

**THE OUTRUN**

by

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Adapted from the book by Amy Liptrot

1 INT. DARK INDUSTRIAL SPACE - NIGHT 1

Abstract fragments of people dancing in the dark. Metallic wall structures are barely visible in the dark background.

Ecstatic bodies, sweating skin and bizarre postures, lit and captured in flashes reminiscent of lightning, appear much slower than stratospheric light in a club usually does.

The dancing bodies move weirdly.

2 INT. DARK INDUSTRIAL SPACE / UNDERWATER - NIGHT 2

In flashes it seems that the bodies are dancing underwater and that their hair and clothes are floating.

3 INT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT 3

Glimpses of grey animal skin in dark water passing by closely. There is no music, only the wind and a female voice.

N1 NERD LAYER / SELKIES N1

RONA (V.O.)

In Orkney it is Samir that people who have drowned turn into seals. We call them Selkies. At the highest tides they slip off their seal skins for the night, come to the shore as beautiful people and dance together naked in the moonlight.

**One of the dancing bodies we see is RONA (23). She seems to be somewhere far away - dancing as if it were an ecstatic act of meditation. Only with and for herself.**

RONA (V.O.)

The Selkies return to the sea at dawn unless they are seen by a person, then they are trapped in their human body and cannot return - and they will always remain discontent on land, because they belong to the sea.

4 EXT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / CLIFF BY STACK O'ROO - DAY 4

Top shot on dark waves crashing heavily against massive rocks. Extreme wide.

Rona's feet in wellies, on the edge of an extremely high cliff, dangling down above the violent waves. Smoking a cigarette, as if the drop beneath her were nothing.

2.

She looks at a sandstone monolith that stands alone close to the shore like a statue in the wild ocean (Stack O'Roo). There is an air of haunted nervousness about her.

5 EXT/INT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM - DAY

5

Rona cleans the barn while listening to rap music on her headphones. She disperses fresh straw with routine.

Lambs are being born. Rona helps deliver them. One is stuck in an amniotic sac that she opens. The newborn lambs and their mother are brought into a separate pen.

Healthy lambs get their bellies sanitized. Other healthy lambs get marked with a number. Rona does the work quietly together with a man in his 60s, her DAD ANDREW.

Rona finishes a cigarette, sheltering from the wind behind an old freezer.

6 EXT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM - LATER

6

Rona takes a few pictures with her phone. She looks at a weird goose. A group of chicken passes. A farm dog runs by and obeys Rona's commands.

Andrew is repairing an old tractor. She brings him a coffee.

7 EXT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM - NIGHT

7

Rona smokes a cigarette at night, the light of the caravan in the background. We hear loud music coming out of it.

A flashlight in the dark. Rona walks over a field at night. Many sheep appear in the light, their eyes eerily reflected by the light.

Rona finds an ewe with a newborn lamb.

8 EXT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM - DAY

8

She walks over a field towards the shore, carrying a dead lamb in her hand, throws it unemotionally into a big metal tank.

She stops at a cliff and lights another cigarette.

Extreme wide: with the massive cliff underneath her, Rona seems tiny.

**TITLE: THE OUTRUN**

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
3.

9 INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / LIVING ROOM - DAY 9

A well-kempt house in Kirkwall. Rona sits with her MUM ANNIE (57) in the living room. On the table an Orcadian newspaper with job offers.

ANNIE

How is dad? \*

RONA

Fine.

ANNIE

*Says that somebody mentioned weird Facebook posts. / I heard he's been putting his rants on Facebook again.*

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Rona shrugs, thinks he is doing well.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

*Asks how the lambing is going.*

RONA

*Answers that one more ewe is due, they made it all on time before she leaves.*

Annie wants to say something more, but leaves it. Rona realizes that.

ANNIE

*I went for a walk at the beach yesterday... There were three dead fulmars and a guillemot washed up on the strand line today. It must have been the storm.*

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Rona listens without showing too much interest. On the walls, old family pictures of Rona and her parents on the farm.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

*(pointing at the newspaper)*

*There were a few jobs advertised this week.*

RONA

*Snaps back that she does have a life to get back to.*

ANNIE

*(calmly)*

*Of course. I know. Adds that she will continue to pray for... (I'll always be puraying for you.)*

\*  
\*

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
4.

RONA  
(interrupts)  
Mum, don't!

Rona stops herself.

10 INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIE PLACE / LITTLE ROOM - DAY 10

An arm chair has been turned into a makeshift bed. Rona is packing her belongings into a big backpack. There is a drawing pinned on the wall of a dog with a burning tail. She carefully takes it off and puts it in a large magazine for protection.

When finished, Rona sits on her bed, motionless. She looks at a framed Christian fish symbol. *Annie calls from downstairs asking if she wants tea.*

RONA  
Sure, later. I'm packing!

She isn't. We hear Annie watching TV. Rona stays seated, nervously clenching her hands.

11 EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / BAR - NIGHT 11

Rona walks through Kirkwall at night. She stops in front of a bar, watching people enjoying themselves. Then she moves on.

JULIE  
Rona? Hi!

Rona turns around. JULIE (28), heavy Orcadian accent, approaches her, joined by a man whom she introduces as IVAN (32).

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Long time no see! How long are you  
home for? \*

RONA  
Yeah, I've just been up for three  
weeks. Helping dad with lambing. \*

JULIE  
Good to see you.

RONA  
Good to see you too.

Rona seems insecure, has trouble holding eye contact. She takes a can of Coca Cola out of her jacket.

JULIE  
*Asks about Rona's life in London.*

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
5.

RONA  
*Says it's all going well. Nothing special.*

IVAN  
*Is curious what she is doing?*

RONA  
*Mentions a PHD but that she is taking a break.*

Rona's answers feel a bit nebulous and short.

IVAN  
*How long since you lived here?*

RONA  
*Ten years.*

IVAN  
*Did it change a lot?*

RONA  
*(slightly dismissive)*  
*Not at all.*

IVAN  
*(smiles)*  
*Says he can imagine. He's been in Orkney for 5 years - had never imagined he'd stay, but he really loves it here.*

JULIE  
*That's because you met me here.*

A moment of silence. Rona forces herself to laugh.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
*Who would have thought I end up with a French birdyman.*

They laugh.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
*Hey, we're going out to Papay on Monday? Have you ever been? We're flying up then going over to the Holm of Papay on a peedie boat. A work trip. To do a seabird count. It should be a laugh. Do you fancy coming?*

Rona shakes her head.

RONA  
*Says that she is leaving tomorrow morning.*

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
6.

JULIE  
(points to the bar)  
*Asks if they should grab a farewell drink?*

RONA  
*Says that she unfortunately still needs to pack.*

JULIE  
*Come on, it'll be fine.*

RONA  
*Says that she really has to prepare for tomorrow's journey.*

JULIE  
*Look at us! When did we get so grown up? Tells Ivan about when they used to hang out as a large group of kids at Skara Brae, scaring away tourists. (We used to sneak into the hoooses at Skara Brae after the tourists had gone, get pished in there.)*

RONA  
*Or take mushrooms.*

They all laugh. Rona finishes her coke.

JULIE  
(now serious)  
*Come again soon. Let me know next time before you come home.*

As they enter the bar, Rona looks at them for a moment before she turns away and leaves. She clenches the can. There is a weird low rumble that we hear.

N2 NERD LAYER / HOME THE ORKNEY ISLANDS

N2

**We see an animated map.**

**Archive of moving images of Orkney maps.**

RONA (V.O.)  
Home. Home is off the north coast of Scotland, at 59 degrees north, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the North Sea. Orkney is a group of around 70 islands, of which 20 are inhabited. Its location which now seems remote made it once - when people used to travel on the water - a centre of ancient civilization.

We see documentary footage of Orkney. Touristic sites, but also scenes from everyday life. Kids playing on a playground.

RONA (V.O.)

The neolithic village of Skara Brae or the stone circle The Ring of Brodgar are 5,000 years old, older than Stonehenge or the Egyptian pyramids.

We see in an animated film the old fairytale.

RONA (V.O.)

The origin of the isles is told in the legend...

ORCADIAN BOY (V.O.)

*...tells the story of when a huge sea monster - the Mester Muckle Stoormworm - was defeated by young layabout Assipattle, killed by a burning peat, its body formed Iceland and its teeth fell out and formed the Orkney Islands.*

We see a young boy in an Orcadian school class telling the story.

RONA (V.O.)

Some say that the Stoormworm's liver is still burning in the volcanoes of Iceland and its presence stays alive in the 'tremors', low rumbles felt by some people in Orkney.

A blonde kid Rona, around 8 years old, with her back towards the camera, facing the ocean. She turns towards us and looks into the camera.

We hear the weird low rumble again that we have heard before, this time it sounds more like a crackling fire.

12

EXT/INT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / CARAVAN - DAY

12

Rona knocks on the door of an old caravan, parked close to the main house. We hear loud music playing.

RONA

Dad?

No answer. She knocks louder, then enters.

The place looks a bit messy, the bed unmade. Wine and beer bottles standing around. A full ashtray. Letters, paperwork.

One window is broken and makeshift repaired with cardboard.

In between we see old farming and family pictures and lots of boxes, full with eggs. CDs, a radio and old vinyl LPs. The CD player is on.

A cluttered little home but with a stunning view towards the ocean.

13

EXT/INT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / BARN - CONTINUOUS

13

She searches all over the farm and finally finds him up high in the air, repairing an old vehicle that is half ship, half caravan.

RONA

Hey Dad, I wanted to say good-bye.  
I'm gonna head off this afternoon.

ANDREW

Already? Hold on. I want to show  
you something.

Rona watches him elegantly clambering down the ladder.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

*Asks if she has ever heard about  
ambergris?*

She hasn't.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

*Says that he hadn't either. Until  
today when he learned that Geordie  
from the Breck farm, his wife Annie  
found ambergris on the beach and  
got a huge amount of money for it.  
Sperm whales puke it up and it's  
worth as much as gold... you remember  
that old lump that we found lying  
around in the old farmhouse?*

Rona seems confused.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

*Don't look at me like that. Google  
it, come on!*

14

INT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / CARAVAN - CONTINUOUS

14

The weird lump now lies on the table of the caravan, it looks like a giant bowl of rotten beeswax. Rona and her dad are fascinated by this thing.

It feels like one of the Nerdlayers is coming to life between them:

RONA

(reads out on her phone online descriptions and definitions of ambergris)

"Ambergris is a rare and highly valuable substance produced in the stomach of sperm whales, either vomited or excreted and found floating on the sea or washed up on the shore"

Adds that it is used for perfume, has a bad smell, a sticky quality and is highly flammable. It can sell for about 28 dollars a gram!

\*  
\*

Andrew weighs ambergris in his hand.

\*

ANDREW

estimates its about 10 pounds, the weight of a newborn lamb, so about 4.5 kilos, 4500g. At £25 a gram, that's over £100,000.

We could buy a brand new tractor. A flash one.

They put needles in it and burn little pieces, to see if it melts. Then they smell it. It doesn't quite fit all the characteristics, but some.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Suggests they send it to a laboratory because this seemingly worthless lump might be worth 100,000 pounds. We could buy a new tractor!

Both agree it's worth a shot. Rona can't help but get excited with him.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(suddenly very soft)

Suggests that she should stay longer. After lambing, he could use help with the dyking. Some sections of dyke have fallen down up on the outrun.

Rona shakes her head.

RONA

Says she's been here too long already. She asks if he could lend her some money.

ANDREW

Says that it's tight right now. Has she asked mum?

Rona nods.

ANDREW (CONT'D)  
She wants to protect you.

RONA  
*Says that mum is already praying  
every day for her, isn't that  
enough?*

Andrew laughs. We feel that there is a deep connection between the two, but there is also an elephant in the room. It's her cue to go.

Rona gives him a hug and while leaving:

RONA (CONT'D)  
*Tells him to fix the windows or the  
next gale will blow them all out.*

15 EXT. ORKNEY STROMNESS / HARBOUR / FERRY - DAY 15

Stromness harbour. Bleak and Industrial. Rona boards the large ferry that goes South with her big backpack.

16 INT. ORKNEY STROMNESS / HARBOUR / FERRY - CONTINUOUS 16

Rona walks on the ferry with many other passengers, she looks for a seat but can't find the right spot, she enters the eating area but turns around, she passes a bar and glances at the bottles. The sound of the ferry becomes louder and louder and turns into an aggressive rumble.

She goes to the outdoor area where a helicopter could land. The sound is almost unbearable.

Cut to: Rona runs along the walkway and leaves the ferry.

17 EXT. ORKNEY STROMNESS / STREET AT HARBOUR - CONTINUOUS 17

Rona smokes a cigarette while watching the ferry depart.

She clicks through her phone, scrolls through contacts.

RONA  
*Calls somebody in London, saying  
that she couldn't come back because  
she still has to help her dad with  
dyking. Apparently he really needs  
her here. It's very urgent. She  
promises she'll get her things out  
of his place as soon as she can.  
Slightly begging.*

The person on the other end of the line seems to get upset.

RONA (CONT'D)  
Well. Throw it all away then.

She hangs up.

Around her people are moving, but Rona is still. A dark and grey place. She looks up, a plain grey sky. She stares at the clouds, then she takes a photo of the sky with her phone.

N3 NERD LAYER / CLOUDS

N3

**Over the shot of the plain grey sky.**

RONA (V.O.)  
Stratus Nebulosus. The grey featureless layer of clouds that often covers the sky. It is the lowest-forming type of cloud and when present at ground level is called fog or mist.

**Cut to a different sky.**

RONA (V.O.)  
Cumulonimbus, the towering rainclouds that bring a storm.

**It becomes a montage of clouds and cloud definitions.**

RONA (V.O.)  
Nimbostratus, the thick grey layers that mean rain. Cumulus. The low fluffy clouds of settled weather. Cirrus. The high wispy cloud. Cirrostratus. The highest veils, hardly there at all. A noctilucent, or night shining cloud. Some people call it Space Cloud. The highest and rarest cloud of all, made of ice crystals rather than water droplets, visible only occasionally in the weeks around midsummer and the hours around midnight.

**Each shot, each cloud gets brighter and brighter. We end on a sunny sky with no clouds at all.**

18 EXT. LONDON / CANAL NEXT TO HOUSE BOATS - 7 YEARS EARLIER 18

A little compass comes into the frame and gets turned so it points north.

A warm and sunny afternoon. Young people chill in groups all over the park.

A younger Rona lies in the grass, her hair dyed in vibrant light blue, holding the little compass she wears around her neck up towards the sky.

Her friend GLORIA (23), a dark haired girl with piercing blue eyes and a birthday crown on her head, lies next to her and hands her a joint.

GLORIA  
*Wants to know what she's doing.*

RONA  
Checking where home is.

