just be one of you. We expect about one in a hundred people who take part to have one of these conditions.

ROB

You mean, you can tell us what serious illnesses we are going to get further down the line? Ultimately you can predict what can kill us?

Leila nods in awe. Rob looks uncomfortable.

LEILA

Isn't it amazing?

ROB

I'm not sure about that.

MS MEHTAL

You two go home, read the information, have a talk and a think. It is a big decision, I do realise that.

(MORE)

But most importantly give that little boy the biggest cuddle in the world!

She gets up and opens the door. Leila and Rob make their way out, hugging Ms Mehtal again and thanking her as they leave.

**INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

Leila is driving, uptight. Rob sits sprawled in the passenger seat, eyes closed.

ROB  
Thank fuck.

LEILA  
What do you mean "Thank fuck"

ROB  
He's okay Leila. Theo is going to be okay.

LEILA  
But now we've got the tests to worry about. It's not over yet.

ROB  
Lei, we don't have to do it. We don't even have to take part. It's optional. Chill, enjoy the moment. This is an amazing day. Theo-is-okay!

LEILA  
Chill?

Leila is incredulous.

LEILA  
We owe it to the system. We owe it to the NHS. We owe it to the country. We owe it to the next poor little bugger like Theo. And we owe it to their parents.

Rob sighs. Right now he just wants to enjoy the moment and savour this breathing space that they have been granted.

LEILA  
We have to do it.

Rob puts a hand on her arm. A moment.

ROB  
Leila, breathe.

Leila looks down at his hand, her face softens and she suddenly yanks the steering wheel and pulls off the road.

ROB

What are you doing?

LEILA

Come on, we need to talk about this. I want to get back to Theo too but we need to resolve this now.

Rob does as he is told.

**EXT. WOODLAND PATH. DAY**

Rob and Leila walk through the woods. They are surrounded by bluebells, it is beautiful.

LEILA

The bluebells are out!

Leila's shoulders drop. She inhales and breathes deeply.

ROB

Wild garlic

Leila's phone rings, undoing all nature's good work. Rob grimaces. Leila mutes it crossly.

LEILA

Sorry - it's work. It must be important.

Rob looks at her questioningly.

LEILA

This is more important. The most important thing in the world.

She stops and turns to Rob and takes his hand without realising. He is surprised but leaves his hand in hers.

LEILA

Rob, look - I'm sorry - you know how I get caught up in things. And today is the day we have been waiting for, hoping for - you're absolutely right. We need to go home and tell Theo and your mum. But we also need to discuss this genome testing whilst it's just the two of us. Otherwise we won't see each other for another couple of weeks and then it will be too late.

Rob nods. Leila looks down, suddenly self-conscious and drops Rob's hand.

LEILA

Sorry.

She moves on and Rob follows.

ROB

It's okay.

He tries to distract themselves from the awkwardness.

ROB

So what's to discuss? You say we have to take part and yes okay, I guess you're right. I'll read the info and then we can sign up for the main findings. If we can help other kids like Theo we should.

LEILA

But don't you think we should think about the other option?

ROB

Uh - no-

LEILA

Don't you want to know more about yourself and your body? I know that I certainly do.

Rob stops dead and looks at Leila.

ROB

Are you mad?

Leila is on a roll.

LEILA

Just think, we can pre-empt future illnesses and potentially extend our lifespan as a result of these tests! What a privilege. Medicine is developing and we are at the forefront.

ROB

Leila - listen to yourself. This is not work. This is us - your family. We've just gone through five years of hell with Theo. And that's how we've ended up...

He indicates them both and the distance between them

ROB  
...here. Splintered. Fractured.  
Destroyed.  
(pause)  
And I don't know where we go now.

He looks at Leila pointedly.

ROB  
After the constant worry and  
relentless tests we're being given  
the opportunity for normality -  
whatever that is. But you want to  
add even more drama to our lives.  
Even worse, you're trying to  
manipulate your own mortality.  
Can't you just let things lie?

LEILA  
But Rob, that is exactly what this  
would enable us to do! We can plan  
and pre-empt and make the most out  
of the rest of our lives!

ROB  
Lei, think where we would be  
without all this. Living with Theo  
together - and his little brothers  
and sisters. I wanted a family. I  
wanted you. I didn't for one minute  
think I'd be living with my mother  
at the age of thirty five.

LEILA  
But-

ROB  
YOU CANNOT CONTROL EVERYTHING. You  
have destroyed us.

He walks off, head down, dejected. Leila looks angry, aghast.  
Tears run down her face as she walks slowly towards the car.

**EXT/INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

Leila unlocks the car remotely, Rob gets in without looking  
at her. As she starts the car her phone rings again. Rob  
sighs loudly and shakes his head. Leila answers it.

LEILA  
Hi Alison... Oh shit, I'm so sorry.  
Yep I'll forward it now... Okay,  
sorry, sorry, sorry...

She hangs up then taps away at her phone forwarding an email.

LEILA

Sorry, sorry.

Leila turns to Rob.

LEILA

Sorry. It's work, I've missed  
something - I've really screwed up.

Rob visibly backs down. He can see the pressure she is under.

ROB

I'm sorry I shouted.

He is not used to seeing Leila cry and takes her hand. A moment. She gently removes her hand and drives off.

LEILA

Let's go and see our son.

**EXT. LEILA'S CAR/ LEILA'S HOUSE**

They look at the front door, trying to compose themselves. Rob carries a balloon with 'WOW' written on it, a big bag of crisps, a bottle of milkshake and a huge bar of chocolate.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Leila and Rob burst through the door.

LEILA

No more hospital! No more  
tests.

ROB

Where is he? My superstar!

Rob's mother PAM (mid 60's immaculate, fashionable) comes running, face full of concern.

ROB

Mum, he's got the all clear!

He lifts Pam in the air and twirls her round. Leila looks at them, trying not to feel left out. She spots a mark on the kitchen island and scrubs at it with the dishcloth.

PAM

That's incredible! Theo, Theo!

THEO (5) walks in, head buried in his tablet.

PAM

Look, your mum and dad are back.  
See what they've bought you?

Leila tries not to push past Pam as she grabs her son.

LEILA  
Clever boy!

She buries her head in his hair.

LEILA  
You've done it baby. Good boy.

THEO  
I'm not a baby!

He sits at the kitchen island with his tablet and looks up.

THEO  
No more hospital?

Theo punches his arm in the air. He spots the treats.

THEO  
Yessssssssss.

Pam high fives him and Rob pats him on the back, keen to get close to his boy. Leila sits next to Theo who is still immersed by his tablet and watches Pam put the kettle on, totally at home in their kitchen.

PAM  
Bed time in five minutes Theo. So you can get your head down again now can't you Leila? Sit your surgeon exams again perhaps?

Leila is taken aback. She was in the family zone so this throws her a little.

LEILA  
I suppose so...yes. I'd love to.

Pam makes three cups of tea and pours a glass of milk.

PAM  
You've had to put your life on hold for the last five years haven't you, duck? Now it's your time.

Leila does not know whether to feel touched or suspicious.

LEILA  
I guess so- but I need to get Theo-

Leila smells her hand, that cloth is rank! She grimaces and then gets up and puts the dish cloth in the bin.

PAM  
Don't you worry about Theo, he can stay with us whenever. He'll love it. Thick as thieves, us.

Leila tries not to get irritated.

ROB

Mum, that would be great. That's  
really kind. Leila - isn't it?

He nods at Leila, to elicit an acknowledgement of gratitude.

LEILA

Yes, great - thanks. I'd just like -

PAM

Theo, love - bed time now. Come on,  
I'll take you up.

Leila looks at Rob questioningly. Rob chooses to ignore it.

ROB

Grandma'll take you up. I'll be  
there for a story in five minutes  
once you've brushed your teeth.

