

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

# SING STREET

**BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**

John Carney



THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

SING STREET

"*This* is school"

Written by John Carney

Card over Black:

*"The '60s never really happened in Ireland. So the '80s will be the '60s. And the '80s will make the '60s look like the '50s."*

AN ALCOHOLIC.

Pre-title:

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - DUBLIN CITY - MORNING

Two FIFTEEN year-old BOYS stand outside this rough, inner city school on a cold, rainy morning. They are CONOR and DARREN. Conor is a middle class kid with a posh accent. Darren is a local boy, with a tough Dublin accent.

They are elbowed by passing STUDENTS entering the school gates. Some of them *mince* past them, implying that they are gay.

These two are outsiders.

Conor will be handsome when he grows up. While most of the other boys have standard issue tight haircuts, Conor's is long and tousled. He sports two black eyes, making him look like a panda. Darren has acne, buck teeth, braces and bifocals. His face is a mess.

They are both looking across the road. We don't see at what.

CONOR

Who's she?

DARREN

I don't know. She's always there.

CONOR

She's beautiful.

DARREN

Yeah. Good luck. She doesn't speak to anyone. Stuck-up cow.

CONOR

Who says?

DARREN

Ciaran Mackie from third year said he tried to get her digits.

CONOR

(confused)

You mean her number?

(CONTINUED)

DARREN

Yeah. No luck. He said she has a boyfriend who's a drug dealer. She's not interested any of the boys in the school.

CONOR

Oh yeah? Why's she standing there then?

Darren shrugs. Conor takes a breath, sets off, crossing the road.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - MORNING

We track with him over his shoulder, arriving at a 16 year-old GIRL, who is standing on the stoop of a HOUSE, an unlit cigarette dangling from her purple lips. Conor stands in front of her.

She has a great look: lots of black. Good makeup. Back-combed hair. Early '80s teen-chic. She's ahead of her time, and anything but ordinary.

CONOR

Need a light?

GIRL

No. I'm trying to give up.

CONOR

Cool. I don't have any matches anyway.

Silence. He doesn't go away.

CONOR

Why aren't you at school?

GIRL

I don't go to school.

(beat)

I'm a model.

CONOR

Cool. Like, for magazines, and stuff?

GIRL

I'm going to London soon. Just waiting for my portfolio shots. There's no real work for models in Dublin, you know.

CONOR

Yeah. I know.

(CONTINUED)

He thinks.

CONOR

Oh yeah, I meant to ask- do you want to be in a video? For my band?

GIRL

You're in a band?

CONOR

Yes. And we need a girl for it. There's like a story. It's called a "Story-Board" video. You could be the girl. In the story. If you're free. Have you been in a video before?

GIRL

No.

(beat)

Is that a problem?

CONOR

I hope not. I'll ask the producer.

GIRL

Who's the producer?

CONOR

That kid behind me.

She looks over his shoulder, pulling onto Darren, who waves nonchalantly.

GIRL

When are we shooting? I'm pretty busy.

CONOR

Saturday after next. I can call you with the details. If I had your digits.

She puts the cigarette away, taking out her pen. He produces his journal, handing it to her. She flicks through it, it's full of thoughts and drawings.

CONOR

Lyrics.

RAPHINA

So if you're in a band, sing me a song.

CONOR

I'm not singing here.

(CONTINUED)

RAPHINA

What, you'll have to sing in front of thousands of people. I'm just one. Sing.

CONOR

What?

RAPHINA

Sing anything off the radio.

He reluctantly sings a hesitant but tuneful few lines from a popular song. She smiles. She writes down her number on the cover. He smiles, turning back. Score.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - MORNING

We track back with him across the street as he approaches Darren, who can't believe what he's seen.

CONOR

We need to form a band...

Freeze Frame. A loud, energetic punk song crashes in on the track.

SONG and titles run over:

TITLE SEQUENCE - MONTAGE

A montage of news stories, rock videos, magazine covers, headlines. It's the early eighties, and it's Ireland. Midway through the worst recession since the 1950s.

TITLE SEQUENCE - MONTAGE

Across the Irish sea, in London, news reports see Thatcher waving to the crowds. City boys talk into early mobile telephones, getting into sports cars. Armani suits, and gold cuff links.

TITLE SEQUENCE - MONTAGE

But back in Ireland: bombs in the North, petrol queues in the South. Deserted building sites, bricked-up buildings. More black and white, than London's Technicolor.

INT. CONOR'S KITCHEN - DAY

We start to PULL OUT from an old TV set. The 9 o'clock news is on. The volume turned down low.

INT. CONOR'S KITCHEN (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

We find ourselves in a large kitchen. High ceilings and rattling sash windows, in what 100 years ago was a fine Georgian home. Now, things are a little faded. The room is cold and unwelcoming. Very little on the shelves. A family on a budget.

Sitting around the kitchen table are: Conor (no black eyes yet), and his parents, PENNY and ROBERT, both in their mid forties. They've just finished a meal of Spag Boll. Though it's more Spag than Boll. Penny fills up her glass of cheap supermarket wine. Robert picks his teeth with a toothpick. He is drinking a whiskey and smoking. Penny checks her watch. They are sitting in silence, as if waiting for something to happen. Conor is wearing a woolly hat, and his coat, indoors.

Card:

*ONE MONTH EARLIER*

INT. CONOR'S KITCHEN (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

Finally, the sound of someone racing down the stairs from above. The door opens and BRENDAN, (20), tumbles into the room carrying an ash tray, glass of wine, tobacco pouch, rolling papers and matches. He sits down at the vacant seat, beside his brother. Brendan has long hair, and a moustache. He's handsome.

BRENDAN

This meeting has been called to order. Pray proceed.

He lights a cigarette.

ROBERT

Okay, so we wanted to talk about finances. Penny?

PENNY

What? Go ahead.

BRENDAN

(to his brother)

This is going to be heavy.

ROBERT

Well, as you might have noticed- your mother and I are really struggling at the moment, like the rest of the country. I haven't had a single commission this year. Your mother is on a three day week. It doesn't look like it's going to get much brighter.

(CONTINUED)

He knocks back his drink. The kids wait for what's coming next.

PENNY

So we've had a look through the accounts, and we see quite a significant saving if we were to alter the education situation.

CONOR

What "education situation"?

BRENDAN

(intuiting)

He means your school. They're taking you out of school.

CONOR

(excited)

What?!

ROBERT

We're not *taking* you out of school. We're *transferring* you from one school to another.

CONOR

Why!?

ROBERT

We have to make some cuts to the budget. I'd suggest taking your brother out of college, but he's already dropped out of his own volition.

BRENDAN

(raising a glass)

Thank you Dad.

CONOR

Cuts? I'm already wearing three jumpers, indoors. And a hat. I read by candlelight! And it's the 1980s. I'm like Tiny Tim up there!

Brendan laughs.

ROBERT

Don't act so entitled. I grew up in a council house with five brothers.

BRENDAN

(mock surprised)

Really? Tell us about that dad. For the first time ever.

(CONTINUED)

PENNY

A school that's close by. So there's no transport costs. You can cycle in. And you can get lunch back here. There's two savings already! It's a non-fee paying school.

ROBERT

Those Jesuits are far too soft on you anyway.

BRENDAN

The Jesuits have a long history of education.

ROBERT

So do the Christian Brothers.

Silence.

CONOR

Who are the Christian Brothers?

BRENDAN

The Christian Brothers, Conor, are a order of the Catholic Church, appointed in the education, formation, and beating of their young charges.

ROBERT

Oh be quiet Brendan! Six years at the hands of the Jesuits yourself, and look at what they did for you!

BRENDAN

Well they didn't *beat* me.

PENNY

Brendan! Cut that out. Synge Street is a perfectly reputable school. You'll settle in in no time.

CONOR

You can't just change in the middle of the year. Just when I'm making friends and settling in. This could scar me. Long-term!

ROBERT

Just deal with this, Conor. You know what the Christian Brother's motto is? "Viriliter Age". That means "Act Manly".

This meeting is over.

(CONTINUED)

Brendan gets up. He squeezes Conor's shoulder, big brother style, and exits. His parents go about their business. We push in on Conor, alone.

EXT. CONOR'S HOUSE (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

The door slams as Conor exits his house, zipping up his jacket. He marches down the driveway. He wears brown cords with a slight flare to them. Leather shoes. Jumper.

This is a leafy suburb of Dublin. Middle class, safe, protected. But Conor's house stands out. It has seen better days. It needs a new coat of paint, and the garden could do with a mow. A car is parked in the driveway, but hasn't been used in a good while. Three push bikes are leaning against the gate instead.

He walks up the street with his hands in his pockets.

EXT. JESUIT SCHOOL SPORTS GROUND - DAY

This is a large sports ground in a leafy Jesuit school. Nice, red brick buildings, very peaceful. It's the weekend, and students are practicing track, rugby, cricket. A big copper beech tree shades the Cricket Training net.

Conor is at the wicket, bat in hand. Two FRIENDS are playing with him. They all speak with posh, South-side accents.

CONOR

So guys, I'm not coming back after the break.

FRIEND 1

The hell? Why?

CONOR

The old pair are moving me to a different school.

FRIEND 2

Dicks. Why?

CONOR

They say they have no money.

The ball whizzes past him. He misses by a mile, throwing down the bat in frustration. They take a break.

CONOR

But we still hang out, yeah?

FRIEND 2

Totally man.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR  
At weekends and stuff. Right?

FRIEND 1  
Absolutely. So where are you going?  
Conlets?

Conor doesn't respond.

FRIEND 2  
Gonzaga?

CONOR  
Synge Street.

His friends exchange looks after they see he's not joking.

CONOR  
What?? It can't be that bad?

One of them mock-hugs him.

FRIEND 2  
Seriously bro, it's been nice  
knowing you.

His friends laugh. We hold on Conor, the gravity of his situation sinking in.

INT. JESUIT SCHOOL OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Conor is sitting in a cosy, large office. Across from him, his history teacher, and headmaster, FATHER WAITS (late 50s). Fr. Waits smokes a pipe, sitting on the edge of his desk. He is prematurely grey, and has a warm, understanding appearance. His SECRETARY, a heavy woman in her fifties, sits in an anteroom, typing, off.

FATHER WAITS  
We'll be sorry to be losing you.  
Synge Street was a fine school in  
its day. It has a poor reputation  
now, but I'm sure that's  
exaggerated. The Christian Brothers  
can be a little tough to my mind,  
but they get the work done.

CONOR  
No more rugby. No cricket practice.  
Debating. School plays??

FATHER WAITS  
They'll have their own  
extracurricular activities I  
suspect.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR  
Yeah, like flick knife practice.  
And corporal punishment.

FATHER WAITS  
I'm sure that's not true.

CONOR  
I've heard it is. I can't do  
corporal punishment. I'm light-  
boned.

Father Waits laughs. Though Conor is wise-cracking, he's clearly genuinely nervous.

Father Waits gets up, putting a hand on Conor's shoulder and walking him to the door.

FATHER WAITS  
You'll be fine, Conor. Trust me.  
You know what's gotten us to where  
we are today, us humans? One  
quality?

They pause at the open door.

FATHER WAITS  
Adaptability.

He winks, shaking Conor's hand. Conor shuffles off down the corridor.

Father Waits looks over to his secretary who has been listening. He makes a doubtful expression. She nods in agreement.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A church on a school campus. 30 choir boys are at choir practice on the alter. They are dressed in their own cloths. There is no congregation. It's Saturday rehearsal. They sing BACH.

We slowly ZOOM in to Conor, who is standing on the edges of the back row. He sings, but is lost in thought.

A TEACHER is conducting them.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - EVENING

Conor walks past Synge Street School that evening. The gates are open. The deserted school looms grey and forboding in the dusk sky. He pushes the gate open and enters, looking around. Litter rolls like tumbleweed across the pot-holed yard. Stripped-down bicycle frames remain locked to the outdoor bike shed. Old windows rattle in the wind.

(CONTINUED)

The walls read like a tabloid newspaper: "IRA" "BRITS OUT" "JENNY GREEN IS A SLUT " are among the headlines.

The playing field of his previous school is another world.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - EVENING

Back in his house, we are in Brendan's attic lair. As far away from the rest of the house as possible. This small room is a shrine to music and art. And hash.

We have numerous ash trays. A homemade hammock. Posters of bands on the walls. Shelves of books on pop art, philosophy, and music. A poster of SIGMUND FREUD on the wall next to his bed. A voice bubble has been drawn in, saying "It's all your mother's fault".

A portable TV on a box. An acoustic guitar with two strings. But most importantly, a *huge collection of Vinyl*. Proudly alphabetized. The only thing so in Brendan's life.

The windows are blacked out with hanging blankets, and the lighting is low; easy on the eternally stoned eye.

Brendan sits in his huge, collapsed armchair in a mist of marijuana smoke, a king of his own domain. He is taking a drag from one. The door is ajar.

Outside, Conor knocks.

CONOR

You in there?

BRENDAN

Where else would I be?

CONOR

I don't know. The kitchen?

BRENDAN

I'm in here.

Conor enters, leaning against the wall by the door.

BRENDAN

(sage-like)

You appear troubled, my young friend.

Conor nods his head.

BRENDAN

Sit. Share your woes.

Conor sits on the edge of his brother's bed.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDAN  
You start tomorrow?

Conor nods his head.

BRENDAN  
You'll be fine. You just have to find a way of distracting the thugs from noticing you.

CONOR  
How do I do that?

BRENDAN  
How would I know?

CONOR  
I feel like I'm going to prison.

BRENDAN  
You are. In a way. All institutions are prisons. You do realize that this is just part of the bigger picture? This school move?

CONOR  
How do you mean?

BRENDAN  
I'm pretty sure they're splitting up. I hear them rowing, in the middle of the night.

CONOR  
Do you? Why aren't you asleep?

Brendan just laughs at this, as if sleep would be ridiculous.

BRENDAN  
There'll be plenty of time for that.

He takes another drag, and then instinctively goes to pass it to Conor. But then realizes, pulling it back.

BRENDAN  
Oh, no, you're tiny.

He stands up, taking the record that has been playing quietly. Replaces it carefully, and searches for something else.

BRENDAN  
...and this is just the start of a process. They start moving you around. Soon the electricity will be cut off. The bailiff will come. The house will be sold.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

The cave is under threat, brother.  
From monsters.

Conor is genuinely concerned.

CONOR  
What monsters?

Brendan finds a record that is pertinent, opening it, and carefully rubbing his sleeve off the vinyl.

BRENDAN  
Oh, just the three-headed monster  
of Fear, Infidelity, Ego,  
Materialism.

CONOR  
That's a four-headed monster.

BRENDAN  
The things that are destroying  
their marriage. And now YOU'RE  
being tested. This is YOUR time. I  
had my time.

CONOR  
And what happened?

BRENDAN  
(beat, a thousand thoughts  
in a blink of an eye)  
This is a great chance for you. To  
break that cycle of shit. That  
school would have turned you into a  
doctor, or a lawyer. "Must make  
money, must make money".

Conor listens attentively, if a little confused.

BRENDAN  
(off his look of  
confusion)  
That was a robot I just did there.  
Who wants to be a robot? Except  
R2D2? Who knows what this new  
prison will do for you, my little  
friend!  
(beat)  
You're on a hero's journey. How are  
you going to fare?

He puts on the record he's been looking for. The needle meets the vinyl with a comforting crunch. A loud, heavy metal song from the late seventies.

The room rocks. Brendan smiles at his younger brother, "you feeling me??"

(CONTINUED)

Hard cut.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - MORNING

Song playing loud.

Monday morning. Almost in answer to his brother's question, Conor walks into the gate of the school. Numerous kids have gathered in packs. Conor has to walk a gauntlet of new faces. Heads turn towards the newcomer. There is something of a stranger arriving at a new town in a Western. But this is no Western, and the stomping song tells us so. Conor's three-quarter length smart coat and long curly hair draws laughs. He is also carrying a soft, brown leather satchel, which doesn't help.

Kids smoke in circles. Kids spit on the ground.

Further into the walk, a fight is just breaking out, and a small circle is gathering. Two boys beat it out. Bloody noses and fists. Conor speeds up as he passes. He notices that above them, at a second story window, a BROTHER (50s), in black suit and white collar, is watching the fight down below. He does nothing about it.

One KID has a dead RAT skewered on the end of a stick. He chases other kids around with it. He finally throws it at Conor. It hits him on the side of the head. Others laugh.