She turns the compass showing north. Rona hands the joint over to LUKAS (25), a friend who lies on the other side of her.

GLORIA/LUKAS/RONA  
*Talk light and drunk fun nonsense.*

Poppers are being handed around.

More people arrive with drinks, they are friends of Gloria - joining because it is Gloria's birthday.

Gloria introduces the new group to Rona and Lukas. A young handsome man, DAYNIN (24) and Rona shake hands. They smile at each other for a second longer than all others, he likes her blue hair. Rona is cheering at the arrival of alcohol. She hands out beer bottles to everyone.

19 EXT. LONDON / STREETS AT CANAL - DUSK

19

Sunset. Fast and drunk, the group rides their bikes through Hackney.

Rona rides a bike with Gloria on the back, birthday balloons tied to it. Rona is the loudest and fastest, not really in control of the bike. Gloria is too drunk to really care.

RONA  
*Yells at Daynin to hurry up a bit.*

Daynin is on a bike next to them, a friend of his on the back. He tries to catch up.

She puts out her hand to him and Gloria is yelling *that she is crazy and they will all die.* Daynin takes Rona's hand.

20 INT. LONDON / INDUSTRIAL CLUB / TOILET - NIGHT

20

In a toilet booth of a nightclub, Rona and Gloria are dabbing MDMA. Lukas and Daynin are in the booth aswell.

Rona hugs Gloria, super close.

RONA

*Tells Gloria how very fucking special she is and how thankful she is that Gloria's parents had sex and that she was born because of that. What a crazy coincidence that this one sperm and this one egg create this one human being.*

GLORIA

*Tells Rona that she is the weirdest and most amazing woman she has ever met.*

LUKAS

*Adds that he loves them both. Starts improvising a poem that veers off course.*

Lukas touches Rona's blue hair and says how much he loves it. He wants Daynin to touch it too, but before Daynin does that, Rona starts singing Happy Birthday. She opens the toilet booth and gets the whole ladies' bathroom to sing along.

RONA

Come on, everybody!

She climbs onto the toilet, Daynin lifts her up, looking into the booth next to them. A woman is vomiting, another one holding her hair.

RONA (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry.

Rona hides a laugh and jumps back. Daynin catches her, holds her tight a moment too long. She enjoys the closeness.

21

EXT. LONDON / INDUSTRIAL CLUB / DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

21

Rona and Gloria are dancing on a cube in the middle of a weird industrial club (reminds of scene 1), above the crowd in full ecstasy. A constantly turning lighthouse light is in the middle of the space.

Rona clings on to Gloria, has trouble standing straight. They are laughing their heads off.

Rona lies down on the cube, her head and legs over the booth. She looks (upside down) into the crowd. Daynin is right in front of her, smiling. They look at each other for a moment.

The sound disappears, we hear the slightest sound of waves - like in the beginning when we saw the people dancing in the dark. For a second it seems that she is underwater.

She smiles at him. He can't help but giving her a tender kiss on the lips. An electrical shock for both. They look at each other in a different way now.

Their hands touch gently. Their fingers entangle. And they kiss again.

Suddenly Rona gets up, wants to leave the club. She runs up some stairs. Daynin tries to hold her back.

DAYNIN

Sorry, I just couldn't help it.

RONA

I just have to go to the sea.

DAYNIN

Which sea?

RONA

(whispering in his ear)

It's north.

And off she goes.

22

EXT. LONDON / VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAWN

22

The sun is rising. Electrified, Rona walks through London. This is HER night. Through her headphones we hear electronic music. The city is waking up.

A montage: Rona passes a canal with house boats and crosses a bridge. A drunk guy with a massive hat is sleeping in a bus station.

She walks past shops opening at the Columbia Road Flower Market. She takes a flower and waves with it to the flower shop owner who waves back.

23

EXT/INT. LONDON / LIQUOR STORE & PARK - DAY

23

She buys booze at the liquor store, knows the liquor shop owner and cracks a joke with him.

SHOP OWNER

*Invites her for a smoke.*

RONA

Not today, mate. I gotta go.

She leaves the liquor store and walks through a park with a big kids playground. Behind it a big estate is visible. She takes a quick whirl round the carousel with her beer before she heads on.

24 EXT/INT. LONDON / RONAS FLAT - DAY

24

Rona quickly climbs up the stairs, walks along an outside balcony.

She stumbles into her flat, stores some bottles of beer in the fridge. Then she goes outside and sits on the railing of an outside balcony. Dropping depth and a sea of city beneath her.

She lights a cigarette. Happy.

N4 NERD LAYER / ORKNEY & LONDON

N4

**We see London merged with Orkney on aural and visual level.**

**Sheep on grass with young folks on London Fields. Full city streets with quiet Orkney roads. Sea birds with city birds. Tower Blocks with cliff faces. Warning lights on tall buildings with lighthouses. The Millenium Dome with the Ring of Brodgar. The Tower of London with Scara Brae.**

RONA (V.O.)

In Hackney, thousands of people live in the same area of an average farm on Orkney - 150 acres.

**All kinds of different Hackney communities portrayed against different, but all white Orkney families.**

**The sound of both worlds merge until it becomes a dark and low rumble.**

RONA (V.O.)

Some say the tremors come from experiments of testing ammunition over on the military site on Scotland Mainland. Others say they are the sonic boom of jets. Another common theory is that there are waves caught in the caves below the land.

25 EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / STREETS - DUSK

25

We see Rona walking through grey Kirkwall. Alone. With her large backpack. Lighting a cigarette and continuing her walk.

She passes narrow streets and a park with lots of rooks yelling from the trees.

26 EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE - NIGHT

26

All in a quiet wide shot:

Rona arrives at her mum's house, lights are on inside and she reluctantly rings the bell. ANNIE opens the door of a round wintergarden and hugs Rona.

Rona tries to get out of the embrace and enters the house.

27 INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / CAFE POMONA - DAY

27

Rona sits in a café in Kirkwall. Everything is red and blue. Little flags with Union Jacks are on the tables. A few older people are having afternoon tea.

In her London-influenced fashion and with her laptop Rona doesn't quite fit in. An empty can gets exchanged for a new can of Coca Cola.

On the screen: in her Email inbox, job rejection after job rejection. She closes her laptop and clenches her hands nervously.

Next to her she sees a mother and a son having an argument in sign language.

Rona checks her phone. On social media she sees Gloria with her younger sister. A happy life with plenty of exciting activities. Rona looks at it for a while.

Then she looks at Daynin's profile. He is in the States, somewhere. She puts it away.

28 EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / CAFE POMONA - DAY

28

Rona goes outside to smoke a cigarette. Another grey street, not much going on. A couple passes with two ferrets on a leash.

She tries to light it, but her lighter doesn't work. She stops a YOUNG ORCADIAN MAN (24), a few years younger than her, and *asks him for a lighter*.

YOUNG MAN

Says that he doesn't smoke, sorry.

RONA

Not many smokers around anymore...

He smiles. *They chat a bit.*

YOUNG MAN

*Asks if she is visiting?*

RONA

*Answers that she is from here actually.*

YOUNG MAN  
*Asks which school she went to.  
Because she somehow looks familiar.*

*Turns out they went to the same school - Stromness Academy - what a coincidence, or actually not in Orkney. There is a warmth about him. The young man looks at her furry retro hat.* \*

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
*Interesting hat.*

RONA  
*Cool, innit?*

RONA (CONT'D)  
*Asks if he wants to join her for a cup of tea.*

YOUNG MAN  
*Says that unfortunately he needs to be somewhere. Another time, he'd love to.*

RONA  
*Rona says she understands.*

The wind blows and she shivers, carefully coming closer to him.

RONA (CONT'D)  
*(while shaking)*  
*Says how much she hates it here and that she can't wait to get back to London. But London can be tough to be honest.*

He seems a little hesitant to leave.

RONA (CONT'D)  
*Mentioned that she is staying with her mum and that it makes her feel like a teenager which is pretty horrible.*

He smiles insecure. She tries the lighter again, after several attempts - it suddenly does work. He helps her with his hands covering the lighter from the wind. Her fingers touch his fingers.

RONA (CONT'D)  
*What are you up to today?*

YOUNG MAN  
*Ah not much. I have to get going.  
My friends are waiting.*

RONA  
*Yeah sure, no problem.*

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
18.

YOUNG MAN  
Nice to meet you.

RONA  
You too.

She plays it cool. After he is gone, Rona stays alone, staring at the ground.

28A INT. ORKNEY / LITTLE PLANE - DAY

28A

Rona sits in a tiny plane with Ivan and Julie, who are very excited that Rona is joining them. There are only six people on the plane.

The pilot turns around and *gives the safety instruction and that they are going to Papay.*

\*  
\*

As they fly, below them we see Orkney islands passing by.

28B EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / AIRPORT - DAY

28B

The tiny plane lands on an airfield with just one lane. They exit the plane and are greeted by a few locals, among them is ELENA (50's), the local RSPB volunteer.

29 EXT. ORKNEY HOLM OF PAPAY / MOVING BOAT - DAY

29

A small boat in full motion on the water.

Rona, Julie and Ivan are being brought over to the holm of Papay by fisherman SIMON (50s). A ram is riding with them in the boat.

SIMON

*Tells her about the Holmie Sheep who live over on the Holm and eat seaweed. They're left to themselves most of time apart from a few times in the year like when they bring a ram over or go to shear them. He just got this very expensive top ram from mainland Scotland to improve his flock. It is supposed to be the ram of rams.*

Rona looks curiously at the ram who unimpressed just stares ahead.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
Your first time visiting Orkney?

RONA  
I'm from here, actually.

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
19.

He looks surprised.

RONA (CONT'D)  
I live in London now.

Now switching to an Orcadian accent, she says:

RONA (CONT'D)  
(*in slang words*)  
My folks are incomers.

SIMON  
Ferryloopers!

Rone smiles.

RONA  
In London, I'm from Orkney, in  
Orkney, I'm fae sooth.

SIMON  
*Says that he has never left Orkney.  
Oh no, he remembers, actually he  
went once to Shetland to visit his  
aunt. You know the story that a  
giant who came walking from Denmark  
left something in the sea when he  
had to take a 'bathroom break' on  
the way - and that is why Shetland  
is historically supposed to have  
been called "Shitland"?*

They laugh.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
No no.  
(he smirks)  
Shetlanders are quite nice.

30

EXT. ORKNEY HOLM OF PAPAY - CONTINUOUS

30

The group gets off the boat. Simon and his ram walk along the shore towards some sheep.

Rona follows Julie & Ivan up to a grassy hill with a chimney.

She watches them carefully plotting and counting the number of birds, nests and chicks on the cliff next to the hill.

JULIE  
Says that everybody likes the puffins, but she really likes the tysties / black guillemots because of their independence.

RONA  
Asks when Julie got into birds?

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
20.

JULIE

says she's always liked birds, grew up with them, knew their names... but joining the RSPB she's realised how much she truly cares and has seen how she can make it a career. Each season I realise how much more I've got to learn. I'm glad you decided to stay a bit longer. You know, somebody just let us down for a summer job, the nightshift corncrake survey.

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RONA

*Says that she really has to get back to London soon.*

Rona walks along the island, passes a big geo and watches the nesting birds for a bit.

\*

30A EXT/INT. ORKNEY HOLM OF PAPAY / TOMB - DAY

30A

She enters the grassy hill via an entrance on the top and clambers down an old ladder.

She is suddenly in a old chambered cairn, looking at the old walls with the light of her lighter. Taking in the slightly eerie space.

31 EXT. ORKNEY HOLM OF PAPAY - DAY

31

Rona walks along the shore and pees near the beach.

Down in the water she sees a seal pup and her mum looking at her.

RONA

PERVERTS!

(more to herself)

My piss is clean, don't worry.

As she continues her walk, the pup is still looking at her.

Even when she goes further away, the pup doesn't turn away. It's slightly eerie.

32 EXT. ORKNEY HOLM OF PAPAY - CONTINUOUS

32

Rona walks to the end of the little island.

All of a sudden, a bird swoops just inches from her head. Then another one. A whole group of Artic Terns is rising and warning Rona to go away. The sound of their wings and squeaks is getting very loud.

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
21.

RONA  
Fuck off, dinosaurs.

Annoyed, she continues to walks further until she gives in and turns back. The camera tilts up and sees hundreds of little upset birds flying and buzzing through the sky.

N5 NERD LAYER / BIRDS OF ORKNEY

N5

RONA (V.O.)  
'pickie ternos' or arctic terns vigorously defend their nest by swooping and divebombing  
'bonxies' or great skuas will also divebomb humans who come close in breeding season  
'Mallimacks' or fulmars will protect their nests and chicks by spitting a foul smelling oil  
'Teeick' is the local name for lapwings, who will feign injury to divert attention from their young.

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There are many hundred times more birds than people on Orkney, cliff-nesting seabirds, farmland birds, waders, songbirds, ducks and geese, birds of prey. Numbers of birds have decreased alarmingly in the last 30 years. The seabird cliffs are much more sparsely populated.

Kids in school learn the Orcadian dialect names.

\*

**We see interviews with kids imitating bird song and telling the names of birds they know. They also describe characteristics of birds like the ones that attack you.**

**We see Rona walking through a museum and passing by an area with many stuffed birds.**

RONA (V.O.)  
The last great auk in the UK was killed in 1813 on the island of Papa Westray. It was a bird that was unable to fly. Some primary schools put on plays about the killing of the last great auk. "I always hoped to be the shooter, but I never was."

**We see little kids on a Primary school stage, one is Young Rona in a giant bird costume. Another one "shoots" her and "bird kid" Rona falls to the ground.**

33

EXT. LONDON / PUB - NIGHT

33

From a perspective of drunken memory.

Adult Rona with blonde hair and eyebrows dyed purple, falls to the ground on a night street in London.

She gets up, tries to get in a fight with the bouncer. She really goes in with all the force she has, but can barely hold herself up straight.

He shoves her away and shuts the door.

RONA

*Curses and yells at him  
aggressively.*

Then she collects her stuff.

34

EXT. LONDON / STREET OUTSIDE PUB - CONTINUOUS

34

Rona stumbles along the street outside the pub, holding her purse tight to her chest while leaving a voicemail to Daynin that she is on the way, but got lost and can't find his house.

A car stops next to her.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

You need a ride?

RONA

*Asks if he knows where Daynin  
lives.*

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Yes, get in. I'll take you there.

RONA

Thank you.

Rona gets in the car.

35

INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The bible group, a few women from ANNIE's Born Again church community has come over for dinner, females of very different ages. The atmosphere is warm and loving.

They are sitting all together at the table, just having finished a plate of Mince and Tatties. Rona didn't finish hers.