Leila opens her mouth to say something to her son then closes it again. Between them they've got it covered - it's as if she's not there. She empties her tea down the sink and takes a half open bottle of wine from the fridge, pouring herself a glass. Rob frowns at her and Pam and Theo leave the room.

LEILA

Want one?

ROB

No ta. I'll finish my brew first.

LEILA

Do you think your mum could be a  
little less.... dominant?

Rob shakes his head at her in disbelief.

ROB

Not this again.

Leila walks out.

**INT. LEILA'S DOWNSTAIRS TOILET. NIGHT**

Leila sits on the toilet staring at the ceiling. She pulls her knickers up, washes her hands then straightens the towel, *Sleeping with the Enemy* style. Removing a Tampax packet from a high shelf she reveals a cigarette packet and lighter.

**INT. LEILA'S FRONT DOOR/ EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. NIGHT**

Leila creeps out of the front door, round the side of the house and crawls in to Theo's playhouse. She shuts the door.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Rob is at the sink washing up. He clocks Leila and double takes. He shakes his head then goes to say goodnight to Theo.

**EXT/ INT. THEO'S PLAYHOUSE. NIGHT**

Leila's hand comes out of the window, tapping her ash outside. She scrolls through her work emails on her phone.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Rob and Pam dry the dishes. She is distracted by the sight of Leila's hand sticking out of the playhouse.

PAM

Is that Leila? In the playhouse?  
What is she doing? I didn't know  
she smoked!

ROB

Neither did I. Well I did, then she  
gave up when she was pregnant with  
Theo. But – it's been a while now.

PAM

She's a funny one. A complete maze  
of contradictions.

**INT. THEO'S PLAYHOUSE. NIGHT**

Leila gives herself a talking to.

LEILA

Stop being such a bitch. She's  
trying to help. Grit your teeth and  
go back in there – and be nice!

She crawls out of the playhouse and steels herself.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Pam puts the tea towel down and picks up the 'RELIEVE' pamphlet, reading out loud to Rob.

PAM

Anyway. These genomes. You said  
they're something we all have?

ROB

Well - yes.

PAM

'Additional findings - adults can choose to find out whether they risk passing on serious genetic conditions to future children or grandchildren'. Would you honestly want to know that? Would you heck!

ROB

No mum -

Pam looks incredulous as she continues to read.

PAM

'What nonsense! 'May get results several years later, as new genomic changes are discovered'. So everything is going swimmingly, until a letter arrives saying 'You're going to die on 3 August 2022'. Do you really want to know that, son? The world's gone mad!

**INT. LEILA'S HALLWAY. NIGHT**

Leila is searching for chewing gum in her handbag. She overhears the conversation from the kitchen.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Pam is still reading the pamphlet, Rob listens.

PAM

'May/ may not be curable, treatable or prevented'. Good to know! Don't get pushed in to this duck.

ROB

Mum -

Too late, Leila enters and gives them both death stares.

LEILA

So you've decided have you? After all, this is clearly *your* decision to make, nothing to do with me.

PAM

Well, you *clearly* aren't going to take part in this nonsense are you, so what's there to discuss?

Rob is desperately trying to placate the situation

ROB

MUM!

Leila stares at Rob, if looks could kill...

LEILA

I'm going to say goodnight to Theo.

As Leila storms out of the room Pam cannot resist calling after her

PAM

I think he's probably asleep by now.

LEILA

Please do not be here when I get back.

She looks at Rob too.

LEILA

Neither of you.

Leila slams the door behind her.

**INT. THEO'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

Leila creeps into Theo's bedroom and strokes his hair.

LEILA

Night night sweetheart. I love you.

THEO

Night mummy. Love you.

Theo is nearly asleep. Leila kisses him again, inhaling her son - drinking him in. Then she slowly leaves the room.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Leila enters the empty kitchen and sighs. She pours herself a glass of wine and looks at the RELIEVE pamphlet, putting her head in her hands. Picking up her phone she texts Rob "SORRY". He texts back. "See you at 8am".

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Leila is in her running kit, eating a banana. There is a knock at the door.

LEILA

Come in

She hears the sound of the key turning. Rob walks in.

LEILA

I keep telling you, you don't have  
to knock.

ROB

It just doesn't seem right. What if  
you were -

They both look a bit awkward. Moving towards the door.

LEILA

We'll just do the usual route, I'll  
be back in an hour and a half.

She heads out of the door then turns around.

LEILA

Rob? Thank you.

She heads out once again then Rob hears the doorbell ring.

**INT. LEILA'S HALLWAY - FRONT DOOR. DAY**

Rob opens the door to Leila.

LEILA

Left my keys. I wanted to say - I'm  
sorry about last night.

She shifts awkwardly from foot to foot.

LEILA

I'll try to be less...controlling.

Rob's instinct is to hug her, which he does. Leila gratefully welcomes the hug but when it becomes slightly too long neither of them know how to end it. Leila sides steps, gives Rob a little nod then runs off.

**EXT. ROUNDHAY PARK. DAY**

Leila, JEN (a tall, slim red head in expensive sportswear, 36) and LOU (short, amiable, wearing jogging bottoms and baggy t shirt, 36) jog around the lake.

LOU, 36

That's bloody brilliant Lei, I'm so  
pleased for you all!

JEN

How did Theo react?

LEILA

Oh you know - pretty non-plussed.  
Head behind tablet. He was happiest  
about the treats he got!

She runs off and shouts behind her

LEILA  
SPRINT FINISH!

Lou and Jen run after Leila. They round a corner, find her sprawled on a grassy verge and collapse beside her.

LOU  
How's Rob?

Leila sits up and straightens her pony tail, brushing the grass off her top.

LEILA  
Um - up and down. We've got a pretty big decision ahead of us. Come on, let's get a coffee.

**EXT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY**

Jen and Leila are seated outside a coffee shop.

LEILA  
And obviously I want the additional findings but Rob is determined to bury his head in the sand and stick to the main ones because he's Rob.

Lou plonks three mugs down in front of them.

JEN  
But why rock the boat? You've got through what is hopefully the hardest thing you'll ever have to face. Now you can get things back on track. Your son's health. Your career. Maybe even your relationship... if you want?

Leila looks thoughtful.

JEN  
You have a nice house, a great job - not to mention the sheer goddesses that are your two best mates! Why can't you just live for the moment?

Leila sighs and hesitates before speaking

LEILA  
Because -

Lou takes her hand

LOU

Think about this from Rob's point of view. He wants a bit of peace and quiet for a while. If things are getting better between the two of you - the three of you - why not have some breathing space?

LEILA

...he wants another child. And I want Rob.

Leila looks surprised by what she has just put in to words. Lou and Jen look at each other.

LEILA

I want him back.

LOU

Oh love, I hear you, I really do.

Leila unloads her confused brain.

LEILA

A baby was the last thing on my mind until yesterday. And how would I have a baby and do my exams? And what if it had what Theo has? We can't do that again.

LOU

No love. You can't.

LEILA

But this test could tell us. We could find out whether a baby would have the same thing as Theo...if that's what Rob wants.

LOU

If it's what YOU want Lei. This must be right for all of you.

JEN

You're playing God, Leila. You're playing with fire.

LEILA

I didn't say that I'm going to have a baby for Rob. But I'd like to explore the option - and this seems like a sensible way of doing so. And knowing if it is a possibility.

LOU

You both need to make the same decision.

(MORE)

Why not get the main findings for now and see how things go with Rob? Then if after a while you *both* want to think about another child you ask for the additional findings.

Leila stands up stiffly, not quite sure what to think or say. She regains her composure and sets off at a gentle jog.

LEILA

Come on, I need to get back to my healthy, happy boy.

JEN

(to Lou)

I hope she doesn't do a Leila.

She rolls her eyes and they both run after her.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Theo is dipping soldiers into a boiled egg. Rob is pouring coffee into a travel mug, his bike helmet and rucksack next to him. Leila walks in and kisses Theo. She looks at Rob hesitantly then plants a kiss on his cheek too. He smiles.

