

EXALTED:

A MYTHOPOETIC MODERN MUSICAL

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In 2025, a mom and her 10 year-old daughter leave the U.S.A. to explore professional and cultural opportunities in Ireland, where they are forever changed by the ancient Goddesses of Nurturing and Sovereignty.

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This document is formatted for submission.

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DIRECTOR NOTES:

QUICK SUMMARY

Exalted follows CARA, JACK, and their daughter EMMY as an active-shooter drill in Minnesota shatters the family's "we're fine" motto and sets them on a path to Ireland, where Celtic Goddesses Brigid (who embodies nurturing) and The Morrigan (who embodies self-confidence) awaken the truths the family has been avoiding. What begins as an escape from violence and patriarchy becomes the family's salvation through honesty and trust. At the heart is a mother-daughter relationship: **Can Cara stop turning her fear into control before EMMY turns pain into self-harm?**

EXPLAINING LOCATION VIA SCHOOL ATTIRE:

- a) Cara and Jack did not wear uniforms (unless for sports, we might show cara as a cheerleader and Jack in a high school football jersey...as if it's spirit Friday before a game)
- b) prep school kids in the USA where tan/khaki shorts or skirts with single color polo shirts and white sneakers...they are allowed to accessorize hair bows and socks but not fingernails
- c) In Ireland, the uniforms are more formal. Girls wear a button up white blouse, with a v-neck sweater and a below-the-knee pleated skirt. For Ireland, let's make that plaid with green / grey stripes. The shoes must be solid black and the most popular brand are Doc Martins. Jack sends a pair in the mail before EMMY's first day of school (Act 2.)

STAGING THE DIGITAL SCREENS:

There's no reason to show the actual screens—or in many cases the device (except phones). It is enough that the character breaks the 4th wall, looking directly ahead. A blue spot hits them, replicating a screen's blue light.

MAIN CHARACTERS

EMMY (Emmy / Eimear) LARSON (protagonist) age 10-11

As an only child in a dual income home, she has all her material needs met but can be socially-awkward and addicted to screens. She exhibits distrust of authority and is traumatized by an active-shooter drill in her school. As she moves with her mom to Ireland, she begins to cut her body as a release from insecurity. She finds a dangerous companion in the goddess within the mirrors. **Arc:** From perceptive child → to confident young woman.

VOCAL RANGE: SOPRANO - A3–E5 (F#5?) STYLE: Electropop-Punk

CARA O’RAWNY-LARSON (mid-30s, maiden name translates in Irish to singing friend) Fit, sharp-witted, hyper-vigilant. An accountant and mother in the Minneapolis suburbs, she’s watching the American dream fray from her “we’re fine” motto until her daughter won’t return to school after a traumatic day. She learns from the goddesses how to hold professional boundaries so she can meet her needs and those of her daughter.

VOCAL RANGE: MEZZO-SOPRANO STYLE: Pop-Soul

JACK LARSON (mid 30s) A career-oriented Mechanical Engineer, gentle father and husband. Raised in Christian patriarchy, he extends control at home with a permanent “we’re fine” slogan. He can’t see the goddesses and learns through Cara and Emmy how to listen without immediately trying to fix interpersonal interactions.

VOCAL RANGE: BARITONE - E3 to G4 (A4?) STYLE: Country-Rock

BRIGID (20s-40s) Onstage goddess of the hearth who represents nurturing and warmth. Her connections to humans include her well and fire, notably the Killymoon Lantern.

VOCAL RANGE: MEZZO-SOPRANO STYLE: Lyrical folk-mystic

THE MORRÍGAN (20s-40s) Phantom Goddess of the Slain, represents boundaries and is often accompanied by crows. She hides in reflections around Emmy to loosen her influence.

VOCAL RANGE: ROCK-SOPRANO STYLE: Electro-rock with folk

ANTAGONIST: The Patriarchy as depicted by three bureaucratic representatives which show up in Emmy’s nightmares as a steam-punk hydra with dancer tentacles.

MOTTO: “Just in case — keep it in place.”

- **PRINCIPAL WHITAKER / FATHER CALDWELL:** keep the child in place
- **MANAGER REECE:** keep the risk in place
- **FOREMAN RANDY:** keep women/family roles in place

VOCAL RANGE: ROCK-BARITENOR TRIO STYLE: Heavy Metal

SUPPORTIVE ROLES which may come from the ENSEMBLE

BLAKE (13 yo) teaches Emmy about self-harm at school **VOCAL RANGE: G3–D5/E5**

GRANDMA (17 yo) a nurse at Killmoon Castle during WWII and a Brigidine postulant

SOIFRA is **EMMY**'s Irish BFF who helps her to adjust to Irish slang but lacks the courage to oppose authority

MRS. CLARK / OLD FLAME / DOCTOR SINEAD (Female, BIPOC perhaps Indian)

SOLDIER / JOCK / BUDDY / ORDERLY (Male, 20s, broad shouldered, maybe BIPOC)

ENSEMBLE of Classmates, Irish Travelers, Construction Workers, Holiday Tourists, and Ancestors – must dance and sing, tap a plus.

PLOT WITH HYPERLINKS TO SONG CLIPS

1) Normal World

We begin with American optimism (circa 2010 flashback) in “[Unbreakable](#)” in which we meet **CARA** (a cheerleader and mathlete) and **JACK** (footballer who works on cars). They marry and have a daughter, **EMMY**.

2) Inciting Incident

Jump to an active shooter drill in 2024, at age ten, **Emmy** is forced to hide in the bathroom, where her body experiences terror as if the incident was real. In “**It Only Hurts For A Minute,**” she meets **BLAKE**, a slightly older girl with a self-cutting habit, who gives her two dangerous ideas: she can “center her terror in pain” and adults will ignore trauma, calling it “perfect” even when it hurts. **EMMY** returns from school with a plea to Mom, “**Can I Stay Home Tomorrow**” which makes clear that something fundamental has shifted.

3) Point of No Return

The family's normal is not peace but performance—fear contained through ritual, work, and denial. In **Emmy's “Just In Case”** nightmare sequence, **Whitaker, Reece, and Randy** become a three-headed **HYDRA** representing the larger patriarchal machinery that trained her to shrink, comply, and internalize harm.

As **Cara** tries to absorb **Emmy's** fear while still functioning at work and at home, Ireland emerges as both a job transfer and an escape hatch. That afternoon, **Cara** shares with **Emmy** about her Irish grandmother and her upbringing and explores her discomfort in “[The Math Isn't Mathing.](#)” With **Jack** looking on in “**Lockdown Lullaby,**” **Cara** realizes that translating terror into tenderness is no longer enough to protect **Emmy**. She chooses to move with **Emmy** to Ireland, while **Jack** remains behind in Minnesota.

4) Midpoint

Now overseas in Ireland, **Cara** and **Emmy** experience the cultural shift in “[Mind Yourself.](#)” They find themselves swept up into the ancient town of Kildare with the Imbolc Parade, during which **Cara** and **Emmy** attract notice from the Goddesses of Nurturing and

Sovereignty in “[Brigid’s Gate](#).” Although Jack tries to parent from an ocean away, Cara is stretched thin while transitioning her career. Emmy must navigate Irish school and culture, with a similar head-of-school, **FATHER CALDWELL** and is assisted by classmate **SOIFRA** in “**Come Again**.” Ireland offers distance from the machinery of American fear, but not cure. Instead, the mythic lane begins to open. Finally, in “**Quiet House, Aching Heart**” Jack’s loneliness gets the best of him: desperate for companionship, he finds a lover in “[The Noise Came For Me](#).”

5) Big Gloom

Following Intermission (Act 3) myth becomes explicit: “**Revealing the Morrigan**” begins Emmy’s transformation while **BRIGID** draws Cara toward warmth, healing, and integration in “**Fire At the Well**.” The deeper moral and spiritual stakes sharpen in “**I Claim Your Almost**” and Cara reflects on how fear and inherited patterns have been pulling her away from Emmy, in “**At the Threshold**.”

In Emmy’s mind, the scriptures of Christianity and paganism fight for her attention in “**Between The Shepherd and the Crow**” but Emmy revelation and self-harm as control, taking the ritual language too far in “[Truth Too Bright](#).”

6) Climax and Catharsis

Emmy’s self-harm is enough to require hospitalization: the emotional and thematic hinge of the show. In “**Between Crow and Flame**,” the horrified goddesses decide to switch humans in order to repair the damage and reunite the family. Jack arrives in Ireland—with Cara guiding Jack’s transformation; he becomes less “prove we’re fine” and more supportive. Emmy crosses toward adolescence with greater clarity, agency, and truthfulness about pain. “**Fire At the Well Reprise**” begins Emmy’s movement toward wholeness; later, she confronts Father Caldwell and defeats her nightmare hydra in “[Appropriate](#)”

7) New Normal

Empowered by Morrigan, Cara counters the systems still surrounding her career; “**The Funding Came Through**.” Cara talks the boss into a promotion and the opportunity to remain in Ireland long term. Finally, by the next Imbolc Parade, the family is transformed. In “[Carry the Flame Home](#)” Brigid and The Morrigan remain as necessary witnesses, and the family enters a new life of clarity and teamwork.

ACT 1, SCENE 1**1.1 UNBREAKABLE - [\[ART\] \[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#)**

SETTING: a stereotypically American high school in 2012. All the cliches are represented in the student body. Cheerleader CARA and JACK-THE-JOCK LARSON are at the top of their game. Fast forward 10 years (2024, costumes change, tablets and smartphones appear), EMMY is a terrified 10-year old during an active-shooter drill. She attends the same school but all students now wear uniforms: khaki shorts, pale blue khaki shirt, white sneakers).

ENSEMBLE *in football rally energy*

We were gonna be We were gonna be Hey—
We were gonna be (Band hits.) Shouted: UNBREAKABLE

ENSEMBLE

We had Friday night lights And a future in our hands
We had songs that felt like promises And teams that felt like bands
We had loud guitars and fireworks And summer in our veins
We believed in open highways And nothing in our way.

TEEN CARA (cheer uniform, sparkling, soaring pop tone)
We're young enough to mean it We're proud enough to try
If the sky's the limit Then we're soaring in the sky

ENSEMBLE

We were gonna be astronauts
Or headline halftime shows

TEEN CARA

Or marry someone in the league
And travel coast to coast
She flips, cheers, high-fives.

JACK'S VERSE – (confident, playful)

Friday nights, stadium lights, shoulder pads and noise,
I'm the kind of guy who plays it hard out there with the boys.
Saturday I'm under the hood, hands black with a plan,
tuning up a hand-me-down Chevy. As I grow into a man.
I'm not top of the class—no, I'm not like her,
but I know how to show up, how to work, how to learn.
Mom says, "Focus on your lessons,"

*Coach says, "Learn to play the game."
and I say, "If God's willing, I'm gonna build a life that stays."*

ENSEMBLE

We were young . We were loud. We were posting it proud
(Cara and Jack appear in veil, suit jacket, boutonniere, bouquet etc.)
We were sure / We were strong / Nothing could go wrong
(Shake hands with "bosses" and get key to house from realtor)
We were gonna be Everything they said
If you hustle hard enough / You get ahead

CARA (now adult tone)

We were free, to raise a family
That was the promise . We were gonna be

The groove softens slightly. Hospital lights. Cara holds a baby bundle. Jack embraces both.