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 1

*Encourages Rona to finish her  
plate.*

RONA

*She is not very hungry today.*

Rona is forcing a smile. She's done her hair, is wearing a colorful sweater and clearly stands out from the group with a different style of fashion.

They end the meal with a little grace. *One lady (Bible Group Member 1) says it out loud.* Rona looks around, not praying along. A young girl, few years younger than Rona, smiles at her.

All get up and start bringing the dishes to the kitchen.

*A few of the older women comment on how great it is that she is back helping her father with lambing.* We can feel that some have known Rona since she was very small.

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 2

*Invites Rona to the service on Sundays. That Rona used to love it when she was small. You used to be singing at the front of the service when you were little. I remember you leading a prayer.*

Rona shares an alarmed look with Annie.

RONA

*Says she'll think about it.*

YOUNG WOMAN

*Says that they do really lovely group meetings every Thursday for people who need a little support.*

It takes a moment for Rona to understand what she means.

RONA

*I'm fine. Thank you.*

Annie seems embarrassed and gets up to fetch something from the kitchen.

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 1

*Offers that she could also do voluntary work in the community until she has a job that actually earns some money.*

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 2

*You know, it could be good to keep you busy. Eventually god will get through to you. That is why you are here. Your mum was praying for you every day over the last ten years..*

RONA

(sharp)

Really? You think so. That's why I  
am here?

Something in Rona's demeanor hardens up and the woman gets a little insecure.

Rona starts hearing the tremors while the woman speaks.

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 3

*Mentions that her mum had told them  
that her studies were on hold and  
that she is now looking into  
different fields.*

RONA

(softer)

*Says that she actually got a work  
offer from the RSPB and that might  
earn her some money over the  
summer. It could work well with her  
studies.*

Annie looks up very surprised, but seems happy about the news. Rona realizes that and hardens immediately.

RONA (CONT'D)

*Adds that she is still thinking  
about it, because the job doesn't  
sound very interesting.*

\*  
\*

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 1  
That matches your studies well.

\*

RONA

Actually, not quite.

\*

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 3

*Emphasizes what a great step that  
would be to have something to do.  
Then Rona will do so much better.*

\*

RONA

I am doing really great actually.

\*

36

EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Rona storms out of the house to get some air. She stands in the backyard of the house, finally a moment of peace. She lights a cigarette. Annie follows her.

ANNIE

Rona, please don't...

Rona takes out a coke of her jacket and drinks it.

RONA  
Don't - what?

Annie takes in the coke. Relieved.

ANNIE  
Nothing.

RONA  
I'm sober, mum!

ANNIE  
(holds her guards up)  
I know.

RONA  
It's for real this time! 4 1/2  
months already. What else do you  
want? You clearly have no faith in  
me at all.

Annie starts feeling guilty.

ANNIE  
I'm sorry. I believe you. Want to  
come back in?

RONA  
I'll be back in a bit. Please don't  
start reading the bible without me.

Annie doesn't know what to reply and leaves with mixed  
feelings.

Rona sees through the window, Annie entering the living room.  
They talk quietly while looking towards her. But they can't  
see her, because it's dark where she is.

RONA (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
Fuck you all, happy clappers...

Rona drinks her coke and smokes her cigarette. From the house  
we now hear joyful religious singing.

Heavily bruised and tired, Rona (with purple eyebrows) sits  
in front of a young female doctor. She seems defeated, but  
determined.

RONA  
I need a referral for a rehab.  
Residential. You have to lock me  
up... Please.

The doctor takes her in, concerned.

DOCTOR

OK. Well. It might take a while until a place is free. There are also other ones...

RONA

Whatever starts as soon as possible. Please.

She looks her in the eyes, but can't hold it for long. She starts welling up.

DOCTOR

How long would you say you've been drinking too much?

RONA

Ten years. Or more. And more each year.

DOCTOR

It's good that you are here. A lot of people don't get this far.

*The doctor starts filling out a questionnaire.*

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Your age?

RONA

29

DOCTOR

Occupation?

RONA

Unemployed.

DOCTOR

Any medical family histories of cancer?

RONA

No.

DOCTOR

Diabetes?

RONA

No.

DOCTOR

Mental illness?

Silence.

N6 NERD LAYER / DNA

N6

We see archive footage of DNA explained for kids, how it consists of material from each parent. The footage mentions that an embryo's cells will stay in a mother's body for around 18 years.

RONA (V.O.)

Homo sapiens have about 50 per cent the same DNA as plants - a banana, a cucumber or seaweed. 60 per cent as jellyfish.

We see pictures of jellyfish floating and we hang on these images for a while. A jellyfish montage starts.

RONA (V.O.)

The names of jellyfish found around UK coasts include: blue, barrel, compass, by-the-wind-sailor, moon, lion's mane, mauve, portuguese man o'war.

The most common type of jellyfish around Orkney are Moon jellyfish, Aurelia aurita, pinkish and transparent with blue rings inside - their reproductive organs. They don't sting but leave a mild envenomation. Jellyfish are only capable of upwards independent movement so are moved horizontally by currents and tides.

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\*

Young Rona in her childhood, finds jellyfish on the beach and brings them back into the water.

RONA (V.O.)

Mass 'strandings' of jellyfish happen when currents wash a swarm into shore, often in spring.

We see her walking on the beach with her parents when they were still together.

We see fragments and glimpses of the day Rona was born.

A younger Andrew is being transported in a straitjacket in a wheelchair. A young Annie is brought with the newborn baby to the helicopter field.

RONA (V.O.)

If you are a danger to yourself or others you can be sectioned under the mental health act. Restrained and sedated. The nearest psychiatric ward is on the Scottish mainland in Aberdeen.

(MORE)

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)

28.

RONA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If you go bonkers on Orkney, they  
fly you out.

We see newborn Rona being put on Andrew's lap, but he can't hold her as his hands are tied in a straitjacket.

We see young Rona (9 years old) with her dad on a tractor.

38 EXT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM - DAY

38

Rona and her dad sit squeezed next to each other on the old tractor, as they drive over the Outrun. The sky is dark blue, the sea crashes roughly below them and a heavy wind is blowing.

They pass a long part of an old stone wall, the dyke.

At a point where the wall has fallen down and has slowly started to be rebuilt, they stop.

39 EXT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / DYKE - DAY

39

Rona and Andrew work together. Rona spreads the stones out on the ground and he selects the ones to build with. It is hard work and takes a lot of time.

When Rona takes a cigarette break, Andrew smokes one too and gives her some tea that he brought in a thermos. He starts playing on his harmonica. Rona hums along.

She stops singing and closes her eyes. We hear the low deep rumble of the tremors again.

ANDREW

The tremors are loud today, aren't they?

Rona looks up surprised. She thought only she could hear them.

RONA

Yes.

They both listen and hear it one more time. He looks at her with a sparkle in his eyes. \*

\*

\*

ANDREW

There's so much pressure, things might crumble at anytime.

\*

\*

RONA

Are you talking about the caves? \*

\*

Rona looks concerned. Andrew hides a mischievous smile.

ANDREW

The ground beneath us is riddled  
with sea caves, can you feel the  
vibrations? They are strong today.  
The land might just give in!

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RONA

Dad, have you been sleeping?

ANDREW

Of course, Rona. I'm just joking.

And then he continues playing the harmonica. Rona looks at him, unsure what to think.

40

INT. LONDON / BIOLOGY LAB - DAY

40

Close up of plant seeds under a microscope. Rona with club stamps on her wrist working at the microscope. She changes the little glass plates and hides a yawn. Her hair is not blue anymore, but shining platinum blonde.

She takes a break from the microscope as she doesn't seem to feel well at all.

From the hallway, through a little window, her supervisor is waving over to her.

41

INT. LONDON / BIOLOGY LAB / HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

41

Rona and the supervisor are having a coffee in the hallway.

SUPERVISOR

*Asks how things are going.*

RONA

(evasive)

*Talks about her plant DNA research project.*

SUPERVISOR

*Mentions that some colleagues were complaining about Rona not handing in papers on time and missing meetings. Asks if everything is fine? Maybe she could lift her spirits at work a bit?*

We can feel the supervisor does not like to have this conversation.

Rona looks to the lab, taking in the other PhD students. She gets a text, reads it and smiles, while the supervisor is still talking to her.

RONA

(interrupts her)

You know what? I'll take the week off. I need a bit of think-time about my project.

And with these words, she takes her apron off and leaves.

SUPERVISOR

(confused)

*Tries to hold Rona back, she didn't mean to offend her.*

But it's too late. Rona walks out of the building and picks up her phone, smiling.

41A EXT. LONDON / BATHHOUSE - NIGHT

41A

Two people masked with balaclavas enter an old stone building towards a backdoor. One of them uses a makeshift lock pick. Both seem a bit nervous. It's Rona and Daynin.

42 INT. LONDON / BATHHOUSE - NIGHT

42

They run through a narrow industrial looking basement with lots of pipes everywhere, then they run up small stairs.

In a large dark room, they undress quickly and - naked with only the balaclavas still on - jump into the turquoise shining water of a public bath house.

They chase each other through the water, holding still and looking at each other in silence, still with the balaclavas on. Security cameras filming them.

She dives down a little and looks out only up to her nose, like a Selkie looking towards a human. He dives down and looks at her in the same way. They circle each other in silence and then come closer together. A love story unfolding.

43 INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT / LIVING ROOM - EVENING 43

Rona's hand is sliding over Daynin's naked body without touching it. Floating maybe 3 cm above it. A white hand, a black chest.

She pretends to kiss him without kissing him, just staying 3 cm away from his lips and his skin. Two naked bodies, comfortable in each other's presence.

We see that they are in a new apartment, bigger than her place. Empty mostly, moving boxes are standing around them. The mattress lies on the floor. They just moved in together.

The window and the door towards a small balcony are open, a heavy thunderstorm is going on outside. The lightning reflecting on their skin.

After a bright flash outside, Rona moves her hand slowly up like a conductor and when the loud thunder crashes in, she indicates a musical accent with her hand. Absolutely in sync.

RONA

*Asks if he ever dreamt about controlling the weather.*

DAYNIN

*Says that until today he hadn't.*

RONA

I knew something was wrong with you.

Her bottle is empty and she finishes his. The room is full of empties, lined up on the walls.

This time when they kiss, there is no distance between them.

44

EXT. ORKNEY / MOWED FIELD - DAY

44

A little piece of tall unmowed grass on the edge of a freshly mowed field. Rona doesn't look euphoric at all.

JULIE & IVAN

*The hours of the survey are midnight til 3am, everynight when its not raining. You have to survey every area of suitable habitat in Orkney, from the car. You have to stop every 250-500m, wind down the window and listen for two minutes, then move to the next grid square.*

RONA

*I don't even know what they sound like.*

JULIE

*Yeah, they're not common like they used to be. There are hardly any left. That's why we're doing all this work.*

IVAN

*It's a distinctive call - rasping, a bit electric*

JULIE

*Like a broken chair.*

Ivan finds a call on his phone and plays it.

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
32.

\*

JULIE (CONT'D)

*There is also a corncrake hotline  
that people can call to report when  
they've heard one. Rona will be in  
charge of it.*

They listen into the field. Nothing. Julie thinks she heard a \* sound, but it was something else.

JULIE (CONT'D)

*Thanks again for helping us out!*

Rona tries to force a smile.

45 EXT. ORKNEY / SHORE WITH LITTLE STONE CAIRNS - DAY 45

Rona walks along the shore all by herself. Aggressively knocking little stone cairns over, built by people with different sized stones and pebbles. One by one, she destroys them all.

After having knocked all of them over, she lies back with headphones on a rock plateau next to the ocean.

46 EXT. ORKNEY / SHORE WITH SHIPWRECKS - DAY 46

Rona is sitting at the shore, wrapped in a coat, freezing and shivering. She smokes a cigarette.

She watches her mum Annie and the Orkney Polar Bears - an Ocean Swimming Group consisting mostly of middle-aged women. Some of them we know from the bible group. Everybody has their own technique for entering the water. Some running, some lurching, some sneaking.

Her mum, with neoprene shoes and gloves and a woolly hat on, encourages her to give it a go. Rona shakes her head.

She looks around and sees a seal looking at her. It looks pretty much like the one from the Holm of Papay. Coincidence? One of the swimmers sees that.

BIBLE GROUP MEMBER 2

Once I sang to one and it sang  
back.

*She sings at the seal, but it dives away.*

47 INT/EXT. ORKNEY / RSPB CAR EMPTY ROAD - SUMMER NIGHT 47

Rona is driving in an RSPB car (logo on the car), equipped with maps and pencils, through the vast landscape of Orkney during bright summer nights. The sky has bizarre colours, the sun hangs very low on the horizon. Nobody around but her.

Rona seems tired and unhappy. While listening to electronic music, she has no eyes for the beauty of the place. She stops, opens a window, sets a 2 minute timer and listens.

While listening, she is going through photos on her phone. In one, we see her with a man (Saíd) next to a donkey. She smiles.

Two minutes are over. No corncrake. Unimpressed, she marks a cross on a clipboard and starts the car.

48 OMITTED 48

49 INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER / BATHROOM - DAY 49

Rona (with purple eyebrows and light bruises) is peeing with the toilet door open. A COUNSELLOR AMANDA (50s) is standing close to her, looking the other way.

When Rona is done, she hands the woman a urine sample with her name and date.

50 INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER - CONTINUOUS 50

In a large room, Rona gets handed different pills, pre-sorted for fourteen days. *She is being warned that the first five days can be heavy on the body.*

51 INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER - CONTINUOUS 51

Now sitting in a chair circle of around 13 people, Rona is scanning the group around her. Hackney rockers, gang members and young women with eccentric nail designs.

AMANDA

*Explains the rules of a 12-week full-time government funded therapy programme for alcoholics and drug addicts. Says that it is tough. Statistically only 10% of you will make it. Anyone who doesn't show up without excuse will be kicked out. Same thing for a relapse. No exceptions. Pee-, smoke- or lunch breaks only accompanied.*

52 EXT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER - DAY 52

Rona smokes a cigarette outside with another participant, SAMIR (mid 40s). The counsellor is standing next to them.

SAMIR

*Offers the counsellor a cigarette  
which she refuses.*

*Jokes that he feels like a  
celebrity now, with his own  
bodyguard.*

The counsellor and Rona laugh.

SAMIR (CONT'D)

Nice eyebrows.

RONA

Thank you.

53 EXT/INT. ORKNEY STROMNESS / RSPB OFFICE BY HARBOUR - DAY 53

At the harbour in Stromness, Rona watches the ferry depart towards the South. She finishes her cigarette. Then she goes back into the RSPB office behind her desk.

She listens to her work voicemail. Several people have called to report that they heard a corncrake.

Rona picks up the phone to call them back.