The song ends as he enters the school. The back of his coat is covered in spit.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Conor sits in a large, drafty classroom, looking around. The windows rattle in the wind. Worn, wooden floorboards underfoot. The desks are mismatched. Two kids per desk. This is a class of about 35 kids.

BROTHER BARNABAS (70), in a black gown and white collar, writes Latin on the blackboard.

Even with his hearing aid, he can't hear kids chatting, laughing and fighting when his back is turned.

Conor sits in the middle, amazed. To his left, at the back of class, a boy smokes a cigarette, blowing the smoke out the sash window beside him.

To his right, two BOYS hold down another, as a fourth farts in his mouth, closing it, and making him swallow.

Another kid is getting an Indian ink tattoo: IRA, on his hand.

(CONTINUED)

At the blackboard, Brother Barnabas takes a surreptitious swig from a hip flask, returning it under his gown. This old guy should have been put out to pasture a long time ago.

The door swings open, and the HEADMASTER enters silently, on his morning rounds. The class stands up. Silence. He is the same Brother we saw watching the fight on the way in.

CLASS

(as one)

Good morning Brother Baxter.

Brother Baxter surveys the room, landing on the blackboard.

BROTHER BAXTER

It's French, brother Barnabas.

BROTHER BARNABAS

Hah?

BROTHER BAXTER

You're teaching French. Not Latin.

Brother Barnabas looks at the board, seeing that he is teaching Latin.

BROTHER BARNABAS

Oh. How modern.

Brother Baxter speaks in a tough, no nonsense Dublin accent. His bushy moustache suggests something of a military man.

BROTHER BAXTER

Mind you, I'd be surprised if any of ye even knew where France *is*, not to mind speaking the language.

Silence. Conor, who thinks this is an actual question, raises a hand.

BROTHER BAXTER

Oh. Go on.

CONOR

On the continent. Above Spain.

BROTHER BAXTER

My my. And how do you know that?

CONOR

My parents took us there. One summer. In the car.

Other kids laugh, jealously.

BROTHER BAXTER

You'll be the new lad then, from the Jesuits.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Yes.

BROTHER BAXTER

Yes "Brother". What's your name.

CONOR

Conor Lawlor.

Laughter. Conor looks around, all eyes on him. Brother Baxter is impressed.

BROTHER BAXTER

Shut up! You could all take a leaf out of his book. Look at a map once in a while. Right Conor. Morning prayers are at a quarter to nine. Little break is ten minutes. At 11 o'clock. Big break is 45 minutes at 1 o'clock. The canteen is located below the P.E. Hall. They serve chips and bars. The lads will show you the ropes. Welcome.

CONOR

Thank you.

BROTHER BAXTER

As you were!

He turns to go. But as he does, he sees Conor's feet under his desk. He pauses. Conor is wearing brown leather brogues. Everyone else is wearing black shoes.

BROTHER BAXTER

We have a strict, black shoe policy here, Mr. Lawlor. Your parents should have read it in the introductory rule book. Page 142. We'll let it go today, but from tomorrow on...

He goes to exit again.

CONOR

I don't have black shoes, Sir.

Brother Baxter pauses at the door. The class goes silent. BB is not used to being questioned like this.

BROTHER BAXTER

Well, you'll have to get a pair then. And report to me first thing in the morning with them. Good man.

Brother Baxter exits. The class takes a sigh of relief. The kid who was smoking releases a lung-full of smoke. Brother Barnabas goes back to teaching Latin.

(CONTINUED)

Conor leans into the BOY sitting next to him, MICK MAHON, a really tough kid with a buzz cut and a gold stud earring.

CONOR

Sorry, but where did he say the restaurant was?

MICK MAHON

The wha?

CONOR

The restaurant? The cafeteria?

MICK MAHON

You mean the canteen?

CONOR

Yeah. Of course.

Mick just shakes his head in amazement.

MICK MAHON

The "restaurant". You're not in France now, you bleedin spanner.

EXT. SYNGE STREET YARD - DAY

Little break.

Kids play football with a punctured football. Others sit on walls eating sweets. Conor wanders about on his own looking for the canteen. He passes by the alleyway towards the P.E. hall. From behind the bike sheds, a low whistle catches his attention.

Down the alley way is a 15 year-old. He has a cigarette in his hand. He has a skin head. His uniform is dirty and too short for him. He wears scuffed loafers and a green bomber jacket.

KID

Do you smoke, do you?

CONOR

Oh. Occasionally. I'm not really a smoker. My brother is, and I sometimes take a little of his tobacco, if my friends are over. And my dad used to smoke a pipe. But he gave up.

KID

Why are you telling me all this? Come on and we'll have a smoke. Follow me.

(CONTINUED)

Conor follows the kid, who enters a prefab marked TOILETS.

INT. THE BOY'S TOILET'S (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

This is a stinking prefabricated building, with a row of urinals across from three cubicles. The floor is sticky and wet. Conor follows the KID in.

He puts a cigarette in his mouth.

KID  
D'you want one?

CONOR  
Nah, I'm okay. I'll just watch you.  
I've already had a couple this  
morning.

The kid pulls a Black Widow catapult from inside his bomber jacket, and a large marble.

KID  
Did you ever see one these, did  
you?

He loads it with the marble, and points it at Conor's head.

KID  
I hear you're a queer.

CONOR  
What?

KID  
I hear you're a little queer?

CONOR  
No. You must have me mixed up with  
someone else.

KID  
(scrutinizing him)  
I don't think so. Dance.

CONOR  
What?

KID  
Dance. Like a queer.

Conor doesn't know how to deal with this.

CONOR  
Are you serious?

The kid aims the catapult at a light bulb, and fires, hitting it perfectly, re-loading and pointing it back at Conor.

(CONTINUED)

Conor starts a merry jig. The KID watches for a while, his catapult ready.

KID  
Now dance with your pants down.

CONOR  
What?

KID  
Get into that cubicle. And dance with your pants down.

Conor stops dancing.

CONOR  
No.

KID  
What did you just say.

CONOR  
No, I'm not doing that.

Silence. To his surprise, the kid disarms his catapult.

KID  
Okay. Bye Bye.

Conor walks past him, exiting hurriedly, baffled.

INT. THE CANTEEN (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

Conor is in a basement building. No windows. It's lit with fluorescent lights. Kids of all ages muck about. There's a ping pong table with no net or bats. There's a tuck shop with candy bars and a dinner lady deep frying chips at a window. Music plays through a small ghetto blaster. Many kids are smoking.

Conor heads for the tuck shop window, joining a rowdy queue while searching for enough change in his pockets.

He manages to get 25 pence together and exchanges it for a Mars bar. As he turns to exit, the KID from the toilet is standing right behind him. He taps him on the shoulder. Conor turns around.

People watch on, knowing that something is brewing.

The KID lets Conor have it, right on the eye. It's a good shot. People wince. Conor goes down on the ground.

The KID picks up Conor's Mars Bar and rips it open; takes a bite and throws away the rest. He turns and swaggers off. People clear the way from him, keeping their distance.

(CONTINUED)

The bell rings and everyone starts to shuffle off back to class, some of them step over Conor, laughing.

As the room empties out, we hear a voice, off:

VOICE

You should've just danced.

Conor looks over his shoulder. DARREN (who we met in the pre-title scene) is crossing over towards him, putting on his jacket.

EXT. SYNGE STREET YARD (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

Conor, now in the company of Darren, walks back towards his classroom, holding his eye.

CONOR

So you were there? In the toilets?

DARREN

I've a touch of the scutters. So I was in one of the cubicles all morning with the liquid shits.

He smiles.

DARREN

Darren's the name.

He goes to shake hands. Conor take his hand, hiding his reluctance.

CONOR

Conor. Who is that psycho?

DARREN

That's Barry Bray. He eats hair gel.

CONOR

What?

DARREN

Yeah. He ate a pot of hair gel in class once. No one knows why. The only problem now is, he'll be out for your blood.

CONOR

Why?

DARREN

Because you've shown weakness.

CONOR

How do you know him?

(CONTINUED)

We hold on Conor, looking increasingly worried. Synge Street is certainly living up to its reputation.

DARREN

He lives in the same flats as me.  
His ma and da are mad drug addicts.  
People say he was conceived on  
acid. And it got into his  
bloodstream. But don't worry, you  
just need to come up with a plan  
for the year. A solution. Here.

He hands him a slip of paper from a plastic wallet. It reads, in marker:

*Darren Mulvey. Business solutions.  
Saint Teresa's Gardens. Flat 221.  
"Your problem is my solution!"*

DARREN

Call me any time.

CONOR

There's no number on it.

DARREN

No, we don't have a phone. Just  
call around.

They arrive outside Conor's class.

CONOR

This is my class. Where are you?

DARREN

Ah they kept me back a year. Or  
two. I can't really read very well.

CONOR

Right. How's that going to work, in  
business?

DARREN

(leaning in)  
I can read people. And you're  
alright. But you won't survive in  
here unless we deal with Barry.

CONOR

What about telling the Brothers?

DARREN

Hah! You *could* do that, yeah.

Darren heads off, laughing.

(CONTINUED)

Conor heads back into class. The door slams behind him with a menacing "SLAM"

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Penny stands in the hallway, shouting upstairs.

PENNY

Bren! Conor! It's on.

Brendan exits his room quickly. He is carrying his drinking and smoking accoutrements. He passes Conor's door as Conor exits. The two of them run downstairs. It's like a fire drill.

INT. THE SITTING ROOM (CONTINUOUS) - NIGHT

Brendan and Conor burst into the sitting room. Their father is sitting at the table drinking a whiskey. The collar of his jacket is turned up, and he has a scarf on. In front of him, a few architectural drawings, draftsman kit, sliding rule etc. He is sketching plans for a building that will never be built.

Numerous photographs of Brendan are framed and around the place. As a baby. A young boy. A handsome teenager. Etc. Brendan was the golden boy.

Brendan turns on the TV as he and Conor take seats on the couch.

BRENDAN

Can we turn on the fire?

ROBERT

No.

TV PRESENTER

(off)

It's Thursday. It's 7 o'clock. It's Top of The Pops!

Penny enters, sitting across from her husband, drinking a coffee. She is wearing a big cardigan.

As the charts countdown for January starts, they are a family. Sort of.

VOICE ON TV

"They can't be here tonight as they're in the USA, so instead, we have to go to... RIO. It's Duran Duran!"

(CONTINUED)

On the TV, the video for Duran Duran's "Rio" begins. Conor is glued to the screen as Brendan lectures on the clothes, video, song, and lyrics. Conor is an enthusiastic student.

BRENDAN

The jury is out on which way these guys will go. They're a lot of fun, and John Taylor is one of the most proficient bass players in the UK right now, giving them a funky edge which I hope they'll go with. Look at this video!

He laughs with glee as beautiful people aboard a yacht in the Caribbean surround Simon LeBon. The band looks good. The girls are clad in bikinis.

At the table, Robert looks back at his sketch. He scrunches up the sheets of paper angrily. Frustrated. Penny watches this.

ROBERT

Who am I kidding. Nothing's getting built here for another ten years at least.

PENNY

You don't know that.

He laughs, pouring a whiskey, and turning towards the TV.

ROBERT

Not exactly the Beatles, is it.

BRENDAN

Oh, I'll just start up the time machine so we can go BACK in time for dad.

He sighs. Underwater, Simon LeBon drinks a pink cocktail underwater. The pink liquid mixes with the sea. Brendan laughs.

ROBERT

Well if that's the future we're all screwed. Look at him, he's not even singing live!

BRENDAN

It's a video, Robert. It's a piece of art. Everyone is making them now.

CONOR

Yeah Robert.

(CONTINUED)

PENNY  
 (referring to Simon)  
 He's very attractive isn't he?

ROBERT  
 You're welcome to him.

PENNY  
 Do you promise?

On screen, a guy in the video plays a saxophone solo on a raft.

CONOR  
 Wow, a saxophone solo.

BRENDAN  
*That* might date.

ROBERT  
 Why can't they get them to play live? What are they hiding?

BRENDAN  
 Because they're in the USA, didn't you hear him? And this lasts forever. It's the perfect marriage of music and visuals. Short. To the point. Look at that...

He points to the screen. Hedonism and fun, in Technicolor.

BRENDAN  
 What tyranny could stand up to that?

Conor looks at the screen, transfixed. His brother has a point. Sort of.

ROBERT  
 That's because this *is* the tyranny.

BRENDAN  
 Oh let's not begin a philosophical argument Robert.

ROBERT  
 Why not?

BRENDAN  
 Because you'll lose.

This winds Robert up, who is up for a fight, but a stern shake of Penny's head warns him off.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDAN

(quietly)

...and the thing about Barry Bray is, he's probably a victim himself. Bullying is a cycle. Like with Dad. His dad undermined him, pissed on *his* dreams. So what do you expect.

CONOR

Right.

BRENDAN

So we gotta break the cycle. Right? Look at these guys-

(referring to the band)

Their dads fought in the Second World War! Wore flat caps and woolen underwear. Look at them now!

On screen, Duran Duran are the epitome of '80s London: affluence, arrogance, and renewed confidence.

BRENDAN

Barry Bray is more than likely gay. And he's struggling with it. And holding you up in the toilets is all part of that.

CONOR

Really?

BRENDAN

Probably. It's not a good school to be gay in, he's suffering in there, same as you. But the only way to get him off your back is to understand him. To defeat him, you must firstly *forgive* him.

He nods, sagely, returning to watching the TV. We hold on Conor thinking about this advice.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL GATE - DAY

Conor walks into school. He is keeping a low profile, walking in by the wall as the madness carries on all around him.

Up ahead, he runs into Brother Baxter. He looks him up and down. We TILT down to reveal... BROWN SHOES.

Hold on Brother Baxter's face. An inscrutable look. Deep shock that his warning would be ignored.

INT. BROTHER BAXTER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Brother Baxter sits behind his large desk in his office. Very little in this room, except a statue of the Virgin Mary, and a cross. On the other side of the desk, Conor.

Silence.

BROTHER BAXTER  
What's going on, son?

CONOR  
About the shoes?

Brother Baxter just nods.

CONOR  
Well, I brought it up with my mum. But she said we couldn't afford another pair of shoes at the moment. I bought these before I knew about the shoe colour policy here at Synge Street. But it's not as if these are runners or something. They're brown. They're quite sensible.

BROTHER BAXTER  
I can see that. They're very nice. Tasteful, as you say. But you see, they're not black?

CONOR  
I'm not sure... What you want me to do. They're shoes. They keep the rain out.

BROTHER BAXTER  
(nodding his head)  
Take them off.

CONOR  
What?

BROTHER BAXTER  
Seeing as you're so fond of them. You can pick them up here at four o'clock every day until you comply with the rules of the school.

Conor looks at him in disbelief. Is this really what's going to happen now?

INT. THE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Close on a pair of stockinged feet. Conor walks down the corridor in his socks. Kids laugh. What is going on.

EXT. THE YARD - LATER

Now Conor walks through puddles in the yard. His socks are already developing holes.

INT. ART CLASS - LATER

Conor sits in art class. This class is made up of about twelve kids. Including Conor. There's some interesting art on the walls. Conor rubs his feet together, trying to keep warm.

MISS DUNNE (40s), sits on the corner of her desk. She has a curvy figure, and a mane of dyed blonde hair. She has a Dublin accent. She has a scented candle lit on her desk. A few flowers in a glass.

MISS DUNNE

Right, so most of yiz picked this class because ye didn't wanna do mechanical drawing. Am I right?

Most people nod.

MISS DUNNE

Yiz think art class will be a doddle? A chance to get a break in the day and scribble a few pictures in between other classes?

A few lads nod in agreement.

MISS DUNNE

Right, well you're not completely off the mark.

This gets a little laugh.

MISS DUNNE

Art should be a break from the rest of the world. It should never be work. It's kind of... therapy. But don't think you're not going to learn something in here. I'm going to impart *some* information to ye, okay? So when you're out with a girl at the National Gallery, you can look at a painting and SAY something about it. Okay?

A few nods and mutterings of acceptance. Mick Mahon puts his hand up.

MICK MAHON

I'll take you on a date to the National Gallery any day, miss.

(CONTINUED)

MISS DUNNE

Ah, thanks, Michael. But I have a fiancée already.

MICK MAHON

Are you sure?

MISS DUNNE

Positive.

She puts on her glasses to get a closer look at Conor's feet under his desk.

MISS DUNNE

What the hell is going on here?

