

For private reading purposes only

Scene 1.

AUDREY'S BEDROOM.

FX: BABY CRYING FROM FLAT UNDERNEATH HERS

1. AUDREY: It doesn't matter, I wasn't asleep anyway. One day I would like to be able to warn people, write an article for Saga magazine, I'd even be prepared to go on a television programme if necessary and say it out loud. 'If when you get older and you're thinking of selling your house and buying a flat - think a-gain.' Oh yes, it's more manageable maintenance-wise, but it comes at a price - noise. Unfortunately, more often than not, it's one you can't go into detail about. People make such a racket having sexual intercourse these days. Heaven knows where they get the idea that so much sound is essential. From Sky and Channel five, I suppose. How I'm expected to find the words at my age to complain about it, I don't know. Of course a baby crying isn't embarrassing to put into words but equally I can't say to my downstairs neighbour, 'Please keep your baby quiet.'



Scene 3

FX: \_\_\_\_\_ RADIO.

1. JENNY: I'm not due in to work for a couple of hours. I sit in the kitchen and go over the care plan. It would be much more comfortable to sit in the living room but I can't face going in there because of the piano. Ludicrous. The only reason I bought this house was because it was end of terrace, and with the door to the hall shut it meant I could bang away on it any hours of the day or night without fear that the neighbours would hear. Now just sitting there like a stone elephant, grey with dust. As if on automatic pilot, I then get up and rummage under the sink for a cloth. But then I catch myself staring at the S bend and start fretting about the baby I've got to take into care.

Scene 4

Scene 5

FX: MEL'S FLAT.

1. IAN: Mel has gone to telephone my work. I'm on my own again in the bed. I don't know if I should get up and have a shower and get dressed? I feel embarrassed about trying to find her bathroom with no clothes on,

1. IAN (cont):        So all I knew was that Mel wanted me to go into her flat but I could only imagine why.
  
2.                        When she opened the door I suddenly forgot about rats and mice because I remembered she had a baby. I asked her where it was. She understood what I meant. The sign for baby - arms over each other slowly going from side to side - can be understood by anyone in the world. I couldn't understand properly what she was saying and I am a good lip reader - but then I saw a bottle of wine - only this full, and I realised why. She showed me his room where he was sleeping. Then we went back in the

Scene 6

FX:

JENNY DUSTING THE PIANO.

1. JENNY:

Before I leave for work I make myself go into the living room, telling myself that I can't possibly carry out my job if I'm scared of such a stupid thing as looking at a piano; but I know it's not really that I'm scared, it's just that don't want to be reminded. My parents ran a pub and when I was a kid there was always a piano in the corner of the lounge bar until I was a teenager and the jukebox arrived. Dad wanting to keep up with the times and, like everyone else who had a piano in those days, wanted rid of it. I'm sure if I'd said something he'd have kept it. Only I had allowed myself to be persuaded that, like acoustic guitars and recorders, they were  
emo a

WWs

FNC?NNWLvi-F4va-4CWN?55vn-FJC?JN4WvoL5v,-F3C5WW55Wv -?







**1. IAN (cont)**

**So far though the written- down conversation with Mel was one I could cope with. I didn't have any idea where it was going but it seemed logical. I could understand it, so I was grateful.**



1. AUDREY<sub>(cont)</sub>: Even so, I wish my daughter were that cultured, music-wise. Apart from the noise, I wish my daughter were more like her, full stop. It wasn't that she didn't have the education. The money we spent but she maintains she's perfectly happy waiting

Scene 9

1. IAN(cont): Even now when I talk about her I have to do the sign on my hand. If I forget and do the one on my forehead, my eyes mist up and I have to suck a mint to stop myself crying.
  
2. I lived at home until after my Dad died. Then when my Mum knew the cancer had come back again she helped me buy this flat with the money she said Dad wanted me to have. So I don't have a mortgage and even though I only work in the post room that still leaves me with quite a bit of money to go on holiday. So when Mel asked me if I had any hobbies I wrote down. 'Yes, I am the chair of the deaf club holiday committee. I used to be called the chairman but now because of sexism I'm just called, 'the chair.' And I look up and she's laughing. And I laugh, and I forget to worry about how it might sound because I am happy.

Scene 10.