ENSEMBLE (gentler)

Tiny hands . Brand new start. Future beating in your heart

MOM CARA

Our Emmy, You're gonna be anything you dream

DAD JACK

We were gonna be safe and sound / Build a life On solid ground

CARA You'd be free, free , loud and wild
I'd give you everything , my bright-eyed child

*Groove continues. The school bell rings inside the rhythm. We bypass 10 years.
Guitar cuts in. Beat simplifies. The ensemble moves a little slower.*

ENSEMBLE (under, hushed)

Unbreakable...
Unbreakable...

CARA

They told us home was something
you could build and then defend
Brick by brick bill by bill
week by week, amen.
But lately something's shifting
and I can't ignore the doubt

If safety needs defending
who exactly keeps it out?

CARA (quieter) When did “shine bright” turn into “Watch out?”

1.15 THE LOCKDOWN DRILL: PERFECT COMPLIANCE

SETTING: *Minnesota high school. We fast forward to 2024. with the girls' toilet stalls*

SOUND/LIGHTS: *Alarm blares. Red/white strobe. PA distortion. Then fluorescent hum.*

Emmy enters the bathroom, locks the door. Chooses the middle stall, pulls her feet up.

SOUND CUE: *rifle shots. Sirens rising.*

EMMY (*screams to herself*): Are those gunshots? Is there actually an intruder?

(*A door rattles. Someone in the nearby stall sobs.*) Don't make any noise. We're gonna be "fine."

The sirens swell closer. A voice barks in the hallway. Footsteps rush past. Another BANG.

As the lights strobe, the stall walls glow with the graffiti of many children who have experienced this same terror. Hands over her mouth. The alarm stops.

BLACKOUT.

PRINCIPAL WHITAKER (O.S.) (*bright PA voice*): Great job, everyone! Perfect compliance. Teachers, you may resume your scheduled instruction.

A stall door clicks. Blake is in sixth grade, perhaps held back a year, hoodie sleeves tugged too far over her hands. She has the practiced look of a kid who has been afraid for a long time and got bored of showing it. She checks herself in the mirror. EMMY cracks open her stall and peers out.

1.16 “IT ONLY HURTS FOR A MINUTE”- [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN\]](#)

Style: edgy grunge / bathroom echo / preteen-singable

EMMY (bright soprano) | **BLAKE** (mezzo-soprano)

VERSE 1

BLAKE: You can come out now / The noise is done
The lights are back / **Gee, wasn't that fun.**

EMMY: What's your name? / **BLAKE:** I'm Blake.

EMMY: Was it real though? / Tell me straight
Why's my heart still running / if it was fake?

BLAKE: Does it matter? / Your body thinks it was
That's the joke, I guess / That's what they do to us

EMMY: Mrs. Clark locked me out / said, “Pick one.”
Said I knew what to do / like I'd already done it once.

BLAKE: Yeah, they do that / and they call it care
Then they say, “Good job” / **doesn't matter if you're scared.**

EMMY: Everything's buzzing / Everything tilts
I can still hear sirens / underneath the guilt

PRE-CHORUS

BLAKE: Sometimes your chest goes loud
and your head goes floaty
Everybody keeps saying, / “You're okay, you're okay,”
and you're obviously not okay.

EMMY: Then what do you do?

BLAKE: You pick one thing / One small thing
Sometimes it helps / to take control (**if only**) for a minute

Blake reaches into her hoodie pocket for more tissue. As she does, EMMY sees it: a thin line of fresh red at the cuff before the sleeve gets yanked down again. EMMY freezes.

CHORUS 1

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute

BLAKE: That's the line, that's the trick

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute

BLAKE: Then they hand you back your script

EMMY: If the room spins

BLAKE: If the floor drops out

EMMY: If they call this "perfect"

BLAKE: while you're trying not to shout

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute

BLAKE: That's what everybody says

BOTH: Then the minute's gone / but it's still inside your head.

EMMY absorbs that with the terrible seriousness children bring to forbidden knowledge. She stuffs the tissue deeper into her sleeve and checks herself in the mirror—not admiring, just seeing if she can pass. EMMY looks at her. Blake is not cool. Not mystical. Just twelve and already old in the wrong way.

VERSE 2

EMMY: You're bleeding

BLAKE: It's nothing

EMMY: That's not nothing

BLAKE: I know / But it shrinks it / for a minute or so

EMMY: Does it fix it? /

BLAKE: No. It just gives it an edge
Cause the bad feeling's still there
and now your arm is bleeding too

EMMY: That sounds bad

BLAKE: Yeah

I didn't say it was smart
I said when everything's smoke
you want one solid part.

(Voices flood back into the hallway. Lockers slam. The world resumes its costume.)
EMMY hears children laughing out there, high and weird with adrenaline. She hates them for it.

PRE 2

EMMY: Tomorrow they'll make me come back
walk the same hall,
touch the same door
hear the same call

BLAKE: Then ask to stay home
See what **Mom says**
But don't let them gloss over
what lives in your head

CHORUS 2

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute
BLAKE: That's the deal, that's the lie

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute
BLAKE: Then you zip it, then you hide

EMMY: Stand up straight
BLAKE: Say you're fine

EMMY: Walk it off
BLAKE: Stay in line

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute
BLAKE: That's what everybody sells

BOTH: Then they ring the bell / and send you back through hell

BRIDGE

EMMY: What do I do / if my mom makes me go back?

BLAKE: I don't know

EMMY: What do I do / if tomorrow sounds like that?

BLAKE: I don't know / I don't know / I don't know

EMMY: Then what's true?

BLAKE: If it hurt, it hurt / If you're scared, you're scared
Don't let them sand it smooth / with a bright voice and a prayer

FINAL CHORUS

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute

BLAKE: That's the pretty little myth

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute

BLAKE: Then it leaves you something with it

EMMY: If it hurt

BLAKE: Don't call it fine

EMMY: Don't call it brave

BLAKE: just because you stayed in line

EMMY: It only hurts for a minute—

BLAKE: no, not right

BOTH (unison): If it hurt, then it hurt, and that counts at night

BLAKE (solo tag): Don't let them say "perfect" if it hurts.

Blake shoulders her backpack, no longer a child. She heads out and pauses with one hand on the door.

BLAKE: Go home if you can, fifth-grader.

*She exits. EMMY stands alone in the buzzing fluorescent bathroom: all of it suddenly sinister. She looks at her own arm. Then she yanks her sleeve down over her hand, imitating without understanding why. (A child trying on an idea.)
The bell rings. EMMY flinches.*

BLACKOUT

1.2 CAN I STAY HOME TOMORROW [\[LISTEN\]](#)

Cara is working from home on her laptop in a modern, clean but active kitchen, snack is laid out. When Emmy comes home from school. Emmy has a routine: dumps backpack, removes shoes, hangs coat, kisses CARA on cheek, washes hands. CARA doesn't make eye contact.

MUSICAL INTRO

- Tempo: ♩ = 84–88 Meter: 4/4 Key: E Minor

CARA: Hi sweetheart. Did you have a nice day? We're having spaghetti for dinner. Dad says he's running late again.

Verse

Mom? Can I tell you something weird?
 Today we had a lockdown drill and tried to disappear.
 The kids sat down against the bookshelves... trying to be small,
 But I was locked out by myself just for being in the hall.
 Ms. Clark said, "You remember what to do."
 And it turns out, she was right.
 But practice feels like almost,
 and almost feels like might.

Pre-Chorus

I know where every bathroom is, and I know how to get small.
 That I shouldn't drop my pencil if I hear something in the hall.
 For when a certain siren blares, Ms. Clark will lock the door,
 Quickly turn off all the lights while we cower on the floor.
 But I don't like knowing that.

Chorus

Can I stay home tomorrow? Just for a little while?
 Until school feels safe again and "safe" feels real awhile.
 I'll still do math and spelling. I'll read **just what** I should.
 I don't want to practice fear and call it "being good."
 Can I stay home tomorrow?

1.25 PATRIARCHAL TRIAD SCENES

Whitaker → Reece → Randy

EMMY's Struggle — "IN AN ABUNDANCE OF CAUTION"

Setting: *Principal's office in a privately funded, Christian prep school. On the wall is hung a cross, a framed mission statement, and a security flyer on a corkboard with a slogan "Meeting the challenge."*

P. WHITAKER *(sits at his desk)* Thank you for coming in. I know this week has been... heavy. As I'm sure you're well-aware, the national frequency of violent school incidents has increased and so each campus has been encouraged to run student safety drills. We've called you in today because EMMY – seems to be struggling with our change in procedure.

CARA Struggling? Yes. EMMY came home and asked if she should wear different shoes so she can run faster. *(Jack looks down. He hates that.)*

P. WHITAKER *(soft smile)* Children process activities in different ways. That's why we keep our language calm...to avoid alarming them.

JACK What exactly did Emmy have to do?

P. WHITAKER We have a comprehensive response plan for all of our locations. We rehearse it in age-appropriate terms. **If**, as in EMMY's case, a child is in the hallway when the drill begins, they shelter in the bathroom. This teaches the children that while they can't control the world--they can always control their response.

CARA But the response is: my ten-year-old rehearsing terror. She's having nightmares and no longer wants to attend school.

JACK So this whole event was— just in case?

P. WHITAKER It's an abundance of caution... a preparation.

CARA Why did you include sirens and gunshots?

P. WHITAKER To desensitize children to the possibility. Safety is not a feeling, Mrs. Lawson. Safety is a practice. *(Jack nods despite himself. Cara sees it.)*

CARA Emmy, honey—do you want to say anything? *(EMMY shrinks.)*

P. WHITAKER I gotta be frank—I think that Emmy's fear is coming from Mom. And it's probably wise for you to speak to a professional.

CARA (*indignant*) You're blaming me? I'm not -- She's not allowed to be afraid?

P. WHITAKER The solution is: we teach maturity. Calm voice. Calm face. Trust me, we're doing everything right for the safety of our students. (*standing, offering to shake hands with Jack*) Enjoy your evening. We'll be praying for your family. And for peace in our nation.

(*Lights shift. As they exit, EMMY glances back.*)

END SCENE.

CARA's Struggle — The Ireland job offer.

Setting: *Cara is working from the kitchen, wall calendar full of notes. Reece appears in a separate light pool: immaculate, and dry.*

REECE Hi Cara. I have twelve minutes before my next meeting, So—let's be efficient.