54 EXT/INT. ORKNEY MAINLAND / FARMS 1-3 - DAY 54

MONTAGE. INTERCUT WITH EACH OTHER:

Rona visits three different farms, educating farmers about how to change their mowing pattern in order to save the corncrakes.

Farm 1 / Catrina - belongs to an energetic woman, CATRINA, her Orcadian accent is very strong. The farm is cluttered and full of life. Her TWO SONS come out to greet Rona.

RONA

*Talks about how the corncrake,  
which is on the red list of  
threatened species, is losing its  
habitat rapidly - mowing is part of  
the problem. Mowing from the middle  
of the field outwards instead of  
the other way around - as is  
traditional - would allow the birds  
a chance to escape. Little areas  
like these, corncrake refuges, are  
a possible solution.*

She is offered homebakes.

CATRINA

*Wants to know how Rona's parents  
are doing after the split?*

RONA

*Says that it's fine, been a couple  
of years already.*

CATRINA

*Wants to know if her dad sold the  
farm.*

RONA

*Only the old house, and he is  
living in his caravan on the  
property while mum is in Kirkwall  
now.*

Farm 2 / Edward - When she drives up to the next farm in the RSPB car and sweatshirt, an older farmer (Edward) greets her as the "corncrake wife".

His farm has a stunning view to the ocean.

EDWARD

*Wants to know how long Rona is  
doing the job for, and if she talks  
to every farmer on the mainland?*

RONA

*Adds that she drives over every  
single road on the mainland and is  
going to every single inhabited  
island.*

Edward seems impressed.

EDWARD

*Offers a beer or a dram of whiskey,  
but she politely refuses.*

Farm or Field 3 / couple - the last farmers we see on this montage are a young farmer couple, younger than Rona.

YOUNG FARMER COUPLE

*Seem very open and tell her that  
they will adjust the pattern.*

Rona seems proud, a small success.

YOUNG FARMER COUPLE (CONT'D)

*Wants to know how many corncrakes  
Rona has seen so far?*

RONA

*Must admit the truth: none. She has  
had a few reports, but never found  
one herself.*

54A INT/EXT. ORKNEY / STREET AT RING OF BRODGAR - DUSK 54A

**Extreme wide shot of the massive landscape with the Ring of Brodgar and the RSPB car driving and stopping again.**

N7 NERD LAYER / GPS N7

**We see animated GPS maps of Rona's driving routes over the mainland, seeing a pattern which marks all the roads that she has already driven on.**

RONA (V.O.)

Because people rarely saw the corncrake fly, it used to be thought that they would go underground in winter, transform into other species or even ride on other bird's backs to migrate.

**We see the animated GPS maps now changing from Rona's driving routes into the corncrakes' travel routes from Orkney to the Congo and back.**

RONA (V.O.)

Scientists now know that they do migrate all the way to central Africa and GPS trackers have placed them in Congo in the winter. But it's a dangerous journey: statistically, only 30% make it.

**The animated GPS maps changes to animated maps of all kinds of bird travel routes from North to South.**

RONA (V.O.)

Recent studies have found that birds can see magnetic fields of the earth with their eyes via a process known as magnetoreception that helps them navigate.

**We see Rona in a little plane traveling over Orkney and seeing different small islands below her.**

**We see an animated map of Rona's work travel routes to all inhabited Orkney islands, ending on the furthest Northern one which is Papa Westray.**

**The plane is landing. The airport is just one little lane of concrete.**

RONA (V.O.)

Scientists are monitoring GPS travel routes not just for birds, but for all kinds of animals. 22 basking sharks around Scotland have been fitted with a live tracker.

We see POV shots of swimming basking sharks underwater.

55 EXT. LONDON / VICTORIA PARK - DAY

55

Rona and Daynin are lying on the grass in London Fields. Their bodies entangled. Rona is finishing her beer, opens a new one.

She reads a biology book, he is studying Economics. She can't really concentrate, he is more into it. She watches the trees above them and caresses his back, hoping to distract him. Then she lies on top of him, looking over his shoulder onto his book.

RONA

*Says she is bored by her studies,  
maybe she should work in finance  
too.*

He smiles and focusses back on his book.

RONA (CONT'D)

*Maybe we should move somewhere  
exciting. Asks him where he would  
want to live if he could choose any  
place.*

DAYNIN

Anywhere with you.

RONA

Ah, come on. More specific.

DAYNIN

That's pretty specific. Maybe New York.

RONA

*Isn't that a bit obvious?*

DAYNIN

*Yes, but probably a cool city.  
Buenos Aires he would like to see.  
Or Mexico.*

RONA

*How come you never left London?*

DAYNIN

*Because he likes it here and also  
he was always working. And his  
parents never travelled. What about  
you? Where do you want to move?*

She doesn't answer. Instead they kiss. Then he concentrates again on his studies. Rona seems a bit disappointed and looks around London Fields.

Up in the trees above them, green exotic parakeets fly around.

56 INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER - DAY

56

Group Therapy. Rona (with violet eyebrows) looks healthier than when she started the course. The bruises are almost gone. The counsellor encourages her to talk.

AMANDA

*Asks what does she feel when she thinks about drinking?*

RONA

I miss it.

AMANDA

Honesty is good. Is there anything about drinking you don't miss?

RONA

(reluctantly)

*Says that she has researched a phenomenon that is called "alcoholic neuropathy". She actually did some research about it. She describes how it starts as a tickle in her fingers and usually she would ignore it until it affected her whole arm, and later also her legs. Until she loses control over her body.*

SAMIR

*Shares about how he sometimes would shit the bed when totally drunk, which is so much worse.*

*Somebody agrees adamantly and adds how do you explain to your family that you are washing the sheets again.*

*A few others chime in with terrible body experiences and the group discussion ends in lively laughter.*

57 EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

57

Rona walks through Kirkwall and passes a dance studio where little girls are practicing gymnastics. She watches them for a while.

Then she leaves somebody in London a voicemail message:

RONA

*Apologizes for her overreaction last time, she wants to know if he still has her stuff.*

*(MORE)*

RONA (CONT'D)

*She has earned some money now over the summer and this time she is coming back for real. Just a few more weeks. She can't wait, she really has had enough of Orkney now.*

58

EXT. ORKNEY / COUNTRY ROADS AT LOCH - NIGHT

58

Cornocrake work. On a sheet of paper, Rona marks another cross next to many others. We can see that quite a bit of time has passed without her having heard a cornocrake.

She sets a two minute timer and when it is over, she doesn't immediately continue to drive.

She takes a moment to take in the beauty of the landscape in the blue shining night and the haunting sounds of all the birds at this time of day.

As she wants to start the car and continue, a police car comes closer and stops.

POLICEMAN

(in heavy Orcadian accent)

*Asks what she is doing.*

RONA

*Explains her work and they chat a bit about what it takes to convince a farmer to change his mowing routine.*

POLICEMAN

*Apologizes, he just had to ask because it looks so lost - a car alone driving and stopping all the time, all over the island.*

The policeman looks at Rona for a while.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

*Thinks that he remembers her from 10 years ago.*

Rona needs a moment to know what he means.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

*She was driving so drunk that she had to spend the night in a cell.*

RONA

*Yeah, my mum called you. Jokes in Orcadian accent that today he has no chances of arresting her. It's just coke.*

POLICEMAN

*He is happy that she is doing well.*

RONA

Thank you. Trying my best.

It seems a little hard for Rona to accept that compliment.

POLICEMAN

You alright?

Rona nods, but feels very nervous now.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

*Asks if she has heard a corncrake yet.*

RONA

No.

POLICEMAN

Well then. Fingers crossed.

She waves him goodbye. When the car is almost out of sight, she all of a sudden starts crying. Her hand starts shaking and she hears the tremors.

N8

NERD LAYER / CRAVINGS

N8

RONA (V.O.)

The urge to drink can come out of nowhere. You think you are doing well, suddenly you want nothing more than a drink.

**We see archive footage people being drunk enjoying themselves, dancing on the streets in the 70s.**

RONA (V.O.)

When people drink, alcohol, or more specifically ethanol, is absorbed into the stomach lining and enters the bloodstream. In the brain, alcohol confuses messages between neurotransmitters and acts as both an intoxicant and a depressant or relaxant. For those susceptible to addiction, alcohol quickly becomes the default way of alleviating anxiety and dealing with stressful situations. Through repeated use of the drug, neural pathways are scored so deeply they will never be repaired.

**We see Rona in Annie's house working on her laptop, posting things online, checking messages, googling.**

RONA (V.O.)

'Cross addiction' is the idea that, in the absence of drink, alcoholics will transfer their addictive behavior onto something else. It's commonly seen with food, exercise, shopping, gambling or the internet.

**We see another can of Coca Cola being thrown into a garbage bin, another cigarette is lit and put into a full ashtray.**

RONA (V.O.)

Abstinence means that rather than trying to control the drinking, alcoholics don't even pick up the first drink. After the first drink, the craving for more is unstoppable.

**We see interview footage of members from Rona's rehab group, talking about their experience of addiction.**

59

INT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / CARAVAN - DAY

59

In Andrew's caravan and without a lot of words, Rona and her father play backgammon. She yawns and seems very tired.

He drinks a beer in front of her. She notices that.

ANDREW

How is the job?

RONA

*Says that it's ok. Nightshifts. A bit boring. Two weeks and she is out of here.*

He is winning.

ANDREW

How is mum?

RONA

Maybe you guys should just call each other.

She smiles, doesn't say anything. Then he drops that:

ANDREW

By the way, the result came back:  
it's not ambergris.

She shrugs, not without a smile.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Thanks for staying longer.

Rona is surprised by the softness in his voice.

60 EXT. LONDON / CITY FARM - DAY

60

Group excursion. The rehab group is entering the city farm. The participants and counsellors together look like a weird school class of adults. People try not to stare at them.

61 EXT. LONDON / CITY FARM / PETTING ZOO - DAY

61

Rona watches the other participants in the petting zoo, tough-looking gang members protecting themselves from hungry sheep and goats. Saïd joins Rona and they watch the spectacle for a while.

SAMIR

*Wants to know something about her life before therapy.*

RONA

*Tells him about her failed PhD in molecular biology and how she messed up her chances - they basically kicked her out, asked her to go on sick-leave, after six years of not doing the work right - and once kicked out it is impossible to get accepted anywhere else.*

SAMIR

*Says that he knows all that from the course and that by the way it's nonsense. She has more chances than anyone else here. Just look at them!*

They watch an old Hackney rocker who unsuccessfully tries to stop the goats from eating his trouser pockets. Both have to laugh.

SAMIR (CONT'D)

Tell me something about the real Rona before therapy.

RONA

(hard)

The real Rona left her friend's birthday party with a made up excuse to go home and drink alone at a faster pace.

A young participant passes by, throws his garbage onto the floor.

SAMIR  
*Tells the guy harshly to clean up his shit.*

But when the boy leaves he smiles to Rona saying:

SAMIR (CONT'D)  
*That's the only language they understand. He tells her about his two boys and that he was always way too soft with them.*

RONA  
*Says she didn't know he had family.*

SAMIR  
*Shares that they don't really want anything to do with him right now. It's not fun to have a dad on crack and heroin. Their mum has a new guy and sole custody for the kids, but that he is waiting until his boys turn 18 - then hopefully they can have a relationship as adults. That's why I am doing all this shit.*

He gestures to the petting zoo, but also meaning the therapy, his whole life.

SAMIR (CONT'D)  
*So I am there when they need me.*

After a moment of silence:

RONA  
*Admits that she's afraid she will never be happy sober.*

Saíd gets it. He looks at Rona.

SAMIR  
*You're so pretty, you know that?*

She doesn't quite know how to take this compliment. He gets it.

SAMIR (CONT'D)  
*Sorry.*

Daynin repairs his bicycle. The apartment looks like they have been living there for quite a while together. Rona's hair has purple tips.

DAYNIN

*Says that he could use a hand. If  
she could hold the bike real quick.*

Rona smokes at the balcony door, drinks beer and paints with the ash on her fingers a little seal figure on a china ball lamp. She finishes her beer.

DAYNIN (CONT'D)

*Complains about her taking so long.*

Then she reluctantly gets up to help him. She is not sober anymore, but doesn't want to show it.

RONA

*Tells him about the selkies, about  
a woman called Ursilla and she was  
so bored in bed with her husband  
who didn't want to love her, that  
she went to the sea, cried seven  
teardrops in the ocean and found  
herself a handsome selkie lover.*

DAYNIN

*Asks if she is trying to tell him  
something?*

Rona denies that and helps with the bike.

DAYNIN (CONT'D)

*Asks why she didn't take him up to  
Orkney in all this time?*

RON'

*Says that he wouldn't enjoy it.  
It's cold, boring and always windy.  
(adds) And only white people.*

DAYNIN

*Sounds fun. Actually, I would love  
to meet your parents.*

The alcohol is finished, she wants to go buy some more. He drags her gently towards him and prefers to take a shower together, since she was complaining earlier - but she wriggles out of his arms.

RONA

*Says that she will be right back.*

DAYNIN

*You prefer to buy booze over a  
shower with a handsome selkie man?*

RONA

*I'll be right back and take both.*

Rona is out the door already. A shadow crosses his face when he hears her running down the stairs.

63 INT/EXT. ORKNEY / RING OF BRODGAR / RSPB CAR - NIGHT 63

Cornocrake work. It's a very foggy night. We can see that the survey paper is full of crosses - only one square is missing; not a single sign of a cornocrake.

Rona is listening to music.

She comes to a halt next to the Ring of Brodgar.

64 EXT. ORKNEY / RING OF BRODGAR - CONTINUOUS 64

Rona gets out to smoke a cigarette and listens into the fog. There is a sound that makes her turn around. Was it a cornocrake?

She is intrigued and follows the sound while the fog gets heavier, until she can't see the car anymore.

Rona starts wandering further through the mist. Losing sense of time and space.

She wanders in between the high stones of the Ring of Brodgar. We start to hear bass music playing - first softly and then louder. Flashes appear.

65 INT. DARK INDUSTRIAL SPACE / FANCY CLUB BAR- NIGHT 65

The light flashes take us to people dancing in the fog, similar to the opening scene. Rona is one of them. Ecstatic. It's like a weird dream.

Daynin is dancing with her in a fancy bar in front of a LED wall. They dance together, close.

66 INT. LONDON / FANCY CLUB BAR - NIGHT 66

The cheering of several beer glasses clinking together. Rona is with Daynin and his business friends in a club. Bass and fog in the background. All are dressed in suits, celebrating a successful meeting they had today.

Gloria joins them, Rona hugs her tight.

RONA

Thanks for saving me! Says  
something dismissive about Daynin's  
friends.

67

INT. LONDON / FANCY CLUB BAR - LATER

67

Rona orders more Vodka, now already very drunk.

