

2. INT. LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON.

INTERIOR OF A SPACIOUS, NEAT LIVING ROOM. A SOFA STANDS IN THE CENTRE BEHIND A COFFEE TABLE, ON WHICH RESTS A LAPTOP. A FLUFFY DUSTER LEANS AGAINST THE BACK OF THE SOFA. CARLY, DRESSED IN COMFORTABLE HOUSE CLOTHES, IS VACUUMING AND HUMMING TO HERSELF ABSENT-MINDEDLY. FOR A FEW MOMENTS, SHE CONTINUES HER TASK, BEFORE TURNING THE VACUUM CLEANER OFF AND LEANING IT CAREFULLY AGAINST THE ARM OF THE SOFA.

SHE BEGINS TO BEND DOWN, REACHING FOR THE DUSTER, UNTIL SUDDENLY SHE PULLS UP SHORT. A LOOK OF CONFUSION COVERS HER FACE. SLOWLY, SHE FEELS THE RIGHT SIDE OF HER ABDOMEN THROUGH HER T-SHIRT. SHE FROWNS. AFTER A MOMENT, SHE STOPS AND PICKS UP THE DUSTER, BEGINNING TO DUST ONE OF THE SIDE TABLES NEARBY WITH A TROUBLED EXPRESSION.

SLOWLY, HER MOVEMENTS COME TO A STOP AND SHE STARES INTO SPACE. SHE PUTS THE DUSTER BACK DOWN, CROSSES TO THE SOFA AND SITS, OPENING THE LAPTOP. SHE TYPES, THEN LEANS FORWARD TO READ, SCROLLING THROUGH THE RESULTS. STANDING, SHE PLACES A HAND ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HER ABDOMEN AGAIN AND BEGINS TO STRETCH TO ONE SIDE, TESTING IT. SHE SITS BACK DOWN AND STARES AT THE SCREEN.

SUDDENLY, HER FACE CHANGES TO ONE OF ABSOLUTE HORROR. SHE STANDS, BREATHING AND CLUTCHING HER CHEST EXAGGERATEDLY. WITH SHAKING HANDS, SHE TAKES OUT HER PHONE AND DIALS, JAMMING IT AGAINST HER EAR.

CARLY

Mum? Yeah, hi. No, listen - I have a pain, a pain in my stomach. I think there's something wrong with me.

BEAT

No, no, don't hang up! I mean it this time, I really do. Please, just listen to me - listen!

BEAT

Right side. Near the bottom - sort of hip bone, groin area. Do you think it's my appendix? I think it's my appendix. Do you think it's my appendix?

BEAT

CONTINUED:

Because apparently it worsens when you cough, or move around, or ...

BEAT, LOOKING GUILTILY AT THE LAPTOP

No, I'm not Googling, why?

BEAT

It isn't a pulled muscle.

BEAT

Because it isn't.

BEAT

Because I didn't bloody do anything yesterday to pull a bloody muscle, that's why!

BEAT

No, I haven't slept funny either. Use your brain, Mum, I'd feel that in my neck or shoulders, wouldn't I? Not my bloody side-

BEAT

Okay, okay - I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I don't mean to snap, I don't. I just want you to take me seriously for a change!

BEAT

Fine, don't then. Don't bother. But when I'm found dead on the floor and they see that you were the last call in my history, you just make sure that you're prepared to answer all the questions they-

BEAT

I can't call the doctor. I'm still waiting for my bloods back.

BEAT

CONTINUED: (2)

I don't care if no news is good news, I'm not fanning the flames. I'm just not. Can we just - just get back to the point, please? Would that be alright? Good.

BEAT

Did he? That's interesting. When he was twenty?

BEAT

Excruciating, he said? Hmm. Okay. Maybe not, then. Still, though ... it's a bit odd that it's in exactly the right place ...

CARLY GETS UP, STILL LISTENING. SHE PULLS UP THE LOWER HALF OF HER TOP AND BEGINS TO TWIST AROUND, LOOKING AT HER BACK.

CARLY (CONT'D) Mum! Mum, shut up a sec - it's worse, it's even worse! I have a rash! A rash on my back!

CARLY RUSHES TO THE LAPTOP, LEANS OVER IT AND TYPES HURRIEDLY. SHE RUNS FROM THE ROOM, RETURNING QUICKLY WITH A GLASS. CONTORTING HERSELF, SHE PRESSES IT AGAINST HER BACK, WINCING AT THE COLD.

CARLY (CONT'D) It's not disappearing, it's not disappearing!

SHE BEGINS TO HYPERVENTILATE AGAIN.

Oh my God, oh, my God. It's meningitis, isn't it? It's ...

