

**THE MIRACLE CLUB**

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1

**EXT. BALLYGAR SEAWALL, IRELAND, 1967 - DAY 1**

1

The view is high and wide as we cross Dublin Bay and approach the City beyond. Sweeping over Poolbeg lighthouse the sea gives way to bright and dark patches of sand until we settle on a small beach amidst the remains of a ruined pier.

A shrine embedded in the sea wall. A black and white old photograph of a nineteen year old boy printed on to a ceramic medallion stands next to the Madonna, marking the place where a life was lost..."DECLAN" lovingly written on the frame..'Drowned At Sea' in this place 29th September 1928

Standing at the shrine lost in thought we find MRS. LILY FOX (80s) elegant an unfading natural beauty with bright smiling eyes, her greying strawberry blond hair framing a patrician face. She's dressed in "Sunday" clothes. She has a BUILT UP SHOE to counter a short leg.

**THE MIRACLE CLUB**

2

**INT. TAXI. DUBLIN STREETS - SAME DAY**

2

CHRISSIE AHEARN (50s) strong, determined, attractive, looks out the taxi window at Dublin Streets. This is the hometown she hasn't seen for forty years. Beside her on the seat a small case with a Pan Am luggage tag. A cascade of memories flood over her as the taxi accelerates through Dublin city.

3

**INT. THE DUNNES/BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

3

MRS. EILEEN DUNNE (60s) a sturdy Irish woman, a fiery temper and residual exhaustion locked behind blue eyes that have lost a bit of their twinkle, frantically tries to pin and spray her hair into a "beehive" style. This and the long dress make her look like a member of the 60s Motown group, The Chiffons. She breaks half a pill and swallows it down to calm her nerves, and tries to wiggle her tight mini dress into place.

From behind the door, her grandson, PATRICK, 6, shouts.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Nana! I have to pee...Hurry, hurry!

Eileen pulls down her tight fitting hand-made frock. She hesitates while looking at her chest in the mirror. She feels THE LUMP on her breast. We see the worry course over her - she doesn't want her children and grandkids to know. She gently pads powder on.

EILEEN

Will you ever wait. For God's sake  
I'm goin' to miss the whole thing  
trying to do this shaggin' hairdo.

MARTIN (O.S.)

(knocking)

God knows what she's gonna come up  
with this time.

GRANDCHILDREN'S VOICES (O.S.)

Come on Nana! Let's see!

She looks in the MIRROR. She sees her anxiety and her pain.  
She opens the cabinet door to stop her reflection.

A small THUMB NAIL bottle of LOURDES water sits dustily in  
the cabinet. She looks at the picture of the GROTTTO of  
LOURDES and fingers away the dust. She opens the water and  
blesses herself. Dips a splash on her breast. Sips a drop.

She changes her mood. She gets ready to open the door.

EILEEN

Are youse ready now?

PATRICK

Yeah!!!

She strikes a pose and opens the door.

Her youngest daughter, CATHY, 19, son MARTIN, 23, his wife  
BRIDGET, 23 and heavily pregnant and Patrick are crammed in  
the doorway to look.

ALL

Jaysis.

Patrick squeezes by, runs for the toilet and pees, unbothered  
by the audience.

Eileen is not sure the reaction is positive.

EILEEN

Wha?

(The Dunnes are immediate neighbours of the Hennessys)

CU. The EYES of DOLLY HENNESSY (mid-20s) a beautiful, black haired woman with it done in a 'beehive', wearing the same dress as Eileen but wearing it as it was meant to be worn - 60's girl group glamour - is precariously balancing herself on a wobbly stool and the hand rail to the staircase while frantically trying to quietly PRY OPEN the SECURITY LOCK to the COIN BOX of the PAY-AS-YOU-GO ELECTRIC METER with a hair clip.

DOLLY

Open up you ye bastard, open up.

Dolly finally clips opens the METER box. She looks in and quietly panics seeing how little money there is left. She takes out a few coins and puts back the rest.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

I'll put it back God, I swear.

She puts the box back into place.

5

**INT. THE HENNESSYS/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

5

Dolly comes back into the sitting room where DANIEL HENNESSY (7) is watching the TV. He appears to be without any disability except...he DOESN'T SPEAK. He sits by himself watching the telly gobsmacked along with his baby sister ROSE (1).

On the TV, B&W and fuzzy, TITLE ON SCREEN: APPARITIONS OF THE VIRGIN, GARABANDEL, SPAIN June 18, 1961.

Daniel sits close up to the screen, watching.

DOLLY

They're looking at our lady,  
Daniel. She's gonna help us, if we  
ever get to Lourdes.

Baby ROSE, 1, plays.

Dolly shovels a mouthful of food into Rose.

6

**EXT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - SAME TIME**

6

The taxi pulls up in front of the local church. Chrissie gets out, wearing a smart, skirt suit, with matching handbag. She's not smiling. She's brisk, efficient, keeps her emotions in check.

Chrissie cautiously looks around her, home again after forty years.

The TAXI DRIVER puts Chrissie's suitcase down beside her.

TAXI DRIVER  
Mind yourself love. They eat their  
young round here.

She ignores him, picks up the suitcase and strides purposefully inside the church.

7

**INT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - CONTINUOUS**

7

A coffin rests in front of the altar adorned with flowers.

Chrissie moves slowly up the aisle toward the coffin, crossing herself as she goes. She pauses by the coffin for a moment.

FATHER DERMOT BYRNE, 40, a supporter of Vatican II, friend to all, and more handsome than a priest should be, approaches.

FR. DERMOT  
Chrissie Ahearn?

Chrissie is slightly startled. She turns to him.

CHRISSIE  
Father Dermot?

Father Dermot nods.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
Thank you for contacting me. I'm  
sorry I was...too late...the flight  
was cancelled...

Chrissie tries to clamp down her emotions. This is not going to be easy.

FR. DERMOT  
You're here. And that's all that  
matters.

Chrissie nods her head in thanks.

FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)  
Let me offer my heartfelt  
condolences. The death of a parent  
is a terrible loss.

CHRISSIE  
(subtly cutting him off)  
I'm fine...

Chrissie looks around the church and sees the empty pews.

                  CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
Big turnout.

                  FR. DERMOT  
                  (apologetic)  
Ah now you see, we have the Holy  
Cross All Star Talent Contest  
tonight. Planned for months...

Chrissie just stares at him, blankly.

                  FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)  
                  (slightly nervous)  
The fundraiser for Lourdes. Your  
mother has been on the committee  
and she worked so hard to make it a  
success and everyone agreed she  
would want us to go ahead...

Chrissie's face remains blank.

                  FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)  
We all feel it's kind of like your  
mother's wake. I hope you don't  
think we are being insensitive?

                  CHRISSIE  
No, it's fine. Can I have the keys  
to the house?

                  FR. DERMOT  
Yes, yes of course.

He exits and fetches her keys. Chrissie gestures to the  
multitude of flowers on the coffin and around the altar.

                  CHRISSIE  
A lot of flowers. A bit excessive  
don't you think?

                  FR. DERMOT  
Yes. Well, perhaps...

                  CHRISSIE  
Perhaps the money would be better  
spent on the needy?

Chrissie rummages through her purse, looking for her wallet.

                  CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
Let me know how much it cost I'll  
pay you back.

FR. DERMOT  
I think there's a misunderstanding.  
The Parish didn't pay for them.

CHRISSIE  
(surprised)  
Who did?

Father Dermot is reluctant to say...

FR. DERMOT  
Your mother's friend, Lily Fox.

Chrissie is stunned.

8 **INT. THE FOXS/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

8

LILY, in a similar outfit to Eileen and Dolly though cut more conservatively. She struggles to zip up her dress.

Behind her, a crucifix hangs over neatly made twin beds.

LILY  
For goodness sake!  
(looking to heaven)  
Oh Maureen, the things I do for  
you. You're probably up there in  
stitches laughing at me.

The final touch - a pair of chunky boots to correct her short leg.

On the dresser there is an old photo (1926/27) of a handsome young man.

9 **INT. THE DUNNES/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

9

Eileen has thrown an apron on over her dress. Pots of food bubble on the cooker.

Her hair has completely collapsed in the steam. Cathy hovers, trying to tease her hair into a beehive.

Patrick races around, getting in the way.

EILEEN  
Would youse get out from underneath  
me feet.

Cathy gets a go at Eileen's hair while she stirs the dinner.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

You're finished with him! Do you hear me?

CATHY

But I luv him ma, I luv him.

EILEEN

Luv! What do you know about luv?

CATHY

He wants to marry me...

EILEEN

(sarcastically)

We all know what he wants...

CATHY

So? Maybe I want that too.

EILEEN

You're too young to be getting married. How you gonna live?

CATHY

I'll get a job.

EILEEN

He needs to get a bloody job.

CATHY

(pleading)

MAAAA!!!

EILEEN

He's a waster that fella the sooner you get rid of him the better.

CATHY

I don't want to get rid of him. Why do you make it so difficult?

EILEEN

And where will ye live? Not here.

CATHY

We'll put our names down for a house. Maybe we'll get Aunty Maureen's?

Eileen clips her across the ears.



EILEEN

Christ on a bike can we bury her  
first.

Eileen's husband FRANK DUNNE (60s) enters exhausted from work, carrying a tool box and wearing grease stained plumber coveralls, with the temperament of a man who leans into every punch, hears the squabbling, stops, reverses course and heads back out.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Where the hell you think you're  
goin'?!

FRANK

(shouting back)  
Out.

EILEEN

You are in your arse...

Frank just ignores her, puts his jacket on and is almost out the door.

FRANK

I'm going to the pub...

EILEEN

No you're bloody well not, you are  
mindin' them kids for once. I'm  
goin' out to the charity show!

Frank is chastised. Finds a new line of attack.

FRANK

Sure what do you want to win a trip  
to bleedin' Lourdes for anyway?

EILEEN

It's not for me you gobshite, it's  
for Dolly and Daniel.

FRANK

(leaving)  
I'm going out...

EILEEN

One of these days you'll come home  
and I won't be shaggin' well there!

FRANK

Promises, promises...

They hear the front door slam shut. Eileen tells Cathy.

EILEEN  
You stay in and mind them kids.

CATHY  
I'm not minding them!

EILEEN  
Oh yes you are.

Cathy begins to weep. Eileen hands her a hair brush and the can of hair spray:

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
Stop your winchin' and do me hair!

10      **EXT. THE AHEARNS - CONTINUOUS**      10

A shot of Ballygar Square, a neat square of terraced houses, and just beyond the square Dublin Bay

Chrissie carrying her suitcase crosses the square. Kids are playing. Girls at the end of a long skipping rope sing the skipping song Wheila, Wheila Whyla as Chrissie walks up the path to a house, the same as all the others.

She takes in the house. Slowly, she goes to the door.

11      **INT. THE AHEARNS - CONTINUOUS**      11

Chrissie stands in the entry hall. A red coat hangs on the coat hooks. Her mother's.

The hall is cluttered. She makes her way through mountains of stuff and peers into the living room.

In the centre of the room is an arm chair facing an old radio on a side table. Beside a small space heater. Stacks of leaflets for the talent show are sitting on the table. Chrissie takes in the scene. A lonely life.

12      **EXT. BALLYGAR SQUARE - EVENING**      12

GEORGE HENNESSY, 25, in working clothes, crosses the square, enters his home.

INT. THE HENNESSYS/LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN/HALL - CONTINUOUS 13

Dolly hears the familiar sound of the front door opening as her husband, exhausted, enters. Meet GEORGE HENNESSY (mid-20s) wearing the paint splattered dungarees of a house painter. He's handsome in a boyish way but his face is careworn, wrestling the weight of the world on his shoulders struggling to make a living for his wife and children.