ROB

Good timing! Your egg's done.

He serves it up to Leila.

ROB

Would you like me to slice your soldiers for you madam?

Leila laughs and shakes her head.

ROB

Gotta run. Well bike.

LEILA

Where are you rushing off to?

ROB

I've got a year eleven revision session. What are you up to?

He gives Theo a hug and smiles at Leila before running out.

LEILA

Not sure yet.

Leila turns to Theo who shrugs.

LEILA

Now then my best boy, what do you fancy doing today?

ROB (O.S)  
Well have an ace time, whatever!

**EXT. SCARBOROUGH SEAFRONT. DAY**

Theo and Leila sit on a bench eating fish and chips looking out to sea. An enormous dolphin soft toy and a bucket and spade are next to them.

LEILA  
How is it?

THEO  
The best!

LEILA  
Hooray! How are you feeling? Okay?

THEO  
Good. Can I have an icecream after?

LEILA  
Sure thing! Ninety-nine with sauce and sprinkles?

THEO  
YEAH!

They watch a FAMILY walk along the seafront. MUM holding the YOUNG BOY'S hand, DAD pushing a pram.

THEO  
Mum?

LEILA  
Yes sweetie?

THEO  
I'd really like a little brother.  
Or sister even. Eddie Selway has  
just had a little baby brother.  
He's pretty cool.

LEILA  
And you'd like one too?  
(under her breath)  
It's a conspiracy!

THEO  
Yes please.

LEILA  
I'll see what I can do. Right we'd better finish off that sandcastle.

**EXT. ICECREAM VAN. DAY**

The ICECREAM MAN hands Leila and Theo a 99 cone each and they head back to their picnic blanket. Theo gobbles his down then busies himself filling the moat with water. Leila lies on the blanket and reads, one eye on Theo.

**INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE. DAY**

Theo sleeps on Leila's shoulder as she checks her work emails on her phone, attempting to balance the huge dolphin across their laps. She looks out the window thoughtfully then texts Rob "Got plans tonight? Would you like to come for tea? X"

**EXT. LEILA'S GARDEN. NIGHT**

Leila is mowing the lawn in the twilight. Rob pushes his bike through the garden. Leila shouts above the noisy mower.

LEILA

Theo's probably still awake if you want to say goodnight to him.

Rob nods and goes inside. Leila continues to mow in her very precise manner. Rob returns and feeling like he ought to help, attempts to strim very badly. After observing him critically for a few moments Leila stops the mower.

LEILA

Why don't you go and get a beer?

As soon as Rob has gone Leila goes back over his handiwork.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN/ EXT. LEILA'S GARDEN. NIGHT**

Rob spots the dinner ingredients carefully laid out and chops an onion whilst drinking his beer. He watches Leila out of the window perfecting the lawn. She enters, washing her hands meticulously. Leila takes a bottle of wine from the rack and pours two glasses before heading out of the room with hers.

LEILA (O.S.)

Don't forget the parsley!

Rob inhales deeply. His phone rings. He balances it between his shoulder and ear whilst he adds various ingredients to the pan. We can hear a loud voice on the other end of the line but the words are indistinguishable, he whispers.

ROB

Hi mum.... Yep, I'm at home -  
Leila's....I'm not whispering...  
she's upstairs. They've been to  
Scarborough....yes I think so...  
he's asleep ... just some dinner.

He hears the sound of Leila coming down the stairs.

ROB

Look mum, I've got to go. Love you,  
bye... yes tomorrow, fine.

Rob hangs up as Leila enters, she has changed her top and put on some make-up. She stirs the dinner and adds a sprinkle of oregano, Rob stands to the side then goes to set the table. Leila moves the huge dolphin out of the way and sits down. She begins to fill in the hospital paperwork.

LEILA

How was your day?

ROB

Yeah - you know. A revision session. In a hot classroom on a Sunday. Not the best.

Leila looks sympathetic.

ROB

Who's this fella?

Rob gestures towards the dolphin.

LEILA

Oh that's Harry Kane from Scarborough. I was trying to get Theo to go for something alliterative you know, Dora, Dolly, Dean - but no, Harry Kane.

ROB

Amazing, I never won anything at those places as a -

He stops as he sees Leila absent-mindedly straightening the table settings and grits his teeth.

ROB

(under his breath)

Want to get your set square out whilst you're at it?

Leila looks up, she hadn't noticed what she was doing. She continues to fill in the form and Rob goes back to cooking.

LEILA

Sorry?

ROB

Nothing... How was Scarborough?

Leila looks up from the form and smiles at Rob, engaging with him properly for the first time since he arrived.

LEILA

Really lovely. Theo was so happy.  
We had fish and chips and ice  
cream. Built a sandcastle. He said -  
he said he wants a little brother.

She scrutinizes Rob's face. He sets Leila's plate down in front of her, sits down with his own and nods. Leila looks surprised. There is an awkward silence and they begin to eat.

ROB

I'd like that too, Lei - if we can work things out.

He puts his knife and fork down.

ROB

In fact I'd really like it. You know I've always wanted a big family. Two parents one child is overkill - just look at mum.

He laughs. Leila smiles but Rob has clearly touched a nerve.

LEILA

But what if we were to have another child with the same thing as Theo?

ROB

Don't you think that's jumping the gun a bit? There's lots to talk about first. We need to remember what life was like before Theo got ill. Remember 'us', have some fun.

Leila gets up and opens a cupboard.

LEILA

Surely it's a reason to go with the additional findings though? To see whether it actually would be a risk or if we're safe to go ahead?

She returns to the table with the pepper and salt and seasons her food. Rob looks put out.

ROB

What if we find out that one of us has a fatal illness? Do we just sit back and count down to the end? I'd honestly rather not know. Would you really want to find that out?

LEILA

YES! That's exactly my point - I want to know so we can plan our lives - our lives together - and make the most of every millisecond. We've already wasted the last five years. Not a minute more!

Rob goes quiet. He looks exhausted, pale, beaten. He gets up, grabs his plate and moves to the sink.

ROB

Lei, you know I'm not one for ultimatums. But I'm telling you - I - cannot - cope - with - this. It would be the last straw for me, if you do this then that's it.

Leila looks taken aback by the force of Rob's outburst.

LEILA

Okay, okay. I'm sorry. I get it.

She moves gently over to him, she wants to hug him but is unsure whether this is acceptable. He embraces her. Silence.

ROB

It's alright. I really want to try and make this work Lei. But you're going to have to let go a bit.

Rob untangles himself and clears the table. Still processing the conversation, Leila puts on her apron and marigolds and begins to stack the dishwasher in a regimented manner.

ROB

Look, why don't I ask mum to babysit tomorrow night and we can go out - we could go to Alonso's, we've not been there in years.

Leila smiles

LEILA

That would be nice. But I really think we need some space from your mother, Rob. Let's get a babysitter and have some you and me time that is not top and tailed by Pam.

Rob looks a bit miffed.

LEILA

Don't get me wrong, I'm so grateful for everything she does for Theo - but to quote Princess Di '*there are three of us in this relationship*'.

Rob smiles. And then Leila does too. A moment of relief.

LEILA

Seriously though, she needs to butt out. She cannot be our Camilla.

Leila looks at Rob in mock horror.

LEILA

And that would also be weird.

Rob laughs, a little freaked out. He takes Leila's hand. She laughs as she is wearing marigolds.

ROB

I'll talk to her....again. But you know what she's been like since dad died. She throws herself in to things-

LEILA

I know - but she needs to find another interest. And allow us some space. To give us a chance.

ROB

Yes. Okay.

Rob takes Leila in his arms and kisses her. He expects her to protest but she responds passionately, still in rubber gloves and apron. They become intimate, it feels very natural. They have missed this closeness and clearly need each other.

**INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

Rob is asleep. Leila awakes to the sound of Theo crying.

**INT. THEO'S ROOM. NIGHT**

Leila sits on the side of Theo's bed and soothes him until he falls back to sleep. She strokes his face and kisses his forehead gently then leaves the room. Her face is thoughtful.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Leila switches the light on and sits down. She removes the form from the envelope, ticks a box then replaces it. Sealing it, she places her hands on top, not quite believing what she has done. Switching the light off she heads back to bed.

**INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

Leila wakes to see Rob tiptoeing around the room.

LEILA

Are you trying to sneak out like a  
dirty stop out?

They both laugh.

ROB

I thought it would be better if  
Theo didn't know I stayed.

LEILA

Why?

ROB

I just thought -

LEILA

But if we both want to give things  
another go then what's the worry?

She clammers out of bed wrapped in the duvet and pulls him underneath it. They both giggle and shriek. Theo enters to see a wriggling duvet on the floor.

THEO

Mum? What are you doing?

Rob whispers, muffled, from under the duvet.

ROB

Uh-oh. Sprung!

LEILA

Nothing, darling. Go and get  
dressed and I'll be right with you.

THEO

Daddy, is that you?

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Rob is cooking bacon. Leila is in her dressing gown making sandwiches looking happy, relaxed and a little disheveled. The envelope lies on the kitchen island. Theo enters wearing his school uniform, his jumper back to front.

THEO

Bacon, yippee!

Rob and Leila look at each other, relieved. Rob hands out the sandwiches, wrapping his in foil.

ROB

Right, I'm off - got a staff  
meeting before registration.

He kisses them both, picking up his rucksack and bike helmet.

THEO

I knew you'd be back.

Theo grins. Rob reaches out and takes the envelope.

ROB

Oh good, you've done it. I'll post  
it on my way.

Leila looks panicked, she'd temporarily forgotten her  
midnight activities.

LEILA

Don't worry, I can -

ROB

It's no bother, really.

He gives Theo a big hug.

ROB

Good luck today mate. Smash it!

He kisses Leila again then leaves the room. She looks at once  
tortured and on top of the world.

**INT. LEILA'S HALLWAY. DAY**

Smartly dressed and immaculately made up, Leila stands at the  
door; work case, school bag and water bottle in hand.

LEILA

THEO! We can't be late on your  
first day back! How many times?

Theo comes running. He shouts like a protesting teenager.

THEO

Okaaaaaaaaaay

**EXT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

Leila opens Theo's door for him and shepherds him in to car.

**EXT. THEO'S SCHOOL. DAY**

Leila holds Theo's hand tightly and gives him a huge hug as  
she hands him to the teaching assistant, MRS FAY (late 40's,  
brilliant with children but terrible with adults)

LEILA

Have a good day darling.

She smiles anxiously at Mrs Fay who nods at her with little reassurance.

**INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

Leila drives fast and efficiently. She calls Rob.

LEILA

Hi - it's me. I just wanted to say... yes he went in no problem. He didn't seem bothered at all! He's such a trooper isn't he?

(pause)

Yes okay. So I just wanted to see if you had chance to post that letter?...Oh great, you did.

She pulls in to her work car park.

LEILA

Rob, I need to - oh okay, bye.

The phone is cut off abruptly

LEILA

I need to tell you that your wife is a complete twat but she loves you. Please remember that.

Frustrated, she hurls her phone to the floor of the car.

**EXT. ROUNDHAY PARK. NIGHT**

Leila sees LOU and JEN in the distance and sprints to catch up with them.

LEILA

Sorry, sorry - we were running an hour behind today.

LOU

You need to be stricter with them, you can't let work rule your life.

LEILA

Yes - but if anyone knows what it's like Lou, it's you. And right now I need to prove myself.

LOU

Humph.

JEN

The only way to have it all is to be a hard-assed bitch. Like me.

Leila laughs.

LOU

How's Theo got on with his first  
full week back at school?

LEILA

It's like he'd never been off!

JEN

That's ace. Superstar Theo.

LOU

And have you and Rob had chance to  
*properly* discuss the tests?

JEN

Like grown ups?

Leila rolls her eyes. Then hesitates.

LEILA

Um, kind of.

Leila steps up the pace somewhat, intentionally. Lou  
struggles to keep up. Jen races after her.

JEN

Don't try that trick missy. Under  
15's cross-country champion 1997,  
remember?

Leila laughs.

LOU

Have you agreed to the tests?

LEILA

Yes

LOU

The main findings?

LEILA

No

LOU

What? You haven't, have you Leila?

Jen grabs Leila's arm and slows her to a halt.

JEN

Lei, you know how serious this is.

She guides Leila to a nearby bench and she and Lou sit on  
either side of her like concerned bouncers.

LEILA

I know, I know..... I don't know.  
There's just been so much  
uncertainty - and this is something  
we can be certain about.

LOU

Yes but you cannot make that  
decision for him Leila. That's not  
right. Nor moral.

LEILA

Is it right or moral that he can  
make the decision for me? One of us  
has to lose out here. It's fifty  
percent my decision after all.

JEN

Think what's at stake! You're just  
getting back on your feet. With a  
lot to lose. It's a huge gamble.

LEILA

I know I shouldn't have. I tried to  
tell him - then I thought - maybe I  
don't need to? There's no reason  
for him to find out... is there?

Jen gets up and stretches her legs, She waits for a family  
who have been feeding the ducks to pass.

JEN

For fuck's sake, Leila.

Jen looks at Leila angrily before walking off. Lou follows.

Leila stares stubbornly ahead at the ducks swimming around in  
the lake, mundanely bickering about bread.

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

Leila hands a prescription to MRS WRIGHT and opens the door.

LEILA

Let's see how that goes then Mrs  
Wright. All the best.

Shutting the door, Leila picks up her phone and texts Lou and  
Jen: "You're right. I'm telling him. Love you XX"

She picks up her mobile and dials Rob's number.

LEILA

Hey, have you got an hour later?  
Theo's with Pam and I need to talk  
to you...Brill, park cafe at 4.30?

As she hangs up she notices a missed call from an unknown number before she is distracted by the buzzer.

**INT. CAFE IN THE PARK. DAY**

Leila spots Rob in the far corner of the cafe, a cup of tea and a slice of carrot cake waiting for her. She smiles.

ROB

What's up?

LEILA

This is nice. Thank you.

(stalling)

How was your day?

Rob looks at her quizzically.

ROB

(formally)

Fine thanks Leila, how was yours?

Leila takes the cue and uses it to stall further.

LEILA

Theo was hilarious this morning. He was going through the alphabet - you know phonetically a is for apple and so on - and guess what he said when he got to l? L is for lady bits. How embarrassing!

Rob laughs.

LEILA

What do you do? If you tell him not to say it he'll say it more, but if we don't, he'll say it at school.

ROB

Could be worse.

LEILA

True.

ROB

So -

LEILA

This morning was relentless, all the usual suspects, you know.

Rob nods, utterly confused. What is he here for?

LEILA

Then I grabbed a sandwich at my desk and ate it whilst catching up on the morning's notes.

ROB

And what did you drink?

LEILA

Drink? I had a coffee.

She realises that Rob is being facetious and checks herself.

ROB

Lei, as nice as this is -

He indicates their surroundings

ROB

We don't do this. Why are we here?  
You said it was important.

Leila steals herself. She moves closer to the table and grabs Rob's hand. This is her chance and she must do it now.

THEO (O.S.)

MUMMY! DADDY!

Theo comes rushes to bear hugs his parents. Pam follows.

PAM

What are you two doing? Oh -

She senses that something is up.

PAM

Theo love, do you want to come and choose your icecream?

Leila seizes the opportunity.

LEILA

No Pam, don't you worry. I'll get it. Come on Theo.