DAYNIN

(sharply)

*Asks her to slow it down a bit!*

RONA

*Tells him to chill out.*

Then Rona hugs Daynin and Gloria.

RONA (CONT'D)

*Telling that if she and Daynin ever had babies and if she were to die, then Gloria should become the children's step mum.*

They laugh, but Rona wants them to swear on it.

Music plays and she tries to get everybody to dance a Ceilidh Dance with her. She falls on the ground, still laughing.

Suddenly she realizes that she has lost her compass, and freaks out.

Everybody is looking at her now. Rona tries to get up but loses control about her body movements. Half her face goes into spasm.

RONA (CONT'D)

*Thinks that Daynin's friends are laughing at her, accuses them of having stolen her compass. The one she got from her father.*

She takes a beer bottle, wants to throw it against the wall but accidentally hits one of Daynin's colleagues on the head.

He starts screaming and bleeding.

68

INT. LONDON / FANCY CLUB BAR / BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

68

In the women's toilet, Rona falls to the ground. Daynin tries to help her and sends Gloria away who is there to help as well. But Gloria stays.

Rona crawls forward and starts crashing her head violently against the wall. Daynin and Gloria don't know what to do. Rona smashes her head against the wall until she regains control of her face and arms.

69

INT. LONDON / FANCY CLUB BAR - CONTINUOUS

69

Back at the bar, Rona orders another vodka. Her eyeballs are turning into her head.

Gloria is helpless.

DAYNIN

*Gets mad at the bartenders for serving her more alcohol.*

RONA

*Yells at him to chill out.*

But then she loses control of her limbs again and starts spilling the vodka on the floor.

70

INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT - NIGHT

70

In an elliptic drunk memory:

Daynin carries Rona into their flat. She stumbles into the kitchen and wants to get a bottle of wine out of the pantry.

He takes it away and empties it into the sink. She starts a fight with him, ripping the bottle out of his hand. Glass is crashing on the ground, she falls into one of the bottles. Her hands and arms start bleeding.

Crying and screaming like a baby, she tries to crawl towards the door, but he locks it and blocks her way.

71

INT/EXT. ORKNEY / RING OF BRODGAR / RSPB CAR - DAWN

71

Rona wakes up in the RSPB car, it's the early morning light. She needs a moment to realize where she is. A look on the map, the last square is crossed out as well. The job is over.

RONA

(disappointed)

That's it then, corncrakes!

Not even this job she can do well.  
Rona starts the car.

72

INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE - DAY

72

Rona packs her stuff. Without any enthusiasm.

She rolls up the picture of the dog with the burning tail. London doesn't seem to be an exciting option for her.

73

EXT/INT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / CARAVAN - DAY

73

Rona walks through the farm, *calling for her dad.*

She gives the farm dog some water, sees other things that haven't been done.

RONA

Dad?

She gets wary and enters the caravan after a few knocks.

Andrew lies in bed, his eyes open. He doesn't react to her coming in, seems totally apathetic.

RONA (CONT'D)

Here you are.

He doesn't respond. She knows this state of his already and sits down close to the bed.

**We see glimpses of helicopter blades.**

RONA (CONT'D)

I will let Mum know so she can organize help for the farm until you get better. Adds that she just wanted to say goodbye. That she is leaving today, this time for real. That she is a bit scared of going back.

(after a moment)

You have to feed Bernie and check on his water. Don't forget that..

Andrew stares right through her and then turns around to face the wall. She looks at his back for a while.

There is a glass with some red wine left next to an ashtray. It must be very old, almost dried out. Booze bottles are on the table next to the chess board. Close to an empty pack of sleep medication and other pills.

She stares at the glass and leans forward to sniff it. She immediately stops herself, looks out the window. She starts hearing the tremors, her hand starts shaking.

Very tense now, she takes out a can of coca cola from her jacket.

RONA (CONT'D)

Wish me luck, dad.

She cheers to her father who doesn't move and empties the can all in one, then she crashes the can and puts it on the table.

One more time she looks at the glass of wine.

Carefully she dips one finger into the glass, she watches the drop of red wine like blood on her finger. Then she puts the finger in her mouth. The tremors stop.

She stares at the glass. Then she takes a mouthful and empties it. All of a sudden, Rona gets up and leaves the caravan, shaken and upset.

74

EXT. ORKNEY / ANDREWS FARM / CARAVAN - CONTINUOUS

74

Outside the caravan she comes to a halt. She breathes deeply, clenches her shaking hands and hears the tremors even louder.

She looks left and right, doesn't know where to go. Doesn't move.

She takes out her phone and calls a number. Nobody picks up. She leaves a message for Daynin.

RONA

*Saying that it's been a while. She isn't even sure if he will get this message. That he seems to be in America now and how happy she is for him that all is well.*

Tears in her eyes. She waits a beat and says:

RONA (CONT'D)

*That she would be really happy if they could just talk one day. That she misses him so much. That she hasn't been in London for a while, but is going back soon. That it's summer soon, the best time for London. That she is so alone.*

She hangs up. Then something in her eyes changes, her expression gets colder and further away. She has lost the battle and goes right back into the caravan.

75

INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT / BEDROOM - MORNING

75

Early morning light. Rona wakes up, needs a moment and suddenly feels heavy pain in her body. She realizes that her hands, arms and back are full of cuts and wounds. Some infected and swollen. Some of the cuts are already taken care of and wrapped with bandages.

Daynin stands on the balcony, in a dark mood, still awake.

RONA

Good morning.

Rona is very sweet, his response just a look.

She wants to get up, but her body hurts so it takes a moment. She goes to the balcony door.

RONA (CONT'D)  
What happened?

He looks at her in disbelief.

DAYNIN  
You wanna tell me that you don't remember?

When she comes closer and reaches out to touch his shoulder, he coldly shoves her hand off. She realizes he has injuries as well.

RONA  
(very insecure)  
Tell me what happened please.

Daynin doesn't respond.

RONA (CONT'D)  
*Asks him for a cigarette. I'm so sorry.*

DAYNIN  
I've heard that before from you.

She looks miserable and genuinely in shock. In the pocket of her trousers, she finds the little compass.

Daynin tries to stay strong.

DAYNIN (CONT'D)  
I don't know how to help you anymore.

She starts crying.

RONA  
*Promises to never touch a drink again in her life.*

DAYNIN  
(cold)  
*Says that she has promised that before.*

RONA  
*Is begging him to believe her that this time it is for real.*

DAYNIN  
*Says he sometimes wishes she were somebody else.*

Daynin can see her real devastation and feels sorry. He hesitantly hugs her.

DAYNIN (CONT'D)  
I don't mean it like that  
literally. It's ok. We've got this.

RONA  
I can't live without you. I am not  
sure I will survive you leaving me.

DAYNIN  
I'm not leaving you.

But something is broken between them.

He holds her tight and kisses her hair. In a very loving way and despite the physical pain, their kisses become more passionate.

76 EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / BAR - NIGHT

76

Through the window, we see Rona totally drunk in a bar.

She is sitting together with several strangers, ordering Vodka shots as if they are good friends, being happy and loud - an everyday happy moment of drunkenness in a bar.

77 EXT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 77

Barely able to stand, Rona has a hard time opening her mum's front door.

After several missed attempts, she gets it open and stumbles into the hallway.

78 INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE - CONTINUOUS

78

Rona closes the hallway door way too loudly, enters the kitchen and looks for something to eat, dropping a fruit bowl. While she tries to pick up the fruit we hear the hallway door.

Annie stands in the kitchen, taken aback. In shock to see Rona like that.

RONA  
Hi Mum, I'm just trying to... fucking apples... sorry...

Annie doesn't say anything. Rona passes her, trying to go upstairs. Annie follows her. She guides her into her own bedroom and tries to help Rona undress, but Rona wants to do it alone. She can't.

She sees a shell on the wall with a cross on waves and grabs it, rips it from the wall. She throws it onto the ground.

RONA (CONT'D)

They are fucking with your head, mum. It's all brainwash. There is no god, there is no one who takes care of us...

With these words, Rona falls on the ground and stays lying in this position.

RONA (CONT'D)

You see, praying for me didn't help.

Annie is deeply shocked and watches Rona crawling around the floor, trying to get her shoes off.

Then she helps Rona get her shoes off, get on the bed and puts a blanket over her.

RONA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.

Annie doesn't say a word.

While Rona is asleep, Annie goes back into the kitchen and stoically cleans up Rona's mess.

79 INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / UPSTAIRS - MORNING 79

Next morning Rona wakes up with a massive hangover.

Next to Annie's bed, she sees a glass of water. Rona drinks it. Fuck, what has she done.

The shell is hanging on the wall again. She turns around and lies still in the bed.

79A INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 79A

Rona splashes cold water onto her face.

80 INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 80

Rona enters the kitchen. Annie has gone and only left a note. Rona sees the written note, doesn't even read it and starts crying.

81 EXT. ORKNEY STROMNESS / STREETS - DAY

81

Rona walks defeated through the streets of Stromness. She looks on her phone, checks an address for a house. Nervously she smokes a cigarette.

82 EXT./INT. ORKNEY STROMNESS / AA MEETING - DAY

82

Reluctantly, Rona enters a small house next to the waterside. She goes up narrow stairs and enters a room with three men in their 60s. One is serving coffee to the group.

All seem quite surprised to have a new guest.

AA MAN 1

Can I help you?

RONA

Is this...

AA MAN 1

Are you here for an AA meeting?

RONA

Yes.

The group is genuinely excited as they have been the only three members of this group for years.

AA MAN 2

*Offers her coffee and invites her to share something, because she can imagine how often they have heard each other's stories. We can tell them all by heart.*

Rona seems raw and vulnerable.

AA MAN 1

Have you been to AA before?

She nods.

RONA

Many times.

She starts with the mandatory introduction.

RONA (CONT'D)

Hi. My name is Rona and I am an alcoholic.

*She says that she has tried to stop drinking hundreds of times. I tried AA, rehab, all there is. Three times she has managed a month.*

(MORE)

RONA (CONT'D)

The last thing I did was a three month course which I finished and stayed sober for in total seven months. Until last night. I thought I was doing alright, but I wasn't.

*All she was thinking about was not drinking and not relapsing. She says she feels useless. Nobody trusts her, she doesn't even trust herself. All she does is hurt people and let them down.*

*If she is honest - she doesn't feel life is worth living like this.*

The old men are deeply moved.

82A INT. ORKNEY KIRKWALL / ANNIES PLACE / LITTLE ROOM - DAY 82A

Rona sits on her bed, everything is packed. Staring at the wall. Apathetic and crunched together.

83 EXT. ORKNEY / AIRPORT - DAY 83

With her large backpack Rona enters the airport.

N9 NERD LAYER / ISLANDS N9

RONA (V.O.)

Britain is an island off Europe,  
Orkney is an island off Scotland,  
Westray is an island off Orkney,  
Papay is an island off Westray.

**Rona is sitting in that tiny plane again - looking at different Orkney islands beneath her.**

RONA (V.O.)

Thieves Holm is an uninhabited skerry where witches and criminals were once banished. Faray used to have a population of 82 but is now home to only birds, sheep and a large colony of grey seals.

**In a wide shot over the water an island is slowly appearing in the fog.**

RONA (V.O.)

On Eynhallow, it is Samir, there is a stolen part from the magical island Hildaland, home to the mermaids and finmen and invisible to human eyes.

(MORE)

RONA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

According to Orcadian folklore, the island Hether Blether only appears in the fog. It was Samir that once a girl was kidnapped by a finman and taken to the mystical island and never could return.

84

EXT/INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

84

A energetic looking woman ELENA (mid 40's) in a post uniform opens the door of a little pink house. She lets Rona enter first.

ELENA

Here we are!

RONA

Thank you.

She takes in the little place, sparsely furnished - it feels a bit empty and quite cold. Elena opens the windows.

ELENA

Are you sure about this? It's quite rough here in winter.

RONA

Yes.

ELENA

Wouldn't it make more sense to go somewhere South? On a Canary island for instance?

RONA

This was the cheapest rent I could find anywhere.

ELENA

Well - for a reason. The only warm thing about this house is the heated towel rail.

(proudly)

I installed it.

Rona forces a smile and drops her big backpack on the ground. She gets an introduction to the house.

ELENA (CONT'D)

*Says that if she needs company, just reach out. It's a small island, but there are quite a few local activities she could join.*

RONA

*Thanks her but says that right now she just needs to be alone.*

ELENA

Alright then. You need anything,  
let me know.

85

INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

85

Rona watches Elena leave in a post car. She makes a fire at the fireplace in the kitchen.

She looks out the windows, there is only one road she can see. It is leading towards a few farm buildings. It is a grey day. Nobody out there.

Rona unpacks a sack of porridge and her laptop.

She sits in the dark kitchen, lit only by the fire and dim light from outside. Empty and motionless. Not able to even open her computer.

86

INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - LATER

86

She calls her mum who doesn't pick up. *Rona leaves a message saying that she arrived fine - and if they could maybe have a chat one of these days. Reception is bad.*

Then she hangs Saíd's drawing of the dog with the burning tail over the fireplace.

Rona looks around her new temporary home.

She looks through old bookshelves. Different people have been living here and left some souvenirs of things they found at the beach. Some old books about birds mixed with other more popular literature.

She spends time on her phone and the computer, smoking and drinking coke.

Sometimes she just stares at the dirty windows, watches the light rain tapping against them.

She takes a few photos with her phone of weird details in the house, broken things that have been repaired. Signs of people who have stayed here before her. A whale vertebrae hanging on the back of a door.

Then she puts more wood in the fireplace and lies on the floor. She puts her legs up in the air, drags them close to her. Cuddles her body like a package and then falls to the side. She lies motionless, crumbled up, eyes staring ahead. Here she is. A whole winter to come.

We see Rona through the window that connects the kitchen with the living room.

87 INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT / KITCHEN & LIVING ROOM \$7-DAY

Rona watches Daynin in the living room through a window that connects the kitchen with the living room.

She still has her jacket on, apparently she just came home. She grabs a coke and enters the living room and Daynin asks how she is doing.

He wants to grab her hand, but Rona says she will be right back and runs up the stairs.

88 INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT / BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS \$8

Rona searches in the cupboard behind cosmetics, a hairdryer and other toiletries, for an old plastic bag. She opens it and gets a bottle of Vodka out.

She drinks a few hectic drags. Then she pauses and drinks a few more.

With quick movements, Rona brushes her teeth. She checks her breath and uses mouthwash.

89 INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT / LIVING ROOM - 89  
CONTINUOUS

With the coke in her hand, Rona joins him on the sofa. She cheers his glass of orange juice with her coke.

