COMPRESSION

Written By

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1. BLACK SCREEN

We hear a low-frequency mechanical groaning. Sparks of electricity are heard woven into the sound scape.

The static gets more distorted and cacophonous, then it fizzles out.

2. EXT. PARK - DAY

We drop in on a still shot of a group of young boys, around 8 years old, playing a game of five aside football on a large patch of grass. A football coach, around 18, oversees and acts as a referee.

People walk past on a concrete path in the background, some watching the kids, some ignoring. Some also sit on benches, overlooking the game and the park.

The kids shout as they chase each other for the ball, at points the coach interjects and prepares for free kicks.

Amongst the people walking around in the background, is a pale, 7 foot tall, lanky middle-aged man wearing a custom made black hoodie and skinny jeans. He goes to sit on a bench and watches the boys play football.

Some of the kids turn their heads to him, but continue playing. A woman with a dog walks past him, the dog seems frightened and attempts to avoid him.

'COMPRESSION'

3. EXT. STREET - DAY

ABEL, a suited mixed-race landlord in his late thirties, rides his bike, a water bottle attached to it, down a bike lane on a London street, near Angel. He wears a helmet.

4. EXT. BLOCK OF FLATS - DAY

Abel stands outside a flat and knocks on the door. He checks his phone, then bangs on it again.

ABEL
Abbie? It's Abel, Abel Aarlemann.

The door opens. A slim woman in her late thirties wearing a Disney hoodie answers. She seems flustered.

ABBIE
You all right?

ABEL
Yeah, good thanks, I've just come to check on the flat, this bit of mould?

ABBIE
Yes, yes.

ABEL
Is it all right if I come in?

ABBIE
Yep. Come on.

He enters the flat. There is a small amount of clutter on the floor.

5. INT. ENTRANCE, ABBIE'S FLAT - DAY - (CONTINUOUS)

Abel is hit with a strong scent.

ABEL
Oh Christ.

He covers the bottom half of his face.

ABBIE
Yeah sorry, it's the drying clothes. I've used my weekly allowance on febreeze and shit. Ha.

6. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABBIE'S FLAT - DAY - (CONTINUOUS)

They enter into the tiny living room. There is a clothesline above the mantle with many different items of clothes hanging from it. Cans of energy drinks fill the space on the coffee tables, as well as an empty bottle of Vodka on the floor.

Abel looks up at the clothesline.

ABEL
Is that a good idea? I think I've found the culprit--

ABBIE
They're all dry--

ABEL
What do you mean they're all dry, why would you hang them up then?

ABBIE
To stop the mould.

ABEL
So it's under there.

ABBIE
No the worst is here.

Abbie points to the other corner of her room. There is a patch of dark mould on the ceiling.

ABEL
Right. I don't think I've got anything for that.

ABBIE
Of course you don't. Why are you here?

He then scans the rest of the flat. There are other pieces of clothing plastered on the ceiling and high on the wall.

ABEL
I just need to see what I'm dealing with.
(beat)
So that? What's that, it reeks, honestly. This is not drug shit is it?

ABBIE
No I'm sober.

ABEL
Why would you tell me otherwise, I'd just send you back to hospital.

ABBIE
I wasn't in hospital.

ABEL
Sorry. I don't care. Go nuts, just don't do it in here, please
(beat)
Been having some people over?

ABBIE
Oh just the family.

ABEL
Immediate or...distant?

He inspects the walls. She throws herself on her sofa.

He sees a lighter on the kitchenette, but thinks only little of it.

ABEL
And you've been good?

She nods. He puts his hands in his pockets.

ABEL
Look. Is it okay if I check there are no drugs here?

Abbie looks at him.

ABEL
It'll be quick, just for my sanity. I don't allow it and I don't want your…facility to think I'm enabling.

ABBIE
How are you enabling it?

There's a silence.

ABEL
Please Abbie. Can I just quickly check each room to see if there are no class A drugs in view. I won't check your drawers, your cabinets.

ABBIE
This is a bit invasive, no?

ABEL
That's why I'm asking.

Abbie nods.

ABEL
Can I have a look in the bathroom?

ABBIE
Yeah, go on.

Abel saunters out the living room. Abbie jumps up and follows him.

7. INT. BATHROOM, ABBIE'S FLAT - DAY

The light turns on. The bathroom is well-kept, except for the mess of makeup and skin products lining the edges of the sink.

He looks around, with Abbie on his shoulder, opening a cupboard behind the mirror and peeping inside the bathtub. He takes a few photos, then turns off the light and shuts the door.

8. INT. BEDROOM, ABBIE'S FLAT - DAY

Abel opens the door, turns the light on, then quickly turns it off.

9. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABBIE'S FLAT - DAY

Abel stands over Abbie, who lies on the sofa. A dufflebag sits in view, violently mindful of its surroundings.

ABEL
Who was here yesterday?

ABBIE
My sister and my three brothers.

ABEL
Ah nice.

ABBIE
My sister actually just gave birth.

ABEL
Oh really? Well pass on my congratulations.

Abbie seems to be jittering, almost terrified.

ABBIE
They're coming here again, to stay the night. Tonight.

ABEL
Okay. That's nice.
(beat)
Well, gonna shoot off now. Thank you, Abbie.

ABBIE
Thank...yourself.

ABEL
The place looks good, but honestly if those clothes are wet don't hang it on the wall, it's gonna damage and make the mould even worse...

ABBIE
They're dry don't worry.

ABEL
I'll send someone to look at it.

ABBIE
Again?

ABEL
What do you want me to do?

ABBIE
No it's fine.

He makes toward the front door.

ABEL
All right. Okay, take care Abbie.

ABBIE
You too, you too.

10. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abel at a glass table with his laptop and an earpiece. His wife GRACE sits across him on a corner sofa. They both sip a glass of wine.

ABEL
I mean--
(beat)
I don't think I'm being unreasonable.

GRACE
No...

ABEL
Because, you know straight out the gate, this fucking miasma of potent chemicals hitting me-

GRACE
Does she still do it?

ABEL
I don't know, but like hitting me yeah?

GRACE
Yeah..

ABEL
And...and I do think she's still doing it. She didn't look clean she was itching at her skin.

GRACE
You going to evict her?

ABEL
Why would I? I think it's a bit disrespectful but…
(beat)
I can't evict her.

GRACE
Patrick said he saw her outside school.

ABEL
How does-

GRACE
I don't know. Ask him in the morning apparently she was in a crowd of people-

ABEL
No how does he know Abbie?

GRACE
Apparently a lot of people do.

ABEL
Town crackhead?

GRACE
Yeah.

ABEL
What was she doing?

GRACE
He said she was with a group of people and they were screaming at some police officer or something. Crying.

11. INT. PATRICK'S ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abel creeps into PATRICK's room, his nine-year old son, who is sleeping. He walks to his side of the bed and kneels down, staring at him.

Patrick opens his eyes.

ABEL
Caught you.

Abel smiles.

PATRICK
What?

ABEL
Are you all right? How was school?
(beat)
You weren't sleeping, you never are.

PATRICK
It was good.

ABEL
Mum says you saw Abbie today.

Patrick rubs his eyes.

ABEL
You know Abbie? Can you tell me what she was doing?

PATRICK
Dad.

ABEL
Then I'll leave you.

They look at each other. Abel flips the sheets and finds a Nintendo Switch on low brightness under the covers. He takes it.

PATRICK
Dad!

ABEL
It's fine. I want...just tell me, yeah.

PATRICK
The pregnant woman?

ABEL
The woman shouting outside school.

PATRICK
Dad...?

ABEL
Yeah.

PATRICK
You know how you let people live in your houses?

ABEL
Yes.

PATRICK
Why have we never been to them?

ABEL
Your mum has.

PATRICK
Can I see one?

ABEL
Yeah at some point.
(beat)
Go to sleep, yeah?

He takes the Switch away.

PATRICK
Dad! I need to charge it. I need to charge it.

ABEL
I'll charge it. Go to sleep.

Abel stands and walks out the room.

12. EXT. STREET - DAY

Abel rides down the street on his bike. He rides beside traffic on a carriageway.

13. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Standing outside a minuscule house in an alleyway is ELISA, a Congolese woman in her early thirties, holding her healthy baby, ROCCO, of three months. Rocco's babygrow is inside out.

Abel rides down the alleyway on his bike, and dismounts.

ABEL
Morning. Elisa?

Elisa flashes a smile.

ELISA
Yes.

He parks his bike against the wall.

ABEL
Welcome.

14. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

We see a fuse box in the living room of a cramped house.

ABEL
So do you know how to use a fuse box?

ELISA
This?

ABEL
Yes this is a fuse box.

We see Abel with Elisa.

They stand in a tiny living room, the front door beside them and a minuscule kitchen connected to it. There is a small flight of stairs at the side of the room, going to the two bedrooms upstairs. The sofa is covered with a plastic sheet.

There is a cot in the corner of the room. A baby, ROCCO, sleeps in it.

ELISA
Fuse box?

ABEL
You see if a light goes out in the house, a fuse is blown, and you can't turn it back on, you come here and you'll find one of these switches are switched off. You just have to switch it on and the lights will turn on.

Elisa looks at the fuse box.

ELISA
Okay.

ABEL
Okay?

ELISA
Okay.

ABEL
You understand?

ELISA
Yes.

ABEL
Okay, great. So kitchen's there, as you can see. If there's any problems with the water, you just let me know. Um, electricity as well.

Rocco starts crying.

ABEL
Right, you have my number. You just let me know if you have any issues okay?

ELISA
Okay.

ABEL
Okay.

ELISA
Thank you.

He leaves the house. Elisa looks around it. It's almost squalid; there are boxes everywhere, it's severely cramped.

She looks to the baby in the cot and walks toward it. There lies the baby. She takes him in her arms.

ELISA
(in French)
Are you hungry? You've got me, my beautiful.

15. INT. TOP FLOOR, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisa walks up the tight staircase, which creaks severely.

16. INT. MASTER BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

She enters the master bedroom. It is dusty and empty apart from a bed frame.

17. INT. BATHROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

She enters the bathroom. Mould spores line the shower and there is damp on the ceiling.

18. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisa sits on the sofa, on Facetime with her brother FRANCK.

FRANCK
(on Phone, in French)
And mum's been crying again.

ELISA
(in French)
Is she still worried about us?

FRANCK
(in French)
Yes, of course. Always.

ELISA
(in French)
We are safe. I worry about her a lot. And you.

FRANCK
(in French)
We have things under control right now Mum hasn't.

Elisa laughs.

ELISA
(in French)
Tell her I love her. I miss her the scent of her rotten cushions.

Elisa's brother laughs.

FRANCK
What a shame.

ELISA
(in French)
You have told her to get rid of them? Franck.

FRANCK
(in French)
She won't listen.

They both laugh.

ELISA
(in French)
How's the um, the money?

FRANCK
(in French)
I should be able to cover you for around three weeks.

ELISA
(in French)
That's fine.

FRANCK
(in French)
Do you know when your Universal credit is coming in?

ELISA
(in French)
I just sent off my application before I moved in, they say it might take three to five weeks.

FRANCK
(in French)
It should be fine. I'll pray for you all, Elisa.

19. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Elisa scrolls on her phone, looking at TikToks she has done with her son, DANIEL.

Most seem to be taken in a big industrialist-looking room, and they all consist of her and her son dancing to trending songs.

20. EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

OMINOUS MUSIC PLAYS

We see Abbie walking down the street by the school, her hands in her pockets, sniffling. She paces up and down the road, almost as if she were mustering courage.

She wipes her face with her sleeve and walks into a chicken shop on the street.

21. INT. CHICKEN SHOP - DAY

A group of kids, a young carer and mother CELESTE, her son MICHAEL (8) and Elisa's son DANIEL (8) queue up at the shop. Abbie walks in and approaches Celeste.

ABBIE
Sorry, could I just ask if you could buy me a meal or something?

Celeste looks at her.

CELESTE
Um.

ABBIE
Please, I'm about to be kicked out my house, please.

CELESTE
Sorry, I've got no cash.

ABBIE
Are you a mother?

Celeste shields Daniel

CELESTE
No, no sorry.

ABBIE
Just some chicken, some chips please?

Celeste ponders.

CELESTE
Okay.

ABBIE
Aw thanks, thanks so much, oh my God.

Abbie walks outside.

22. EXT. CHICKEN SHOP, HIGH STREET - DAY

Abbie waits by the door, sniffling and coughing as if she were crying. She takes out her phone and makes a call.

ABBIE
Hi, it's me.
(beat)
Yeah, I can't... I can't go in there any more.

Kids inside the chicken shop peer at Abbie through the window.

ABBIE
Nah.
(sniffles)
It's too much. It's too much now. Have you left?
(beat)
Yeah.
(beat)
I'm just eating now. Yeah.
(beat)
Okay, see you later, love you yeah?
(beat)
I love you.

She hangs up and plants her face in her hands.

ABBIE
(under breath)
Fuck.

Celeste comes out with Daniel, both holding a box of wings and chips. She gives one to Abbie.

CELESTE
Here.

ABBIE
Oh God, thank you so much. Thank you.

Celeste walks away with Daniel and Michael. Abbie begins eating.

23. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Celeste knocks on the front door, with Daniel and Michael. Elisa answers.

CELESTE
Hello Elisa.

ELISA
Aw, hello.

Daniel runs into his mother's arms.

CELESTE
Is this your new place?

ELISA
Yes, do you want to come in?

CELESTE
Let me have a look at it.

Celeste walks in.

24. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Celeste seems puzzled at first glance. Michael and Daniel rush to the sofa and turn on the TV.

ELISA
Sorry there are boxes everywhere.

CELESTE
What's upstairs?

ELISA
Two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Celeste nods and looks around. She spots the crib in the corner of the room.

CELESTE
Oh my God, is this your little one?

ELISA
Yes.

She walks over to it and looks in.

ELISA
He's called Rocco.

CELESTE
Oh how cute.

She pinches his face.

CELESTE
Why is the cot in the living room?
You should definitely move it
upstairs.

ELISA
I've been meaning too.

CELESTE
How old is he?

ELISA
Just three months.

CELESTE
Oh my God. Such a precious boy.

They gaze at Rocco for a while.

CELESTE
Daniel was telling me he wants to play Sunday league.

ELISA
What is that?

CELESTE
Football on a Sunday. Michael does it.

ELISA
Oh yes that'll be great--

We see Michael and Daniel watching TV.

25. INT. PATRICK'S ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Patrick plays with his switch on his bed. The lights are off and the curtains are opened to see a vast sunset.

26. INT. EN-SUITE, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Abel stands naked in the mirror, having just come out of the shower. Easy-listening, classical music blasts from his phone on the sink.

27. INT. ENTRANCE, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Dressed in a gown, Abel strolls to his front door and picks up some post from the doormat.

GRACE(OFF SCREEN)
Yeah I'm really conflicted because-
(beat)
No yeah because I love my living room being filled with light, if I put boards up I won't even want to sit in it-

He opens one letter and reads it briefly. His face sours, his eyebrows protrude from his face.

ABEL
Fuck. FUCK!

GRACE(OFF SCREEN)
Abel?

He rushes into the living room.

28. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Grace is sitting on the sofa wearing woolly lounge-wear. Abel bursts in holding the letter.

GRACE
Do you think we should board up these windows, Abel?

He reads over the letter.

GRACE
Abel? What's that letter?

He looks up at her.

ABEL
What is it?

GRACE
What's that letter?

ABEL
What did you say before?

GRACE
Do you think we should board up those windows? Natasha had her windows smashed in the middle of the night last week.

ABEL
What really?

GRACE
Yeah, it's horrible.

29. INT. POST MORTEM ROOM

A deceased 9 month old sits on an operating table, surrounded by a pathologist. The child is grey, almost blue, with white eyes.

30. INT. WHITE ROOM

Abbie sits, her face red with tears. She picks at her finger tips, peeling skin off frantically. Beside her is her lawyer comforting her.

31. INT. SOLICITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Abel sits facing his solicitor, MIKEL, in a clean but dingy room in a law firm.

MIKEL
Well, there are many different directions we can take depending on your desired outcome.

ABEL
Mik I want you to tell me what to do, I really don't have time--

MIKEL
A baby has died with all due respect.
(beat)
This is one of the most serious claims of landlord negligence that I've ever done, you could help me out a little bit.

Abel sits back on his chair and contemplates.

ABEL
Yeah, it's easy though isn't it?

Mikel doesn't say anything.

ABEL
I did weekly checks on her, I have a notebook at home that proves my whole innocence. How or why would I ignore an issue that she was so clearly hiding from me?
(beat)
She was a homeless drug addict, she had all basic facilities to her disposal, she was close to the local school, tube station, I didn't even know she had a child-

MIKEL
It was her niece that was dead.

ABEL
A niece, well.
(beat)
Look, I guarantee as soon as the autopsy comes back you can put your feet up, Mik. She's a sick woman, tryna get some money from me, I respect it somewhat--
(looks at Mikel, who is stern)
But obviously not to this degree--

MIKEL
I know Abel.

32. EXT. PARK - DAY

Daniel and Michael are playing five-aside football on the pitch. Celeste and Elisa watch them, sitting and chatting amongst a handful of other parents.

CELESTE(OFF CAMERA)
There's loads of different plants in this park, it's very bio-diverse.

ELISA
I had more plants growing in my bathroom.

CELESTE
Well, of course. I mean no flower, plant here actually comes from here surely. Or at least very few do.

ELISA
Hm, what can grow in such weather?

CELESTE
Exactly.
(beat)
How was your house back home?

ELISA
My house? My house was beautiful I think-

CELESTE
Hm.

ELISA
We had a big patch of land, with my mother and my four brothers with a house in the middle.

CELESTE
Where are you from again?

Elisa smiles.

ELISA
Do you not know?

CELESTE
No.

ELISA
Congo.

CELESTE
Wow lovely.

They sit in a comfortable silence. Elisa catches a glimpse of a tall, pale man whose face is obscured by a large hood.

He is sitting at the other end of the pitch, watching the children.

33. EXT. PARK - DAY (LATER)

Celeste and Elisa walk while their two children, still in their kit, follow them.

CELESTE
When Michael was around six, I'd asked his dad over and over, will you take your son out for his birthday? He'd never respond but I knew he saw the messages.

ELISA
Hm.

CELESTE
But he said yes so when he came to pick Michael up, bear in mind it was his birthday, Michael said something to him about the stench in his car, he said it was like latex, sweat.

ELISA
Oh dear.

CELESTE
Then his dad had a huge go, shouting, 'you don't tell me what I can do in my car,' you know, 'have some respect.'

ELISA
To Michael?

CELESTE
To Michael, to his face.

ELISA
Oh no.

CELESTE
I had to come off work to take him.

ELISA
That's terrible.

CELESTE
I know and look, if you're going to fuck prostitutes in the family car at least give it a wash before you take your son on a birthday trip.

ELISA
Do you know where he was taking him?

CELESTE
Haven't got a clue, job centre?

Elisa gives a small giggle.

ELISA
What's your job?

CELESTE
Oh I'm a social worker-

ELISA
Oh, wow.

CELESTE
But with a focus on adults living with learning difficulties.

ELISA
Do you enjoy it?

CELESTE
Yeah I do, yeah. It really opens your eyes.

ELISA
Hm.

CELESTE
You know I had this idea last night, so also on the side, my friend from secondary school is the editor of the Islington Gazette, the newspaper, sometimes I write little articles in it.

ELISA
Wow, yes.

CELESTE
I was wondering if I could write about you.

ELISA
Oh.

CELESTE
Like how you're finding London, taking refuge here, the events leading up to it. I think it might inspire others. It's a brave journey.

Elisa thinks for a second.

ELISA
Yes of course.

CELESTE
Oh thank you so much, this is such a relief. I hadn't had anything to write about for months.

Elisa looks to Daniel playing with Michael.

34. INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniel is fast asleep in his bed. Surrounding the bed frame are boxes filled with things. He snores lightly.

35. INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The bed is elegantly made. The cot has been moved to the corner of the room, Rocco is gently asleep within it, the light from the window above him shining down.

36. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa sits on the sofa on her phone. She is scrolling TikTok and comes across a video, presumably made with AI, of a series of clips of school children.

VOICE
(eerie, high-pitched)
St Mary's Catholic Primary presents Aladdin, our year six play-

She scrolls. The next video is a clip from a high production podcast featuring a man and a woman.

MAN FROM PODCAST
I mean where do you stand on school uniform because for me I think it's important.

WOMAN FROM PODCAST
Yeah.

MAN FROM PODCAST
It teaches discipline and it puts all students on the same pedestal-

WOMAN FROM PODCAST
Hm.

The woman's face changes slightly, as if it were starting to be altered by AI.

MAN FROM PODCAST
You know it's uncomfortable but-

The man's face begins changing. They stop talking; all audio is cut. We cut to the woman, who is now flashing an enormous, uncanny-like smile. She looks up and begins gyrating. The man's face changes dramatically; he seems confused and almost vexed. The woman falls to the ground and melds into the floor.

Elisa scrolls once more, puzzled by what she had just watched. She looks to the corner of the room, where there is a small pile of envelopes.

She gets up and walks over to it, picking up the pile and reading the names. They are all addressed to a 'MR A. BARTON'

Some letters have the UK government logo in the top corner, others a blank.

The sound of fast-moving footsteps gets louder as Daniel runs down the stairs.

DANIEL
Mummmy, mummy.

He runs into his mother.

ELISA
Daniel, what's wrong?

DANIEL
I'm scared, mummy.

She looks down to her child.

ELISA
Why are you scared?

DANIEL
I'm scared, I think I saw a ghost.

ELISA
Don't be stupid.

DANIEL
It's a shadow in my room. And it moved.

ELISA
It's a shadow, Daniel, probably a tree outside.

DANIEL
But mum, please.

Elisa looks down at the letters. She seems on edge.

ELISA
Please what? The trees move, it's windy tonight.

DANIEL
Can you come sit with me?

ELISA
Go up to my bed, I'll come up soon.

DANIEL
Can you shut the door in my room?