Leila grabs Theo's hand. Rob looks utterly bemused.

ROB

Leila?

LEILA

It's alright Rob, we can talk about it later.

She leads Theo over to the counter. Pam looks at Rob and raises her eyebrows.

**EXT. PARK CAR PARK. DAY.**

Leila waves to Pam and Theo as they drive off. Rob cycles after them, pulling faces at Theo. Leila opens her car door and sits down heavily, head on the steering wheel.

LEILA

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

**EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. DAY**

Theo kicks the tyres of the car, school bag in hand.

THEO

Muuuuuuuummmmmmm! Come on, we're going to be late.

Leila comes running out of the house and slams the door. She unlocks the car and they both jump in. She notices another missed call but has no time to think further on it.

LEILA

Sorry, sorry, sorry

**INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

Leila is focussing intently on the road ahead, willing the cars to get out of her way. Her son will not be late in his second week back at school. Theo tries to get her attention.

THEO

Mum, I need a dolphin costume.

LEILA

What's that?

THEO

A dolphin costume. I'm playing the dolphin in Aesop's Fables.

LEILA

I don't remember a dolphin in Aesop's Fables.

THEO

There is one, just ask Mrs Fay.

Leila smiles as she pulls up outside the school.

LEILA

It's okay sweetie, I believe you!

She hurries Theo out of the car.

**EXT. THEO'S SCHOOL. DAY**

Leila kisses Theo, passing him his bag, lunch and drink bottle. Mrs Fay hands her a letter.

MRS FAY

Don't forget it's the reception play next Wednesday and Theo will need his dolphin costume.

THEO

I told you.

Leila laughs and gently nudges him through the door.

LEILA

Wednesday?

MRS FAY

Yes, you will have received a letter, text and an email.

LEILA

Oh. Shit.

She puts her hand over her mouth and surveys the small children surrounding her. Mrs Fay gives her a death stare.

LEILA

Sorry.

Layla runs, if she had a tail it would be between her legs.

**INT. LEILA'S CAR. DAY**

Leila drives furiously, her phone rings on hands free.

LEILA

Hi Alison..... Yes I know, nine fifteen. I'll be there.

She looks at the clock. 9.11.

LEILA

Two minutes.

She puts her foot down even more.

LEILA

Newcastle? Next Wednesday? Oh shit. Is there anything we can do?...Just pulling up now. Okay, bye.

Leila screeches into a parking space and runs in to work.

**INT. LEILA'S WORK RECEPTION. DAY**

Leila leans over the desk pleading with ALISON the department receptionist (60's, Scottish, unimposing in stature but ferocious in attitude - born to be a gatekeeper)

LEILA

It's Theo's first school play Ali,  
I can't miss it. Can I just go to  
the next one instead?

ALISON

You know the departmental policy  
Leila. Sue's been so understanding  
over the last few years -  
understandably - but I really don't  
think you can get out if it again.

Leila nods.

LEILA

Understandably understanding, sure.  
Look what if I just go for the  
morning?

ALISON

As far as I'm aware you'll be there  
for the whole day.

She winks and nods at a patient nearby.

ALISON

You're getting a death stare from  
Mr Corbett, any longer and I  
actually think he will bore right  
through you in to me then who'll be  
left to keep you from the lions?

Leila laughs, picks up her clipboard from the desk, puts on a smile and turns to survey her patients.

LEILA

Mr Corbett? Please follow me.

**INT. GYM/INT. ROB'S WORK. DAY**

Leila is on the cross trainer in the gym whilst on the phone to Rob who is packing up his things in his classroom.

LEILA

I thought you were doing bed time  
tonight Rob, why's Pam there?

ROB

I got caught late at work.  
Emergency meeting about Paul Pratt.  
You know, psycho cat killer.

LEILA

Yes I know the one. But it's only  
Theo's second week back at school  
and your mum is already putting him  
to bed. If I'd known I'd have  
skipped the gym. I thought we were  
trying to establish a normality.

ROB

Leila. It was an emergency.

Leila clocks the impatient tone of his voice and takes a  
mental step backwards.

LEILA

Sure. Okay. Well I hope  
everything's alright.

Rob waits for the sarcastic remark. None follows.

ROB

I'm on my way. I'll be home in  
twenty minutes.

LEILA

Okay, I'll be back in a couple of  
hours. I'm going for a drink with  
Lou and Jen... thank you Rob.

ROB

You're welcome. I'll leave some tea  
as you'll be either hungry,  
hammered or both, knowing you.

Leila laughs.

ROB

Have a good night, see you later.

LEILA

Rob - you're welcome to stay over -  
if you want - that is.

She hangs up, smiling shyly to herself.

**EXT. BAR. NIGHT.**

Leila and Jen are sat at an outside table with a bottle of  
wine, three glasses and three cocktails. Leila rushes up, hot  
and sweaty from the gym.

JEN

Oh jeez you're that active wear  
mum. Do we have to sit with you?

LOU

Why didn't you get changed?

LEILA

I left my clothes at work by  
mistake. God, I'm such a state...  
Is this for me?

She gestures towards a cocktail and takes a swig.

LEILA

Thank you.

JEN

Happy Hour.

Lou knows that it is not like Leila to be so disorganised and flustered so she tries to help calm her down.

LOU

You're fine. Here take my make-up  
and go to the toilet. Have a bit of  
a wash, bob's your uncle.

Leila looks at the lip gloss Lou is proffering.

LEILA

Jen, lend us your make-up will you?

Lou pretends to be insulted and they all laugh as Jen passes Leila her huge handbag.

JEN

Just take the whole thing.

Leila gratefully departs with the huge bag after downing the rest of her cocktail.

LOU

So, guess what? A tattoo shop has  
opened on my street! Shall we?

Jen laughs.

JEN

What. You want us to get matching  
tattoos?!

LOU

Just small ones, it'd be fun.

JEN

Midlife crisis anyone?

LOU

Mind you, the guy specialises in  
Clint Eastwood apparently!

She scrolls through her phone to find a photo and shows Jen.

JEN

Wow, that's awesome. Who else can he do? Not sure I want Clint, how about someone more... current? Tom Hardy or Ryan Gosling?

LOU

Ooooh yes. But are they lifers? You will have their mugs on your arm - or wherever...

She gestures downwards and giggles

LOU

...for life, so you need to choose a classic face who will age with you and never fall out of favour.

JEN

True.

Leila returns, a bit calmer, carrying two bottles of wine.

LEILA

Happy Hour, woohooo!

She tops up their glasses and takes a swig.

JEN

Leila, here's one for you. Tattoo - arm - famous man - GO!

LEILA

Patrick Stewart of course.

JEN

Really?

LOU

I forgot you were a Trekkie!

Jen turns to Leila abruptly.

JEN

Have you told him?

LEILA

Who, Patrick Stewart?

JEN

No, your husband. About the form.

Lou sighs and shoots Jen a look - she doesn't have to be quite so brutal. Jen shrugs it off. Leila refills her glass.

LEILA

No.

Jen looks at her questioningly.

LEILA

I tried -

JEN

It's been two weeks Leila.

LEILA

I know, I know. You're right. I will do it, I promise.

She downs her glass then refills them all.

LEILA

Can we talk about something fun now?

**EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. NIGHT**

Leila falls out of a taxi outside her house. She gets up and brushes herself off. Wobbling, she manages to shut the door and let herself in. Spotting a pile of unopened post on the side she leafs through it. One official looking letter is addressed to them both. Leila knows exactly what this is. She walks in to the kitchen to sit down and open it but instead she about turns to the bin and forces the envelope down inside angrily. She then wobbles back out of the door.

**INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. DAY**

Leila wakes up to find the room spinning and a cup of cold tea and toast by her bed. Theo is jumping on her.

THEO

Mummy!

LEILA

OUCH!

THEO

Come on Mummy, wake-up!

