

TRAUMA

by

Cillian Daly

PREVIEW

FADE IN:

FLAME -- From a well used ZIPPO LIGHTER. The jet of burning gas fades. SPARKS on the flint re-ignite it.

WHUMP!

INT. STERILE OFFICE CORRIDOR - DAY

CLAIRE BOLTON, 24, thin, gaunt, elbow length hair, sits on an uncomfortable chair, opposite an empty desk, watching the flame from the Zippo flicker. She looks burned out.

A SECRETARY, late twenties, model looks, hurries up the corridor. She fixes her hair, sits down behind the desk, and picks up a glossy magazine.

Claire snaps the lighter shut, clears her throat.

Nothing. A different tack --

CLAIRE
Anything good in there?

The Secretary barely lowers her magazine to glance at Claire. This woman doesn't give a shit.

SECRETARY
No.

Claire checks her CALCULATOR WATCH, then back at the Secretary -- still nothing.

CLAIRE
Right.

SECRETARY
(without looking up)
I take it you're his two thirty?

CLAIRE
Yeah.

The secretary smacks the magazine down.

SECRETARY
Are you ever on time?

Claire frowns, shrugs.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)
Go on then. He's waiting.

She nods to the door behind her, returns to the magazine.

(CONTINUED)

As Claire reaches the indicated door, from behind the magazine;

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

You'll pay the full hour too.

INT. SHRINKS OFFICE - DAY

A clock ticks somewhere. A fluorescent light hums.

Claire fidgets with her watch, twists the band around her wrist.

She says nothing.

DR MILUS KING watches her from the safety of his desk. He glances over his notes, regards Claire, and settles back into his chair, arms crossed over his lap.

King offers her a wide smile, shows off his immaculate, expensive teeth.

KING

How is your sister?

CLAIRE

You bring her up, every time.

KING

She's the main reason you're here. I need to put something in the report.

CLAIRE

Talk about me. Put me in the report.

KING

Why not talk about her?

CLAIRE

Because she's fine.

King exhales a long breath.

KING

Honestly, I'm getting tired of this carry on. The last time you wasted the better part of an hour, sitting there, saying nothing.

Claire stops twisting the watch, squirms in her chair, uneasy.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

She's tough. Didn't affect her much. Happy?
(indicating the writing pad)
Write that down.

KING

I've a job to do, these little reports to file. And that involves us having a conversation every now and then. "She's tough" -- that's all you're giving me? Would you prefer I made something up?

CLAIRE

You're already making it up.

KING

Ok, Claire. I'll stop asking questions. You just talk about what you want, when you want to. Give me something I can put down.

King exhales dramatically, pushes his heavy frame back into his chair. Claire's focus stays on the watch.

Ignorant.

The rotating stops. She shoots a look at King.

CLAIRE

People are assholes.

KING

Many are.

Kings lips part in that condescending doctor smile. Claire stares.

CLAIRE

There's one of them sitting outside your office. Can I get the prescription now?

Kings smile evaporates. He leans forward, pushes his files neatly to the side.

KING

Would you like me to bring Keira in here, to have a chat? See for myself how she's doing? Cross that little errand off my To-Do list?

CLAIRE

Just draw your notes and I'll go.

(CONTINUED)

KING

You could lose custody of her,
someone like you, your condition.
It's amazing you've managed to
hold on to her this long. My
actual reports would make
interesting reading for the
courts. And I'd prefer not to
alter our arrangement.

Claire stares the man down.

CLAIRE

Then don't.

King has his smile back in place.

KING

Who's to say I would? But I can,
and that's the point, Claire.
Think about that for a moment.

King grabs a prescription pad and begins to scribble.

KING (CONT'D)

What happens to Keira then?

He tears the paper off the pad, flicks it at Claire. She
grips it in return. King doesn't let go.

KING (CONT'D)

You need this. Don't you?

Claire barely nods, continues to hold his stare.

KING (CONT'D)

Good. Then our agreement stands.

His fingers release the paper like a clasp snapping open.
Claire pulls back, folds the paper tightly in her hand.

King stands, walks behind Claire. He leans down, lips
brush her ear. Claire closes her eyes, a well practiced
action.

KING (CONT'D)

I'm losing interest in hearing you
talk. Maybe we can--

Claire shoots to her feet, eye to eye with King.

CLAIRE

Then why don't you just fuck your
secretary more often, keep taking
my money and leave well enough
alone?

