

# The Midwich Cuckoos

Episode 2

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An adaptation of the novel by John Wyndham

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Pre-titles: A series of fast intercutting news and online footage.

MALE TV REPORTER 1 (V.O.)

*As the weeks pass, the pretty  
Hampshire town of Midwich finds  
itself at last able to return to  
some semblance of normality...*

LIBRARY TV FOOTAGE of the morning after the blackout. People covered in blankets, police cars, helicopters... smoke and flame, frightened faces, people hugging...

FEMALE TV REPORTER 2 (V.O.)

*The huge power surge that left over  
seven hundred people unconscious  
from electrical shock and  
tragically killed three local  
citizens still haunts the town's  
population...*

Now we see the streets are normal - people are shopping, RACHEL passes with her kid DAVID in a push-chair and glances briefly at camera...

FEMALE TV REPORTER 2 (O.C. CONT'D)

*But the community has bonded over  
the shared grief and gradually  
families are putting their lives  
back together...*

MARY-ANN sits in Hobbs Dawson's office being interviewed... a caption tells us her name. *Mary-Ann Phillips. Resident of Midwich.* Her assistant, GARY, is in the background, looking self-conscious.

MARY-ANN

*It was terrifying really. One  
minute I was at home eating my  
supper. Thinking about what to  
watch on the TV. The next minute I  
woke up, I was flat out in the  
living room, there was red wine all  
over the carpet, I can hear  
helicopters. The TV's still on,  
it's breakfast news, and on the  
news is Midwich, my own town. It  
was like a dream...*

More images of Midwich. People jogging, walking dogs... over this:

TV REPORTER 3 (V.O.)

*Perhaps, Miranda, we will never  
know what happened that late spring  
evening.*

JANE is approached by a JOURNALIST but walks by... JANELLE and SADIE blow kisses towards the camera...

TV REPORTER 3 (V.O. CONT'D)

*The government is describing it as a blue moon event, one in a million, deeply upsetting for those involved, but not something we expect ever to see again in our lifetime*

GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN

(on camera)

...all we can do now is support the people of this town as they rebuild their lives and give them the privacy and the space to do so...

In MARY-ANN's office.

MARY-ANN

As far as I'm concerned, Midwich remains the best place to live in the world. I was born here and there's never a day when I wish I lived anywhere else.

A big smile. GARY nods. A crackle on the TV, a sense of threat, and to BLACK.

**TITLE: THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS.**

2

**EXT. GRAVEYARD. MIDWICH. DAY.**

2

Windswept graveyard outside Midwich. Hills beyond. Emptiness.

PAUL, in 2020, clean-shaven, pale-faced, in a suit, is standing at a grave.

Actually two graves.

One is *DEBORAH KNOWLES 1984 - 2020*

The other is *SAM KNOWLES*. A tiny gravestone next door to Deborah's. Just one date. May 5th 2020.

*Taken too soon.*

PAUL looks at the graves. His face hides all emotion. The countryside around the graveyard is beautiful.

In on PAUL's face. Memories. Loss.

Then he hears a car. He looks up.

A black car on the brow of the hill. BRYONY gets out. She approaches PAUL. Big skies. Crows in the trees.

They meet.

BRYONY

Station said you were here. I tried your phone.

PAUL

I thought the meeting was at three.

BRYONY

We had to move it forward. He has to be back in London at 5 so....

She gestures. Someone in the car. They start to walk back towards it... she speaks quietly.

BRYONY (CONT'D)

How are you?

PAUL

I'm fine, thank you.

BRYONY

You know there's a local therapist available, Susannah Zellaby, we've put her on a government contract...

He nods, unconvinced. PAUL sees someone else get out of the car. WESTCOTT. Suited.

BERNARD

DCI Knowles? Bernard Westcott. May I offer you my deepest condolences.

Somehow they don't sound deep enough. PAUL nods but does not reply. Consummate diplomat that he is, BERNARD moves on.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

The last of the national press are leaving I hear...

PAUL

Yes. We're down to weekly briefings now.

BERNARD

That's good. Very good.

PAUL

What's good?

BERNARD

It's good that they bought the story.

Beat. What does he mean? PAUL waits.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Shall we take a walk? There's something you and I need to discuss.

3

**EXT. MIDWICH SCHOOL, OUTSIDE AREA. DAY.**

3

TOM is on lunch break-duty at the school where he now teaches.

He watches NATASHA and SADIE who are in deep conversation, then sees NOREEN watching them, standing alone.

Something about this girl gets to him. He approaches her.

TOM

You OK Noreen?

NOREEN

Yeah.

TOM

You've been a bit quiet recently.

NOREEN

I'm always quiet. You'll learn that Mr Cork.

TOM

Well. Anything you want to talk about...

But now the bell goes and lunch-time is over.

NOREEN can't wait to get away, passes him and averts her gaze. TOM watches her go. Then sees NATASHA looking at him as she passes, a secret in her eyes too?

4

**INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, REAR BEDROOM. EVENING.**

4

It's later. ZOE and TOM's house is now beautifully unpacked and very "them". Tasteful throws etc. Lots of books. Some on shelves, some stacked on the floor.

In a small first-floor office room, (where Zoe saw the kid's picture in ep 1) TOM is at his computer. Lots of homework and school text books on the desk.

He hears the door.

ZOE (O.C.)  
(from hall)  
I'm back...

TOM  
(loud)  
I'm just finishing marking.

ZOE walks up the stairs. Do we sense that her face has a secret?

She walks up, past her mother's family clock, and into the room. Watches TOM doing what he loves most.

ZOE  
How's it going?

TOM  
Some of these kids are amazing.  
They make Thomas Hardy actually interesting.

She smiles, waits. He hits a button, turns.

TOM (CONT'D)  
You're early.

ZOE  
Work was quiet. I just thought why not? I got you something. I saw it in a shop near Waterloo. Thought you'd like it.

ZOE hands TOM a wrapped present.

TOM  
You didn't need to.

ZOE  
Open it.

He opens it. It is a small box. Inside is a pregnancy test. He stops dead, looks up.

TOM  
What... is this?

ZOE  
What does it look like?

Beat.

TOM  
Is this a joke Zoe...? Because it's not funny....

ZOE  
It's not a joke.

He looks again. The world seems to go slightly quiet.

TOM

Could it be a mistake?

ZOE

I did two tests. One three days ago. This one today. I wanted to be sure.

He stands. Suddenly, deeply moved.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I think it was the night of the lightning strike. I felt it that next morning. I thought I was just being emotional... the shock of the whole thing...

She smiles but is deeply moved, anxious, overwhelmed. In on TOM's face.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Aren't you happy?

TOM

Of course... I just thought after last time...

ZOE

I know.

TOM

...What that fucking doctor said  
...

A wave of anger, emotion, relief seems to rise up in him. It surprises him and us.

ZOE

It's OK.

She kisses him. They embrace. Deep emotion in both of them.

ZOE (CONT'D)

This could be their room. Like we always thought...

TOM

Yeah. Back to marking on the kitchen table.

She laughs. They look around the room. Yes. This will be the baby's room. TOM smiles and holds her. Over his shoulder ZOE can see the clock on the book-case on the landing.

She stares at it with triumphant defiance.

5           **EXT. COLIN'S DOCTOR'S SURGERY. EVENING.**

5

ZOE and TOM walk into the GP surgery.