Leila realises that Theo is fully dressed in his school uniform and looks at her phone.

LEILA

SHIT! It's eight thirty!

Leila jumps out of bed and looks in the mirror. She has panda eyes and is still in her sports bra, knickers and socks. Hearing a loud noise she looks out the window. It's the BIN MEN. A horrible thought crosses her mind as she watches one of them approach her drive. She rushes from the room.

THEO  
Mummy! Where are you going?

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Leila runs to the kitchen bin. It's empty.

**EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. DAY**

Leila is running along her road after the bin men dressed only in sports bra, knickers and trainer socks. She winces, her head pounding from the excesses of the night before.

LEILA  
STOP! PLEASE! STOP!

A BIN MAN is just about to load her wheelie bin on to the truck. He turns to look at her.

LEILA  
Number seven - I need it!

She catches up with the bin man and lorry.

LEILA  
Sorry. Please may I have my bin?

The man looks totally confused but pushes the wheelie bin towards Leila then hits the back of the lorry. It moves up the road as Leila scrabbles in her bin. She pulls out a bin bag, sticks her hand in and feels around, eventually pulling out the envelope covered in filth. There is a moment as she stares at it. Leila's revelry is soon interrupted.

THEO  
MUM! What are you doing? We're going to be late!

Leila stands up and shakes herself, get a grip Leila. Theo is stood outside the front door, bewildered. She puts the bin bag back in the bin and returns it hastily to the drive. She runs in to the house, clinging to the envelope.

**INT/EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. DAY**

Theo stands outside; bag, lunchbox and water bottle in hand. Leila runs out of the house, clutching the envelope and looking exactly the same as before except for a dress, bag and a pair of trainers. They jump in the car and race off.

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

Leila sits, staring directly ahead, breathing deeply, hands on the desk. The envelope is in front of her unopened.

She grabs it and tears it open. Shaking, she removes the letter, words jump out: 'CRITICAL', 'URGENT CONTACT', 'ROBERT MELLOR'.

LEILA

Rob?

Leila is in shock. The buzzer goes. We hear Alison's voice.

ALISON (O.S.)

Doctor Mellor, Mrs Howard is here.

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

Leila shuts the door behind her last patient and begins to search the internet, scrolling through serious medical terms. Her mobile rings, it's Rob. She takes a deep breath.

LEILA

Hey... yep a bit delicate. Thanks for the tea this morning, I needed it.....I honestly don't know what happened.... Yes Theo was fine...

She continues to scroll through the journals, staring stonily at the terrifying words in front of her. Her voice falters.

LEILA

How are you?...Oh that's - good.  
Are you coming over tonight?...Yes  
I'd like that.

The intercom crackles

ALISON (O.S.)

Ms Partington has arrived.

Leila stands up and moves towards the door.

LEILA

Look Rob, I've got a patient. But see you tonight, yes?

Leila hangs up and leans with her head against the door. She takes a deep breath before opening it.

**INT. LEILA'S HOUSE - LANDING/ HALLWAY. NIGHT**

Leila closes Theo's door quietly and tiptoes down the stairs. She takes her phone out of her coat and sees a text from Rob. "Sorry Lei, emergency - Paul Pratt/ Cat. Can't make it X". Leila sits on the bottom step, relieved. She begins to laugh. Her laughter soon turns into tears of despair.

**INT. TRAIN STATION. DAY**

Leila races through the station and checks the departures board. She runs along the platform and spots Lou hammering on the train window. Jumping onboard, she collapses next to Lou.

LOU

You made it! But why have you got  
Theo's water bottle?

Leila looks down at her hand.

LEILA

No idea! Well other than the fact  
that I actually don't know my arse  
from my elbow right now.

Lou looks at her sympathetically.

LEILA

Lou, it's Rob.

LOU

What do you mean "it's Rob"... Oh.  
Rob? No.

Leila nods. Her eyes fill with tears. Now she has actually given words to the situation it all begins to come out.

LEILA

Lou, what have I done?

She cries, rummages in her bag and hands Lou the letter. Lou hugs Leila whilst reading the letter.

LOU

Oh shit. Leila honey, we have to do  
something about this. Now.

**INT. CONFERENCE CENTRE. DAY**

Leila and Lou file in to the lecture.

LEILA

Lou, will you tell him? Tell Rob?  
You're his GP after all.

Lou looks panic stricken and keeps walking.

**INT. LECTURE THEATRE. DAY**

Leila and Lou are sat amidst a sea of people.

LEILA

It could work perfectly. You call him in for a 'standard' blood test, get the results, then - tell him!

Lou looks at her questioningly - this is unbelievable.

LOU

Are you serious? You want me to break the news to your husband that he has a life threatening condition because you are too scared to?

Leila looks deflated.

LOU

Lei, can you put someone else first for once? It just might save Rob's life. What's more important? His life is literally in your hands.

Leila begins to cry again. Lou sighs and hugs her.

LEILA

Lou, if I tell him then - then it will be over. Without a doubt.

LOU

Leila, this is his life.

She sees just how helpless and vulnerable Leila is right now.

LOU

Let me think. I'm sure we can come up with something.

Leila looks at Lou gratefully.

LEILA

I'm going to head back in a bit for Theo's play. As far as you're concerned I was here all day.

Leila puts a finger to her lips and Lou elaborately mimics her. They are interrupted by an announcement.

SPEAKER

Welcome ladies and gentlemen to the fifth annual....

The voice drones on in the background and Lou pulls a face.

#### EXT. CONFERENCE CENTRE. DAY

Leila tries to hail a taxi in the rain, checking her watch anxiously. Finally one stops and she dives in. They race off.

**INT. TRAIN. DAY**

Leila checks her emails on the train. She receives a text from Lou: 'We'll find a way, I promise XXX'. Her eyes fill with tears as she stares blankly out of the window, the rain lashing down outside. She looks lost.

**EXT. THEO'S SCHOOL. DAY**

Leila runs through the door, still clutching Theo's bottle.

**INT. THEO'S SCHOOL HALL. DAY**

Leila sneaks in to the back of the school hall. The stage is filled with child ANTS and one in a splendid GRASSHOPPER costume. As her eyes settle, she detects Rob in the darkness and slides in to the seat next to him. Pam is on his other side. Rob takes her hand. This is nice. For maybe one moment Leila will be able to forget... Rob whispers.

ROB

You've missed 'The Dog in the Manger'. Now we're on to 'The Ant and the Grasshopper'.

Leila smiles.

ROB

I've never known a school play like it!

Suddenly the GRASSHOPPER dramatically keels over and the ants run around happily with an assortment of plastic food.

GRASSHOPPER

"It is best to prepare for days of necessity".

The audience clap, parents on their feet. The grasshopper and ants bow enthusiastically. Pam whispers loudly.

PAM

Prepare for days of necessity?  
They're only five! What on earth  
are they teaching them?!

Leila laughs and spots a DOLPHIN (Theo) and a MONKEY shuffle shyly on stage. They are followed by a SAILOR GIRL.

LEILA

Shhhhhh, it's Theo!

Pam claps loudly and Rob looks nervous.

SAILOR GIRL  
A sailor took her monkey on a  
voyage.

The monkey follows the Sailor Girl around the stage.

SAILOR GIRL  
There was a big storm and their  
ship was wrecked. Everybody had to  
swim for their lives.

The Sailor Girl swims dramatically to one side of the stage  
as the monkey thrashes around in the sea. Meanwhile, Theo is  
stood stock still at the edge of the stage looking on.

SAILOR GIRL  
A dolphin saw the monkey and  
thought it was a man so went to  
help him.

Leila, Rob and Pam are all anxiously willing Theo on.

SAILOR GIRL  
(whispering loudly)  
Go on dolphin!

The monkey grabs Theo's hand.

MONKEY BOY  
Now!