(CONTINUED)

Claire steps away from a flabbergasted King, puts a hand on the door handle.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I'm keeping your secret too.

A quick glance back, Claire opens the door and leaves.

EXT. STREET - GLASS OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Claire leans against a wall, rummages through her shoulder bag. She finds a small reusable baggy, traces of white powder cling to the inside. Claire seals it all back up, crosses the road.

EXT. LANEWAY OFF STREET - DAY

An electric blue SUBARU sits with it's engine idling.

GLEN, 27, pushing through six foot, stands behind the car, arms draped over the open drivers door.

Claire waits a few feet away, like she's afraid to get any closer.

Leaning against the boot of the car, GAZ, 22, and KEITH, 27, giggle as they watch a video on a MOBILE PHONE.

Gaz chews gum loudly.

GAZ
You'd fuckin' throw it into that.

Glen glances back at them then turns his attention to Claire.

GLEN
This can't keep happening. I'm not a free clinic for the bleedin' depressed.

Claire looks at her feet, shuffles them.

CLAIRE
I can pay you tomorrow night.
Money goes into the account then.

GLEN
All of it? If I give you this,
you'll owe me for six, now.

CLAIRE
All of it.

Glen removes a little packet of WHITE POWDER from inside the car. He holds it out beside him -- like a master to a dog.

GLEN

Here, take it. Go on.

Claire goes to him like a good little pet.

Gaz passes the phone to Keith, swaggers up behind Claire.

Gaz gives her a good look up and down, runs his hands through her hair. His gum chewing speeds up, his grin widens.

GAZ

You'd be alright, if you put a bit of fuckin' effort in. You know, like used a mirror gettin' your clothes on.

Gaz drops his hand to Claire's ass, rubs her with his palm.

GAZ (CONT'D)

We should search her. Cunt like her always has the cash.

Claire whirls around, grabs his wrist, and bends it.

Gaz yelps, SMACKS Claire loudly across the face with his free hand. He's red faced, raging.

Glen steps in, throws a look at Gaz, pushes Claire away from the car.

GLEN

Leave her.

GAZ

What? You goin' soft? Fuck her!

CLAIRE

Fuck you, you little shite.

Glen turns to Claire, holds her by the shoulders --

GLEN

Tomorrow. Midnight. Here. Full payment, all of it now, or the aul' fella' will be pissed.

(softly)

We don't want that.

Claire, hair a mess, lip bleeding a little, nods in agreement. She puts the bag of powder away, composes herself.

She turns and walks from the lane. Glen watches her go.

EXT. SIDESTREET - THE WHITE HORSE LOUNGE - DAY

Claire looks down at her feet, lets out a long held breath. She steps through a puddle, pushes open the door to the lounge.

INT. THE WHITE HORSE LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

It's a shithole. And then some. A handful of men, all over fifty, turn and watch Claire enter through a drunken haze. A wasted life, each of them.

Claire takes a stool at the bar, signals the BARMAN.

CLAIRE
Whiskey. Straight.

BARMAN
Cash.

Claire slides a twenty towards him. She glances around the lounge, evaluates the clientele.

CLAIRE
Make it doubles. Two.

As the two glasses are put in front of her, JAMES, 60's, unshaven, unclean, slides up beside Claire. He slurs like the drunken pro he is.

JAMES
Nice to see you back.

CLAIRE
I'm sure it is.

The barman retreats. James rubs Claire's leg.

JAMES
You drink up there now.

Claire smiles weakly, shows off the split lip. James, after a moment, pulls back.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Maybe leave it for a day or two.
Be for the best.

He shuffles away. Claire knocks back a drink, gazes at the remaining one.

From behind --

(CONTINUED)

SEAN, 50's, burly and well drunk, puts a hand on Claire's shoulder.

SEAN

I don't mind a bit of blood, now.

Claire drains the second glass.

EXT. LANEWAY - BEHIND THE WHITE HORSE LOUNGE - DAY

Up against a wall, Sean shoves himself roughly into Claire. He grunts as he trusts.

Claire shudders with each impact, a vacant stare on her face -- her mind someplace else, two crumpled twenty Euro notes grasped in her fist.

INT. OFF LICENCE - DAY

Claire makes straight for the counter, cash in hand.

CLAIRE

Vodka, the big one, thanks.

BARRY, according to his name tag, looks down at the cash, the blood stain on Claire's sleeve and finally settles on her broken lip.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

And that bottle of red, there.

Claire points at a bottle on the top shelf. Barry gives it a quick glance.