CARA (*careful*) Yeah, you sound as swamped as I feel.

REECE Yes. "swamped" is the company's love language. As we say, "The Problems are the Job...no problems leads to no job." (*chuckles*)

Soo, Cara—I'm hearing there's something going on with EMMY? (*Cara says nothing.*) I'm required to mention this parenting webinar that HR just released, called "Resilience in Uncertain Times."

CARA I don't need a webinar. I need a change of scenery.

REECE That's interesting because something just came in. We have a client contract open in Dublin. One year. Possibly longer. High visibility.

CARA Wait, what? Did you say, Dublin. As in Ireland? (*ancestors sing*)

REECE Yes, Ireland. I know the weather is damp and moving is a pain.

CARA No, I mean – I'm interested. Tell me more.

REECE You'll integrate with the team there. And work hours that will skew into your evenings so you can join meetings here too.

CARA (*optimistically*) So this would be... a relocation.

REECE Temporarily. Yes. Your benefits will continue. The company maintains a corporate flat near the office that will be yours for the duration of the assignment.

CARA This would be a great break for Emmy. Send me the details. Thanks Reece, for finding an exit door for us.

REECE Of course. I'm trying to maintain my team's headcount. So I'll need your decision by Friday. **END SCENE.**

JACK's Struggle — “JUST KIDDING”

Setting: Construction site. Hard hats. Pliers. Electric tools. Randy and Buddy have been working on the engineering site.

RANDY ” (notices JACK entering) Larson! There he is. The man who works all day and goes home to the wife and kid. (*BUDDY laughs. JACK gives the reflex half-smile.*)

JACK Morning Randy...Buddy

RANDY How's the wife? She been running the numbers or running you ragged again?

JACK (*small*) She's... fine. (He already regrets answering.)

RANDY Of course she is. Wives do “everything,” including audit your tone. (*Laughter. JACK hates himself for participating.*)

BUDDY My wife's got a pie chart for my feelings. But that's marriage, right?

RANDY Nowadays, men don't live in a house, they live in a committee. And husbands are the only ones who don't get a vote. (*Bigger laugh. JACK chuckles in amusement, then shame.*)

JACK (*tries to redirect*) Cara's not bossy like that, she's just— tired. (Beat. JACK hears himself defending Cara to the wolves.)

RANDY Relax. It's a joke. Everybody's so serious now. (*He leans in, conspiratorially*) And you know somethin'—your kid. She's gonna be a looker, You better start installing security cameras now.

JACK (firm, but not loud) She's only ten. And we're — dealing with stuff.

BUDDY Yeah. Heard about that school drill thing. World's crazy. But you know what fixes crazy? (*He slaps Jack's on the back*) Being men. Not all of these feelings... you start sharing and you might as well be back in diapers. (*Laughter.*)

JACK I'm just trying to do right by my family.

RANDY What women want is someone to tell 'em “it’s fine.” (*Hold a beat.*)
Listen—rule of marriage is this: If she’s mad, it’s because she’s holding a grudge.
Don’t ask why—just apologize and keep moving.

(*Laughs. JACK gives the tiniest nod. Randy exits, still chuckling.*)

END SCENE

1.26 BEDTIME STORY → ELLÉN TRECHEND DREAM

SETTING: *Emmy’s bedroom, twin bed center. A small lamp. A storybook with an ornate Celtic knot cover. Jack sits on the bed.*

JACK (*softly, conspiratorially*) Okay. Tonight’s story is... very Irish. Which means: someone makes a promise, someone breaks it, and then something attacks from a cave.

EMMY Were there dragons in Ireland?

JACK This Irish folktale is about something that *behaves* like a dragon-- a three-headed vulture with copper wings called THE ELLÉN TRECHEND.

EMMY ELLÉN TRECHEND is the name of a monster... in Ireland?

JACK Yes, that comes out of a cave and— (*reads*) —“burns the land.”

EMMY (half thrilled, half wary) That’s rude.

JACK Extremely. But then Amergin—(*enjoying the alliteration*) Not “America.”
Amergin is the hero: both Poet and warrior. He chases it back *from whence it came*.

EMMY Why doesn’t Amergin kill it? He’s the hero.

JACK (*a beat*) Because in life, sometimes you don’t get to destroy the monster. Sometimes you only get to **face it...** and **contain it how it effects you.** (*lightening it*) So the hero, Amergin seals the hydra in the cave forevermore. And the moral is: “with courage, you can do anything.”

EMMY And a sword.

JACK A sword? Sure. If you’ve got one. But mostly? A good speech.
(*He kisses her forehead.*) Goodnight, Emmy.

EMMY (*sleepy*) Hey Dad, do you think the Ellen Trechend still lives in the cave?

JACK (*gentle*) Maybe. Goodnight kiddo. Get good sleep. (*turns off the lamp. He exits.*)

Transition into Dream – Sounds: distant gear grind. A tiny PA beep. a “machine waking up”) EMMY’s breathing slows... then catches.

LIGHT: a copper shimmer creeps across the room like heat

VISUAL: Create a **steampunk, copper “machine monster”** made from a **tap/step ensemble on risers** that feels like an American system come alive—hot, loud, relentless—without sexualizing bodies. Steam. Hissing valves. The movement is seductive *in the way ads are seductive*—too smooth, too sure, too adult. The family in pajamas anchors the human stakes.

The Hydra Body (Ensemble) forms a **single organism** on risers:

Spine: center tier, tight unison feet = “gear teeth.”

Ribs: outer tiers, alternating shoulder angles = “pistons.”

Wings: two diagonal lines on the top tier that can open/close like shutters.

Key image: the ensemble can “lock” into a symmetrical machine pose in one count.

Copper industrial palette: rust, bronze, soot gray, oil-black accents.

Silhouette: full-coverage **workwear** (mechanic jumpsuits, fitted utility jackets, high-waist trousers) with **harness-like straps** that read as *safety rigging*, not lingerie.

Texture: faux rivets, seam tape, piping, distressed canvas, metallic paint highlights.

Footwear: hard-shoe/tap or Irish hard shoes; add **metal toe caps** look for “machine.”

1.28 JUST IN CASE [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN TO THE SONG\]](#)

Music: Heavy metal 4/4 machine time:

- relentless forward motion
- rigid formations
- Entrapment and hiding as choreography
- authority as a dance you're forced to learn

Hydra Breath Motif (Treat it like steam escaping a valve):

- “jusst” = long hiss
- “in” = swallowed
- “cassse” = low hot release

ENSEMBLE (spoken, layered)

Buzz. Beep. Ping. Click. Hiss. Clank. Lock. Smile.

Head 1: P. WHITAKER (spoken/sung through a grin)

In an abundance of caution...

Head 2: REECE Let's keep this actionable.

Head 3: RANDY Relax. It's a joke.

ENSEMBLE Don't alarm. / Don't name it. / Don't make it political.

P. WHITAKER (*bright, pastoral*)

Calm words, children. Calm face.

Practice the posture. Know your place.

We don't say “panic,” we don't say “fear,”

We say “hold tight,” and keep you near.

We can't control the world out there—

But in here? We control the air.

ENSEMBLE (under)

Swallow it, polish it, call it mature.

REECE (*slick, clipped, amused*)

We don't process “life,” we process “risk,”

We forecast budgets, decks, and lists.

If it hurts, we call it “change,”

If it's cruel, we call it “range.”

You want relief? Here's a door—

but you leave on the terms we built it for.

ENSEMBLE (under)

Swallow it, polish it, call it mature.

RANDY (*grinning, Bundy mean*)

Hey, smile pretty, keep it light,
everybody fights somewhere at night.
Wives run hot and kids grow fast,
jokes are how a man outlasts.
If she's mad, say "yes," say "fine,"
keep your head and tow the line.

BUDDY / ENSEMBLE (under-laugh pulse)

Swallow it, polish it, call it mature.

PRE-CHORUS — ALL THREE (interwoven)

WHITAKER: Don't alarm the child—

REECE: Don't report the truth—

RANDY: Don't admit you care—

ALL THREE: Contain it. Maintain it. Keep smiling.
(Steam hiss. Gears accelerate.)

CHORUS — FULL MACHINE (Hook)

ALL THREE + ENSEMBLE

Just in case — keep it in place.
Shut the door and fix your face.
Call it care, call it grace,
keep the fear out of the space.

Make it actionable. Make it clean.
Make it small enough to fit the scene.
If fear shows up, don't let it spill—
swallow it down and call it skill.

Swallow it, polish it, call it mature—
that's how we teach you to endure.

BRIDGE — CARA (hydra hijacks her lineage, 8–12 bars)

(Boiler pulse drops; gears tick like counting. The hydra turns its light onto CARA who appears in pajamas and robe. She can see Emmy but can't reach her.)

CARA (*caught, trying to breathe*)

Study the tide—don't drown in water.
Keep it tidy—protect my daughter.
Light a candle with a spark...
Listen to the patriarch.
(*reflex, soothing-script*)
Calm voice. Calm face. Practice.

(Cara and EMMY snap into the dream formation. The heads rotate toward EMMY.)

EMMY (*small, learning; the truth of it*)

Adults say "it's fine"
when they mean "be still."
School stays "you're safe
if you follow the drill."
(*the lie she's been handed, now in her mouth*)
But it only hurts for a minute.

ALL THREE HEADS (*stacked, smiling*)

Good girl. Pretty girl. Safe girl.

ENSEMBLE (*hook, final and brutal*)

Swallow it, polish it, call it mature.

(The three heads rotate on risers like a grinding carnival mechanism. Copper light pulses like a forge. Cara and Jack are dragged to opposite sides. Emmy trapped center in a ring of tapping feet.)

ALL THREE HEADS

Just in case — keep it in place. Boiler heart and copper face.
Hold the line and bless the cage. Teach the child to love the gauge.

ALL THREE HEADS in UNISON (*smiling*)

We're doing everything right.

(All sound cuts except one tiny pressure hiss.)

EMMY WAKES UP

LIGHT: hard snap to EMMY's bedroom light pool.

SOUND: the machine stops like someone cut power.

EMMY bolts upright, **screaming**.

Cara **runs in** immediately—grabs Emmy, holds her, rocking. Emmy cowers.)

EMMY (*through breath*) Mom—the hydra— it caught all three of us.

But it dragged you and Dad away. It only wanted me. And it was so *hot*—and the noise—

CARA Shh. Shh. There, there. Mama's here. You're safe. You're safe.

EMMY clutches her like she's anchoring. Jack enters in robe and pajama pants, hair a mess. He's trying to be calm and failing at it.

JACK Another nightmare?... was it the book?

EMMY (nodding) The hydra had three faces, Daddy. Principal Whitaker was in the center, with a man and a woman on either side. I didn't know who they were, but they knew me.

CARA (*tight, gentle*) Okay guys. No more monster stories.