He sees Daniel sitting on the sofa.

GEORGE

How're ye Son? How're ye Rosie?

Daniel does not respond.

DOLLY

Hello.

He kisses the baby gently on the forehead. He sees Dolly

GEORGE

Jaysis. Would ye look at you.

Dolly smiles all over. She sashays up close, twirls. He puts out his dirty hands. She squeals and jumps out of reach.

DOLLY

George, have you any money you could spare?

He turns the tap on, washes himself. The mood has shifted.

GEORGE

Why'dya need it?

DOLLY

The pilgrimage.

GEORGE

What bleedin' pilgrimage?

DOLLY

We're entering the Talent Contest. The winner gets two tickets to go to Lourdes with the parish.

GEORGE

I don't care what you do, Dolly, win or lose, but you're not bringing him to Lourdes.

DOLLY

Why not?

GEORGE

I'm out breaking me bollox every day and you want to give money to the church? Sure they have loads!

DOLLY

We've been to all the doctors in Dublin and they don't know what's wrong with him. No one does.

GEORGE

Some fecker in Lourdes is gonna know?

DOLLY

Miracles happen there, George. He could speak. That's all we want.  
(getting emotional)  
We can't just give up on him.

Dolly moves to Daniel who is looking away from them, lost in his own private world.

GEORGE

Maybe he doesn't want to talk, and you know that's OK with me.

There's click and all of the electricity goes out.

They stand looking at each other in silence for a moment.

DOLLY

Are you going to feed the meter?

GEORGE

Feck sake.

George, annoyed, digs into his pocket, finds a coin and opens the door from the flat into the entry corridor.

Dolly lovingly cups Daniel's face in her hands, kisses his cheek - willing him to speak.

He pulls away.

DOLLY

Don't mind him. I want to hear what you have to say. D'ya hear me.

Daniel remains oblivious, eyes on the screen.

13A      INT. THE HENNESSYS/LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN/HALL - LATER      13A

Later, Dolly at the meter again, takes the coin George has just put in.

14      INT. THE FOXS/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS      14

Pictures of Declan adorn the walls and mantelpiece. Tommy is sitting eating dinner. Lily sits fiddling with a necklace.

LILY

Here Tommy. Do this up for me  
Tommy.

Tommy gets up and puts the necklace on her.

LILY (CONT'D)

God be with the days when somebody  
died the whole street went dark for  
a week and here we are going to a  
bloody cabaret.

TOMMY

Well maybe we need to do things  
differently.

Tommy sits down.

LILY

Do I look decent Tommy?

TOMMY

You look lovely.

Beat.

LILY

Went to visit Declan today. I asked  
him to send us luck.

TOMMY

(sighs)

You're not visiting Declan, you're  
visiting a pile of bad memories.  
Rocks and Statues that don't mean  
anythin'.

This is clearly a conversation they've had before.

LILY(CONT'D)

I asked him to watch over me  
tonight.

TOMMY

What d'ya want to be going to  
 Lourdes for anyway?

LILY (CONT'D)

(fragile but resolute)

All me life I've wanted to go. I'm  
 running out of chances...

TOMMY

Don't talk like that.

She picks up her handbag.

LILY

Give me a hand with this. Wish me  
 luck. I'm off now to make a fool of  
 meself.

15

**INT. THE AHEARNS/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

15

On the wall by the dresser are her old school diplomas, and a wedding picture of her mother and her soldier father in an Irish Regiment of the British Army. And a school photo from 1926.

On the shelves of a corner cupboard there is a framed photo of a young woman on a beach with a handsome young man we may recognise as Lily's son Declan, 19. Chrissie is overcome with emotion as she looks at him, and her former self, aged 17. She picks up the photo and looks on tenderly.

Underneath that photo there is another photo of Declan, with herself and a slightly more mature young woman, 27, who we may recognise as a younger Eileen. They are smiling, laughing, full of life and all the promises of youth, on the beach at Ballygar by the sea wall where Declan's shrine now is.

16

**INT. PARISH HALL - EVENING 1**

16

A large banner: *Holy Cross All Star Talent Contest* hangs above a little stage of a small Parish Hall. Under it there is another banner "*In Maureen's Memory*". Chairs and tables are filled with women smoking and chatting away, all dressed up for a BIG night out. Children milling around. Fun and bustle. No-one paying much attention to the performance of TWO TEENAGE SISTERS who are up on stage. Their brother Johnny on the fiddle is playing. The girls are Irish dancing. All three look absolutely terrified.

Dolly, Eileen and Lily arrive in the Entrance Hall where there is a hand lettered poster with cut out photos of "Lourdes" and a "Boiled Bacon Joint" from the local Butcher - Doyles. Father Dermot comes over to register their names and take their money.

FR. DERMOT  
Ladies. What's the name?

EILEEN  
Just us Father

LILY  
Mrs Lily Fox, Mrs Eileen Dunne...

Father Dermot interrupts, smiles patiently.

FR. DERMOT  
Of the act?

DOLLY  
The Lourdettes.

Father Dermot winces and says apologetically.

FR. DERMOT  
We already have one of them.

Dolly and Lily go blank.

EILEEN  
The Miracles!

Father Dermot rolls his eyes writes the name down.

Dolly, Eileen and Lily pay their entrance fees and they make their way through the door down the hall.

17

**INT. PARISH HALL/IN THE WINGS BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER**

17

Eileen corrects Lily's eyeliner while Dolly watches the dancers from the wings. All speak in hushed voices

DOLLY  
Nothing to worry about there,  
girls.

LILY  
My nerves are rattling.

EILEEN

I never won a thing in me life.  
Except when I got married – I won  
the sweepstakes then I can tell ya!

Eileen rearranges her dress. It's too tight and irritating  
the lump. She rubs the soreness.

Lily stares.

LILY

What's wrong with ye?

EILEEN

A little lump...a small one..

LILY

Is it sore?

EILEEN

Sore?

LILY

When you touch it?

EILEEN

I don't think so.

LILY

Ah well, that's a good sign, isn't  
it then.

EILEEN

If it's not sore?

LILY

There you go. Great sign.

EILEEN

How come?

LILY

If it was the other way round you'd  
be in trouble.

EILEEN

I thought if it's not sore you have  
it?

Lily searches her memory. Eileen looks terrified. Lily needs  
to distract. She picks up a can of hair spray.



LILY  
Eileen, your hair's after doing  
it's thing again.

EILEEN  
You know what I was thinking,  
Maureen's ticket is going spare...

LILY  
(whispers, winking)  
I was thinking the exact same.  
She's coming to Lourdes with me one  
way or another...

Eileen doesn't look as happy at the thought as Lily does.

On stage, the girls finish their dance to some applause.  
Dolly turns to them. Her face is lit up, she can barely  
contain herself.

DOLLY  
I have to say girls, I think we  
have this won. We're next!

Lily looks panicked. Dolly pats her arm.

DOLLY (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, Lily, you only have to  
look pretty.

Lily harrumphs. Lucky she has a soft spot for Dolly, no one  
else would get away with that.

18

**EXT. THE AHEARNS - MOMENTS LATER**

18

Chrissie exits THE HOUSE. Hears the sound from the hall, and  
heads off towards the noise.

DOLLY/EILEEN/LILY O.S  
Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang  
Do-lang, do-lang  
He's so fine  
(Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
Wish he were mine  
(Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)...  
That handsome boy over there  
(Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
The one with the wavy hair  
(Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)

INT. PARISH HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Chrissie enters the back of the hall. Dolly, Eileen and Lily are on the stage.

DOLLY/EILEEN/LILY

I don't know how, I'm gonna do it  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 But I'm gonna make him mine  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 He's the envy of all the girls  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 It's just a matter of time  
 (Do-lang, do-lang)

Dolly, Eileen and Lily give it all they've got. Clicking their fingers doo-wop style, their dresses sparkling. The audience love it. Some get up to dance.

DOLLY/EILEEN/LILY (CONT'D)

He's a soft spoken guy  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 Also seems kinda shy  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 Makes me wonder if I  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 Should even give him a try  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)

But then I know he can't shy  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 He can't shy away forever  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 And I'm gonna make him mine  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)  
 If it takes me forever  
 (Do-lang, do-lang)

He's so fine  
 (Oh yeah)  
 Gotta be mine  
 (Oh yeah)  
 Sooner or later  
 (Do-lang, do-lang, do-lang)

The song ends. Dolly, Lily & Eileen bow, absolutely delighted with themselves.

FR. DERMOT

And let's hear it for The Miracles.

The audience cheers wildly, whistles and cries of "More, More".

Lily sees Chrissie standing by the door. She freezes, stunned. Eileen follows her gaze

EILEEN  
I don't believe it!

LILY  
(shocked)  
Jesus, it's never Chrissie...

Chrissie has seen them and moves towards them.

EILEEN  
She's coming over.

DOLLY  
Who is it?

EILEEN  
Aunty Maureen's daughter.

DOLLY  
(absolutely shocked)  
Mrs. Ahearn had a daughter?

EILEEN  
Risen from the dead.

Chrissie arrives at the table. Lily and Chrissie stare at each other as four decades vanish in a flash.

CHRISSIE  
I wouldn't have recognised you...

LILY  
Forty years will do that to you.

CHRISSIE  
It does a lot of things to you.

A beat of tense silence.

LILY  
Well, I'm sorry for your loss.

CHRISSIE  
Eileen. Hi.

Eileen is stunned. Resets herself.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
You remember me? I was sure you wouldn't...

EILEEN  
(sarcastically)  
Who forgets family?

The words are loaded. Chrissie recognises that this is directed at her. But she's not taking the criticism.

CHRISSIE  
Yeah. Who does that?

Chrissie hesitates. Dolly looks confused; puts out her hand.

DOLLY  
I'm Dolly. One of the neighbours.  
I'm very sorry for your loss. Your  
ma was a great neighbour.

CHRISSIE  
Thanks. Pleased to meet you, Dolly.  
You were very good up there.

Eileen notes this seems directed at Dolly alone. Chrissie looks directly at Lily.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
How much were the flowers? I want  
to pay you back.

LILY  
I bought them for your mother. She  
didn't think you'd be here.

CHRISSIE  
Why would she think that?

EILEEN  
(sharply)  
Have you never come back in forty  
years?

From her purse, Chrissie takes out a few notes. She hands it to Lily but Lily refuses to accept it.

CHRISSIE  
For the flowers.

LILY  
I don't need that. It was an  
honour. Your mother was a saint.

Chrissie defiantly puts the money on the table and starts to slowly walk away. Lily and Eileen are dumbfounded.

The women watch Chrissie leave. Fr. Dermot comes over.

FR. DERMOT  
Who'd have thunk it? Maureen's  
daughter. And coming all this way.

LILY  
And only a little bit late.

FR. DERMOT  
Isn't it great to have her back?

EILEEN  
Yeah, marvelous, absolutely bloody  
marvelous.

He looks twice but then decides it's better to walk away.

20

**EXT. BALLYGAR - CONTINUOUS**

20

CHRISSIE walks back from the Parish Hall. Her hometown seems frozen in time. So much has changed...yet so much has stayed the same. She takes a deep breathe. Long forgotten but familiar smells awaken her senses.

In the background she can hear the noise of laughter in the hall.

21

**INT. PARISH HALL - CONTINUOUS**

21

Back in the Parish hall.

EILEEN  
We all thought she was dead.

DOLLY  
She kept her figure all the same  
didn't she?