Claire stares at Barry without blinking. Hurry up!

Barry quits playing detective. He retrieves the wine, scans it --

"49.95 EURO" is displayed on the cash register.

EXT. O'TOOLES PHARMACY - DAY

Sliding doors SHOOSH open. Claire bounds out onto the footpath, couple of paper bags in hand. She turns to face back inside the shop.

CLAIRE

No, no, thank you for all the fucking questions. If I needed plasters, I'd have asked for plasters. Morons!

She strides away as a lab coated PHARMACIST peers around the open door after her.

INT. BUS - EVENING

The window offers Claire's head an uncomfortable cushion as she stares out at an uninterested world.

Across the aisle, a MOTHER and DAUGHTER talk animatedly to each other. The little girl glances at Claire, catches her eye and smiles.

Claire smiles back, but the split lip sticks out like a wart on a nose. The girl looks away quickly.

Claire returns to the world out the window. Embarrassed.

INT. BOLTON HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire stands in a large georgian hall, shuffles off her coat. She drapes it over the banisters.

The kitchen is visible -- a young girl, in a school uniform, lifts a dish from the oven.

KEIRA BOLTON, 15, sets the dish down on the counter.

KEIRA
Hot! Hot! Shite!

Claire's footsteps almost sneak up on Keira. *Almost.* Keira feigns indifference.

INT. KITCHEN

KEIRA
(without turning)
You want something to eat?

Claire hovers in the doorway --

CLAIRE
No.

KEIRA
You high?

CLAIRE
No.

KEIRA
Drunk.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Not yet.

KEIRA

Get a job?

That hurt.

CLAIRE

Wasn't looking. I'd a session.

Keira looks Claire up and down, eyeballs the brown paper bag full of drink.

Without missing a beat --

KEIRA

What's with the love bite?
Your lip?

Claire glances down, touches her lip.

CLAIRE

Nothing.

Keira stares at Claire, dumps a pile of food onto a plate and moves to the table. As she sits --

KEIRA

My exam results need to be signed.

CLAIRE

By me?

Keira moves food around with her fork.

KEIRA

Yeah, you. I don't think mum and dad are going to do it.

CLAIRE

Right.

KEIRA

And you need to do a shop. Stuff doesn't magically appear in the presses anymore.

CLAIRE

I'm doing my best.

KEIRA

Course you are.

Claire clenches her fists, controls her breathing.

(CONTINUED)

KEIRA (CONT'D)

Go fix your face, you're a state.

Claire turns from the door. Keira waits a moment, picks up her exam results, reads, and takes a bite of food.

INT. HALLWAY

Claire walks away, picks up the mail from the hall table and climbs the stairs.

INT. BATHROOM

Claire pours vodka onto a cotton pad, cautiously dabs it on her swollen lip, presses hard, winces.

She repeats the action. The sink fills with a collection of the little cotton balls stained pink with blood.

Claire steadies herself on the sink, stares into the mirror -- The reflection isn't pretty.

Eyes, bloodshot, sunk back into her skull. She picks up the open bottle, toasts her reflection.

CLAIRE

Judge this.

Claire forces down a couple of fingers of vodka. She sits on the toilet, finds a container of pills in her pocket. She throws back a few tablets and washes them down with a few fingers more.

Claire flicks through the mail, singles out one envelope, slices it open with a finger.

She looks down at a -- FINAL PAST DUE NOTICE

A list of emergency treatments at ST LUKE'S MEDICAL CLINIC. A total of twelve thousand Euro. At the bottom is written --

"Action will be taken if payment is not made in twenty eight days from date of issue".

Claire drops it, and the unopened mail, on the floor, leans back, distant.

INT. BOLTON HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Claire, drunk, falls loudly into the kitchen. She slaps the light switch -- a pristine kitchen lights up.

(CONTINUED)

Keira's exam results wait on the table for Claire's signature. Claire picks them up, reads. She turns it the right way up and reads some more.

Claire searches through drawers, finds a CLICK-TOP PEN. Arms it. With a flourish, she signs her name, scrapes the nib across the table.

She peers at the sheet of paper; The pen didn't write.

She tries again, another invisible mark.

She frowns, flips the pen towards the WASTE BIN, misses it by a margin.

Claire looks down at the table, the note, the vodka. She takes the bottle by the neck and stumbles from the kitchen, leaving the light on.

INT. SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire trips into the room, knocks a picture, which sits proudly on a side table, to the floor. She reels around at the noise, gazes at the pictures on the carpet. She bends, scoops it up.