They pass PAUL as he walks out. PAUL looks for a moment at ZOE, a strange look?

TOM

Morning.

PAUL nods at them but says nothing. Gets in his car and drives off. TOM watches him go. What was all that?

6           **INT. COLIN'S DOCTOR'S SURGERY, ROOM 1. EVENING.**

6

COLIN is with ZOE and TOM.

COLIN

We'll arrange the scan in a few weeks and you'll get a letter from the hospital in due course but it all seems fine. Congratulations.

He smiles. Is there something a little forced?

ZOE

We've had some issues before. We wanted to make sure you were aware...

COLIN

Yes I can see that from the records. We'll ensure you're on the appropriate pathway.

ZOE

Thank you.

They get up, walk out. The door shuts.

Then COLIN's face changes. He looks serious, scared.

He breathes. Picks up the phone.

7           **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, KITCHEN. EVENING.**

7

SUSANNAH making supper. CASSIE is watching TV in the living room. A glimpse of CASSIE's face, she looks anxious, a few tears have been shed.

COLIN enters through the front door. Preoccupied. They've both been waiting for it. CASSIE turns to watch the TV studiously.

SUSANNAH gestures COLIN into the kitchen.



SUSANNAH

Come in here. I've got something I  
need to tell you.

COLIN walks into the kitchen... he seems almost in a daze...

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Close the door.

He does.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

It's about Cassie. Don't get angry,  
we've spoken, we're going to deal  
with it...

COLIN

Susannah. Paul Knowles came to see  
me. We need to talk.

Beat. Their eyes meet. And SUSANNAH just knows from his look  
that something very strange has happened indeed.

8      **INT. PAUL'S CAR. OUTSIDE MIDWICH. EVENING.**

8

PAUL is driving alone. Out of Midwich, on a dual carriageway.

He is troubled by what he is about to do.

Everything PAUL does here is somehow controlled, oddly numb,  
a man operating at a very deep level of grief.

As if to let go would mean the destruction of everything.

9      **EXT. JODIE'S HOUSE. CROYDON. EVENING.**

9

A suburban street. PAUL's car draws up. PAUL gets out.

He eyes the house. Knocks. No one in. He returns to his car  
and waits.

10      **INT. / EXT. PAUL'S CAR. / JODIE'S HOUSE. EVENING.**

10

PAUL looks up. He sees what he's been waiting for.

JODIE is walking along the street.

She walks up to the front door.

PAUL gets out the car.

PAUL

Jodie...

She turns.

JODIE

What are you doing here? I thought you didn't want to talk to me.

PAUL

I'm here on a police matter.

JODIE

(testy)

Was it about that Twix I stole from Smiths? It was twenty years ago. And I've eaten it....

He does not smile.

JODIE (CONT'D)

Better come in then.

11      **INT. JODIE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN. EVENING.**

11

It's a mess. Chaotic. Nothing cleared up. PAUL walks into the living room as JODIE drops her bag and goes into the kitchen at the back.

JODIE

Sorry about the mess, I was in a rush this morning. How long will this take because Steve's coming round later and I need to tidy up and cook.

PAUL

Steve?

JODIE

Yeah we're giving it another go. You want tea?

PAUL

Why are you giving it another go?

JODIE

None of your business. You want tea or not?

PAUL trying to sense - what does she know? How much is she hiding? She makes tea. He looks at photographs on the wall. JODIE and DEBORAH as kids and teenagers, with their DAD. PAUL breathes.

JODIE (CONT'D)

You were a real bastard to me after the funeral. You know that? I was in grief too. Maybe you didn't notice.

She's trying to provoke. But PAUL stays strangely calm. He pauses. He talks very quietly.

PAUL

Jodie I didn't come here in a personal capacity...

JODIE

You never do Paul. You're never personal about anything. Not with us. You loved my sister but you didn't want anything else attached to that. Not me, not my mum. You took Deborah off as far away as possible...

PAUL

Midwich is less than fifty miles away...

JODIE

Yeah but it's a different planet isn't it... "Not my world..." Even when she dies...

PAUL

Will you listen to me please?

He's still quiet here, no explosion. That's what silences her: his strange innerness. The kettle boils...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Something's happened. To do with May 5th. Now I could have come here with a support team. I said I wanted to come on my own, to talk to you.

This checks her.

JODIE

What are you talking about? What support team?

He speaks quietly. Slowly. As if through glue.

PAUL

Why are you back with Steve? Is there a particular reason? A personal reason?

She looks at him. Sensing he has guessed everything.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Because if that's the case, you need to call Steve and cancel tonight. And you need to come with me.

12

**INT. RACHEL AND CURTIS'S HOUSE, KITCHEN. DAY.**

12

It's morning. RACHEL and CURTIS's baby, DAVID, is crying in a high-chair. RACHEL is doing clothes. On the cork board is a notice announcing the weekly dates of the "Blackout Survivors Group".

In the hallway CURTIS is at the window watching across the road past his pest control van in his drive. He sees TOM drive up, park and take tins of paint, brushes, out of the back of the red car. But now he sees ZOE approach him from their front door with a letter in her hand.

RACHEL (O.C.)

Curtis can you help with this? It's not spinning properly again.

But CURTIS is watching. TOM reads the letter, they both look suddenly anxious and head inside. CURTIS watches, curious. DAVID cries.

Then CURTIS sees a letter also on their mat. To RACHEL SAUNDERS.

RACHEL (O.C.) (CONT'D)

(to DAVID)

All right baby, Mummy's coming...

CURTIS opens the letter. Stares.

RACHEL walks out, holding the baby.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Did you not hear me?

CURTIS

What is this?

He shows the letter to her but keeps hold of it. She reads. RACHEL's face. Holding her secret. Scared.

RACHEL

I was going to tell you.

CURTIS looking at her. Sudden quiet threat.

CURTIS

Going to tell me what...?

RACHEL

I don't know how it happened  
Curtis. I swear to God.

13

**INT. ZOE & TOM'S CAR. MIDWICH. DAY.**

13

TOM is driving as ZOE is re-reading the letter in the car. They are heading out of Midwich centre.

TOM drives, anxious, ZOE looks ahead at the road. Afraid. They've been here too many times before.

TOM drives the red car into the out-of-town hospital car park. The hospital serves several towns in the area and stands amidst fields and near the dual carriageway. It's somewhat modern and a little anonymous.

They enter the main reception. ZOE hands the letter to the young receptionist.

A look from the RECEPTIONIST.

A smile. Slightly strange.

ZOE and TOM walk through to D Wing. There are indeed signs about rebuilding, "closed for reconstruction" etc. Both of them are very anxious now, and hiding it.

                  ZOE  
It's what she said. Come on, we're  
late.

They walk on. Less and less people here, no nurses, no doctors.

They reach a lift. One is broken, one works. They have to wait for it.

The lift doors open. They get in. It's eerie, strange. The light flickers. TOM suddenly speaks.

TOM

Zoe..

ZOE

It's going to be fine. OK? It won't take long and you can get back to school.

He nods. Unconvinced. Anxious.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Tom. This feels different. I promise you.

The lift climbs, the light remains on the blink. It's unnerving. Reminds them...

The lift doors open at the fifth floor.

A simple sign on a small stand signals the way to go.

There is temporary lighting in place.