CONOR

Oh. I don't have black shoes. So I have to leave my brown ones in Brother Baxter's office every day until I get some.

She shakes her head.

INT. THE CANTEEN - LATER

Conor enters the canteen in his bare feet. He looks around. Up ahead in a little group, he sees Barry. He musters up the courage, and approaches, tapping him on the shoulder. Barry Bray turns around.

Other kids notice this.

CONOR

Hey. I understand that you're in pain. That there is a conflict within you. And that can't be easy to deal with in this school. You publicly humiliated me. So now, I publicly forgive you. Barry Bray.

EXT. THE SCHOOL - MORNING

Conor now has the TWO black eyes of the opening scene. Darren stands beside him.

He marches off towards the GIRL across the street. We hold on Darren this time. In a few moments, Conor returns:

CONOR

We need to form a band...

EXT. A SMALL COTTAGE - DAY

Conor and Darren stand at the front door of a small, run-down cottage on a narrow lane way. They are not wearing their school uniforms. It's out of school.

Darren knocks on the knocker.

DARREN

Eamon's a genius. He can play every instrument known to man. His hobby is rabbits.

After a while we hear footsteps thundering down the stairs. The door opens and EAMON (14), stands there. Eamon wears stone-washed denims, matching DENIM (!) jacket, a crew neck jumper, and white, dirty boot runners.

He has curly hair, and wears steel-rim glasses. He sports a wicked mullet.

DARREN

Hey Eamon. What you doing?

EAMON

Nothing. I was just feeding me new bunny. Howareya Darren.

DARREN

Cool. This is Eamon. Eamon, this is Conor. He's new in the school, and he's putting together a band.

EAMON

So?

INT. EAMON'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Eamon's small living room has been transformed into a band-rehearsal space. In a semicircle in the corner of the room is a drum kit, guitar amp, keyboard, and microphone. Conor looks about, impressed.

CONOR

Wow! Where did you get all this gear??

EAMON

Me da's in a covers band. Weddings, parties, pubs.

Close up on the logo on the kick drum: "EAZY LIVIN'" with some glittery stars.

DARREN

Eamon can play every instrument known to man, can't you Eamon?

(CONTINUED)

EAMON

Probably.

DARREN

Show him.

FOUR VERY QUICK SHOTS: Eamon plays the bass guitar, slapping. The drums. The guitar, soloing. And the keyboard, playing jazz.

CONOR

Wow. So/

But Eamon isn't finished.

SIX more very quick shots. Eamon is playing an African Balaphone. Next, he's playing an Indian flute. Then the Uilleann pipes. Then a shaker. Then a Conga drum.

Finally he is done. He's clearly something of a prodigy.

EAMON

What do you play yourself?

CONOR

(thinking on his feet)

I'm more of a singer.

Eamon waits for him to go on.

CONOR

And I write songs. Well, I mean, lyrics. Words. But I haven't put them to music yet.

EAMON

So what do you want from me?

DARREN

We want to hire your instruments.

CONOR

(interrupting)

No way. You've got to be IN the band. You're amazing. Right Darren?

DARREN

Are you into that Eamon?

We can see that Eamon is very glad to be asked, but bluffs a little:

EAMON

What kind of music are you going to be doing?

CONOR

I don't know yet.

(CONTINUED)

EAMON

You have to know what you're going to play. What are you into?

CONOR

I'm a futurist.

EAMON

What does that mean?

CONOR

Like no nostalgia. Not like your dad's band. Not looking backwards. Just forwards.

EAMON

Cool. Like Depeche Mode?

CONOR

(not knowing them)  
Okay.

EAMON

Or Joy Division?

CONOR

(bluffing)  
Right.

Eamon sure knows his stuff.

EAMON

Or Duran Duran. What do you think of them?

CONOR

(beat, then parroting  
Brendan)  
The jury is out on which way those guys will go. They're a lot of fun, and James Taylor is one of the most proficient bass players in the UK right now, giving them a funky edge.

Silence. Eamon is impressed, even though Conor has got John Taylor's name wrong.

EAMON

JOHN Taylor.

CONOR

Yea. John. Of course.

They stand there, sizing each other up.

(CONTINUED)

EAMON

I'll be in the band. I'll play guitar. And help write the songs. We can rehearse here because me da's in Saint John Of Gods.

DARREN

Is that a pub?

EAMON

No, Darren. It's where alcoholics go to get off drink and stop beating up their wives and kids.

DARREN

Right.

EAMON

And neighbors.

CONOR

Okay.

EAMON

And the police.

INT. EAMON'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Conor, Eamon and Darren sit around the kitchen table continuing their plans.

Eamon's MOTHER (45), is pouring Cup-O-Soup into three bowls in front of them, and giving them slices of bread. Eamon is stroking a bunny on his knee.

EAMON

Who's going to be the manager?

DARREN

Me.

EAMON

Have you managed bands before?

DARREN

No. (thinks) I'm just breaking into the market?

EAMON

Nice. How are we going to cut things up?

DARREN

I'll draw up contracts?

EAMON'S MUM

Do you need a pen?

(CONTINUED)

EAMON

Ma, we are trying to have a band meeting here?

She smiles as she pours.

EAMON

Gotta have everything straight first. Get everything down on paper. Otherwise you can get ripped off by the big record labels when they come a huntin'. That's what me dad says.

Eamon's mum laughs conspicuously.

EAMON

When do you want to rehearse?

EAMON'S MUM

Not the weekends. He's got a job packing shelves in Quinnsworth on Saturdays. You're not leaving that job. Not for any jaysis band.

CONOR

How about Mondays and Wednesdays after school.

EAMON

Sounds good.

EAMON'S MUM

That's fine.

DARREN

Now all we need is other musicians. Do either of you know any other musicians?

CONOR

No. You?

DARREN

No. Eamon?

EAMON'S MUM

He usually just plays on his own, don't you son?

She squeezes his shoulder.

EAMON

Right, we can't get any peace here. Let's continue this meeting out the back.

They get up, following Eamon out back.

(CONTINUED)

EAMON'S MUM  
No smoking now!

EAMON  
Ma! How many times do I have to  
tell you? I don't smoke!

They exit.

INT. A SHED - MOMENTS LATER

The three of them stand in a VERY small shed. They are all  
smoking. They are continuing their plans.

From the window at the kitchen where Eamon's mum is washing  
up, she can plainly see smoke wafting out the window. She  
shrugs.

Darren clicks his fingers.

DARREN  
There's a black guy in 3B?

EAMON  
So?

DARREN  
Be cool if he was in the band.

CONOR  
Why?

DARREN  
He's the one colored guy in the  
whole school. Probably in Dublin!  
Having a Golliwog in the band would  
give us a real edge.

CONOR  
You can't say Golliwog.

DARREN  
Why not?

CONOR  
Trust me. You just can't.

Darren looks to Eamon for this. Eamon shakes his head,  
agreeing with Conor. Darren shrugs.

CONOR  
Anyway what if he can't play  
anything?

DARREN  
He'll be able to play *something*.  
He's black!

(CONTINUED)

Close on a FLYER up on a notice board in school. It reads:

*Futurist band forming. Looking for  
Bass player, drummer, and keyboard.  
Own instruments not essential, as  
we have them. Influences include  
DEPECHE MODE, DURAN DURAN and many  
more! Contact Management Solutions  
at 221 St. Teresa's Gardens. No  
telephone. Just call in.*

EXT. A HOUSE ON A HOUSING ESTATE - DAY

Conor, Eamon and Darren knock on the door of a small house on a shitty housing estate. In a moment, an enormous, beautiful woman answers the door. She speaks in a strong Nigerian accent, wearing colorful headgear and dress. They've never seen anything like it.

EAMON

Wow.

WOMAN (EARLY 30S)

Can I help you?

DARREN

Is this the house where the colored  
lad lives?

WOMAN

What do you think? How many black  
people do you think live on this  
shitting estate!?

(beat)

Do you know Ngig?

DARREN

What is that?

WOMAN

My son! Do you know my son?

CONOR

No. But we're in his school. And  
we're putting a band together. Does  
he play any instruments?

WOMAN

(opening the door wider)

Why don't you ask him yourself.

They enter.

DARREN

Does he speak English?

INT. NGIG'S SITTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The three lads stand in a small, tidy living space. In front of them, NGIG (14), a black kid, stocky, well built.

DARREN  
(very slowly)  
WE-ARE-PUTTING-A-BAND-TOGETHER. I-  
AM-THE-MANAGER.

NGIG  
What the hell is wrong with *him*?

When he speaks, he speaks in a tough, inner city Dublin accent.

DARREN  
Oh. You sound different from your  
ma?

NGIG  
'Course I do, I've been here half  
me bleedin life. What did you  
expect.

CONOR  
Would you have any interest in  
being in a band?

He clearly is.

NGIG  
Maybe. What kind of music are you  
playing?

EAMON  
We're not 100 percent sure yet. But  
do you play any instruments?

He is about to shake his head, when his mother interrupts.

NGIG'S MOTHER  
Of course he does. He's black.

Ngig looks doubtfully at his ma. She nods her head.

Music starts up on the track. It's sketchy, out of time, but vaguely recognizable. It's a bad cover version of RIO, by Duran Duran.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Song over.

TRACK out from the flier. Two KIDS are writing down the number from the flier on the wall. They are identical twin rhythm section, GARRY and LARRY (14).

(CONTINUED)

It is hard to read the number, as the poster is covered in an array of Spunking Dick drawings.

INT. EAMON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Conor sings into a microphone. Eamon plays rhythm guitar. Garry fingers a bass guitar. His twin brother Larry sits behind the drum kit. Ngig cycles through sounds on an early synthesizer. He has no real idea what he's doing.

Conor is hesitant and nervous. Though he can sing, he has zero presence.

It's chaos. They are all dressed in their school uniforms and look awful.

TRACK down to find a tape cassette recorder on a chair in the middle of them. It is RECORDING.

The song ends.

NGIG

Not bad.

GARRY

Sounds great.

NGIG

I think we sped up a little.

EAMON

Really? We were shit.

LARRY

Yeah, it's a shit song. We should be a metal band.

CONOR

It's not the song. It's us.  
It was all over the place. Let's try it again.

LARRY

Smoke break!

EAMON

What?

NIGIG

Cool. I'm gasping for a smoke!

They all run out.

Eamon sighs, looking at Conor, the only other one who hasn't left his station.

INT. THE SHED - MOMENTS LATER

ALL of the band are crammed into the shed smoking.

NGIG

So what are we called?

They think.

EAMON

The Rabbits?

NGIG

What is wrong with you and Rabbits??

EAMON

I just love them. So fluffy. Those ears. Not a dog. Yet not quite a cat. And manageable shit. Just, the perfect pet.

CONOR

I have an idea. What about "La Vie".

Silence. Darren looks at him, witheringly.

DARREN

What does that mean?

CONOR

It French for "The Life"

GARRY

What's French for "That's not going to be the name of the band"?

CONOR

(beat)

"C'est nes pas le nom du groupe"

GARRY

Right. There you go.

EAMON

What about Sing Street.

They think about this. Not bad.

CONOR

I like that.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Song continues.

(CONTINUED)

Pull out from Brendan's tape machine. Conor is playing his brother his first demo tape. The tape reads "SING STREET" DEMO 1. If it sounded bad live this afternoon, it sounds worse played back on a small tape machine.

Conor chews his nails in anticipation of his big brother's response. Brendan finally ejects the tape before it's over.

BRENDAN

This is BAD. And there's nothing as bad as bad music. And you must never play this again.

To Conor's surprise, he begins unspooling the tape, pulling it out in a pile at his feet.

CONOR

You know you can record over tapes?

BRENDAN

No no. All evidence of this day must be destroyed.

He finally bins the tape.

BRENDAN

That's a novelty act. You want to get the girl right?

CONOR

What?

BRENDAN

(shouting, impatient)  
The Girl! That's what this is about? Right?

CONOR

(thinking)  
Oh. Yes. The girl. Right. Okay.

BRENDAN

Right. So you're going to get her with someone else's art? Are you kidding me?

CONOR

I suppose. But we're just starting out. We need to learn how to play.

BRENDAN

Play? PLAY? You don't need to know how to play! You think the Sex Pistols knew how to play? Who are you, Steely Dan?

(CONTINUED)

Brendan is coming into his own. He leaves his chair, pacing the room. Pulling different records from his collection. He now has the first project of his adult life: his brother.

BRENDAN

You have to learn how to NOT play.  
That's rock n roll. And that takes  
practice.

(beat)

And you're not a covers band!

CONOR

Really?

BRENDAN

Every school has a covers band.  
Every wedding. Every pub. And in  
every covers band there's a middle  
aged man who never knows if he  
could have made it because he never  
had the balls to write a song for  
someone. Rock n Roll is a risk. You  
risk being ridiculed.

Conor thinks about this.

CONOR

I don't know how to write a song.

Brendan now has a large pile of records in his arms. He points at the door.

BRENDAN

Close the door. And sit down.

CONOR

Really? I have school in the  
morning.

BRENDAN

THIS... is school.

Conor closes the door. Sits down. It's going to be a long night.

DISSOLVE TO:

**SONG 1**

A song is formed...

INT. EAMON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Conor and Eamon are alone in the rehearsal room. Conor reading from a little notebook of scrawled thoughts and pictures. Eamon sits on the edge of the couch with an acoustic guitar.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR  
 (reading)  
 "Well she's standing on the corner.  
 Like an angel in disguise. And I  
 want to try and warn her, but She's  
 got dangerous eyes."

EAMON  
 Dangerous eyes. I like that. What  
 does that mean?

CONOR  
 I don't know.

EAMON  
 What's this song about Conor?

CONOR  
 It's like, when you don't know  
 someone, they're more interesting.  
 They can be anything you want them  
 to be. It's like you know them  
 better, when you don't know them.  
 You know?

EAMON  
 No that doesn't make any sense.  
 What's it called?

CONOR  
 "The Riddle of the model"

EAMON  
 Epic. What about a rhythm like  
 this.

Eamon plays a chord. A funky rhythm.

CONOR  
 Nice. Slow it down a little.

Conor tries this lyric over it. Eamon drops to an F, and it starts to sound like something. They smile at the change. Conor takes out a pen from his school bag, adding a lyric, as Eamon continues to play.

We start to see how this might work- Conor the director/lyricist/visionary, Eamon the pragmatic musical prodigy.

The sound of their first song coming together plays over the following scenes. Just guitar and voice for now.

INT. IRISH CLASS - DAY

Song over.

(CONTINUED)

Conor sits at the back of Irish class. The TEACHER reads PEIG SAYERS while sitting behind his desk. Conor writes feverishly in his notebook, looking out the window for inspiration. The teacher calls a BOY up to his desk, and slaps him, really hard across the face.

( SCENE 41 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

INT. CONOR'S BEDROOM - DAY

Conor writes in his bed. His parents rowing on the corridor, off.

ROBERT  
(off, muffled)  
That's funny, coming from you!

PENNY  
Keep your bloody voice down!

Two doors slam, separately. He listens out, then continues writing.

INT. EAMON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Song over.

The song is really coming together, as Conor and Eamon jam it. Though complete opposites, this combination of songwriters is coming together. Through the window behind them, the rest of the band are playing football in the garden. Conor taps on the window, waving at them to come in and give it a spin. They run in.

INT. EAMON'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Now the FULL band play the song. And it sounds pretty good. Conor is still a little shy of his own voice, and is frozen at the microphone.

Eamon gestures for him to enjoy it. But he just smiles and stays static.

Again, the tape recorder records it on the chair in the middle of them.

EXT. SYNGE STREET - MORNING

Song over.

The song plays over as Conor walks across the street. From his satchel he produces a cassette tape as he meets the GIRL, standing on her stoop smoking. He hands her the tape.

(CONTINUED)

GIRL  
What's this now?

CONOR  
That's the song. I mentioned it to you.

GIRL  
Oh yeah. The song. You're the kid in the band! That's cool.

CONOR  
You should probably learn the lyrics. So you can lip sync. We're shooting down the lane at the back of Quinnsworth. This Saturday. At 12 o'clock. See you there.

He nods, not waiting for a response. She blows smoke, watching him go. Then she looks at the tape in her hand.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - NIGHT

By moonlight, Conor, Darren and Eamon peel back a sheet of corrugated metal at the back of school. This allows them a gap to slip through into the yard.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - NIGHT

Darren opens a little back door with a key. They are in.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The three of them sneak down a basement corridor. Conor guides them with a clunky bicycle lamp. They arrive at a door. A handwritten sign says "Audio Visual Room".