JACK (*quietly*) It wasn't supposed to be a scary story. It was supposed to be... a courageous story.

EMMY Dad, the hero, Amergin. He didn't kill the hydra. He just trapped it.

CARA You're OK now. Close your eyes baby (*leans Emmy back on her*) Momma's got you.

When Cara holds EMMY, have the riser wall remain visible in dim silhouette for one extra second—then dissolve. It implies: the Hydra is always "there," just out of sight.

BLACKOUT

1.30 THE KILLYMOON FLAME

V/O: WOMAN'S RADIO BROADCASTER: (Sirens)

A vigil is being held outside the Annunciation Catholic Church following the shooting at the Minneapolis Catholic school. The shooting, in which two children died and 21 people were injured, was—nationwide--the largest school shooting of this year. This is Ellen Schmidt for Associated Press.

SETTING: *Late afternoon. Cara's laptop is open but she's fastidiously cleaning the counters. EMMY arrives carrying the hush of another school day.*

CARA Hey, Em.

EMMY Hi.

CARA Shoes off, snack next. House rules.

EMMY I know.

(Cara tries for light.)

CARA You want apple slices or emergency cookies?

EMMY I don't want anything.

Cara clocks the answer. She leaves the dish towel and opens her body instinctively.

CARA Okay. Come here.

(EMMY accepts the side hug for a second, and then slips out of it.)

CARA Talk to me. What happened today?

EMMY Everyone was whispering. Like talking out loud is bad luck. The whole school was trying to be quiet so nothing bad would happen to us.

CARA Mm.

EMMY The teachers said there was a shooting at another school nearby. I can't concentrate in class...I kept imagining those poor kids. Were any of them locked in the bathroom alone like I was? When things get hard, how do you not fall apart?

CARA I want to show you something.

*Cara crosses to a high shelf/cabinet—careful, reverent. She brings down the **old oil lamp**. [as on Temu #YE1102748](#) - Clear topped kerosene lamp perhaps with a red or green base.*

EMMY Isn't that grandma's lamp from your bedroom?

CARA: **Yes**, she brought it over from Ireland. It was a gift from the Abbess of Kildare. She believed that if you lit it, you asked Saint Brigid to keep watch (Ancestors hum) and to guide you, even when life feels chaotic.

EMMY *(leans in despite herself; the lamp is a spell.)* Does it still work?

CARA I think so. I haven't lit it since my mother passed away, years ago.

(Cara sets it on the table. Turns to find a matchbox in the drawer.)

CARA Want to hear how it got here?

EMMY ...umm. Yeah.

(EMMY sits. She's still scared, but she's listening now and watching as if the story happens in real time. Cara places a hand near the lamp—not yet lighting it.)

CARA Okay. So there was a castle called Killymoon...

LIGHT CUE: *stone-light upstage. The ghost of grandmother silently walks in and sits near her Oil lamp. Lights it.*

SOUND CUE: *far boots in corridor + match strike.*

ANCESTORS: Where it started.

GRANDMOTHER Hello Lieutenant. You're early.

SOLDIER I was told there's tea... and a kind nurse who doesn't see me as a weapon.

GRANDMOTHER They say you've been through Sicily.

SOLDIER I jumped into night so thick you could choke on it... then the sun came up anyway.

GRANDMOTHER And now they're sending you again.

SOLDIER They call us the Panthers. Black cat on the shoulder... supposed to mean we don't scare easy.

GRANDMOTHER Sit. Let us find our calm together.

SOLDIER Do you ever pray for one person. By name.

GRANDMOTHER We pray for whom we wish, without borders.

SOLDIER Then, would you... pray for me.

GRANDMOTHER I already have been.

SOLDIER To whom.

GRANDMOTHER To Brigid. For your return. Not victory. Safety.

ANCESTORS (*whisper-sung once*) Divine Brigid, keep him—bring him home.

SOLDIER And if I come back... I owe you a life.

GRANDMOTHER If you come back, you owe me nothing. You'll have already paid through your service. (*Distant call from hall.*)

SOLDIER Can I come back and visit you sometime? (*She nods. He goes.*)

GRANDMOTHER (*to the flame; vow*) Divine Brigid, keep him—bring him home.

ANCESTORS: Vocals thin to a single held tone, then fade.

LIGHT CUE: *tight warm-white pool on CARA and EMMY, the rest is dim.*

EMMY Can we go to Ireland now?

CARA Oh, we can't go tonight. But yes...soon.

EMMY (*nodding nervously*) Mom... do you ever feel like...grown-ups are pretending all the time? Like they're lying so kids won't freak out?

CARA (*honest, gentle*) Yes. Sometimes adults lie because they're scared too. When I was your age, I learned to trust numbers because they always told the truth, even when people didn't.

EMMY: Principal Whitaker says they're doing everything right. But, something just doesn't add up.

CARA: We'll talk this again when your Dad gets home. How about you get a start on your homework. (*quick hug and exit*)

1.35 THE MATH ISN'T MATHING [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN\]](#)

CARA Okay. (She turns. Lights isolate. Music begins.) So if we're "doing everything right"—why do I feel that everything's wrong of all the time?

I color-code the chaos, I reconcile the books.
 I know exactly where the money goes, if you give me twenty looks
 I can forecast any quarter, I can hedge against a fall
 But I can't predict the trauma from a lockdown in the hall
 And I'm so tired of saying "It's probably fine"
 While checking for the exits, every time.

They say, "It's just the way it is" Like that's a lullaby
 But if this is normal, then why am I bracing for goodbye?

The math isn't mathing, no matter how I try
 You can't subtract the danger and multiply the pride
 I don't want to raise my daughter
 On thoughts and prayers and drills
 I want boring Tuesday mornings and libraries on hills
 I want safety to be simple
 I want courage without cost
 The old math isn't working anymore

They're taking books off shelves now
 Like stories started wars
 Like curiosity's a threat we can't afford
 They call it "parental guidance"
 They call it "family choice"
 But the loudest ones keep drowning
 out every quieter voice
 And I was...raised to be agreeable -
 to smile and nod and cope
 But compliance has a body count
 and silence isn't hope

They say, "If you don't like it, you're free to leave the land"
 Well freedom shouldn't mean packing up with shaking hands.

The math isn't mathing, the numbers don't align
 You can't balance out a bullet With a ribbon and a sign

I don't want to teach her bravery before she learns to spell
 I don't want her dreams negotiated in some committee meeting hell
 I want laws that guard the living not arguments that stall
 The math isn't mathing anymore and I won't let it take us all

If the only door blown open is a company door, then fine.
 I'll walk my daughter through it. I'll claim the choice that's mine.

Maybe it's time to put my family first; not someday — but now.
 Maybe **courage** looks less like staying and more like leaving town.

The math is finally honest When I look across the sea
 Staying out of fear Is no longer good enough for me
 I want Emmy safe when I'm not watching I want her loud and free
 If there's a place that adds up better That's the place we're gonna be

I'm not running from my country, I'm running toward a life
 Where peace doesn't need permission and safety's not a fight
 The math's no longer working...so I'm changing what I can
 And if home is where you build it, then I'll make our home in Ireland

***LIGHT CUE:** Evening. Kitchen light. Cara opens an envelope from EMMY's backpack, inside is a newsletter on red paper. **SOUND CUE:** Front door. Keys. JACK enters—work jacket, lunch pail. He clocks the flyer and the quiet in one glance.)*

JACK Hey babe.

CARA Hey hun.

(Jack crosses to Cara for a quick kiss, fifteen years of "I'm here.")

JACK Is Emmy asleep?

CARA No. She's been in there all evening...But, I'm worried. She asked again not to go back to school.

JACK *(gestures to the laptop)* She's a tough kid. You seem to be working late?

CARA The boss sent this message at mid-morning. I keep re-reading it.
(Jack reads. His brow lifts.)

JACK "Staffing Need in Dublin: Client Rotation " They want to send you to Ireland?

CARA Yes. Temporary assignment. One year.

JACK Cara...that's crazy. Our home is here.

CARA It's not crazy. It's an opportunity. And it's the first option I've seen that doesn't send Emmy back to her school terrified. (*From the hallway: EMMY's door opens a crack, then shuts.*)

1.4 "LOCKDOWN LULLABY" [\[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#)[\[ART\]](#)

Style: Piano & electric guitar-driven pulse ballad

Tempo: 100

Key: A major (chorus leans into F minor color)

Meter: 4/4

JACK's VERSE

Here's a flyer in her backpack reading like a grocery list—
 "Lockdown Drill: Thursday," giving parents notice like this.
 She came home counting corners, how to shrink and how to hide
 and I nodded like it's normal, like her fear will fade in time.
 Then I packed her lunch in silence, smiled like I always do—
 peanut butter, apple slices... and a terror lesson too.

CARA's VERSE

And on the drive past the schoolyard
 I watched her watch the door— not scared, not crying, just...measuring the
 world.
 And I thought: that's what changes you.
 Not one big moment but a pattern "be smaller, be quiet, be smart."
 And I looked at our family habits and realized we've turned it into art.

STAGGERED CHORUS

I can't lullaby a siren, can't kiss away the drills,
 can't call it "just a Thursday" when it changes how she feels.
 I can't make this normal— I've tried, oh Jack I've tried.
 I can't hold it all together while my baby learns to hide.
 So here it is, plain as the kitchen light on:
 I can't live here anymore ; not in Minnesota, not like this.

JACK: And then **your** laptop beeping— amongst numbers, deadlines,
 memos—

They want **you** on a client shift, temporary, overseas—

CARA: It's fate that I can choose where I'll call home

From an email begging that I "clean-up the process, please."

JACK: It's a strange kind of sentence **CARA:** "We need you for a year."

JACK: Like **you're** useful as a lever **CARA:** like I can fix the world with tape.

JACK: But Ireland's on the screen now **CARA:** and something in me exhales.
BOTH: Not because it's perfect— because it's *safe*.

BRIDGE (Cara and Jack alternate)

BOTH: There are two kinds of strong.

CARA: One that keeps the fire fed, keeps the house warm, keeps the peace.

JACK: And one that says, "TO GO" **CARA:** When the calm is just a cover
and the cost is underneath.

JACK: And lately we've been forcing habits **CARA:** making due and smiling
through **JACK:** but we can't keep teaching shelter **CARA:** like it's a virtue too.
(Cara's voice drops; she tries to steady herself. The piano thins.)

EMMY *(peeks out from her bedroom)* Mom?...I need some water.

(Cara retrieves a cup.) They said it's not real. But I couldn't catch my breath because...
my heart just couldn't believe them.

FINAL CHORUS *(Cara w Jack and EMMY witnessing)*

I can't lullaby a siren, can't hush it with a smile.

I can't raise Emmy on "be careful" like it's another passing style.

CARA: I can't make this normal **JACK:** not for Emmy, not for me.

CARA: So I'm taking the assignment, where we can finally breathe.