DAYNIN

*Says that he is proud of her.*

RONA

*Says that it's not as hard as she thought.*

Cuddled up together on the sofa, they watch a comedy show.

Rona tries to enjoy it, but hears the tremors.

90 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY 90

Rona lies in bed and stares out of the window.

The sky seems bright and sunny. Despite the beautiful weather outside, she seems terribly sad and unable to move.

91 OMITTED 91

- 92 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE / SHED - DAY 92  
 In a shed outside Rose Cottage, Rona finds an old bike.  
 She checks it and it seems to work fine. She starts to ride it to "town".
- 93 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROAD - CONTINUOUS 93  
 Halfway there the weather changes and the wind blows so heavily that the chain breaks. She lets out a loud curse and starts walking back.
- 94 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY 94  
 In Rose Cottage she changes into pajamas, makes some noodles with butter, eats a banana.  
 She checks social media on her laptop, sees her colleagues posting about a biology paper being published. She sees Lukas and boyfriend with a pregnant friend.  
 She looks up Daynin's instagram and sees pictures of him in America, enjoying his life there.  
 She scrolls through all the pictures of him she can find.
- 95 INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT - EVENING 95  
 As a drunken memory: Rona walks up the stairs dripping wet and one shoe missing. But with more alcohol. Daynin can't take it anymore.
- DAYNIN  
*Says never again will he be able to trust her.*
- RONA  
*Becomes mean, accusing him of just wanting to control her.*
- Daynin is crying on the bed. Rona next to him, drunk, still dripping wet and panicked.
- RONA (CONT'D)  
*Repeating in panic that she can't live without him.*
- DAYNIN  
*(while crying) saying that he can't do this anymore.*

96

INT/EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

96

Rona lies in bed, eyes wide open, her hand shaking. Tremors. Or is it the ocean? As her hand starts calming down, the sound of the tremors gets lower.

It's freezing cold. She puts more wood on the fire in the kitchen and gets under many blankets. The wood is empty.

Covered in blankets she leaves Rose Cottage to get fire wood from the shed.

Suddenly, in awe, she stands absolutely still. It's pitch black and she listens to the heavy crashing of the ocean right and left of her.

97

INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER / ART ROOM - DAY

97

Amanda and JACK a second counsellor are leading the art therapy painting lesson.

Rona is staring at the dog with the burning tail picture (half finished) on a table next to her. Saíd is drawing it.

He smiles when he sees that she likes it.

Rona is drawing a black and white scribble of a demon-like being, looking weirdly like a seal rising out of a bottle.

98

INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER - LATER

98

Everybody is supposed to say a few words about what they were painting. A thin young woman called RITA (34) is talking about her painting.

RITA

*Drew herself being pregnant and  
explains why her little baby boy is  
living with another family now  
until she gets sober.*

It's heartbreaking, but nobody is really listening. *There is a parallel conversation going on in the room that is getting louder and louder.*

JACK

*Asks everybody kindly to listen to  
Rita.*

SAMIR

*Gets angry because another  
participant is wearing a Jack  
Daniels t-shirt.*

Rona is now more outgoing and confident than she was before and has become an active member of the group.

RONA

*Tries to deescalate and suggests  
they vote as a group.*

Her suggestion is supported and the group majority vote that the shirt is inappropriate and must be taken off - right now.

GARY the t-shirt owner sits on his chair with his naked chest, tattoos showing and a pretty big belly, slightly pissed at the others.

RONA AND GROUP MEMBERS

*Cheer him up. Rona is sayin she  
will bring her heroin t-shirt  
tomorrow.*

Somebody else shares his pullover with him. At first he refuses to take it, but then he finally gives in.

99 OMITTED

99

100 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ELENAS CAR - CONTINUOUS

100

Rona and Elena drive in Elena's car and pass the little airport.

101 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHOP - DAY

101

They stop next to a little shop.

ELENA

*Our gas station.*

Rona takes in the absurd looking single fuel dispenser that Elena points at. A few farmers exit the shop and look curiously at Rona. She doesn't seem comfortable with the attention.

102 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / LOCAL SHOP - CONTINUOUS

102

A stuffed little shop with everything one might need on white metal shelves.

ELENA

*Introduces the man who works behind  
the cashier in the shop as her  
brother Calum.*

Calum (late 60's) has a warmth to him, his face is marked with life. Rona buys things to fix the wheels of the bike, many big bottles of coke and lemonade, pasta and tobacco.

CALUM

*Is curious about Rona's reason for  
spending a winter at Rose Cottage?*

RONA

*Says she likes rough weather.*

ELENA

Tells him not to be so nosy.

CALUM

Says he was the birdy man 40 years ago, spent three summers in Goury - before Rose Cottage was built. No running water and just an outhouse. But those were summer shifts.

When paying Rona sees the booze section that is right behind him at the cashier desk.

CALUM (CONT'D)

You need anything else?

RONA

No thank you.

ELENA

*Wants to drive her back.*

RONA

*Prefers to walk.*

103

EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROAD - CONTINUOUS

103

Rona carries the heavy bottles in two plastic bags. She walks along the one road that goes over the island.

She walks past the little airport. Elena passes by with her car and honks.

104

INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

104

Rona is trying to meditate with an app, but can't do it. Can't concentrate.

She inspects her body hair that is growing - but doesn't cut it.

She reads old bird books from the house, in the background we hear the Radio Orkney weather forecast warning about a gale coming up.

105

EXT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT / BALCONY - MORNING 105

Morning. Rona sits on the lower balcony, smoking a cigarette. Hungover. Listening to the radio.

A flash and the sound of a picture being taken. She startles, wasn't aware that Daynin was photographing her from the upper balcony.

RONA

*Complains about him taking pictures without asking.*

DAYNIN

*Says that when she is unaware, she looks so incredibly sad, he just had to capture it.*

106 INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT - DAY

106

Rona comes home from work. In the kitchen, she takes out an apple and eats a bite.

She enters the living room and realizes that the flat is weirdly empty. The TV is missing, just a mark on the wall where it had been.

She runs upstairs to check the bedroom. Daynin has gone for good and with him all his stuff. Only her belongings remain - years of having lived together, are now meticulously split in half.

All that is left from him is a note on the bed: "Sorry."

With all her desperation, she throws the apple against the wall. The tremors crash in on her heavily.

She sits on the bed, calls him, but he doesn't pick up. She tries him again and then starts searching in her closet. In a suitcase she had hidden some Vodka and Wine.

She starts drinking. Alone. Until she doesn't feel the pain anymore. The tremors disappear, almost no sound is left. Everything is numb.

Behind her we see a ghostly shadow on the wall.

107 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

107

A few hours later, Rona is still sitting at the same place.

It has become dark now. There's barely any light in her kitchen, just rain bursting against the window.

She goes to the window and taps her fingers lightly against the glass as if repeating the rhythm of the rain.

108 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

108

We see in a wide shot the little pink house and Rona at the window, tapping her fingers against the glass.

109 INT. LONDON / RONA AND DAYNINS FLAT - DAY/NIGHT

109

MONTAGE - INTERCUT WITH ROSE COTTAGE - similar shots between the loneliness in both places:

Rona's apartment is a mess, the apple is rotted where it had landed.

Rona lies on the floor of the living room, hears the tremors... in between bottles and cans, she whispers to Daynin - even though he is not there anymore.

She drinks herself into a delirium, throwing up in a dirty toilet that hasn't been cleaned for a while, wiping her mouth with her t-shirt.

110 EXT. LONDON / DAYNINS NEW HOUSE - DAY

110

As a drunken flash memory: Rona rings the bell of a house in London, but nobody opens. She rings like crazy.

RONA

*Yells Daynin's name up the building, down the whole street - that she knows he lives there!!*

People shout out of their windows telling her to shut up.

Finally, she sits down on the steps in front of his house. While drinking, she leaves messages on his voicemail that he is a fucking asshole and should open the door.

111 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / OLD GRAVEYARD BY TINY CHURCH - DAY 111

With her headphones, listening to music, Rona inspects an old graveyard next to a tiny old church.

The graves are partly overgrown with algae and lichen.

112 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / KNAP OF HOWAR - DAY

112

She reaches an old stone settlement. She inspects the place, humans must have been tiny back then.

The old door barely reaches Rona's belly. She sits in front of the two entrances and smokes a cigarette.

Calum combs by with a long stick and is combing the beach. Rona watches him for a little bit.

113 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / GLASSHOUSE AT NORTH HILL - MORNING 113

Rona continues her walk alone. Headphones on, listening to music. She passes a little glass house on a hill.

Doesn't pay attention to it.

113A EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / NATURAL POOL NORTH - DAY 113A  
  
She puts a foot in the water. It's freezing. She puts her shoes back on and goes walking along the layered stone ground.

114 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE / SHED - DAY 114  
  
Back at Rose Cottage, she puts the big wood pieces in the shed to dry. She takes the wood that is already dried and uses a saw to cut it into small pieces for the fire.  
  
She looks very clumsy, is sweating and cursing.

115 EXT/INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DUSK 115  
  
It's getting dark. The wind is blowing much heavier than before. Outside Rose Cottage, Rona brings the rubbish bins inside for cover.  
  
With a rope she ties up a wheelie bin. The wind is already blowing heavier.  
  
She checks all the windows, making sure they are shut.  
  
Shortly after, a massive gale starts. It is extremely loud.  
  
Rona measures and records the noise with her phone while outside the world seems to go down.

N10 NERD LAYER / WIND N10  
  
Little kid Rona is watching in a hallway how her father is smashing windows in the living room. He is screaming and yelling.  
  
ANNIE tries to stop him, but he is in a frenzy, moving like a crazy conductor through the house as if conducting the gale.  
  
Rona runs and hides under the kitchen table while Andrew comes into the kitchen now and smashes all the windows to let the wind come in, thinking that he is controlling the weather. He shouts like crazy and invites the wind to come in and take over the house. Weirdly his movements and the lightning flashes seem to be in sync sometimes.  
  
Little Rona is covering her ears and eyes. The police comes to arrest him.  
  
They hand him to an ambulance team who are supposed to bring him to a psychiatric ward. Before leaving the house, he bends down to Rona.

YOUNG ANDREW

I love you, you hear me? You will always be my girl! Don't listen to them. I'm not crazy. They just don't have the power to understand it all. Don't you ever believe what they say!

RONA (V.O.)

The original Beaufort scale didn't give wind speed in miles per hour but, rather, in terms of its effects on sailing ships, from 'just sufficient to give steerage' to 'that which no canvas sails could withstand'.

**Little Rona is covering eyes and ears under the table.**

**We see private found footage from cell phones of Orkney locals when they filmed heavy gales.**

RONA (V.O.)

In 1952 there were winds in Orkney so strong they blew away hen houses, killing 70,000 chickens and effectively ending the islands' poultry industry. An account of the storm Samir 'tethered cows had been flying in the air like kites'. At primary school, on the windiest days, the smallest children are not allowed outside at playtimes.

**We observe things flying (hen houses, Christmas trees) around in the wind on Orkney fields and outside the farm.**

115A ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE AFTER BEACH - DARK WINTER DAY 115A

Rona walks along the beach with headphones. The shore is rearranged after the storm. She collects big pieces of driftwood.

She finds an old china doll, the arms are missing but otherwise it is still in pretty good shape.

116 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DARK WINTER DAY 116

Rona in Rose Cottage, puts the doll on her desk and sorts a few seaweed examples that she took from the beach.

116A EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE WITH SEALS - DAY 116A

Rona sits at the shore watching a group of seals near an old mill.

A group of people come walking by. A mix of conservative Orcadians and eccentric South folk. One lady has blue hair, another one has very colourful clothes on.

One of them is Elena. She introduces them as the Papay Walking Committee. Once a month they walk around the whole island. Takes them between 4 and 5 hours, but it's great fun.

They all greet Rona and invite her to join them next time, she very reluctantly agrees with a "yeah, maybe".

117 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE AT GREAT AUK STATUE - DAY 117

Rona walks along the shore. Again. Her daily routine.

As always, her headphones are on her head, she listens to electronic music walking very carefully as she cannot see far.

She passes a statue that commemorates the killing of the last great Auk.

Near a steep geo Rona comes to a halt.

She looks around, takes everything in. She can see that the water is full of energy today, heavy waves crash relentlessly against the cliff. She doesn't move. Then, very slowly she takes her headphones off.

The music stops and instead the churning and bursting sounds of the wild ocean and the powerful wind take over.

Rona closes her eyes and the sound gets even louder and louder. It's immersive and surrounding and breathtaking.

Rona stands still with her eyes closed and keeps listening. For the first time, she really opens up to her environment.

N11 NERD LAYER / THE OCEAN CIRCLE N11

**We see little kid Rona walking along the shore and searching for things that the waves brought to the land. Sticks, seaweed, sacks with fish eggs.**

RONA (V.O.)

All things come from the ocean and the ocean takes them back, and eventually - one day - they might come back again to the land.

RONA (V.O.)

*Telling the stories about locals from different Orkney islands and their finds, naming the people and the islands.*

We see photographs of Orkney Locals and what they found on the shore, presenting the items to the camera. Some are impressive and others are absurd finds, like a crash test dummy or an old globe from a sunken ship. Some find old war items from military ships.

RONA (V.O.)

There are shipwrecks scattered around the coast of Orkney. The natural harbour at Scapa Flow was the UK naval base in the world wars. Scuba divers from around the world come to dive on the wrecks of the scuttled German fleet.

We see a photograph of a young woman with a china doll.

1868, on its way from Bremerhaven in Germany to New York, the Lessing drove into the rocks at Klavers Geo on Fair Isle. All 465 passengers crew were brought safely ashore by the islanders but the ship itself was broken up by the sea and its cargo, including china dolls, dispersed.

We see a older couple holding a big wooden tool in the air, reminding us slightly of Vikings.

Parts of the Udal Law from Old Norse times still apply in Orkney. If you find something on the shore of your farmland and it is above the low water mark, it's yours.

118 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / COMMUNITY HALL - NIGHT

118

In the middle of "the Muckle Supper" - a local Papay dance event in late November. It seems like the whole island is there.

There is food served, tables are being moved.

The local band "The Poor Man's Corner" is playing traditional Orkney music. Susie, the lady with blue hair from the Walking committee, sings and plays the guitar.

It's a loud and nice atmosphere, many people are drinking. Rona sits by herself, in the background, drinking a coke and watching the lively dance.

Calum is there as well, looking at Rona from another table. He lifts his soda in cheers to Rona. Both are smiling when they realize that they are the only adults drinking something non-alcoholic. He gets up and come toward Rona.

CALUM  
*Asks Rona for a dance.*

She reacts reluctantly at first.