Darren tries numerous keys until he gets the right one. They open it.

DARREN  
(with the flair of a  
master criminal)  
Gentlemen, I give you the Audio  
Visual Department....

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - THE AUDIO VISUAL ROOM - NIGHT

This is hardly a room at all. More like a broom closet. Conor's torch reveals a steel shelving unit, bare, except for the camera and VCR machine on the top shelf. And three or four VHS tapes.

They start taking it down.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - NIGHT

The three of them run back across the road by moonlight laughing. Music plays over.

EXT. A LANE-WAY - MORNING

The band are setting up their instruments on a rainy morning. They are down a little laneway at the back of a row of shops. Piles of rubbish, old bins, and an abandoned car. It's overcast and depressing. And cold.

Their guitar amps and drum kit look pretty small out in the open.

EAMON

It looks like loads of gear back home, doesn't it? And yet it looks shit here.

Conor is setting up the video camera across from them on a tripod. He looks through the viewfinder. It does look shit.

He checks his watch.

DARREN

Where is this chick?

CONOR

(worried)  
I don't know.

DARREN

Did everyone bring some clothes?

They start rooting through plastic bags stuffed with clothes from home.

Larry holds up a pair of flares. Garry, a child's cowboy outfit.

DARREN

Who the hell brought a cowboy outfit?

GARRY

Me. It's all I could find.

DARREN

No one dresses as a cowboy in a band!

LARRY

There's a cowboy in The Village People.

(CONTINUED)

GARRY

Yeah. And Adam Ant.

EAMON

Adam Ant is a highway man.

LARRY

So we can have a highway man, but not a cowboy? Are you mentally ill?

GARRY

So what did you bring then?

Hard cut.

EXT. LANEWAY - MORNING

Conor is dressed as a low-budget New Romantic. A mash-up of ideas from a cross section of TV. Nothing quite works. He's wearing sunglasses, bangles, his father's long overcoat with the sleeves rolled up, and a blouse that definitely belongs to his mum.

Eamon is dressed in his Dad's show-band uniform. A purple, velvet suit that is way too big for him. He's a little Austin Powers.

EAMON

It's me Da's showband outfit.

Garry, Larry and Ngig are unimpressed. Darren isn't sure.

GARRY

Is this a gay band?

CONOR

Coming from the one who wants to look like The Village People.

GARRY

What's gay about The Village People??

As the others squabble, Conor's attention is drawn to the end of the lane, where Raphina has just appeared.

He smiles. She approaches carrying a large bag. She looks great, in a huge Angora sweater, pencil skirt and high heels.

RAPHINA

Hello all. Sorry I'm late. I was out last night. At a night club. Still recovering.

She takes off her sunglasses, dramatically, looking them up and down.

(CONTINUED)

RAPHINA

Jesus Christ. What in God's name  
are ye all wearing?

CONOR

Yeah, we're just working that out.  
Maybe you can help.

RAPHINA

Who's your wardrobe person? Stevie  
Wonder?

CONOR

We don't have a wardrobe person.

RAPHINA

Right. Who's the camera man. Maybe  
he can make some of this work.

CONOR

Em... We don't really have...

DARREN

I'm the camera man.

RAPHINA

I thought you were the producer.

DARREN

AND camera man. Saving money all  
the way.

Conor takes her by the elbow, walking her out of earshot a  
little.

CONOR

What did you think of the song?

RAPHINA

I liked it. It's the only reason  
I'm here. Did you write it?

CONOR

Pretty much. Eamon wrote most of  
the music.

RAPHINA

So you wrote the lyrics? They're  
cool. Who are they about?

CONOR

Just a girl, I see her about.

RAPHINA

You know you've got really good  
cheek bones?

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

What?

RAPHINA

Yeah. Look at you. Can I do your makeup?

CONOR

Really?

RAPHINA

Yeah. This light is going to be really harsh on camera. You should totally take the edge off it. I'm actually wearing some make up right now.

She's wearing a lot of makeup.

RAPHINA

In fact, guys! You should ALL wear makeup.

The band turn around.

DARREN

Let's get one thing straight. I am NOT wearing any makeup.

RAPHINA

Relax. You're not even in the band.

DARREN

Yeah, thank God!

GARRY

I am in the band. And yet I'm not wearing makeup.

RAPHINA

Why not? You've got great lips.

GARRY

Piss off would you?

RAPHINA

Whatever. Those who actually care about how their band look and want to do this half-properly, queue over here.

GARRY

Who's saying we don't care about the band? This band is my life!

DARREN

You've been in it for three days.

(CONTINUED)

EAMON  
 Alright, stop rowing.

GARRY  
 Bitch.

Raphina sets up her stall on a rubbish bin, taking out her makeup kit. Conor sits down on an upturned box and she begins applying his make up.

GARRY  
 Who is this chick anyway? She's here two minutes and she's threatening to break the band up!

EAMON  
 Shut up Garry.

GARRY  
 Bleedin Yoko Ono.

EXT. LANEWAY - MORNING

All of the band are now wearing makeup. It's a little full-on, but they look sort of cool.

Conor directs Darren as to what the shot will be, referring to his notebook. Darren looks through the viewfinder.

CONOR  
 Okay, so we're playing here. Raphina is standing over there, against the wall. I go up to her. Start singing to her. Make sure to pan up to her eyes, when I sing "She's got Dangerous eyes".

DARREN  
 I think a zoom would be better.

CONOR  
 Okay. A zoom, whatever.

RAPHINA  
 What if I have little lightening flashes on my eye lids when I close them?

CONOR  
 Can you do that?

RAPHINA  
 I can try.

CONOR  
 Cool. So then, for the chorus, you walk off, and I follow.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Circling you like when he's following her in Thriller. Do you think you can keep the camera steady, Darren?

DARREN  
What do you think?

CONOR  
Okay, so then I follow her up the lane. Keeping behind her. Then we'll go around and get that angle in front.

DARREN  
Love it!

EXT. LANEWAY - MOMENT'S LATER

Conor presses PLAY on the tape machine. It is plugged into a small speaker. He signals to Darren to start filming. Then runs back to the band, who have started miming to the song.

Raphina is standing against the wall. Conor approaches her, Darren following.

Conor starts lip syncing to the song:

CONOR  
"Well she's standing on the corner.  
Like an angel in disguise. And I'd really like to warn her. But she's got dangerous eyes."

Darren crash zooms into her eyes. Raphina closes them, she has little lightening flashes on her lids.

CONOR  
"Well she tells me she's a model.  
Of international reputation. She's lightening in a bottle. But there's a stipulation..."

She sets off and Conor follows her. Darren walks backwards in front of them.

Conor yells "Cut", and makes some adjustments. Ngig has moved his synthesiser and stand about three feet to try get in the back of Conor's shot.

CONOR  
Cool. How does it look Darren?

DARREN  
Pretty epic. It's hard keeping focus on that zoom. And Ngig, stop moving into the back of his shot.

(CONTINUED)

NGIG

I haven't moved an inch!

DARREN

You started about three foot that way!

NGIG

It was windy.

CONOR

And it's not too shaky when you're following us?

DARREN

No, it's grand.

CONOR

Okay, take 2!

FIRST VIDEO. SHOT ON ACTUAL EARLY VHS.

Here we see their actual results, edited crudely together.

INTRO: Some zooms into hands playing instruments. Keyboard. Bass. Guitar. Ngig is wearing leather gloves.

FIRST VERSE: Conor breaks away from the band, singing into camera in front of Raphina. Ngig edges into his shot.

Four quick shots of each band member turning their heads and looking into camera.

Raphina signing autographs for the band members, over the line "She has an international reputation".

CHORUS

Raphina breaks away, walking down the laneway. Conor walks around her, singing to her, ala Michael in Thriller. But Darren's camera work is RIDICULOUSLY shaky. Like sea sick inducing.

SECOND VERSE:

The band are using the abandoned car as their set. Some sitting on the roof. Some on the boot (or hood, for our American colleagues), and others in the body of the car.

Raphina is standing on the sidewalk. Conor gets out of the car, offering her a lift. She sits in.

Up front, Conor is "driving" Raphina. She looks into camera for the last line, and mouths "The riddle of the model"

End.

(CONTINUED)

The group laugh as they prepare to watch playback through the viewfinder.

But this moment is interrupted when Barry Bray appears up the laneway. He is walking with an unshaven man in his mid-thirties who is drinking a can of beer. A friend, or brother, maybe. They are carrying a few plastic bags of shopping.

CONOR  
(under his breath)  
Oh shit.

Barry and THE MAN pass them, THE MAN slowing down to check out what's going on. He looks like he's had a few cans already.

MAN  
It's just kids filming something.  
What are you filming lads?

CONOR  
A video for a band. Hi Barry.

Barry shrugs.

MAN  
Are these in your school, Barry?

Whatever has come over Barry, he is less confident in the presence of THE MAN. Less of a bully.

MAN  
They're wearing bleedin make up!  
Jaysus lads, are yous making a  
movie, is it?

His laugh turns into a coughing fit. His tattooed hands over his mouth as he coughs.

DARREN  
A video for a band.

MAN  
Why don't you get in the band  
Barry? Hah! Dress up and all. You'd  
be bleedin' great.

He starts laughing at the idea of Barry in costume.

BARRY  
Ah piss off.

But he doesn't like this.

He hits him a slap on the side of his head. It's a sucker punch, and totally out of proportion.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

What did you say?

The mood has suddenly changed. Barry hardly flinches, but you can see his eyes are watering up. The MAN calms down. Lights a cigarette.

Barry catches eyes with Conor, who looks away.

MAN

See yous boys. Good luck. See yous at the Oscars! Come on Barry.

Barry follows behind. They turn the corner up ahead. The others don't know what that was.

DARREN

Knackers. Come on. Never mind them.

Darren presses play on the machine as the others watch. But Conor's attention is momentarily taken by Barry, who makes a throat-slitting gesture back to Conor. All the colour drains from Conor's face.

( SCENE 55 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

( SCENE 56 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

EXT. LANEWAY - DAY

Raphina diverts his attention back to the viewfinder. On screen, Conor begins singing. Raphina smiles at him. She grabs his hand in excitement as she appears on screen. And doesn't let go. Conor looks down at his hand in hers.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Conor is cycling his rusty racer through the city. Raphina is sitting on the cross bar, holding on to the handlebars, enjoying the wind in her hair.

RAPHINA

So where do you live?

CONOR

Not far from the school. Harcourt Terrace?

RAPHINA

Oh, by the canal. You grew up there?

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Yeah. Though we might be moving. My parents are broke. That's why they sent me to that school.

RAPHINA

Yeah, I wondered about that. You're a bit posh for around here!

She laughs.

CONOR

Speak for yourself. Your house is massive!

She is silent.

CONOR

And my parents are probably splitting up.

RAPHINA

That's sad. You doing okay with it?

CONOR

Oh yeah. It's sort of intense being around them. They'll probably get separate flats. We'll live between two places. Me and my brother. Which will be cool. I'm like "Guys, split up, you're killing each other".

He is experimenting with this. It is not how he feels about it at all.

RAPHINA

A bit like an American movie. You'll be all complicated and divorced and sophisticated.

CONOR

(bluffing)  
A bit, yeah.

He doesn't quite know what she means, as they pull up outside her house across from the school. She jumps off the bike.

RAPHINA

Jesus, all that drama! I'm glad I don't have parents.

CONOR

Right.

He has no idea what she means. Though intrigued, he is polite enough not to ask.

(CONTINUED)

A Ford Granada screams into the street, and skids up beside them. The window winds down, and a smiling man (22) is at the wheel. Music blaring, smoking a cigarette.

MAN

Hey baby.

RAPHINA

Hi. This is Evan Adams.

MAN

Word.

CONOR

How do you do.

RAPHINA

This is Conor, the singer in the band I mentioned.

EVAN

Ah! Cool. She played me your song. Good vibes. Bitta Duran Duran in there, little bitta New Romance. What style would you say you are?

CONOR

I'm a futurist.

EVAN

Epic. See you in the future then. You ready, baby?

RAPHINA

Yeah. See you soon.

She gives Conor a very European kiss on either cheek. He is blushing awkwardly. Evan looks very dangerous and cool, wearing a dirty leather jacket and sunglasses. He is listening to GENESIS.

Raphina gets into the passenger seat and the car revs up.

EVAN

Nice blouse!

He shouts as he spins off. She rolls down her window and gives him a big, white smile.

RAPHINA

Let's make another video soon, yeah?

Evan U-turns. But but has over estimated the width of the street, and the coolness of the U-turn is undermined by the fact that he has to do a five point turn.

Finally, the car drives off.

(CONTINUED)

Conor stands around. Suddenly, he feels very young and self conscious. And he's wearing his mother's blouse.

He looks over towards the gate on her house. As he passes it, he sees a detail he missed before. It's a small sign on the gate. It reads

KIRWIN HOUSE ESTABLISHED 1940

He continues past.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Conor is playing Brendan the dailies of his first video. They are watching it on a small TV at the end of Brendan's bed. On screen, a wobbly camera follows Raphina down the laneway.

CONOR

You have to imagine it's not as...

BRENDAN

Shit?

The take ends. Conor nervously awaits his brother's reaction. Below the table, we see that Conor's fingers are crossed.

BRENDAN

(finally)

This will be good.

CONOR

(delighted)

Really?

BRENDAN

Yeah. If you had proper cameras and a good director. As long as it's in your head, that's the important thing. This is an exercise in imagination.

CONOR

Really?

BRENDAN

Yeah. Think big, Conor. This is all just a means to an end.  
SHE looks amazing.

They both watch Raphina on screen. Frankly, she is the only good thing about this whole affair. She has a confidence and sultry beauty that totally belongs on screen.

BRENDAN

The "Riddle of The Model" isn't a great title.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

But your chorus is promising. You gotta get her in all the videos.

CONOR

Yeah?

BRENDAN

Oh yeah. She should connect them all. She's world class. Looks a little like Dee C Lee, from the Style Council? Without her, you're just a bunch of gay looking children down an alleyway. She elevates it. So did you kiss her yet?

Surprised by his forthrightness.

CONOR

What? No way.

BRENDAN

Why not?

CONOR

She's a year older than me. And anyway, she's got a boyfriend.

BRENDAN

Oh yeah. Who?

CONOR

Evan Adams. He's like, a grown man. He has a car and all, and stubble.

BRENDAN

What's he doing hanging out with a kid?

CONOR

She's not really like a kid.

We hold on Brendan. He doesn't like the sound of this. He has pulled three albums out of his collection. He hands them to Conor.

CONOR

What's this?

BRENDAN

Homework. You're good. Get better.

Conor studies the sleeve. A Joe Jackson record. The Police. The Jam.

BRENDAN

How do you know he's her boyfriend anyway?

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Well it seemed like he was. They pulled off in his car, music blaring. He's pretty cool.

BRENDAN

What was he listening to?

CONOR

Genesis?

BRENDAN

He won't be a problem.

CONOR

Really?

BRENDAN

Trust me, no woman can truly love a man who listens to Phil Collins.

Off, we hear a row breaking out downstairs between the parents. Brendan lowers the volume.

BRENDAN

Shh. Listen.

They listen. Raised but muffled voices. Slammed doors. The smash of a plate.

BRENDAN

I think she's having an affair.

CONOR

What? Why?

BRENDAN

I see her getting a lift home from her boss a couple of times a week.

CONOR

She doesn't drive. What's wrong with that?

BRENDAN

She always gets out of the car about a hundred yards up from the house. It's a nervous thing. She's overcompensating.

We hold on Conor considering this. It clearly makes him very sad.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

On bike.

(CONTINUED)

Conor free wheels. He is preoccupied. In his satchel over his shoulder, the three albums.

EXT. SYNGE STREET - RAPHINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Conor cruises by Raphina's house. He leans against a tree, still sitting on his bike. He's not sure what he's doing here.

He is about to cycle off, when the Ford Granada pulls up, and Raphina gets out, crossing over to the driver's door. Evan Adams holds onto her hand, pulling her back. She laughs, and pulls away, making her way up her steps. He accelerates off, wheel spinning, burning rubber. She rings the doorbell. In a moment, a WOMAN (60s) opens the door and lets her in.

Across the street, Conor checks his watch. Just coming up to 9 pm.

He cycles off.

EXT. EAMON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Conor knocks on the front door of Eamon's house. Checks his watch hoping it's not too late.

In a moment, Eamon answers, carrying a rabbit.