The frame slips on the shinny surface as she replaces it. She leaves the frame where it falls, waves it away.

Claire slides onto the couch, her feet knocking a pile of books and magazines from the coffee table to the carpet. She doesn't notice. Or care.

She takes a hit from the vodka, and sits gazing into space.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

Claire shuffles unsteadily up the last couple of steps and onto the landing.

One door is labelled with a little wooden plaque:

"Keira's Room".

Claire reaches for the handle, hesitates, turns away and stumbles along the hall.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Claire wakes to a nice healthy hangover. Her eyes barely open, her palms pressed against her forehead, pushing the pain away.

(CONTINUED)

She moans, roles onto her side, burying her face in her pillow.

Her eyes crawl open. She checks the bedside clock.

1:34 PM.

CLAIRE

Fuck.

Claire rolls slowly to her feet, the duvet tangled around her. She puts her head in her hands.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Claire throws water on her face, clocks herself in the mirror.

She brushes stray wet hairs back from her cheek, spits out minty saliva, and wipes her swollen lip carefully with the back of her hand.

She stares at her reflection -- It stares back, unconcerned.

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

A cushion lands on the sofa, Claire's hand wipes a stray hair from it.

The pictures and magazines are neatly replaced, the room tidy again.

Claire smiles softly, smug at her handiwork.

EXT. BOOTERSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Keira leans against the wall, flicks through tracks on her iPod.

LAURA, 15, blonde and dimpled, approaches, notices Keira's mood as she gets nearer.

LAURA

What's up?

Keira pops the ear buds out and lets them hang down, wrapped loosely around her hand.

KEIRA

Nothing. I'm fine.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

Sure.

(beat)

You need a lift home? My mum's picking me up.

KEIRA

Wasn't planning on going home.

LAURA

She still acting the shite?

KEIRA

Came home yesterday, had a split lip, swollen cheek. Said it was nothing.

(pause)

Only so many doors you can walk into.

Laura searches the footpath for what to say next.

LAURA

Tried saying something to her?

KEIRA

We fight.

LAURA

(nodding towards the school)

You could talk to one of the teachers? Ms. Kelly, she's nice. I like her glasses.

Keira looks up.

KEIRA

The red ones? They make her eyes look big. She'd only involve social anyway. Last time was a disaster. We'd lose the house now.

(beat)

And I like my room.

Keira plays with the ear phones a little.

KEIRA (CONT'D)

I'm fine, really. Maybe I just let it work its self out.

A SILVER BMW X5 shunts to a stop on the kerb, alloy SCRAPES concrete. The drivers window descends smoothly into the door.

AINE, bleached blonde hair, the wrong side of 50, but trying desperately to avoid the fact, waves to Laura.

(CONTINUED)

AINE

Laura honey!

Laura grins at Keira.

LAURA

Come on. We'll get something nice. Have her wrapped around the finger!

Keira smiles reluctantly, picks up her bag and follows Laura to the SUV.

INT. BOLTON HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Claire sits at the table, a plate of cold food in front of her.

From the hall, the sound of the front door opening, distant, muffled voices, girls laughing. Claire turns, sees Keira and Laura enter, leave the door open.

Keira, school jumper tied around her waist, drops her bag at the feet of the hall table. Laura's uniform is immaculate.

Claire watches Keira stop, sniff, and turn to the kitchen.

Claire gets up, steps into the hall.

INT. HALLWAY

CLAIRE

(looking at Laura)

Hi, you're eh...

Keira throws her eyes up to the ceiling--

KEIRA

Laura.

A flicker of annoyance across Claire's eyes.

CLAIRE

Hi Laura. You staying for dinner, or..?

Aine appears through the door, BMW keys dangle from an expensively manicured set of nails.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

Aine, flustered, fumbles with the keys as she extends a hand towards Claire.

AINE

Oh, hi, I'm Laura's mother. Oh, sorry, Aine. I'm Aine.

The woman is clearly uncomfortable.

CLAIRE

I guessed.

Handshakes exchanged, an awkward silence descends. Keira shuffles her feet, glances at Laura. The two teenagers giggle, stop suddenly.

Aine shoots first.

AINE

Hope you don't mind us dropping Keira home, she was a little worried about being alone, again... But it's good you're here. Now.

Aine trails off, Keira suddenly fascinated with her feet. Claire has stopped smiling, awkwardly or otherwise.