EILEEN  
(sarcastically to Lily)  
I wonder why?

LILY  
Didn't notice a ring did you?

EILEEN  
Sure who'd have her Lily, she'd  
sour milk, tha' one.

DOLLY  
I can't believe youse are bad  
mouthing her and her mother only  
dead.

Eileen reacts angrily to Dolly.

EILEEN

Sure she never cared about her  
mother Dolly.

LILY

And only comes back forty years  
later. When the poor woman is gone.

EILEEN

Came back to claim the house. You  
know what they turn into when they  
go to America.

Dolly is lost in thought.

On stage, Fr. Dermot ushers a young boy, PETER, 7, onto the  
stage with his mother RUTH.

Peter begins to sing. The boy's sweet voice soars. Soon  
everyone is shushing everyone else.

Even Daniel stills, listening. The singing boy looks at  
Daniel and smiles as he sings.

DOLLY

(lowering her voice)  
And she was a friend?

Eileen bristles. Lily answers Dolly's question.

LILY

Eileen was everything to  
Chrissie... Bein' she was an only  
child. Eileen here looked out for  
her. Protected her.

Eileen grows more and more uncomfortable, reaches into her  
bag and pours a stiffener from a little bottle into her  
orange juice and sips it. Dolly grows more and more  
intrigued.

DOLLY

(whispering)  
Youse never mentioned it before.

LILY

Eileen, Chrissie and my  
Declan...Couldn't put a cigarette  
paper between them.

Dolly is doing her own mental gymnastics. Lowers her voice.

DOLLY  
 (loud whisper)  
 But *why* she'd go to America?

LILY  
 She *had* to leave.

DOLLY  
 What do you mean?

EILEEN  
 (sternly)  
 Dolly, the past is the past and  
 some things are best left unsaid.  
 Now just leave it.

Eileen slugs back her drink. Dolly picks up the tension.

22

**INT. PARISH HALL - LATER**

22

Everyone is upping and leaving.

All sit shoulders slumped. Nothing left to be said.

The bacon joint on the table.

RUTH (O.S.)  
 Dolly! Dolly!

The women turn around. Peter runs up to them, his mother,  
 Ruth struggling to catch up.

Dolly opens the envelope. Takes out two tickets to Lourdes.  
 Bewildered, she looks to Ruth.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
 Peter wants you to have the  
 tickets. He wants Daniel to go to  
 Lourdes.

PETER  
 So he can learn to talk.

Dolly is suddenly emotional. She tearfully pulls Peter up  
 into her arms and covers him in kisses.

LILY  
 Me heart!

Joy all round. Except for Eileen, the only one not going.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 2

The funeral is almost over as Fr. Dermot prays over Maureen's coffin.

FR. DERMOT

(background)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Chrissie holds herself together as she listens. The only visible tension is in her clasped hands.

On the other side of the grave, Eileen and Lily stand next to each other.

Eileen's family on one side - Frank, Martin, Bridget, Cathy, and Patrick. Tommy beside Lily. Dolly nearby with George, Daniel, and Rose. Lily's devastated by the loss of her best friend, her sadness is evident as she wipes her eyes with a hanky. Eileen is an emotional mess. Lily tries to console.

LILY

We'll get her in the ground and go straight round to the doctor to have him look at your lump. Look! Don't be worryin'. Take one of your pills, keep you calm.

Eileen nods.

Fr Dermot scatters a handful of dirt and scatters it over the coffin. Chrissie follows.

Eileen has her eye on the best moment to approach the priest.

Her grandson PATRICK is staring at Lily Fox. Patrick asks:

PATRICK

Nana? Is Mrs. Fox goin' to Lourdes to make her leg grow back?

Distracted, Eileen waits to approach Fr Dermot.



EILEEN

No love. Her leg's not goin' to grow back. She's goin' to help the disabled.

Eileen pulls Fr. Dermot aside.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Father. It came to me all of a sudden. Maureen's ticket to Lourdes. Terrible for it to go to waste.

She leans in close and whispers.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

I have this lump on my breast.

FR. DERMOT

Oh I see. Have you seen the doctor?

EILEEN

No I was hoping to go to Lourdes first, with poor Maureen gone she'd want her ticket put to good use.

FR. DERMOT

I'll see what I can do.

The priest listens but he is wary. Eileen has a big smile across her face.

Lily goes to Chrissie.

LILY

(dutifully)

I'm...sorry for your loss.

(now all business)

Your Ma asked me to give this to you. In case you came home.

Lily extends her hand with the letter.

24

**INT. THE AHEARNS/BEDROOM - DAY**

24

Chrissie sits on the stairs and stares at the letter a long time. Then slowly opens it. She begins to read:

MAUREEN'S VOICE

Dear Chrissie, if you are reading this it means you came for my funeral. So thank you for that.

(MORE)

## MAUREEN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I remember you saying when you left  
that you'd only come back when I  
was dead. Welcome home.

Decades begin to unravel as she reads.

## MAUREEN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I don't know the pain and the joy  
that you've known. I guess I don't  
really know you at all. Not the  
"you" that is reading this today.  
But you're here and that tells me  
everything

(new thought)

I've been saving for a very long  
time to come and see you in  
America...I always wanted to see  
Boston. I've left something for you  
in the top drawer of my dressing  
table.

She makes her way to the kitchen.

Chrissie opens the drawer and finds an envelope with  
"Lourdes" written in fragile handwriting. She looks inside.  
There is some Irish notes and coins - savings for the trip  
and her voucher for the pilgrimage. Underneath the envelope  
her hand finds a small golden locket and chain. It is the  
necklace her mother always wore. She opens the locket. Inside  
is a black and white photograph of Chrissie...as a baby.

25

**EXT. BALLYGAR SQ - CONTINUOUS**

25

Father Dermot walks through Ballygar Sq approaching  
Chrissie's house.

## MAUREEN'S VOICE

I'm sorry for what I said. I'm  
sorry for what I did. I wish I was  
there to tell you in person. But I  
beg you this one thing...Don't cut  
yourself off from who you are...and  
where you're from.

26

**INT. THE AHEARNS/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

26

Chrissie re-enters the living Room from the kitchen looking  
around at the photos on the wall and the dresser.

## MAUREEN'S VOICE (CONT)

We are more alike than you think.  
We both carry our pain too proudly.  
(MORE)

## MAUREEN'S VOICE (CONT) (CONT'D)

I know you've no love for Lily  
Fox...or Eileen. I don't blame you  
for that but it's a heavy load to  
carry. The last words you hear from  
a mother shouldn't be angry ones. I  
love you, Chrissie with all my  
heart. God bless.

There's a knock on the door. She doesn't want to answer,  
tries to hide.

Fr Dermot taps on the window and sees her.

FR. DERMOT

Hello! Hello!

27

INT. THE AHEARNS/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

27

Father Dermot stands in the living room.

Chrissie glances at him; begins to tidy around him to  
distract herself. Her movements are tight, overly efficient,  
like there's a clock ticking. He has to keep stepping out of  
her way.

Finally he stops moving, stands in front of her, to get her  
to speak to him.

FR. DERMOT

How are you, Chrissie?

CHRISSIE

Well, my mother is dead. I'm in a  
place I swore I'd never come back  
to. Everyone is as pleased to see  
me as ever...So overall, I'd say,  
yeah, mixed.

FR. DERMOT

You seem a little cross mebbe.

CHRISSIE

You think?

Chrissie grabs the Lourdes envelope and hands it to him:

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)

From my mother.

Father Dermot opens THE ENVELOPE. Takes out the Irish notes.

FR. DERMOT

Thank you.

CHRISSIE  
 Put it to good use.  
 (a beat)  
 Just don't give it to the nuns.

Fr. Dermot looks at the rest of the contents of the envelope.

FR. DERMOT  
 This is your mother's voucher for  
 Lourdes.

CHRISSIE  
 Give it to someone who needs it. I  
 don't need a "cure".

FR. DERMOT  
 Not everyone goes to Lourdes for a  
 cure.

CHRISSIE  
 No? What was she looking for?

FR. DERMOT  
 Reconciliation.

Chrissie takes a moment. She realises he must know her story.

FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)  
 I think she would have liked you to  
 go in her place.

CHRISSIE  
 Take the voucher I don't need it.

28

**EXT. THE DUNNES - MOMENTS LATER**

28

Fr. Dermot crosses the road to Eileen's door.

Eileen answers to door. Father Dermot hands over the envelope. Eileen hesitates, deeply suspicious. Pokes her head out the door, look over towards Chrissie's house.

FR. DERMOT  
 (lying)  
 She wanted you to have it.

EILEEN  
 You didn't tell her about my lump  
 did you?

FR. DERMOT  
 Strictly between us.

Eileen starts to take in the moment. She looks suddenly child like staring at the voucher. Tears fill her eyes.

FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)  
 Congratulations. You are coming to  
 Lourdes!

Eileen's face is full of joy.

29

**INT. THE DUNNES - LATER**

29

Frank's irate face fills the screen. Eileen holds the ticket.

Eileen and Frank are in the midst of an argument.

EILEEN  
 It's a service o' gratitude to God  
 and Our Lady.

FRANK  
 Service of gratitude me arse. One  
 big gimmick to get my money is what  
 it is.

EILEEN  
 Do you not know "Song O'  
 Bernadette"?

FRANK  
 "Song O' Bernadette"? How does it  
 go again?

EILEEN  
 It's not a song, it's a fillum,  
 about St. Bernadette and how she  
 saw the Blessed Virgin in  
 Lourdes...

FRANK  
 (interrupting)  
 You're not goin' to no bleedin'  
 Lourdes! Would you go home and take  
 your bleedin' tablets.

Eileen's face falls.

EILEEN  
 (pleading)  
 I have to go Frank, please.

FRANK  
 You got somethin' all of a sudden?

EILEEN  
 (nonchalant)  
 'Course not.

FRANK  
 You're not goin' on no bleedin'  
 holiday on the French Riviera with  
 Father 'too good looking for his  
 own bleedin' good.' You think I  
 can't see what you're up to?

EILEEN  
 I'll be helping Dolly and Daniel  
 and the other poor unfortunates.

FRANK  
 Unfortunates? That's a good one.  
 What about me ha? I'm the  
 unfortunate one. And who's going to  
 cook, clean and look after the  
 chiselers? Not me, I can tell you  
 that. That's your job. Now go sell  
 the ticket.

EILEEN  
 I'm not selling it.

FRANK  
 Sell it! Sell it to an unfortunate.

He storms off. Nothing is going to stop her. Not even Frank.

30      **EXT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - DAY 3**

30

It's a bright, early morning as the sun comes up over Dublin Bay.

A SMALL COACH with "Holy Cross Lourdes Pilgrimage" above the windscreen, and Irish flags either side pulls up outside the church where Father Dermot is waiting.

31      **INT. THE FOXS/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

31

Tommy is still in his pyjamas, unshaven. Lily closes her suitcase.

TOMMY  
 You can't go...I won't allow it.

Lily glares at him - cutting off any further objection.

LILY  
I'm going.

TOMMY  
What am I goin' to do on me own...?

LILY  
I'll be back before you know it.  
Will ye stop making me feel bad.

TOMMY  
What'll I do without you? What if  
something happens?

LILY  
Go back to bed, Tommy. You'll be  
safe there.

She moves to her door, opens it and yells to one of the kids  
playing on the street.

LILY (CONT'D)  
Jimmy, go an' tell Mr Dunne we've a  
leak and would he call over right  
away?

Jimmy runs off. She shuts her window. Tommy is confused.