SHE BEGINS TO TWIST HER NECK ROUND AT AWKWARD ANGLES.

CARLY (CONT'D) My neck is stiff. It's stiff! I need to go to A&E, right now. *Right now.*

SHE CROSSES TO THE DOOR AND GRABS ONE OF HER SHOES, HOPPING ON ONE LEG AS SHE TRIES TO FORCE HER FOOT INTO IT.

CARLY (CONT'D) I know what they said, but they didn't mean it, surely? They can't really fine me, it's more than their jobs are worth ... imagine if I dropped dead the next day, imagine the lawsuit on that ... what do you mean, you wouldn't sue?

BEAT

It is not 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf', Mother. I actually find that incredibly offensive ...

SHE STANDS UP STRAIGHT AND BEGINS TO PULL UP HER TOP TO LOOK AT HER BACK AGAIN.

CONTINUED: (3)

CARLY (CONT'D) I know my own body, and if I'm saying there's something wrong, there's something wrong. I have a stiff neck and a rash, and I ... oh. Wait. Hold on a second. I think ... yes. It's gone.

BEAT

Why would I feel better? I still have this awful pain in my stomach, which could be anything. A ruptured intestine, or a tumour, or ... or ovarian cancer ... oh, God. You don't think it is ovarian cancer, do you?

SUDDENLY, CARLY LAYS DOWN FLAT ON THE FLOOR AND BEGINS AGGRESSIVELY PRESSING INTO HER STOMACH.

CARLY (CONT'D) (HIGH-PITCHED)

There's a lump. I can feel a lump.

BEAT

It isn't a muscle, do you not think I'd know a muscle if I felt one? It's not stringy and sinewy, it's hard - it's rock hard. In fact, I bet it's big enough to see, let alone feel.

SHE CRANES HER NECK TO LOOK DOWN HER BODY.

CARLY (CONT'D)

BEAT

Well, of course I'm tense! I ...
(QUIETLY)

Mum. There's a heartbeat in my stomach. A heartbeat.

SLOWLY, SHE RISES TO HER FEET. WITH A TREMBLING HAND ON HER STOMACH, SHE WALKS TO THE LAPTOP - THE WALK OF THE DAMNED. SHE SINKS DOWN TO THE SOFA AND BEGINS TO TYPE IN SILENCE. SHE STOPS, READING SOLEMNLY.

CARLY (CONT'D) (WHISPERING)

Mum. It's an aortic aneurysm. It's over. It's all over.

SHE BURSTS SUDDENLY INTO LOUD, EXAGGERATED TEARS.

CARLY (CONT'D) What do I do? What do I do? I'm done for, I'm absolutely ... hello? Hello?

SHE PULLS THE PHONE AWAY FROM HER EAR AND STARES AT IT FURIOUSLY.

CONTINUED: (4)

CARLY (CONT'D) (SHOUTING AT THE PHONE)

Fine! FINE! Hang up on me, then - I don't need you! You're absolutely bloody useless! There's nothing anyone can do for me anyway, nothing can explain-

SHE STOPS CRYING ABRUPTLY.

Wait a sec.

SHE PRESSES HER HAND TO HER STOMACH AND BREATHES IN AND OUT SLOWLY, FEELING THE HEARTBEAT.

CARLY (CONT'D) Isn't there supposed to be a massive artery in your stomach? Yes ... I think there is, I'm sure I've read about it. And it's responding to my breathing, so surely there can't be a blockage ...

SUDDENLY SHE PUTS HER HEAD IN HER HANDS.

CARLY (CONT'D) Oh, God. She's right, isn't she? I'm doing it again - I'm being ridiculous. I have a sore neck, yes, but in that case ... maybe I did just sleep funny? That has to be more likely than bloody meningitis, at least.

SHE STANDS AND PICKS UP THE DUSTER.

CARLY (CONT'D) No! Just no. Stop it. You are fine, you are fine, you are fine. You are sane, you are normal, you are in control.

SHE CROSSES THE ROOM AND BEGINS TO DUST THE SURFACES. SHE FEELS AT HER STOMACH GENTLY AND SMILES TO HERSELF SLIGHTLY, REASSURED. SHE CONTINUES TO DUST AROUND HER, BEGINNING TO HUM AGAIN QUIETLY AS SHE WORKS.

SLOWLY, SHE BENDS DOWN TO DUST NEARER TO THE FLOOR ... AND BRINGS A HAND UP SHARPLY TO HER TEMPLE. SHE SHOOTS BOLT UPRIGHT, EYES WIDE WITH ALARM.

CARLY (CONT'D) What the hell was that?

SHE DARTS OVER TO THE LAPTOP AGAIN, SITS DOWN AND BEGINS TO TYPE.

FADE OUT.