Go ahead and call it running. **ALL:** cause the change is what we need.

CARA: I want you to come. But I'm not packing fear into her lunchbox ever again.

EMMY: Do they do active shooter drills in Ireland?

CARA: No honey. Come on Emmy, let's tuck you back into bed.

(They exit. Jack stands alone and very still, facing the hallway. He's holding himself together with rules.)

JACK "Do they do active shooter drills in Ireland..." *(picks up flyer)*

This is exactly why we don't—We don't panic. We talk. We plan. *(crumples flyer)*
We were supposed to be...unbreakable.

ACT 2 — IRELAND ARRIVAL: BODHRÁN HEARTBEAT [\[ART\]](#)

Pronounced: Bad-ron; The bodhrán is a traditional Irish frame drum, often called the "heartbeat of Irish music" for its deep, rhythmic pulse that drives traditional tunes.

Setting: *Dublin Airport arrivals → shifting into Irish landscape*

Tone: *Quiet, grounded, slightly surreal*

Music: *Sparse piano, low strings, light bodhrán pulse underneath*

Key: *D major (open, pastoral, unresolved)* **Tempo:** *Slow — ♩ = 72*

PRELUDE: PIANO MOTIF

Simple rising figure: D – A – B – F# Gentle. Almost like stepping stones.

CARA (SPOKEN): It's colder than I thought it'd be. But not unkind.

EMMY The sky feels closer. Like it's lower.

CARA (soft, reflective)

We said we'd do this calmly. We said we had a plan.

But plans don't pack the feeling, of leaving what you can.

(She looks at her phone) no service yet. (She turns it off.)

EMMY Nobody's clapping. I kind of like that.

ENSEMBLE *(Irish voices, light harmony — no words yet. Open vowel hum. Almost like wind through stone.)*

EMMY

The buildings aren't shouting. The signs don't glow.

The cars don't honk at everything. It's... slow.

CARA Slow can be safe. *(A fiddle enters, very lightly. Bodhrán heartbeat underneath.)*

ENSEMBLE Fáilte. Fáilte abhaile.

EMMY Does that mean "Welcome home"?

CARA I think maybe. *(Looking not yet at each other, but forward at the horizon.)*

EMMY *(sung in staggered phrases)*

Does it count if you're not from here?

CARA

Maybe home's a place that lets you learn

FINAL IMAGE OF ACT II INTRO

Cara picks up her suitcase. Emmy adjusts her backpack. They step forward together.)

2.2 MIND YOURSELF [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#) **NO CLIP**

Style: Contemporary Irish folk-pop

Time: 6/8

Tempo: Lively but grounded.

INTRO – (*Fiddle riff — cheeky. Bodhrán quick pulse.*)

ENSEMBLE (*spoken rhythmically in Gaelic*)

Ah here— Look at them— Fresh off the plane—

Welcome, so—

VERSE I — WEATHER & RESILIENCE

We're fond of the landscape The cliffs and the green

We'll tell you it's stunning (It mostly is, to be seen)

But don't mind the weather It's sideways and damp

We complain about sunshine Like it's some sort of scam

We've mastered the drizzle We've befriended the grey

We don't get too gloomy We just get on with the day

REFRAIN

Mind yourself, love Don't get too grand

If you start getting notions We'll knock you down where you stand.

It's how we show liking It's how we're polite

If we slag you a little You're doing alright. Mind yourself.

VERSE II

We'll take the mick gently If you're feeling too tall

If you start talking shite We'll shorten it small

You say you're "building a future"? That's lovely, so—

We've been building and losing For centuries, you know

We'll mock you affectionately If we think you'll survive

It's how we keep balance And keep egos in size.

REFRAIN

Mind yourself, love Don't get too bright

We've seen empires sparkle And vanish overnight

Stay steady, stay human Stay kind, stay sound

Climb as high as you like here But keep your feet on the ground

VERSE III — THE HARD PART

Now housing's a nightmare The rent's through the roof

There's nowhere affordable That's just the truth

We've people from Kyiv , Lahore, and beyond
 Trying to build something steady On this soggy **old pond**
 We welcome Americans Especially the flush—
 You'll find that the bankers Are happy to hush
 But we're sorting our growing We're fixing our flaws
 Trying to heal from the bottle And the betting shop draws.

BRIDGE — EDUCATION & BRAIN DRAIN

School's mostly steady And college near free
 It's safer than many As you'll come to see
 But our brightest are leaving For beaches and pay
 Australia's sunshine Steals half 'them away
 We wave from the shoreline And say, "Mind yourself, kid,"
 We're proud of your leaving ...and sad that you did.

CARA

I thought I was arriving With answers in a case,
 With spreadsheets full of certainty And courage on my face.
 But you don't seem impressed by that—
 You don't applaud the plan.
 You just ask if I'll stay steady and try to understand.
 Back home I kept on proving I could build it right and tall,
 Here you shrug and say, "We'll see, love. That's not everything at all."
 You don't promise me perfection. You don't promise sun.
 You just say, "Put the kettle on"...Somehow... we're done.

EMMY (*Light, observant, dry humor*)

They make fun of you already. But not in a mean way.
 The pilot said, "You've an accent fierce enough
 To charge rent by the day."
 And everyone just laughed— Including me.
 It didn't feel like shouting. It felt... Free.
 They complain about the weather, but they still go out and play.
 They don't act like every event needs a big parade.
 And when someone brags too loudly , they just roll their eyes and grin.
 It's like the rule is: Be a good 'un, but too much bragging's a sin.

CARA (joining ensemble softly) Maybe I can learn that.

EMMY (joining, lighter) Maybe I already have.

CARA Ooh, look a parade. Let's go take a look. Wait, are you hungry?

EMMY (*Gen Alpha slogan*) Six-Seven.

CARA Come on, keep your strength up. (*Hands EMMY a King Size bag and a water bottle. Cara closes her bag and heads toward the Imbolc Parade, dragging Emmy.*)

**FINAL REFRAIN —
INVITATION TO KILDARE**

Mind yourself, love
Come into the flame
Saint Brigid's Day in Kildare
They're calling out her name

Follow the bodhrán heartbeat
Lanterns in the rain
Bring your little paper prayer
And feed it to the flame

Down by Brigid's holy well
Old and young draw near
No one comes here empty-handed
No one leaves unclear.

Mind yourself, love Don't get too grand
If you start getting notions We'll knock you down where you stand.
Mind yourself. Mind yourself.

EMMY Thanks. But---

Emmy spots a homeless lady who's been crouched in a gently staired doorway (stoop). She has a glass lantern and a grey cloak with long disheveled hair over her face. She holds out a copper cup for donations, (perhaps also wearing a dusty breathing mask). She coughs.

As CARA races by, enthralled by the Brigid Parade, Emmy places the candy bag in the copper cup, and places the water bottle on the stair: unwittingly making an offering to the Morrigan Goddess.

2.25 BRIGID'S GATE [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#) WHICH INSTRUMENTS?

The bodhrán pulse rises under the end of “Mind Yourself.” Lanterns and fire bowls appear. The ensemble gathers Cara and EMMY into a moving spiral. Morrigan, still in beggar shape, lifts the bottle and candy from her mug and watches them go.

DRUID with ENSEMBLE (call and response)

Brigid of the flame— / Bless this house.

Brigid of the well— / Bless this child.

Brigid keep us steady— / Through the dark, through the wild.

Kindle the flame within...What you bless, you heal...

What you tend, you become...The well is holy because it is shared...

The paradors arrive at the well. Brigid is now visible above, center stage, on a riser, candlelit and radiant in white with green and gold. Cara is pulled toward her at once. EMMY is less interested in Brigid than in the depth of the well and the flicker in its reflection.

DRUID (PROCESSION LEADER)

Light what you carry. Name what you leave.

Brigid keeps the well. Cara lights her paper.

EMMY hesitates, then lights hers. Across the square, Morrigan slowly rises.

She removes the beggar's shawl, then the mask of age.

Her hair falls loose. She transforms into startling beauty as a crow calls, once overhead—

BRIGID (blessing from the riser)

Kindle the flame within you, and no night will master you.

What you bless, you heal. What you tend, you become.

ENSEMBLE Drink deeply from the shared well—and carry the light home.

DRUID *Cara and EMMY cast their lit papers into the well with the others.*

ENSEMBLE (soft, circling)

What you bless, you heal... What you tend, you become...

On the opposite side, in shadow and rhythm, Morrigan begins to circle. Her verse rides the faerie pattern like something older underneath it.

MORRÍGAN (one verse, in time with the faerie dance)

I am the crow above the ruin

the hush that waits beyond the flame.

When lanterns fail and prayers go wandering,

I keep the dark from going tame.
Let Brigid bless the shared well brightly—
let lanterns gild what hands can mend—
But I am SHE at every threshold.
where fear begins and masks must end.

DRUID *That last word lands close behind EMMY, almost in her ear. EMMY startles and looks into the well as if the reflection moved first.*

MORRÍGAN (approaching, pleased, almost tender)

Who are you, sweet child? Not one for lanterns, I think. You look into the depth, not up at the light. Perhaps you've come for something no one here is naming.

EMMY: Mom—did you hear that?

CARA: *(still caught in the blessing, not turning)* Hear what?

BRIGID

What you bless, you heal.
What you tend, you become.

MORRÍGAN

What you name, you face.
What you shed, you survive.

ENSEMBLE

Carry the light. Cross through the dark.
Keep what is true. Let the false fall apart.

MORRÍGAN

Stand at the threshold.

BRIGID

Drink from the well.

ENSEMBLE

Child of the fire, child of the crow,
one day you will learn which self must go.

BODHRÁN: *DUH-DUM.*

END OF SCENE

2.3 CORPORATE HOUSING

The corporate flat in Dublin in the evening. White walls. Tiny kitchen. A bedroom door. Cara enters first with corporate optimism already loaded like it springs from her purse. EMMY follows, taking in the room like it personally insulted her.

CARA: Look, this isn't forever. Corporate housing is free, convenient and has wifi. We're gonna be fine.

EMMY: Smells like a dentist office.

CARA: That is bleach and opportunity. We're fine. *(starts unpacking quickly)*

EMMY: Soo Mom, the Irish don't say "fine" they say "grand." We crossed an ocean and your critical items were office supplies?

EMMY pulls out a stuffed bear, a fleece blanket and a poster.

CARA: Aww, yay. You brought your favorite poster.

EMMY: Dad likes the space one.

CARA: You also like the space one.

EMMY: Okay, wow, don't make it weird.

CARA: *(teasingly)* As your Mum, that's my job. And speaking of weird, these electrical outlets are unexpected. I'll need to pick up some adapters tomorrow. Your dad's going to be disappointed, my phone won't charge until morning.

Scene change.