It's very strange, like a ghost hospital, like a closed section has been re-opened just for this purpose. No one else around.

They walk on.

They hear voices.

They approach a room that is more lit.

They enter.

17

**INT. WARD 300. DAY.**

17

In the large main room of the abandoned ward are a large group of Midwich women, maybe 40 of them, a few with partners. A bunch of plastic chairs have been found. And there are POLICE and OFFICIALS everywhere. SUITS. UNIFORMS. PAUL is there, COLIN, BRYONY.

ZOE

(to TOM)

What is this?

An OFFICIAL approaches with a sheet.

OFFICIAL

Name please?

ZOE

Zoe Sawyer.

OFFICIAL

And this is your partner?

ZOE

(Yes.) What's going on?

OFFICIAL

(smiling)

Just take a seat please.

ZOE looks at TOM in confusion. We see that MARY-ANN is there, sitting with SARAH. RACHEL is there with a tense-looking CURTIS. JANE sits alone. SUSANNAH is with CASSIE.

JODIE is there, sitting alone, she knows no one, a look of quiet shock on her face.

ZOE and TOM sit, anxious now. Something not right.

Something very wrong.

18

**INT. MIDWICH SCHOOL, CORRIDOR. DAY.**

18

Busy school, end of the day. NOREEN walks down a corridor. Then she happens to glance outside to see SADIE, JANELLE, NATASHA and a couple of other GIRLS talking with their MOTHERS to a TEACHER and DS REYNOLDS. Then they start to walk towards a police car together.

NOREEN

What's going on?

GIRL

It's about May the 5th. They were inside the zone.

NOREEN

So?

GIRL

God knows. They think they're so fucking special.

NOREEN watches as they get into the car.

*A feeling that she should be in that car.*

19

**INT. WARD 300. DAY.**

19

The room is full now. ZOE sits in her seat, wants to do something. But the police presence upsets and worries her. She whispers to TOM.

ZOE

Tom what is this?

But now the OFFICIAL nods to PAUL who in turn walks over to COLIN, who gathers himself. Then COLIN stands up and addresses the group.

COLIN

Hello. Um. Thank you for coming everyone. I appreciate this must seem a bit strange so please let me explain. My name is Dr Colin McAfferty. For those that don't know me, I am the lead and accountable GP for the East Midwich practice. The reason you're here today is that DCI Paul Knowles and I need to talk to you about what happened on the night of May 5th.

Beat. Looks across the room. A sense of impending fear...

20      **INT. WARD 300, SIDE ROOM. DAY.**

20

In a kitted-out side room, screens, computers, an OPS TEAM at work, BRYONY watches the waiting room. Eyes on the screen. Anxious.

COLIN

(on screen)

We've asked you here today along with a partner or someone you trust ...

21      **INT. WARD 300. DAY.**

21

ZOE watches as COLIN talks.

COLIN

...because, as you will recall, the government's medical teams took extensive tests from every victim of the Midwich blackout. Our intention was to check that there were no ongoing health concerns. And I'm happy to say there weren't.

Beat.

COLIN (CONT'D)

But what the tests did show and ensuing events have confirmed is that something occurred that night.

COLIN is suddenly not sure of himself, out of his comfort zone. Forty women's eyes upon him.

COLIN (CONT'D)

It appears... that every woman of child-bearing age who was in the zone - it seems that you have all fallen pregnant.



SUSANNAH, who knew this was coming, looks around at the women who stare at each other and at their partners if they have them, in shock.

CASSIE's eyes look to the floor. She knew already too. She avoids SUSANNAH's gaze.

RACHEL looks to CURTIS but he does not return her gaze.

JANE sits quiet, still.

JODIE breathes quietly.

MARY-ANN glances at SARAH.

PAUL's face is totally calm but it hides a strange and unbearable pain.

COLIN (CONT'D)

I want to reassure you that you're all healthy, and we see no sign as yet that your foetus is anything other than normal. But how this happened we do not yet know.

CURTIS

What do you mean you don't know?

COLIN shifts...

RACHEL

Are you saying it's... what are you saying?

Another MAN stands. 33 years old. MARTIN. He is with his partner CLARE.

MARTIN

What the hell is this? Why have you brought us all...?

COLIN

(interrupting)

If I could just finish? The government is, as we speak, conducting a full investigation into that night. As part of that I need you to work with us medical professionals so we can help you understand what has happened to you. We will need to do more scans and tests. Should you choose to terminate the child, we will offer that service here, in a special clinic, where you will be well looked after. But we need to talk to you about confidentiality...

ZOE

Hold on a second. Are you implying we're all pregnant... for the same reason?

COLIN glances at PAUL.

COLIN

We can't say anything with any medical certainty at this time...

ZOE's eyes fill with fear and anger.

ZOE

But you are saying something. You're making assumptions.

COLIN

I'm really not...

CURTIS

Is this a joke?

COLIN

All you women here are at the exact same stage of pregnancy. We are therefore drawn to date conception to the night of the Blackout.

ZOE

Well clearly we all enjoyed ourselves that night. Is that a crime?

COLIN

It's not that simple.

ZOE

What do you mean?

What does he mean? He seems awkward.

But now a WOMAN stands and looks at JANE. This is CLARE.

CLARE

Excuse me. Miss Fellows? What are you doing here?

Beat.

CLARE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry but... She teaches my son... are you pregnant? It's just... (quietly) You're gay aren't you?

ZOE

What are you talking about? So what if she is gay?

JANE says nothing, looks down, in acute embarrassment...  
SUSANNAH looks to her, this is JANE'S worst nightmare.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Gay women can get pregnant too. At least they can in London.

COLIN

Please can we refrain from...

ZOE

You have heard of sperm donors?

CLARE

Well is that what she did? Did you?

JANE can't bring herself to speak.

COLIN

Listen...

But ZOE stands.

ZOE

Excuse me. I'd like to leave. This is nothing to do with us.

COLIN

Sorry... I don't remember your name.

SUSANNAH shifts, uncomfortable. A sense that COLIN is losing control here.

ZOE

Zoe Sawyer. My partner and I came to see you three days ago Dr McAfferty and you told me my baby was fine and my pregnancy was normal. Tom, let's go.

TOM rises. PAUL speaks for the first time.

PAUL

Please sit down.

PAUL speaks quietly, with authority. They turn to look at him.

His grief-stricken face. ZOE knows what has happened to him and is polite.

ZOE

No. You can't tell me what to do.

PAUL  
I'm afraid I can.

He walks forward. JODIE watches him. He has the quiet gravity of a man who has experienced extreme loss. It gives him a weird undeniable authority.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I know that this is a shock to you all but there was no easy way of telling you, and it's vitally important that what has happened to you all does not go outside this room. For this reason we brought you here together and for this reason, before anything else happens, everyone here must sign this.

He holds it up. He nods and a FUNCTIONARY hands them round. They are official secrets act documents.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
The Blackout event has been classified a National Red Level Threat.

Beat. Murmurs of shock, incomprehension.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
A red-level threat means that although we can as yet identify no actual immediate danger, we are dealing with an unexplained phenomenon that could be the result of a hostile attack from a foreign or domestic agent...

MARTIN  
What?

SARAH  
Do you mean terrorism?

Murmurs of distress in the room.

ZOE  
I'm pregnant... how can that be a hostile act...?

She glances to TOM. Unsure...