Theo hesitantly swims up to the Monkey. The Monkey tries to  
climb on his back and they collapse on the floor. The  
audience laughs. They stand up and glare at each other. The  
Monkey Boy and Sailor Girl gesture at Theo to speak.

MONKEY BOY  
I am a Citizen of Athens

Theo nods. The Sailor Girl gesticulates further at Theo.

SAILOR GIRL  
His family are rich and noble

Theo opens his mouth to speak but nothing comes out. She  
nudges him and whispers loudly.

SAILOR GIRL  
Ask if his family are rich and  
noble.

THEO  
(Robotically)  
Are your family rich and noble?

MONKEY BOY  
Yes, my family is one of the  
noblest in the city.

There is silence. The Monkey Boy hisses at Theo.

MONKEY BOY

Piraeus

THEO

Then you must know Piraeus?

PAM

Piraeus? What *is* this?!

ROB

Shhhh mum, you're as bad as the sailor!

The Sailor Girl nudges Theo and whispers in his ear.

MONKEY BOY

Piraeus is my best friend. I play with him every day.

The Monkey Boy climbs on to Theo's back again and he carries him around the stage before dramatically dropping him on the floor and swimming off.

SAILOR GIRL

The dolphin saw that he was carrying a monkey and dropped him in to the sea. He went to search for a human being to save.

The Monkey Boy looks up from the floor where he is lying.

MONKEY BOY

He died

SAILOR GIRL

Yes he drowned. Because he did not tell the truth.

Leila's face falls. Pam lets out a whoop and Rob claps loudly. The Monkey Boy flops back down on to the floor. Theo bobs around the stage in his dolphin costume before all three of them bow, the Sailor Girl remonstrating with Theo.

#### INT. RESTAURANT. DAY

Theo, Pam, Leila and Rob eat burgers. Theo is buzzing. They look like a happy family unit, the first time in ages.

THEO

And then I said "Then you must know Piraeus"

Leila and Theo nod.

PAM

Yes we heard you, love. You were brilliant. You all were.

THEO

Who is Piraeus?

PAM

Why have they got five year olds acting out Aesop's Fables? This new head teacher is from the dark ages! Wouldn't have happened in my day.

ROB

Of course not mum! We just did musicals when you were head. Piraeus is a place and not a person Theo. That's how the dolphin knew the monkey was a liar.

PAM

See, the geography of Greece age five? Word play? It's nuts!

Leila smiles and hugs Theo. She studies Rob, he looks well. Maybe it's just a horrible mistake. Or a dream - she wishes.

**EXT/ INT. LEILA'S CAR - OUTSIDE SCHOOL GATES. DAY**

Leila drives off and phones Pam on her hands free.

LEILA

Pam? Hi it's me. Can I -

Leila checks herself.

LEILA

How are you? Did you enjoy last night?

She waits for Pam to respond and tries to remain patient.

LEILA

Oh good. It was lovely wasn't it?... the best dolphin ever! Look, I wondered...is there any way you could have Theo tonight? That's fab, thanks Pam. I'll Facetime him - you both later. Thank you.

Leila hangs up and dials Rob's number. There is no answer.

**INT. LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

MS FINCH lies on the examining table, Leila looks at her leg.

LEILA

What's your occupation Ms Finch?

MS FINCH

I'm a counsellor

LEILA

If I advise you to rest and elevate  
the leg can you still do your job?  
Not that I'm advocating such a  
thing but I am realistic. If you  
can take a week off please do!

MS FINCH

I wish! Mind you work is a holiday  
compared to home.

LEILA

Yes that's the tricky bit.

She helps Ms Finch to get up and passes her her crutches.

LEILA

Counsellor you say?

Ms Finch hobbles towards the door, nodding.

MS FINCH

That's right.

Leila runs to help her.

LEILA

Can I ask you a question?

Ms Finch looks a little surprised but nods.

LEILA

If you have to break some news to  
someone, some *really bad news*, how  
would you do it?

#### **LEILA'S CONSULTING ROOM. DAY**

Leila writes a prescription and hands it to MR OLIVER.

LEILA

There you go Mr Oliver. Take one  
three times a day for seven days.

Mr Oliver nods and stands up to go.

LEILA

Do you mind if I ask you a  
question? (pause) If you have done  
something that you know will upset  
Mrs Oliver how would you tell her?

MR OLIVER

Um?

LEILA

Say - bumped her new car.

MR OLIVER

She doesn't drive.

LEILA

Fed the dog chocolate.

MR OLIVER

We don't have a dog.

LEILA

Okay - well you lied to her -  
something big. How -

MR OLIVER

I never lie.

LEILA

Okay, thanks then.

Leila shows Mr Oliver out and shuts the door behind him.

**EXT. LEILA'S WORK HOSPITAL. DAY**

Leila smokes anxiously, trying to conceal herself from patients. She phones Rob but gets his answerphone. An orderly, MAX joins her.

MAX

You okay Leila?

LEILA

Hey Max. I'm just trying to get  
through to Rob, he's not answering.

MAX

Probably with his other woman.

LEILA

I wish!

Max looks at her strangely, she realises how odd this sounds.

LEILA

I mean, it would be better than him  
being ill or something wouldn't it?

Max nods, still looking surprised.

MAX

Well yes, for sure.

Leila looks around her then moves closer to Max.

LEILA

Max, I appreciate this is a bit of a weird question but if you had something serious - really serious - that you needed to tell Rana - how would you do it? And where?

MAX

What's up Leila? Are you okay?

Leila shrugs and takes another drag on her cigarette. Max appreciates that some questions just need to be answered.

MAX

I would get a bottle of wine and a takeaway and tell her I loved her. And then spill.

Leila nods thoughtfully. She stubs out her cigarette.

LEILA

Yep, thought so. Thanks Max.

She hugs him then heads back inside.

**INT. OFF-LICENCE/ EXT. ROB'S WORK. NIGHT**

Leila chooses a bottle of wine whilst ordering a takeaway.

LEILA

Yes mixed starter for two, sweet and sour prawns, duck pancakes, special fried rice and prawn crackers. Seven thirty? Thanks.

She hangs up. The phone rings.

LEILA

Rob? Thank god. I was worried...

Rob is trying to put his helmet on whilst on the phone to Leila and balancing his bike against his leg.

ROB

Why?

LEILA

Well I called you earlier... twice.

ROB

Sorry Lei, it's been meeting after meeting today. You okay?

LEILA

Theo's at your mum's so you don't have to get him. And we're having a takeaway. Can you come over?

ROB

Oh - okay - what's the occasion?

LEILA

I just - thought it would be nice.

ROB

Alright. See you soon.

LEILA

Love you.

She hangs up leaving Rob staring at his phone in surprise.

**EXT. LEILA'S CAR/ EXT. LEILA'S HOUSE. NIGHT**

Leila shuts her car door and lets herself in to the house.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Leila dumps her bags and gives the room a quick tidy. She puts on some music and lays the table. She checks her watch.

**INT. LEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

Leila changes her clothes and applies her make-up. She looks at Rob's side of the bed and then at the clock. Still no Rob.

**EXT. LEILA'S FRONT DOOR. NIGHT**

Leila smokes nervously. She tries to phone Rob but there is no answer. She sits down on the step and calls Pam.

LEILA

Hi Pam - it's me... all okay with you two? Thanks again... Listen, I was wondering, Rob hasn't popped in on his way home has he?...thought as much. Yes, I'm sure he'll be here any minute. Thanks, yes bye.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.**

Leila tries Rob again. No answer. She scrubs some already very clean pans ferociously. Her phone rings. She runs to it.

POLICE VOICE (O.S.)  
Leila Mellor?

LEILA  
Yes

POLICE VOICE (O.S.)  
This is PC Dawson from Leeds  
Central Police. I'm afraid your  
husband is in Leeds General  
Infirmary. Can you come now?

LEILA  
Yes. Of course.