TOMMY  
I didn't see a leak.

LILY  
Well it's all wet in the bathroom.

By the bathroom door she takes a glass of water and when  
Tommy is not looking pours it on the floor in a small puddle.

LILY (CONT'D)  
Got to hurry... Don't let him leave  
until he finds it...

Tommy walks into the bathroom, looks for the leak. He can't  
see it. He painfully gets down on his hands and knees.

32

**INT. THE DUNNES - MOMENTS LATER**

32

Frank collects his tool kit by the front door.

FRANK  
I'm off to Tommy and Lily's.  
They've a leak.

EILEEN  
Hope it's not too bad.

Frank goes. As soon as he's gone, Eileen runs upstairs and comes in with a hastily packed suitcase.

Cathy follows her.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
Don't burn your father's sausages,  
whatever ye do. And remember  
Patrick's asthma medicine.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
Look. If you still want to marry  
your sweetie pie after you've  
cleaned and cooked and scrubbed  
while he sits in the pub and talks  
shite with the lads... who am I to  
stand in the way of true love?

CATHY  
Do you mean that?

Cathy lights up. Eileen rolls her eyes. Cathy scowls.

EILEEN  
Now be good to them.

She surprises Cathy with a tender kiss on the cheek.

CATHY  
What are you doing?

EILEEN  
Kissin' you goodbye. It's not like  
I'm going to the shops. I'm going  
abroad. To France.

A beat. Cathy looks at her worried.

CATHY  
France?...Ye are coming back? Ma?

EILEEN  
Maybe. Maybe not.

Eileen laughs as she hurries out the door. Cathy's fearful.



33      **EXT. THE DUNNES - CONTINUOUS**      33

Eileen hurries down the steps making a dash for freedom, wanting to run but trying not to be unseemly in her escape.

34      **EXT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER**      34

Father Dermot stands by the luggage hatch with other passengers, helping the DRIVER load suitcases.

Eileen hurries towards them.

FR. DERMOT  
Eileen, you made it.

EILEEN  
Just.

FR. DERMOT  
Take a seat inside.

35      **INT. COACH - MOMENTS LATER**      35

Eileen swings herself up into the coach, breathless, hot and sweaty and plonks herself down next to Lily, delighted to have escaped.

EILEEN  
That man won't let me go to bingo  
never mind Lourdes.

They grin at each other delighted that their trick worked, and to be going on an adventure.

Eileen looks around. There are a number of other passengers, all ages.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
Where's Dolly?

LILY  
I don't know. She should be here.

36      **INT. THE HENNESSYS - CONTINUOUS**      36

Dolly, in her dressing gown, paces. George gets ready to leave for work.

Daniel comes downstairs carrying a suitcase. George glares at Dolly and then looks back to Daniel.

GEORGE  
 Sorry son, but you're going  
 nowhere.

He pulls the suitcase out of Daniel's hands. Daniel's empty hands frantically open and close.

George turns around to see Dolly taking off her dressing gown. She is fully dressed underneath.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 (shocked)  
 Don't you -

Dolly takes out a suitcase from behind the sofa.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 What's that?

DOLLY  
 We're going to Lourdes.

GEORGE  
 You are in me bollox!

Dolly holds out her hand to Daniel. She's shaking.

DOLLY  
 Ruth in number 45 said she'd mind  
 Rosie while you're at work.

GEORGE  
 You go out that door, Dolly, don't  
 bother coming back.

Dolly stops, shocked.

37

**INT./EXT. COACH - MOMENTS LATER**

37

Lily's looking out the window, eyes peeled for Dolly.

Fr. Dermot climbs the stairs, nods at the driver. The driver starts the engine.

LILY  
 Father wait! Dolly's not here. The  
 most important member of The  
 Miracle Club.

FR. DERMOT  
 We can't wait much longer. We'll  
 never make the ferry.

As they are about to move off Lily spots Dolly and Daniel sprinting alongside the bus like they're part of a prison break. She puts her fingers in her mouth and executes a deafening whistle.

38

**INT./EXT. COACH - MOMENTS LATER**

38

The door's squeal open. Dolly, breathless but beaming, climbs the stairs, dragging suitcases and Daniel up behind her. Eileen and Lily cheer.

Dolly and Daniel plonk themselves down on a pair of seats.

The driver puts the coach in gear, starts the van forward but then suddenly lurches to a sudden halt.

Standing in front of the minivan is...CHRISSIE AHEARN. Around her neck WE SEE she is wearing her MOTHERS LOCKET.

Chrissie looks at Father Dermot and climbs on. Lily is absolutely shocked to see her and even more shocked to see her wearing Maureen's locket around her neck.

LILY  
(whispering)  
Holy Mother of Christ.

EILEEN  
(dumbfounded)  
I don't shaggin' believe it!

Chrissie looks around and smiles to Lily and Eileen.

Father Dermot turns to Chrissie

FR. DERMOT  
There's a place here. If you don't  
mind sitting next to me.

CHRISSIE  
(with gusto)  
Driver! Lourdes! Step on it!

Chrissie energetically takes her seat beside the priest. Close on the stunned and gobsmacked faces of Lily and Eileen. The coach drives away.

39

**DELETED**

39

39A **EXT. COACH - DAY**

39A

The coach drives off into a great big adventure.

40 **INT. COACH - LATER THAT NIGHT**

40

Everyone is asleep, heads on shoulders or against windows. Eileen wakes as she adjusts her position. She looks disapprovingly at Chrissie whose head is using Fr. Dermot's shoulder as a pillow.

Daniel is awake. He's turned around staring at Chrissie's face. Her eyes closed. He reaches out and touches her hair with his fingers. Chrissie's eyes flutter open. They hold each other's gaze. Dolly looks.

CHRISSIE

Hi, What's your name?

DOLLY

Daniel.

CHRISSIE

Hi Daniel. I'm Chrissie.

Daniel pays her no heed.

DOLLY

He doesn't talk yet. Me ma said he'll talk when he has something to say, isn't that right, Daniel?

CHRISSIE

(to Daniel)

Very sensible.

Dolly smiles at Chrissie. She likes her.

40A **Ext. BALLAGAR SQUARE - EVENING**

40A

Looking past the Ahearn's House out to sea, the sun goes down on Ballygar Square.

41 **EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 4**

41

Early morning. Sun rising spreading shafts of light across the French countryside (library).

The Coach with its Irish flags fluttering, glides through the sunshine and poplars.

A road sign - SUD DE LA FRANCE

*The Bells of the Angelus* (or similar) plays over-

42 **INT./EXT. COACH/LOURDES - DAY** 42

Chrissie awakens with the bright morning light moving through the bus.

Lily, Eileen, Dolly, and Daniel peer out the windows as they arrive in the beautiful village of Lourdes.

Lourdes is reflected in the windows of the bus. Chrissie looks out at the massive BASILICA in the distance. Bells ring out.

A SIGN across the narrow street reads: "Bienvenue à Lourdes"

43 **EXT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE - MOMENTS LATER** 43

Father Dermot herds his tired pilgrims off the coach.

FR. DERMOT  
Welcome to Lourdes.

EILEEN  
(tearful, gobsmacked)  
I can't believe it. We're here.

Chrissie steps off the bus. She stretches.

Eileen stomps off into the hotel. Chrissie ignores her.

DOLLY  
(wide-eyed)  
It's perfect, isn't it, Daniel.

EILEEN  
I've always wanted a bell boy to  
carry my bags.

Dolly smiles as she watches Daniel.

43A **INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER** 43A

There's a souvenir stall in the lobby area, and racks of tourist brochures. Large statue of the Blessed Virgin.

Staff check in the pilgrims and room keys are handed out. Orderly chaos. Father Dermot is arguing with a receptionist in French.

Chrissie looks around her, bemused by the commercialisation. Eileen drags her oversized suitcase into the lobby with Lily close by.

44

**INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DOLLY & EILEEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS** 44  
**LATER**

Eileen and Dolly stand in a small room with two large bunk beds in the single, sparsely furnished.

Daniel climbs up on to the top bunk.

DOLLY  
Isn't this lovely?

EILEEN  
Did you get talking to that one at all Dolly?

DOLLY  
Who? Chrissie?

EILEEN  
What the hell is she doing here?

DOLLY  
I think she just wants a break. With her ma passing and all that.

EILEEN  
I'll tell you what she's up to.

DOLLY  
What?

EILEEN  
Fr. Dermot. That's what she's after.

DOLLY  
No she's not, he's a priest!

EILEEN  
Sure that wouldn't stop her! Did you see her sleeping on his shoulder?

INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/LILY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chrissie arrives at her room. Opens the door - and sees Lily at the window, gazing in the direction of the Basilica.

Lily turns to look at her. Chrissie checks her key and the room number on the door:

CHRISSIE

It appears I'm sharing with you.

Lily's momentarily concerned but hides it from Chrissie.

LILY

Look. The Basilica. Isn't it beautiful?

Chrissie realises there's only one double bed. She's not happy.

CHRISSIE

There's only one bed?

Lily doesn't care.

LILY

I sleep on the right. Yer Ma wouldn't have fussed.

CHRISSIE

I'm not my mother.

LILY

(under her breath)  
Isn't that the truth

CHRISSIE

What do you mean by that?

Lily turns away.

LILY

Would you show some respect  
Chrissie, this is a holy place.

There's a knock on the door. Eileen barges in full of excitement.

EILEEN

The Father's taking us to the  
Grotto, and he's the baths booked  
for tomorrow.

Eileen's not waiting.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
 (leaving)  
 I'll see ya downstairs, Lil.

Lily goes to leave. Chrissie sits lost on the bed.

LILY  
 (to Chrissie)  
 Whatever the reason ye came, it  
 wasn't to sit in a hotel room.

Chrissie knows and follows Lily out.

45A

**INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/SOUVENIR STALL - SOON AFTER**

45A

Eileen and Dolly examine multitudes of trinkets and statues of every size and shape of the VIRGIN MARY and JESUS CHRIST on the hotel's souvenir stall.

DOLLY  
 (looking around)  
 I wasn't expectin' all this.

EILEEN  
 All what?

DOLLY  
 Sellin'.

EILEEN  
 Sellin'?

DOLLY  
 You'd think it was Liberty Market  
 back in Dublin.

EILEEN  
 I suppose... I thought Our Lord  
 hated all that when he chased them  
 out of the temple?

Chrissie couldn't care less about shopping, instead randomly looking at postcards, talking to the hotel receptionist.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
 It's hard to believe though isn't  
 it? Like her coming from having  
 Jesus to coming here to Lourdes.  
 And in France like?



DOLLY

I mean, why would she suddenly show up after all these years of being quiet?

Eileen looks coldly at Chrissie as she says:

EILEEN

I'm asking meself the same thing. What you got there Daniel?

Daniel is taken by a SNOW GLOBE of the Virgin appearing to Bernadette. He turns it over so it snows.

DOLLY

It's so pretty.

Eileen puts her other arm around Daniel.

EILEEN

(to Daniel)

I'll treat ye, Danny. Not a word to Frank, d'ya hear?

Daniel is delighted. Eileen sees the medals.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

And I'll have twelve of them miraculous medals.

Eileen turns to the shop clerk to pay, and comes face to face with tall fluorescent Virgin Mary. She is in awe.

46

**EXT. LOURDES - LATER**

46

Archive film to establish Lourdes, the valley, the river, the Basilica. And people walking towards it.

47

**EXT. GROTTA - CONTINUOUS**

47

The Ballygar group walk from the hotel to the grotto.