37. INT. STAIRCASE, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa creeps up the staircase, Daniel following behind. She gets to the door to Daniel's room and looks inside. There is a shadow in the corner, but it's not moving.

Daniel runs into his mother's room. Elisa shuts Daniel's door.

38. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The wind is heavy outside. Elisa is on the phone, holding the letters.

ELISA
Hello, Abel?
(beat)
Hi, it's Elisa, your tenant.
(beat)
Yeah, I just realized, well, I saw them before but, there are a lot of letters here for the tenant before me.
(beat)
Yes.
(beat)
Mr A. Barton
(beat)
Well I was just asking if you have his number so I can return them? They seem like quite important letters.

39. INT. BEDROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abel stands topless with his ear to his phone by the window.

ABEL
You can scribble out the address on the front and write return to sender on the envelope. I'm not just going to give you his number. I can let him know and he can come and pick it up if that works with you.
(beat)
Okay?
(beat)
All right. Good night.

He hangs up. We see Grace in bed, on her phone.

GRACE
Was that Mikel?

ABEL
Oh no, no.

Abel gets into bed.

ABEL
It was a tenant.

GRACE
What were they calling about?

ABEL
Nothing. I feel like some of these people have never lived in a house before.

Grace looks at him, then back to her phone.

ABEL
Well?

GRACE
What?

ABEL
It's stressful.

GRACE
Don't you think you're a bit too personal with them? You know you don't ever have to know who they are, really. Like you don't ever have to meet them.

ABEL
Yeah but I like to.

GRACE
You know what I mean, don't be aggressive.

ABEL
Aggressive? Fuck sake.

GRACE
Abel. I'm trying to help.

ABEL
I said fuck sake.

GRACE
You're getting paid, you might as well make it easier for yourself.

ABEL
Are you fucking serious?

GRACE
Abel.

ABEL
What? You don't tell me how to do my job.

Grace's jaw drops.

ABEL
Are you ovulating?

GRACE
Good night.

She turns the light off beside the bed and turns over.

ABEL
(whispering)
Do you hear the wind?

40. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The high street one street away can be heard. Elisa's street is small and is only accessed through a thin road.

At the end of the small street, a couple of yards away, is an entrance to a park.

We hear subtle footsteps amongst the sound of wind blowing through the trees.

An outline of a tall figure, A.BARTON, can be seen in the dark, coming toward us.

As he emerges from the shadows, we see he is the man from the beginning; a pale, balding, hunchback middle aged man.

He walks toward us, then stops and looks up at Elisa's window.

41. INT. HALLWAY, ABEL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Grace waits patiently outside a small toilet under the stairs. Abel comes out wearing lycra and a cycling helmet.

GRACE
You're joking, look at you.

ABEL
What?

GRACE
Are you serious, you're going to court dressed like that!?

ABEL
I told you yesterday.

GRACE
Just get an Uber, Abel, it won't kill you.

ABEL
Grace, I can't be arsed.

Abel goes to put his shoes on.

ABEL
Every fucking time, I hate the fucking train, I hate sitting in another person's car. I like cycling.
(beat)
You actually think I'm walking in dressed like this? You think I have no respect for myself--

GRACE
OKAY! FUCK!

She slams the toilet door.

42. EXT. REGENT'S PARK - MORNING

Fully equipped with cycling gear, a backpack and a helmet, Abel cycles through Regent's Park.

There is congestion, Abel cycles around the cars, and in the corner of his eye he sees a car in the traffic go into the other lane, attempting to bypass the other cars to turn left onto another road.

He cycles into the car's way and stops.

ABEL
No. NO! Turn back! Turn back!

The man is his car signals to Abel to move, but Abel gets off his bike and stands firm.

ABEL
What the fuck do you think you're doing?

Another car stops behind Abel, but behind the junction, in order to allow the car that Abel stopped to turn into it.

ABEL
Look at what you're doing.

The man in the car pokes his head out.

MAN IN CAR
Get the fuck out the way, I'm a doctor, I've got appointments!

ABEL
And I'm due in court you thick fuck, we've all got places to be--

A man in another car calls out.

MAN IN OTHER CAR
Get out the road, you prick!

ABEL
(to the offending car)
Move back, go back!

Abel walks toward the car, pointing. His phone starts ringing. He takes it out and sees it's Elisa. He declines the call.

ABEL
Are you going to keep everyone waiting?

MAN IN CAR
Fuck you, you prick.

The man reverses back into the traffic. Abel turns around to see the person in the car behind him flashing the middle finger.

Abel gets on his bike and cycles off.

43. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Daniel is in his school uniform, Rocco is crying in his cot. Elisa is fiddling with the door lock, which has come off. She holds a phone on her shoulder.

Daniel picks up his jacket and throws it on the floor.

DANIEL
No.

ELISA
Dan Dan, please.

With a screwdriver, she attempts to screw the lock back on, but the wood has been eroded too much and the screws are unable to stay in place.

DANIEL
I don't want to go!

Daniel picks his jacket back up and throws it again.

ELISA
Why not?

She puts the lock down and walks toward a bookshelf in the corner of the room.

DANIEL
I'm sick.

ELISA
You said that yesterday and you're fine
(beat)
Can you move Rocco, please? Move him upstairs.

Daniel stands and sulks. Elisa realizes, picks Rocco up and goes upstairs.

DANIEL
MUMMMM!

She rushes back down and attends to Daniel. He phone starts ringing. She takes it out, whilst helping Daniel with his jacket, and sees it is Abel.

ELISA
Come on.

DANIEL
NO!

ELISA
DANIEL.

She turns him around and puts his jacket on.

ELISA
Get your shoes on.

She answers the call.

ELISA
Hello?

She puts the phone on speaker.

ABEL (ON PHONE)
--really busy so this has to be important--

ELISA
It is, my lock is broken, the front door. It came off.

ABEL (ON PHONE)
Sorry, the front door came off?

ELISA
No the lock, I can't lock the door.

Daniel puts his shoes on very gradually.

ABEL (ON PHONE)
How?

ELISA
I woke up this morning, opened the door and it fell off, I didnt--

ABEL (ON PHONE)
Sorry the lock?

ELISA
The lock, yes.

ABEL (ON PHONE)
I'm sorry I can't do anything now, but I'll call a locksmith in around three hours--

ELISA
Why not now?

ABEL (ON PHONE)
I'm really busy, I literally don't have any time to give to calls-

ELISA
You can't just message?

ABEL (ON PHONE)
No, I'll need to give them a ring. Just stay home for the next couple of hours, okay? Take care.

He hangs up. Elisa looks at Daniel, who has only put one shoe on.

44. EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SCHOOL - MORNING

Elisa takes Daniel to school, pushing Rocco in a pram. Celeste comes up to her.

Elisa says goodbye to Daniel and kisses him on the cheek. He runs off.

CELESTE
Elisa!

Celeste approaches Elisa, who sees her and flashes a grin.

CELESTE
How have you been?

ELISA
Oh, good--

CELESTE
Do you want to get a coffee and chat?

ELISA
Oh, I can't, my front door's broken I need to get it fixed.

CELESTE
Oh no, how?

ELISA
I don't know.

CELESTE
Oh, well I hope your landlord does something--

ELISA
Yes, I've been calling him.

45. INT. COURT ROOM - MORNING

Abel, wearing a tight suit, sits next to Mikel, facing a judge.

ABBIE'S LAWYER (OFF CAMERA)
I think, Mr Aarlemann, it's undeniable what you provide for the underprivileged people of London, but standards are always required, wouldn't you agree?

ABEL
Of course.

ABBIE'S LAWYER (OFF CAMERA)
Could you tell us what property my client was renting from you.

ABEL
Number 66, Pendleton Gardens.

ABBIE'S LAWYER (OFF CAMERA)
And how would you define the place?

Abel hesitates.

ABEL
Cosy...Functional.

Mikel cringes slightly. We see Abbie's lawyer, a man in his fifties.

ABBIE'S LAWYER (OFF CAMERA)
And what did you think of Miss Jenkins when you first met her?

ABEL
Well I um-- I pride myself in seeing the good in people. I have quite an unconventional approach to letting, which is I like to know who I'm renting my properties to. I like to remain in somewhat frequent contact with them, and I think it provides a sense of, not only knowing and comfort but of trust, you know?

There's an awkward silence.

ABBIE'S LAWYER (OFF CAMERA)
And you prioritise, essentially people in need of housing; ex-convicts, asylum seekers--

ABEL
Yes, my company works with the Home Office to house vulnerable people--

ABBIE'S LAWYER (OFF CAMERA)
Yes.
(beat)
What made you think Abbie was the right tenant?

Abbie sits miserably.

ABEL
Her drive to get better. She was very transparent with me.

ABBIE'S LAWYER
Let's see what happened, right, so. The coroner had concluded that Miss Jenkins's niece had died from Hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy. He had started showing symptoms around October and over three months, Miss Jenkins had noticed stiffness in the infants muscles or Hypotonia…or hyper… severe coughing and had also taken the infant to A&E twice, once when she found him in her cot convulsing, the other time when the infant experienced another seizure at a supermarket. The infant was diagnosed with severe asthma, and died the next morning. The infant was under the care of Miss Jenkins, her auntie's, home in East Finchley as her mother was on holiday to Spain. Miss Jenkins had suspected it was due to mold in living room, where the infant would sleep.

(beat)

That is what happened, now, what I didn't mention there was actually how long the infant was staying at Miss Jenkin's home. You see her sister, Arora, and Abbie had an intertwined relationship, Arora would bring…the infant… Jane. Um, they'd visit Miss Jenkins's home every weekday, from midday to tea time. Jane would sleep in that living room every weekday for, get this, over a year.

(beat)

Now the mould. The mould was not disclosed to Miss Jenkins by Mr Aarlemann, not once. Miss Jenkins moved in there August of last year. Around two months in, she noticed a spore on her ceiling. She called Mr Aarlemann, who advised her to use mould remover. She did so, but the mould wouldn't go away. She phoned Mr Aarlemann again, who sent round a mould removal specialist. Or apparently, because he didn't turn up. Miss Jenkins, admittedly foolishly, covered the mould with towel as to protect herself, her sister and her infant. She phoned Mr Aarlemann one last time to say that the mould remover didn't come--

Abel clenches his fist.

ABBIE'S LAWYER
He didn't pick up, he hadn't opened her messages to him. Two weeks later, the infant…Jane was dead. She had no previously observed health conditions, asthma was not present in her family history, she was not predisposed to any environment that could've developed her asthma, until she started staying with Miss Jenkins at her home. This is negligence if I've ever seen it. A woman loses her baby, over negligence. It's cowardly. And you could say well there's other ways the infant could've developed such issues, and you'd be right to question that.

A screen in the courtroom shows a picture of the mould on her roof; it takes up a whole corner, some parts are dark green, some parts are pure black.

ABBIE'S LAWYER
I mean if this only gave you a snotty nose I would still class this as negligence. If I just had to look at it. Landlords must do better. It's disgusting. Miss Jenkins herself also reported breathing difficulties and fever-like symptoms around the period of the infant's worsening condition.
(beat)
Would you say this is negligence, Mr Aarlemann?

Abel stares at the image.