Leila hangs up. Calmly she puts on her shoes and coat, picks up her handbag and opens the door to find the TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN raising his hand to knock.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Twenty-four sixty please.

Leila looks absolutely flummoxed and bursts in to tears.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
You okay love?

**INT. TAKE AWAY DELIVERY VAN. NIGHT**

Leila grips the door handle as the Take Away Delivery Man drives fast. A tear silently trickles down her cheek.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
You alright love? Want some music?

He doesn't wait for an answer, keen to break the silence. Roxette's 'Must Have Been Love' comes on.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Hmmmmmmm...

He fiddles with the radio again and some thrash metal starts.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
Perhaps not...

He turns the radio off. Driving fast, deliveries slide around in the back. He tries to distract Leila.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
So Theo, you said? Your son?

LEILA  
Yes

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN  
How old is he?

LEILA

Five

The Takeaway Delivery Man jumps on this, a talking point.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN

Oh, so is he in reception? He might  
be in the same class as my niece.

LEILA

Yes but he has a heart problem and  
hasn't been there much.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN

Shit. And now husband. You're going  
through the mill aren't you, love?

Rather than the floodgates opening, Leila starts to laugh and the delivery man joins in, relieved.

LEILA

I guess you could say that.

They swing in to A&E, drawing up beside the ambulances.

LEILA

Thank you, I am so grateful.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN

No worries, that'll be twelve  
pounds please love.

Leila looks confused but puts her hand in her bag.

TAKEAWAY DELIVERY MAN

Only joking love! Take care. And of  
him. And Theo.

He gestures to the hospital. Leila smiles, bemused then gets out and heads towards the entrance, terrified.

**INT. INTENSIVE CARE WAITING ROOM. NIGHT**

Montage: Leila paces the corridor. Reads the posters on the walls. Stares at the vending machine. Reorganises her purse. Picks up her phone and puts it down again several times.

DOCTOR GERRARD (late 50's, gravitas) enters.

DOCTOR GERRARD

Mrs Mellor? Good news, your husband  
is doing really well.

LEILA

The lymphoma?

DOCTOR GERRARD

(confused)

Lymphoma? No. Sprained wrist and a  
broken rib - he was really lucky.

LEILA

Sprained wrist? Broken rib?

DOCTOR GERRARD

Yes, from the bike accident. Has  
nobody told you?

LEILA

No, the police just said to come  
here and I assumed -

She stops dead. Doctor Gerrard looks at her questioningly.

LEILA

Is he okay?

DOCTOR GERRARD

Yes he's going to be fine. You'll  
be able to see him shortly.

This time the floodgates open, Leila bawls. Doctor Gerrard  
hands her a tissue and beckons to a nurse.

**INT. HOSPITAL CAFE. NIGHT**

Leila is at the tea machine. She spots Pam and gives her a  
big, very genuine hug. Pam is delighted and responds fondly.  
Barriers crumble left, right and centre. Pam does not ask a  
million questions, ten to the dozen as usual, instead she  
lets Leila talk. They appear unified for the first time.

LEILA

He's okay Pam. But the bastard just  
drove off. How could he?

Leila adds milk to two cups of tea. Pam shakes her head.

PAM

My boy. Like blooming Geraint  
Thomas on that bike he is. It was  
going to happen sooner or later I  
guess. And how are you duck?

LEILA

Me?

Leila bites her lip, it's been a long time since anyone has  
asked that. She stirs the tea ferociously, fighting tears.

LEILA

I'm fine. Now I know Rob is. Come on, let's go and see him. Was Lou okay to have Theo?

PAM

Yes love, it's all in hand.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY**

Dawn is breaking as Leila and Pam tentatively stick their heads around the door. Rob smiles and Leila sits down next to him, overwhelmed. She takes his hand and begins to sob. Rob strokes her hair. Pam hangs back, giving them a moment

ROB

Hey, Lei? It's okay.

LEILA

I'm so sorry.

ROB

Why? It wasn't your fault that some pissed up twat mangled my new bike.

Leila sobs more. Rob looks helpless and Pam finds tissues.

PAM

It's okay duck, Rob's fine and the police will trace whoever did it. They have witnesses.

LEILA

It's not-

ROB

Honestly Lei, I'm fine.

He grimaces as he tweaks the rib awkwardly.

LEILA

I-

PAM

Now then Robbie, the food isn't up to much in here. What will you be having when I come in later? I'll rustle up something nice.

Leila looks deflated, the earth and everyone in it seem to be conspiring against her confession. A NURSE enters.

NURSE

It's time to give Rob a bit of a break. If you come back later, visiting hours are two til three.

Pam leans over to embrace Rob.

PAM

Bye duck, see you in a few hours.  
I'll bring a bag.

She winks at him. Leila lies gently down beside Rob and holds his good hand tenderly.

ROB

Give Theo a big hug from me and tell him I'll be out soon.

LEILA

I love you. Don't worry, I'll sort this. I will, I promise.

Rob looks confused. She kisses him then backs slowly out of the room, not wanting to take her eyes off him.

**INT. LEILA'S LIVING ROOM. DAY**

Leila wakes up fully dressed on the sofa, confused and groggy. It takes her a few seconds to remember why she is asleep at midday. She hears a noise in the kitchen.

**INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Jen is wearing marigolds and washing up, a coffee next to her. Her laptop is on the side, emails ping as Leila enters.

JEN

Afternoon! How are you feeling?

Leila looks around her. She gestures at the washing up.

LEILA

Okay... Thank you. You didn't have to do the washing up! Where's Theo?

JEN

Lou dropped him at school this morning with the twins.

LEILA

You two are absolute godsends, I owe you -

JEN

You owe us nothing. You'd do the same. Anyway, an extra one isn't going to make any difference for Lou's taxi service. And I'm -

She gesticulates inverted commas with her hands

JEN  
"working from home"

Leila smiles gratefully. She starts to dry up.

JEN  
So what happened?

LEILA  
Afternoon?

Leila looks at the clock. Shit, visiting hours.

LEILA  
Jen, would you mind driving me back  
to the hospital?

JEN  
Don't be daft. Shove some clothes  
on and let's go.

**INT. JEN'S CAR. DAY**

Jen puts her foot down as Leila steels herself.

JEN  
So how is he? Lou said that he got  
knocked off his bike. How?

LEILA  
It was an accident. Completely  
unrelated. It's mad.

JEN  
So - does he know? Do they know?  
Have you told them?

Leila steels herself.

LEILA  
No, but I'm going to as soon as I  
get there. I promise.

Jen nods and takes her hand. Leila grips it hard.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY**

Pam is already there, plying Rob with homemade lasagne and jelly. Previously this would have riled Leila but instead she smiles. She kisses Rob gently, he is pleased to see her.

LEILA  
How are you feeling?

ROB  
Yeah, a bit sore. How's Theo?

LEILA

Lou took him to school, I've not seen him. I'll get him after this though. Listen -

She is determined to say her piece.

LEILA

I need to tell you something. Now -

Doctor Bernard knocks gently on the door and enters.

DOCTOR BERNARD

Mr Mellor? I'm Doctor Bernard.

ROB

Hi.

MS BERNARD

This is a little out of the ordinary. We've been looking at your records, Mr Mellor and I'm afraid we have some concerns.

Rob looks confused and Pam indignant. Leila simply puts her head in her hands.

MS BERNARD

According to our partners in the hospital research scheme RELIEVE they recently informed you of some rather serious findings. Mr Mellor, we need to get you in for some further tests immediately.

PAM

For a broken rib?

MS BERNARD

No. Mrs-

PAM

Mellor. Senior.

MS BERNARD

It's a bit more serious than that.

Pam is utterly confused. Rob stares at Leila as a hundred different emotions cross his face. Leila clutches Rob's hand.

LEILA

(whispering)

I am so, so sorry.

END OF EPISODE 1