2.4 SCHOOL IS MANDATED

School office. Polite Irish efficiency. EMMY sits in the chair like she's been subpoenaed. Cara sits upright. Father Caldwell enters, damp but energized by the weather like it personally chose him

FATHER CALDWELL: Ah, our American. EMMY, yes? I'm Father Caldwell. *(He shakes Cara's hand warmly, then EMMY's if she allows it.)* Welcome to Ireland. It seems you'll have proper Irish weather to start.

EMMY: It's raining sideways.

FATHER CALDWELL: Exactly. Rain builds character and endurance.

EMMY: That feels like propaganda.

FATHER CALDWELL: *grins* You will acclimate faster than you think. Children are generally tougher than their parents give them credit for. *(That lands on Cara, same message even overseas.)*

CARA: This all feels a little rushed, but we had to register our intent for education at immigration. And just so I understand the process, we're talking about a gradual integration with pastoral support and reasonable flexibility as needed?

EMMY: Mom, you sound like LinkedIn.

CARA: I just want to make sure that you feel comfortable here.

EMMY: It's embarrassing.

FATHER CALDWELL: *(pleasantly ignoring this)* It's best to start right away. Same time up, same time in, same expectations. We find that children do better when they have a routine.

EMMY: Do they?

CARA: EMMY.

EMMY: What? I'm asking an educational question.

FATHER CALDWELL: We'll begin Monday.

EMMY: Monday?

CARA: That's sooner than I expected.

FATHER CALDWELL: Better not to let the mind make a haunted house out of anticipation. EMMY, we hope to see you on the pitch, even if you don't play camogie, it's healthy to cheer for someone who does.

EMMY: What's CA-MO-GIE?

FATHER CALDWELL: It's Hurling for ladies. Great Irish sport.

CARA: Is there a school counsellor—for support if she's struggling?

FATHER CALDWELL: Most children settle once they've something to belong to. Sooo, we'll see you Monday, then. Make sure to wear the proper shoes—nothing announces rebellion faster than the wrong footwear.

EMMY: Cool. I love a threat with branding.

CARA: EMMY. Yes, Father Caldwell. She'll see you on Monday.

2.5 Parcel from Dad / First Day in Uniform

The flat, morning. A parcel sits on the table beside Cara's tea and work papers. EMMY enters half-awake, already in the Irish blouse and plaid skirt, not yet buttoned all the way. Cara is dressed for work and answers an incoming video call from JACK.

JACK: Happy Birthday, kiddo. Also first-day-of-school blessings from your DAD who is awake at a ridiculous hour.

EMMY: Hey Dad. (yawn) You remembered! Yeah, I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

CARA: Here Emmy, your package made it. Go on then.

(EMMY opens the box: black Doc Martens and a folded note.)

JACK: See? Your father has provided you with optimal footwear. Read the card.

CARA: "For the most intimidatingly smart girl in Ireland. Proper boots. If anybody gives you trouble, aim for the shin. Kidding. Mostly. Love Dad."

EMMY: *(has taken the boots out of the box)* Yeah, they kind of eat.

JACK: If you have to wear a uniform, at least one accessory should pack a punch.

CARA: Jack. That's probably enough talk about violence.

JACK: I'm building confidence. Also: good leather, good sole. If the weather turns biblical, at least you'll have good traction.

EMMY: (*putting them on*) That's is...practical.

JACK: I'm from Minnesota. "Practical" is my love language. Listen kiddo, I wish I could be there for your birthday. But—at least I got one thing right before your first day.

CARA: (*EMMY stands in both boots now. More confidently.*) You look lovely. Very Irish and sophisticated.

EMMY: I look like a nun in a rock band.

JACK: (laughs) Wear the boots like you mean it. Kick ass and take names.

CARA: Time to go, birthday girl. You have your lunch, your maths book. We're gonna be late to registration. Bye Jack. Talk soon.

EMMY: Yep. Ready enough. Bye Dad.

Cara grabs her bag. EMMY shoulders hers. They click off and head for the door.

2.6 MORRIGAN'S GARDEN

*Morning. On the walk to school. The shortcut path bends around an ancient ring of trees and earth, enclosed by a low stone wall with a small plaque is set into it. In the center of the circle, visible to the audience but not to Cara or EMMY, stands **The Morrigan**, dark and motionless. High in the branches, a crow shifts. Under the scene, very faint: a **bodhrán pulse**.*

BODHRÁN: *duh-dum... duh-dum...*

CARA: If they'd just cut a proper path through this ring of trees we'd save six minutes a day and approximately one full year of my life.

BODHRÁN: *DUH-dum.*

EMMY: I'm pretty sure it's bad luck to bulldoze a Fairy Ring. No one in Ireland wants to be the person who gets cursed by landscaping.

FAIRY ANCESTORS (*unseen, soft, almost sung, maybe translate to Irish*):
Go around... go around...Mind the ring... mind the ground...

The wind moves. The crow caws. EMMY looks up.

EMMY: Do you hear that?

CARA: I hear us being late.

EMMY: No, like... in there.

CARA: EMMY, you can't keep fantasizing about every crow—
They keep walking the boundary. EMMY lags, looking through the trees. The audience still sees The Morrigan at the center, unacknowledged.

FAIRY ANCESTORS (*unseen, a little brighter*):
Spare the ring... spare the root...Cut the road... lose the fruit...

EMMY: You heard that.

CARA: I heard the wind. Keep moving.

EMMY touches the old stone. It is cold. She pulls back sharply.

EMMY: Oh.

CARA: Splinter?

EMMY: Since when do rocks have splinters?

FAIRY ANCESTORS (*unseen, lower now*):
Cold stone... old bone...Not yours... not gone...

The Morrigan stays still. EMMY stares.

CARA: EMMY. This is nothing but a vacant lot. Do you have to be so dramatic?

EMMY: That is such a rude thing to say to someone being haunted.

CARA: You are not being haunted...can you please stop stalling?

EMMY: I wish I had your confidence.

FAIRY ANCESTORS (*unseen, barely there*):
She looks... she hears...Not yet... come near...

They leave. The Morrigan stays.

Blackout.

2.7 “COME AGAIN?” - [\[ART\] \[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#)

Morning. Outside the Irish school gates. Gray sky, damp air, the old stone wall nearby. Cara is doing a last-minute visual audit.

CARA: Sweater straight. Collar down. Bag zipped. Lunch in the front pocket.

EMMY: I look like a tiny tax attorney.

CARA: A very capable tiny tax attorney.

EMMY: This skirt is itchy. But, at least Dad sent the trendy shoes.

CARA: Look, I know you're nervous, but you're going to be fine. I promise.

MUSIC CUE: KEY: D MAJOR / METER: 12/8

EMMY turns. Siofra stands there in the same uniform, but she somehow looks like it belongs to her. Backpack slung low, hair a little escaped, alive in her body in a way EMMY is not yet.

SIOFRA

You're the American, yeah? I'm Sheef-ra, S-i-o-f-r-a —
And before you make that face: yes, we weaponize spelling.

EMMY: Thanks. I'm EMMY. I was actually worried about that.

VERSE 1

SIOFRA

Good. Then rule one: if you don't know what somebody means,
don't say, “Sorry, what?”

EMMY

Why not?

SIOFRA

No, see, that's too honest. You've got to squint a little first.
Like maybe they've asked a stupid question,
Like maybe they should do the work.

EMMY

That feels manipulative.

SIOFRA

Exactly. You're learning. You'll be local by lunch break.

SIOFRA's HOOK

Come again? Say it cool, not tragic.
Come again? Confused, but with good manners.
Come again? Buy yourself a second.
Half of school is bewilderment. Half is style.

EMMY

That sounds fake.

SIOFRA

Trust me, it works.

VERSE 2

GIRL 1 / SIOFRA / EMMY

What's the story? / Come again? / That means hello.

Are you grand? / Come again? / That means
"Can you stand up and keep moving without a scene?"

EMMY

That is weirdly specific.

SIOFRA

Welcome to Ireland.

If someone says the craic,
they mean the fun, the buzz, the news.

If they call you gas,
you're funny — take the win.

If they say acting the maggot,
you're being feral — own the bit.

If something's banjaxed, it's wrecked. Dead. Gone. That's it.

HOOK 2 (BOTH)

Come again? Say it like you mean it.

Come again? Chin up, don't concede it.

Come again? Eyes steady, no panic.

Half of fitting in is timing, half is bluffing well.

MINI BREAK: CALDWELL BUTTON

FATHER CALDWELL

Morning, girls. EMMY Larson in the proper shoes. Fine start.

EMMY

Come again?

SIOFRA (*aside*)

No, he means that. Save it.

FATHER CALDWELL

And Siofra — no corrupting the new student.

SIOFRA

I will yeah, Father.

EMMY

That sounded like a yes.

SIOFRA

That means absolutely not.

VERSE 3

SIOFRA

What do you like, then? Besides glaring at authority.

EMMY

Maths. Books. Space. Distrusting institutions.

SIOFRA

Oh, deadly. Maths?

EMMY

It stays where you put it.

SIOFRA

That is the most romantic thing
anyone's ever said to me.

EMMY

You need to meet more people.

SIOFRA

No, I mean it — you're one of those secret maths freaks.
You look normal, then a fraction appears
and suddenly you've got a religion.

EMMY

That feels rude.

SIOFRA

That feels twin.

EMMY

Statistically unlikely.

SIOFRA

Spiritually obvious.

BRIDGE

EMMY

Everybody here is faster. Everybody gets the joke.
I feel like I'm two seconds late to being somebody people know.

SIOFRA

That's school. That's girls. That's islands. That's life.
Just say "Come again?" and buy yourself time till the room turns right.

EMMY

And it does?

SIOFRA

Sometimes. And sometimes you find one person who translates.

FINAL HOOK**BOTH**

Come again? Like you missed on purpose.
Come again? Like they've got to earn you.
Come again? Not lost, just landing.
Half of growing up is language, half is who stands still
long enough to teach you how not to disappear.

SIOFRA

Come on. Maths (*a nickname*)

EMMY

That's the nicest thing anyone's said to me all day.

2.8 SCHOOL IS "6-7"

After school. The flat. Cara has overprepared a snack. EMMY comes in, drops the bag, and kicks one Doc off with theatrical disgust.

CARA: How was it?

EMMY: Fine.

CARA: Really?

EMMY: Six-seven

CARA: Six-seven doesn't sound bad.

EMMY: There we are, problem solved.

Cara takes a breath and tries again.

CARA: Okay. Talk me through what happened.

EMMY: The kids were nice.

CARA: That is not usually a problem. Is it?

EMMY: It is when everyone's nice and you still feel like an idiot.

CARA: You are not an idiot.

EMMY: Cool. Fixed.

CARA: You made a friend, at least. I met her.

EMMY: I met Siofra. She taught me to say "Come again?" so people think I'm mysterious rather than confused.

CARA: That sounds... surprisingly useful.

EMMY: Ireland's all soft sweaters and psychological warfare.