ABEL
Yes.

ABBIE'S LAWYER
What would you do if this mould spore had appeared in your infant daughter's bedroom?

MIKEL
I oppose this hypothetical line of questioning.

JUDGE
Sustained.

46. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

We can hear Rocco crying upstairs. Elisa is moving the bookshelf in front of the front door. She stands back and observes it.

We hear a pot of water boiling in the kitchen.

47. INT. KITCHEN, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

With a pair of tongs, Elisa removes a baby bottle from the pot of boiling water and places it on a plate. She takes the lid out and places it beside it.

The crying upstairs stops instantly. Elisa pours milk from a jug into the bottle and screws the lid on.

48. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Holding the bottle, Elisa creeps into the living room. She looks at the ceiling.

The front door is pushed open and the bookshelf is moved slightly. Elisa jumps.

ELISA
AHHHH!

A.BARTON (OFF CAMERA)
I'm sorry.

Elisa stares at the front door, frozen.

A.BARTON (OFF CAMERA)
I'm sorry, I'm so sorry for scaring you. Old habits.

Elisa goes to the front door and opens it. A.Barton stands outside, wearing tracksuits and a shirt and blazer.

He bends down to face Elisa.

A.BARTON
I used to live here.

ELISA
A. Barton?

A.BARTON
Mmhm.

Barton looks at her, then inside.

A.BARTON
You got my letters.

Elisa reaches for a pile of letters on the floor. She gives them to A.Barton, who puts it in his blazer inside pocket.

A.BARTON
It's a lovely little home, really.

He peeps inside. Elisa reacts and pushes the door shut slightly.

A.BARTON
You got children? Hopefully not many.
(smiles)

Elisa smiles and nods.

A.BARTON
You should get this door fixed. Abel's not done it? Or has he sold it!?

ELISA
No.

A.BARTON
(stutters)
Have you got my photographs?

Elisa shakes her head.

A.BARTON
Didn't I tell you, I'd left my photographs and various trinkets in the western bedroom.
(beat)
Do you mind if I fetch them?

ELISA
Where are they?

A.BARTON
The bedroom on the right, dear.

He smiles. Rocco starts crying again. Barton smiles.

A.BARTON
Your child, I love children, the sweetest innocence.

ELISA
(smiles)
One moment.

She closes the door and hastily hurries upstairs.

49. INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisa searches through a small wardrobe in Daniel's room. She peeks outside and looks down; Barton is standing with his feet together, nodding constantly.

Elisa can't find anything, so she checks a chest of drawers beside the bed - nothing.

50. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisa opens the door to Barton.

ELISA
I can't find it...

A.BARTON
Well maybe, it's somewhere else.

He looks at her.

ELISA
Do...
(beat)
You want to come in and look?

A.BARTON
Ohhh. Um. Thanks.

He smiles and she lets him in. He bends down and enters into the living room, looking around.

A.BARTON
Ah. It's just becoming home.

ELISA
Do you want to come upstairs?

Elisa rushes upstairs.

51. INT. UPSTAIRS, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisa closes her bedroom door and opens Daniel's door.

Contorting his body in order to move up the staircase, Barton follows her, and stops just before her.

A.BARTON
Oh...Maybe it's in the other room?
Have you checked there?

Elisa shakes her head. She opens the door to her bedroom and immediately enters.

52. INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisa enters the messy room, scattered with plastic bags of clothes, and picks up Rocco from his crib. He starts crying. Barton peeps through the door and enters the room.

His stature is oppressive; Elisa sits on her bed holding her crying child, looking up at him as he grins at the sight.

A.BARTON
Hmmm. How old?

ELISA
(hesitates)
About four months.

A.BARTON
Oh, how pure.

ELISA
You can check in there--

Elisa points to a built-in wardrobe in the corner of the room.

Barton makes his way to it and opens it slowly. He bends down, groaning in pain and holding his back.

A.BARTON
ARFG ARFG. Ummmmm.

He rummages through the wardrobe as Elisa watches him, holding Rocco to her chest, attempting to soothe him. He quietens down.

Barton stands holding a dusty cardboard box.

A.BARTON
This is um...
(rummages through the box)
Only some. The rest I might have somewhere.

He turns to Elisa.

A.BARTON
Thanks.

He smiles.

A.BARTON
If you do find more pho...photos. No. The box. If you find any of my boxes, please ring me. Okay? I trust you not to look inside, they're very private.

ELISA
Of course.

Barton gets up slowly and walks out of the room.

ELISA
Thank you.

Elisa watches him as he leaves the room. He turns back to her.

A.BARTON
You not going to see me out?

ELISA
Oh sorry-

A.BARTON
Nope not bother. That's not something you people do nowadays.

He smiles and goes down the stairs very slowly. We hear the vibration of every footstep, as if the house is reacting to his presence.

We hear the front door open. Elisa runs to the window and sees him exiting the front door and walking down the street holding the box.

Elisa's phone starts ringing. She answers it.

ELISA
Hello?

ABEL (ON PHONE)
Hello, Elisa? I've called a locksmith he should be round in about an hour or two--

ELISA
Okay, thank you.

He hangs up.

53. EXT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

Abel, now wearing his lycra, hangs up his phone and puts his helmet on.

Grace is on the phone a couple of yards in front of him. She gazes at him, then turns around.

Abel gets on his bike and cycles away.

54. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Celeste, with Michael and Daniel in school uniform, walks toward Elisa's house and knocks on the door, which opens slightly.

Elisa opens the door.

CELESTE
Hi.

ELISA
Come in.

Celeste enters with Michael and Daniel. Daniel runs up to his mother and hugs her.

ELISA
What is it Daniel?

55. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Michael and Daniel watch CBBC on TV, Michael is sitting next to Celeste who is sitting opposite to Elisa.

In front of them on the coffee table is two cups of tea.

CELESTE
Yeah I think they enjoyed it.

ELISA
Did you like the school trip, Daniel?

Daniel nods, still engaged with the TV. Elisa smiles.

ELISA
You ate all your lunch, yeah?

He nods again.

CELESTE
He did.
(beat)
Elisa do you think we could talk, for my article?

ELISA
Oh yes! I forgot, sorry this stupid landlord has been causing so many problems--

CELESTE
Oh, oh no worries.

ELISA
Let's do it.

Celeste turns to the children.

CELESTE
Kids can you go upstairs?

The kids groan.

MICHAEL
Mum, please.

There's a knock at the door. It swings open and we see the LOCKSMITH standing peeping in.

Elisa opens the door as Michael and Celeste argue in the background.

LOCKSMITH
Elisa?

ELISA
Yes.

LOCKSMITH
(small beat)
What's the problem?

He smiles.

ELISA
The lock.

LOCKSMITH
Yes well, I'll see what's happened, do you have it?

She picks up the rim lock and gives it to him.

LOCKSMITH
Thanks.

ELISA
Thank you.

Elisa goes to sit down.

MICHAEL
But I want to watch this mum! Please.

ELISA
Look, I'll take the television upstairs.

Elisa unplugs the television and heads for the staircase. The children follow after.

ELISA
Come on.

She goes upstairs. Celeste catches a glimpse of the locksmith, who is examining the door.

He sees her and she looks away. Elisa comes downstairs and sits back down.

ELISA
Okay.

CELESTE
All right. Um I just need some answers to some questions, just say anything you want, if you want me to cut some things out--

ELISA
It's fine.

CELESTE
Perfect um.
(looks at Elisa and shrugs her shoulders)
Why have you come here?

Elisa looks to the locksmith, who is searching through his toolbox. She looks back at Celeste, hesitating to talk.

CELESTE
Can be as brief as you want?

ELISA
The father of my children, he um. He's got power in um, my town in Congo. He was a commander--

The locksmith picks up a safety chain and places it on the door.

ELISA
And...
(beat)
We weren't safe, when we left him. He had his friends everywhere. My brother could get us to UK, with urrrrr
(beat)
Ship. Shipping ship. UK or Portugal or Spain or France but I chose UK--

CELESTE
Why London?

She shrugs her shoulders. She looks over to the locksmith.

LOCKSMITH
(mouthing)
Sorry!

ELISA
Sorry.

Elisa gets up to speak to him.

LOCKSMITH
Right, so what's happened here is, I can't put the lock back on, nor can I put another rim lock in the same place.

Elisa nods.

LOCKSMITH
The wood around the lock has rotted so I'll message Abel, and either-- I mean you may be able to have a choice here --but either you need to replace the whole door, or just this section of it--
(he points to the part of the door that has rotted)
Okay?

ELISA
Okay.

LOCKSMITH
For now, I've put a standard door chain on it--

He points to a door chain high up on the door. Elisa looks up at the door chain.

LOCKSMITH
You might have to reach for it. But, yeah, this, I'll message Abel straight away because honestly he needs to replace this door as soon as possible, I mean this wood damage is just unacceptable, it's so odd, this rim lock somehow attracted a lot of moisture to it and damage to the stile--

ELISA
Yes, it's unbelievable.

LOCKSMITH
In fact, I should check the other locks on this place--

ELISA
Are you sure? It's just the front door that had this lock.

LOCKSMITH
Just to be sure. Is that okay?

Elisa nods. The locksmith walks to the window overlooking the street. He analyses it, checking its locks and how it opens.

Elisa goes to sit down opposite Celeste.

ELISA
Where was I?

Michael and Daniel, peek down the stairs.

CELESTE
Why did you come to London?

ELISA
Well I've always loved London, the idea of it. London, Paris, New York.

The locksmith is struggling to open the window, and is using his full strength to pull it upwards.

She shrugs her shoulders again.

ELISA
It's nice, polite, glamorous--

The locksmith forces the window open and smashes it. Everyone's eyes are drawn to it.

LOCKSMITH
Fuck. Okay, I'll fix that.

The locksmith gets his phone out and starts ringing it.

ELISA
Pumbavi--
(beat)
This stupid landlord. You've broken my windows now? He breaks my door and you break my window--

LOCKSMITH
Miss, I'm sorry, I'm just--
(on the phone)
Alright, mate, I've got an emergency

The locksmith goes outside and closes the door behind him.

ELISA
That lock, the only lock on the door has come off--

CELESTE
Terrible.

The locksmith enters back in.

LOCKSMITH
Okay, um.
(beat)
There's no one right now I can call to come at this moment, um, to fix the window but..
(beat)
If you-- you know what I'll do it--

The locksmith goes into the kitchen area and starts opening the drawers.

LOCKSMITH
If you just use a bit of tape--

ELISA
NO!

The locksmith freezes.

ELISA
Please, go.

LOCKSMITH
Tomorrow, someone will be here to fix the window, okay? I'm sorry.

ELISA
This is unbelievable. I genuinely can't believe it.

We peek at the two kids watching by the stairs.

ELISA
How incompetent can you be? You put a chain on my door--
(beat)
That's it?

The locksmith heads for the door.

LOCKSMITH
You don't have to pay me--

ELISA
No of course not, of course I don't have to pay you--

Celeste places her hand on her shoulder.

ELISA
Are you mad?

LOCKSMITH
I'm sorry.

The locksmith picks up his tools and leaves.

Elisa is breathing heavily. Celeste is comforting her. The two kids run back upstairs.

56. INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

The room is dark, with a flashlight on the bed pointing at the wall. Michael and Daniel run into Daniel's room and they both kneel to the floor to play with their action figures.

MICHAEL
What was that about?

DANIEL
Our front door broke.

We hear Elisa shouting downstairs.

MICHAEL
Why?

Daniel shrugs his shoulders.

MICHAEL
I feel bad for your mum.

Daniel is silent. He looks at the light on the wall.

MICHAEL
Have you seen anything?

DANIEL
Not yet.

They continue playing.

57. INT. ENTRYWAY, ABEL'S MUM'S HOUSE - EVENING

Abel's mother, ESTERI, opens the door to Abel, Grace and Patrick.

ESTERI
Ohhh, my baby--

She gives Abel a hug and kiss, then Grace, then Patrick.

ABEL
Mum, who's here?

ESTERI
Everyone! How are you Patrick?

PATRICK
(nodding)
Good.

ESTERI
Come in.

58. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S MUM'S HOUSE - EVENING

The living room is filled with relatives; Abel's two brothers CHRIS and ALEX, their wives, their children (MATILDA, THOMAS, AMANI) and Abel's cousins (JOSHUA, NSUBUGA and LORCAN), who are black. His two uncles and auntie stand in the corner of the room, laughing and talking.

Abel enters, everyone's eyes are drawn to him, but everyone is hesitating to greet him.

ABEL
Hello!

There are general murmurs as people respond. Abel's sister-in-law whispers to two of the kids, who then run up to Abel and give him a hug.

ABEL
Hey guys.

Patrick is nervous to interact with his cousins. Chris stands and approaches him.

CHRIS
All right?

They dap each other up.

ABEL
Yeah, happy birthday mate.

CHRIS
Thanks.

59. INT. DINING ROOM, ABEL'S MUM'S HOUSE - EVENING

Everyone is eating dinner, almost silently. The kids sit on another table in the corner of the room.

Abel looks over to them. They gaze at him, then begin whispering amongst themselves.

ABEL
You didn't burn it again, mum.

ESTERI
Why would I, Abel? Thirty years I'd never burnt it!

Abel's cousins stare at him coldly.

ESTERI
Chris tell your brother what Lorcan got you for your birthday.

CHRIS
It's this um, AI model, right, where you have this screen and, what is it again, how do you explain it?

LORCAN
Bro you don't even know what your own present is?

CHRIS
(kisses teeth)
Shush man, I just can't explain it.
(beat)
It's um, I put it on my fridge right, it's like a screen and it scans everything in the fridge, it has a camera, then it tells you like recipes and shit--

ESTERI
It's brilliant! It's witchcraft, honestly.

ABEL
(to Lorcan)
Where do you get it?

Lorcan freezes.

LORCAN
Um, my work. I do um, AI models for like home devices, smart speakers and stuff--

ABEL
Ah nice.

Lorcan continues eating. The other cousins gaze at Abel. Joshua shows Alex something on his phone and they laugh.

ALEX
That's fucking nasty-

ESTERI
Come on boys, you're in your thirties now!

ALEX
Ay mum, lemme--

JOSHUA
Nah don't.

ALEX
Please.

JOSHUA
Bro we're at the dinner table, are you mad?

Joshua starts laughing.

JOSHUA
Allow it man.

He puts his phone away. Abel takes a big spoonful of food.

ESTERI
How's the court case, my love?

Everyone sits up, the kids look back to Abel. Abel stops chewing and swallows.

ABEL
Um.

He looks around.

ABEL
Good I think.

Everyone is silent.

ABEL
What?

Grace holds his hand under the table.

ABEL
It's sad, it's sad honestly. She's mentally ill this woman--

Nsubuga and Lorcan cringe subtly.

ABEL
And um, I don't really want to get into it, I think.

Abel looks around and sees everyone acting awkwardly and tense. He stands and leaves the room quickly.

GRACE
Sorry.

Grace chases after him. Patrick watches him leave from the kids table.

Everyone continues eating. Thomas turns to Patrick.

THOMAS
(whispering)
Is your dad angry again?

Patrick doesn't respond.

THOMAS
Is he gonna shout again?

Patrick covers his ears.

LORCAN
(under breath)
Thank God.

NSUBUGA
Shush man.

Esteri seems upset, and eats her food slowly.

60. EXT. STREET - EVENING

Abel, Grace and Patrick are walking down the street after the party.

They are walking in silence.

61. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abel is alone downstairs with the lights off, drinking a glass of whiskey and typing on his computer.

He opens an email, it reads:
Hi Abel,
The rental payment for 47 Burroughs Road/Burroughs Passage has stopped for 22 days now.
The Tenant was warned and sent a letter 12 days ago, but we have not received a payment.
I've scheduled a Section 8 notice to be served in seven days, if the tenant has not sent the payment.

Tenant Name: Elisa Luemba

Amount Overdue: £1244.31
Hope your well,
Tony.

62. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Through the trees and greenery that grows on the buildings, Barton approaches us from the shadows once more. He is holding a single envelope.

He creeps to the front door and posts the letter through the

letterbox.

63. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see the windows being covered by tape and bin bags. Wind blows lightly, making the bin bags look alive.

Allowing just enough space for the letter to pass through the letterbox, a bookshelf is placed in front of the door.

64. INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa is lying awake in bed with her arm around Daniel as he sleeps. Rocco's cot is placed next to her bed, he is asleep as well.

Elisa watches out the window at the shadows of tree branches dancing in the wind.

She hears footsteps outside, and gets out of bed.

65. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa goes downstairs, moves the bookshelf back slightly, and picks up the letter. It is addressed to her, and has a logo for AARLEMANN PROPERTY SOLUTIONS LTD.

She opens it and reads the first line of the paragraph:

Dear Ms Luemba,
According to our records, a rental payment due on 16/03/2026 has not been received by Aarlemann Property Solutions Ltd. Under the terms of your tenancy agreement, failure to make payment constitutes a breach of contract. If payment in full, or an agreed payment plan, is not received within 14 days of the date of this letter, we will have no option but to proceed with formal notice.

Elisa throws the letter down and immediately takes out her phone and makes a call.

66. INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Daniel sleeping like a Victorian child, as Elisa's phone is heard ringing downstairs.

67. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa hangs up and calls someone else.

ELISA
Mum?
(beat)

Where's Franck?

ELISA'S MUM (ON PHONE)
I thought your sister called?

ELISA
Mama.

ELISA'S MUM (ON PHONE)
Oh dear.
(in Swahili)
Your brother's in hospital, Elisa.

ELISA
Was it Jude?

ELISA'S MUM (ON PHONE)
No, he fell off his bike and hit his head--

Elisa gasps.

ELISA'S MUM (ON PHONE)
They say he'll be fine--

ELISA
(almost crying)
And no one called me--

ELISA'S MUM (ON PHONE)
I asked your sister too-

ELISA
My payments have cancelled, Mama--

She wipes her tears away.

ELISA
I think he's run out of money.

ELISA'S MUM
We're not worried about that Elisa--

ELISA
Of course. How is he?

ELISA'S MUM
(in French)
He's in hospital, he's awake, but he should be fine they say. Just shock.

They stay on the phone in silence.

ELISA'S MUM

(in French)
I know.

ELISA
(in French)
What am I gonna do?

ELISA'S MUM
(in French)
Do you not have a job yet?

ELISA
(in French)
No. I don't want one. I want to look after the kids.
(beat)
I'm praying for him, mama. Please tell him.

ELISA'S MUM
(in French)
I will.

ELISA
I don't know what to do.

68. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Daniel is sat at the table with an empty bowl of cereal beside him. His homework book is open and he reads from a sheet tucked into it.

DANIEL
(reading with large pauses between words)
Can you name these pieces of technology that can be found in school? Phone. Computer. Ummmmm, photo-printer? Headphones.

Elisa is packing his football kit.

ELISA
Daniel, where are your shin pads?

DANIEL
I don't know.

ELISA
Your coach told you off last time, did you hide them again?

Elisa stands and rushes upstairs. Daniel continues reading his sheet.

69. INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Elisa goes into Daniel's bedroom and searches through his wardrobe.

She reaches her hand in between his folded clothes and feels around. She moves her hand around and takes out a shinpad.

ELISA
Ah bon!

She takes out a small A5 brown envelope. She throws it down and reaches in again, pulling out the other shinpad.

She picks up the envelope and slowly removes a printed picture inside.

She skips a breath at the first sight of it; a slightly dirty, purple babygrow laid out on top of a Persian carpet.

DANIEL (OFF SCREEN)
Mum!

Elisa is frozen, as she gazes into the picture. She takes the picture and places it on top of the wardrobe.

DANIEL (OFF SCREEN)
MUM! MUM!

ELISA
Coming.

DANIEL (OFF SCREEN)
We're going to be late!

70. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Elisa leaves the house with Rocco and Daniel, who is holding a water bottle. A thirty year old white man walks past.

MAN OUTSIDE HOUSE
How much you pay for that?

Elisa ignores him.

ELISA
Do you have your water? Yes?

MAN OUTSIDE HOUSE
AY! Did that place cost you a lot?

Elisa starts to walk the other way.

MAN OUTSIDE HOUSE
Are you Congo's greatest accomplishment? Coming over here? HEY!
(beat)

(beat)
Can I get a news article?

71. INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Mikel addresses the court. He smiles at the judge.

MIKEL
You know I've endured my fair share of emotional manipulation within the civil courts, but honestly I've not seen anything like it. Yes, it's a tragedy, but we have to look at the nuances. The death of a child is no excuse to execute these appeals to emotion. We've heard a lot about 'truth' over the past couple days, so let's keep that going.
(beat)
The Office for National Statistics does not track the annuals death in infants attributed to mould exposure, but we can use their other findings to in a sense, piece together the likelihood of what potentially happened. From 2013, to 2020, seven years, there were zero death from asthma among babies under one, only three in babies aged 1 to 4. Now the infant did not die from asthma, she died from HIE, which is a contributing factor to around 8% of child deaths in England. Just some facts. Do you know that after searching for weeks and weeks I couldn't find a single instance of a child under 1 dying from mould-caused asthma, leading to death from HIE. I had spoken to the coroner who performed the autopsy, and what has been failed to mention at any point during this case was his opinion, which was that it would've been highly unlikely that the infant died due to mould. It just doesn't happen, you'd think it does, but there aren't any cases of it. Yes they could get sick, but not die. Also asthma is not a cause of HIE, at least not a common one. 'The infant most likely suffered from an internal issue that it had been

suffering with since birth.' That's directly from the coroner. But let's talk about my client. There have been a lot of assumptions made in this court of the past couple days.
(MORE)

MIKEL (CONT'D)
Miss Jenkins had said that the mould-removal specialist that Mr Aarlemann had sent did not arrive. This is not true. A testimony from him reveals that in fact he did arrive at Miss Jenkin's home, but she was not home, so he had left. She knew this, because he had sent her a message, and she had replied to it. She had since deleted the message but police recovered it. 'I think it's fine, I have it under control'. That's what Miss Jenkins messaged the specialist. Why lie? This is such a blatant and unintelligent lie.