EAMON

Howareyou Conor. What's going on.

CONOR

I don't know. What are you doing?

EAMON

Just rabbit stuff.

CONOR

Do you want to write a song?

Eamon opens the door wider, meaning, YES.

INT. EAMON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eamon sleeps in the attic room. The room is covered in posters of bands and football teams. And some rabbits.

Conor and Eamon are studying the records, playing and replaying parts.

Now they are working on a song. They are laughing and having a good time. Conor writes words down. Eamon tries different chords. They record parts on a tape machine.

EXT. SYNGE STREET - RAPHINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Conor returns down Raphina's street. He pulls up outside her house across the school, and walks through her gate, climbing the steps.

He takes a brown envelope covered in sellotape from inside his jacket and looks at it.

RAPHINA

He stuffs it through the letter box and heads off, cycling away, looking up at one of the lights in the window.

INT. RAPHINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

This is a tiny, monastic little room. There are some posters on the wall, and a small single bed under an alcove. A small dresser with mirror. A chair.

Raphina enters, carrying a bowl of cereal. She sits down on her bed. She is still wearing her clothes. In a moment, a knock on the door, and a head pops in.

This is MRS. KIRWIN (60), a matronly looking woman in an apron. She is carrying Conor's envelope. She passes it to Raphina.

MRS. KIRWIN

This came through the letter box for you.

RAPHINA

Oh. Thanks.

MRS. KIRWIN

Is it from that older lad?

RAPHINA

No.

MRS. KIRWIN

You know how I feel about that, Raphina, don't you?

RAPHINA

Yes. Thank you. Night.

Mrs. Kirwin nods, exiting.

MRS. KIRWIN

Lights out in ten.

She pulls the door closed, and Raphina opens the envelope. There's a cassette in side. With NEW SONG written on it.

(CONTINUED)

She locates a little tape player from under her bed, and puts it in, pressing play.

SECOND SONG

The song begins on acoustic guitar with Conor singing. Raphina smiles as she recognizes his voice. She sits down at her dresser and begins combing her long hair, starting to take off her makeup and kicking off her shoes.

The song is instantly catchy, and clearly a love letter from Conor to her.

As the song hits the chorus, we PAN off her face, and start a 360 slowly around her room as the song plays over.

There's a family photograph on her locker. A 10 year-old Raphina in the company of her parents. They all look very stiff and awkward.

A school profile of Raphina in her uniform, a couple of years ago. Very troubled.

Off this to various pictures she ripped out of glamour magazines. Models. Big hair. Lots of make up.

A poster of Tom Waits.

Of The Cure.

Of Siouxsie and the Banshees.

There's a teddy bear on her bed, with a pair of sunglasses on his nose, and an unlit cigarette stuffed into his mouth.

An ash tray with a few sticks of incense.

A collection of cassette tapes.

Cartons of cigarettes.

Two books on her locker- Catcher in the Rye and To Kill A Mocking Bird. Numerous magazines. Vogue, You, Cosmopolitan.

As the song comes towards its end, we have arrived back around on Raphina. She has transformed. She's changed into her pyjamas and dressing gown. And she's taken off her makeup to reveal a bruise, under her eye, and a cut lip underneath. She has paused what she's doing, and her eyes have filled with tears as she listens to the song.

EXT. A STREET - NIGHT

The song cross cuts with Conor cycling at night through town.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL GATES - A NEW DAY

Music plays over as Conor turns the corner into the school gates. There is a little confidence in his step this time.

He has bleached his hair blonde, and styled it so this falls over his eyes a little in a NEW ROMANTIC way.

He is wearing a little mascara and a little shadow. People stare at him. As he passes us, we PULL onto BROTHER Baxter, who watches from above.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - DAY

Conor sits in art class. He is painting a picture of his band. Miss Dunne leans over his shoulder.

MISS DUNNE

I like it. What is that?

CONOR

My band.

MISS DUNNE

You're in a band? Cool. What are they called?

CONOR

I don't know yet! What about "La Vie". It's French for "The life".

MISS DUNNE

I know. I like that.

In a moment, there is a knock at the door, and a FIFTH FORM KID enters.

FIFTH FORMER

Headmaster wants to see Conor Lawlor.

Miss Dunne nods. Conor gets up, heading out with the fifth former, worried.

EXT. SYNGE STREET YARD - DAY

Conor follows the fifth former as he marches across the empty yard. He looks over his shoulder at Conor.

FIFTH FORMER

What are you wearing on your face?

CONOR

Bit of make up. I'm in a band. What do you think Brother Baxter wants?

(CONTINUED)

The fifth former shrugs.

FIFTH FORMER  
Hurry up.

INT. BROTHER BAXTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Brother Baxter is filling out files. He doesn't look up. Conor is led into the room.

FIFTH FORMER  
Conor Lawlor, Brother.

He closes the door, leaving Conor standing there. Finally, Brother Baxter looks up.

BROTHER BAXTER  
What's going on?

CONOR  
With what?

BROTHER BAXTER  
With...this.

He gestures the face.

CONOR  
Oh. Well, I checked the rule book. The one you mentioned, about the brown shoes? I couldn't find anything about makeup. Or altering hair colour.

He shrugs. He lifts his foot up, revealing the newly painted black shoes.

CONOR  
I painted them. With paint from the art room.

Brother Baxter doesn't even look at them. He is seething underneath.

BROTHER BAXTER  
Head down to the toilets and remove the make up right now.

CONOR  
Why?

BROTHER BAXTER  
Because I told you to.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

I'm in a band now. A school band.  
And I think it's important for us  
to have a "look".

BROTHER BAXTER

You're a man. Men don't wear  
makeup.

CONOR

Yeah, but why not? Like, people in  
the 18th century would have worn  
make up. So that means that people  
like Mozart would have. And he was  
a man.

BROTHER BAXTER

So you're Mozart, are you?

Conor shrugs, a little embarrassed. Shakes his head.

BROTHER BAXTER

That makes me Salieri, is it?

CONOR

Who's Salieri?

BROTHER BAXTER

Take the make up off, and stop  
acting like you deserve special  
treatment.

CONOR

I don't want special treatment. At  
all.

BROTHER BAXTER

You've a fine face, I wouldn't  
worry about covering it up with  
make up.

He smiles. Conor stands there, trying to work this one out.

BROTHER BAXTER

You can use me own bathroom there.  
If you like.

He gestures a door off his office.

CONOR

I'm going to go back to class now.

Conor exits. We hold on Brother Baxter.

INT. THE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Conor exits the office, but Brother Baxter is hot on his tail. He grabs Conor by the hair, and drags him down the corridor. Conor shouts and wriggles, but BB means business. It's like a red mist has descended over him. He slaps him a couple of times across the side of the head. Other kids look on, clearing the way.

BB kicks in the door to the students' bathroom, pushing Conor through in front of him.

INT. THE TOLIETS - CONTINUOUS

Conor falls into the toliets. BB follows, picking him up and forcing him over to one of the sinks.

CONOR

You can't do this!

BROTHER BAXTER

You wanna bet?

BB turns on the taps, and as the sink fills up, plunges Conor's head into the water.

Conor bucks like a drowning animal. Brother Baxter pulls his head back out. Conor gasps for air, spluttering water. Brother Baxter slaps a bar of soap into Conor's face, mashing it into his face.

BROTHER BAXTER

(shouting)

We'll get you clean! Don't worry!

We'll clean you up! And get that shite off ye.

Then down into the water again. Conor splutters. Again, he is pulled back out, now crying and coughing, his make up mixing with soap and dripping down his face.

Brother Baxter wipes his hand with a towel, and turns to go, leaving Conor leaning over the sink shivering.

He exits. We hold on Conor.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - LATER

Conor is back in regular class. He has makeup stains under his eyes, and his hair is wet. He looks like a drowned rat. He is shivering, but holding back tears. All eyes are on him. Some giggling, others shocked. He looks very alone.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - DAY

Students exit the main gate at the end of the day. Conor pushes his bike out.

To his surprise, Raphina is leaning against the school gates up ahead.

She is listening to music on massive, 1970s-style headphones with a curly lead. They are plugged into her battery operated tape player from home. She's smoking a cigarette.

She gives him a wave and one of her killer smiles. Just seeing her lifts him.

RAPHINA

Hey Cosmo.

CONOR

Who?

RAPHINA

That's what I'm calling you now. Cosmo. You need a catchy name if you're going to be in a band.

CONOR

Right. What are you doing here?

RAPHINA

Waiting for you. What happened to you?

He looks pretty rough.

CONOR

Oh. Nothing.  
(off her tape machine)  
Does that work?

RAPHINA

(shouting)  
For about half an hour. Then the batteries run out. And I have to rob more. But it means I can take my tapes anywhere.

CONOR

Wow. Portable music.

She smiles. Links his arm, and walks off with him.

EXT. THE PARK - LATER - DAY

A small, city centre park. Some kids play on the swings. Others drink cider and smoke on a bench. Conor and Raphina enter.

(CONTINUED)

RAPHINA

I really liked your song. It made me cry.

CONOR

Oh, I'm sorry.

RAPHINA

No no, that's a good thing. But write me a happy one some time.

CONOR

What if I don't feel happy?

RAPHINA

What have you got to not feel happy about? Big house. Family. And we don't live in the Lebanon!

He smiles. She has a point.

CONOR

Who's the guy, with the car?

RAPHINA

Evan?

CONOR

Yeah. Is he your boyfriend?

RAPHINA

We're on and off. It's complicated. We're kind of on a break right now.

CONOR

Yeah. That's a good idea. Take a break for a year or so. Get some perspective.

RAPHINA

You're funny. He's actually a really nice guy.

CONOR

Yeah. Shit taste in music though.

She smiles.

RAPHINA

He's taking me to London. I'm too young to go on my own. He's organized everything. Booked the tickets, and got us an apartment and all. We're going after I get my portfolio shot. It's a really big deal to get your shots done just right. For modelling. Your whole career can depend on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR  
Yeah. And what's in it for Evan?

She pauses, falling behind.

RAPHINA  
Are you jealous, Cosmo?

CONOR  
Why would I be jealous?

RAPHINA  
Exactly. Write me a happy song. I need a laugh.

CONOR  
What if I don't feel happy?

RAPHINA  
Your problem is that you're not happy being sad. That's what love is, Cosmo.  
(beat)  
Happy/Sad.

Cosmo searches her for the meaning of this. She just smiles back.

She checks her watch.

RAPHINA  
Shit, I gotta go. We only have a half an hour dinner window at my house.

CONOR  
Oh yeah, so what's that house like, where you live?

RAPHINA  
It's fine. Better than some of the other places I've been.

CONOR  
Cool. So... where are your parents?

RAPHINA  
My da's brown bread. He got hit by a car.

CONOR  
Oh my God. Sorry.

RAPHINA  
No, don't be. He was drunk. He deserved it. Me ma's in and out of hospital.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Why?

RAPHINA

She's a nurse.

She laughs. He gets it.

RAPHINA

No. She's a manic depressive.

Cosmo is shocked by this. But tries to lighten it.

CONOR

So, like, "Happy/Sad"?

RAPHINA

You're funny. I like that.

She kisses him on either cheek again, and turns to go, but then turns.

RAPHINA

Let me know if you need me for another video before I go.

CONOR

Okay. When are you going?

RAPHINA

Soon.

(beat)

You don't have any problems, Cosmo.

She winks, and sprints off, leaving Cosmo to decode.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Conor is standing in the doorway of his brother's room. Brendan sits on his usual chair.

CONOR

...what did she mean by that?

BRENDAN

She means that you've got to get to a place in life where you're okay with your sadness. That you're not fighting it anymore, but that you're almost... happy with it. It's monastic. She's like a monk. I like this girl.

CONOR

(Half-getting it)

Right. Happy/sad.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDAN

So her dad's dead, and her mum is mental? And you thought you had problems?

(beat)

So that's what the older boyfriend is about. Daddy issues. I used to know chicks like her. They can be tricky. And need a lot of protecting. Think you're up for that, Conor?

CONOR

I don't know. She's not even my girlfriend.

BRENDAN

So what's it all about then?

CONOR

I think she's just an amazing human being. I've never seen anything like her. The way she talks. And looks. She wears these sunglasses, and when she takes them off, her eyes, it's like the clouds clearing past the moon. And sometimes, I just want to cry looking at her.

Brendan pauses, smiling.

Brendan has taken a new album down from his shelf. He slips out the record, and throws the sleeve to Conor. An 80's band, all dressed in black, looking gloomy. Conor is mesmerized by their look.

BRENDAN

*They're happy/sad.*

A Gothic, pop/love song starts up on the turn table and Brendan smiles.

BRENDAN

Close the door.

Conor pushes the door closed, transfixed by the sound. Brendan takes his seat. Conor, his.

It's going to be a long night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL GATES - ANOTHER DAY

As the song continues, Conor walks through the school gates. He is with Eamon and Darren. Conor is now dressed in a long, black overcoat.

(CONTINUED)

(Possibly his Mum's), an endless scarf, and has dyed his hair black, and back combed. A junior Sherlock Holmes/Cure-head.

EAMON

How do you mean, you're  
"Happy/Sad"?

DARREN

Yeah. How am I supposed to market  
that?

CONOR

It means that we're not pop  
anymore.

EAMON

Were we pop? I'm happy being any  
type of band. I just want to play.

CONOR

That's fine. Be who you are, Eamon.

EAMON

I don't know who I am. Maybe I'm  
Happy/Sad too? I don't know.

DARREN

(shouting)

What does Happy/Sad mean??! How can  
you be both bleedin things?? It  
makes no sense.

CONOR

(stopping)

It means that I'm stuck in this  
shithole, full of morons and  
rapists and bullies, and I'm going  
to deal with it. Okay? It's just  
*how life is now*. And I'm going to  
try and accept that and get on with  
it, and make some art!

DARREN

Right.

EAMON

How does it affect our music?

CONOR

Positively.

INT. THE DART TRAIN - DAY

Song continues over.

The whole band, with Darren and Raphina, ride the dart train  
out of the city.

(CONTINUED)

They are carrying the camera, and a few props- picture frames and paint brushes. The band are all Cure Heads now, and look quite good. But it's low-budget Cure Heads. Conor and Raphina sit across the aisle from them. Music plays over, as they ride out towards the sea. A welcome break from the city.

Conor watches the sun burst behind Raphina's profile. He smiles, taking out the camera and filming her.

Conor describes to the gang what this video will be about, reading from his journal...

CONOR

So the idea of this video is about a guy standing halfway down a pier. And a beautiful woman walks past him. Towards the lighthouse. Half an hour later, she hasn't come back. So he investigates. But she's gone.

DARREN

Wha?

CONOR

There's nowhere to go. And yet she's not there?

DARREN

She's vanished?

EAMON

She's jumped in. She's killed herself.

CONOR

Correct. She's really sad.

RAPHINA

No she's not. She's a mermaid. She's jumped back into the sea. You see, she got washed up in a fishing net. And she's been in the city. But she's been dying to return to the water. To her friends. Where she belongs.

Conor likes this. He smiles. He starts writing this into his journal.

CONOR

Yeah. That's better.

EXT. THE PIER - DAY

The band have set up their gear at the end of the pier, looking out to the Irish sea. Conor is framing up the camera.

(CONTINUED)

The wind threatens to blow it over on its tiny, lightweight tripod.

CONOR

Okay, so we're playing here, and Raphina walks past. Then I'll show you where you can jump off. From here it will look like you've gone into the sea.

He shows Raphina and the others a little ledge behind the wall, where it will appear as though she's dropped into the sea, but is in fact just on the other side.

RAPHINA

It's not far enough down. You'll see the top of my head.

CONOR

You'll have to dip your head down to make it look real.

The others look doubtful, including Raphina.

CONOR

Trust me.

EXT. THE PIER - LATER

They are halfway through another song, miming to playback. Darren is operating the camera. They all look very gloomy and introspective; ala The Cure, staring down at the ground, and barely playing their instruments.

But the song is brilliant. Darren holds up the picture frames in front of the musicians in separate shots.

Conor stands with his hands in his pockets. Now Raphina enters frame, walking towards the end of the pier.

She pauses for a moment, and NGIG holds up a picture frame in front of her as she walks. She is mouthing the lyrics. As she gets to the end of the pier, she stares out to sea dramatically. Conor is watching her in the background, singing.

Then she jumps. But NOT onto the ledge. In fact, she jumps way past it and into the sea.