CLAIRE

It is my home.

Aine laughs nervously.

AINE

Yes, of course! Oh, you're at dinner? I hope you don't mind, Keira had ice-cream earlier? They twisted my arm!

Aine forces a smile.

CLAIRE

Course not. Who needs dinner?

Claire turns to Keira, shoots her a stare. Keira takes the hint.

KEIRA

(to Laura)
I'll see you tomorrow?

LAURA

Yeah.

Laura taps her mother on the arm. Claire moves to the kitchen. Without turning back;

CLAIRE

Thanks Aine.

Aine can only watch Claire go.

AINE

No problem. If you need anything,
just--

LAURA

(cutting her off)

Come on mum.

Laura leads her mother outside. Keira waves them out,
closes the front door, walks down to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

The table, set for two places, no alcohol in sight.
Keira hides her surprise.

KEIRA

No take-out? You cooked?

CLAIRE

Yeah. Washed and dried some of
your clothes too. Doesn't matter,
though, it's gone cold.

Keira glances at the basket filled with a mound of half
folded clothes.

KEIRA

We have a microwave.

Then, matter-of-factly --

KEIRA (CONT'D)

What happened? Are social calling
again?

CLAIRE

No. I wanted to make dinner.

KEIRA

Why?

CLAIRE

So we could sit down, eat, talk.

KEIRA

Really? Like be a family?

CLAIRE

(mocking Keira's tone)

Yes. Be a family. Be sisters.

(CONTINUED)

Keira sits.

KEIRA

Two sisters don't make a family.

It's enough to stop Claire in her tracks. Keira grimaces, waits --

CLAIRE

We're all that's left of one!
Jesus. Maybe we could try and
make it work, huh?

KEIRA

We've been trying.

Claire sits down at the table.

CLAIRE

We could try harder.

KEIRA

You could try harder.

CLAIRE

For fuck's sake, I am! What do
you think this is?

KEIRA

Not enough.

CLAIRE

Oh fuck off.

Keira storms from the kitchen. Claire waits a moment,
follows.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Hang on! Hang on!

INT. HALLWAY

Keira slows, stops at the bottom of the stairs.

CLAIRE

Wait -- I'm sorry.

Keira turns, eyes like daggers through her sister.
Claire breathes for a moment.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Do you want to do something?

KEIRA

Like?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
Bowling? Cinema, maybe? Late show?

KEIRA
It's a school night.

CLAIRE
I didn't worry about school nights
when I was fifteen.

KEIRA
You didn't worry about school.

CLAIRE
(shrugging)
We won't go.

KEIRA
No, we can go.

They hold eachothers gaze.

CLAIRE
Do you want to change?

KEIRA
I'll be down when I'm ready.

Claire watches Keira climb the stairs, slumps back
against the wall.

CLAIRE
Christ.

INT. SMALL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MICK, (50's), with a physique of someone ten years
younger, pops the top off a BOTTLE OF JAMESON and pours a
generous measure into an ice-filled crystal glass.

Mick turns, stares at Glen, sitting nervously on the
couch.

Glen wipes his palms together as Mick sits down beside
him. Mick takes a long drink, swirls the ice, cools the
glass.

MICK
I know you're fond of this girl.
Might be different if you were
seeing her.
(beat)
You're not seeing her though.

Glen shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

MICK (CONT'D)

Involved with a user. That's pure stupidity, that.

Mick takes another sip.

MICK (CONT'D)

You going to pay me what she owes?

Mick turns to Glen, to see his sons reaction. Glen drops his head.

MICK (CONT'D)

Didn't think so. You're not that fond of her.

(pause)

You're causing me a lot of fucking grief here, son. So is she, mind. Girl needs a lesson. You could do with one too.

(Another long sip)

You remember the trouble we had with those immigrant bastards last year?

Glen looks up to Mick, nods.

MICK (CONT'D)

You trusting one of them nearly got us all fucked.

(pointing at Glen)

You were lucky. Johnny Foreigner, not so much.

Glen watches his toes.

GLEN

Tomaz.

MICK

(sips)

Huh? What?

GLEN

His name, it was Tomaz.

MICK

There you go, getting to know them. It's like a bleedin' musical with you. Did you know his favourite colour, and all? Middle name? First fuck?

(pause)

You start to like them. No! They're not people. Not friends. And by jaysus, they better not be a casual ride.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICK (CONT'D)

Let those little things slide, you
lose control of the bigger ones.
She owes, she pays.