Abbie sits, looking down, almost sulking.

MIKEL
Miss Jenkins is a vulnerable person. She's been known to lie to her healthcare professionals regarding her condition, Mr Aarlemann has recounted times where she had lied to him regarding her financial status. It won't be surprising to find out that Miss Jenkin's had used her niece's untimely and deeply unfortunate death in order to gather compensation and a hefty payout.

ABBIE'S LAWYER
This is an opinion for an expert and should not be speculated, Your Honour.

JUDGE
I'll permit it.

ABBIE'S LAWYER
This is an assumption--

JUDGE
Permitted.

MIKEL
So we can gather that Miss Jenkins

had lied about the mould-specialist, but her lies do not end there. She had said that the baby died in its sleep, and that when she had found her she immediately called an ambulance.
(MORE)

MIKEL (CONT'D)
Again, the coroner had a different opinion, that the baby had been dead for much longer, potentially even a week. Her skin was discoloured, there was slight peeling of the skin and bloating, a foul odour. These things quite literally don't happen over night. Where was the baby that week? Was she just rotting in her cot because Miss Jenkins had forgotten about her? These are the fundamentals of the case. I know an incident as egregious as this one can elicit extreme emotional reactions, but we can't be emotional in a court of law. We can't appeal to emotions in order to win the case. We need to, as pointed out very frequently, look at the facts. Landlord negligence? This to me is clear case of negligence from a carer. Miss Jenkins had her two kids taken away from her just three years ago--

ABBIE'S LAWYER
I question the relevance of this.

JUDGE
I'll let him finish.

MIKEL
She was an unfit mother.

Abbie begins tearing up.

MIKEL
She was a drug addict suffering with mental health conditions. I have sympathy for her of course, but that doesn't mean I think she was fit to care for children. The infant was, again according to the coroner, severely malnourished, underweight. I think before we start blaming others around us, we should look at ourselves first.

72. EXT. PARK - DAY

Daniel and Michael are playing football. Celeste is sitting with Rocco in his pram and a few other parents watching.

Elisa is far behind them on a call.

ELISA
(in French)
--it's just for this week, when Franck gets better and out of hospital he can sort it out--
(beat)
How do you even know if Jacqui has access to it?

Elisa notices a 7 foot man with a face mask walking at the other end of the pitch on the path.

ELISA
(in French)
I don't have her number. Okay

She hangs up and calls another number.

ELISA
(in French)
Jacqui? It's Elisa, Franck's sister. I'm sorry about Franck--
(beat)
Um, Franck, for the past three weeks has been paying for my rent in London until they can give me benefit payment, but the payment stopped a month ago--
(beat)
Oh okay--
(beat)
Oh no, you don't have to--
(beat)
No Jacqui, your father hasn't even met me and he's giving me one million Franc--
(beat)
I don't want your money, Jacqui, I don't even want Franck's--
(beat)
Of course, I thought you were giving it to me--
(beat)
Of course I'll pay it back, thank you so much. Oh thank you, I'm sending my prayers to you and Franck.

She hangs up the phone and freezes still, breathing heavily. She walks over to the parents.

ELISA
Thank you.

Elisa looks into the buggy to see Rocco fast asleep. She pushes it out the way and sits beside Celeste.

CELESTE
Do you want to know the surprise?

ELISA
What surprise?

Elisa moves the buggy so that it's next to her.

CELESTE
I told you I had a surprise when you came--

ELISA
Oh sorry, I was miles away, sorting out this rent situation--

CELESTE
Oh of course. Hang on.

Celeste reaches into a bag at her feet. She takes out a copy of the Islington gazette.

CELESTE
Ta da!

ELISA
Already? That was quick.

Celeste flips to a page near the middle and shows Celeste.

There is a medium-sized photo of Elisa standing in her living room, staring awkwardly into the distance. The headlines reads 'A Brave Refugee's Story from Death, War and Corruption to a New Beginnings'

ELISA
Oh wow. I look kinda bored, eh? A brave refugee's story from death, war and corruption to, it's not that catchy is it?

CELESTE
It had a short deadline, I know.

ELISA
Wow.

Elisa gives Celeste the paper back.

CELESTE

No it's for you! I've got loads of copies.

ELISA
Aw thank you.

Elisa smiles, folds the paper and puts it in her bag.

She watches Daniel and Michael play, then she turns to where she saw the 7ft man. He has disappeared.

Her smile drops, and she shivers. She looks into her pram. Rocco is missing.

ELISA
No.

Elisa checks inside the pram, and the compartments below the seat.

ELISA
No, no, no!

Celeste attends to her.

CELESTE
What happened, where's Rocco?

Elisa looks around.

ELISA
ROCCO!
(in French)
Oh my God, oh my God--
(shouting)
Rocco?

Daniel stops. Other parents and carers come to Elisa's attention.

PARENT AT FOOTBALL GAME
Who's missing?

ELISA
My baby.

CELESTE
Fuck.

Daniel runs back to his mum, Celeste intervenes.

CELESTE
Wait here, Daniel.

Elisa starts walking hastily down the park, Celeste and a few people catch up to her.

PARENT AT FOOTBALL GAME

What does she look like?

CELESTE
Elisa?

ELISA
ROCCO!!

Elisa breaks down crying into Celeste's arms. People sitting on benches and runners all watch her.

ELISA
Who's seen my baby! HELP!
(in French)
HELP! ROCCO!

Elisa faints onto a patch of grass. Many people attend to her.

We see the reactions of people she passed, and people around her. We traverse through them, as if we were searching for the kidnapper.

73. EXT. AMBULANCE - EVENING

Elisa wakes up around two paramedics, Celeste and a couple of the people who attended to her.

PARAMEDIC
Steady. Are you all right.

Elisa starts crying.

PARAMEDIC
What's wrong?

ELISA
Someone took my baby--

CELESTE
We found him Elisa.

ELISA
Where.

Celeste brings Rocco out. Elisa holds him and cradles him. Her eyes water as she looks down on him.

Daniel watches from a distance.

CELESTE
It took us three hours to find him.

ELISA
Where was he?

CELESTE

In his pram.

ELISA
He wasn't there the whole time, nah?

CELESTE
No I remember he was gone. We checked the whole park for three hours, we came back and he was there.

Elisa freezes in deep thought.

ELISA
He can't have got out of the pram--

CELESTE
But I remember he wasn't there.

She looks down at Rocco.

74. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Heavy rain is falling. Elisa sits downstairs cradling Rocco, facing the wall.

Her phone is lighting up with notifications from ABEL. He calls her, but she hangs up.

75. INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniel is in bed, staring at the moving shadows of the trees on the wall.

DANIEL
(whispering)
Are you there?

The shadows stop moving, then start again.

DANIEL
(whispering)
I see you.

VOICE
(high-pitched, mumbling, barely audible)
I am here.

DANIEL
MUM!

Elisa comes running up the stairs and runs into his room.

ELISA
What?

DANIEL
I heard someone there.

Elisa turns the lights on.

DANIEL
No, mum he's gone now.

ELISA
What game is this, Daniel?

DANIEL
It's not a game!

ELISA
What is it? You're trying to scare me after today, huh?

DANIEL
No.
(beat)
I'm scared.

ELISA
Of what?

DANIEL
Where did Rocco go?

ELISA
No where.

DANIEL
Mum,do you know what I think? If you have like loads of ghosts in your house--

ELISA
What ghosts, Daniel? Are you trying to scare yourself?

DANIEL
No.

ELISA
What are you saying?

DANIEL
I think if you have like loads of ghosts in your house, then its more likely for some of them to leak out into our world.

ELISA
Daniel. Please no scary stories--

DANIEL
It's not scary.

He looks back at the shadow on the wall.

ELISA
Come, sleep in my bed.

Elisa and Daniel walk out.

76. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abel is on his laptop, his phone open right next to it. On his screen is an email, addressing Elisa's late payment of rent.

Grace is on the sofa snoring loudly, slumped from too much wine.

ABEL
I do what I can, you know. My love.

77. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abel, wearing a sleek jacket, discretely with his hood up walks to Elisa's front door. He knocks and it opens.

He peeks inside to see Elisa looking at him on the sofa.

ELISA
AH!

ABEL
Sorry.

Elisa gets up and opens the door.

ELISA
Are you okay?

ABEL
Yes, are you?

Elisa nods.

ABEL
Um, look, I've tried to email, call, and message, um. We haven't received a payment from you in a little under a month--

ELISA
I'm sorry.

ABEL
It's three days, Elisa. Then…

(beat)
You have to go. Can I come in, so we can talk about it, what you can do--

Elisa shakes her head.

ABEL
I'm sorry. Bit of an awkward time, but I've been very busy-

ELISA
Have you?
(beat)
I'm loaning the rent I need to pay from a family member, but she hasn't sent me it yet.

ABEL
What about Universal Credit, Elisa?

ELISA
I submitted for it around a month ago--

ABEL
And you didn't get an advance?

ELISA
What?

Abel cringes.

ELISA
I don't want to use the government's resources. I'm very lucky that my family back home can pay for me to have a new life.

ABEL
Is that who's paying for it?

ELISA
Yes, until I can settle down and get a job, yes.

ABEL
Well what's happening? You been applying.

ELISA
Is this what landlords are like in the UK?

ABEL
No, not on the whole--

ELISA
Because you're very rude you know?
(beat)
You come check up on me like I'm a criminal. Look at my door. Look at my windows.

ABEL
I know it's bad, I've literally had no time, I had no one that could help me out--

ELISA
You had no one that you could ask to send someone to fix it? To make one call?

ABEL
Why can't you do it?

ELISA
I don't have money.

ABEL
Maybe you should start working.

ELISA
How rude. How bloody rude.

ABEL
Look, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Elisa looks at him, her lip trembling. She bursts out into tears on her doorstep. Abel goes to help her.

ABEL
What's wrong?

ELISA
(through heavy tears)
No, no.

Abel stands back up and watches her knelt on the floor, crying. She stands back up and wipes her face.

ELISA
Sorry.

ABEL
What's the matter?

Elisa composes herself. She looks behind her, then turns back to Abel.

ELISA
Who is that man who lived here?

ABEL
Which one?

ELISA
Before me. You know he came round. He had left his photos.

ABEL
He shouldn't have been in there.

ELISA
What?

ABEL
He went in the house?

ELISA
Yes--

ABEL
With your children in there?

Elisa freezes.

ELISA
You're going to tell me who he is.

Elisa looks to the side, into the darkness surrounding the trees.

ABEL
He went to prison for kidnapping his ex-wife's child--

ELISA
Oh--

Elisa hangs her head and starts breathing heavily.

ABEL
And for kidnapping neighbour's child.

ELISA
And you didn't tell me this? Well of course. You've got houses to rent.

ABEL
He wasn't a sex offender. Or at least he isn't.

ELISA
What?

ABEL

The motive in both situations, was for revenge. The children were examined, they hadn't been touched.

ELISA
How old?

ABEL
A year and nine months.

Elisa breaks down crying on her doorstep again.

ELISA
NOOOOOO!

ABEL
Come on let's go inside.

Abel picks her up and puts her inside.

78. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa, distraught in grief, is being helped to the sofa by Abel. Daniel is peeking from downstairs. Abel looks at him.

ABEL
It's fine.

ELISA
(through tears)
It's fine, Dan Dan. Go upstairs.

Daniel runs upstairs. Elisa sits on the sofa. Abel sits opposite her.

ABEL
What did he do?
(beat)
Breathe, just breathe.

She attempts some deep breaths.

ELISA
(in French)
Mama, please, help.

He calms down. Abel is sat waiting.

ELISA
My child…my baby went missing today. I fainted, but they said three hours he was gone.
(beat)
I saw him.

ABEL
Your baby?

ELISA
(crying)
No, the man. The tall man. He was in the park.
(beat)
When he came here, he saw him. I need to tell the police.

ABEL
Do you have any proof?

ELISA
Wait.

Elisa runs upstairs. Abel waits patiently. She comes back with the photo of the babygrow.

ELISA
I found this in my son's wardrobe.

She gives him the picture. He freezes.

ABEL
Jesus.

ELISA
I need to call the police.

ABEL
I'll do it. Did you already call them?

ELISA
I think someone else did.

Abel stands and gets his phone out. He dials 999 and holds it to his ear.

ABEL
Police.
(to Elisa)
Did they check him? Your baby.

Elisa nods.

ABEL
And nothing?

Elisa shakes her head.

ABEL
No sign of…?

Elisa starts tearing up again.

ABEL

Hello, um. Elisa…

ELISA
Luemba.

ABEL
Luemba, um, her child was lost today…she thinks she knows who might've done it.

79. EXT. BARTON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CUE MUSIC

Three officers park a police car at the side of a residential road and get out.

They approach the front door of a bungalow. Barton opens the door, in his nightwear.

80. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Two officers approach Elisa's door and knocks. She opens it and lets them in.

81. INT. KITCHEN, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa is holding Rocco, who is crying. She searches the drawers in the kitchen, and finds a dummy. She puts it in Rocco's mouth.

82. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa enters the living room holding Rocco, the two officers are standing by the front door.

83. INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The lights are off. Daniel plays a game on a large Android phone. He frequently tracks the shadow on the wall.

VOICE
(whispering)
Where's a your-a shoooes????

Daniel looks over to the corner of the room. We hear a big commotion downstairs, with Elisa bursting out crying.

DANIEL
Hello?
(beat)
Hello?

Daniel gets out of bed and leaves his room.

84. INT. STAIRCASE, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniel creeps down the staircase to a point where he can poke his head and see what is happening.

Elisa is crying on the sofa, with the two officers standing above her.

ELISA
(through tears)
Who did it then? Who would've done it?

POLICE OFFICER 1
I don't know.

ELISA
Wait.

Elisa runs upstairs. Daniel runs back into his room.

85. INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniel jumps into bed and assumes a sleeping position. Elisa rushes in and reaches for the photograph at the top of the wardrobe.

ELISA
(in French)
Come on, where are you?

She finds it and runs out the room, down the stairs. Daniel's eyes are wide open. He hears Elisa explaining something to the officers, almost as if she were pleading.

Daniel creeps out of bed slowly and goes back to the staircase.

86. INT. STAIRCASE, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Assuming his regular position, Daniel is spying on his mother.

POLICE OFFICER 1
We just have no ground to arrest him. He hasn't committed a crime, he hasn't violated a court order-

ELISA
He took my child for three hours! He stole babies, that's how he went to prison.

POLICE OFFICER 2
We understand it can be tricky but--

ELISA
No you don't.

POLICE OFFICER 1
You do need to get that front door sorted.

ELISA
Oh do I!?

POLICE OFFICER 1
We're sorry, but we can't do anything. We have the reports from earlier. Your baby wasn't harmed--

ELISA
How do you know? How do you really know? You frauds.

POLICE OFFICER 2
We suggest you stay with a friend or family member until you get this door sorted out?

ELISA
Fuck off.
(beat)
HELP ME!

POLICE OFFICER 1
Sorry, madam. Honestly. If you find any proof--

ELISA
Here--

She flashes the photo of the babygrow in the officer's face.

POLICE OFFICER 1
--but how can we prove that? What does that show? How does that tie into this? How could we know that's his, he never told you?

ELISA
He came here looking for photos!

POLICE OFFICER 1
That could be his baby's clothing, that's not your child's is it?

ELISA
No.

POLICE OFFICER 1
Look, we've made sure to not contact you, okay? If you see him again, call us.

ELISA
And what will you do?

POLICE OFFICER 1
Tell him off again.

ELISA
You don't think it's weird?

POLICE OFFICER 1
I don't know.

ELISA
Please go.

POLICE OFFICER 2
Sorry.

They leave.

87. INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa is sleeping with her arm around Daniel, and Rocco in a cot next to her. She is breathing heavily.

DANIEL
Calm down, mummy. Go to sleep. Everything will be better.

88. INT. BATHROOM, COURT HOUSE - DAY

Abel is vomiting into the toilet. Grace enters.

GRACE
Abel?

ABEL
Hang on.

He flushes the toilet and leaves the cubicle with a tissue over his mouth.

GRACE
Your mums here.

ABEL
What? Anyone else?

GRACE
Just her.

He nods.

89. INT. COURT ROOM - MORNING

Mikel, Abel, Abbie, her lawyer and the judge enter the court room and take their seats.

A few people are seated behind them, Esteri being one of them.

JUDGE
Court's in session.
(beat)
I have my judgement. This case, cases like these are questions of causations. A baby dies in a carer's home, it's a grievous tragedy, but to put a man in jail for such an indirect act of incompetence, is cheapening the lives lost by those who are indeed evil. I accept the potential negligence from a landlord who was trusting his properties with vulnerable members of the public. But to level this negligence with an event so tragic, places Mr Aarlemann in the same bracket as those directly responsible for a loss of life. I believe Miss Jenkins never had bitter intentions, however in my professional view, a loss of life of a child is more likely to be resulted by actions of the carer, rather than the landlord.

Abbie starts tearing up.

JUDGE
That being said, the weight of this trial must have been immense on both parties, and I do grieve for Miss Jenkins and her family. Mr Aarlemann on the other hand, I have found his conduct troubling at times. Although he has shown to have had sympathy for Miss Jenkins, I do believe that his practices breach the safety and sanctity of his tenants and that he should try to assume more responsibility for himself. However, based on the evidence, medical, testimonial, there's not much way I can tie Mr Aarlemann directly to this tragic incident.

(beat)
For those reasons, and on the evidence as it stands, I find that the claimant has not discharged the burden of proving causation, and the claim against Mr Aarlemann fails.
(MORE)

JUDGE (CONT'D)
(beat)
Mr Aarlemann's agency has requested an order that the claimant bear some of the defendant's costs of these proceedings. Miss Jenkins will be required to pay sixty percent--

Abbie bursts out into tears. Esteri is sullen.

90. INT. ENTRANCE HALL, COURT HOUSE - MORNING

Abel is standing with Patrick and Grace.

GRACE
You're gonna help her right?

Abel sees his mother in a crowd of people. His mother turns and leaves the court house.

ABEL
Maybe.

GRACE
You're not gonna make her pay your costs?

ABEL
It's standard procedure.

GRACE
But she hasn't got anything.

ABEL
I didn't choose it. Okay? We do it as a company to stop people from making false claims. She was trying to say I killed her baby!

People around him look.

GRACE
Shh. Come let's go. Where your mum?

Abel stops and thinks for a second.

ABEL
She had to go.

GRACE
Did you talk to her?

ABEL
Yeah, briefly

91. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Elisa walks downstairs in her nightwear. The windows and front door have been replaced and a box of random objects are placed in the middle of the room.

A key is placed on the small dining table.

Elisa walks up to the windows and touches the glass.

92. INT. PUB - DAY

Abel, along with other people in suits, is dancing to music in a pub. He has half a pint in hand.

Grace sits in the corner with Patrick, who is drinking a coke.

ABEL
Hey! Flip the song, change the song!

Grace stands and approaches Abel.

GRACE
We're gonna go okay?

ABEL
It's only 4pm?

GRACE
And Patrick needs dinner.

ABEL
Okay.

Grace takes Patrick and leaves the pub. Abel stays with his friends.

ABEL
It's a hard business.

ABEL'S FRIEND
Yeah?

Abel kisses his friend on the lips, who pushes him away.

ABEL'S FRIEND
Fuck off, bender.

ABEL
It's a celebration!

ABEL'S FRIEND
Tell me about it.

Abel's friends all snicker at his drunken state.

ABEL
You know you understand, you understand it's a tough world, you have to be tough.

ABEL'S FRIEND
Yes, yes
(laughs to the other men)
Push him, push him.

Another man pushes Abel, who struggles to retain balance. Abel goes back to his friend and kisses him again.

ABEL'S FRIEND
Eugh, do you see what he's trying to do to me? Fucking fag.

ABEL
Who wants another drink? All on me.

ABEL'S FRIEND
Look mate if you can bring six pints over from the bar without spilling them, I'll pay for them.

ABEL
Alright.

Abel stumbles to the bar to order. He slips, but remains standing by holding onto the bar. His friends all laugh at him.

ABEL'S FRIEND
Hardest part's not here yet.

Abel turns to his friend, but his eyes seem blank.

ABEL'S FRIEND
Look at him, look at him. He's finished.

93. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - DAY

Daniel is digging through the box of items. He pulls out a

smartphone projector.

DANIEL
What's this?

ELISA
I don't know, you should know.

Daniel puts it down and reaches in again. He pulls out a toy car.

DANIEL
Oh my God.

He puts it on the floor and drags it across the floor.

ELISA
Oh wow, how lucky.

He reaches in again and pulls out

94. INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Elisa, Daniel and Rocco are all sat in bed with the smartphone projector. Daniel is trying to find a video on his phone to play.

ELISA
Why don't we watch it in your room?

DANIEL
There's a party going on in there.

ELISA
Party?

DANIEL
Everyone’s dancing.

Elisa looks across into her son's room. The shadows from the trees are moving slightly.

ELISA
Who's dancing?

Daniel doesn't reply.

ELISA
Do you need help, Daniel? You're a smart boy you should know.

DANIEL
I do, I'm finding something to watch.

ELISA
Nothing scary please--

Daniel smiles.

ELISA
I don't like scary things, I know how you're like.

Daniel laughs

ELISA
(in French)
Why are you laughing?

Daniel finds a video and puts it into the cardboard projector.

ELISA
This better not be scary. You're still laughing.

DANIEL
I'm not.

Projected onto the wall in front of the bed is a video of a man playing a Roblox game and commentating.

ELISA
You want to watch video games? What about a nice movie? I'm too old for this.

DANIEL
Look.

MAN IN VIDEO
Do you want to play together?

PLAYER IN VIDEO
(child voice)
No, fuck off.

ELISA
Daniel! That's rude! Turn it off. You watch these things for children and they're swearing like that!

DANIEL
Okay.

Elisa looks to the window and sees Barton's eyes peeping at them. She screams and his eyes widen, as if he is smiling.

ELISA
AHHH!

Daniel looks and jumps.

ELISA
Stay here.

Elisa runs downstairs.