RONA  
*Saying she doesn't know the steps.*

CALUM  
*Knows that everybody learns the steps in school.*

Once Rona gets up and starts dancing, she knows exactly how to dance. They dance "Strip the Willow" and "The Eight Men of Moidart." They are quite wild and rough movements.

For a fleeting moment, Rona starts having a good time on the dance floor. But there is immediately an air of discomfort about her.

119 OMITTED

119

120 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / COMMUNITY HALL - NIGHT

120

Rona smokes a cigarette outside the community hall. Calum joins her.

CALUM  
How long have you been sober?

Rona is a bit surprised.

RONA  
63 days.

He smiles.

CALUM  
14 years, 6 months and...  
(now he needs a moment)  
17 days.

RONA  
How is it going?  
  
CALUM  
Like they say. Minute by minute.  
Day by day. Year by year.

Rona thinks on that.

RONA  
(after a moment)  
Does it get any easier?

CALUM

It's not easy, but it does get less hard. The rest depends on you.

Rona smiles at Calum - without much confidence.

121 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

121

Rona googles Daynin. She sees his picture as a junior executive of a financing company. He looks energetic and successful. The person he always wanted to be.

Sadness on her face. She drinks her coke and smokes.

Then she goes to his contact page and types a message to him, saying that she just wants him to know that she is doing much better. Deletes it. Types the same message again. Deletes it... she closes her laptop.

122 INT/EXT. LONDON / TAXI - DUSK

122

Rona is in a taxi, very drunk. When it stops, she runs off and hides behind a corner.

123 INT. LONDON / GLORIA'S FLAT - NIGHT

123

In the middle of an art event, Lukas is in front of a bunch of people, doing a poetry reading. Gloria is hosting, there is a nice buffet with lots of drinks set up in a airy loft flat.

Rona yells loud comments complimenting Lukas. They're all nice things that she's saying, but people are getting upset. Gloria is next to Rona getting nervous.

Lukas reads a poem about love and a painful break up. Rona starts crying now. Now she has everyone's attention.

RONA

*Cries that Daynin is gone. That she only wants to see him once, you cannot delete somebody just like this and disappear without getting in touch at all.*

GLORIA

Tries to calm her down.

RONA

*Begs for any information. She must know SOMETHING about him.*

*(then getting more and more upset)*

*That she KNOWS they are in contact.*

Buff Rev. (mm/dd/yy)  
70.

GLORIA

*Is running out of patience, saying that Rona needs to move on and concentrate on herself! Last time she was stalking him. She has to face reality - he has a new life now. She should get one too.*

RONA

*Becomes super mean to Gloria and accuses her of being a liar and a bad friend, and always on his side.*

Gloria is in shock and tries to hide her tears. Rona is being asked to leave.

124 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

124

Rona is eating warm porridge in front of Saíd's drawing.

She is stretching and warming up her body while listening to loud energizing rap.

125 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SEA - DAY

125

Rona's legs are slowly entering the cold sea. Goose bumps. The weather is harsh and windy. Nobody in sight anywhere.

She swears in a low voice, each step forward is an extreme achievement in overcoming her personal limits.

She scratches her feet and calves, blood enters the ocean. This time it's not just one, it's a whole group of seals looking at her.

Her jaw is shaking from the cold. She starts cursing and telling them to get lost.

\*

Curious, they still look at her. She stops.

All of a sudden she gets all her strength together, runs into the cold water and dives into the ocean. She comes up to the surface and screams out loud. A painful and pore-entering scream. A burst of energy that the shock of the cold produces in her body.

She breathes fast and heavily. Then she dives again and we dive under water with her, seeing magical landscapes with high seaweeds flowing in the waves.

126 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE - DAY

126

Rona runs out of the ocean, getting to the shore as quickly as she can.

She dries her wet body with a towel and gets dressed as quickly as she possibly can to escape the wind.

127 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / LOCAL SHOP - DAY

127

With wet hair, red skin and a huge frantic smile on her face, she buys groceries in the shop.

128 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

128

Rona takes a hot shower and cleans everything up.

129 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

129

Rona bakes bread while speaking on the phone (video call) with her dad.

His voice feels frantic. He looks disheveled. There is loud music in the background. She asks him to lower it, so she can hear him better. He doesn't lower the music, instead he just talks louder and in high speed. We see him drinking while talking.

ANDREW (O.S.)

*Talks about what got broken at the farm and that she was right:  
All the caravan windows got blown out by the gale. And that there is a reason behind that - because now he knows how to renovate. It's gonna be amazing. He has made some great plans, not just for the caravan, but for the whole farm. He doesn't need to sell it, because he contacted the bank to get a loan.*

RONA

Dad?

He continues talking without really listening to her. Rona stops immediately what she is doing.

RONA (CONT'D)

(alerted)

Dad, you have to take your medicine and go to sleep! This is really important. Like you did last time and you managed to do it very well!

ANDREW (O.S.)

*Says that he can't bother with this now, much greater things are waiting. She will see.*

RONA

Dad, you are getting high. You have  
to be careful please.

And then he hangs up. Rona stays quiet.

RONA (CONT'D)

Fuck.

She picks up the phone and calls her mum.

RONA (CONT'D)

*Tells ANNIE that dad is getting  
high, if she can go and take a  
look. Offers that she can come over  
to look after him.*

ANNIE (O.S.)

*Tries to calm Rona down. She will  
go and look for him tomorrow. There  
is nothing that Rona can do right  
now.*

Rona stares ahead. Worried. The tremors are starting.

129A EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

129A

Rona stands outside Rose Cottage and watches the night sky  
with millions of stars.

130 OMITTED

130

131 INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER - DAY

131

It's the last day of group therapy for Rona, Samir and the  
two other participants that started with them. Before the  
ceremony, Amanda takes Rona away from the group.

AMANDA

*Says that Saíd passed away last  
night, they got the news this  
morning. He overdosed from a fatal  
drug cocktail. She doesn't want to  
announce that in front of  
everybody, but she feels like Rona  
should know that.*

Rona is in shock.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

*Says a blessing and comforting  
words.*

But for Rona the whole scene now takes place as if in a trance. She watches everyday life take place outside the window.

They are about to celebrate 12 weeks of sobriety. The big sign on the wall says "You made it!".

Rona and the other two get their "90 day chip". Everybody is excited, only Saíd is missing.

RONA

(when it is her turn)

*Says what she is thankful for and  
what she is looking forward to.*

We barely hear what she says. Everybody wishes her the best.

132 EXT/INT. LONDON / TREATMENT CENTER / ART ROOM - CONTINUOUS 32

Rona takes Saíd's drawing of the dog with the burning tail off the wall.

She rolls it up carefully and leaves the building. The sun is shining bright on her face.

133 EXT. LONDON / CANAL - CONTINUOUS

133

With the drawing in her hand, she walks along the canal. She sees kids playing, everything seems bright and clear. The sound of the water, the birdsong. Everything weirdly sharp and crisp.

She calls ANNIE, *saying that she is 90 days sober today*. She tries to sound happy, but can hardly hide the tears.

RONA

*Says she was thinking about coming  
up to Orkney - just for a few days.  
It's been quite a few years since  
her last time. If she could stay at  
Mum's place?*

ANNIE

Of course. Is everything ok?

Rona clenches her hands, cramps her body together. Tears are starting to fall.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Rona?

RONA

All good, mum. I just need some fresh air.

134

INT. LONDON / MOVING TRAIN - DAY

134

Rona in the train towards Orkney. Headphones on. She stares through the window as the landscape starts to change.

All her dreams broken. She closes her eyes, the music disappears - we hear the tremors getting louder and more aggressive.

N12

NERD LAYER / MANIC DEPRESSION

N12

**We see little Rona as a child gathering and gluing plants on paper.**

RONA (V.O.)

The past follows us. Energy never expires.

**She is running into a bedroom where Andrew is lying in bed, eyes open but motionless.**

**She wants to show him the plants, get a reaction from him - but he seems to be dead inside, unable to show any emotion.**

**We see a wave rolling towards the land and then we fly on as if we are the continuation of the wave.**

RONA (V.O.)

The energy of waves, carried across the ocean, changes into noise and heat and vibrations that are absorbed into the land and passed through the generations.

**At night, Rona stands alone outside Rose Cottage - smoking a cigarette and watching the sky.**

RONA (V.O.)

The Marine Traffic and Flight Radar websites show, in real time, the paths of all vessels at sea and all commercial aircraft in the sky. A light that moves above the cottage is a Lufthansa flight from Los Angeles to Frankfurt.

**Rona in front of her computer at night. We see a computer screen showing all kinds of movements across a virtual sky.**

RONA (V.O.)

Asteroids are monitored if they come too close to Earth. Currently 25 asteroids are at risk of coming close to Earth, but none of them is a real threat.

(MORE)

75.

RONA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You can monitor the path of the  
International Space Station and  
find out when it is passing over.  
On twitter, you can chat to crew.  
Tonight it flies over Orkney.

**We see Rona uploading a picture of Seaweed on twitter to the ISS crew. They respond to her immediately. She starts chatting with them about her discoveries.**

135 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

135

Rona stands alone outside Rose Cottage - smoking a cigarette and watching the night sky. She is freezing despite her warm jacket.

The sky is bright, so full of stars. One of them moving. It's the ISS.

When we take a closer look we can see she is crying.

136 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / CHURCH - DAY

136

Rona joins a Wednesday Coffee Morning. Lots of Papay locals are eating homebakes and drinking tea and coffee. Lively chatter all around her.

Rona is sitting and being a part of the group - still a bit shy, but she allows herself to engage in conversations.

136A EXT/INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / NORTH HILL - WINDY WINTER DAY 136A

Rona walks up the hill to the little glass house. This time she enters. It has a massive window looking out over the North Hill.

Left and right she sees the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. The wind is blowing so that the waves are coming towards her and it seems as if the island is moving.

Rona takes out the little compass that she had around her neck and checks where it's pointing: North.

RONA

(in marine terms, as if talking to  
a crew on a ship)  
Tells the crew to prepare for  
change of course and go north.  
Dangerous water ahead.

The sound world changes and with Rona, we are not in a little glass house anymore, we hear the acoustic of being on a ship.

She is steering the island around an iceberg.

137

INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

137

Rona works very concentrated on a biology paper about seaweed. Everything is full of notes and sketches.

When one cigarette is about to die, she lights the second one with the first.

Her phone rings. She stops working, not sure who is calling at that time of the night. It's her dad, *calling from a psychiatry ward in Aberdeen*. His speech is slowed down as if he was given heavy medication to calm him down.

RONA

Dad?

ANDREW

*Says that they are keeping him there without his consent. That she needs to get him out immediately. He has been taken South without his consent.*

RONA

*Says she is not sure if she can do that, because they have to keep him there until he is better. Like last time.*

ANDREW

*Start accusing Rona of having called the police!*

RONA

(distressed)

Dad, I didn't! It wasn't me.

ANDREW

*Gets mad, that she is lying and that everybody is teaming up against him, to keep him locked away.*

RONA

That's not true, dad! Why would we? Everybody is trying to take care of you.

ANDREW

I went for a climb and I knew what I was doing. You are only trying to control me! All of you are! And you are on their side.

Rona hangs up.

138 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE - DAY

138

Rona walks on the shore. No more headphones. She walks fast, breathes heavily.

Suddenly she stops and bends over. The wood falls down. Her hand starts shaking, she closes her eyes and breathes deeply. She hears the tremors are even louder and heavier than before.

She sits on the ground, puts her head between her knees. The tremors lead us to..

139 INT. LONDON / RANDOM FLAT 1

139

We see glimpses, drunken memory flashes, rather than scenes:

She is stripping for a couple in their apartment, so drunk that she almost passes out. They are laughing about it.

140 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE - DAY

140

Rona is still at the shore on her knees and slowly gets up.

141 INT. LONDON / RANDOM FLAT 2 - NIGHT

141

Rona is having sex with a random guy, one of Daynin's work colleagues from the Fancy Club Bar. She is so drunk, her head is being knocked against the wall while the guy is having sex with her. She barely realizes.

142 EXT. LONDON / RANDOM FLAT 3 - DAY

142

Rona is sleeping fully dressed on the dirty floor outside an unknown door, next to a staircase.

143 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE - DAY

143

Rona is at the waterside now, putting cold water on her face.

144 OMITTED

144

145 OMITTED

145

146 INT. LONDON / NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

146

We see a flash of Rona stumbling through a crowded dance floor. Falling on the ground between all the people.

- 147 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT 147  
Rona falls into the bed. An exorcism is ending.
- 148 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY 148  
Much calmer now, Rona is printing out her biology paper and starts correcting it.
- 149 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / AIRPORT - DAY 149  
A little plane is landing on the one lane of the airport. A few people get off, one of them is ANNIE.  
Rona waits for her at the gate.
- 150 EXT/INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE / KITCHEN - DAY 150  
Annie and Rona eat freshly baked bread with jam. The little china doll is sitting on one of the shelves. In general Rose Cottage now has a bit more life to it. The kitchen is clean and tidy. ANNIE seems relieved about that.
- ANNIE  
*Likes the bread.*
- Rona made it herself. The atmosphere is a bit distant and awkward. ANNIE seems to carefully assess what state Rona is in.
- ANNIE (CONT'D)  
*How much longer does Rona plan to stay?*
- Rona shrugs.
- RONA  
*Until spring maybe.*
- Silence.
- ANNIE seems worried, but knows that there is very little she can do to convince her daughter.
- 150A INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY 150A  
ANNIE takes in all the paper and scribbles about seaweed.
- RONA  
*Asks if mum knew that seaweed can change the world? Cows fed with seaweed produce less methane emissions.*
- (MORE)

RONA (CONT'D)

*It grows much faster than onshore plants, requires no fresh water no fertilizers and can be used as a soil fertilizer and for absorbing carbon.*

ANNIE

*Says she doesn't really know much about seaweed.*

ANNIE takes in her daughter, realizes that some sort of spark is coming back.

151 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / SHORE - DAY

151

Rona and Annie are walking along the shore, they find a dead bird.

Everything full of seaweed around them.

152 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / NEAR KNAP OF HOWAR - DAY

152

Rona and Annie walk past the Knap of Howar.

ANNIE

*Says that Andrew is being released next week and coming back home. He has seen a psychiatrist and seems to be doing better.*

RONA

*Wants to know where he will be living.*

ANNIE

*Back on the farm. You know him. He doesn't want to be anywhere else.*

RONA

*I can come to the mainland and help. Do groceries for him maybe.*

Annie sees that Rona is worried.

ANNIE

*Try not to worry too much. He's been there many times before. You need to concentrate on yourself, Rona. Says that dad has dealt with this his whole life. You know that. And that she has to move on to make sure she gets better.*

Rona doesn't know what to respond.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
I had to do the same, you know.