PAUL  
Some external force, as yet unidentified, caused a major power cut that night and may... also have caused you all to conceive.

Now it hits. Murmurs... fear... ZOE looks to TOM. TOM's face drains of colour. JODIE sits quiet, she has already heard much of this from PAUL.

RACHEL

What about the power surge? The lightning strike...

A murmur of discontent sweeps the room.

CURTIS

You lied to us.

PAUL

Let's just stay calm.

SARAH

Was there a lightning strike or not?

ZOE

Hold on. What evidence have you got for any of this? That the blackout connects to any of us conceiving...

PAUL

Please sit down.

ZOE

No. Either you prove this to us or you let us leave. You can't force us to stay against our will.

CURTIS

Is that a camera?

He looks at a small box in the ceiling...

22

**INT. WARD 300, SIDE ROOM. DAY.**

22

BRYONY watches the scene through CCTV. ARMY PERSONNEL with her.

BRYONY

You want me to go in?

BERNARD

(on video-cam from London)

No. The local touch is better. This was always going to be the tricky bit.

23

**INT. WARD 300. DAY.**

23

CURTIS

I asked a question. Is that a camera?

PAUL

Yes.

CURTIS

Who's watching us?

ZOE

Answer the question.

PAUL

As I explained, the police have been assigned temporary extrajudicial powers by the home secretary...

CURTIS

They're filming us.

RACHEL

Can they do that?

CURTIS

No they bloody can't.

ZOE approaches PAUL.

ZOE

(to PAUL)

Let us out that door now.

PAUL

I can't.

TOM turns.

TOM

Where did they come from?

They all look. There are army personnel at the door.

ZOE

I'm calling a lawyer.

She tries but no signal.

ZOE (CONT'D)

(to TOM)

My phone's not working.

TOM

Have you blocked our phones?

WOMAN

What's going on?

ZOE

They've blocked our phones.

RACHEL

They've what?

ZOE

Try your phone. No signal.

CURTIS

What is this? Who the fuck do you think you are?

He approaches COLIN and PAUL with anger. PAUL looks at him calmly. SUSANNAH stands.

SUSANNAH

Excuse me please. May I say something.

COLIN shifts, a little uncomfortable.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

My name is Susannah Zellaby. I'm Dr McAfferty's wife. I'm also the mother of Cassie here who was in the zone that night and is pregnant like the rest of you.

CASSIE sits, head down.

CURTIS

And?

SUSANNAH

I work in trauma therapy. I've been helping some of you deal with what happened on May 5th. In general I support people whose lives dramatically turn from normal to abnormal at one stroke.

Beat. SUSANNAH directs the next to line to ZOE.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Which is what has just happened here.

CURTIS

That's bullshit.

SUSANNAH

Then why is your wife pregnant? You clearly didn't expect her to be.

(MORE)

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

You've not said once that the baby  
is your child.

CURTIS

What the fuck? How do you know...?

SUSANNAH

Your wife has been to see me.

CURTIS

She what?

RACHEL lowers herself in her chair. CURTIS glances at her  
then turns on SUSANNAH, aggressive.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

(to SUSANNAH)

How dare you?

She speaks quietly.

SUSANNAH

I've worked with a lot tougher  
customers than you Curtis. Let's  
cut the anger, it'll get us  
nowhere.

CURTIS says nothing. SUSANNAH speaks to the room. But also  
specifically to ZOE.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

I've known about this for a few  
days so I am at an advantage. But  
we all have to deal with this now.

Zoe feels the pressure of her gaze...

24      **INT. WARD 300, SIDE ROOM. DAY**

24

BRYONY watches. Her eyes focus in on SUSANNAH, on ZOE...

SUSANNAH

(on screen)

It's human instinct to want to deny  
it, and silence the people who are  
telling us about it. We want none  
of this to have happened. But it  
did.

25      **INT. WARD 300. DAY.**

25

CURTIS, floored momentarily, turns to RACHEL.

CURTIS

Rachel. Get your things.



ZOE

Tom, we're going too.

SUSANNAH

Please. Zoe? We need to talk about what happened. All together.

And ZOE's emotion suddenly surfaces.... *What this really means.*

ZOE

I'll tell you what happened! We made love. That night in my new home. As a result we have a baby coming. And you - and this - have nothing to do with it.

There's a vulnerability here in ZOE and SUSANNAH senses it.

SUSANNAH

I understand. It's terribly painful. But every woman in this room is pregnant regardless of their sexual orientation, their sexual experience. Why?

ZOE

I don't know!

CURTIS

Rachel, get up!

ZOE

Tom!

But RACHEL isn't moving. TOM looks around, uncertain.

Now MARY-ANN stands. Speaks quietly but bravely. SARAH watches her.

MARY-ANN

I think most of you know me. But for those that don't. My name is Mary-Ann, I work at Hobbs Dawson estate agents on the High Street.

Beat. She gulps. This is very hard. ZOE stares at her. SARAH gives MARY-ANN an encouraging look. JODIE watches.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

I've come with my friend Sarah, because I was scared to come on my own. I'm pregnant. And I haven't had sex with a man for four years.

Beat.

ZOE

That can't be true.

MARY-ANN

Trust me...

ZOE

What about artificial...

MARY-ANN

No.

ZOE

I don't believe you...

SARAH

That's not helpful...

MARY-ANN

It's all right Sarah.

(to ZOE)

It may not make sense, but it's the truth.

CURTIS

Maybe you got drunk, maybe you forgot...

MARY

Given the sexual desert of my last four years, I think that is something I would remember.

RACHEL

(to SARAH)

What about you Sarah? Are you...?

SARAH

No, I'm just here to support Mary-Ann.

RACHEL

But you live in the zone...

SARAH

I was out of town that night with the kids. Otherwise I think I would have been.

Beat. Weirdly this is more disturbing.

RACHEL

I don't understand. Did something happen while we were unconscious?

CLARE

Did someone date-rape us?

PAUL

We consider that unlikely but we can't be certain of anything yet.

RACHEL

So what? No one knows anything?

PAUL gets approached by DS MAYES.

DS MAYES

They're here.

PAUL

Bring them in.

She nods, walks out, getting on the radio.

PAUL (CONT'D)

There are some younger women coming up with their parents. They were also in the zone that night, most of them at a house party on Lichfield Road. They're in the same situation as you but as they were under eighteen when it happened we felt it important to talk to them individually first. Please - let's stay calm for their sake.

The doors open. The TEENAGE GROUP enter with MOTHERS, one FATHER. NATASHA, SADIE, JANELLE. There is a strange sense of the world expanding.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Come in. It's alright. Everyone knows what's going on.

The group of older parents stare in amazement at the TEENAGERS. CASSIE looks across. Feeling more kinship with them than with the other mothers.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We are still looking for any other women who stayed in Midwich that night but may have returned back home without being on our records. If you know anyone who may have done that, or anyone we may have missed, please inform us.

He eyes JODIE for a moment.

PAUL (CONT'D)

But otherwise this is everyone.

Beat. There is a calm in the room for the first time.

PAUL (CONT'D)

OK. I'm going to ask you to sign these forms indicating your consent to say nothing about what we have told you today. And I mean nothing. No online messaging, no chat. This is not guidance, this is legally binding and will be enforced. We will need to create a story that is plausible for the outside world as to how you each became pregnant. You've seen the press in action, none of us want that again. And the medical team will then need to do some clinical tests and we will discuss how the police, government agencies and health services can support you in the choices that you make regarding your child. Whether you choose to keep it, or not.

Silence in the room.

Now suddenly JANE stands, walks to PAUL. Takes the pen. She signs. Looks at the room. At CLARE.

JANE

In answer to your question. Yes. I am.

She returns to her seat. Deadly silence in the room.

MARY-ANN stands. She walks forward, signs. Refers to SUSANNAH.

MARY-ANN

She's right. Whatever the hell this is, we're in it together.

JODIE stands and signs. PAUL watches her. A sense that they are in some way connecting for the first time.

RACHEL stands and signs. CURTIS follows. Slowly they all take pens and they all sign. SUSANNAH included. CASSIE also.

It is a moment of bonding, a moment of ritual, that hits home to all of them.

ZOE watches in horror as TOM stands and signs too.

26

**EXT. TRAIN STATION. WORSLEY. DAY.**

26

NOREEN gets off the train at Worsley.

Now she is walking back from the station. She feels strange, not right, she flushes, she sits for a moment, is she going to be sick?

She looks around in fear.

27      **INT. NOREEN'S HOUSE, KITCHEN, BEDROOM. DAY.**

27

NOREEN enters her small terraced house. Her MOTHER is in the kitchen, cooking.

NOREEN'S MOTHER  
You're late.

NOREEN  
I did some homework at school.

NOREEN'S MOTHER  
Oh yes? Show me...

She's not convinced. NOREEN is used to it.

NOREEN  
I'm not showing you mum.

NOREEN'S MOTHER  
You want something to eat? Or will you wait for your father?

NOREEN  
No I'm not hungry.

She walks up the stairs. Then she suddenly gags, her MOTHER hears it, NOREEN hides her nausea. Rushes to the bathroom, pukes violently in the toilet.

NOREEN'S MOTHER  
Noreen? What's going on?

NOREEN  
Nothing. I'm fine.

NOREEN'S MOTHER  
Have you been drinking? Have you been with those girls again?

NOREEN  
Just leave me alone.

Her MOTHER walks back down the stairs. NOREEN stays on the loo, in tears, terrified and alone.

28      **INT. WARD 300. DAY.**

28

The WOMEN are all being tested, scans on wombs, blood tests. There are queues. RACHEL, CASSIE, JANE. All brought together by this strange event.

MARY-ANN  
Sorry I've forgotten your name...

CASSIE

I'm Cassie.

MARY-ANN

Mary-Ann.

They smile. The teenagers NATASHA, JANELLE and SADIE sit together. Embarrassed. SADIE takes out her phone.

SADIE

No signal...

29

**INT. WARD 300, MEDICAL ROOM. DAY.**

29

ZOE and TOM are in a medical room with COLIN and two NURSES.

ZOE

What is this for?

COLIN

It's a standard NIPT. We're looking to isolate the foetal DNA from your own.

TOM

You can do that?

COLIN

At just over seven weeks yes. The mother's blood contains small levels of the baby's DNA that has been excreted through the placenta...

ZOE

Why are you doing it?

COLIN

All sorts of reasons. But one thing we do want to do is to test for paternal DNA...

Beat. ZOE glances at TOM. TOM breathes. COLIN smiles.

The blood is extracted. TOM watches. Her blood. But his DNA? Or not?

30

**INT. WARD 300, SCANNING ROOM. DAY.**

30

In another room, CASSIE is being scanned. The DOCTORS are watching the ultrasound. CASSIE looks anxiously at SUSANNAH who is watching through glass. SUSANNAH and CASSIE's eyes meet.

31        **INT. WARD 300. DAY.**

31

Now they are leaving. Literature is being handed out. The WOMEN all look at each other, a strange bond...

NURSE

Here is a contact sheet. And this is the information you'll need about termination, do take this with you...

JANE

I won't need that.

NURSE

You should at least read it. It gives you the opportunity to make an informed decision.

JANE

I've made my informed decision.

ZOE watches her as JANE walks out.

32        **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, KITCHEN, LIVING ROOM. EVENING.**

32

COLIN sits alone in the kitchen. His world upset in a way that he doesn't like at all. SUSANNAH makes tea, not sure how he has taken her intervention.

SUSANNAH

You all right?

COLIN

Just tired.

SUSANNAH

Long day...

COLIN

I wish you'd told me you planned to say something.

SUSANNAH

I didn't plan anything Colin. It felt like my voice might be helpful. I'm sorry if I didn't ask your permission.

Beat. She's angry. He knows. He nods.

COLIN

I didn't mean that...

SUSANNAH

I'll be back in a minute.

She takes the tea through into the living room. CASSIE is on the sofa. She is reading a letter that has been sent through.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Hey... I brought you tea. Anything else I can get you?

CASSIE  
No I'm fine.

SUSANNAH  
How are you feeling?

CASSIE  
Is this my free session? Paid for by the government?

SUSANNAH  
No Cassie. It's your mother asking how you are.

CASSIE  
I'm OK.

SUSANNAH  
Really?

CASSIE  
Yeah. In a strange way it all makes sense.

She looks at her mother.

CASSIE (CONT'D)  
I knew that night had to be for something. The way I felt, straight after. I couldn't make sense of it. But now...

SUSANNAH  
If that's how you feel that's great...

CASSIE intuits SUSANNAH means something by that.

CASSIE  
But what?

Beat.

SUSANNAH  
You've read this, right?

She shows CASSIE the letter. It talks about "the right to terminate your child".

CASSIE  
Yes I've read it.



SUSANNAH

And?

Beat.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Cassie, when you thought the baby was Ryan's, you had decided to ...

CASSIE

I know what I decided.

SUSANNAH

They're offering a special service in the wing of the hospital...

Beat. CASSIE bridles inside. SUSANNAH notices it but a slightly uncontrolled part of her own damage pushes her on.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Do you think you are capable of bringing up a child on your own? Ryan isn't going to be there, you know that? I'll be here, of course, always, but is that what you want? To be dependent on me again? You don't have a job, you'll be financially reliant on me and Colin... I just think you have to consider all the implications...

CASSIE

Just say it mum. Say what you want me to do.

She holds the paper. And yes that's exactly what SUSANNAH wants.

33

**INT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION. EVENING.**

33

JODIE sits waiting on a bench in the police waiting room, a small suitcase by her.

She is also reading the termination offer.

PAUL comes round the corner. JODIE folds the letter but PAUL knows what it is. Beat.

PAUL

Sorry. The call with London went on longer than I thought.

She nods and gets up.

34      **INT. PAUL'S CAR. EVENING.**

34

PAUL is driving JODIE in the front seat. JODIE is in still in shock... PAUL is aware how many times Deborah sat in the same seat.

JODIE

What?

PAUL

Nothing.

He shakes it out of himself but she notices. It's strange and upsetting for both of them.

35      **EXT. PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE. EVENING.**

35

PAUL's car draws up to his house. JODIE with a suitcase. PAUL takes it.

NEIGHBOURS watch. A strange image, the sister entering the house.

36      **INT. PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, HALLWAY. EVENING.**

36

JODIE enters the hallway. Looks at the kitchen. She can't walk into it.

Looks disturbed, feels sick.

PAUL

It's OK.

JODIE

I can't go in there. Not tonight.

PAUL

That's fine.

JODIE

Why haven't you moved Paul? Just rent somewhere else...

Beat.

PAUL

I can put you in a hotel for the night if you prefer. Then you can go home tomorrow... depending on what you decide to do.

Beat. He means the offer of termination and she knows it.

JODIE

I'll sleep in the spare room  
tonight. I can't decide anything  
now.

He walks her up. The spare room, single bed.

PAUL

You want something. Tea? Food?

JODIE

I just need to sleep.

PAUL nods - walks down.

He enters the kitchen. No lights on.

The emptiness of the room haunts him. But he can't leave it,  
can't bear to.

He sits alone in the growing darkness.

37

**INT. MIDWICH RIDING SCHOOL, STABLES. DAWN.**

37

The next day. Early dawn.

NATASHA, tired from lack of sleep and worry, arrives at work  
at the stables, walking up the country lane off the road.

She looks at her Whats-app. Message from Janelle.

*Sadie's keeping hers. Nutter. I'm not. You?*

STABLE MANAGER

Morning Tash. You look shit. Been  
partying all night again?

NATASHA

Yeah you know me. 24 hour animal.

She smiles, lying as best she can.

Later: NATASHA is cleaning out the horses. She feels the  
horse whinny and rear up in her presence.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Hey Cecil. It's only me. Nothing to  
worry about.

She hugs it but it whinnies and rears.

STABLE MANAGER

Everything OK?

NATASHA

He's just being moody.

She smiles. But it isn't all right. It's weird.

Now a MUM and KID walk in for the 8am lesson. NATASHA helps the little kid whose lesson it is get on the horse but the horse sweats and rears again.

NATASHA breathes. Why is it doing that?

38      **EXT. MIDWICH RIDING SCHOOL, HORSE TRAINING RING. DAY.**      38

The BOY rides around. NATASHA offers advice.

NATASHA  
Keep the knees in. Tell him you're there.

The HORSE is circling but every time it gets near NATASHA it sweats and rears.

NATASHA (CONT'D)  
Knees in George.

GEORGE  
I'm trying.

He circles again. But he isn't in control.

Now NATASHA is worried.

NATASHA  
Whooah Cecil... Cecil what the hell are you playing at?

Instinctively she moves forward... but in reaction the HORSE bolts. NATASHA loses the rope, the HORSE throws the BOY, the HORSE leaps the ring... then stops half way down the track, looking back at NATASHA as the BOY lies in agony and screaming, his arm broken, and the STABLEHANDS rush to help.

The HORSE looks at NATASHA.

She feels her belly. Breathes. Shock.

STABLE MANAGER  
Natasha. Help him. HELP HIM!

39      **INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DAY.**      39

ZOE is on the phone.

ZOE  
I understand. And you'll send a letter? Thank you.

She hangs up. TOM is waiting. She shows him the email.

TOM

Well?

ZOE

It has my DNA, but not yours. It says there is no evidence of any paternal DNA.

TOM

How is that?

ZOE

I don't know...

Beat. He nods.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I swear Tom... I have never...

TOM

I know. Of course...

ZOE

It's like I did it on my own...

TOM

Is that even possible?

She shakes her head, confused. But also hiding something.

TOM (CONT'D)

What else did they say?

ZOE

They said... it's in a letter that's coming... but technically as you're not the father, you don't have the same legal rights... unless we both sign something to ascribe those rights...

She seems suddenly to be about to cry.

ZOE (CONT'D)

But that's bullshit. I'm with you...

TOM

Zoe. It's OK.

ZOE

I should get rid of it.

TOM

Why?

ZOE

It's not what we wanted. We wanted  
OUR child...

TOM

Zoe. Listen to me very carefully.  
That doctor in Stoke Newington gave  
us a less than one per cent chance  
of conception... and that was  
largely down to me.

ZOE

That was one doctor... that's why  
we came here. Change of  
environment.

TOM

And it worked. You're pregnant. You  
have wanted this so much. So much  
more than anyone I have ever known.  
And yes you wanted it to be mine.  
But as far as I'm concerned it is  
mine. We made love on our first  
night in this house. And you became  
pregnant. There were war heroes in  
the first world war, they came  
back, they were paralysed or in  
trauma, they couldn't have sex with  
their wives. Arrangements had to be  
made. That's all this is. It's your  
child. And I love you. And that  
kind of makes it mine. I can live  
with that if you can.

ZOE holds his hand.

40

**INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, CASSIE'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

40

CASSIE lies on her bed.

She is once again reading the letter.

*We are offering an abortion service for all May 5th Mothers  
at Ward 300. This allows for maximum discretion should you  
choose to terminate your pregnancy...*

CASSIE looks around the room which still has a teenage feel  
to it. Lots of stuff from when she was 14 or 15. And she  
suddenly feels her youth, her insufficiency, her fragility.

And we sense that she is making a decision.

She reaches for the phone...

41           **INT. PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, SPARE ROOM. DAY.**

41

JODIE lies in the spare room bed. She feels her stomach, such a strange feeling.

She opens a cupboard. Finds stuff for the new baby. Stares at it.

Takes out baby clothes, an unmade cot.

She finds a baby-grow. Holds it. Brings it to her face. Smells it. As if trying to smell Deborah.

She breathes.

42           **INT. PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, HALLWAY. DAY.**

42

JODIE walks down the stairs to the hallway.

Walks to the kitchen door.

PAUL sits in the kitchen. Alone.

JODIE

Paul?

He stirs.

PAUL

Oh. Yeah. Sorry.

JODIE

What time did you get up?

PAUL

Not sure.

JODIE

You didn't go to bed did you? Been there all night?

He looks at her. Nods.

She looks at him, understanding the level of his lostness.

And as if to honour his bravery, she breathes deep, enters the kitchen.

The memories come back but she braves them. He notices. It helps him.

JODIE (CONT'D)

You want tea?

He nods. She puts the kettle on.

PAUL

Not sure there's any milk...

JODIE

We can have it black.

He nods. She puts the kettle on.

JODIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I shouted at you. I can be a selfish bitch sometimes.

He stares at her. Empty.

PAUL

We're all selfish. How we're made.

JODIE

Do you really believe that?

Beat.

JODIE (CONT'D)

Paul. I've thought about it.

Beat.

JODIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to keep the baby. Just so you know.

He nods. What does he think? Is he strangely relieved?

Does he even know?

43

**INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, SUSANNAH'S STUDY, LANDING. DAY.**

43

SUSANNAH is with JANE in her therapist's study.

JANE

I have strongly held religious beliefs. I judge no one else, and I mean that. But for me, "getting rid of it" is simply not an option...

SUSANNAH nods.

SUSANNAH

And I don't judge you. I believe in freedom of choice. You are making your choice and I respect that... I just want to be sure you're allowing the feelings associated with that choice to be fully articulated.

Outside the room, on the landing, CASSIE is listening.



JANE (O.C.)

I don't have feelings about it Dr Zellaby. I have a duty now. I don't celebrate that. I have a sick father, a full-time job, this is the last thing I need. But that's how it is.

CASSIE quietly walks down the stairs, she can hear COLIN making coffee in the kitchen.

CASSIE opens the front door quietly and slips out from the Zellaby house...

44

**INT. RACHEL & CURTIS'S HOUSE, KITCHEN. DAY.**

44

RACHEL sits alone in the kitchen. CURTIS walks in. Stares at her with noticeable hostility.

CURTIS

Why are you even thinking about it?  
You've booked the time, just go.  
Get it done.

Beat.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Unless there's something you're not telling me?

Tense moment. Unspoken issues articulated for the first time. He walks outside to smoke. RACHEL stands dead still, as little DAVID eats his food.

45

**INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, REAR BEDROOM. DAY.**

45

TOM is painting the small first floor room a light colour. Installing baby furniture. He looks across at CURTIS who is smoking outside the house, furious and confused.

*As CASSIE walks past, between TOM and CURTIS's houses, her head down, on her way...*

TOM's and CURTIS' eyes meet across the road. ZOE can be heard on the phone on the landing, next to the family clock...

ZOE

No, Tom is being amazing. He's feeding me huge suppers. The baby's good, scan was normal... no need for amnio or anything like that. Yes I am sleeping fine. No mum I'm not working too hard. It's all fine...

She eyes TOM from the corridor as she says this. Her eyes are tired, but she gives him a smile. Trying her best.

TOM returns the smile and quietly gets on with his painting...

46     **EXT. / INT. STREETS OF MIDWICH / STEWART & SARAH'S HOUSE, 46 KITCHEN, LIVING RM. DAY.**

CASSIE walks on, hood up, along the street. She passes little CHARLOTTE MCLEAN who is playing with her toys in the front garden of her house. Her brother CALLUM is playing football against the garage door.

CASSIE and CHARLOTTE's eyes meet for a moment, a strange connection, then CASSIE walks guiltily on.

CHARLOTTE runs inside. Through the kitchen where MARY-ANN is sitting at the table with SARAH, sipping tea, as they talk covertly...

MARY-ANN  
(under her breath)  
I don't care how it happened. It feels like a gift. You know?

SARAH  
It's funny. I'm almost jealous.

MARY-ANN  
Hands off. You've got two of your own...

CHARLOTTE eyes the two WOMEN as if sensing something is up, but runs through to the living room.

STEWART is in the large living room, he's on a pale faux-leather sofa, and he is texting someone called "A" secretly.

*I can't see you now. Let's talk Monday.*

He gets a reply.

*I missed two periods.*

He stares at the message. Breathes.

CHARLOTTE  
Who's messaging you?

STEWART  
Oh. Just work.

CHARLOTTE  
Can we play?

In on STEWART's face. CHARLOTTE studies him like a hawk.

STEWART

Sure.

47      **EXT. / INT. MIDWICH & WARHAM HOSPITAL, RECEPTION. DAY.**      47

CASSIE gets off a bus, and walks up to the out-of-town hospital.

She enters the reception. Nervous.

RECEPTIONIST

Excuse me... can I help?

CASSIE

No it's OK. I know where I'm going.

48      **INT. MIDWICH & WARHAM ST GEORGE'S HOSPITAL, LIFT. DAY.**      48

CASSIE goes up in the lift. Her fingers knot and unknot. She plays with her hair. Nervous tics.

49      **INT. WARD 300, WAITING ROOM. DAY.**      49

CASSIE walks out of the lift. The wing has transformed. It has become fully medical, fully lit, different sections. Clean, modern, organised.

CASSIE sees a sign saying "Room T171". She follows that. Goes through double doors.

CASSIE approaches a NURSE in a modern waiting room.

NURSE

Miss Stone? We got your phone call.

CASSIE nods.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Is anyone with you?

CASSIE

No.

NURSE

Coming to pick you up?

CASSIE

No.

NURSE

Did you... walk here?

CASSIE

Yeah. Listen I've done this before.  
So...

NURSE

May I ask, how many times?

CASSIE

Once. And it was fine. So let's just get it done...

NURSE

Of course. If you could fill out this and wait for your name to be called.

CASSIE takes the form and walks through.

In the waiting room she sees to her surprise NATASHA already waiting.

CASSIE and NATASHA sit at different ends of the waiting room.

NATASHA reads a magazine, eyes down.

Time passes.

Now another voice - female - at the reception desk.

RACHEL walks in. She looks surprised to see others here.

CASSIE stares at her.

Then a NURSE comes through.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Cassandra Stone?

50

**INT. WARD 300, INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY.**

50

CASSIE is being given an ultrasound to look at the foetus. She is not shown the screen but she is aware of a DOCTOR looking at it.

NURSE

OK you can do your trousers up now.

Later:

NURSE (CONT'D)

So this is a preliminary interview to make sure you're resolved in your decision. It will last just twenty minutes or so and if you're comfortable we will then administer the pills for a medical abortion. Due to the unusual nature of the pregnancy we will administer that here and monitor you during that process, OK?

(MORE)

NURSE (CONT'D)

We'd also like to seek your permission to take genetic samples from the foetus in order to better understand what's going on here...

This is very casually slipped in. CASSIE nods.

NURSE (CONT'D)

So Cassie. You've thought about keeping the baby and decided against, is that correct?

CASSIE

Yeah.

NURSE

And you made that decision yourself?

CASSIE

Yeah.

NURSE

Did you consult anyone? Family? Friends? I realise that the unusual nature of the pregnancy means that your opportunities for discussion are limited.

CASSIE

My mother and I discussed it.

NURSE

I see. Good.

She notes that.

CASSIE

She thinks I should get rid of it.

Beat. The NURSE looks up.

NURSE

And what do you think?

CASSIE stares at her.

CASSIE

I agree.

The NURSE looks at her again, then smiles.

NURSE

OK so should you decide to proceed, you'll be taking two pills....

51           **INT. WARD 300, WAITING ROOM. DAY.**

51

CASSIE walks out. The waiting room is empty now.

NURSE

Just sign the consent form. And  
we'll get everything ready.

CASSIE sits on a plastic chair. She looks at the consent  
form. She holds the pen. She breathes. She is about to sign.

Then she hears voices in an adjoining room.

She gets up, walks to the wall, she can hear RACHEL having  
the same interview.

NURSE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

You've thought about keeping the  
baby and decided against, is that  
correct?

RACHEL (O.C.)

Yes.

NURSE (O.C.)

And you made that decision  
yourself?

RACHEL (O.C.)

Yes.

NURSE (O.C.)

Did you consult with anyone in your  
decision?

RACHEL (O.C.)

Yes. My husband...

CASSIE sits back and waits. Pen in hand.

The door opens and RACHEL comes out.

NURSE

Just wait here Mrs Saunders. Sign  
this consent form. And we'll get  
everything ready.

RACHEL too has the consent form in her hands.

She sits, looks at the consent form.

RACHEL and CASSIE look at each other.

Then the door opens again and NATASHA comes out.

NURSE (CONT'D)

If you sign the consent form, we'll  
get everything ready.

NATASHA nods and the NURSE returns.

The three WOMEN are left alone.

They breathe. They all have the pens in their hands.

They all look to each other.

As if looking for strength from each other.

CASSIE goes to sign.

Then her hand pauses. Stops.

*As if controlled.*

She breathes.

There is a gentle flicker of the lights in the room.

The WOMEN stare at each other, scared.

RACHEL, sensing she's the senior figure here, goes to sign, to lead the way.

*But she can't either.*

Again the lights in the room flicker.

The three WOMEN stare at each other. They breathe deep.

Then suddenly they stand.

They all put the pens on the chair.

CASSIE scrunches the consent form in her hand.

RACHEL does the same.

NATASHA does the same.

They all tear the consent form in half.

They look at each other. None of them are quite sure what just happened.

Then they all walk out, leaving the scrunched consent forms on the floor.

The NURSE walks back out.

NURSE 1  
OK Miss Stone...

She stops still. The room is empty.

She breathes. She walks to a phone on the wall. Picks it up.

NURSE 1 (CONT'D)  
It's happened again.

52      **INT. WARD 300, SIDE ROOM. DAY.**

52

BRYONY is on the other end of the phone. She hears what the Nurse has said and breathes deep.

Very disturbed indeed.

53      **INT. / EXT. ZELLABY HOUSE, BEDROOM, KITCHEN / GARDEN. DAY.**

53

COLIN is at his computer in the bedroom. He looks scared, serious. The strangeness of the situation hitting home now.

On the computer: "... can confirm total terminations carried out on Blackout pregnancies - Zero..."

Downstairs SUSANNAH is at the kitchen window. She is looking out at CASSIE who is in the garden. It's a fine summer's day.

SUSANNAH's face is racked with tension. She clearly knows CASSIE has decided to keep the baby.

CASSIE seems struck by a sudden private sense of joy. She feels her stomach. She feels good.

CASSIE circles the fruit tree that stands in the middle of the garden, she looks up at the sky, spreads her arms to the sun.

SUSANNAH stares at her daughter's young expectant body through the kitchen window, dappled in sunlight...

54      **INT. EMPTY HOUSE. MIDWICH. DAY.**

54

A young couple, TED and AISHA, are entering a house. They are looking around it with excitement.

**TITLE: DECEMBER 14TH 2020.**

A familiar voice from the hallway. Giving the buyers space to see the room for themselves...

MARY-ANN (O.C.)  
As you can see you still get the incredible double aspect kitchen living room but it doesn't extend quite so much into the garden as the other one. So you get more garden here but a little less living space. It's all a matter of taste but I personally think this is a real peach.



And here she comes, into the room, she's taken her shoes off, as is her custom. She looks terrific, smart, and very well.

And MARY-ANN is also seven months pregnant.

55 **EXT. HIGH STREET. MIDWICH. DAY.**

55

MARY-ANN is saying goodbye to the young couple. Proud bump not being hidden by her suit.

AISHA  
We'll call you!

MARY-ANN  
You do that. Phone's always on.

AISHA  
And good luck. When is it?

MARY-ANN  
Oh a good six weeks yet. They'll have to drag me out that office.

She waves to AISHA who climbs into their car and they drive off.

AISHA  
Bye!

MARY-ANN  
Don't be strangers!

MARY-ANN waves and walks into her estate agent's office.

As she does she sees RACHEL, also seven and a half months pregnant, walking along the street. Their eyes meet, a slight complicity, then RACHEL walks on and MARY-ANN enters...

56 **INT. SUPERMARKET. MIDWICH. DAY.**

56

MARY-ANN is buying her evening meal in the medium-sized supermarket. She welcomes the gazes of other families, kids etc. She is owning her pregnancy. It makes her feel complete. No longer the feeling of loneliness she used to have.

She turns to see JODIE in the shop, up the meat aisle. JODIE is also seven months pregnant. JODIE buying food for two people, broccoli, two chicken breasts. Potatoes.

MARY-ANN  
Hi... Mary-Ann.

JODIE  
Yeah I remember. How are you?

MARY-ANN

Good. You?

JODIE

Yeah. No problems so far.

A tense smile of complicity. JODIE particularly awkward. They know the secrets they are keeping. Other SHOPPERS pass. Then:

MARY-ANN

(quietly)

You've come back to Midwich? I thought you went home...

JODIE

I did for a while but it felt weird. And all the appointments are here so it was just easier. Paul's letting me stay in the spare room, he's been very kind.

This just to make clear they're in no sense "an item". JODIE smiles. She knows it's weird. They both do. MARY-ANN squeezes her arms.

MARY-ANN

It's fine. No judgments here.

JODIE smiles.

JODIE

Appreciate it. It's weird enough as it is right?

MARY-ANN

Yeah. It is. Very bloody weird.

Silence. KIDS run past.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

Well I think I'm done...

JODIE

Me too.

They walk towards the cashier - down the aisle...

MARY-ANN

You having chicken tonight?

JODIE

Yeah it's my mum's recipe. Paul seems to like it so...

Then JODIE stops dead. Just stops. Stands.

MARY-ANN

You OK?

JODIE nods. But then feels a cramp inside her. She breathes.

MARY-ANN looks at her.

A light in the supermarket flickers just slightly.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)  
Jodie? Are you...?

MARY-ANN looks down.

There is a little pool of water on the floor under JODIE's feet. In the middle of the aisle.

MARY-ANN looks at her. Neither say anything to anyone else. No one else in the shop has noticed. MARY-ANN quietly pulls a delivery trolley of bread rolls over the little pool of water.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)  
OK. Stay calm. It's fine. Do you have the number they gave you?

JODIE  
Yeah I have it on my phone. It's so early though...

MARY-ANN  
It's OK. They said it might come early, remember? I'm with you. Let's just call that number and tell them you're on your way in and then we'll call Paul. And he can come and pick you up. Everything will be fine.

SHOPPERS pass. Do they notice? No. They don't. But it's clear they can't call in here.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)  
OK. Let's get out of here and we'll call outside. Walk with me?

They leave their trolleys and baskets in the aisle, begin to walk down the dairy aisle towards the exit.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)  
That's good. Nearly there.

They are close to the exit.

But then MARY-ANN suddenly feels something. A strange cramp.

A light flickers above them.

JODIE looks at MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN feels another cramp.

JODIE

No way.

A trickle of water. Under MARY-ANN's feet.

57 **INT. WARD 300. DAY / NIGHT.**

57

Music. And now we are in Ward 300 and it is chaos. NURSES running from room to room. MIDWIVES in full flow.

It's very hi-tech, lots of monitoring gear, very well prepared. They suspected something like that might be coming.

In a series of private rooms, we see a whole sequence of MOTHERS, all in labour, all surrounded by doctors, epidurals, midwives, all monitored on cameras... the results on screens.

The music rises, ZOE, RACHEL, JANELLE, MARY-ANN, NATASHA, JANE, JODIE, CASSIE and other MOTHERS we don't know all go through the pains of labour... a series of faces, pained, serene, expectant, some alone, some with partners. The sequence climaxes as ZOE feels the baby crown, she is sweating and screaming, unbearable pain and joy, TOM is with her, the sound of a baby's cry...

In on ZOE's face.

Then darkness and silence.

58 **INT. WARD 300. NIGHT.**

58

Later: It is night. On ward 300.

The sound of sleeping.

We see one baby in a small cot at the end of the bed. Then another. Then another.

Camera comes out to see a huge ward of sleeping mothers and children.

All the babies are sleeping. Perfectly.

Too perfectly?

And then as we pull back, we see a figure standing in front of the far door, silhouetted against the hallway light behind him.

It is PAUL.

A solitary light flickers for a moment in the room.

It flickers on PAUL's face as he looks at the room of MIDWICH MOTHERS.

But more than anything, he is looking at the sleeping JODIE.

And the beautiful little baby beside her.

**END**