95. INT. KITCHEN, ELISA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Elisa grabs a knife and leaves the house.

96. EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Elisa leaves the front door with a knife to see Barton.

ELISA
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

A.BARTON
Woah, wait. I just wanted to talk about the police--

ELISA
You need to get out of here.

A.BARTON
I'm sorry, I'm sorry--

ELISA
MOVE!

She swings her knife at him. Daniel watches from the window above.

A.BARTON
I just want to say I haven't done anything, I'm sorry for scaring you--

ELISA
You want me to call the police again?

A.BARTON
I'm going, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Barton walks away. Elisa stands watching him with a knife in hand.

She looks behind her to see people watching. She goes back inside and slams the door.

97. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Elisa is on the phone.

ELISA

Hello? How are you?

ABEL (ON PHONE)
Fine, what's wrong.

ELISA
I just wanted to apologize and thank you for fixing the windows and door.

There's a pause.

ABEL
Um. Did I?

Elisa starts tearing up.

ELISA
(through tears)
Sorry--

ABEL (ON PHONE)
No, no it's fine.

ELISA
It's been so bad recently.

ABEL (ON PHONE)
I know, and I'm really sorry. It's terrible what happened.

ELISA
All the things--

ABEL (ON PHONE)
Yes, all the things.

Elisa starts crying again.

ABEL (ON PHONE)
Is something wrong?
(beat)
Hello?

ELISA
He came back.
(beat)
I want to kill him.

98. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Abel is on the phone with Elisa, sat at his dining table with his laptop with a drink beside him. He ponders for a moment.

ELISA (ON PHONE)
But I won't. My son is always scared.

(beat)
Can you help me?

ABEL
Yes. What do you nee-

ELISA (ON PHONE)
Can you give me his address?

ABEL
For what?

ELISA (ON PHONE)
I want to talk to him.

Abel ponders for a moment. He looks over to his staircase and the coats that hang on the bannister.

He looks over to the pictures on the wall of his family, including Patrick when he was much younger.

99. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - EVENING

ELISA
Please?

She looks up at the wall.

ELISA
Where are you from?

100. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Abel seems puzzled.

ABEL
London.

ELISA (ON PHONE)
No, where are you actually from?

ABEL
My mum's from Uganda, Kampala.

101. INT. LIVING ROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - EVENING

ELISA
I'm from Congo. We're neighbours.

ABEL (ON PHONE)
Why do you ask?

ELISA
I was just curious.
(beat)

Can I have his address?

Abel opens his notes app and scrolls through a list of addresses. He picks a random one and sends it to Elisa.

ABEL
Don't do anything dangerous.

He hangs up. Grace enters in her nightwear.

GRACE
When are you coming to bed?

ABEL
In half an hour.

GRACE
Are you working?

Abel doesn't respond.

GRACE
What?

ABEL
You know Patrick's friends? What do their parents think of us?

GRACE
Fine.

Abel takes a sip of his drink.

ABEL
You know cause like…cause like I know people don't like me.
(beat)
My family, my kid--

GRACE
Abel, please.

ABEL
I know I'm strict, and, but I just want things to go good.
(beat)
I can't connect to anyone.

GRACE
You just need to try, Abel. You work a lot, this case has been consuming you.

ABEL
Go to bed, I'll be up soon.

Grace leaves.

102. EXT. ABBIE'S FLAT - EVENING

Holding a bag, Elisa walks up to Abbie's front door. She knocks. No answer. She knocks again.

ELISA
Hello? Mr Barton?

103. INT. ABBIE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Abbie is sitting on an armchair in darkness, watching the television idle screensaver.

There are bags around her eyes and her lips are dry and peeling.

She turns her head to the door, then back to the TV.

104. EXT. BARTON'S BUNGALOW - EVENING

Abel, wearing a long black overcoat approaches Barton's bungalow and knocks. Barton, in a shirt and tracksuit answers the door.

ABEL
Mr Barton.

A.BARTON
How are you, Abel?

ABEL
Fine.

A.BARTON
What do you want?

ABEL
Can I come in.

A.BARTON
Yes, I'm just getting ready for bed.

ABEL
I won't be long, I just want a chat.

Abel enters.

105. INT. LIVING ROOM, BARTON'S BUNGALOW - EVENING

Barton's living room is strangely nostalgic, as if it came from the 70's. On the wall are bizarre images of clothing,

mainly people wearing dungarees or overalls.

Abel sits on the sofa, opposite Barton who sits in his armchair.

A.BARTON
It's not what's been happening recently has it?

ABEL
What's happened?

A.BARTON
I got arrested yesterday, for no reason. Because I went to the park.
(MORE)

A.BARTON (CONT'D)
No doubt you're here because of that?

Abel looks at the pictures on his wall.

ABEL
You know you were very respectful to me and the property.
(beat)
Have you been bothering the tenant at your old place--

A.BARTON
No!? And that's why you're here?

ABEL
No that's not why I'm here.

A.BARTON
I didn't do anything. I went round to get some letters and photographs and left, I never saw her again!

ABEL
She said she had. She saw you at the park.

A.BARTON
Please leave.

ABEL
Who are you?

Barton is taken back.

ABEL
Huh?

A.BARTON
It's none of your business.

ABEL
You said photographs? She said she found a photograph of a… Like a baby onesie. She showed it to me, it was yellow, almost brown and sticky, it weren't hers.
(beat)
It was probably the guy that went to jail for abducting two babies--

A.BARTON
NOT THIS AGAIN! FOR YEARS--
(beat)
You can leave.

ABEL
For years what? For years what?

A.BARTON
For years I've been tainted with a reputation that doesn't reflect who I am or even what I did! You know that!

ABEL
What do you mean revenge?

Barton stands.

A.BARTON
Please go.

ABEL
Her child went missing for three hours! I'm gonna have you put away.

A.BARTON
I didn't do it.

ABEL
Were you at the park?

A.BARTON
Yes I always go the park every weekend midday.

ABEL
I just…

A.BARTON
You're disturbing me. I never want to hear from you ever again.

ABEL
I'm gonna send you to jail, you know that?

A.BARTON
How?

ABEL
Do you like kids? Babies?

A.BARTON
No.

ABEL
What do you want with them?

A.BARTON
Nothing. I just hated my, those women. I took their children.

ABEL
For how long?

A.BARTON
I don't remember.

ABEL
47 minutes, and 2 hours.

A.BARTON
Please go.

Abel runs to the entryway.

106. INT. ENTRYWAY, BARTON'S BUNGALOW - EVENING

Barton opens a drawer, looking for evidence. Barton grabs him from behind and holds him.

ABEL
No, no! Get the fuck off me!

Abel hits his head backwards to hit Barton's head against the wall and runs into the bedroom.

107. INT. BEDROOM, BARTON'S BUNGALOW - EVENING

Abel turns the light on and runs into the bedroom. Barton comes behind and rugby tackles him to the ground.

Barton punches Abel in the face, which shocks him and gives him the strength to push Barton off him.

He takes a picture off the wall and smashes it on Barton's head. He kicks him a couple times and picks up a shard of glass.

Barton grabs his legs and he falls to the floor once again. With the shard of glass, Abel sticks it into Barton's eyelid, perforating his eye.

ABEL
FUCK YOU!

A.BARTON
AHHHHHHHHH!

ABEL
Fuck.

Abel stands and watches Barton roll around on the floor screaming.

Almost like an impulse, Barton picks up another shard of glass and sticks it in his cheek.

ABEL
Hey, hey!

Abel tries to interfere, but Barton shoves him away. Barton takes another, larger shard and glass and slices his throat.

ABEL
NOOO!

Barton flops to the side and blood pours from his neck.

ABEL
Fuck.

Abel searches around, opens the door to Barton's wardrobe and slams it. The door swings back open and Abel looks in.

On the wall is hundreds of pictures of babygrows, baby underwears, baby socks and accessories. Abel looks down and sees a cardboard box of photos.

He looks back to Barton who is making noises as he bleeds out.

A.BARTON
(gargling)
HELP! HELP! HELP! ABEL AARLEMANN KILLED ME!

There is a knock at the door.

108. INT. ENTRYWAY, BARTON'S BUNGALOW - EVENING

Abel, covered in blood, sees a silhouette in the window of the door.

BARTON'S NEIGHBOUR
Hello? Mr Barton is everything alright?

ABEL
Fuck.

Abel turns around and enters the garden.

109. EXT. GARDEN, BARTON'S BUNGALOW - EVENING

Abel hops the fence and runs into the street, past the man at the door.

BARTON'S NEIGHBOUR
Hey! You're on CCTV. BARTON!

Abel runs down the street.

110. EXT. STREET - EVENING

Covered in blood, Abel dashes down the street, past commuters.

111. INT. LIVING ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

The front door opens. Abel walks into the living room. Grace enters.

GRACE
Where did you go? Oh my God! What happened?

She tends to him.

ABEL
Get off me.

GRACE
Abel?

ABEL
What? Just fuck off--

Blue lights can be seen through the windows.

ABEL
Shit.

Abel runs upstairs. Grace chases him

GRACE
Abel!

112. INT. SECOND STORY LANDING, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Abel runs into the bathroom and locks the door. Grace bangs on the door.

GRACE
Abel! What did you do?

(starts crying)
What did you do!?

There's a knock at the door.

GRACE
What did you do, Abel?

There's a bang at the door. Grace runs downstairs to open it.

Patrick steps out onto the landing. He goes to the stairs and sees Grace talking to two police officers.

GRACE
He's locked himself in the bathroom.

Patrick runs off to his bedroom. The police and Grace come up the stairs.

POLICE OFFICER 3
Mr Aarlemann? Abel? Are you harming yourself?

GRACE
ABEL!

Patrick starts breathing heavily. Grace approaches Patrick's room and he jumps into bed.

113. INT. PATRICK'S ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Patrick pretends to be asleep when his mother enters. She goes over to him and lies down with him.

He starts tearing up. They both start crying together.

114. INT. SECOND STORY LANDING, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Three police officers stand around the top of the stairs, one of them preparing to push a door down.

POLICE OFFICER 3
Okay, we're coming in now!

The officer runs and pushes the door open.

They rush in to see Abel with his eyes opened, laying motionless on the floor with both of his wrists slit. Grace runs to the doorway.

GRACE
NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

She falls to the floor. An officer attempts to help her and usher her away.

115. INT. PATRICK'S ROOM, ABEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Patrick is lying on his side, his eyes watering and widened as he hears his mother scream in grief outside.

He can't bring his body to move. He stays still, looking at the various posters on his wall.

116. INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elisa is in bed with Daniel.

DANIEL
Are we going to get kicked out?

ELISA
No.

DANIEL
I heard you said you didn't have the money.

ELISA
I don't have it yet.

DANIEL
Is he going to kick us out.

Elisa looks outside.

ELISA
I think we can stay a couple more days.
(beat)
I'm going to go get some water.

She stands up and leaves the room. Daniel is alone in the bed, with the sheets dishevelled and scattered.

Daniel's eyes close naturally and starts to sleep.

Slowly, the sheets on top of him are pulled by the sides by an invisible force, tucking him in. He doesn't move.

Elisa enters and stares in shock.

THE END