Dolly and Daniel, Eileen and Lily walk together up ahead, alongside PILGRIMS of all ages and nationalities, some in wheelchairs, some with sticks, some with NURSES. Volunteers wear blue sashes.

Chrissie and Fr. Dermot bring up the rear.

Eileen notices Lily looking back at Fr. Dermot and Chrissie talking.

EILEEN

I don't know what that one came here for.

LILY

Maybe Our Lady brought her

Eileen and Lily exchange a look. Neither really believe this.

DOLLY

I think she's nice and so's her clothes.

Eileen and Lily share another look.

EILEEN

My nerves are gone, sure I'm a day off me tablets!

LILY

What are you nervous for?

EILEEN

Seeing something...

LILY

Ah don't be so silly. People come here looking for peace. It's in the air like? A warmth.

DOLLY

I feel freezing.

EILEEN

(looking at crowd)  
They're not all looking for cures are they? Surely someone is going to be disappointed...

DOLLY

(gazing at Daniel)  
I'm sure they're all here...for different reasons.

A FAMILY walks by with a girl with cerebral palsy. Her limbs have a mind of their own but she seems happy, as do her parents one either side of her.

LILY

Will youse stop starin! People hate to be stared at.



LILY

When you think of all she went through. Watching her poor son crucified...

EILEEN

She picked a good place to stand all the same.

Lily looks at her, bemused.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

So we can all see her.

49A

**EXT. THE GROTTTO, LOURDES - CONTINUOUS**

49A

A TRICKLE OF SPRING WATER runs down the rock face. Large candle holders stand in the middle of the Grotto.

Lily, Eileen and Dolly walk under the grotto with other pilgrims. They touch the sacred rock as they process beneath it.

CHRISSIE walks over to Father Dermot.

CHRISSIE

You believe she really came here? That the Virgin Mary picked that girl and this spot?

FR. DERMOT

Yes. Yes I do.

(a beat)

And whether she did or not is unimportant.

Chrissie looks around at the pilgrims, Eileen, Dolly and Lily.

CHRISSIE

(smiling)

You might want to keep that to yourself.

FR. DERMOT

Have you ever been to the Statue of Liberty in America?

CHRISSIE

Yes. Once. Many years ago.

FR DERMOT

And what did it make you feel?

Chrissie thinks.

CHRISSIE  
Freedom, maybe. A new life. Maybe...

FR DERMOT  
You see, this is how statues work.  
They focus our minds on an ideal.

This has a resonance with Chrissie.

FR. DERMOT  
Shrines. Holy relics. Even the  
water that flows from these rocks.  
They mean nothing without the  
compassion of Our Blessed Mother.  
And through her...our ability to  
forgive others.

Much to her surprise, his words strike a chord.

CHRISSIE  
(quietly)  
Or ourselves.

Father Dermot takes notice of Chrissie's unexpected candour.

49B

**EXT. GROTTO - LATER**

49B

The group are sat on a bench.

Dolly is holding A BROCHURE of the Grotto. There's a large photo of a grotto wall covered in crutches. (the crutches had been only recently removed)

There's only a couple of crutches there now, part of the display.

Seeing the evidence of so much suffering has a profound effect upon Lily, Eileen and Dolly. Chrissie joins them. Eileen gives her a weary look.

DOLLY  
Is this where all the cures happen?  
Where people just get up and walk?

LILY  
(indicating brochure)  
God isn't it beautiful. Look where  
all the crutches used to hang.

EILEEN  
From all the miracles...

LILY  
And the miraculous water.

CHRISSIE  
(cynically)  
I wonder what do they do with all  
of them?

LILY  
Do with what?

CHRISSIE  
After the miracles, where have all  
the old crutches gone?

DOLLY  
Chrissie's right, the place has  
been open a hundred years, you'd  
think there'd be thousands. What  
did they do with them all?

Lily has to think. She suddenly invents an explanation.

LILY  
There's a museum somewhere. There  
must be...

EILEEN  
That's right Lily. A museum for  
pain and suffering?

LILY  
A museum for pain and suffering  
*left behind.*

Lily throws a look to Chrissie. Dolly holds tight to Daniel,  
who is restless.

LILY (CONT'D)  
We'll find you a little miracle  
Daniel here.

Daniel tugging at Dolly to move on.

DOLLY  
Daniel, Lily's talkin' to ya!

LILY  
Never mind, love.

EILEEN  
God imagine though.

DOLLY

What?

EILEEN

If we seen one happening right in front of our eyes. A miracle like. I think I'd die if I seen people get up, throw they're crutches away and walked!

DOLLY

But it mightn't be crutches Eileen. Other things get cured too.

Dolly glances at Daniel then to Eileen:

DOLLY (CONT'D)

Tumours and things you can't see.

EILEEN

Oh that's right! How do we know there wasn't hundreds of them cures? Sure, look at Lily over there.

LILY

What about Lily over there?

EILEEN

Well you don't need a crutch.

LILY

Excuse me?

EILEEN

For your leg. Ye don't need a crutch to walk, if you got a cure now, you wouldn't have a crutch to put on the wall.

LILY

(affronted)

I didn't come lookin' for me leg to grow longer for God's sake. I wouldn't know meself if it did. I'd lose me balance.

They laugh.

49C

**SCENE DELETED**

49C

49D

EXT BALLYGAR SQUARE, - THAT SAME AFTERNOON

49D

Frank Dunne is struggling home with bags of shopping which he drops before he can get to his house.

FRANK  
(muttering to himself)  
And how in the name of Jaysis am I  
supposed to do this?

A neighbour, MRS. CONNOLLY walks by carrying EIGHT bags.

MRS CONNOLLY  
Do what your wife does everyday.

FRANK  
What's that?

MRS. CONNOLLY  
Line them up.

FRANK  
Wha'?

She organizes the handles for him.

MRS. CONNOLLY  
Look, give us your hand, line them  
up. Like that, see.. That's what  
the loops are for.

FRANK  
Thanks.

MRS. CONNOLLY  
(a beat)  
Did your poor wife pass away on ye?

FRANK  
No! Jaysis no. She's in Lourdes.

Cathy emerges from the house to help.

MRS. CONNOLLY  
Lourdes?! Well there's a miracle,  
you shoppin'. Best of luck to ya.

She walks off cackling.

CATHY  
Poor Ma. I don't know why she  
hasn't left you already. Oh I  
forgot, she has left.



FRANK

Wha?

Cathy picks up the bags effortlessly and walks into the house

FRANK (CONT'D)

Cathy?

She keeps walking.

FRANK (CONT'D)

She's coming back isn't she?

CATHY

Ask yerself, why would she?

49E **INT. THE HENNESSYS - SAME TIME**

49E

George has Rose pinned down on the sofa. He tries to work out the nappy. He thinks he has it sussed. Rose runs off, the nappy falls down.

50 **INT. THE FOXS/BEDROOM - SAME TIME**

50

Tommy Fox is wearing the same pyjamas, unshaven, hair uncombed, sitting in the bed eating biscuits and listening to the radio.. Happy as Larry

51 **SCENE MOVED TO 49E**

51

52 **SCENE MOVED TO 49D**

52

53 **EXT. LOURDES - DUSK**

53

Torchlight Procession (library footage) Hundreds of pilgrims walk in the dark, holding candles and praying. Ave Maria can be heard through a creaky loud speaker.

Our ladies, lit by candlelight, walk by the grotto rapt, looking up at Our Lady silhouetted against the Basilica and the dusk sky. Even Daniel is peaceful. Eileen watches Father Dermot and Chrissie who have fallen behind walking together Even Chrissie seems caught up in the magic of Lourdes.

EILEEN

(to Dolly)

As tight as a drum they are. It's them Americans so it is.

(MORE)

EILEEN (CONT'D)

They don't care what they do in public and it rubs off on everyone!

53A

**INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/LILY & CHRISSIE'S ROOM - LATER** 53A

Lily and Chrissie unpack in their small hotel room. It's been a long exhausting day for both of them. Yet neither speak. The atmosphere is tense.

Then, Lily takes out her PICTURE OF DECLAN and sets it down by the side table.

CHRISSIE

*She will ruin your life.*

LILY

What? Who?

Chrissie stares at Lily.

CHRISSIE

Isn't that what you told Declan?  
I'll ruin his life?

LILY

Not now Chrissie.

CHRISSIE

I'm seventeen. I'm pregnant. We were so happy. We were so in love, How was I going to ruin his life?

LILY

I thought you were trying to trap him...he was my son...my only son...I wanted him to have a better life than I had...

CHRISSIE

We would have.

Beat.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)

How did you do it? How did you convince her to shut me out?

LILY

Your mother did her best, but with your father dead there was no one to reel you in. There was no talkin' to ye. You were... wild.

They stare at each other.

LILY (CONT'D)  
Your mother forgave me...  
God punished me. Didn't he? Takin'  
him away like that.

CHRISSIE  
He punished all of us.

Lily turns to Chrissie and asks her directly:

LILY  
I'm old Chrissie. Will you forgive  
me?

Chrissie looks at her. The words don't come.

Lily sits on the bed. She looks lonely.

54

**EXT. GROTTO - LATER THAT NIGHT**

54

Chrissie sits alone by the small river that runs by the Grotto. Deep in thought.

Father Dermot is seen walking along. He stops and sees Chrissie. He comes over towards her.

FR. DERMOT  
Chrissie.

They both giggle.

FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)  
(motioning to sit)  
Do you mind?

CHRISSIE  
No. Not at all.

He sits alongside. They share the silence.

FR. DERMOT  
You know we have something in  
common. You and me.

CHRISSIE  
Oh yeah, what's that?

FR. DERMOT  
We both tend to the sick. My  
ministrations are to the soul. How  
about yourself?

CHRISSIE  
Paediatric nurse.

FR. DERMOT  
Children, a special calling.

CHRISSIE  
It was a choice, not a calling.

FR. DERMOT  
We all live the lives we choose,  
don't we? Or that we accept.

CHRISSIE  
The lives we accept?

FR. DERMOT  
I met your mother the night before  
she died. I heard her confession.

CHRISSIE  
Did I feature?

He nods with a smile.

FR. DERMOT  
Chrissie, you might find this  
difficult to believe, but, your  
mother worried about you every day.  
Came to mass. Lit a candle. Said a  
prayer. Just for you.

CHRISSIE  
Did she feel better for it?

Fr. Dermot shrugs a "yes".

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
Good. The church is good at guilt.

FR. DERMOT  
It's also good at forgiveness. You  
don't have to believe in the  
doctrine to appreciate the  
sentiment.

Chrissie doesn't react.

FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)  
Would you like me to hear your  
confession?

Chrissie thinks about this.

CHRISSIE  
No. But thanks anyway.

Chrissie gets up to go.

FR. DERMOT  
Chrissie, why did you come back?

She is emotional. She walks off.

55      **SCENE MOVED TO SCENE 45A**      55

56      **INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DOLLY & EILEEN'S ROOM - LATER**      56

It is quiet and DARK except for A GLOWING FUZZY LIGHT in the corner of the room. We hear snoring. The clock ticks. Suddenly a TERRIFIED SCREAM breaks the silence.

DOLLY  
Gerrout, gerrout ye bastard!!!

EILEEN  
Jaaaayssseezzee whaaattt!!!

DOLLY  
It's in the room!

EILEEN  
Get the bleedin' liiightttt!!!

DOLLY  
Get out, get out!!!

The light switches on. Lily has come in dressed in her night gown.

DOLLY realizes she is screaming at the light-up GLOWING THREE FOOT STATUE OF THE VIRGIN MARY in the corner of the room that Eileen bought. DANIEL remains wide awake, starring at it, quietly calm.