CARA: Anybody act weird about your accent?

EMMY: They all have accents.

CARA: You know what I mean.

EMMY: Why do I even have to go to school?

CARA: It's got to be tough finding your feet in a new school. How about math class? You've always had a special talent for numbers, like your MUM.

EMMY: Oh, so now it's about you again?

CARA: Right. Sorry. 100% the wrong thing to say.

EMMY: There you go again. You're not listening to me at all. I'm going to take a shower.

EMMY takes her snack and disappears into the bedroom. Cara stays at the table.

2.9 QUIET HOUSE, ACHING HEART [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN TO SONG\]](#)

Back in Minnesota, Jack comes home from a long, hot day at the building site. Traces of Cara and EMMY linger and he feels haunted by their distance. One lamp. One chair. Two mugs on a rack. Speaker glows.

RADIO V/O: *A new study shows an increase of the illegal use of Generative Artificial Intelligence technology, known as GAI, to create explicit images of a child that are used to blackmail the child for additional sexual content, coerce a child to engage in sexual activity or to obtain money. The predators can be international, but are more often classmates or even family members.*

JACK: Hey Siri, STOP. God Almighty, that's the last thing that I want to hear. (Tosses the mail on the table, forgets he's living alone) What's this? Another damn flyer—this warning us against sending children to school with light-up sneakers because they might attract notice from a gunman. I can't believe we have to worry about stuff like this. We live in Minnesota—not Chicago—and not a third world country. **SONG STARTS**

INTRO (spoken over 4 bars)

JACK: The plant was loud enough to drown out anything. But this... at home it's quiet enough to drive a man crazy.

VERSE (condensed, 12–16 bars)

I walk in with the line still in my ears—
presses, belts, that warning tone,
boots on the mat, lunch pail down,
and nobody sees I'm home.
I catch myself listening for Cara—
sexy and sharp and quick with a laugh,
numbers in her head like music,
always right here with a plan.
Emmy's shoes aren't by the doorway,
no backpack in that same old chair.
List-serv pings—"just in case"—
and I'm still on it like she's still there.
A hand held up, thumb folded in,
fingers closing tight...
Says I'm supposed to teach my kid
how to ask for help in silence and fright.

PRE-CHORUS (4 bars)

What happened to the life we were promised?
The one I could name like parts on a shelf,
the one I could fix if something went wrong—
the one that worked... if I worked hard enough.

CHORUS (8 bars)

It's too quiet in this house—
 too quiet to pretend.
 I can hear the space between us
 like a song that won't end.
 I thought love was building something
 that nothing could break through—
 but I couldn't build a world
 that felt safe enough -- for you.

Cell Phone Rings: Yeah, RANDY. You're at "LAST CALL" again? I'm on my way.
(He stands. He can't sit in it. He grabs his keys like they're oxygen.)

JACK: I just need... noise.

LIGHT SHIFT / MUSIC MODULATES INTO BAR GROOVE.

2.95 THE NOISE CAME FOR ME – [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN\]](#)

Staging picture (big)

- Neon sign ("LAST CALL") or a single rotating club light.
- The bar morphs into a nightclub via **ensemble chairs + hand claps + stomps**.
- Randy and Ensemble: "the guys" + women dancing;
- Jack gets pulled center without choosing it.

Tempo: ♩=100–108 (still 4/4, danceable)

Key: stays in **G** but leans Mixolydian/blues (F natural color) to feel "bar-band"

INTRO (4 bars, bar-band vamp)

JACK: Let's go!

RANDY: (spoken hooks, overlapping):
 Hey Larson! / One round! / You're alive! / Come on!

VERSE 1 (Jack; half-sung, half-spoken; 8 bars)

I swore I'd go home early—
 that's what I always do.
 But the house was a museum
 and I can't stand missing you.
 So I came where the music pulses
 and nobody asks you why—

where a laugh is just a laugh
and a night is just a night.

RANDY: See man? You're fine. Let me buy you that drink.

CHORUS (Ensemble + Jack; 8 bars; hooky)

Turn it up—make it louder,
make it something I can feel.
If I can't fix what's broken,
let the bass line make it real.
Too loud, too bright, too close—
for a minute I can breathe.
Yeah, I came for a little noise...
and the noise came for me.

VERSE 2 (The Guys; RANDY leads; 8 bars)

Man, you did your best—she's dramatic.
Ireland? That's a phase.
Come on, Larson, you're still standing—
don't waste your good years in a daze.
There's girls here who like a builder, aren't
who like a man with grit—
don't sit there like a saint, man—
you're allowed to forget.
(Jack tries to laugh. He doesn't fully.)

JACK (2 bars, honest aside)

I don't want to forget. I just want it to stop.

RANDY / GUYS:

Then dance. Have a drink and smile.
Be a man with us for a while.

CHORUS 2 (8 bars, bigger)

Turn it up—make it louder... *(repeat hook)*
...Yeah, I came for a little noise...
and the noise came for me.

BRIDGE (8 bars; the old flame appears)

(A WOMAN steps into Jack's space—someone from "before Cara." Not a vamp. Familiar.)

OLD FLAME (sung, teasing but kind)

Jack Touchdown Larson.
Still got that good-boy face.
You always looked like you were leaving—
even when you stayed in place.

JACK (quiet, cracked)

I'm not—I'm not looking for trouble.

OLD FLAME

No. You're looking for an escape.
(The guys whoop. Jack is stuck between resisting and needing.)

RANDY & ENSEMBLE:

Lar-son! Lar-son! Lar-son!
Turn it up—make it louder,
make it something I can feel.
If I can't fix what's broken,
let the bass line make it real.
Too loud, too bright, too close—
for a minute I can breathe.

JACK: Yeah, I came for a little noise...
and the noise came for me.

FINAL MOMENT (2 bars, no lyric)

Jack and the old flame **kiss**—long, suggestive, but Jack pulls back, it's a mistake.

BLACKOUT. INTERMISSION.

ACT 3.1: REVEALING THE MORRIGAN

Emmy's bedroom, Late. Rain on the window. A laptop glows. A small nightstand mirror catches the room at an angle. A souvenir St. Brigid's Cross sits under the window.

SOUND CUE: *spooky instrumental music plays softly. **Lights rise** on Emmy's bedroom. Emmy has nicked her shin trying to shave for the first time.*

EMMY *(muttering, dabbing her shin)* Great. I'm bleeding in a foreign country. *(hears a bang)* I'm sure it's fine. Not an intruder. *(A **tiny red dot** blooms again. A crow caws.)* It's fine. This isn't enough blood to call...I don't have *that* much blood. It wouldn't even be a heavy snack. Try a cow!

THE MORRÍGAN *(chuckles eerily)* I like cows.

EMMY *(whispering, fast—reciting rules like a prayer)* You spoke, from over there. That means you're real. But why can't I see you? If you're a vampire, you can't come in unless you're invited. Think Em, what repels vampires?...garlic, holy water...a cross!! *(She grabs the St. Brigid's cross from her windowsill.)* This is crazy! Are you a vampire?

THE MORRÍGAN *(amused, almost fond of the attempt)* You are adorable. If I wanted your blood, child...I would have taken it.

EMMY That is—so creepy. *(fascinated)* So if you're not a vampire, what are you?

THE MORRÍGAN I am the Phantom Queen, the Goddess of Kings and the Slain. I am as old as Legend. I appear when a girl is learning who she is and what she will disallow. You may call me Morrigan.

EMMY More Again? *(Morrigan winces at the accent).* I'm EMMY.

THE MORRÍGAN That is what they call you, although it won't stick.

EMMY Mom's in the next room, she'll—she'll call someone.

THE MORRÍGAN Will she? *(beat)* You're not afraid because you're alone. You're afraid because you are NEW—New place. New rules. But you still harbor old fears which, like crows on a battlefield, have nowhere to land.

EMMY *(whispering)* That's... XX

THE MORRÍGAN Sometimes, knowledge is distasteful. But wisdom is powerful. I offer you sovereignty over your own life, now and the future. *(Silence. Rain.)*

EMMY *(catches her reflection)* Do you...live in mirrors?

THE MORRÍGAN (*A brief, startling laugh*) Only when I'm shielding my full power from children. Do you remember seeing me in Brigid's well? (*EMMY nods*) You stood apart...searching for yourself in the noise and darkness. And I heard your silent prayer for belonging.

EMMY How could you have heard my thoughts?

THE MORRÍGAN There are certain perks to being a Goddess. And that invitation rule you love so much? It exists for a reason.

EMMY Because of monsters?

THE MORRÍGAN Because thresholds manifest permission. Doors and windows are places where "yes" becomes "no," especially for young women who confuse the two.

EMMY (*quiet*) But I don't do that.

THE MORRÍGAN Not yet. It is time you learn to repel the dangerous while attracting the beneficial. To that end, unless you call me—I won't visit you again.

END SCENE.

ACT 3.2: BRIGID VISITS CARA, FINDS THE MORRIGAN

Setting: Ireland flat, night. Three light pools. A large boxes labeled **KITCHEN**, **FRAGILE**, and **OPEN FIRST** face the audience. **Cara** is unpacking. She pulls out some carefully wrapped glass pieces and a jar of oil which becomes the **Killymore Flame**. She places it in the center of the dining table, which is elegantly set for dinner.

CARA lights the flame. Steps back, steps forward to adjust everything perfectly. From **EMMY**'s room, we hear the unmistakable rinse and tap of a razor.

(Brigid appears on the landing / upper stair / balcony, warm and luminous, carrying the afterglow of a public festival — smoke, candlelight, song.)

BRIGID (softly) Cara O'Rawny, which means singing friend in the old tongue. Your hands are shaking. And you're still curating fear. (She steps further in, then stops, seeing *Morrigan*.) What are **you** doing here?

MORRÍGAN The matrilineal line is strong. The maiden needs sovereignty.

BRIGID True. The mother's hearth is cold. She is exhausted and lit a flame.

MORRÍGAN A lit candle may simply be décor.

BRIGID (coolly) Only if you've forgotten the value of ritual.

MORRÍGAN (smirks) You're working late. Don't you have nuns to console?

BRIGID It's true that I've been busier lately...not that I mind. The parade was gorgeous again this year, wasn't it? Lanterns in the fog. Maidens twirling on floats. Girls at the well with awe in their eyes. And how I love those Bodhrán drums!!

MORRÍGAN You always did appreciate the ceremonial.

BRIGID (with real feeling) These last few years, since Ireland dedicated a bank holiday TO ME...I've loved helping Ireland to celebrate the female divine.

MORRÍGAN (dripping sarcasm) As only you can..being a "Saint" and all.

BRIGID Imagine being a goddess with shrines...and then the Romans sail over and suddenly I'm an "Abbess."

MORRÍGAN Sorry, did you sneeze? (both laugh) I wouldn't mind a feast day.

BRIGID You have one: Halloween.