FX: JENNY DRIVING TO WORK. MUSIC/ITEM  
FROM 70'S ON THE RADIO.

1. JENNY: (SWITCHES THE RADIO OFF) Everyone warned me that Social Work was a thankless task but I was still fuelled by an adolescent enthusiasm. I waited patiently until the kids were at uni so I could start the second half of my life. I even believed that my life experience would be of real benefit to my work. Only, after years of hoping I'd graduate from the Friends Reunited Profile. I.e. married, two kids divorced to a professional person who can be successfully Googled, I now dread it; because it will mean something else has gone badly wrong and this time it will have made the papers. Journalists like Mel would take me apart. I could never leave the house again. Not that I would probably ever want to.





1. AUDREY<sub>(cont)</sub> Oh. Oh my... I've been too self-absorbed to think why. Why does the baby cry continuously? What is Mel doing? Don't get carried away now. She wouldn't do anything like that. She's a respected journalist. And I've never heard her shouting... but then maybe she's doing something she doesn't want anyone to hear. People torture and murder their babies and their neighbours do nothing. In my case worse than nothing.
  
2. How could I account for myself? I can't pretend that I didn't hear it continuously crying... It? I don't even know if it's a boy or a girl. Take some deep breaths Audrey, collect yourself, and go home.

Scene 12.

FX: \_\_\_\_\_ MEL'S FLAT.

Scene 13

FX: OFFICE.

1. JENNY: I'm in my Team Manger's office for a final briefing but my mind keeps wandering. I start to think, of the other baby, the little girl who will now never have full use of her left arm because of me. The one who is probably only alive because a neighbour had had the courage to call the NSPCC.
  
2. Despite all my training, I was completely taken in by the mother. I didn't believe she was capable of, and as I subsequently found out, of deliberately breaking her baby's arm in three different places.  
Chris, my Team Manager, looks up from the application for an emergency protection order and asks if I'm all right. I nod. She tries to reassure me. She says 'We're in this together'.  
But it's of no real comfort. A baby on the Child Protection Register dies and the name of the person who's murdered it is forgotten long before the Social Worker's. I phone the foster parents who are on standby. Then we take my car and go.

Scene 14

FX: \_\_\_\_\_ MEL'S FLAT.

1. IAN:

I have a shower at her flat but she doesn't even want me to go back to mine to get some clean clothes. I don't mind so much about my shirt because I only put it on yesterday evening, but I don't like wearing the same pair of pants. I don't want to upset her so I turn them inside out and put them back on. Then she asks if I will help bath Rory. I don't mind helping but she gently puts my hand in the water and sort of leans him against my palm. He is very, very small. His rigid little body seems

Scene 15

FX: BUSY ROAD. AUDREY WALKING BACK TO  
HER FLAT.

1. AUDREY: When I get in I'm going to get the vests. I haven't even wrapped them up. They're still in the bag with the receipt and they'll probably be too small. I should never have bought 0-3months, but she can take them back. I'll just say that's why I haven't wrapped them up. I'll say I've been away. Well, I have. I have. Only for a week ...four weeks ago. But I'm seventy five. I have an excuse not to know what day of the week, month of the year it is. Say I've been away and ask to have a peek at the baby. Yes, yes. Suppose she's not in? You can leave a note and then you can say you tried -when the film crew from Crime Watch come round and ask you questions. The answer is easy. It's always, 'she kept herself to herself. '

**Scene 16**

Scene 17

FX: GOES UP TO MEL'S DOOR AND RINGS THE BELL.

1. AUDREY: The side gate is already open and she comes to the





Scene 19

FX: AUDREY'S FLAT.

1.AUDREY: Of course I thought that was the last I'd seen of Mel but, blow me, good as her word she came up to thank me later that week. And to my surprise she said yes to the suggestion made really for politeness' sake that she come in for a cup of tea or coffee. When she was settled on the sofa she said it was a bit late in the day for caffeine and so I found myself rootling in the back of the cupboard hoping I didn't throw out the bottle of port I got for Christmas. I don't like to think how many years ago. She asked about my trip to the States. I even got out the photographs - well, I say got out. They were in their envelope on the table where I get them out once or

1. AUDREY (cont): Oh I said but not as a question. I didn't want to pry. She said, 'You know what it is really about, don't you? The fact that I've written articles on the amount of public money and resources we waste on hopeless social workers who let children die under their noses on the one hand and accusing defenceless innocent people of child abuse on the other.' 'Yes,' I told her. 'Often when I've read one of your pieces I've said, 'Hurrah, for you for saying it.' Well, she said, 'I'm paying the price for it now.' As she was saying it, we started to hear Rory cry. Not from downstairs but as if he were in the room with us. She showed me she had the baby alarm in her bag and said she should be getting back. I'd assumed she left him with Ian. A look must have passed over my face because she said, 'in Victorian times this would have been one house so it's only like I've run upstairs.' I suppose, I said, but next time please do bring him with you.

2. Okay, she said and I still thought that was that. Probably the next time I'd see them he'd be in his school uniform or something...just shows you're never too old too be entirely wrong.

## Scene 20

1. IAN: From then on I stayed most nights in Mel's flat. She gave me a key. I got a flashing light baby alarm for Rory and lots of times it was me who got up. I didn't mind.
2. She started to come to the deaf club with me. Sometimes we took Rory and sometimes Audrey looked after him. Most people at the deaf club liked Mel. But the first time I took her Amy was very funny with me.
3. Steve was there so I said to him, 'What is the matter with her?' He took me into the toilets - no not for anything like that. But because you cannot whisper in sign. He said for some one as clever as me I must be thick. 'She's in love with you, that's what'.  
How? How can she be? She always argues with me?'  
'It's the only way she can get your attention, isn't it?' he said.
4. Because of what Steve said. I had to re-wind all my memories of how she'd been with me like an old videotape in my head and when I started to play it forward again, it was a completely different story to what I thought it was.



## Scene 22

1. IAN:

I still wasn't sure why we had to keep seeing the social workers. Mel was quite good at communicating what they were saying to me but she also told me that if I didn't understand to try and look like I did. As this is what a lot of life is like for deaf people, it wasn't hard. But this visit Social Services had found an

## Scene 23

1. AUDREY: I'd been used to looking after Rory when they'd had to go out in the evening. Ian would come to the door, with the nappies and feeds made up and I would have my notepad ready but increasingly he had come to understand more and more of what I said so that he only had to write down his side of the conversation. So I was sorry that I hadn't seen him for a while and wondered if something had happened. I was going to ask Mel when she brought Rory round this afternoon so she could do some shopping but he was asleep and we didn't want to disturb him.
  
2. An hour or so later I was wondering if I should wake him up - because obviously the more he slept in the day the less he would at night. It wasn't me I was concerned for but Mel. I'd long since given in to earplugs and put my faith in double- deadlocking the front door,- when I heard a car draw up and, as I went to the window, it struck me that I hadn't been to Lakeside in fact I hadn't even thought about it, for two weeks. I saw them coming down the path. One I recognised as the older social worker from that first time but I hadn't seen the other one before. When they realised Mel wasn't in, they came up to the front door and rang my bell. They introduced themselves. Turned out that the other one was from a support organisation for women who had babies like Rory. The social worker, Jenny, said how lucky Mel was to have me - that she'd described me as being like a Mum to her- I could have punched the air with pride - yes, like you see young soccer hooligans on the telly do. The one from the organisation had a stack of leaflets and such like in an envelope which she put on the hall table for me to give to Mel.

1. **AUDREY**<sub>(cont)</sub>: Rory woke up and started to grizzle, so I picked him up and the other one from the organisation cooed over him and said something about all FAS babies being big criers. She could remember her own at that age. 'FAS' I asked, is that an acronym?
  
2. She looked at me. I thought she hadn't understood what I was asking but I now realise she was stalling.



## Scene 24

1. IAN: I have never felt like this in my life. Steve said to me ' It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all' I went mad. What do you know? You have sex five times a week with different men whose names you don't even know '

2. I would rather just have been the way I was forever than feel like I do now. I can't stop thinking about my mum how pleased I thought she'd be if she could see me with Mel and Rory. But now how relieved I am that she's not here. Because she wouldn't have be able to bear me being this upset and when I think that, I upset myself more.

FX: KNOCK, AT AUDREY'S DOOR.

3.AUDREY: I thought it was Mel at first and I did nothing. but then I heard him blow his nose. Unmistakably Ian, like an elephant tunelessly trumpeting the last post.

FX: \_\_\_\_\_ TAKING CHAIN OFF ETC.

4.AUDREY: (CONT/G) I think I sort of pulled him in. I didn't want to say anything for fear of raising my voice so Mel could hear.

5. IAN: I thought Audrey should know.

FX: \_\_\_\_\_ GO IN SHUT DOOR BEHIND THEM.

1. AUDREY:

Just as I was thinking how am I going to manage this, he pulled out a notebook and pen. He had already written the first question. Do you know about why Rory is like he is? I was too angry to trust myself to be able to speak clearly so I just snatched the pen and wrote, yes I do and I am very angry. She hasn't even tried to give up drinking.

2. IAN:

I wrote, yes, I know. She tricked us both into helping her so he wouldn't go into care.

## Scene 25

### 1. IAN:

I went back to my flat, pleased to be on my own again but only for about two minutes, then I felt so lonely that my body ached as though it was about to get cramp all over. I thought there should be a tablet for this. There should be something to take it away. Then the light flashed to let me know someone was at the door. I was really hoping it was Mel, that it had all been wrong, that it was a mistake and she did really want me. But it was Amy. I was furious. Why? Because I didn't want her to see my flat. I didn't want her to see me upset. She wanted to ask me why I hadn't gone to the holiday meeting. I just shrugged. She said but what about the scuba diving? I said, but in a nasty way, that I agreed with her it was elitist and oppressive to deaf people. She said she didn't really mean it. She was just saying it - and I told her to go and play games with someone else. I called her names and told her to just f off out of my flat and it was such a relief to be able to sign what I meant to someone who understood that I had forgotten I was doing it to the wrong person. When she'd gone I sat down and wrote down everything I wanted to say to Mel and thought I'd just go and put it through her letterbox.

Scene 26

FX:

CLOCK RADIO - NIGHT PROG (?)

1. JENNY:

I couldn't sleep that night anyway. I'd visited Mel that afternoon and acted really unprofessionally. She accused me of not understanding alcohol. I couldn't resist telling her that I grew up in a pub, so actually there was nothing new she could teach me about booze. So she changed tack and accused me of being judgmental. And then, I can't believe I did this, I told her about the other time I'd done my job badly because I'd empathised with the mother, not just the child.

'But I love Rory' she said 'I would never hurt him'

2.

I could have said you hurt him the minute he was conceived until the day he was born and the damage can never be undone but I took a deep breath and said instead;

3.

'If you drink you are not allowed to drive a car so why do you think you should you be considered capable of looking after a small baby?'

4.

I am though. Here's the proof, she said holding him up - although she did have the grace not to look proud as she showed me his squished-up little face.

5.

Damn right I'm judgemental. With the protection of her fame and smug broayvo-FNCLWWL5vf-jC44L?JN

Scene 27

1. IAN:

I walked through the side gate and I was about to leave the letter but something very bad ran through me. Like I had swallowed mercury and it had set solid and hardened the inside of me. I opened the door with the key she'd given me. I knew this would scare her. That is why I did it.

FX:

OPENS THE DOOR WITH HIS KEY AND GOES IN CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.

2.

But as usual it was her who scared me. She was on the floor, not moving at all and whatever I did I couldn't make her wake up. I went to look at Rory. He was lying in his cot crying. I could tell from the minute I opened the door that he badly needed changing. Then it was like the mercury inside me warmed up and started to spill in all directions. I didn't know what to do. I know if you dial 999 and even if you don't speak they will come because they can trace the call. But then I started thinking, what if she's dead. They'll blame me. I'm not supposed to be in here. How will I explain to the police? I thought I'll jynad s

tl, s wasNC?NNWLvo4  
jnte

**Scene 28**

**1. AUDREY:** Things often happen just like they do in your imagination but the context is never the same. What woke me was the flashing light of the police car outside. Although I couldn't work out what it was straight away. When I sat up and took the earplugs out I heard the banging on the door.

**FX:** **BANGING ON DOOR. LETTER BOX.**

**2.** This is it, I thought, it's him, the mad axe man. Then

Scene 29

### Scene 30

1. IAN:

The next evening I'm looking out of the window wondering what's happened to them both. Then I see Mel coming up the path without him. I wanted to rush down to her flat but I couldn't. Instead I asked Audrey. And she told me that Mel can not have Rory back until she's sober.



## Scene 31

1. AUDREY: Spurred on by my conversation with Jenny, the social worker, I went down to see Mel. I asked her if she'd read the leaflets the young woman left for her. No, she said. I said, 'then I expect

**1. AUDREY**<sub>(cont)</sub>:

**It's impossible to believe that these people have survived, waking up in skips, cutting themselves, wishing they were dead,- and she**

## Scene 32

1. IAN: Steve persuaded me to go back to the deaf club today. The first person I saw was Amy who says sorry to me. What for? I said. For coming round to your flat and upsetting you. I laugh, for all the things she could have said sorry for, arguing in meetings, trying to turn people against my holiday ideas, but no -she says sorry for something which wasn't her fault. I say sorry to her and Steve for how I was. I tell her I wasn't angry with them, just with Mel. Not Rory then she asks?  
No, of course I'm not. He's only a baby.
  
2. Then she said, in the same cross way she uses in the holiday committee. 'So why have you stopped seeing him? None of this is his fault.' Only of course she is right about this. So I said thank you and she smiled with her eyes and her mouth and signed 'anytime'. So I went to see Mel. She hadn't had a drink for five days. She looked terrible and was shaking so much she couldn't finger spell properly. She just said sorry over and over and held on to me and cried.
  
3. I feel so sad. When dreams come true they are never like they are in your imagination. My Mum used to say something which I never ever understood. 'Be careful what you wish for.' Thinking about my Mum makes me say, 'Whatever happens I will help with Rory ... '

### Scene 33

1. JENNY:

I telephoned Audrey to ask if she and Ian could make an appointment to see me. I couldn't get hold of an interpreter but we muddled along. I explained that if they felt able to support Mel again we could start -for as long as she continues to remain sober- to allow Mel to have access, to Rory with a view to her being able to get him back for good. As they left we shook hands and Ian made a sign with the palm of his hand and pointed at me. That means, 'Thank you' Audrey told me. And that goes for me to'

Scene 34

FX: SATURDAY IN THE LOCAL SWIMMING BATHS.

1. AUDREY: I am standing in the swimming pool, holding this little tiny piece of life. His bones sticking out each and every which way. He only stops crying when he feels the water and then his tiny elfin face looks up at me and that thin top lip twitches into a wind-induced smile. And I smile back and for the first time in a long time I feel the piercing joy of being needed. Ian points at me and gives me a thumbs up sign. I know this

Scene 35

FX:

JENNY'S LIVING ROOM.

1. JENNY: I am waiting for someone to come and look at the piano with a view to buying it. He'd said on the phone that it was a present and would I be able to play something on it as he didn't know how.
  
2. I told him that if I was to play it, I probably wouldn't want to sell it but he just laughed and said that was a risk he and I would just have to take. And of course that makes me think about Mel. She came to the office yesterday, completely unprompted. She said she'd come to apologise for how she'd been with me. I told her there was no need.  
'And,' she went on, 'for all the negative, terrible stuff I've written about social workers in the past.'
  
3. I nodded. I didn't know what to say.  
Then she said, 'I know it isn't enough just to say it. I want to do something more.'  
Is this because of the AA 12-step programme? I asked, knowing full well that step eight is: Make a list of all the persons you have harmed and become willing to make amends to all of them.
  
4. Yes, partly, she admitted. But I started it before I even knew about that. I wanted to write something, about me -what I've been through. But I'm scared of using my real name'  
I bit my lip from saying, 'never been bee fn

1. JENNY (Cont): She goes on, 'So I've changed the names but I won't do anything with it without your approval,' and tries to hand me a sheaf of paper. I can see it's some sort of playscript. Only I didn't take it. Instead I said, ' Will it make me feel better about my chosen career'?
2. 'I don't know' she said, looking quite anxious. ' I don't think it's life-changing or anything. It's only written about me, and Rory and the diffence your input's made to our lives.' I'm half wondering now if I should have read it but I stop thinking about it because I'm not even conscious of the fact that I have lifted the lid and started to play.

**FX: JENNY STARTS TO PLAY THE PIANO.**