For a moment, Conor hasn't seen what's happened. He goes on singing. But Darren looks up from the viewfinder.

DARREN

(shouting over the music)  
Em, I think she went into the sea.  
Seriously.

(CONTINUED)

Conor looks over towards the wall. No sign of Raphina.

CONOR

Shit!

He breaks away from the group and runs over, jumping up onto the wall.

Down below, Raphina is struggling in the choppy water.

CONOR

What the hell??

RAPHINA

KEEP-BLOODY-FILMING!

CONOR

What?

Behind him, Darren runs with the camera and tripod. He has heard her, and is rolling. Now the camera is on Conor.

CONOR

What'll I do?

DARREN

Stop looking in the camera.

RAPHINA

Save me!

CONOR

What?

RAPHINA

Jump in. It'll look great!

CONOR

But my clothes??

RAPHINA

I can't swim!

CONOR

You mean the character or actual you?

RAPHINA

ACTUAL ME!

She is thrashing around in the water, starting to get pulled under. Conor throws off his coat and looks towards Darren. Darren steadies the shot. Gives the thumbs up. Raphina is shouting for help, off.

Conor dives into the sea. Darren tilts down as he hits the water. A perfect shot.

(CONTINUED)

DARREN

YES!

Conor swims over to Raphina who is genuinely starting to drown, and pulls her towards the ledge. The camera follows.

The rest of the band have gathered on the edge of the pier, looking down and cheering.

EXT. ON THE WATER - CONTINUOUS

Down below, Conor pulls her onto the safety of the ledge as she spits mouth fulls of water.

CONOR

Jesus Christ! What were you thinking?

RAPHINA

(up to Darren)  
Did you get it??!!

Darren gives a thumbs up, as he scans back over the shot.

RAPHINA

Fantastic!!

The band laughs.

CONOR

Can you really not swim?

RAPHINA

Nope.

CONOR

Then why did you do that?

RAPHINA

For our art! You can't do things by half, Cosmo.

He shakes his head, searching her. They are both shivering and wet. Suddenly, he reaches in, and steals a kiss. She is silenced by it. Amazed.

CONOR

Sorry... I... I'm sorry. That was...

RAPHINA

Great. Is what it was. Fair play.

CONOR

(happy)  
Was it?  
What about Evan?

(CONTINUED)

RAPHINA

Evan's just a means to an end.

( SCENE 82 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

( SCENE 83 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

( SCENE 84 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

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( SCENE 89 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

EXT. THE PIER - LATER

The gang haul their gear back up the pier. Conor and Raphina fall back. Raphina is looking out to sea.

CONOR

You know, on a clear day you can actually see the mainland of England? Ireland is actually only 30 Miles from the coast of Wales. It has to have just rained. No dust in the air. Then you can just about see it.

RAPHINA

No way. How do you know stuff like that?

CONOR

My grandad worked on the ships to Holyhead. He used to bring me out here. We used to go out on his little boat. Fishing.

RAPHINA

Wow. So I can wave back to you when I'm in London!

Conor's heart sinks. They both stop and look out to sea. The others carry on.

INT. THE TRAIN - RETURNING - DAY

The gang returns to the city at dusk; tired and worn out from all the sea air. The rooftops of Dublin spreading out through the window. Raphina leans her head against the glass looking out. Conor sits next to her.

CONOR

My brother says all the great artists had to get off this island. The ones who stayed just got depressed. Or turned into alcoholics.

RAPHINA

That makes sense. You mention your brother a lot, don't you? Do you really love him?

Conor shrugs. He's never been asked a question like this.

CONOR

Well, he's kind of like my dad in a way. He seems to be the only one who cares how I turn out. Like take music- when we were kids, we shared a room- and he'd play me records every night. Falling asleep. He said that way, the music entered into your subconscious. He's a bit mad like that.

RAPHINA

He sounds cool. My dad used to sing songs to me falling asleep. And it got so I couldn't fall asleep until he was back from the pub. Which was usually after 11. Then he'd sit there on the side of the bed, singing The Auld Triangle, or whatever, old mad rebel songs! The smell of drink, and I'd fall asleep with the music.

(beat)

Always had trouble sleeping since he died.

She smiles.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Conor and Brendan sit at the top of their stairs. Down below, Penny is sitting in the porch, catching the last few minutes of evening sun. They watch her, her shoulder straps pulled down a little, a glass of wine poured, and a cigarette in the ashtray. It is a beautiful, sad image.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDAN  
(watching her)

Look at her. She races home in the evening to get that last little bit of sun. She sits there and reads the evening paper. She's always talking about a holiday to Spain. But he never takes her. This is all she gets. Then that tall tree blocks it, and she comes in. I often wonder what she's thinking about.

We hold on Conor, watching his mother.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL YARD - ANOTHER DAY -

Conor walks with the band through school. He is wearing massive sunglasses and a porkpie hat. The rest of the band are a little ABC. Outside his class, they disperse, back to their individual classes. Conor joins his queue. Barry is waiting with the rest of the class to get in. He laughs at Conor.

BARRY  
I hear you're in a band now. What are they called? The queers?

A few lame laughs from the group.

CONOR  
Good one, Barry. Is someone getting these down? You know who you're like, Barry? Oscar Wilde.

BARRY  
What class is he in?

Conor shakes his head. Some people laugh at Barry. Another, bigger kid, standing with some fifth formers, overhears this.

BIGGER KID  
He's not in school, Barry, you spanner.

BARRY  
Wha?

BIGGER KID  
You spa.

The crowd laughs. Barry is not used to this.

BARRY  
I'm going to kill you some day, do you know that?

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

No you're not. Because you don't even exist.

BARRY

What?

Barry comes up close to him. This time, Conor stands his ground. A small group is gathering.

CONOR

You're living in my world, I'm not living in yours. You're just material for my songs.

BARRY

Be careful what you say now, you'll get a battering.

CONOR

Go ahead Barry. Beat me up while you still have the power. This is the best year of your life. But it'll all come crashing down when you leave school. You only have the power to stop things. But not to create.

He turns. Barry doesn't stop him. It's a minor triumph for the little man. Conor joins the back of the group, on his own. Barry makes a *wanker* gesture with his fist.

This bomb is diffused, but the battle is far from over.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL CORRIDOR - ANOTHER DAY

Conor is excitedly leading Darren and Eamon down a corridor towards the notice board. There's a poster for the END-OF-TERM disco.

*End of Term disco. School hall Fri 15th. DJ and lights! Tickets £2.*

EAMON

So?

CONOR

I say we ask if we can play at it. Our first gig!

DARREN

When is it?

CONOR

Three weeks.

(CONTINUED)

EAMON  
We're not ready.

CONOR  
We could be. We need a deadline.  
Something to prepare for.

EAMON  
We have exams next week. I need to  
prepare for that.

CONOR  
They're mid term exams. They mean  
nothing.

EAMON  
They do to me Ma. She wants me to  
go to college an all. Get  
qualifications.  
Will there be girls at the disco?

CONOR  
Yes!

EAMON  
I say we do it.

CONOR  
We've got five songs. We need a  
half hour set. So three more...

INT. CONOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Conor is working away with an acoustic guitar and notebook  
and pen. He writes lyrics, trying them out.

CONOR  
"Well the boots's on the other foot  
now, Look alive we're taking you  
down. Your curtain's falling, take  
a bow".

As he plucks away on the acoustic, his composition is  
interrupted by raised voices, off.

ROBERT  
(off)  
Well you're sure as hell not moving  
in here with *him*!

PENNY  
(off)  
It's my mother's house!

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT

(off)

I've been paying a mortgage on this house for fifteen years. I must own some part of it by now!

PENNY

(off)

You came into this relationship with nothing but a bicycle and a raincoat! And you've never had anything. My mother was right!

ROBERT

(off)

Oh give me a break. Go to his place. Go on, piss off.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Conor sets out into the corridor. His mother is filling a large suitcase in the hallway below from her wardrobe. Robert is standing with his arms folded, watching her.

Conor looks up at Brendan's attic door. It is closed.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The two brothers sit in Brendan's room listening to a popular 80's tune. This drowns out their parent's rowing.

They are laughing, and having a good time, air guitar and air drumming.

BRENDAN

People sort of laugh at this chap,  
but he's actually the dogs  
bollocks!

Conor looks at the album cover.

INT. CONOR'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Conor wakes up on a Saturday morning. We hold on him overhead, as he lies there, considering his lot. He finally pulls himself out of bed and exits.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Conor is greeted by a MAN (40s) directly outside his door, who is measuring the corridor with a tape, taking notes in his pad.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR  
Who are you?

MAN  
I'm with the surveyor.

CONOR  
Oh.

MAN  
Can I do your room now?

Conor shrugs, heading down stairs.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Conor enters the living room. Penny and Robert are going through paper work.

CONOR  
Who's the guy upstairs?

ROBERT  
He's from the surveying company.  
We're having the house evaluated.

CONOR  
You mean, sold?

PENNY  
No, I don't mean sold. We're having  
it valued. It might be a good time  
to sell it and downsize.

CONOR  
Are you people going your separate  
ways?

PENNY  
What is this "You People"? And  
Robert and Penny? What ever  
happened to "Mum"? "How was your  
day, MUM", or " "You look really  
stressed, MUM" or "I Love you,  
MUM."

She looks like she might cry. Conor is sort of surprised.

PENNY  
That might be nice.  
What is wrong with kids who won't  
call their mother MUM.

CONOR  
A lot is wrong! Look at us. We're  
lunatics who can hardly leave their  
bedroom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

And wimps who can't defend  
themselves in school. With parents  
who can't stop arguing for twenty  
years. We're far from normal.

ROBERT

Shut up, Conor. There's people in  
the house.

In the background, through the window, a FOR SALE sign is  
erected. Conor points at it.

CONOR

Oh look. A For Sale sign.

ROBERT

(bluffing)

We're testing the market.

Conor gets up, annoyed, heading out.

CONOR

I'm going to band practice.

ROBERT

Oh, about that. It's great that  
you're doing something  
extracurricular, but don't you have  
end of term exams soon?

CONOR

Yeah. So?

ROBERT

Shouldn't you be spending your  
weekends doing revision?

CONOR

THIS is school.

He walks out.

EXT. CONOR'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Conor marches past the For Sale sign, and off up the street.

INT. EAMON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Conor and the band finish off a song. In a moment, Eamon's ma  
enters.

EAMON

What, Ma!? We're working.

(CONTINUED)

EAMON'S MUM

Mr. Griffen from next door has just been rushed into hospital this morning. He had a heart attack.

EAMON

So?

EAMON'S MUM

So, you'll have to stop playing. They're all inside.

EAMON

But we're in the middle of writing a song! We have a gig.

EAMON'S MUM

Eamon! They're just back from the hospital! Show some respect. It was probably this racket that gave him the heart attack in the first place.

EAMON

That's a mean thing to say.

She exits. They look at each other, shrugging.

INT. SYNGE STREET - ART CLASSROOM - DAY

Lads filter out of Miss Dunne's art class. Miss Dunne calls Conor back as he goes.

MISS DUNNE

How's that band of yours going, Conor?

CONOR

Oh, Good, Miss. Well, yeah. Okay.

MISS DUNNE

When are we going to hear yiz play?

CONOR

Well we were going to play at the end of term disco, but now we've lost our rehearsal space.

MISS DUNNE

That's a bit shit. What about asking Brother Baxter? There's loads of vacant rooms here.

CONOR

He hates me. So I asked Brother Byrne for the P.E. Hall, but he said no.

(CONTINUED)

MISS DUNNE

Freaking Brothers. They've driven this school into the ground. You know they're almost outnumbered now?

CONOR

No?

MISS DUNNE

Yeah. There's half us lay teachers now. And rising.

(beat)

One day...

(beat)

Why don't you use here?

CONOR

What?

MISS DUNNE

It's my classroom, isn't it?

CONOR

That'd be amazing, miss.

She walks him out.

MISS DUNNE

Let me look into it.

She winks, returning to her work. Conor exits with a smile.

MISS DUNNE

But ye better be good now!

CONOR

(pausing)

We are.

He heads out.

INT. SYNGE STREET EXAM HALL - DAY

Conor takes the mid-term test. An exam supervisor stands at the top of the hall looking at his watch.

SUPERVISOR

And...begin.

The swish of a hundred students opening their paper. They start to write. We focus on Conor reading the questions. He is baffled by them.

Scattered about the hall are the rest of the band, scratching their heads and shrugging their shoulders to each other, as everyone else is writing.

(CONTINUED)

We see that Conor has given up, and is writing lyrics in his journal instead.

INT. SYNGE STREET ART CLASSROOM - DAY

The band finish a song in the classroom. They are sounding a lot better than before. In fact, they are tight. And Conor is more and more confident at the mic.

CONOR

So I've got an idea for another video. Who's free on Saturday?

NGIG

Sometimes I think you're only shooting these videos so you can see your one. The chick.

CONOR

No I'm not.

The others laugh in agreement. We know he is right.

CONOR

Shut up! Let me tell you what happens.

EXT. SYNGE STREET - RAPHINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Conor walks up the steps to Raphina's door. As he does so, the front door opens silently, and Raphina sneaks out, carrying an overnight bag. She closes the door silently, bumping into him with a yelp. He laughs.

RAPHINA

Jaysis! Shh.

CONOR

What are you doing?

RAPHINA

Sneaking out. She thinks I've gone to bed already. Come on!

She drags him down the stairs and around the corner, giggling, under a tree.

CONOR

Where are you going?

RAPHINA

(evasive)

Just out for the night. What are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Oh. We're shooting another video. This Saturday. In the school. But it's a really big one. We've got extras coming, from the girls school and everything. It's going to be amazing.

RAPHINA

Sounds epic. I'll try to come.

CONOR

You have to come! I've got the whole video working out in my head.

From down the street, the Ford Granada pulls up outside Raphina's house. Evan is sitting in the driver seat. He doesn't see them around the corner. Conor looks at the car. Then at Raphina's overnight bag. Gets it.

CONOR

Come on. Let's go. You don't need to be with him.

RAPHINA

How else do you expect me to get to London? He's connected. And he has money.

CONOR

What's so special about London? Jesus. It's just there! It's not like all your problems are going to go away because you're in England!

RAPHINA

Shut up now, and don't be getting jealous. Leave it. This has been nice.

CONOR

Just lets go. We'll think of something.

RAPHINA

You're a kid. Don't be crazy. If we're not gone, then I'll swing by Saturday. Okay? Love ya.

She smiles.

She runs off. Conor watches as she jumps into the car and it speeds off. We hold on Conor.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - DAY

Conor exits the school, carrying his report card in his hand. Other kids study their's. He meets Eamon, who is looking at his at the school gate. Darren joins them.

CONOR

Did you do as badly as me?

He shows Eamon his card.

Fail. Fail. Fail.

DARREN

I failed too.

EAMON

Shit. I scraped a pass.

CONOR

Well done!

CONOR

My ma is going to kill me. What are you going to say to yours?

CONOR

I haven't thought about it yet...

They walk out. In the background, Barry tears his report card in half and throws it away without even reading it. He then boxes another kid in the face and approaches Conor, Eamon and Darren.

He reaches in his school bag and takes out a homemade knife. A metal bar with a plastic scalpel welded it to it.

BARRY

I made this in metal work class. What do you think? And you said I couldn't create anything?

Conor is silent. It looks gnarly, and lethal. Barry smiles.

BARRY

And I'm going to mark you with it. One of these days. And you won't be so handsome then. In your little band.

Conor looks at it, then at Barry.

CONOR

Why are you targeting me, Barry? What did I do to you?

BARRY

I don't like you.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Is it because your brother beats you up? And you're taking it out on someone else. Like that day down the laneway?

BARRY

(laughs)

That's not me brother. That's me da. What are you saying about me da?

He leans in, laughing menacingly, raising the knife to Conor's face. A millimeter from his mouth.

Just then, Brother Baxter appears out of a doorway behind them.

Barry quickly pockets the knife, before Brother Baxter sees it.

BROTHER BAXTER

What's going on here? Is there a problem, Lawlor?

CONOR

No, Brother.

Brother Baxter just turns and re-enters his office, closing the door. Barry is as surprised as the rest of them. He looks around, then skulks off.

BARRY

See you around.

We hold on Conor.

INT. SYNGE STREET ART CLASSROOM - DAY

About ten local teenage girls sit on desks. Ten boys stand around the classroom. They've turned up to be extras.

A number of tables have been turned upsidedown to make a small stage. On this, the band's gear has been set up. Garry checks his drum kit on stage. Miss Dunne is hanging decorations up, including a disco ball. Darren is moving about with the camera, looking for shots.

Across the room, Miss Dunne checks her watch.

MISS DUNNE

So you'd better film something. I have to lock up in an hour.

DARREN

Yeah. She's not coming. Let's do it without her.

(CONTINUED)

Conor reluctantly agrees. He gets up on stage.

DARREN

So, all of you come and stand here.  
You have to pretend it's a live  
gig. And you're the audience.

CONOR

Okay, so everyone. This is like a  
school video. But not like an Irish  
school. More like an American  
school. And it's the prom night.  
We'll rehearse it.

He presses playback, and the band mime. Conor sings into a microphone. But his eyes are on the door. We hear the first verse. The band are really coming along. Conor is really developing some stage presence.

Again, he looks towards the door. But this time... it opens. Raphina is coming through. But she's dressed up in an amazing, 1950's style prom dress. As she enters, we start to notice that we are not in the classroom anymore. We are in a huge school hall. It's prom night in a big, American school.

Conor's band are transformed on stage. All wearing cool, 50's clothes.

In this video, Conor's parents will arrive, all dressed up and happy together to see their son on stage. Brendan shows up, like Jimmy Dean in Rebel Without A Cause, and makes a fool of the bungling Brother Baxter. And Conor will defeat the evil Barry, who is dressed like the lead Scorpion in Grease.

Then the ENTIRE audience start a choreographed DANCE sequence, which brings us out.

We pull out from the view finder, and find ourselves back in the mean little classroom in Dublin. The group is huddled around the view finder. There's no sign of Raphina. It's all been in Conor's head.

DISSOLVE TO:

( SCENE 107 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

( SCENE 108 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

( SCENE 109 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

( SCENE 110 INTENTIONALLY DELETED )

EXT. CONOR'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Conor returns home. He pauses at the door, looking at his report card. He enters.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Conor enters the hallway, he is met by his mother coming down the stairs.

CONOR  
So before you get angry...

PENNY  
Oh good, there you are.  
(calling)  
He's back. You get Bren.

ROBERT  
(off)  
Okay.

PENNY  
We want to chat to you both.  
Kitchen. Two minutes.

She passes.

INT. CONOR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Conor, Penny and Robert sit around the table in the kitchen, as they did a few months ago. Waiting. In a moment, we hear Brendan running down the stairs. He enters, carrying all his smoking and drinking shit.

BRENDAN  
Pray begin.

He sits down.

ROBERT  
Well. So, firstly, we don't want to make a big deal about this. Lot's of married couples-

PENNY  
Your father and I are splitting up.

BRENDAN  
(getting up)  
Thank you! Knew it was just a question of time. Let me know when we're moving. I'll be packed.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT

Why don't you sit down Brendan, for a second, and we'll tell you what we're thinking. See if you agree.

BRENDAN

Oh. A consensus? Well that's novel. Go ahead.

He sits down. We push in on Conor for the following.

ROBERT

So your mother's fallen in love with Tony. And they're going to move into his apartment for a while. We got an offer on this house- it's half what it's worth, but we're going to take it. I can't afford to stay here on my own.

CONOR

So are you, like, getting a divorce?

PENNY

No, you can't get divorced in Ireland. We'll be legally separated. It's better for everyone.

ROBERT

I'll get an apartment, and you guys will live between there and... there.

BRENDAN

I won't be staying in Tony's. Let's get that very straight. I'd rather sleep on the street.

Brendan seems unusually angry. Even twitchy.

ROBERT

We'll talk about all the details. Tony's a very nice man. I can vouch for that.

This is very hard for him to say. Penny is surprised.

PENNY

(almost silently)  
Thank you.

BRENDAN

Wow. Look at you two. This is the first time I've seen you being nice to each other in ten years!

(CONTINUED)

He lights up a cigarette, raising his eyes to heaven.

CONOR

Maybe he's right. Maybe this is what you needed to do, you know, to get back. Closer than before.

Everyone looks at Conor. Suddenly seeing how young he is. And how vulnerable.

CONOR

You don't love Tony. You hardly know him. You got that job a few months ago. It's just an excuse. A way of ending this relationship because you don't know how to keep it together.

ROBERT

Now Conor. You don't know what you're talking about.

He gets up and exits, slamming the door. After a moment, Brendan gathers his stuff and exits, shaking his head, leaving the parents sitting there on their own.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brendan enters his room to find Conor sitting on the hammock. Brendan sets his stuff down.

CONOR

So you were right.

BRENDAN

It was obvious.

CONOR

They're our parents. They're supposed to look after us. So we can do stuff.

BRENDAN

That's bullshit. They're just human beings. I told you that.

CONOR

I was sort of hoping they'd come to my gig on Friday.

BRENDAN

What? You thought they'd suddenly become different people? And start noticing what you were doing? Or wanted? They have their own shit going on. They're not going to come to your stupid gig.

(CONTINUED)

This is not the usual Brendan.

CONOR  
Why is it stupid now?

BRENDAN  
It's not that it's stupid. It's  
that it's annoying.

CONOR  
What is wrong with you?

BRENDAN  
I don't know! I'm having  
withdrawal.

CONOR  
From what?

BRENDAN  
From hash. I haven't smoked in two  
days.

CONOR  
Why?

BRENDAN  
So I can do something with my life!

CONOR  
Like what?

BRENDAN  
Look at you. You little punk. You  
know nothing, do you? You're the  
youngest. You get to follow the  
path that I macheted through the  
jungle that is our mad family. They  
took all their shit out on me. I  
got bitten by every insect, and  
snake. And fell into every river.  
For six years I was alone with  
those two. You think they're mad  
now, think what they were like when  
they were in their late twenties  
with a screaming baby in a rented  
flat who got married because they  
were two Catholics who wanted to  
sleep with each other. They didn't  
even love each other. And I was in  
the middle of that. On my own. And  
then you came along, thank God, and  
followed the trail I cut for us.  
You just moved in my jet stream.  
Untouched. And people laugh at me  
now. At the stoner. The college  
dropout. And praise you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

And that's fine. But once, I was a  
fucking jet engine.

On this, he takes a pile of Vinyl off the shelf and flings  
them across the room smashing them.

Conor's eyes are glazing over.

CONOR  
I'll just be back in a second. I  
have to go to the toilet.

He exits.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - TOILET - CONTINUOUS

Conor cries his eyes out in the toilet.

EXT. CONOR'S HOUSE - MORNING

Darren rings on Conor's bell. In a moment, Conor answers. He  
is wearing his pyjamas.

DARREN  
You can't run away from this, you  
know that? You have to face him.

CONOR  
He'll kill me.

DARREN  
Yeah. But you're just kicking it  
down the line. Come on. As your  
manager I've let you down. I  
haven't solved this problem. I  
can't sleep.

He walks off.

EXT. A BLOCK OF COUNCIL FLATS - DAY

Conor follows Darren up the steps to the fourth floor of a  
block of flats. They walk past numerous doors, stopping at  
one.

DARREN  
Now, leave this to me.

He knocks. In a moment, Barry opens the door. He is very  
surprised to see these two. From inside, the sound of the  
TV.

BARRY  
What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONOR  
We want to talk to you.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Who the hell is it?

BARRY  
(re Conor)  
Get him away from me door, I'm going to kill him.

DARREN  
No you're not, Barry! Because he had a chance to rat you out the other day, and he didn't. He made a choice.  
(beat)  
You think you're different from us. From everyone. And you are. You're nuts! But we have one thing in common, you, me and him. (Meaning Conor).

BARRY  
No we bleedin' don't. He's a queer, and you're a fag, probably. Because who else would hang around with a queer, except a fag.

DARREN  
Do you want to know what it is?  
(beat)  
We're all shit at school. We've all failed these exams, and we'll be out of school next year. We're bleedin useless!

Silence. Barry doesn't disagree.

BARRY  
So?

DARREN  
So what are you going to do when you're kicked out of school? Stay at home with your Ma and Da? Get wasted? Watching daytime telly?

BARRY  
Okay.

BARRY'S DA  
(off)  
Barry? Who is it, son?

DARREN  
Well we're going to be in a *band*. Gigging. On the road.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Different venues each night.  
 Different women. A bleedin band!  
 And do you know what bands need?

BARRY

What?

Darren leans in.

DARREN

Roadies.

(beat)

Someone who is strong, and knows  
 how to fight! Protect themselves,  
 and the lads. And carry gear.

BARRY

Are you talking about *me*?

DARREN

Why not? You'd be great at it.  
 You're tough. Ane you're off your  
 head.

He thinks about him. His Da screams, off

BARRY'S DA

(off)

Barry! Get in here and get me  
 another bottle. You worthless  
 shite.

BARRY

I'm a worthless shite. What would  
 you want with me? In a fag band.

DARREN

A band is like being in the army.  
 Everyone has everyone else's back.  
 Fag or not. Think you're up to it?

BARRY'S DA

(off)

Where are you, you lazy prick? Do  
 you hear me? Get in here and get us  
 a bleedin bottle!

BARRY

Hold on a second.

Barry disappears for a moment. Darren and Conor exchange  
 looks. We hear a SMASH from inside. Followed by a groan. His  
 father is silenced.

In a moment, Barry reappears. He has a broken bottle neck in  
 his hand. And some blood on it. He chucks it away, as we hear  
 groans of his father, off.

(CONTINUED)

BARRY  
 Could I drive the van?

CONOR  
 We don't have a-

DARREN  
 (elbowing him)  
 Of course you'll drive the van!  
 When we get one.

Barry exits, grabbing his jacket, and pulling the door behind him.

BARRY  
 Come on.

DARREN  
 We have a gig this Friday. Are you free? I've got a fiver for you for it. You can do the lights.

EXT. THE FLATS - CONTINUOUS

They set off, away from Barry's house, Barry following behind in between them. Conor and Darren exchange a smile of surprise. The bomb has finally been diffused.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - DAY

The three of them arrive at school. As they cross the road, Conor looks over his shoulder towards Raphina's house. There's a YOUNG GIRL walking back towards the house carrying a bottle of milk. She's been looking at them. But she quickly looks away. We think we recognize her. But we're not sure. Conor double takes, then breaks away from the lads and runs towards her as she runs up the steps.

CONOR  
 Hey. Wait.

But the girl hurries up. Conor catches her up. Spinning her around. It is Raphina. But a much younger looking Raphina, wearing a dowdy jumper, stone washed jeans and trainers. Her hair hasn't been back-combed. She's wearing no make up. She looks like a kid.

RAPHINA  
 Wha?

CONOR  
 Is it you?

RAPHINA  
 Who?

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Raphina?

RAPHINA

I'm not Raphina. I'm her younger sister.

CONOR

No you're not. What are you doing? I thought you were in London?

RAPHINA

My sister? Yeah, she's in London. Getting on great.

She walks on. Conor follows, spinning her around. She stares him in the face, finally giving up.

INT. THE LITTLE PARK - DAY

Conor and Raphina sit on a bench. She really does look different. Without the war paint and clothes, she's lost something of herself.

RAPHINA

...it was a mad idea anyway. I don't know anyone in London.

CONOR

I thought he had booked tickets?

RAPHINA

No. It was all just an act. To get a ride like. He doesn't have a flat there. Or friends. Or any of that.

CONOR

So where is he now?

RAPHINA

(ashamed)

I don't know. He left me in a B&B in town. I've been trying to ring him. I'm like me Ma.

She blushes a little.

CONOR

So what are you going to do now?

RAPHINA

I don't know. I was going to print up some CVs. But I haven't done anything. Except your videos. So I don't know where to start.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

CVs for what?

RAPHINA

I don't know. McDonalds have an ad in their window. Would you still fancy me if I was saying "Do you want chips with that?"

CONOR

I'd fancy you no matter what, as long as you were happy.

RAPHINA

Oh shut up, you sap. You make me sick. I don't know what I'm doing half the time. I live in a dream world. Who's going to put me in an ad? Or the cover of a magazine? I'm telling you- I'm like me Ma, thinking like that. There's something wrong with me.

She hits her head, her eyes filling with tears.

CONOR

There's nothing wrong with you. But you have to follow one dream at a time. I was actually happy I thought you were in London. Even though I was jealous. And I missed you.

(beat)

I have to go now. I have a gig to rehearse for.

He gets up. She looks at him. Then gets up and they both wander back.

RAPHINA

Tell me about that...

CONOR

It's our first gig. At the school. Will you come?

They chat as they wander off. We CRANE UP.

INT. CONOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Conor sits down and picks up pad and pen. He thinks about what he wants to say. Then writes down

TO FIND YOU.

He starts writing a first verse.

EXT. EAMON'S HOUSE - DAY

Eamon opens the door to his house. Conor's is outside, with his journal of lyrics.

CONOR  
Want to write a song?

EAMON  
(smiling)  
Always.

He enters.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - DAY

Conor knocks on Brendan's room. Brendan is just sitting there. The window open, looking out.

CONOR  
Hi. I'm off to school. Got that gig tonight.

BRENDAN  
Excellent. What time?

CONOR  
Starts at 9.

BRENDAN  
Okay. I'll see you there, probably.  
Is your girlfriend going?

CONOR  
She's not my girlfriend. I don't know. She's totally unreliable. I might try and get a new girlfriend tonight. If the gig goes well like.

BRENDAN  
You know I was in a band once?

CONOR  
Really.

BRENDAN  
Oh yeah. We never got to play a gig. But we practiced for about a summer. It was really just an excuse to get high with your friends.  
But we weren't half bad. I wrote some pretty good lyrics.

(CONTINUED)

CONOR  
What happened?

BRENDAN  
Ah, parents. Mum always wanted me  
to be a doctor. Or a lawyer.

He shakes his head.

BRENDAN  
You should be glad they don't give  
as much of a damn about you.

CONOR  
Maybe that's what you'll do.

BRENDAN  
When?

CONOR  
When you get off your arse. Re-form  
a band? Write some lyrics.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Conor passes through the kitchen. Penny and Robert are eating  
breakfast and reading the paper. Conor grabs a slice of toast  
and his school bag and goes to exit.

CONOR  
Oh, I'll be late tonight.

Neither of his parents look up.

CONOR  
School gig.

PENNY  
Okay. What time is it at?

CONOR  
We're on at around 9. Are you  
coming?

PENNY  
Ohh. I might be busy. A work do.  
I'll try and get out of it.

CONOR  
Cool. Dad?

ROBERT  
Where is it at?

CONOR  
At school. It's a "school" gig.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT

Oh yeah. Okay. I'll try.

Conor smiles, happy. He exits.

EXT. CONOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Music over.

Conor exits his house. He looks up at a "SALE AGREED" sign in his garden. He is carrying an envelope. He stuffs it into his jacket and gets on his bike.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Music over, as Conor cycles through streets.

RAPHINA'S STOOP - DAY

Conor drops in the envelope through Raphina's door.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - NIGHT

People arrive for the school disco. They enter the gym hall.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - GYM HALL - NIGHT

A DJ plays music. There are a few colored lights. Gangs of teenagers assemble in groups. No one dances. Brothers and teachers supervise things. On stage, the band's gear is set up.

INT. BACK STAGE - NIGHT

Behind the stage is a little changing area, where our boys are assembled. They are dressed up. Conor wears pretty funky makeup. They nervously check behind the curtain.

DARREN

It's filling up lads. There's chicks from Saint Annes, Notre Dame. And St. Louis!

This just makes the band more nervous. All except Eamon, who sits on a desk, his guitar strapped on practicing. Conor notices that he's quiet. He approaches.

CONOR

You alright?

(CONTINUED)

EAMON  
 Yeah bro. I'm good.  
 (beat)  
 Showed me Ma me test results.

CONOR  
 Oh yeah? What did she say.

EAMON  
 She killed me! Have to get the  
 marks up by end of year. Gotta  
 leave the band.

CONOR  
 Really?

EAMON  
 Da's not coming out for a while. I  
 have to help take care of things.  
 She's on the dole. She can't  
 manage.

CONOR  
 But we can't break up. Maybe if we  
 just practice once a week.

EAMON  
 Nah. If we were to do it we should  
 do it properly.

CONOR  
 You're too good not to do this.  
 This was your dream, right? Be in  
 a band? Write music? Get out of  
 Dublin?

EAMON  
 Maybe later. After school or  
 whatever. I'll still play. And  
 write and stuff. But I have to  
 focus on school and jobs. I can't  
 afford to have that dream right  
 now.

Conor understands.

GARRY  
 (o.s.)  
 So what's our set list?

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - NIGHT

More and more kids show up. Kids of all ages. Some of them  
 drunk.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Things are turbulent in the school hall. Brothers and teachers have a tough time keeping things under control. A few local skinheads have shown up, drinking bottles of cider. Girls have started kissing guys.

On stage, a fifth former (17) speaks into a microphone as the DJ turns down the music.

FIFTH FORMER

Okay. So now, some live music.

No one claps. Except Miss Dunne, who is there with her boyfriend, a man in his late thirties. They are drinking orange juice.

The band take to the stage. Conor's look gets laughs: he's wearing a dress and heavy makeup. A few "Faggots" from the crowd, etc. Conor begins a riff.

CONOR

Hello Dublin. We are Sing Street.  
From Dublin.

CROWD

(collectively)  
BOO!!!!!!!!!!

THUG VOICE

Faggot band!

CONOR

Dad, you shouldn't have come if  
you're going to slag us.

(beat)

This is called "Words".

The band crash into their first song, a lively, up-tempo stomper.

Cosmo is transformed on stage. He's stepped outside himself. He's carefree and confident with the microphone, and his weeks of rehearsal have paid off. The band is tight.

Miss Dunne is delighted. The other teachers aren't so sure of the angry, passionate performance and risqué lyrics, as the crowd begrudgingly starts to come around, gathering at the front of stage.

Barry is working their backline. Darren winks at him.

The play through their first song passionately, and it ends to some applause, mostly from girls.

INT. RAPHINA'S HOUSE - EARLIER

Raphina opens the envelope Conor dropped in, and puts the tape into her machine. Through her window, Conor jumps on his bike earlier that afternoon, and cycles off. She presses play.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Back at the hall the band are well into their gig. They are sweating, and ending a song to applause. Conor changes out of his dress -- he's wearing a school uniform underneath.

CONOR

Thank you. Here's one called "I will Find you" It's a slow song.

The crowd boo. The rest of the band shake their heads. The band have an unplanned discussion on stage, off mic.

NGIG

We're not doing a bleedin slow song at a gig! Are you mad?

CONOR

No?

GARRY

They love us. We'll totally blow it. And we haven't rehearsed it properly.

CONOR

But it's a great song. And it's really simple. And it'll test our audience. Girls will love it. Eamon?

They all look at Eamon.

EAMON

It's a bold move. Let's do it.

Eamon takes a seat by the piano.

CONOR

This is a slow song. Anyone ever had a girlfriend for a day? Then that's it?

Lots of rowdy shouting from the crowd. This is turning into a proper gig.

CONOR

What is that about? Anyway. This is called "I Will find you".

(CONTINUED)

He begins a mid tempo song. It's beautiful. Soulful yet forceful. We hear the first verse.

INT. RAPHINA'S ROOM - EARLIER THAT DAY

Raphina is listening to the music. It is the same song he is playing live at the gig. She is dressed as we saw her earlier, hair in a pony tail, no make up, sensible jeans and jumper.

The song is an address to her to follow her dreams. About being who you're supposed to be. That she must at least find out if she could have made it as a model. And made it to London.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Music plays over

Penny is making love to A MAN (45), on the couch in an office. She is smiling and happy.

INT. CONOR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Music plays over.

Robert is sitting in front of the TV with a sandwich and a glass of whiskey. He is watching violence on TV from Northern Ireland.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Music plays over.

Brenden enters his room. Restless. He is trying on his jacket to go out. Looks in the mirror. The song from the gig still playing over. He checks his watch and looks at his guitar and smiles. Picks it up, sits back and strums it. Blows some dust off it. Tunes a string. Then gives up. Crosses the room, puts the needle onto the vinal. Picks up his hash paraphernalia and begins rolling a joint on the back of the guitar, tapping his feet to the music. Takes off his jacket. He's not going anywhere.

EXT. THE PARK - NIGHT

Raphina sits on the bench listening to the same song Cosmo is playing live. She's been listening over and over. She's smiling and crying at the same time. It is a call to her from someone who really cares about her.

(CONTINUED)

## LYRICS

"I got to find out who I'm meant to be. I don't believe in destiny. But with every word you say to me... something's going to change..."

We hold on her, eyes full of tears.

## INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL - GYM - NIGHT

Back on stage, they have lost most of the crowd. Many are outside the windows, smoking. Others in groups chatting. Only a few GIRLS have stayed put, looking up adoringly at the young band.

Now, at the back of the hall, the door opens, and Raphina steps in out of the cold.

But she's OLD RAPHINA again. The hair is done, the make up. And she's dressed in a cool skirt, doc boots, and jacket. She can't believe what she's seeing. Conor, is singling with his eyes closed. She smiles, walking through the hall towards the stage. Conor sees her and smiles, singing the last verse to her. She stands at the front of stage looking up at him.

## LYRICS

"So bring the thunder bring the lightning, bring the fall. I know I'll get my heart through. I've miles to go, but since the day I started crawling I was on my way to find you."

They finish to applause. A SKINHEAD tries to get up on stage but Barry, who has been standing, arms folded like a bodyguard, punches him off the stage.

## CONOR

Okay. This is our last song. It's about this school. It's for Brother Baxter.

People hoot and whistle. Brother Baxter, who stands at the back of the hall is not impressed. He signals to another Brother to turn on the hall lights.

Florescent lights blink on, ruining the dark, cavernous atmosphere.

The crowd collectively BOO. One of the skinheads turns them off again. The crowd cheer.

On and off again. Things are getting chaotic. The crowd is getting pissed.

(CONTINUED)

The Brother turns them on again. Then the skin head turns them off, then takes a fire extinguisher and smashes it down on the light switch, ensuring they stay off.

Brother Baxter is making his way towards stage. He stands at the side of the stage, gesturing for Cosmo to come over.

Conor heads over, leaning down.

BROTHER BAXTER  
Lad, don't push it.

CONOR  
What? It's a tribute song.

BROTHER BAXTER  
If you want to keep this band going next term you'd better be careful.

CONOR  
Oh. Okay.

He goes back onto stage.

CONOR  
(to Eamon)  
You ready? This may be all of ours first and last gig man. You ready to do it?

EAMON  
Let's go!!

CONOR  
And you better come back to this after school. You're a bloody genius man!

Eamon laughs.

CONOR  
(shouting, into mic)  
This is called "Brown Shoes". It's for every Christian Brother, and for every bully you ever knew.

Larry starts with a thumping bass lick.

Eamon and Garry join in. Conor approaches the mic, singing angrily

CONOR  
"Who the hell are you, to tell me what to do... you wear a dress and tell me not to wear Brown Shoes..?"

The crowd gets it. They start moshing. An angry guitar riff soaring over the top line.

(CONTINUED)

Conor sings a verse about being stabbed by a bully. Then the chorus:

CONOR  
(singing)  
"Well the boots on the other foot  
now, buckle up, we're taking you  
down. Your curtain's falling so  
take a bow."

He spots Raphina as he sings, smiling.

CONOR  
"...yeah you've had your time in  
the sun, so step aside it's time  
for some fun. Yeah the boot's on  
the other foot, take a bow!"

Raphina joins in the dancing. A few people stage dive. The Skinhead jumps around the room letting the fire extinguisher off, drenching everyone. They love it. The lights come on again, adding to the chaos. Cosmo laughs as he screams a mantra into the mic

CONOR  
"Brown shoes, Brown Shoes, Brown  
Shoes!!!!"

Brother Baxter turns and exits, unnoticed.

CONOR  
"Brown Shoes, Brown Shoes... BROWN  
SHOES!!"

And the song crescendos into a loud stab. And ends.

The crowd roars. Conor and Raphina fix eyes, laughing.

CONOR  
We are Sing Street.

The DJ takes over as the crowd cheer.

INT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL GYM - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Conor and the band get off stage, hugging. Raphina runs over to meet him. She kisses him. They SHOUT above the music and crowds.

RAPHINA  
You look great!!

CONOR  
So do you!

RAPHINA  
You guys were brilliant!!

(CONTINUED)

CONOR

Really? Shit. Because I have to  
break the band up!!

RAPHINA

What? Why??

CONOR

I failed my exams. And Eamon's Mum  
won't let him be in a band anymore.  
And my parents are selling the  
house. So we'll be moving... So I  
won't be able to call in and leave  
tapes for you and stalk you!

She shrugs.

CONOR

We should go.

She nods her head without needing to think.

RAPHINA

How?

CONOR

On a boat.

RAPHINA

On the ferry, like? They won't let  
us travel. You're too young! I  
mean, I'd get away with it. But  
you're just a baby.

He's shaking his head, all this coming to him like a bolt  
from the blue.

CONOR

No. We borrow a boat. From Dalkey.  
It's 35 Miles. How far can that be?  
It's like 45 minutes in good  
weather.

RAPHINA

You mean steal a boat?

CONOR

Are you ready? There's nothing  
going on here right now.

She thinks about it. They look at each other, wide-eyed.

EXT. SYNGE STREET SCHOOL / RAPHINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Conor and Raphina run, hand in hand out of the school gates.

(CONTINUED)

RAPHINA  
Do you forgive me? About Evan?

CONOR  
Was he any good? At sex?

RAPHINA  
Not great.

CONOR  
Cool.

RAPHINA  
You need to tell me you forgive me?

CONOR  
Something tells me I'll always be  
forgiving you.

They run on.

She runs towards the steps of her house.

RAPHINA  
Two minutes. I need to pack a few  
things.

CONOR  
GO!

She laughs.

EXT. CONOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They run around the corner and up to Conor's house, hand in hand. Raphina is carrying a bag.

INT. BRENDAN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brendan is writing something in his writing pad, and smoking one. Conor knocks and enters, followed by Raphina.

BRENDAN  
Hey. What's going on?

CONOR  
Shhh. Where are the parents?

BRENDAN  
In bed. Why?

RAPHINA  
Hi.

BRENDAN  
Hey. You're Raphina?

(CONTINUED)

She bows.

CONOR  
We need your help. Can you drive us  
to Dalkey?

BRENDAN  
What for?

CONOR  
Grandad's little pleasure boat is  
still moored there. We're going to  
sail to England. The two of us.  
We're all set. But we need a lift  
to the harbour.

Brendan looks at them. They are totally serious. He thinks  
about it.

BRENDAN  
Sure. When are you talking about?

CONOR  
Now.

BRENDAN  
What!!? Do you have any friends  
there?

CONOR  
No.

BRENDAN  
Do you have any sterling?

CONOR  
No. Not a penny. She has her  
photographs. And I have my demo  
tapes and videos.

He looks at them, smiling. He puts on his jacket.

BRENDAN  
Let's go.

Raphina and Conor smile.

INT. CONOR'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In a frenzy, Conor throws things in a shoulder bag.

INT. ROBERT AND PENNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Conor sneaks in to his parents' room. He tip toes over to the  
bedside locker. The car keys are under the lamp.

(CONTINUED)

He fishes them up silently, and as he does so, looks at his parents, asleep. Robert is sleeping on the floor beside the bed. Penny is on the bed, in a shaft of moonlight.

Conor pauses, looking at them, almost smiling. Then his eyes fill up with tears. They look very vulnerable. He leans in to his Mum...

CONOR  
I love you. Mum.

She repositions herself in the bed. But she doesn't hear him. We hold on him, smiling.

EXT. CONOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Conor and Brendan pull the tarpaulin off the old car in the driveway.

The old car reverses out of the driveway. Conor and Raphina jump in.

INT. THE CAR - NIGHT

Palpable excitement in the car as Brendan drives it south, out to the sea...

EXT. COLIEMORE HARBOUR - DAWN

The car pulls up to a small jetty. A few old boats bob up and down in the moonlight. They all get out, carrying their bags down towards one small pleasure cruiser. Dalkey Island just across the water.

RAPHINA  
Jesus, you were right, it's really close.

She smiles.

CONOR  
It's a *little* bit further than that.

They approach the hero boat. It's an open boat, with a steering wheel, and a little tarpaulin shelter area at the back. It's pretty basic.

RAPHINA  
Is that it? It's tiny!

They look out to sea.

CONOR  
Nice and calm.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDAN

You DO know it can get pretty choppy once you get out past the island?

CONOR

We'll be grand.

He heads. They follow him to the edge of the jetty.

He jumps on board the boat, getting it ready. Brendan and Raphina stand watching him. He appears to know what he's doing. Kind of.

He finds a can of petrol in the boat next to it, and steals it, looking in his own engine.

CONOR

I don't believe it. There's still petrol in it. We'll take this one as a spare. Ready?

He pulls the cord. The engine coughs. But doesn't take. Raphina jumps in, helping him, as Brendan does lookout.

Finally, the engine comes to life, spluttering and coughing out smoke.

Conor jumps back off, handing Raphina her bag, photographs, and his stuff. She secures them under the little tarpaulin.

Conor unties the boat from its mooring, throwing the rope on board.

Then he turns to his brother.

BRENDAN

Call home as SOON as you get there, okay? No messing around.

CONOR

I will. We'll get into the Welsh coast. Then hitch down to London. Be there this evening.

BRENDAN

Okay.

CONOR

You'll get some flak from the parents for driving me out.

BRENDAN

I'll be fine. I'm bulletproof.

He smiles. He is far from bulletproof.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDAN

Oh, here. I wrote some words down.  
For a song.

Brendan reaches in his pocket and produces a foolscap of paper with loads of lyrics written on it.

BRENDAN

They're just a stream of  
consciousness thing. It's about  
this kid and a girl. In the future.  
If you get there, put some music to  
them some day. I'm serious. Could  
be a good song.

CONOR

Okay. I will.

Conor takes it and folds it up carefully, and puts it in his inside coat pocket.

Conor jumps back onto the boat.

RAPHINA

Come and visit us. You seem like a  
mad bastard.

BRENDAN

Oh yeah. You look after that  
brother of mine. He's going to be  
lost without me.

RAPHINA

Hah! I will.

BRENDAN

And I hope you can swim.

Raphina shakes Brendan's hand and hugs him from the boat.

Brendan is getting a little emotional as A SONG starts to fade up on the track. He hugs his brother one more time. But this is no time for tears.

Conor steers the little boat out of the harbour. They wave back to Brendan, who stands on the jetty waving.

EXT. THE BOAT - DAWN

The boat sets out onto the sea. The shelter of the harbour is immediately met by a strong wind. The song swells...

EXT. THE BOAT - DAWN

The sun is coming up, but a heavy mist is refusing to lift. The waves are growing in force as the little boat sets off.

(CONTINUED)

Raphina looks nervous. It starts raining.

INT. THE CAR - DAWN

Brendan watches them from behind the wheel of his car. They look very vulnerable in the distance, bobbing up and down. He starts screaming. For no reason. Shouting and screaming and cheering, looking at the little boat making its escape. In a way, he's on that boat. The boat disappears around the side of the island. Brendan smiles, shouting.

EXT. THE BOAT - MORNING

Now it's raining hard. The boat is buffeted by waves.

CONOR  
(shouting)  
You'll want to sit down around now

RAPHINA  
(shouting)  
WHAT?

In answer to her question, the boat is hit by a good wave, knocking Raphina over.

She huddles up under the tarpaulin, soaked.

Conor steers the boat with focus and determination. She watches him, scared, as the song soars.

Ahead, nothing but mist and rain. No sign of a coastline.

Then, a bellowing HORN is heard, off.

Conor looks out. Out of the mist a HUGE CAR FERRY is appearing, travelling in the same direction, but cutting across their boat's course.

RAPHINA  
Jesus Christ!!!!!!

Conor slams the boat into reverse. The engine grinds in protest. The FERRY passes them by. Up on deck, countless Irish immigrants stand, smoking, drinking cans of Guinness, watching the sun come up etc. Some of them see the little boat below, pointing and laughing.

EXT. THE CAR FERRY - CONTINUOUS

P.O.V. Shot from deck of ferry.

EXT. THE BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Conor waves up at the people on deck. Then speeds onwards. Raphina smiles, looking at his back. She tries to light up a cigarette. Then gives up. She starts laughing.

The SONG really takes off now. It's Conor's voice singing.

The lyrics are about him and Raphina. About their future. A model and a singer. About staying together. Written from an older brother's perspective. What we're hearing is clearly a marriage of Brendan's lyrics and Conor's music. From the future. And it's the only clue to whether Conor and Raphina ever made it. Because right now, all we can see is mist, rain, and grim determination on COSMO'S drenched face....

Snap to black.

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