MORRÍGAN Oíche Shamhna (pronounced *ee-ha how-na*) is not the same.

BRIGID Isn't one spooky holiday enough for you?

MORRÍGAN I appreciate the cultivation of horror and sweet treats--there's even special music--But the origin story, and my name in it, has been lost.

BRIGID You always did have a flair for the dramatic. What else do you want?

MORRÍGAN I enjoy being remembered accurately for the roles which I've played and the effects I've had on the history of this island.

BRIGID (*a look*) At last, something we agree on. (*indicating Cara*) The mother is obsessed with perfection and can't find joy in her family.

MORRÍGAN (*watching EMMY*) The maiden searches the mirror to find herself.

BRIGID Be careful, she's still yet a child. You know how you can be.

MORRÍGAN She is listening through her discomfort and is already tired of being lied to. She is trying to build certainty out of shadows.

BRIGID Listening is not the same as being ready. Do not hand a blade to a child who's still mastering her grip.

MORRÍGAN Aye. Do not hand a blanket to a woman already suffocating. (*lands*) For her safety, I'll answer the maiden in reflection. I'll teach her not to translate herself for the comfort of others. How to hold her ground when adults go soft around the truth. How to stand strong without apology.

BRIGID The mother is trying to build safety out of symmetry. I'll help her to establish her home without allowing fear to run her ragged. How to tend without emptying herself. How to let warmth hold what force cannot.

CARA (to herself, adjusting the table settings again.)
It has to be perfect. Then maybe Emmy will feel like this is home.

EMMY (to mirror, under her breath) I don't need "perfect" I just want to be myself.

MORRÍGAN (to Emmy, almost too soft to hear) You're taking the first step.

BRIGID Cara. Sit down. (*Cara stops furiously polishing a spoon — sits.*)

MORRÍGAN She heard you. Be careful she doesn't burn out.

BRIGID I am always careful.

MORRÍGAN You are always kind; but, it's not the same thing.

BRIGID And you are always precise; but, it's not the same thing as wise.

MORRÍGAN Fair point. If we succeed, our legacy will be one step clearer.

(Brigid's warmth shifts toward Cara. Morrigan recedes. The flame dances.)

CARA *(Cellphone rings)* Hi Jack. Can't talk to right now, I've almost burnt dinner, yet again. Yes, of course, I'll tell her you called and send your love. *(Hangs up. Calling, rehearsed cheerful)* Emmy—dinner in 5 minutes!

EMMY *(calling back)* Okay, Mom! Coming!

CARA: Just... breathe. Ugh! Why is this so hard? We're safe. We're here. This is what we wanted. Air. So why do I feel like I stole her from her own life? Geez Cara, get a grip.

(STAGE LEFT: Pool of light: Minnesota building site.)

RANDY Wow Larson. You look like you haven't slept in a week.

JACK *(flat)* Yeah. The house feels a lot different now that they're gone.

RANDY You had your pick of dames at the club. *(Jack ignores the bait.)*

JACK Don't.

RANDY I'm just saying that maybe Cara and you have had your fun—but now your paths have split. You're not at fault for her moving overseas just to prove a point.

JACK *(under his breath)* They didn't leave to make a point. They left to feel safe.

RANDY She took your kid. You gonna let her run the show? You know why this happened, right? You let Cara read too many self-help books.

(Light pool fades. They exit.)XX

EMMY *(entering)* Smells great Mom! Can I ask you something?

CARA Yeah, baby. Have a seat before the spaghetti and meatballs cool.

EMMY But, I accidentally cut myself. I can't find the bandaids!

CARA (*shouting again*) Top shelf. In the bathroom bag. (to herself) in all the mess, how do I expect her to find anything? Maybe this move was a mistake.

BRIGID (*warm, plain*) You redirected your life...change feels messy.

CARA (*startles*) Who's there? No. Nobody, I locked the door. I'm tired. I'm—I'm exhausted and I'm—

BRIGID A mother at an unfamiliar hearth—who prayed for help.

CARA A hearth? This is a rental kitchen. And I...I don't recall praying...unless it was that night of the parade.

BRIGID (*soft smile*) A hearth is not the fireplace, it's the act of lighting a flame. And yes, I received your message in my well.

3.2 “FIRE AT THE WELL” (DUET) [\[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#) BITE

Tempo: ♩ = 66–72 **Key center:** *D minor (Dorian color on B natural)*
Time: 6/8 **Style:** *modal, harp-like piano; gradual lift; not hymn-y*
SETTING: SEYENCE

Intro (4 bars) — (Piano rolls open fifths. Candle flame steady.)

CARA (spoken at first, then hauntingly)
I can handle dinner. But, I cannot handle...a ghost in my kitchen.
I'm all stacked in boxes, half a kitchen, half a life,
new time zone, new title, still waking up to strife.
I told myself “it's better,” I told myself “it's air,”
but see my daughter acting like she's trying not to care.

Brigid's Verse

I know that sound. It's brave trying not to shake.
It's a child seeking exits with whatever courage she can fake.
You didn't steal her life— you moved her while it burned.
Now learn the slower safety: stay where she has to learn.

Pre-Chorus

CARA What if I overreacted? What if I broke what we were?
BRIGID You didn't break it. You saw the crack and chose to stir.

BOTH - Chorus

Light the flame—don't hide it. Let it warm what you can't fix.
 Drink the well—don't hurry. Love is not a checklist.
 You are not "too much," Cara, for wanting your child to stay.
 You're building a different shelter where the old fear can't lay. (sustained)

Cara's Verse

Jack's back in Minnesota, making peace with men who sneer,
 and I'm here counting invoices and pretending I don't hear
 how Emmy's laugh comes out thin, how she watches every room—
 like she's waiting for the world to make good on its own doom.

Brigid's Verse

Not all hearths are merry. Not all homes are old.
 Sometimes you are simply learning a new way to hold.
 A candle is a covenant when your hands are full of doubt—
 you don't need perfect answers, to keep a flame from going out.

Pre-Chorus 2 — Brigid then Cara (*shift into agency*)

BRIGID Tend the spark with steady hands. Don't bargain with the night.

CARA Teach me how to stay here— to help Emmy feel alright.

BOTH – Chorus 2

Light the flame—keep it honest. Let it say what you can't name.
 Share the heat—don't hoard it. A hearth is not a claim.
 You can miss him and still choose you. You can ache and still be strong. You are
 not leaving your old life— you're carrying what belongs.

Bridge —

CARA (half-spoken) She's in the next room.
 Trying to grow up quietly. Like it won't scare me.

BRIGID Let it scare you and stay steady on your path.
 (*Emmy's light pool: Morrigan in the mirror, just one line, like a blade.*)

EMMY: I didn't mean...

MORRÍGAN Stand in your truth, EMMY.

CARA I don't know what she needs.

BRIGID Ask her. Then listen without taking over.

BOTH - Final Chorus

Light the flame—keep it tender, not to burn but to remain.
 Drink the well—slow and steady, let it rinse the old refrain.
 This is not an escape, Cara— it’s a life you get to make.
 A hearth of a different kind now, a home that doesn’t shake.

BRIGID’S BLESSING - Outro

In the hush before the morning, when the doubt comes back around—
 there is fire at the well of you., and it knows you by your sound.

3.25 EMMY’S EXPERIMENT

EMMY’s room in the corporate flat, late evening. Rain at the window. A lamp on low. The Doc Martens are kicked off near the bed. Her backpack is open beside her.

EMMY: Dad got the boots right. Everybody keeps getting pieces right. But, that is NOT the same as getting me. (*Mockingly*) “Are you grand?” “Deadly.” “Yer man.” “Fair play.” “Oh my God, no, that means something else here.” (*She laughs once, sharp and miserable.*) They were nice. That’s the worst part. They were nice and I still felt stupid. I turned eleven in a country where no one understands my jokes.

(She picks up the tiny silver object) Blake said it only helps for a minute. I miss fitting in. *(She makes a small, reckless choice. Immediate regret.)* Oww. Stupid. That hurts. *(She looks toward the dark window.)* Morrigan, you said I can call you. If you’re real, please help me to stop being scared and weird all the time.

The room changes. Not because of blood. Because the prayer is finally honest. The lamp flickers once. A shape gathers in the dark corner of the room: The Morrigan, becoming visible. But to EMMY, only in the mirror. Not warm. Not cruel. Exact.

MORRIGAN: You do not cross a threshold by cutting pieces off until you fit through it.

EMMY: I thought maybe if it hurt enough—

MORRIGAN: No. Pain is not the offering. Truth is.

EMMY: Then why does it feel like I have to lose something?

MORRIGAN: Because you do. But not blood. Not skin. Not the bright wild thing at the center of you. You shed your obedience disguised as goodness. You shed fear dressed as caution. You shed the stranger’s face you have been wearing so everyone else can relax.

EMMY: I don’t know how. Teach me. How can I learn to be what you’re asking of me?

“I CLAIM YOUR ALMOST” [\[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#)

Style: dark, intimate, predatory-calm *Meter:* 4/4

Staging: Morrigan appears indirectly (reflection / window), but can briefly “step into full view” as a jolt. Ancestors move behind as shadow dancers.

VERSE 1

I live where your courage hesitates,
 where your mouth starts, then turns polite.
 I know the places you go quiet
 to survive another night.
 You call it “fine.” You call it “normal.”
 You call it “don’t make a scene.”
 I call it leaving yourself behind
 to keep the room clean.

PRE-CHORUS

No kneeling. No begging.
 No making yourself small.
 If you want a different life,
 stop answering to their wall.

CHORUS

Come closer—steady. I don’t feed on fear.
 I am strength that forms when you stay right here.
 I won’t take your fire. I won’t thin your flame.
I claim your almost—the truth you edit to survive.
 I claim your almost—so you can stay alive.

VERSE 2

You think power has to shout.
 You think strength is always loud.
 But some girls learn to disappear
 and still call it “being proud.”
 You’ve been swallowing weather,
 you’ve been smiling through the storm—
 tell me, Emmy— (*beat*) —**EMMY**—
 how long can you stay warm?

PRE-CHORUS 2

I’m not asking for perfection.
 I’m not asking you to prove.
 I’m asking you to stop retreating
 halfway through the truth.

CHORUS 2

MORRÍGAN

I claim your almost— the truth you edit to survive...

EMMY (echo, small)

...the truth I edit to survive.

BRIDGE

MORRÍGAN (spoken, intense)

You don't need pain to be real.

EMMY (spoken, too fast)

Then why does it help.

MORRÍGAN (controlled)

Because it makes the noise stop.

For a minute, but then it asks for more.

EMMY

I just want one minute.

MORRÍGAN

Then find another door.

FINAL CHORUS

I claim your almost— the truth you edit to survive...

I claim your almost—but I cannot live your life.

MORRÍGAN (spoken, softer)

Tell your parents the truth.

EMMY (spoken)

They won't understand.

MORRