

The Midwich Cuckoos

Episode 1

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An adaptation of the novel by John Wyndham

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Music under all this, shimmering with serene menace...

It's summer.

They sit on the empty cricket pitch of a school. They are young. They look nine or ten maybe. Their eyes are laughing as they lie on the sun-kissed grass. They have bottles of soft drinks. One GIRL is blowing bubbles in her drink. A BOY flicks the spores off a dead dandelion. The spores dance in the sunlight.

There is something strange about these children. A calmness? A knowledge? A similar dress sense?

A bee lands on one GIRL. They all watch it. It seems likely to sting but she does nothing. Just looks at it. An intimate connection. Then as if of its own will, the bee flies off and straight into one of the bottles of drink. Where it drowns. The GIRL quietly puts on the lid. Smiles.

Then the CHILDREN look round, as one.

They look across the park. A COUPLE are staring at them. The COUPLE have a BABY BUGGY which they are pushing along the path.

They are ZOE and TOM. Early thirties. Casual clothes, creased. They look jaded and tired, rings around the eyes. He is unshaven, it could be your average parent's tiredness but it seems more than that.

It seems like a terrible exhaustion and fear.

They stare at the CHILDREN.

Then one CHILD runs forward, a GIRL - HANNAH. She approaches ZOE.

HANNAH
Hello mummy.

ZOE recoils slightly. HANNAH smiles, her eyes shimmer in the light. ZOE seems unsure what to do. *As if torn between love and loathing.*

HANNAH leans into the BABY BUGGY, tickles the BABY.

And now we can see that where ZOE is confused and upset, TOM is just utterly terrified.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Hello Ellie.

The CHILDREN are all smiling. TOM seems almost to drag the BUGGY back, ZOE hints at him not to, HANNAH carries on tickling the BABY with a serene look in her eyes...

2

EXT. ROAD, MIDWICH. DAY. 2024.

2

Music builds. Like glittering summer light.

Now the CHILDREN are walking. They are walking as a harmonious group down the pavement by the side of a quiet residential road. The sun shines on their skins.

They pass a woman walking the other way. She is in her early 40's. She looks shattered, crosses the road slightly to avoid them. We will later know this to be JODIE.

They pass a 47 year old woman driving the other way. She drives an estate agency car, we will later know this to be MARY-ANN. She stares in tired and emotional shock at the children who only smile at her as she drives past.

The CHILDREN walk on. One BOY looks up at the sun. Looks beyond the sun into space, into the blueness, as if wondering what might be there.

As if *knowing* what might be there.

Then they hear something.

They turn, as one. *As if of one mind.*

A slightly weathered RED HATCHBACK CAR is driving towards them down the road. Someone at the wheel, lone driver, can't see who it is. Still at a distance.

A beat. Sudden tension.

The car gets closer. Accelerates towards them. Too fast for this residential street.

The CHILDREN's eyes tighten.

Then the car veers, rises on to the pavement, drives headlong at them, full acceleration.

Aiming to kill.

The CHILDREN stare at the car as it hurtles towards them.

They do not move.

They smile.

AS ONE.

TITLE: THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS

3

INT. ZOE & TOM'S CAR. DAY.

3

The same RED HATCHBACK CAR, but brand new, is driving calmly down a motorway out of London. Music on. It's a spring day. The sun is out.

A young woman is in the passenger seat. Her eyes glisten with hope and excitement.

It's ZOE.

And a title appears to help us understand when we are:

FIVE YEARS EARLIER.

ZOE is five years younger than when we last saw her, but she looks completely different - fresh-faced, full of quiet hope.

In the back of the red car a small number of removal boxes and cases. Yes. They are on the move.

TOM is driving. He is handsome, clean-shaven, good hair-cut, he looks young, healthy. Big contrast with the opening.

ZOE watches TOM as he drives. Her man. His body. Good arms. His eyes. His mouth. His nostrils. Yes she even loves that part of him. She loves all of him. He notices.

TOM

What?

ZOE

I just love this tune.

TOM

Oh yeah?

ZOE

Yeah I really love it.

He smiles. Sensing she's teasing, sensing her love is really for him. The sun glitters. There's a sexiness to this feeling between them, new beginnings, fertile hopes...

They drive closer. The green fields pass.

The sign ahead says "MIDWICH 5 miles".

Her phone rings. She answers her phone. He waits, tense with expectation.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Hi Mary-Ann. OK yes sure. We're on our way.

She hangs up. Looks at him. He knows already...

ZOE (CONT'D)
We can pick up the keys.

He nods. She breathes deep. A sense of a new beginning. As if in a fairy tale.

The town approaches. She looks at the sign.

WELCOME TO MIDWICH.

4 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, SUSANNAH'S STUDY. CLEMENCY DRIVE. DAY. 4**

A line of cuddly toys on a sofa in a large, book-lined study, rich in learning but not in a threatening way. Outside green trees and blue sky. We hear a child's voice.

CHARLOTTE (O.C.)
This is Caspar, this is Dottie and
this is Pablo the Penguin and this
is Miriam the Magic Girl...

DR SUSANNAH ZELLABY is 50 years old. She is attractive, whip-smart, a genius at her work.

Right now her work is CHARLOTTE McLEAN, a six year old girl who sits on the sofa opposite her. CHARLOTTE has all her cuddly toys in a very tidy row on the sofa next to her. SUSANNAH takes in this little girl, watching her, observing her, all her experience coming quietly to bear.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
...this is Lazy Mary, she sleeps
all the time and this is Eunice the
Unicorn. And this is Miss Smilla
and this is Sadie Spider and this
is Brian the Lion.

BRIAN is a furry lion. She hugs him. SUSANNAH smiles.

SUSANNAH
Thank you for introducing me to
your friends.

CHARLOTTE nods earnestly. SARAH McLEAN, CHARLOTTE's mum, 38 years old, smiles anxiously in a chair to one side.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)
And your mummy tells me that when
you go to bed it's very important
that all your friends line up in
exactly that order. Is that right?

CHARLOTTE nods, suddenly anxious.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)
And if one gets lost? In the car
maybe, or behind the sofa?

CHARLOTTE

Then I find it.

SUSANNAH

And if you can't find it?

CHARLOTTE

Then Mummy finds it.

SUSANNAH

And if mummy can't find it?

Anxiety silently rockets in CHARLOTTE's face. Her breath shortens. SARAH asks SUSANNAH a silent question - is this necessary? SUSANNAH gives a little reassuring smile. Trust me.

CHARLOTTE

Then I can't sleep.

SUSANNAH

Why can't you sleep?

CHARLOTTE

Because bad things will happen.

Real intensity in her eyes as she says this. SUSANNAH is a little taken aback. Leans in.

SUSANNAH

Charlotte I understand that feeling. I have it too sometimes. As if everything you love could be lost, yes? But that's when I have to be brave. I want you to do something very brave for me this weekend. You're going away to your granny's, yes? I want you to leave one of your friends. Here in Midwich with me.

CHARLOTTE looks at the toys, shakes her head.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

And if you do, I promise that nothing bad will happen to your friend or to you. Do you think you can do that?

CHARLOTTE thinks. SUSANNAH watches as she makes her momentous decision.

5

EXT. / INT. ZELLABY HOUSE. / ZELLABY HOUSE, HALLWAY. DAY. 5

At the front door SUSANNAH watches CHARLOTTE and SARAH get in the car.

SARAH

Thank you so much!

And now we see that SUSANNAH is in fact now holding Brian the Lion. She makes him wave his paw. CHARLOTTE waves back, anxious but converted.

As the car drives off, SUSANNAH turns inside and calls out.

SUSANNAH

Cassie? I'm finished.

Her face loses some of its lustre. She walks into the living room.

Her daughter CASSIE ZELLABY, 23, thin, washed-out, sits inside the living room, watching TV. Day-time shit on the TV. Chat-shows. We and Susannah can only see the back of her head.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

You want tea, love?

CASSIE

No I'm good.

She doesn't turn. SUSANNAH looks at the back of her head from the door. Struggling to make a connection.

SUSANNAH

You've remembered Colin and I are going up to London tonight?

CASSIE

Yeah.

SUSANNAH

You'll be alone for a few hours. How do you feel about that?

CASSIE

Mum... Therapy language...

SUSANNAH bites her tongue.

CASSIE still doesn't turn, quietly turns up the volume on the TV.

SUSANNAH walks back out into the corridor and into the kitchen. She feels uneasy and annoyed. A psychologist by trade so why can't she talk to her own daughter?

She reaches the kitchen. Nothing is washed up. Cassie has left a bowl, a plate, a mug. Half-cut fruit lies on the surface. SUSANNAH thinks about saying something, decides against (she can still hear the TV from the living room), breathes and clears the dirty stuff.

Then she puts on the kettle as a strange sadness fills her.

6

EXT. / INT. MIDWICH RIDING SCHOOL. DAY.

6

In the Midwich riding school, the horses are stabled.

Inside the stables the fans are on to cool the horses.

The HORSES are alone. One HORSE starts to kick the ground. A deep fear in its eyes.

And then it happens. The lights in the stable suddenly flicker on and off. The fans cut out, then start again.

All back to normal.

The HORSE's eye stares as if it knows something we don't.

7

INT. HOBBS DAWSON OFFICE. MIDWICH. DAY.

7

MARY-ANN PHILLIPS, 42 years old, runs a busy small estate agent's office in the heart of Midwich High Street. Three employees. Friendly, busy, chatty, very chatty, MARY-ANN is Midwich to her bones.

Right now MARY-ANN is on the phone.

MARY-ANN

The roads around Midwich school - Clemency Drive and Kilmorey Gardens - these houses were originally commissioned by the Galbreath family when they were kingpins of Midwich in the 1880's. They're ideal family homes, dual aspect, high ceilings. But a slight hole will be burnt in your pocket.

She continues to talk but sees ZOE and TOM arrive at the door. She smiles and waves at them as they enter.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

Nicola may I suggest you and Sam make a trip down when you can. I'd be more than happy to host you. Any time, call me on my mobile. Ok bye.

With a smile, she hangs up, grabs a small bunch of three keys. Approaches ZOE and TOM. Pauses for effect.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

I give you your happiness.

The keys hit ZOE's hand. Like in a fairy tale.

ZOE

Thanks Mary-Ann. For everything.

MARY-ANN

Now don't do what most people do
and become strangers just because
you've bought. Promise?

ZOE

We promise.

TOM

Come and have a glass of wine some
time.

MARY-ANN

Oh I don't drink.

For one moment TOM believes her.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

Yes we do irony here too darling.

Her office phone rings.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

I better get that.

They reach the door.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

One thing. When you walk through
your front door. Go in backwards.
It's Midwich good luck.

ZOE

Bye.

MARY-ANN watches them go, watches TOM take ZOE's arm. MARY-ANN answers the phone but continues to watch ZOE and TOM through the window as they walk down the street together to their car.

MARY-ANN

Hobbs Dawson. Oh yes Mr Harrison. I
got your email.

She watches ZOE rest her head on TOM's shoulder. Such love they have. MARY-ANN's eyes. A slight sadness at a life she will never have...

8

INT. / EXT. ZOE & TOM'S CAR / MIDWICH STREETS. DAY.

8

TOM is driving. ZOE is looking.

They are driving past the drive to Midwich Boys School, past the green parkland. Past the sign to the Midwich Riding School. Past perfect commuter-land.

WOMEN walk by with BUGGIES and CHILDREN. ZOE looks at the KIDS, the BUGGIES. Swings in a passing playground. TOM notices. There's a moment between them. It's complex, a shared history. Maybe a shared pain...

TOM

What are you thinking?

ZOE

I'm thinking about the floorboards in the living room.

She smiles to him. There's a flirtatious promise in that. He feels it.

TOM

I have one request. Can we not have that clock in the bedroom?

ZOE

Tom, that's been in my mother's family for years. It's been loathed by generations of Sawyers... why can't you suck it up?

TOM

Because it gives me nightmares... Please. Anywhere but the bedroom.

ZOE

My mother is going to kill me. She will notice and she will kill me...

TOM

Upstairs landing...

ZOE

Deal.

They drive on, past three girls returning from sixth form college. JANELLE, SADIE and NATASHA. They are laughing and kidding around on phones. JANELLE is smoking and they share a puff.

Then another more solitary girl, NOREEN. She walks alone, wears glasses, big rucksack, studious and serious.

It's dreamy this drive, almost slow-motion, fairy-tale, and yet as ZOE smiles and looks out of the sunlit window, we should feel this indeterminate but awful sense that something is very wrong.

Past Kilmorey Gardens, past COLIN MCAFFERTY, 43, who is jogging in a bright purple track-suit. Past Clemency Drive.

Past a man in his late 30's, STEWART MCLEAN, waving goodbye to his family. We recognise his wife SARAH and daughter CHARLOTTE, the girl with the toys on the sofa. Also in the car is her brother CALLUM, aged nine.

STEWART

Have a great weekend! Say hi to
Granny!

CALLUM AND CHARLOTTE

(leaning out of car
window)

Bye dad!

Now Zoe and Tom turn into Gladstone Road. Smaller houses.
Nice. Pretty.

To their house.

ZOE's eyes focus on the house of their dreams.

9 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DAY.**

9

In her living room CASSIE looks at the trash on TV. Her face has a quiet pain, so clever but somehow unable to live in the world. She knows she should get up, do something else, but she just can't bring herself to do so.

10 **EXT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE. GLADSTONE ROAD. DAY.**

10

Zoe and Tom approach the house. They have the keys in their hand.

Behind them the REMOVAL TRUCK waits. Their own red car is on the road.

They walk up the path, unlock the door.

TOM

You first.

ZOE turns walks in backwards... TOM smiles, follows in.

But not backwards.

She turns.

ZOE

You didn't walk in backwards.

TOM

Oh come on. Since when were
you...?

ZOE

Thomas Cork. What have you done?

She's joking. Or is she? She smiles and, anxious but covering it, she kisses him in the doorway.

11 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DAY.**

11

The TV just flickers for a moment. CASSIE stares.

A strange white light on screen for a millisecond. A hum. Then back to normal.

CASSIE breathes. Did she see it? Was it real?

12 **INT. MIDWICH SCHOOL. DAY.**

12

JANE FELLOWS is 33 years old. She sits in the TEACHER'S COMMON ROOM marking books, radio on quietly, Schubert, her laptop open. The MIDWICH BOYS SCHOOL insignia is on the books.

Outside she can see BOYS playing cricket on this late spring day. We should recognise the cricket pitch from the opening.

BARNABY enters. Teacher. 40, amusingly professorial.

BARNABY

Jane I'm sorry to bother you.
Tony's not well, we're one teacher
short for night duty tonight...

JANE

Sure I can stay.

BARNABY

I'm not ruining any plans?

No. JANE's solitary nature subtly apparent.

JANE

I'll need to fetch Scarlet from
home. Is that ok?

BARNABY

Of course. Thanks a bunch.

He leaves. JANE mimes "a bunch?" to herself, slightly but affectionately amused. Then leans back in her Schubert-filled happiness. God she likes it here...

13 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DAY.**

13

COLIN, returning sweaty from his run in his jogging clothes, enters through the front door into the hall. Sees CASSIE still sitting through the living room door watching TV.

COLIN

You all right Cassie?

She turns to look at COLIN. His track-suit. She hides any fear she might have been feeling.

CASSIE

Did you choose that colour?

COLIN

Was it a mistake?

CASSIE

No.

It was.

COLIN

How are you feeling today?

He means well. She knows it but can't help punishing him for his kindness.

CASSIE

That's a complicated question
Colin. And I think you want a
simple answer.

He smiles awkwardly. He did.

14

EXT. MIDWICH STREETS. DAY.

14

A car screeches up to a Midwich supermarket. JODIE BLAKE, 37 years old, bundle of neurotic energy, leaps out, ignores the double yellow, runs into the supermarket.

15

INT. SUPERMARKET. MIDWICH. DAY.

15

JODIE is choosing two bottles of wine - fast, frantic. She looks across to see MARY-ANN (the estate agent) choosing her own bottle plus a single ready-meal.

They don't know each other but it resonates with JODIE in a way she doesn't like one bit.

Rejecting that thought, JODIE buys the wine at the auto-checkout but the machine says she needs an assistant to help because it's alcohol, there isn't one of course, the queue at the checkout is huge and through the window a TRAFFIC WARDEN approaches her car outside.

JODIE

Fuck!

16 **EXT. MIDWICH ROUNDABOUT. DAY.**

16

JODIE is driving. She undoes the screw-top of one bottle, takes a sneaky sip, she needs it right now.

When suddenly the traffic lights ahead go green, then yellow, then red, then green, then yellow, then red... *all at incredible speed.*

JODIE nearly crashes into another car, a screech of brakes, horns blare, the bottle falls to the ground, JODIE almost doesn't see a KID walking out in the chaos, jams her feet on the brake and just avoids him, her heart beating like mad...

17 **INT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, KITCHEN. CLEMENCY DRIVE. DAY.**

The doorbell rings. DEBORAH KNOWLES, 39 years old, intelligent, slightly reserved, five months pregnant, is in her Midwich kitchen, radio on, kettle boiling. She goes to the door. JODIE is there. Two bottles of wine in hand.

JODIE

Hey!

She smiles. It's wafer-thin. They hug.

DEBORAH

Hey. Come in.

DEBORAH looks at the two bottles of wine, one already drunk from and having lost some wine to the car-floor. Slight embarrassment.

JODIE

Oh come on. You can have a glass can't you?

DEBORAH

You trying to kill it already?

She references her belly. JODIE laughs at her sister and then enters the kitchen like a whirlwind. Puts the bottle down. Talks fast, keeping something at bay.

JODIE

Had a nightmare getting here. I reckon they don't want my type in this town. They set traps.

DEBORAH

Yeah we discussed it at a local meeting. How to keep Jodie Blake out of Midwich.

JODIE

I bet you bloody did too.

A little barb but DEBORAH's used to it. JODIE opens the bottle, fills and drinks from the glass. Too fast. DEBORAH watches. Like watching a sinking ship.

DEBORAH
So what happened?

JODIE
Oh it's all just fucked... he says
there's no one else but he's got
that "boy in a sweetshop" look on
his face so...

Beat. Her jollity drains from her face.

JODIE (CONT'D)
So you know, I think it's...

JODIE suddenly bursts into tears. Not just tears. Deep sudden choking primal grief of loneliness and fear.

DEBORAH
Oh love.

JODIE
He left. This morning. It's over.
Oh what do I do Debs? What do I
do?

DEBORAH holds her as the kettle boils...

18 **INT. RACHEL & CURTIS'S HOUSE, FRONT ROOM. GLADSTONE ROAD. 18 DUSK.**

It's dusk now. RACHEL SAUNDERS, 35 years old, is looking through curtains at the REMOVAL MEN bringing in the last of Zoe and Tom's stuff across the road. Her wiry, somewhat edgy husband CURTIS, 33, is holding a baby.

He approaches and looks too.

RACHEL
I reckon London.

CURTIS
South or North?

RACHEL
South. Battersea maybe.

He looks.

CURTIS
They're too cool for Battersea.

RACHEL
As if you'd know.

CURTIS

They thought they liked the smell
of the city. Until it started to
stink.

As they watch Zoe and Tom help bring the last boxes into
their wonderful new home...

19

EXT. / INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DUSK.

19

The removal men have gone. Inside their new house. TOM is
unpacking the large number of boxes in the shadows of the
living room. Sofa and armchair already in but otherwise it's
just boxes lining the walls. An estate-agent welcome-pack
sits on the empty mantelpiece with a card from "all the gang
at Hobbs Dawson", a photo of the team led by MARY-ANN. TOM
smiles at its sweet awfulness.

But then he hears ZOE on her mobile upstairs. He listens a
little intently.

ZOE

It's so great. Honestly the photos
don't begin to do it justice. You
must come soon.

TOM isn't sure he wants whomever it is on the phone to come
at all.

20

INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, BEDROOM / LANDING. CONT'D.

20

ZOE is walking around the empty main first-floor bedroom as
she talks on the phone. The bed is already constructed but no
sheets on it yet.

ZOE

Yeah he's really happy.

ZOE'S MUM

(on phone)

Well I should hope so, it was his
idea...

ZOE senses she might be heard below, lowers her voice. Walks
across the landing to get away so Tom can't hear from
downstairs.

ZOE

It wasn't just him mum.

ZOE'S MUM

(on phone)

He could have stayed at that other
school.

ZOE

He was hating it. This is a great new chance for him.

ZOE'S MUM

(on phone)

So now you have to take a train every day to work.

21 **INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, HALLWAY. CONT'D.**

21

TOM walks into the hall. He can just hear...

ZOE (O.C.)

Look. We both wanted this, I'm the one that found the house so maybe you should accept I actually want to be here...

22 **INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, REAR BEDROOM. CONT'D.**

22

ZOE walks into the small rear bedroom.

ZOE

And I also chose him. Maybe it's time to deal with that too.

Her anger surprises her. The move has given her a new honesty. A new strength?

ZOE'S MUM

(on phone)

Darling I love Tom...

ZOE

Sure.

But ZOE is suddenly looking at the empty small rear room. The previous owner clearly used it as a child's room. There is a baby-blue child's lamp-shade that has been left hanging from the ceiling. And in one corner of the wall, where the bed had been, is a small, scribbled child's drawing in felt-tip. Someone has tried to wash it clean but without success.

ZOE'S MUM

(on phone)

It's not his fault you've been struggling... I just wish he'd front up.

ZOE looks at the faded drawing. It's a very simple kid's drawing of a family. Mum, dad, two kids. In felt-tip.

ZOE'S MUM (CONT'D)

(on phone)

For such a good-looking man he
really does lack confidence. Maybe
I'm old-fashioned but in my day...

A tension fills ZOE.

ZOE

Listen mum I've got to unpack. I'll
call you later.

ZOE'S MUM

(on phone)

I love you darling.

ZOE

Love you too.

ZOE hangs up. She stares at the child's room. A little jolt
of nerves and pain hits her. Might she almost cry?

No. She's not letting that happen.

23

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

23

ZOE walks in. TOM is carrying on his unpacking in the shadowy
room. It's getting pretty dark outside now.

ZOE

Hey.

TOM

She OK?

ZOE

Yeah. She sends love.

He smiles, not believing that for a second.

Then she sees he is holding "the clock", a late 19th century
"Strasburg Ware" china clock, about 40cm tall. Antique but in
no sense pretty. Slightly Grimm's fairy tale.

She laughs.

TOM

Landing?

ZOE

Landing.

He smiles. He kisses her, she responds, it's intimate and
sweet, then he makes to the door with the clock.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Turn a light on would you?

He reaches for the switch at the door.

And then something frightening happens. The living room light flickers, the hall lights suddenly fizz, TOM turns, sees all the lights fizzing and flickering in the kitchen, living room, hall... he nearly drops the china clock, grabs it just in time.... ZOE stares in fear...

As suddenly the lights flicker supernaturally bright for a moment - and then go out.

24 INT. MIDWICH SCHOOL. DUSK. 24

JANE's radio also cuts out. Her laptop goes to battery power. Her lights go out.

25 INT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, KITCHEN. DUSK. 25

The kettle in DEBORAH's kitchen flickers off, the lights go out. JODIE looks at DEBORAH in anxiety.

26 INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DUSK. 26

In her living room CASSIE ZELLABY sees the TV flickering off to blackness, the lights in the living room flicker off.

CASSIE stares at the dead TV, her face shadowy in the darkness.

SUSANNAH
Cassie? You OK?

SUSANNAH walks fast along the hall. She enters the living room. CASSIE turns.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)
It's just a power cut.

CASSIE
Yes I know.

But does she? Does she sense something else? Does it connect to the white light of earlier? She doubts herself, she knows she has "history".

SUSANNAH looks out the window, dark residential streets.
Senses CASSIE looking at her in the darkness.

Their eyes meet in the reflection of the window.

27 INT. MIDWICH RIDING SCHOOL, STABLES. DUSK. 27

The lights in the stables are out. It's deeply eerie. Fans are silent. The HORSES stand silent.

It's as if they are expecting something...

28

INT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION, INCIDENT ROOM. DUSK.

28

DCI PAUL KNOWLES, originally Northern, quietly affable and no-nonsense, is entering the Midwich Police Station incident room. 43 years old, experienced copper now running his station. There is a map of the town. An electricity board rep MITCHELL FISHER is studying it. Suited and earnest.

PAUL

All right what the fuck is going on? You checked all the sub-stations?

MITCHELL

Three times. There've been no break-ins. No faults. I'm telling you Paul. This is not us.

PAUL

Mitchell with respect I've got a mile-wide blackout in the town. I've got terrified old ladies calling thinking we're at war. I need an answer.

MITCHELL shows the map.

MITCHELL

Look at the map. The outages stretch from Kilmorey Gardens right across Gladstone Road, the school and the riding stables to Hatchfield in the East and Baker Lane in the South. That's not an area governed by one substation. It doesn't make any sense.

PAUL

So what is it?

MITCHELL

I honestly don't know.

PAUL looks at the map, just slightly concerned: is this something more than just a power cut?

Now PAUL's phone rings. DEBORAH CALLING. He grabs it anxiously.

PAUL

Hey.

29

INT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, KITCHEN / MIDWICH POLICE STATION. DUSK.

DEBORAH KNOWLES, in her darkened hall. Through the doorway she can see JODIE sitting drinking in the kitchen, candles are lit.

DEBORAH

Sorry, I only just got your message. We were talking.

PAUL

How is she?

DEBORAH

Steve's left her. For good this time.

PAUL

I'm sorry. But I can't say I'm surprised.

DEBORAH

She's drunk a vat of wine. I think she should stay the night.

Not what he wanted to hear.

PAUL

Listen I may not get back for a while. I need to write a report on all this for the national agencies. Do you need anything?

DEBORAH

(smiling)

It's a power cut Paul. I'll manage.

He nods. But is it?

PAUL

Ok.

She smiles, feels her belly gently. Says suddenly:

DEBORAH

I love you.

It surprises him. Not like her to be so impulsive. He wants to say "Love you too" but MITCHELL is there staring at him and by the time he's worked that out, she's hung up. Fuck. Not how that should have gone.

He puts down the phone. Turns to MITCHELL, annoyed at him for getting between him and his wife.

PAUL

All right Mitchell. If it's not
your bloody wiring, then what the
hell is it?

30 **EXT. PARKLAND. MIDWICH. NIGHT.**

30

The Midwich streets are now dark. Cars quietly pass. House
windows are dark too. No light.

The three TEENAGE GIRLS we saw earlier from Zoe's car, walk
through the light-less park carrying bags with bottles. They
are dressed up for the night. We sense that someone else is
watching them...

JANELLE

I'm not going across there. Not
without street lights. We'll get
molested.

NATASHA

God you're such a drama queen.
Sadie get a move on!

SADIE

I'm just sorting my boobs out.

NATASHA

How many have you got?

JANELLE

She's got three. She's an alien.

NATASHA

Hurry up!

And now we see that the other teenager NOREEN is walking at a
distance behind them, following them. A little shy and nerdy,
NOREEN's made an attempt to dress for a party but it's only
semi-committed.

NOREEN watches as SADIE fights with her very committed dress.
JANELLE stares into the darkness.

JANELLE

I'm serious Tash. I'm not going
across there. It's a black hole.

NATASHA

It's twenty minutes longer the
other way! Come on.

They walk on. NOREEN follows. She makes her way towards the
darkness.

Then she hears horse sounds. Whinnying. In the distance.
Wild, unhinged.

31 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

31

COLIN is looking at his phone.

COLIN

Trains are running. It seems it's
only our area that's out.

Dr SUSANNAH ZELLABY is getting ready. The house is dark.
She has dressed up for the night, so has he. She is doing
her make-up in the semi-darkness. She is anxious and he can
tell.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Look if you're worried about her,
we don't have to go. We could stay
in Midwich, go to Luigi's...

But SUSANNAH knows he only half-means that. She looks at
herself in the mirror. Speaks quietly.

SUSANNAH

No. You booked this weeks ago.
We're going.

32 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, KITCHEN. NIGHT.**

32

SUSANNAH, now ready, walks into the kitchen. Night-lights
illuminate the kitchen. Otherwise dark in the house. CASSIE
ZELLABY is looking in the dark fridge, taking out a
yoghurt.

SUSANNAH

Cassie there are more candles in
the living room drawer. Eat
whatever you want. But don't use
the freezer just in case.

SUSANNAH tentatively kisses her daughter's head from
behind...

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

I've got my phone. Any problems.
Call. OK?

BEAT. CASSIE pauses a moment, mother and daughter have this
strange, awkward moment together. Should she go? Does Cassie
want to stop her?

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Ok. Bye then.

SUSANNAH walks out into the hall. COLIN is waiting. He speaks
quietly.

COLIN

You all right?

SUSANNAH

Let's just go.

She walks out the door. He follows.

As the door slams, CASSIE suddenly turns. Fear on her face.

CASSIE

Mum?

But they have gone.

CASSIE is alone.

Her face suddenly vulnerable in the dark.

33 **INT. / EXT. COLIN'S CAR / MIDWICH TRAIN STATION. NIGHT.** 33

COLIN and SUSANNAH's car reaches the station. Parks up.

They get out and start to run as the train draws in.

The train arrives, they leap on, as a thirty-three year old woman in a long coat and noticeably sexy shoes, gets off.

ANITA. She sees a car flash its lights.

She walks over. It's STEWART MCLEAN, Sarah's husband. He leans out nervously.

STEWART

Get in.

34 **INT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION. NIGHT.** 34

PAUL sits in his fully-lit station ops room, alone looking at the area. DS MAYES enters.

PAUL

Nothing from the Grid?

She shakes her head.

DS MAYES

You want to call regional command?

PAUL

And say what? "I've got a quarter of my town in darkness and I've no idea why." Anyway the super's on holiday so I'd be dealing with some upstart deputy. Just keep hassling them, get those bastards to sort it out.

DS MAYES

Yes sir.

She leaves. PAUL looks at his phone. Looks at Deborah in the contacts? Should he call? No don't be silly. She's smart. Instead he texts: *Your trusty local constabulary are on it. Shouldn't be long.*

But does he believe that? Something about it feels wrong.

He puts away his phone. Breathes.

35 **INT. MIDWICH SCHOOL. NIGHT.**

35

JANE walks the dark corridors of the school, a torch providing light. Looks into the dormitories, BOYS are sleeping, one reading with a torch, sneakily under his sheet... he sees her, and turns the torch out as she passes. She smiles.

And continues down the unlit corridor.

36 **INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.**

36

It's very dark. Zoe and Tom eat Indian takeaway off boxes, drink red wine from random cups. TOM looks at her.

ZOE

What?

TOM

I'm just remembering camping in Bodmin.

ZOE

Fucking hell. Never again.

TOM

Great days.

ZOE

All I remember is trying to make love while rain dripped relentlessly on my forehead.

She sips her wine. Leans forward, suddenly filled with love.

ZOE (CONT'D)

It was true what I said to mum on the phone.

TOM

I wasn't listening.

ZOE

Yeah you were.

(she smiles but continues)

I chose you. And it wasn't only you
who wanted to leave London.

He looks her in the eye. And now we see a vulnerability we
hadn't seen before.

TOM

It was mainly me.

ZOE

Well it's mainly you I love.

She takes his hand. She raises her glass.

ZOE (CONT'D)

To new beginnings.

TOM

New beginnings.

ZOE

And to our family. If and when.

There. She's said it. He nods. They clink and ZOE drinks the
wine in one. Flushed with wine and love, she steps out on to
the floorboards. Her feet feel the cool of the wood.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I really do adore these
floorboards.

And slowly she undresses for him in the darkness.

As she does we see that, across the road, RACHEL SAUNDERS is
watching from the curtained window of her dark house
opposite.

She is watching ZOE's slow striptease in the lightless house,
with a deep and possessive jealousy...

37

INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, SUSANNAH'S STUDY. NIGHT.

37

CASSIE walks up the stairs to the dark landing.

She enters Susannah's study, where Susannah met little
Charlotte earlier.

A desk, the therapy "couch" (a sofa), Susannah's chair.
Books. Lots of books. Some art done by patients.

CASSIE looks at the room.

CASSIE's hands play anxiously. Fingers dig into her skin.
Unsure why she feels so weird.

She sits on the sofa where Susannah's patients sit. Looks at Susannah's empty chair.

As if Susannah was sitting in it. Examining her.

And CASSIE for a moment imagines her there. She clicks out. She needs something. Something to calm her.

CASSIE takes out her phone, goes to name RYAN, thinks about calling, but then rethinks, no, she mustn't. She puts the phone down. Breathes.

38 **INT. LAUREN'S FLAT, LIVING ROOM. WOODBRIDGE ESTATE. NIGHT.** 38

A party in a council flat in the small estate. Still no power. JANELLE, NATASHA SADIE and their PARTY GANG are dancing "silent disco" in the darkness, all with head-phones on.

SADIE sees a BOY looking at her. This is DANNY. NATASHA notices too and eggs her on.

SADIE and DANNY dance close. Very close. It's sexy. As they all dance to the music on their phones.

39 **EXT. LAUREN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 39

Outside on the street the shy and studious NOREEN looks up at the party window. She sees silent, dancing figures. Despite her vague effort to dress up, she is now too frightened to enter...

Instead, she turns and walks away back home through the darkness.

Alone.

40 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.** 40

CASSIE walks back into the living room, looks again at the dark TV.

Into its blackness...

And then her eyes focus.

She seems to see something in it. Something we don't. Hear something. Something we don't.

Something in the screen.

Her breathing gathers pace. Anxiety rising.

She looks out the window into the night. Darkness outside. No lights.

She looks again at the TV. Black.

Now the TV's blackness seems to hum to her. Mumbled sounds. High-pitched laughter? Children?

And for the first time CASSIE senses something truly strange and alien.

And terrifying.

41 **INT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, KITCHEN. NIGHT.** 41

A pasta pan boils in the darkness. Candles on the table. JODIE drinks. JODIE, calmer now, softened, looks at DEBORAH's belly.

JODIE

I'm so happy for you Debs. I know I used to take the piss out of you for being safe. But look at you. Great house. Decent man.

DEBORAH

It'll happen for you.

JODIE smiles - not believing a word of it.

42 **INT. ZELLABY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DAY.** 42

CASSIE stands in horror in the living room. Her breathing increases, she looks around, she dashes into the hall, grabs her coat, walks out.

43 **INT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, KITCHEN. NIGHT** 43

JODIE leans into the belly, very soft and sweet...

JODIE

Alright sweetheart? This is your messed-up auntie Jodie. And you don't know how lucky you are.

DEBORAH smiles. And says it:

DEBORAH

It's a girl.

JODIE

Oh my God. Oh come here.

Genuine pleasure for her sister. They hug as the pasta pan boils...

And then through the window of their kitchen we see CASSIE walking fast down the road, her eyes wild with panic.

The hugging sisters do not see her...

44 **EXT. MIDWICH STREETS. NIGHT.**

44

CASSIE is walking fast in the darkness down the road. Fear in her eyes. She takes out her phone. Calls.

CASSIE
Ryan? It's me. I need something.
What have you got?

45 **INT. MIDWICH RIDING SCHOOL, STABLES. NIGHT.**

45

In the darkness of their stables, the HORSES strain at their tethers, there is a growing violence to their sweating brows.

Then suddenly one breaks its tether, it smashes out of its stall, out into the stable-barn...

46 **EXT. ESTATE PARKLAND. MIDWICH. NIGHT.**

46

The SILENT DISCO has spilled out on the street, they have headphones on, dancing in the darkness, each to their favourite tune... NATASHA and JANELLE dance...

47 **INT. LAUREN'S FLAT, BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

47

SADIE and DANNY are kissing in a kid's bedroom. He starts to undress her...

48 **INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.**

48

ZOE is making love to TOM, it's tender and uninhibited in the darkness, on the floorboards, she is released, it's healing love-making, they haven't made love like this in ages, he is so happy to see her this way... they are unaware that across the road RACHEL is watching them in the shadows...

When suddenly on the street CASSIE walks past between the houses, RACHEL ducks down, CASSIE breaks into a run... for a moment ZOE turns, thinks she sees this crazed girl running down the street but then she is gone...

49 **EXT. MIDWICH RIDING SCHOOL, STABLES. NIGHT.**

49

Now all the horses have broken free and are starting to run wild out of the stables, across the dark courtyard in sheer panic.

There is a sense of wildness, of animals fleeing a terrifying presence...

50 EXT. MIDWICH STREETS. NIGHT.

50

CASSIE walks on fast in the darkness. Panicked purpose in her walk. Desperation. She reaches the traffic lights where Jodie crashed earlier.

Then suddenly the street lights flicker on, the traffic lights ahead show all three colours, red, amber and green. The lights are bright.

CASSIE stops and stares.

51 EXT. PARKLAND. MIDWICH. NIGHT.

51

The shy NOREEN is walking fast home. She suddenly sees
lights flooding the parkland.

She looks round. What the hell is going on?

52 INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, STAIRS. NIGHT.

52

The lights are on in the house. Zoe and Tom run, in hysterics, naked up the stairs, across the landing, past the china clock...

TOM
(laughing)
Where are the fucking curtains!

53 INT. STEWART & SARAH'S HOUSE, BEDROOM. CLEMENCY DRIVE.
NIGHT.

53

The lights are on revealing STEWART and ANITA in flagrante in his bed.

ANITA
Turn the lights off. Turn them
off Stewart!

He rushes to the switch, tries.

STEWART
They won't turn off.

54 INT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, KITCHEN. NIGHT.

54

The kitchen is fully-lit and the radio is on too. It is emitting a high whine. The blender is on full. The pasta pan boils. DEBORAH tries to turn off the lights in the kitchen. Tries the radio. Nothing will turn off. JODIE watches, scared now.

JODIE
What's going on?

DEBORAH is scared too but knowing what JODIE is like, she makes a show of calmly reaching for her phone. The call goes to answerphone.

DEBORAH

Hi Paul it's me. This is going to sound a bit weird...

55

INT. MIDWICH SCHOOL. NIGHT.

55

The lights are back on in JANE's reading room. They are bright. She also tries to turn them off. Not working.

Now she looks up to see a SCHOOL-BOY staring at her in pyjamas. Eight years old.

JANE

Back to bed George. George? Wake up.

The BOY stares at her. Sleep-walking. Not conscious. *Eyes wide open.*

BOY

(whispers)

They're coming.

JANE's dog SCARLET howls and cowers. Confused, anxious, JANE stares out on to the cricket field.

Now JANE's radio emits a high-pitched whine, hugely loud, JANE covers her ears, dives to the power point to try to turn it off but nothing works...

A staggering white light fills the field.

56

EXT. MIDWICH STREETS. NIGHT.

56

CASSIE looks around, the vivid brightness of the street-lights and traffic-lights reflecting her own madness.

Then she sees it.

A HORSE galloping towards her, right down the street...

She stops in amazement.

It's coming right towards her...

She walks on towards it.... it's beautiful, her arms open to the glaring light...

As the horse gallops towards her.

THEN SUDDENLY CASSIE'S EYES ROLL UP IN HER HEAD.

Sudden flash-images:

At the silent disco party, JANELLE's eyes go vacant, so do NATASHA's... They fall. Across the road the other dancers watch as a line right down the road seems to divide those who fall from those who don't...

In her living room MARY-ANN falls.

In the school room JANE falls.

In Deborah's kitchen JODIE and DEBORAH fall.

Naked, running, half way along the landing, right by the family clock, ZOE falls... the clock says the time: it's just after ten past nine.

On the street of Midwich - the HORSE's knees crumple...

CASSIE falls.

BLACK.

57

INT. RESTAURANT. LONDON. NIGHT.

57

SUSANNAH ZELLABY is finishing her dessert in a lovely understated restaurant in London, and talking. COLIN looks across at her as she follows her intense train of thought.

SUSANNAH

This nine year old boy who came to me on Wednesday, he had a recurring dream of fish attacking him. They eat his ankles then his knees. They continue upwards until they reach his middle. He screams and wakes... the same every night.

COLIN

It couldn't be caused some sort of somatosensory stimulation?

SUSANNAH

Oh come on Colin. You seriously think the kid's dog's been nibbling his legs while he slept? No. There is a wave of anxiety among our younger generation that we remain completely ill-equipped to deal with. They are overwhelmed by commercialised technology, haunted by terrors of imminent disaster. They're alienated and lost. They need our help.

She eats more of her pudding. COLIN smiles. Says gently:

COLIN
Can I say something?

SUSANNAH
Sure.

COLIN
The ten years with you have been
the happiest of my life.

Beat.

SUSANNAH
(deeply touched but
unsure)
Do you mean that?

COLIN
Why wouldn't I mean it?

SUSANNAH
I'm not always easy to live with. I
find the domestic sphere...
complicated.

COLIN
You're wonderful to live with.

She's touched by that. He hands her something. A little gift.

SUSANNAH
What is this?

COLIN
Just a... token. To mark the
occasion.

She opens it. It's a bracelet.

COLIN (CONT'D)
I saw it in this little shop in
Brook.

SUSANNAH
It's beautiful.

She looks at the bracelet. A little turquoise bird has its
wings outstretched. And for some reason this little bird
makes SUSANNAH suddenly deeply and terribly sad.

COLIN
What is it?

But he knows. She's thinking of Cassie.

COLIN (CONT'D)
It's OK. We can talk about her.

SUSANNAH

I keep thinking I should call.

COLIN

It's the first night you've left her. Cassie needs you to trust her.

SUSANNAH

I trusted her six months ago. She said she was fine to live on her own. Look what happened.

COLIN

That was a cry for help... She's different now.

SUSANNAH

Is she?

COLIN

When she came back she was so angry. You remember? Not any more. And she's getting her sense of humour back. She took the piss out of my tracksuit earlier...

SUSANNAH

That's not difficult.

She tries a smile but...

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Oh God. We're even spending our anniversary dinner talking about her. I swore we wouldn't.

COLIN

Life happens Dr Zellaby. You can't stop it, even with a brain the size of a planet.

SUSANNAH

Why can't I talk to her? I think about her all the time, I talk to you about her endlessly. But when I'm with her...

He takes her hand.

COLIN

She'll come back to you. When she's ready.

She looks at the turquoise bird. Sudden emotion fills her.

He takes her hand, smiles.

COLIN (CONT'D)
We should probably go.

SUSANNAH
We'll get the ten twenty.

COLIN
That's more like it. Railway
timetables.

He stands. She whispers.

SUSANNAH
And when we get home, Dr
McAfferty, I have a gift for you
too...

COLIN
Do you now...

She squeezes him secretly. He's pleased.

58

INT. LONDON WATERLOO STATION. NIGHT.

58

SUSANNAH and COLIN walk fast as they enter the station.

SUSANNAH
It'll be platform 4.

COLIN
How do you know?

SUSANNAH
It's always Platform 4.

But he has seen something.

COLIN
Susannah.

SUSANNAH
Come on I don't want to miss it.

But COLIN is staring at the board.

*All South West Trains towards Southampton and Bournemouth
cancelled due to power failure in the Midwich area.*

A flicker of anxiety in SUSANNAH. She gets her phone out.
Calls Cassie. It goes to voicemail.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)
She's not answering.

Her panic levels are already on the rise. And being SUSANNAH,
that means she has to solve the situation.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Let's get a taxi.

COLIN

That'll cost a fortune.

SUSANNAH

I'll pay.

She is already walking towards the large queue at the taxi rank. COLIN looks again at the sign.

Power failure in the Midwich area.

59

INT. WHITEHALL, MEETING ROOM. NIGHT.

59

BRYONY CUMMINGS, a young intelligence officer, 32 years old, is being walked by her boss BERNARD WESTCOTT through Whitehall corridors.

BERNARD

The town is called Midwich. Comes under the North Hampshire Police Authority. There's an area about a mile square that seems to have descended into an unexplained power and communication blackout.

BRYONY

Any intelligence on terror activity?

BERNARD

Nothing yet. SO15's on its way. There's a local DCI down there, Paul Knowles, competent record. He's getting the army to help him cordon the area. No deaths reported. But I think we must anticipate the worst.

He speaks quietly.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

It's a watching brief. Don't interfere with the formal line of command. Let SO15 deal with it. Just report back, keep us informed.

BRYONY

When do I leave?

BERNARD

Car's waiting outside.

And with that he is gone, leaving BRYONY to wonder what exactly is going on...

60 **EXT. MOTORWAY, TOWARDS MIDWICH. NIGHT.**

60

A taxi drives fast through the night.

61 **INT. TAXI, TOWARDS MIDWICH. CONT'D.**

61

SUSANNAH and COLIN are in the back of the taxi. SUSANNAH again tries CASSIE's phone. Again it goes to voice-mail.

She talks to the TAXI DRIVER.

SUSANNAH

As fast as you can please.

The taxi rides on into the night.

62 **EXT. A-ROAD, ONE MILE OUTSIDE MIDWICH. NIGHT.**

62

They drive closer to the town through pale, moonlit countryside. Fields on both sides. English beauty.

But now POLICE are stopping traffic. A roadblock.

TAXI DRIVER

Looks like no way through.

SUSANNAH

There has to be.

COLIN

We live here. What are we supposed to do?

SUSANNAH is texting. *Cassie please. Just answer.*

Nothing back.

SUSANNAH

Let's walk.

COLIN

Susannah we're not even close.

But she just gets out the taxi. It's quiet. Rural here, fields and hedgerows gleaming in the moonlight. Strangely still and almost serene.

A small traffic jam ahead. A team of two or three POLICE turning the small number of cars around.

COLIN pays the taxi, a lot of money, and follows her.

They walk past the six or seven cars. Some are turning around. Police lights glow gently in the distance. There's no sense of panic, just an eerie silence.

She approaches a TRAFFIC POLICEWOMAN.

SUSANNAH

Excuse me. We live in Midwich.

TRAFFIC POLICEWOMAN

There's no entry at the moment.
If you could turn your vehicle
round and go back to Barham, park
up. Then go straight to the
village hall, and wait there.

SUSANNAH

Until when?

TRAFFIC POLICEWOMAN

We hope to have more information
soon.

SUSANNAH

But I have to get home. I have a
daughter. She's alone.

TRAFFIC POLICEWOMAN

How old is she?

SUSANNAH

That's not the point. She has
mental health issues...

TRAFFIC POLICEWOMAN

If you head to the village hall
you'll be looked after there.
There's no entry to the town at
present.

SUSANNAH looks at her - is she hiding something from her?
She's already turning to the next car that is waiting.

COLIN

Can you at least tell us what's
happened?

No she can't.

63

EXT. COUNTRY LANE, BARHAM. NIGHT.

63

SUSANNAH and COLIN walk down the quiet rural lane towards the tiny village of Barham. In the distance they see the village green, twenty or so cars parked on or round it, and Barham village hall, its warm lights lonely in the darkness. They see POLICE waiting there. PEOPLE being signed in. It's strange and unsettling.

SUSANNAH

We go in there, they'll keep us
in all night.

COLIN

Susannah this could be anything.

She knows he's right. But a deep biological pull drives her.
She looks back towards Midwich, across the fields. She speaks
quietly, calmly almost.

SUSANNAH

I'm walking. You stay here. I'll
be fine.

COLIN

The roads are closed!

SUSANNAH

I'll cut across the common, there
are hundreds of paths. I've lived
here ten years Colin, I can find
my own house.

She quietly turns off the road down a dark footpath between
hedgerows.

COLIN pauses for a moment then follows.

64

INT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

64

The police station is completely different to how it was
earlier. An emergency ops room has been instated. Maps on the
wall show the zone. Circular. Coloured flags are dotted
around and close to the perimeter.

PAUL KNOWLES is staring at a series of long-lens photo-images
on a screen. The images are blurred, eerie and disquieting.
We are not quite sure what they are. But they disturb PAUL
deeply.

PAUL looks at his phone, checks no one is looking at him,
tries DEBORAH.

No reply.

A voice from behind him.

DS MAYES

Sir. London's sent someone.

PAUL nods, turns to see through the ops room window BRYONY
CUMMINGS get out of a black BMW that has parked up, and walk
towards him.

65 **INT. SARAH'S MOTHER'S HOUSE, CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.** 65

CHARLOTTE wakes suddenly, her breath short. She looks at the bottom of her bed. A line of toys as she always needs to have them. But there is a gap where Brian the Lion should be.

CHARLOTTE looks round in the darkness, scared. In the other single bed in the room CALLUM sleeps soundly.

CHARLOTTE gets out of bed.

66 **INT. SARAH'S MOTHER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.** 66

A TV in the small living room is showing breaking news.

REPORTER

Clare at the moment the police are saying very little.

In her mother's small and comfy living room, SARAH MCLEAN, wife of Stewart, is watching the TV in shock.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

What we do know is that the town of Midwich has been quarantined. No one is going in and as far as we can see no one is coming out...

SARAH tries Stewart's number, clearly not for the first time. It again goes straight to voicemail.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

... normally by now we would have messages on social media, we'd have footage from people's phones, something to tell us what is happening inside the area affected.

She turns to see CHARLOTTE, in pyjamas, who has come down and is watching the TV secretly from the door with an anxious look on her face. She is holding a polar bear.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Tonight there is nothing whatsoever coming from the area. And that has to be of slight concern.

SARAH

Charlotte go to bed. You'll wake Granny.

But CHARLOTTE has seen the map on the TV. Midwich. Her eyes fill with fear.

CHARLOTTE
Is Daddy there?

She looks scared. It's everything she feared.

SARAH
It's OK. Sssh. It's OK.

SARAH tries to comfort her daughter as the news continues to roll.

67

EXT. COMMON, OUTSIDE MIDWICH. NIGHT.

67

A dark night. Strangely quiet. SUSANNAH is walking across the common. She's worried but walks with purpose. COLIN follows.

COLIN
We should go back.

SUSANNAH
They always dramatise these things. We'll get home, check Cassie's OK and in one hour we'll be in bed.

She's calming herself as much as him. But now they stop as smoke seems to float across the common from the town.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)
What is that?

COLIN
Smells of burning.

SUSANNAH's face tenses. She walks on.

68

EXT. MIDWICH STREETS. NIGHT.

68

SUSANNAH and COLIN exit the common, they are on the edge of the town now, they turn a corner in the path.

They walk quickly along a residential street. It's quiet. Lights are on normally. That's a relief.

SUSANNAH
Everything seems fine.

She walks on. COLIN goes after her. Is he reassured?

But then they see a number of ARMED POLICE and a SPECIALIST RESPONSE UNIT in yellow HAZMAT SUITS on the crest of the hill in front of them.

The UNITS are marking a boundary of some kind. Creating a cordon of tape. Police cars. Ambulances. It's all very quiet.

More smoke floats through the air.

And beyond the POLICE they see in the distance someone lying on the ground. A MAN and a DOG not far from him, on a lead. Both flat on the ground.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

What is that?

COLIN

Looks like a shooting.

SUSANNAH

Why are they not tending the body?

Now SUSANNAH's worry turns to fear.

COLIN

Let's talk to them. Susannah please. This is not safe.

SUSANNAH

No. They'll send us back.

She turns down a path towards a small gate leading into woodland.

COLIN

For God's sake. Where are you going?

SUSANNAH

If we go through the school grounds, we can avoid them.

COLIN

Susannah!

She turns.

SUSANNAH

(quiet whisper)

I'm not leaving her alone all night.

Sudden quiet fierceness. And before he can answer she has already turned off the street down a footpath into the school grounds. He follows. It's darker here among the trees. SUSANNAH's face is deeply anxious now, she struggles with her phone, calls again, again it's voice-mail.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Cassie answer your fucking phone!

Behind her COLIN has seen something strange in the parkland of the school.

COLIN
Susannah wait!

She strides on, not listening. She is entering the school grounds.

COLIN stops. It's so quiet. He can see distant in the dark woods the shy schoolgirl, NOREEN, flat out on a grassy bank. Beyond her he can see a HORSE flat lying on the ground, also appearing dead or unconscious. Fires in the distance, smoke in the darkness.

He turns, sudden terror.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Susannah!

But she continues even faster.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Come back!

Then COLIN sees something very strange.

He sees SUSANNAH, mid-walk, stop dead, and then as if shot, fall flat to the ground.

His heart misses a beat.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Susannah?

He sprints towards her, almost reaches her. Then CRACK, almost instantly, he passes out, his eyes go up into his head...

And he plunges unconscious to the ground.

69

INT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION, INCIDENT ROOM. NIGHT.

69

PAUL is talking BRYONY through the situation as they walk through the busy ops room, POLICE on phones, POLICE looking at photos, adding coloured flags to the map of the exclusion zone on the wall.

PAUL
The military are sending hazard units from Aldershot and Salisbury. SO15 are also on their way.

BRYONY
Where's your regional superintendent?

PAUL

He's in Corfu. Scuba fan
apparently. So until SO15 get here,
I'm the boss.

She smiles.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I've established roadblocks
outside the town and a cordon
around the affected zone itself.

BRYONY

How many people in the town?

PAUL

Thirty thousand.

BRYONY

And the affected area?

PAUL

Two thousand maybe, we're getting
precise data. Mostly family houses.
A small estate, the school, and the
riding stables. As far as we can
see the affected zone is about half
a mile wide, almost exactly
circular, centred on the school.
There was an unexplained power cut
earlier today. Since 9.12pm we've
had a complete blackout in the
area, no communication possible in
or out, anyone trying to get in
falls instantly unconscious.

BRYONY

What do you mean - unconscious?

He refers her to the flags on the wall. There are about forty
of these flags.

PAUL

Visible bodies. We can't reach them
but we have eyes on them.

He shows her the photographs. Bodies lying flat in the
darkness.

BRYONY

Dead or alive?

PAUL

We don't know.

She look at him, bewildered, taking that in.

PAUL (CONT'D)

No mobile signals. No GPS. I flew a small drone over. It picked up nothing.

BRYONY

Show me.

He clicks on the computer. The footage is aerial but it's interfered with.

PAUL

Something's blocking the infra-red.

BRYONY stares at the screen, dark interference. It's somehow very frightening. When suddenly he says...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Is there anything you're not telling me Miss Cummings?

And she sees for the first time a fear in his eyes. But now an OFFICER rushes in.

OFFICER

Sir we have two new bodies passed out right on the edge of the zone.

PAUL

(to BRYONY)

You should see this.

70

EXT. PATH TOWARDS SCHOOL. NIGHT.

70

The ARMY RESCUE TEAM are in bio-hazard suits. Police lights flicker in the darkness.

A hook from a crane has dug into COLIN's belt on his trousers. It misses his belt first time. The hook pulls him back to the edge of the cordon.

VOICE

Bring him in. Go. Go.

COLIN wakes, is rushed back from the cordon line by the ARMY TEAM.

His pulse is tested.

ARMY MEDIC

Pulse normal.

COLIN feels his head. He has a cut on his forehead. Then he sees ARMED RESPONSE POLICE training guns on him.

COLIN
What the hell?

Minutes later: COLIN is given a hot drink as he recovers by the side of the road.

POLICE 1
What's your name?

COLIN
Dr Colin McAfferty.

POLICE 1
You have ID?

COLIN nods. Hands over his ID.

COLIN
Susannah? Where is she?

BRYONY CUMMINGS and PAUL KNOWLES get out of police cars and are led towards him by POLICE.

PAUL walks forward with BRYONY.

PAUL
It's all right, I know him.

He addresses COLIN.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Dr McAfferty? DCI Paul Knowles.
You go jogging in my road.

COLIN
Not as often as I should. You
live at thirty-one.

PAUL nods. The slightest shadow of worry crosses his face and BRYONY notices it.

But now COLIN looks up. Sees that they are walking a very dazed SUSANNAH back from inside the zone.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Susannah!

SUSANNAH has been given a blanket to warm herself. She shivers in fear as she approaches.

COLIN (CONT'D)
You OK darling?

SUSANNAH
I'm fine.

COLIN

You know Paul Knowles don't you...
he and his wife live at 31 Kilmorey
Gardens.

BRYONY flicks a look to PAUL who says nothing. SUSANNAH
nods, feels her head. She is almost sick.

PAUL

(to JUNIOR OFFICERS)
Someone get her a hot drink.

SUSANNAH

What's going on in there?

BRYONY

Bryony Cummings. Home Office. Can
I ask you something? What did it
feel like when you fell?

The scientist takes over in SUSANNAH as she analyses her
memories.

SUSANNAH

I'm not sure. I remember
walking.. And then I think I... I
felt this lightness... dizziness,
very quiet.

BRYONY

Unpleasant?

SUSANNAH

No. It was calm. Almost a relief.

BRYONY

And now?

SUSANNAH

I feel cold. That's all.

PAUL

We'll take you for tests Dr
Zellaby. Get you warmed up.

SUSANNAH

My daughter... I need to know if
she's OK.

PAUL

We can't get in there at the
moment.

SUSANNAH

I have to, she's vulnerable...

In on PAUL's face.

PAUL

You can't. Not at the moment.

Her fear resonating with his own.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Take her, keep her warm.

COLIN and SUSANNAH are escorted towards a car.

BRYONY looks towards the invisible border that separates consciousness from apparent sleep. Walks towards it. Stops at the markings.

She seems about to take one step into the void... He takes her arm.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Careful.

She looks into the zone. Smoke in the air. And decides to say it:

BRYONY

Your wife? Is she inside there?

Beat. He nods very slightly. He gives little away but we sense his deep fears.

PAUL

She'll be fine. Her sister's with her.

BRYONY

Heard anything from her?

He pauses. Makes a decision. Hands Bryony his phone. Plays her a message.

DEBORAH

Hi Paul it's me. This is going to sound a bit weird. The lights are on again and now they won't turn off. I'm a bit scared... would you come h....

Then just a crackle, a buzz, loud. Then a crash.

Then silence. In on PAUL's face.

71

EXT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

71

PAUL and BRYONY's car returns to the POLICE STATION to find a fleet of police cars and unmarked cars outside plus an NPAS helicopter waiting on the pad. A SUITED MAN approaches PAUL. This is LANCASTER. BRYONY hangs back. She and LANCASTER register each other quietly. He knows who she is.

LANCASTER

DCI Knowles? John Lancaster. SO15 commander. I have your Incident Response Report. Good job on the cordon. We'll take it from here.

PAUL

Given how little we know I'd like to recommend a phased evacuation of the rest of the town.

LANCASTER

Not yet. We're going to find out what this is. Get your team on to the local population outside the zone, knock on doors, keep them in their homes, reassure them we're protecting them.

PAUL senses a slight patronisation here. National command taking over. BRYONY senses it too.

PAUL turns to see a PILOT and CO-PILOT of an NPAS HELICOPTER in protection suits, walk towards the helicopter. The Co-Pilot is armed with cameras.

PAUL

What's that?

LANCASTER

We're putting an NPAS copter up...

PAUL

The drone I sent up earlier saw nothing.

LANCASTER

You didn't have the kit we do.

But LANCASTER is already moving away. We can hear radio voices as the PILOTS get in the helicopter.

NPAS TEAM LEADER

(on radio)

Mission is to identify any hostile presence. If there are hostile bodies within the zone, maintain height of 1200 feet, until we can verify the extent to which they may be armed. If no hostile presence detected, permission for descent closer to create better eye-line will be given over radio. All clear?

Thumbs up from the helicopter pilot. They climb in and PAUL watches the POLICE HELICOPTER soar up into the air.

72 **EXT. MEDICAL HOLDING AREA. MIDWICH. EARLY DAWN.** 72

SUSANNAH walks out of a police medical holding area, having had her blood tests. Inside COLIN is still receiving his.

Across the road she can see press and TV cameras gathering, police not allowing them closer to the zone.

SUSANNAH watches the helicopter pass over her.

73 **EXT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION. EARLY DAWN.** 73

BRYONY and PAUL watch as the helicopters gain height then fly over the zone area.

74 **INT. HELICOPTER. EARLY DAWN.** 74

The PILOT manoeuvres over the zone, he is high above.

The Co-PILOT tries to take footage with a camera. Nothing. Just interference. She shakes her head.

PILOT

Nothing sir. Must be some blocking of the signal.

MILITARY TEAM LEADER

(on radio)

Descend closer for naked eye survey.

The PILOT begins to bring the helicopter closer.

75 **EXT. SO15 OPERATIONS TENT. EARLY DAWN.** 75

On the monitor the MILITARY TEAM LEADER watches as the altitude dial goes down. 1400, 1300, 1200, 1100...

76 **EXT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION. EARLY DAWN.** 76

BRYONY and PAUL watch as the helicopter seems to get closer to the tops of trees from where they are viewing.

PAUL watches, a worry gnawing at him.

BRYONY notices.

BRYONY

What is it?

77

INT. HELICOPTER. EARLY DAWN.

77

The Co-PILOT looks down. Sees smoke, fires in its spotlight.

CO-PILOT (ON RADIO)
No hostile bodies visible sir.

There is nothing moving.

Just mist and stillness. It's eerie.

Then the spotlight dances across something very strange indeed.

CO-PILOT (CONT'D)
Terry look.

TERRY turns to look.

Is that a horse lying on the road?

TERRY
I'm going in closer.

He descends. 1050. 1000. 950.

The spotlight illuminates people on the ground. JANELLE and NATASHA and their silent disco friends.

A JOGGER flat out on the ground.

A KID flat out outside a house.

A DOG in the middle of the road.

The PILOT stares in amazement.

A car crash in the street - an upturned lorry, a smoking van.

A pub garden. In the pub garden, there are dozens of BODIES lying flat out on the ground below... it's like a battlefield after a battle.

PILOT
What the....?

Then a sound behind him. The PILOT turns. The CO-PILOT has passed out.

He turns to see the dial. 950...900.. He tries to reach the dials to climb...

But too late. His eyes close.

78 **EXT. MEDICAL HOLDING AREA. MIDWICH. EARLY DAWN.**

78

SUSANNAH catches her breath as the helicopter does a tail-spin and plummets.

79 **INT. SO15 RESPONSE TENT. EARLY DAWN.**

79

The MILITARY TEAM LEADER stares at the altitude dial which is flying down. 450. 400. 300. 200.

RADIO OPERATOR
NPAS21 re-ascend immediately.
Reascend!

100. 0. 0. 0. 0.

A noise in the distance.

BRYONY and PAUL watch the small plume of flame rise up in the distance.

LANCASTER stands in shock.

RADIO
NPAS21 respond. NPAS21 respond.

PAUL says nothing but his worst fears have been realised.

80 **INT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION, INCIDENT ROOM. EARLY DAWN.**

80

BRYONY is sitting in the police ops room watching through a window into a large office space where a high-level GOLD GROUP meeting is in session. A pale-faced LANCASTER leads it. PAUL is there as chief of local police. With emergency services, army, media liaison, SO15. There is a new gravity to the situation.

LANCASTER
(just heard through
window)
We're implementing a phased
evacuation of all areas of the town
currently accessible to police and
army as per Emergency Plan 243. DCI
Knowles will co-ordinate and lead
regular briefings to the press.

Later: the meeting breaks up, urgency, clear action plan.

PAUL walks out. He approaches his office. Sits alone for a moment, tries his phone. Nothing. BRYONY enters. There's a moment of quiet between them.

BRYONY
You OK?

PAUL

Deborah... my wife. She's pregnant.

BRYONY

Do they know?

She means his team. He shakes his head.

PAUL

It's been a while coming. So we thought we'd keep it to ourselves for as long as possible...

BRYONY understands for the first time how much this means to him.

BRYONY

We'll get her out.

He nods but does he believe it?

81 **INT. MEDICAL HOLDING AREA. MIDWICH. DAWN.**

81

It's lighter outside now. COLIN wakes. SUSANNAH sits along with several SLEEPING PEOPLE on camp beds provided. She is not sleeping. She is again trying her phone.

SUSANNAH

I need a charger. Has someone got a charger?

Distressed by her distress, COLIN walks outside.

82 **EXT. MEDICAL HOLDING AREA. MIDWICH. DAWN.**

82

Outside is a kind of chaos. Army jeeps are bringing people out.

Early morning dog-walkers stare.

COLIN

What's going on?

83 **INT. MEDIA CENTRE. DAWN.**

83

PAUL walks to the microphone, TV CAMERA turn, JOURNALISTS cram in.

PAUL

I am issuing the following statement on behalf of the police force of North Hampshire, the national crime agencies and combined armed forces.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

We have an emergency situation developing in the town of Midwich. The decision was made at zero five hundred hours to evacuate all areas of the town that could be reached by our rescue teams. This evacuation is ongoing.

84

INT. MEDICAL HOLDING AREA. MIDWICH. CONT'D.

84

Inside the holding area, SUSANNAH watches on a TV screen as PAUL continues his press conference.

PAUL

(on TV)

As regards the area that remains in communication blackout and impenetrable to all external agencies, I have no further information at this time.

JOURNALIST

(on TV)

Is this a terrorist incident?

PAUL

(on TV)

We are treating it as such until we know otherwise.

JOURNALIST 2

(on TV)

There are thousands of people in that area. What do you say to their families?

SUSANNAH watches PAUL on the screen. He speaks with a personal sincerity that only we truly understand.

PAUL

(on TV)

I can assure them that every avenue is being explored to bring those people out safely.

In on SUSANNAH's face. Trying to control her fear.

On the TV, PAUL leaves as questions and camera-bulbs continue to fly.

SUSANNAH looks around. Where is Colin?

85

EXT. MEDICAL HOLDING AREA. MIDWICH. DAWN.

85

COLIN is outside watching PAUL and BRYONY make their way out of the media centre.

Army jeeps are delivering families out of the town. Cars are also driving out of the town. KIDS, OLD PEOPLE, FAMILIES, all are being escorted to buses that are standing by.

COLIN

Where are they taking them?

POLICE OFFICER

We have various out-of-town hotels and conference centres on stand-by. You should join them sir.

COLIN watches the ambulances on stand-by. In the distance, a small group of Evangelists are chanting an anthem, placards declaring the second coming. Media tents are swarming. Reporters, TV vans, cables, POLICE in constant negotiation, but the ARMY have every avenue sealed now.

COLIN avoids JOURNALISTS who swarm towards him, and sees a woman getting out of her car. SARAH MCLEAN. He recognises her. Approaches.

COLIN

Sarah?

SARAH

What's going on?

COLIN

They're evacuating the town but they can't reach our area.

SARAH

I just drove back from my mother's. I can't get Stewart on the phone.

She suddenly breaks up.

COLIN

Hey it's OK.

SARAH

What if they're all dead?

COLIN looks round, sees SUSANNAH standing there. She heard that. She looks at the evacuation.

SUSANNAH

They're just abandoning them.

COLIN

Susannah. They're moving everyone out to the perimeter. We have to go.

POLICE and ARMY are moving across.

ARMY OFFICER

Everyone on to the buses where
you will be registered and given
a temporary permit for residence
in local accommodation.

SUSANNAH

I'm not going anywhere until I
know about my daughter.

ARMY OFFICER

Move along please. Let's go!

SUSANNAH ignores him. Refuses to move.

ARMY OFFICER (CONT'D)

I said move along please.

He touches SUSANNAH roughly.

COLIN

Hey get off her.

ARMY OFFICER

This is an enforced evacuation
under police and military
command.

SUSANNAH

Don't push me!

She pushes the ARMY OFFICER hard. More SOLDIERS rush over,
but COLIN is joined by other MALE RESIDENTS. And SARAH too.
PAUL and BRYONY notice the melee and begin to walk over.

ARMY OFFICER

Get on the buses.

SUSANNAH

I'm not leaving her!

COLIN

Susannah!

Now a FIGHT breaks out between two RESIDENTS. Now TV
cameras move in. REPORTERS.

PAUL

Get back! Everyone get back!

REPORTER

Tensions are reaching fever pitch
here John. There is a fight
breaking out between residents...

But now the REPORTER is grabbed by a RESIDENT.

RESIDENT

Get the hell out of here! This is
nothing to do with you!

More melee, noise, chaos. The ARMY bring out guns. It's
chaos. PAUL struggles to control it.

PAUL

Put the bloody guns away!

ARMY SOLDIER

(on TANNOY)

This is a state of emergency! Get
in the vans now. Move!

Then SUSANNAH suddenly stares at her phone. 4% battery. But
it is ringing.

ARMY SOLDIERS

I said move! MOVE!

Pause. SUSANNAH can't believe her eyes. And PAUL notices.

The screen says CASSIE. COLIN sees it too.

COLIN

WAIT!

SUSANNAH answers it.

SUSANNAH

Cassie? Cassie?

And as if by osmotic instinct, the whole place calms,
senses an event happening, senses a new development. Even
the SOLDIERS calm.

BRYONY and PAUL stare at SUSANNAH as the TV cameras quietly
turn.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Cassie? Is that you?

86

EXT. STREET. MIDWICH. DAWN

86

CASSIE ZELLABY is lying on the empty street where she fell,
her face is bruised, smoke is floating, it's like a dream,
she looks round to see a HORSE capily getting to its feet.

CASSIE

Mum?

87

EXT. MEDICAL HOLDING AREA. MIDWICH. DAWN.

87

Silence.

CASSIE
(on phone)
Mum?

SUSANNAH's eyes fill with utter relief. In the background we now hear other phones start to ring. But we are focused only on SUSANNAH.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Where are you? I need you.

SUSANNAH
I'm here baby. I'm here.

88

INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, LANDING / BATHROOM. DAWN.

88

ZOE wakes. Her head hurts. Heavy. She looks up at the china clock that stares down at her.

She is freezing. Shivering. Why? She looks round.

Now she sees why. She is naked on the floor of the landing, boxes everywhere.

ZOE
Tom? Tom!

She runs into the bedroom. Daylight through the windows. Across the road she sees the neighbour CURTIS stagger out of his house, bewildered. No one else on the street. He looks up and sees her, naked through the window.

ZOE opens a box, finds a coat or similar and covers herself.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Tom?

A groan. From the bathroom.

She runs in.

TOM, bleeding, naked, on the floor where his head cracked on the bath.

He stares up at her. He is shivering, faint, losing blood.

She holds him.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Oh my god. You're OK. You're OK.

89

INT. MIDWICH POLICE STATION, INCIDENT ROOM. DAWN.

89

PAUL is on his radio as the map in front of him lights up with GPS signals, phones etc. He moves to his team, energised, professional, but with hope inside him.

PAUL

I want ambulance and fire teams to the border of the zone. You go in slow, and you go in according to strict emergency procedures. Let's go.

The TEAMS fan out.

BRYONY looks to PAUL who sits at his radio ops main desk, a man in charge of his operation.

BRYONY

You have to stay here?

PAUL

I need to co-ordinate all units.

BRYONY

You tried your wife?

PAUL

No reply yet.

A moment between them. But the first radio reports are already coming in.

POLICE OFFICER

(on RADIO)

We're inside sir. No detectable gas, no noticeable effects on myself or any of my team.

BRYONY

(to PAUL)

What's your address?

He looks at her.

90

INT. MIDWICH SCHOOL. DAWN.

90

JANE wakes. She has a dog licking her face. SCARLET. She gets up. She sees the SCHOOL-BOY still flat on the ground.

JANE

George? George!

She runs down the corridor. She bends down to see how he is.

His eyes open.

91 **INT. / EXT. POLICE CAR. / MIDWICH STREETS. DAY.**

91

BRYONY is being driven in by her driver. She passes several crashed cars, now with ambulances in attendance, a pub with a fire being fought, flames still licking the building. PEOPLE standing, pale, cold, bewildered.

BRYONY drives on, passes the crashed helicopter which has fallen right into a dentist's car park.

She passes NOREEN who is walking fast, head down, secretive, the other way...

She passes seven or eight teenagers with headphones including JANELLE and NATASHA, who are all recovering on the street.

She passes a horse that has been caught and tethered.

Still the smoke pours by.

It's like a dream.

92 **INT. STEWART & SARAH'S HOUSE, BEDROOM. DAY.**

92

STEWART wakes. He is on the floor. He gets up. Sees ANITA looking at him. They are both in a state of undress.

His phone is ringing. Ringing. He answers.

STEWART

Hello.

SARAH

Stewart? Are you OK?

It's SARAH, she's outside the town still. She's deeply relieved to hear his voice.

STEWART

I'm fine. What's going on?

He is shaking with cold.

SARAH

(deeply emotional)

There's been a blackout for twelve hours. We thought you were all dead.

STEWART stares at ANITA.

SARAH (CONT'D)

The army are coming now. Don't move. Ok?

STEWART

OK love.

He hangs up. Turns to ANITA.

ANITA

What happened?

STEWART

You can't be here.

93

EXT. CLEMENCY DRIVE. DAY.

93

BRYONY's car turns into the road.

She passes houses with a few bewildered people standing outside. All look pale, cold, shocked.

DRIVER

What number is it?

BRYONY

Thirty-one.

She passes ANITA who is walking head down, coat on, down the road.

BRYONY's car approaches the house. Stops outside. There is no fire. Nothing seems wrong.

BRYONY gets out.

BRYONY (CONT'D)

Wait here.

She walks up the front door. Rings. No reply.

Then she senses something. A smell?

And she moves like lightning.

She grabs a rock, hurls it through the living room, window, the smell is appalling, gas, she smashes the glass away, dives through, covers her face, her hands bleeding, she runs into the kitchen....

94

INT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE, KITCHEN. CONT'D.

94

A body face down on the ground.

The cooker-gas on for the pasta pan but the flame is out.

BRYONY dives over, turns off the gas, and half-choking she reaches the back door, tries to open it, it's locked, she looks round, sees the key on a hook, unlocks it, and just before collapsing, she opens the door.

She hears a groan.

She dashes over to a body that is lying near a slightly open window.

BRYONY
Deborah? Deborah!

The body groans, chokes almost, BRYONY almost drags the body to the open back door and the oxygen coming in.

BRYONY (CONT'D)
Deborah.

The face she is staring at shakes its head. It's JODIE.

BRYONY (CONT'D)
Are you Deborah?

JODIE shakes her head.

BRYONY dashes back inside. And sees the other body. Next to the cooker. Pregnant.

She walks over. DEBORAH is still.

BRYONY drags the body, tries resuscitation, pumps the chest, mouth-to-mouth, but knows its too late.

Now Deborah's phone rings. BRYONY knows who it is. PAUL.

PAUL (ON PHONE)
Debs. Is that you?

In on BRYONY's face.

95

INT. STEWART & SARAH'S HOUSE, KITCHEN. DAY.

95

Music. SARAH MCLEAN dashes into her house, finds STEWART sitting in the kitchen. Shaking still. POLICE are on the streets, one POLICEWOMAN is with her.

SARAH
Thank God. Thank God.

SARAH kisses him, hugs him.

CHARLOTTE
Daddy!

Now CHARLOTTE enters, rushes to her daddy, hugs him. Gives him a big kiss.

In on STEWART's face.

96 **INT. / EXT. MIDWICH SCHOOL. DAY.**

96

Music rises. POLICE and ARMY are in the school interviewing the BOYS who are all eating breakfast. JANE watches then turns with her dog Scarlet and walks out on to the cricket pitch. SOLDIERS are posted at the gates. SCARLET runs ahead, sniffs the ground. It's as if she can feel something in the air, in the ether.

There is a strange circle of grass, very faint difference but there, around the cricket pitch. JANE looks at it. It's incredibly subtle but it's there.

And then in a moment she and we do not yet fully understand, JANE puts her hands to her belly. As if feeling something.

Something impossible.

97 **INT. / EXT. DEBORAH & PAUL KNOWLES' HOUSE. DAY.**

97

JODIE, in pale shock, stands at the window and watches as DEBORAH's body is taken on a gurney out on to the street to a waiting ambulance. Through the window JODIE sees PAUL approach on the pavement and silently collapse over the body.

JODIE stares in a deep grief, but then her hands too go to her belly as if sensing something strange inside.

98 **INT. ZOE & TOM'S HOUSE, HALLWAY / STAIRS / BEDROOM. DAY.** 98

Music continues. TOM is saying goodbye to POLICE. He walks up the stairs, he is dressed now, his head is bandaged. ZOE is sitting in the bedroom alone. She is dressed now too.

She is surrounded by boxes.

She has unwrapped a full-length mirror and is looking at herself in it.

And then TOM watches as ZOE's hands go also to her belly.

She looks up. She looks straight at him.

She smiles.

99 **EXT. KILMOREY GARDENS. DAY.**

99

Music rises further. SUSANNAH ZELLABY is running from a car. She is running towards a group of POLICE who are looking after a girl, shivering and shaking. It is CASSIE. She has a cut face, she is frozen cold, but she is alive.

SUSANNAH embraces CASSIE.

SUSANNAH

Oh God Cassie I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

CASSIE holds her mother tight. But her eyes have a strange ecstasy in them. Like one who has seen a revelation...

CASSIE

It's OK mum. It's OK.

And her hands go also to her belly - with a deep love.

100 **EXT. ROAD, MIDWICH. DAY. 2024.**

100

We are back in sunny 2024.

The CHILDREN are staring.

They are looking at the smoking wreckage of the RED HATCHBACK CAR. It has hit a wall and flipped on to its roof. It is crushed and crumpled. And it's on fire. It is impossible to see if anyone is inside. Smoke is pouring out of it. Petrol on the ground.

The CHILDREN look calmly and do nothing.

Then a voice.

SUSANNAH

Who's in there? Is there anyone in there?

It is SUSANNAH ZELLABY running up the street. Five years older than we have seen her up until now. She turns to the kids.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Nathan. Joe. Evie. Did you see? Is there anyone in there?

No answer. She looks at them, mystified, through the smoke and mist.

SUSANNAH rushes to the car, tries to open the door, her hands are burnt by the heat, she can't open it. We can just about see a body inside. We can't identify the body, the smoke pours, she grabs her scarf around her hands, struggles with the door, her hands in agony, the fire grows bigger, she can't do it, she staggers away from the car....

And turns to see the children staring at her, as one.

A moment's eerie horror.

As behind her the car goes up in flames.

END