LILY  
What the hell is goin' on? You're after wakin' up half of Lourdes.

DOLLY  
What is that?!

EILEEN  
Our Lady.

DOLLY

It's huge.

EILEEN

So is that scream of yours.

Lily looks around.

LILY

Where's Chrissie? She's not in our room.

DOLLY

We should go look for her.

EILEEN

I wouldn't Dolly, you might be mortified by what you find.

LILY

She's safe. She's in Lourdes. Now shush.

Lily looks confused by what Eileen has said.

57

**INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DINING AREA - DAY 5**

57

The beautiful buffet breakfast of, baguettes, butter, jam ham, cheese, fruit and coffee disappoints Eileen. Dolly is with Daniel who is dressed in his communion suit.

EILEEN

There's no tea. No eggs. No sausages.

DOLLY

That's no breakfast at all.

Eileen glances over at Chrissie who is sitting by herself with a bowl of cafe au lait and bread and cheese and says for her benefit.

EILEEN

Must be what it's like in a convent.

DOLLY

I'm going to take this to Daniel.

Chrissie hears her. Offers a little smile but otherwise doesn't react.

Eileen puts a dollop of jam on her plate and tastes it with her finger.

EILEEN  
Blackberry. It's got nothing on  
ours at home.

Dolly tastes the blackberry and offers a taste to Daniel on a spoon.

Eileen holds the plate of Blackberry jam out to Chrissie.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
You want a taste?

Chrissie is wary of the conversation and declines.

CHRISSIE  
No thanks.

Chrissie looks at her, refusing.

EILEEN  
We used to pick blackberries. You,  
me, and Declan. We'd eat them as we  
lay in the grass and brag about the  
future. We were full of  
ourselves...  
(a beat)

The memory settles and begins to float away.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
Declan, you and me...

Eileen moves the conversation on again.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
I never heard ye come in last  
night. You must have been late?

CHRISSIE  
I'm glad I didn't wake you.

EILEEN  
Talking to Fr Dermot?

Chrissie isn't sure where it's going but she has nothing to hide. Chrissie shrugs.

CHRISSIE  
Yes.

And the snide innuendo comes:

EILEEN

A Priest? You always did like a challenge.

Chrissie makes no effort to hide her distaste for Eileen's remark.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

I guess it took a little longer than you thought?

Chrissie gets up from the table to leave. She's not intending to respond to Eileen's bait. Eileen hisses an accusation.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Declan could swim like a fish. You ever wonder why he, of all people, would drown?

57A

**INT/EXT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE - MOMENTS LATER**

57A

Father Dermot herds his flock out the door. We see Eileen. We see Dolly standing with Daniel holding his hand. We see Chrissie. But no Lily.

Chrissie looks around:

CHRISSIE

Where's Lily?

EILEEN

Said she'd catch up to us later.

DOLLY

Her leg was hurtin' this morning.

Chrissie looks back...pauses and turns right around, walking quickly back inside the hotel.

58

**INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/LILY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

58

Chrissie finds Lily lying on the bed with her boots on. A kind of sadness and resignation on her face.

They look at each other. There is an awkwardness.

CHRISSIE

Are you okay?



LILY  
Just me leg. You go ahead, I'll  
catch up with you all later.

Chrissie wonders what to do.

CHRISSIE  
You look pale.

Lily smiles weakly.

LILY  
I must have overdone it yesterday.

Chrissie comes over and instinctively holds Lily's wrist to  
take her pulse. The intimacy is not unnoticed by both. Quiet.

LILY (CONT'D)  
You seem to know what you're doing.  
The child? What happened?

CHRISSIE  
Shh.

Chrissie is not ready for this moment. She assumes her  
professional composure.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
Your pulse is fine. I think we need  
to get you a chair.

LILY  
No.

Chrissie immediately stops the conversation dead.

CHRISSIE  
You have to take it easy on the leg  
today. I'll go fetch a wheelchair.

She goes to walk out. The Angelus rings from the Basilica.

Lily sits realising the past is creeping back to her.

59

**EXT. BATHS/WAITING AREA - MOMENTS LATER**

59

We see Chrissie quickly pushing Lily toward the Baths in a  
BLUE WHEELCHAIR. All around "THE BELLS OF THE ANGELUS" (or  
similar) can be heard ringing from the Basilica. As they join  
Father Dermot and the others, she reasserts her role as  
mother hen:

LILY

Is everyone set now? Everyone ready? Here we go, this is what we came for girls. Be strong no matter what you see. The heartbreak of the world is upon us.

Eileen, Dolly and Daniel are sitting on a bench waiting their turn. Daniel, calm, turns his snow globe over and over, watching the snow fall.

NUNS and VOLUNTEERS help those in need. Their attention is taken by an old irate LATVIAN MAN on a stretcher who frantically grips onto the wooden frame. It is quite obvious he doesn't want to go into the Bath Chambers.

They watch the spectacle, as loud groaning and splashing from the icy cold water is heard coming from behind the DRAPES, behind which are the MIRACULOUS BATHS.

DOLLY

Is that someone... dying?

EILEEN

It's the water. They say it's bitter cold.

DOLLY

Jaysis, I don't know if this is good for Daniel, maybe I'll wait outside for youse.

CHRISSIE

Maybe that's a good idea.

EILEEN

How do you know that's a good idea?

Before Chrissie can answer, EILEEN sees a disabled person go into a cubicle.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

They're not steppin' into the same water as us, are they?

LILY

Course they are.

EILEEN

Ah here, now that's a bit much. What about catchin' infections?

LILY

Ye won't catch anything. No one ever does in Lourdes, sure that's another miracle. Our Lady told everyone to come bathe...

The OLD LATVIAN MAN now in a blue towel bursts out of the chambers, shouting obscenities in a foreign language. A voice in the crowd shouts - IT'S A MIRACLE! A few Pilgrims drop to their knees in prayer. The man is caught by people trying to touch him - to share something of the miracle. He fights them off, terrified.

Dolly and Eileen stand, trying to catch a glimpse of the now apparently fully healed and standing old man. His wife emerges and falls to her knees praying - it could be in gratitude or for help. Eileen gets the fever.

EILEEN

It's a miracle! A miracle! That man's after walking!

Eileen pushes Dolly and Daniel toward the cubicles.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Get him in quick! She's here, Dolly, she's really here. Our Lady is here. We're only here five minutes and there's one already.

Chrissie watches as Dolly blesses herself and drag Daniel with her to the baths. She looks to Lily.

CHRISSIE

You all right?

LILY

I'll wait my turn for redemption

Chrissie nods - and walks away from the chaos toward the quiet of the grotto.

Lily watches Eileen, Dolly and Daniel push through the faithful to the baths.

60

**INT. BATHS/EILEEN'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER**

60

A NUN holds up a sheet and indicates Eileen should take her clothes off. Eileen is a little embarrassed, as she slowly undoes her clothes. She stops. She indicates that the two nuns should turn around. She wraps herself in a large blue towel and removes the rest of her clothes.

61 INT. BATHS/DOLLY'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

61

Dolly and Daniel are both wrapped in blue. Daniel is fretting. A NUN leads Dolly and Daniel up to the top of the steps.

Daniel's anxious. Dolly holds tight to his hand. Off-Screen we hear a mumbled prayer:

NUN 1(O.S.)  
 "Oh Mary, conceived without sin,  
 pray for us who call upon thee".

THE NUN gently prods Dolly to go in.

NUN 1(O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 God be with you.

Dolly steps into the water. Gasps at the cold. She looks to Daniel behind her, pulls him forward.

NUN 1(O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray  
 for us who call upon thee...

Daniel steps forward, his foot touching the water.

61A THIS SCENE HAS BEEN MOVED TO SCENE 78D

61A

62 INT. BATHS/EILEEN'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

62

Mad splashing of water as Eileen tries to get 'used' to it. She is trembling like a leaf, splashing the nuns, as they try to pray the HAIL MARY.

NUN 2  
 Hail Mary, full of Grace..

EILEEN  
 Oooohhh jaysis it's bitter, bitter.  
 Oooohhh, ahhaahh!

She lets herself down, wanting to get her 'lump' under but she bursts up immediately, her mouth open to SCREAM.

63 INT. BATHS/DOLLY'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

63

Daniel has taken one step into the bath when he hears Eileen's bloodcurdling SCREAM and reacts in terror.

63A      **SCENE MOVED TO 78E**      63A

63B      **SCENE MOVED TO 78F**      63B

63C      **EXT. BATHS/WAITING AREA - MOMENTS LATER**      63C

Lily hears Eileen's scream and her eyes go wide as she reacts with alarm. Does she really want to go in?

Nun 1 comes out and beckons for Lily to come forward.

NUN 1  
We're ready.

LILY  
I'm not.

64      **INT. BATHS/EILEEN'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER**      64

Eileen is finishing dressing as she asks the Nun hopefully.

EILEEN  
I believe you had a miracle today.  
The poor crippled man who ran out.

NUN 2  
(laughing)  
Oh no. False alarm. Everyday we  
have one.

EILEEN  
(disappointed)  
Really?

NUN 2  
Everyday! But only the men. Always  
the men.

EILEEN  
But the real miracles like? How  
many a day would you get?

Eileen's hopeful face waiting for the answer. Her hand resting over her lump.

65      **EXT. BATHS/WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS**      65

Eileen comes out of the baths her hair soaking wet.

EILEEN(O.S.)  
(shouting, annoyed)  
Well that's that then!

Eileen walks stridently towards Lily, She's extremely annoyed.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
Well that's that then.

LILY  
What?

EILEEN  
Guess how many miracles there's  
after been?

LILY  
Tell us.

EILEEN  
Sixty-six! Sixty-six!

LILY  
Well that's very good. In one day.

EILEEN  
Not today!

LILY  
The week? Well that's still good!

EILEEN  
Not the week. Since she appeared.  
In 1858!

LILY  
Since 1858?

EILEEN  
Sixty-six.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
Dr. Devlin cures more than that in  
a mornin's surgery.

LILY  
It couldn't be.

EILEEN  
I have to say I'm very  
disappointed, Lily.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Frank was right. It's all a bloody gimmick.

She stomps off.

66

**EXT. GROTTO - SOON AFTER**

66

Chrissie is sitting, watching the devout, taking some comfort in the silence and the quiet devotion of the pilgrims when she sees a child, out of the corner of her eye disappear into a dark alcove of the grotto. Curious, Chrissie approaches slowly.

Chrissie finds Daniel holding his snow globe, turning it over as he watches the snow fall. His face lit up. Calm. Half dressed in the wet shift from the baths and shivering.

CHRISSIE

Are you okay Daniel?

Daniel looks at her. He doesn't try to flee.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)

Can I sit beside you?

Chrissie takes off her coat/cardigan and puts it around him.

DOLLY (O.S.)

Daniel! There you are...

Dolly's shout makes Daniel flinch.

She runs up to them. Daniel scrambles away from her. Grunting. Dolly stops.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

Daniel? Did you say something? Say it again, love. Go on. You can do it. I'm listening.

Daniel's become unresponsive again. His hands frantic.

CHRISSIE

Dolly, leave him a minute -

DOLLY

Say Ma. Ma. Mamamamamma...

Chrissie tries to encourage her to stop.

CHRISSIE

Dolly?

DOLLY

Maybe we should try again, can't we? He only touched the water, if we can get him all the way in?

CHRISSIE

Look at him Dolly, just look. Let him show you how he feels.

Dolly holds Daniel's head close to her.

DOLLY

We're going to work on you Daniel, everyday. Isn't that right? We'll just chat. Talk. That's all we need.

She cradles him tightly.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

I won't give up on you, Daniel. I'll never give up on you.

Daniel rocks with his arms around his knees, hands flapping madly.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

(Heartbroken)

I'm sorry me love, I'm so sorry.

Chrissie pushes the snow globe towards him. He watches the snow fall and begins to calm down.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm a terrible mother.

CHRISSIE

Stop it Dolly. That's not true.

Dolly stares at Daniel. There is a look of distance written across her face; as if suddenly, she doesn't know him.

67

**INT. THE DUNNES - SAME TIME**

67

Martin, Bridget, Patrick, Joan, and Cathy sit around the table. Everyone is unusually quiet. Tense. Watching Frank serve up a stew.

They poke at the bowls in front of them, waiting for someone else to try it first.

FRANK

Now. Eat. I said. Eat.



Frank watches as Martin takes a bite.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Well?

MARTIN

(surprised)

It's good.

FRANK

Stop acting a maggot.

MARTIN

I'm not.

FRANK

You're a bollox.

CATHY

Hardly burnt at all.

Patrick shovels it in.

PATRICK

I thought I'd starve to death  
before Nana got home.

Frank wipes the sweat from his brow.

CATHY

Didn't know you had it in ye.

FRANK

(shocked)

Neither did I.

CATHY

Not as good as ma's now.

FRANK

Course.

Silence as we see the unspoken fretting for Eileen as they quietly eat the stew.

68

**INT. THE HENNESSYS - LATER THAT DAY**

68

George, still in his work clothes, has fallen asleep on the couch with baby Rose asleep on top of him. An empty bottle nearby. The place is a mess.

69

INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DINING AREA - SAME NIGHT

69

Chrissie is leading a big SING-SONG in the dining area. Everyone is drinking and having a grand time, including Father Dermot. Chrissie affectionately sings along with Daniel spinning him around to the music. He loves it.

CHRISSIE

"YOU PUT YOUR RIGHT LEG IN, YOU PUT  
YOUR RIGHT LEG OUT, YOU PUT YOUR  
RIGHT LEG IN AND YOU SHAKE IT ALL  
ABOUT..."

Lily and Eileen sit watching Chrissie. Eileen, tipsy from too much drink, watches how much everyone is enjoying Chrissie.

EILEEN

So now she's St Bernadette all of a sudden! Ah, I don't give a shite anymore!

She rants as she pours more wine for herself.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

(Looking to heaven)  
Raising six children is obviously  
not good enough for some people...

She is emotional, fights it back in.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

And a nursemaid to ten grandkids?!

LILY

Twelve.

EILEEN

Twelve, twelve Lily.  
(getting emotional again)  
I love those little feckers!

CHRISSIE

"AND THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!"

Chrissie's arms in the air, finishing the song. A mighty cheer goes out.

Dolly takes Daniel off to bed

70

SCENE DELETED

70

71 INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

71

Father Dermot looks around for another singer.

FR. DERMOT  
Does anyone else have a song?

LILY  
Give us a song Eileen!

EILEEN  
(privately)  
Ok...Just so we don't have to  
listen to Chrissie Ahearn any  
more...  
(singing)  
"WELL THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN AND  
SHE LIVED IN THE WOODS..."  
"A WHEILA, WHEILA, WHYLA..."  
"SHE HAD A BABY THREE MONTHS OLD."  
"A WHEILA, WHEILA, WHYLA..."  
"SHE HAD A BABY THREE MONTHS OLD  
DOWN BY THE RIVER SAWYER"

Lily is concerned. Father Dermot's face drops.

72 INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DOLLY & EILEEN'S ROOM - SAME TIME 72

Daniel lies on his side, watching his mother.

Dolly sits on her bed. She has the snow globe in her hands,  
turns it over and over, watching the snow fall, calming  
herself.

The SING SONG is heard going on down stairs.

73 INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

73

The shocked face of Father Dermot watching Eileen loudly sing  
along with everyone in the room. By now, all the woman in the  
hall are a bit drunk and the mood has shifted from playful  
verging on rowdy. He downs his whiskey.

EILEEN (O.S.)  
SHE HAD A PENKNIFE LONG AND SHARP.  
"A WHEILA, WHEILA, WHYLA..."

Eileen looking directly at Chrissie

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
 "ARE YOU THE WOMAN THAT KILLED THE  
 CHILD,  
 A WHEILA, WHEILA, WHYLA..."

Lily is horrified

Lily  
 Stop Eileen! That's enough.

Eileen turns to see Father Dermot standing up shocked, his face a bit too red from a bit too much drink. He's in a panic and embarrassed, having clearly lost control of his flock.

FR. DERMOT  
 You can't sing that song here?!

EILEEN  
 The WHEILA, WHYLA! Do ye not like  
 it, Father? Were you never a child?  
 We used to skip to it.

FR. DERMOT  
 This is Lourdes, Eileen!

Wrong answer...

EILEEN  
 Lourdes is it? Don't you dare  
 lecture me, laddie. Draggin' people  
 half way around the world to  
 disappoint them when there's no  
 miracles! It's all a sham. A con!  
 And you're a con man!

Lily tries to close the conversation down.

LILY  
 Eileen, up to bed we go, come on.

EILEEN  
 (simmering with rage)  
 To see you pally'n around with  
 Chrissie Ahearn...

She points at Chrissie.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
 Who's a sinner of the first  
 order...

FR. DERMOT

Well if you ladies will excuse  
me...

Embarrassed, Father Dermot tries to quietly get up and leave.

LILY

Eileen enough! I can't believe yis.  
Goin' on like corner boys at  
Lourdes.

Eileen is filled with instant drunken regret.

EILEEN

I'm sorry Lily. I just want to go  
home to me kids.

LILY

Apologies, Father.

Just when we think it has calmed down, Eileen turns on  
Chrissie.

EILEEN

You're the devil's spawn you  
are...rebuking people...spreadin'  
your regret...

Chrissie's voice is clear and powerful:

CHRISSIE

The hate in you is a sickness,  
Eileen.

LILY

Stop! Stop!

EILEEN

Why did you go away and never come  
back?

CHRISSIE

Go away? I was banished Eileen. You  
were there, you remember. And who  
was it who told her about my  
pregnancy. You were my best  
friend... You were the only one I  
told.

EILEEN

Why couldn't you just give the baby  
to the nuns as you was told!

LILY  
That's enough, Eileen!

EILEEN  
Don't you start with me. You.  
Pretending all these years it was  
an accident. Go on believing that  
if you want. It's the guilt that  
killed Declan. You'd both killed  
him with guilt.

CHRISSIE  
I put no guilt on him...

Lily grabs Father Dermot's arm and says sheepishly:

LILY  
Apologies, Father.

FR. DERMOT  
Given her circumstances at present,  
it's hardly surprising.

Chrissie realises that Eileen has something wrong, but before  
she can say anything Daniel tugs her skirt.

JUMP CUT TO:

74

**INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/DOLLY & EILEEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS**

74

**LATER**

Lily, Eileen and Chrissie are in the room comforting Dolly  
whose eyes are red from crying.

Dolly checks that Daniel is asleep. Turns to the women.

DOLLY  
I can't live with what I done I  
just can't live with it.

CHRISSIE  
Dolly, listen to me. Take a deep  
breath. Just breathe.

Dolly begins to cry.

DOLLY  
I have to make a confession!

EILEEN  
Go get Father Dermot...

LILY

He'll never come after all that.

EILEEN

Find another priest...there's no shortage of 'em here...

DOLLY

I have to confess me sin.

LILY

What sin, Dolly?

DOLLY

I ruined him, I ruined him!

LILY

Ah, it's hard not to spoil them...

DOLLY

I have to see a priest...it was my fault and I never said a word.

LILY

What's your fault Dolly?

EILEEN

What did you do to him Dolly? Did you smack him. Look we all do that, you get overwhelmed.

DOLLY

(sobbing)

No. The trauma. In the womb. What I done on him.

(beat)

Don't hate me!

LILY

We'd never hate you Dolly.

EILEEN

What did you do?

DOLLY

I tried to miscarry him...

EILEEN

Old wives tales Dolly. None of them work. Between ourselves, I threw meself down the stairs more times than I had hot dinners, and still thank God they came out the same way. What one did you do Dolly?

DOLLY

I can't...

LILY

Best to get it off your chest  
Dolly. You'll see yourself it's  
probably nothin'. How did you try?

CHRISSIE

Leave her alone. She doesn't want  
to say.

DOLLY

But I want to tell, I have to  
confess...

CHRISSIE

You don't have to.

EILEEN

(loaded at Chrissie)  
The guilt is killin' her. Isn't it  
Dolly?

Dolly nods.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

See! Go on Dolly love...

DOLLY

I filled up the bath with water...

CHRISSIE

Dolly, don't tell them...

EILEEN

You can tell us Dolly. She knows  
nothin' about raisin' children.

Eileen stares directly at Chrissie:

EILEEN (CONT'D)

She looks down the nose of us  
raisin' families like it's not good  
enough!

Eileen resumes crisis management mode, turning to Dolly.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

You filled the bath up Dolly, then  
what happened?



DOLLY  
It was freezin' Just like today.  
Then I got the whiskey...

LILY  
Whiskey?

DOLLY  
Five bottles!

LILY/EILEEN  
Five bottles!...

EILEEN  
You could have killed yourself  
drinkin' five bottles of whiskey!

DOLLY  
I didn't drink them.

LILY  
What did you do with them then?

DOLLY  
I poured it in the bath.

LILY  
What did you do that for?

DOLLY  
You know why! I sat in it to make  
it pass. That's how I know I did it  
to him.

LILY  
You didn't do anything, Dolly. It's  
God's will. Sure he's perfect,  
Daniel, the way God intended, and  
sure who are we to question.

CHRISSIE (O.C.)  
You didn't do it, Dolly.

They turn and see Chrissie is shaking.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)  
(Turning, fiercely)  
Because it has to be boiling water!

There is a stunned silence of apprehension in the room.

DOLLY  
But how do you know Chrissie?

CHRISSIE

Because when I finally made it off that boat, when I finally made it to Boston my landlady... she knew I was throwing up every day. She told me I couldn't stay unless I went..... I think she was used to girls like me..... she gave me a name and address just a few blocks away. This large woman, she gave me some pills, she made me drink something. She did what she had to do, and put me in a bathtub. Believe me it has to be boiling water.

She becomes emotional. There is a silence of empathy.

Chrissie is filled by a deep defiant pain. There is a silence of shock yet compassion. Eileen looks at Chrissie. Eileen, clearly and deeply moved, gets up and goes over to Chrissie.

The room is silent. No one dare speak.

DOLLY

(deeply moved)

Chrissie. Thank you.

Chrissie looks on, lost.

75

**INT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE/LILY'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

75

Lily and Chrissie are in bed, looking up at the ceiling.

LILY

Can I ask you something...

Chrissie turns to her.

LILY (CONT'D)

Did you ever meet someone after Declan? Someone special?

CHRISSIE

No.

LILY

Did you ever want to have a family?

CHRISSIE

I would have liked children but...  
I was damaged from that procedure.  
I almost died.

A beat.

Lily glances to Chrissie. Looks back at the ceiling.

LILY

Oh Jesus Chrissie I'm sorry.  
Would you take me to the baths,  
Chrissie? In the morning? Would you  
take me?

76        **SCENE DELETED**        76

77        **SCENE DELETED**        77

78        **EXT. LOURDES - LATER THAT MORNING**        78

The town of Lourdes, the Basilica reflecting the morning sun.

78B       **EXT. BATHS/WAITING AREA - MOMENTS LATER**       78B

We see Chrissie quickly pushing Lily toward the Baths in a BLUE WHEELCHAIR. All around "The BELLS OF THE ANGELUS" can be heard ringing from the Basilica.

They arrive at the front of the baths. There are no crowds yet. Lily and Chrissie look at each other in silence.

Lily looks at the door to the baths, feeling a rush of anxiety. As if the truth might drown her.

LILY

Eileen was only doing what she thought  
was best for ye. Same as your Ma. We  
all were.  
(a beat)  
Declan told me yous' were leaving.

NUN

Are you coming?

LILY

Chrissie... I don't think there's  
anything in there for me...

CHRISSIE

Shall we find out?

A NUN opens the door to the baths. She looks at them.

Lily quips to Chrissie.

LILY  
You'd think she was St. Peter.

A beat before Lily says -

LILY (CONT'D)  
He loved you. He wanted to marry  
you, have the baby together. I was  
a fool. I shouldn't have meddled.  
(beat)  
It's because of me he's dead.

Lily chokes up. Chrissie reaches out to her.

CHRISSIE  
Lily -

LILY  
- we lied to him. We were  
ashamed. And we lied. Told him  
you'd gone to America, for a  
"better" life. Said you were done  
with him. It destroyed him.

Silence.

LILY (CONT'D)  
I destroyed him as sure as I gave him  
life.

Lily turns to Chrissie directly:

LILY (CONT'D)  
I'm old Chrissie. And I'll be dying  
soon enough.

Lily looks back to the baths, and the Nun who is loitering  
inside the door.

LILY (CONT'D)  
And if it's as cold as Eileen says it  
is, that could be very soon.

With determination now, Lily beckons for the Nun to come push  
her into the baths.

She goes, leaving Chrissie alone.

ANOTHER NUN arrives at the door and looks to Chrissie.  
Gestures for her to come forward.

We follow Chrissie toward the baths.

78C      **INT. LILY'S CUBICLE, LOURDES - CONTINUOUS**      78C

LILY looks at the pool of water. She reaches up to clutch the hand of the NUN as she rises from the wheelchair and walks toward the water.

78D      **INT. CHRISSIE'S CUBICLE, LOURDES - CONTINUOUS**      78D

Chrissie enters the small private bath cubicle. She looks around, absorbs what she sees as she walks tentatively over to the still, dark pool, then pauses deep in thought. She looks down, seeing her own reflection staring back at her... Chrissie closes her eyes and with a leap of faith... wades into the water.

78E      **SCENE DELETED**      78E

78F      **INT. CHRISSIE'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER**      78F

Chrissie sits dripping wet. She's wondering how she feels and reflecting on what Lily has told her. She trembles. She looks deeply vulnerable. Like she hasn't felt since she was 17.

78G      **EXT. BATHS/WAITING AREA - MOMENTS LATER**      78G

Outside the baths. Lily is sat in her wheelchair and Chrissie is sat on a bench beside her. Both are silent. Reflective.

LILY  
Anything happen for you?

CHRISSIE  
No.

LILY  
No. Nor me.

CHRISSIE  
I'm not sure exactly what I was meant to feel.

LILY  
Cold.

Chrissie finds a small smile.

LILY (CONT'D)

I was hoping she might come to me...  
(pointing to baths)  
In there.

CHRISSIE

The Virgin Mary?

LILY

No! Your mother. Maureen. Thought she might let me know what to be expecting... when I get there!

Lily smiles ruefully.

LILY (CONT'D)

I don't suppose I deserved that. Sometimes, I think I haven't believed, properly, you know? Not since Declan. Never had the heart to say that to your mother.

CHRISSIE

(with fondness now)

No. Well. You wouldn't have wanted to take that from her. She loved it... all the hocus pocus.

Lily crosses herself.

Chrissie is watching her, a little amused.

LILY

Well. You still *hope*, don't you? Even when you're not completely sure?

Chrissie reflects.

CHRISSIE

Peace. That's what I feel here. That's more than I could have hoped for.

A beat.

LILY

I'm glad you came. Maureen would have been so proud. Chrissie. I know I'm asking too much. I need your forgiveness. Will you forgive me?

Chrissie looks at her....absorbing. Deciding.

Yes.

She forgives Lily with a gentle kiss to her cheek, and brushes her tear away.

79

**EXT. HOTEL DE BERNADETTE - DAY**

79

Fr. Dermot stands by the door of the Coach as Chrissie helps Lily up the steps.

Eileen dragging her suitcase comes face to face with Fr. Dermot.

EILEEN

I'm sorry, Father for last night.  
I'm not taking it back but.

He smiles kindly.

FR. DERMOT

(whispering)

Your - you know what - I gather the  
baths didn't help?

Eileen takes a moment, Shakes her head.

FR. DERMOT (CONT'D)

You don't come to Lourdes for a  
miracle, Eileen. You come for the  
strength to go on when there is no  
miracle.

Eileen nods and gets on the coach.

80

**INT./EXT. COACH/HOTEL DE BERNADETTE - CONTINUOUS**

80

Eileen steps onto the coach. She looks down the isle and sees the empty seats. She sees Chrissie seated by herself near the back. She begins to walk down the isle slowly - their eyes locked on each other - each trying to decode the others eyes and intention.

Eileen reaches Chrissie. Stops. Eileen's eyes ask if she can sit down next to Chrissie.

Chrissie moves over - it's a gesture of consent. Eileen smiles weakly and sits.

Both women stare straight ahead waiting for the other to make the first move. Eileen fills the silence - talking as she looks for what she really wants to say.

Dolly and Daniel board the coach and sit in the front.

EILEEN

Chrissie I loved you. I loved you  
and you left.

Chrissie is quiet.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

So I hated you. I didn't want to  
hate you but I did.

Eileen qualifies her words...it's almost an apology...

EILEEN (CONT'D)

But I never hated you as much as I  
loved you.

(a beat)

And that's what God's punishing me  
for...the hate...I know that's what  
it is...

Chrissie looks at her quizzically.

CHRISSIE

Punishing you?

EILEEN

I've a lump. On my breast. Just  
here.

Eileen touches the lump.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

There'll be no miracle for me.

Chrissie sees how scared Eileen is.

CHRISSIE

What's the doctor say?

Eileen doesn't answer.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)

Have you been to a doctor?

Eileen looks at her, an unspoken "no" on her face and terror  
in her eyes.

EILEEN

Why can't people like us have  
miracles? Why can't I have a  
miracle? I go to mass. I came to  
Lourdes.



Chrissie laces her fingers into Eileen's - a gesture of reconciliation - before she says quietly and reassuringly.

CHRISSIE

We'll go together...to the doctor.  
We'll find you the best one and  
I'll be with you.

Eileen touches her face. She'd say: "I love you all over again" if she had the courage to do it.

Chrissie takes Eileen's hand and has it guide her hand to the lump.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)

Does it hurt?

EILEEN

Yes. It's bad isn't it?

CHRISSIE

(relieved)  
No. That's hopeful..

Eileen's terror starts to lighten.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)

Are you losing weight?

EILEEN

Does it look like I've lost weight,  
you cow?

Chrissie smiles.

CHRISSIE

And that's a very very good sign.

Eileen's face begins to show hope and we know that they will laugh again...together.

EILEEN

Thank God for that.

DISSOLVE TO:

80A SCENE DELETED

80A

81 SCENE DELETED

81

82 SCENE DELETED

82

83            INT/EXT. COACH/HOLY CROSS CHURCH, DAY 7            83

The sky is an all too familiar unforgiving grey as the Coach navigates through the narrow streets of Dublin, and pulls up by the church.

84            INT. COACH - CONTINUOUS            84

Daniel's in a hurry to get off the bus. Dolly remains seated. The only one. Chrissie stops to let Dolly out into the aisle.

                                CHRISSIE

                                Dolly?

Eileen at the doors, stops.

                                DOLLY

                                George told me if I went to Lourdes that I shouldn't bother coming back. I thought if we had a miracle and Daniel talked then he'd forgive me.

The women look at each other. This one is too familiar and too hard.

                                CHRISSIE

                                I'm sure he didn't mean it.

Eileen looks to Chrissie. They're very afraid he did. Daniel comes back on to the bus. Squeezes through the women. He grabs a handful of Dolly's skirt and pulls.

                                DOLLY

                                Okay, okay. I'm coming.

He keeps pulling.

                                DOLLY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

                                (to the women)

                                Wish me luck.

Dolly stands up, straightens her clothes. Puts on a brave face.

85            EXT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - CONTINUOUS            85

Dolly climbs off the bus and stops dead. George, with Rose in his arms and a tear in his eye, is waiting for Dolly on the steps of the church. Dolly runs into his arms and he embraces her. Eileen and Chrissie watch, relieved.

GEORGE  
Terrible quiet without ye.

George sees Daniel watching.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Howarye son. D'you enjoy yerself?

Daniel pulls on him, shows him his globe.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
That is something.

Dolly takes Rose from George who bends down to look at him face to face. Watches the snow fall.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
What's up, son?

DOLLY  
He wants to go home.

GEORGE  
You look different?

DOLLY  
You too.

After a moment, Daniel smiles, pulls on him.

85A

**EXT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER**

85A

Eileen gets off the coach, kisses her kids and grandkids who swarm around her, delighted to see them. Frank is overjoyed to see Eileen. He rushes to help carry her heavy suitcase, treating her like royalty.

FRANK  
Let a man at that, would ye.

She's slow to hand it over, wary of what's going on.

EILEEN  
Frank, what have you done?

FRANK  
Tryin' to make you happy...

EILEEN  
Happy?

Eileen tries to fight back her tears.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
 What do you mean "happy"?

FRANK  
 Happy.

Frank laughs and suddenly gives her a tight squeeze.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
 Good to have you back. I made the  
 stew.

EILEEN  
 (gobsmacked)  
 A what? Better than mine?

She looks at Frank.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
 I had a miracle.

FRANK  
 What?

EILEEN  
 Yeah. I actually missed you.

Frank gets very teary.

86

**EXT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER**

86

Tommy approaches. LILY and TOMMY look at each other. Lily smiles at his disheveled appearance.

LILY  
 Still alive?

TOMMY  
 Just about. Thought I'd hang  
 around. Wanted to see your face  
 again.

LILY  
 I'm just going off to see you know  
 who.

Lily kisses him tenderly. He takes her case. Lily turns and catches Chrissie's eye as she gets off the bus. She smiles.

LILY (CONT'D)  
 Come on.

Chrissie moves to be in the centre of the gathered community. Daniel moves close to Chrissie. He looks up at her. Then away. Daniel watches Chrissie and Lily walk away.

DANIEL

Bye Chrissie, bye Lily.

Music rises at the camera ascends into the sky, looking down on the happy community that have come *home*. Lily and Chrissie walking down the road.

87        **SCENE DELETED**        87

88        **SCENE DELETED - MOVED TO 85A**        88

89        **EXT. BALLYGAR SEAWALL - MOMENTS LATER**        89

CHRISSIE catches up with Lily, holds her arm to assist her.

As they walk, kids are playing on the beach.

LILY and Chrissie stand looking at the shrine in the seawall, amongst the rocks. The ceramic picture of nineteen year old Declan.

Chrissie, never having seen this shrine, is deeply moved.

Chrissie stands and looks at Lily.

The sea behind glistens in the evening light, the water silhouetting them as they embrace.

The tears flow.

THE END

**SCENE DELETED**