RONA  
*Says that she blamed religion as  
the reason for the divorce.*

ANNIE  
It's more complicated than that.

The atmosphere between is different this time, more respect from Rona towards her.

153 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / WHITE BEACH - CONTINUOUS 153

Rona and Annie are coming too a magical beach with white sand.

RONA  
It must have been so hard for you,  
when Dad was ill when I was little,  
looking after me and the farm by  
yourself.

ANNIE  
He was away for months at a time,  
those winters...  
But God helped me through it. That  
was when he finally got through to  
me. That was when I found him.

Rona looks at her Annie for a moment. This time she just lets her be. No judgement anymore.

N13 NERD LAYER / THE SHOALING PROCESS N13

**We see the waves crushing against the cliff next to the Outrun. Little Rona stands close to the edge watching the power of nature crashing against the Stack O'Roo.**

RONA (V.O.)  
The physical laws of the 'shoaling process' explain how waves increase in height, then break as they reach shallower water near the shore.  
Waves break when the wave height is more than one-seventh of the wavelength. There are different types of breaking waves: spilling, plunging, collapsing, surging. But although they collapse in different manners, there is only so much height any wave can sustain before it comes crashing down.

**Rona and Annie run into the water at the white beach and go swimming together.**

RONA (V.O.)

I know about the power of wind and water, of erosion and corrosion. I grew up with it. Massive metal octagons used for renewable energy are being effortlessly broken by the sea. Thrown against the shore. One day the Stack O'Roo will fall. The islands are getting smaller all the time and whole islands will vanish, it's just a matter of time.

154 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

154

It's dark at Rose Cottage. Rona, wearing a beanie and gloves, puts a chair outside the cottage, and sets up a thermos with hot tea and several layers of blankets.

She looks like she might be going to an open air movie.

And then she watches the sky: it's a magical night of shooting stars and Merry Dancers (Northern Lights). The whole sky appears in wonderful and surreal color shifts.

RONA

*Lets out a loud "Bloody Hell".*

The nature in this moment is so incredibly beautiful and surreal. Nothing is missing. She is at peace.

155 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY - DAY

155

Rona walks with the Papay Walking Committee around the island. The whole group waves at every car that passes.

ELENA

*Tells Rona about her torch collection: she has 75 different torches at home.*

Since it's so windy they have to almost yell to understand each other. *They point out Fair Isle to Rona, saying that on very clear days you can see it, but not today.*

WALKING COMMITTEE MEMBER 1

*Says that is actually impossible to see the Fair Isle, it's too far away.*

## WALKING COMMITTEE MEMBER 2

*Talks about hallucination and how things on the horizon under certain weather conditions can appear upside down.*

Rona is enjoying the company.

156 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY - NIGHT

156

*They walk for hours and when it's dark we still see them walking with a few torches in a wide shot.*

157 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / AIRPORT - DAY

157

*On a foggy day, Rona heads to the airport with just a small backpack. But both the flight and the ferry are cancelled due to fog. No traveling to the mainland today.*

## ELENA

*Wishes her Merry Christmas!  
She invites her to come join her family dinner.*

## RONA

*Thanks but prefers to join them another day.*

158 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - EVENING

158

*Instead she "celebrates" by herself in Rose Cottage.*

*Loud music on, she cooks fish.*

## RONA

*Starts talking to herself as if she were discussing cocktails with the bartender, but refusing to drink them because of the quality of ingredients. She is full of expert knowledge and seriously engaged in the conversation while in reality she is just drinking coke.*

159 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

159

*Rona raves to electronic music by herself in her cottage.*

*Out of breath, she chills in bed and watches old TV comedy on her laptop (Father Ted Christmas Special) laughing out loud at the silly humor.*

160 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / HOSTEL - DAY

160

A local meeting in the hostel. The island is getting ready for the big annual art event, the Papay Gyro Nights. An international art festival, held in the middle of winter.

As they do every year, pretty much everyone on Papay is involved with some sort of work for the festival.

One artist is already there and has brought a bunch of satellite dishes.

Rona gets assigned to help set up banners. She puts up some of her seaweed drawings on the wall in the hostel.

161 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

161

Rona is in front of her laptop. She has a video call with Gloria.

They haven't spoken in a long time. The atmosphere is awkward, but warm.

GLORIA

*Wants to know how Rona is doing.*

RONA

*Tells her a bit about her life alone on the island.*

GLORIA

*Wants to know if Rona is really doing ok?*

RONA

*(nods) she is probably better than she has been for a very long time. She tells Gloria about her dad who was in hospital.*

GLORIA

*What happened?*

RONA

*Tells that he climbed the church in Kirkwall and yelled at the people that god doesn't exist.*

Both have to laugh about the absurdity of it.

GLORIA

*Will he be ok?*

RONA

*Yeah, he is back on the farm. Says that he'll probably have a depression soon. It's the cycle.*

GLORIA

I'm sorry.

Rona smiles. Silence.

GLORIA / RONA

*Start chatting again about this and that, people they know, Gloria's new hairstyle, all light stuff and fun - they make each other laugh.*

They become friends again.

162 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / GYRO NIGHTS / VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY 162

## MONTAGE:

Harbour. Artists and other guests arrive on Papay. They come from all over the globe.

Street outside shop and hostel. The island starts to become alive, more people walking around or riding bikes than usual.

Outside the school a dadaistic performance is being held. Three geese watch.

Community hall. A dark installation with ocean sounds. Rona wanders through it with Elena.

Beach. In a challenging performance, a young woman in latex is burying herself in seaweed while moving in slow motion. It's a culture clash between traditional farmers and modern art.

163 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

163

Rona sits in Rose Cottage, her finished essay in her hands. Proudly she puts it in a big envelope. Ready to send.

Something outside catches her interest.

With her binoculars she watches a young artist putting up some giant canvasses around an old farm building. The canvasses get blown over by the wind again and again until he gives up.

164 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / HOLLAND FARM - NIGHT

164

To finish the festival, all guests and locals gather in front of the big Holland farm and walk as one large group to the shore, everyone with torches in their hands.

A cleansing ritual with an archaic touch to it. Rona walks in silence, staring at the flame. Through the fire she makes eye contact with the young artist whose canvas lost its fight against the wind.

At the end of the procession, everyone puts their torches together to make a bonfire by the shore.

Rona looks wonderful and mysterious. A glowing spark of life is coming back to her.

165 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - NIGHT

165

Rona makes a fire in her kitchen at Rose Cottage.

RONA

*Talks about how the different uses  
of fire are fascinating to her. Has  
he ever thought about bonfires  
being a controlled form of chaos?*

The young artist is there with her, standing shy in the corner, smiling, freezing - not really knowing where to sit.

Her place isn't set up for two people, she fetches a second chair from the bedroom that she normally uses as a bookshelf.

They *chat about seaweed*.

YOUNG ARTIST

*Asks what she misses most from the  
outside world.*

A moment of silence before she answers.

RONA

Nothing.

But the break was a little too long and her smile a bit too sad.

They warm their feet at the fire. There is a totally different energy in Rose Cottage.

After a moment of silence, he starts slowly caressing her ankle. She lets it happen.

N14 NERD LAYER / FIRE

N14

**We see the embers of the bonfire fly in the wind.**

RONA (V.O.)

In the time of the Viking earls, hilltop fires were used as beacons to warn of enemies approaching. In the past they were lit on the days of Yule, Beltane, Johnsmas and Halloman.

We use fire as warnings, to come together, to burn the past.

**We see running around the bonfire by herself, no one is there except her.**

## RONA

My body is a continent. My grinding jaws are the tectonic plates, my teeth the clouds and when I orgasm it is an earthquake.

166 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / HARBOUR - MORNING

166

Next morning. Rona waves at a ferry that is just departing.

There is a warmth and a glow on her face that we haven't seen for a long time.

167 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / DYKE BY AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

167

As she walks home alone, a hint of a smile is crossing her face.

She passes the airport and stops at a dyke. She sits on the old stone wall, watching a little bird close to her. She takes a photo of the bird.

Elena stops by with the post car and hands her a package.

168 INT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

168

With the opened package next to her, Rona uses what was inside to dye her hair orange. She looks at herself in the mirror, now her hair has a vibrant orange color.

169 OMITTED

169

170 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / GROATIE BUCKIE SHORE - DAY

170

Uplifted, Rona with orange hair, goes for a walk along the shore. No more headphones. Just her and the ocean.

She is looking for Groatie Buckies (little shells) at the beach.

Something catches her attention. She picks up a bottle of Finnish vodka between the seaweed. There is a little left in it.

She assesses the bottle, waits a long moment, looks around, thinks - and then she opens it. She puts the bottle to her nose and smells the Vodka.

It is almost as if she hears a sound, something bright. The sound of a sweet promise, of lightness and relief.

**We see a glimpse of Rona in full ecstasy on the dancefloor.**

171 OMITTED

171

172 INT. LONDON / PUB - NIGHT

172

Rona is hammered in the pub we saw at the very beginning, drinking the leftovers from strangers's glasses and getting kicked out by the bouncer.

173 EXT. LONDON / STREET OUTSIDE PUB - NIGHT

173

She walks along the street outside the pub leaving Daynin another message, saying that she got lost on the way to his house.

The car appears and the stranger offers to bring her to Daynin.

174 INT/EXT. LONDON / STRANGERS CAR - NIGHT

174

In the car she leaves another voicemail message, saying that a nice man is giving her a lift and that she is coming to his house now.

She hangs up. The man stops the car near a quiet spot by the canal.

He takes a heavy boot from the backseat and hits Rona hard on the head with it. She screams (now she is sober!), fights and wrestles with the guy.

Somehow she manages to get out of the car and runs into a park.

175 EXT. LONDON / PARK - CONTINUOUS

175

The guy runs right behind her. He is faster and pulls her to the ground. He rips her tights while violently hitting her head.

People who heard her screams come running over a bridge towards them. He lets go and runs to his car.

176 EXT. LONDON / PARK - NIGHT

176

Next thing Rona sees are the lights of an ambulance reflected on the grass. We hear that her phone is ringing.

177 INT. LONDON / HOSPITAL / INVESTIGATION ROOM - NIGHT

177

In the hospital they examine her and take pictures of her bruises.

178 INT. LONDON / HOSPITAL / HALLWAY - NIGHT

178

When she leaves the investigation room, Daynin is there. Rona is so happy to see him, he just looks worried.

179 EXT. LONDON / HOSPITAL - NIGHT

179

They go and smoke a cigarette together outside the hospital. It's the first time that she's seen him since he left. It's super weird, but very familiar at the same time.

RONA

*She says that he straight up  
managed to ignore all her messages.  
For two years in a row.*

DAYNIN

It's been quite a challenge to be honest.

RONA

*Jokes if she had known that it  
takes this to get to see him, she  
would have tried that sooner.*

They laugh together in this horrible situation. It's super awkward - but there's almost a flirtation in the air.

Her face is swollen and freshly bruised, she is wearing a hospital gown. With incredible gentleness he touches the tips of her hair that are dyed in blue. Her heart stops beating for a second.

Both smoke a second cigarette straight after the first one. *Small talk about his life. He has a new job, a new girlfriend.*

There is music and laughter that they can hear from a pub close by.

RONA (CONT'D)

*Asks if he wants to go to the pub?*

She's serious. The horror in Daynin's face.

It's pity. He can't hold her look for long.

DAYNIN

*Says he must leave.*

She finishes the second cigarette alone.

180 EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / GROATIE BUCKIE SHORE - DAY

180

Rona is still sniffing the vodka bottle. All the temptations. All the time she managed to stay sober. Nobody would ever find out.

She looks around. The weird seal is watching her again. And then she throws the bottle back again into the ocean.

We swim with the bottle for a little while, watching how it is thrown around by the power of the waves.

181

EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / EDGE OF NORTH HILL - DAY

181

We see Rona climbing down to a plateau, looking at the sea, staring at massive waves and heavy wind. The ocean seems wilder than before.

She starts lifting her arms and moving them slowly as if she were conducting the ocean. She moves her body more and more secure and faster, the waves and all of nature move in perfect sync with her.

A little melody starts and merges with the sound of the crashing waves, Rona starts moving her whole body now. It becomes a full body experience and it seems as if all the forces of nature are obeying her.

N15

NERD LAYER / THE BEAUTY OF LIFE IN SOBRIETY

N15

**We see Rona conducting the weather in several spaces of the islands now. At the Outrun, in the glass house. She breaks up the rules of physics and time.**

RONA (V.O.)

Whatever the tremors are, they will always be part of me.

She is one with all the powers around her. The music gets louder like a symphony and now we only see waves crashing against the rocks, ascending and descending, lifting again - all in perfect harmony obeying the rhythm of the music.

**SHE IS CONDUCTING THE WEATHER.**

The montage slowly merges with shots from Rona's childhood, growing up on the farm, bottle feeding a sheep, playing with stones.

We see Annie holding baby Rona tight while Andrew is being pushed towards the helicopter. We hear the tremors and witness them getting merged with the sound of the helicopter blades.

Rona is standing up on a high cliff at the end of North Hill.

RONA (V.O.)

The edge is where I come from, the edge is my home.

**The montage ends with adult Rona getting undressed on the shore and dancing naked in the moonlight. She enters the water and dives in.**

**Magical underwater footage of swimming seals. We swim with them. Elegantly, dancing through the water.**

182

INT/EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - DAY

182

In Rose Cottage, Rona packs up her stuff. This time for good. Sunbeams shine through the dirty windows. Winter is over and she is leaving.

She leaves a picture with pressed seaweed and puts it on a shelf. Then she puts her little compass next to it. Her gifts for the house and the people who will be there in summer.

Elena parks in front of the house and pops her head in.

ELENA

*Asks if she needs any help?*

RONA

*Says she is fine.*

ELENA

*Insists on taking the backpack*

RONA

(smiles)

*She'll carry it.*

ELENA

Well, see you at the airport. Lucky me, I have shift today!

After Elena has left, Rona takes in the drawing of the dog with the burning tail. She takes it off carefully, almost tenderly. Looks at it for a long moment before deciding what to do.

183

EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY / ROSE COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

183

Rona shuts the door of Rose Cottage and leaves the key in the hiding spot.

Then she puts her forehead against the door. An intimate moment of saying goodbye to the house.

She lights a cigarette and with that same flame, she burns the drawing. Sets him free. We see the embers flying in the wind.

Alternative: she packs it in her trousers pocket.

184

EXT. ORKNEY PAPAY - DAY

184

While walking to the airfield with her big backpack, she suddenly hears the Crex-Crex of a corncrake. She stops cold, can't believe it, hadn't thought about that sound for a while.

Suddenly a corncrake runs across the street from left to right, just in front of her.

A mix of happiness, surprise and laughter on her face.

THE END