Glen goes to speak, hesitates, then;

GLEN

If she doesn't, it's just a
lesson, now?

Mick drains the glass.

MICK

Just a lesson, son. But a very
important one.

EXT. BOLTON HOUSE - NIGHT

Claire and Keira walk out onto the street, turn
momentarily yellow as they pass under a couple of street
lamps.

Gaz and Keith emerge from the shadows. Gaz watches them
disappear into the darkness. He turns, follows Keith
over to --

THE SUBARU

Inside, Glen, bathed in the glow of a mobile phone, turns
on the headlights. Gaz climbs in after Keith.

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

Gaz leans forward between the two front seats, a lopsided
smirk imbedded in his face.

GAZ

I doubt she's bringing her sister
to meet us, charming though we
are.

Glen drops his head slightly. He closes his phone, turns
the ignition and pulls out onto the road.

EXT. MALL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Claire and Keira move quickly through sliding glass doors
into --

INT. MALL

Groups of teenagers, late shoppers, heading home, or
hunting for more bargains, fill the cavernous space.

(CONTINUED)

The girls stop in front of an ATM. Claire withdraws a wad of fifties.

KEIRA

We OK cash-wise?

CLAIRE

We're fine.

THE ATM SCREEN Shows a balance of twenty seven Euro. Clearly not fine.

KEIRA

Just asking.

CLAIRE

We'll be fine for a long time. They left us enough. Don't need a job.

KEIRA

It'd give you something to do, 'stead of moping around, getting off your face.

CLAIRE

Look, that's just how I deal with it, ok? A job won't bring them back.

Keira looks away, fixes her gaze on the floor.

KEIRA

I miss them.

(pause)

I must have been, what, eight, the last time we did the cinema as a family?

Claire fidgets uneasily, putting the money away.

CLAIRE

Around that, yeah.

KEIRA

Dad was going to take me once, but something came up. He never said after.

CLAIRE

Well I'm taking you now, come on.

Claire moves away. Keira stays put.

KEIRA

I hear you at night. The drinking. The guys you bring home. You're killing yourself.

Claire turns to Keira.

CLAIRE

It's none of your business. Are you coming?

KEIRA

Not my business? I live there too! You think one meal and a bit of washing makes up for all the crap, the, the sickness you've brought into the house?

Some shoppers are taking an interest.

CLAIRE

Will you shut up? You're too young to understand.

Keira opens her mouth to speak, holds back. A realisation.

KEIRA

That's what he said. I was too young. Too young to understand.

CLAIRE

What?

KEIRA

Dad. He said that. You were the reason. He couldn't bring me to the cinema because of you.

CLAIRE

I don't remember.

KEIRA

Because you don't care! No one else matters. Just you.

Claire reaches out, Keira pulls away.

KEIRA (CONT'D)

It'd be better if you just died.

Keira runs at the sliding doors, leaving Claire alone, an audience of gawkers waiting for what happens next.

And what happens is totally unexpected.

(CONTINUED)

Gaz, Keith and Glen are in front of Claire, blocking a quick exit. Claire watches Keira bolt through the doors and out into the car park, gone.

GLEN

We had a deal.

CLAIRE

You followed me?

GLEN

We did, yeah. To make sure.

CLAIRE

I thought we had trust?

GLEN

We have a dealer addict relationship, nothing more.

The crowd are still keeping an eye. Claire glances around. Gaz moves back towards the exit, beside a newsagents, flicking through a postcard stand. Keith waits a few meters away.

CLAIRE

Can we take this elsewhere?

GLEN

Come on, Claire, the ATM is just there.

Claire's nostrils flare.

And then a salvation of sorts --

Two MOTORCYCLE COPS, full leathers, helmets, enter the mall, escorting TWO SECURITY couriers carrying money boxes. Another two COPS follow at the rear.

They stride right at Claire and Glen.

LEAD COP

S'cuse us, love.

The little police parade divides Claire and Glen. They watch each other as the men pass between them. As the last cop approaches, Claire makes a decision.

She runs.

Straight at the exit, no looking back.

It catches the three boys off guard. Glen looks wounded as Gaz slides up to him, grins gleefully.

GAZ

You know what this means now? We
get to wear our teachers hat.

Glen stares at the sliding doors as they close.

EXT. BUS STOP - MINUTES LATER

Keira, on the kerb, as a double decker pulls up. She
steps on before the doors fully open.

Claire sprints to catch it, jumping on at the last
second.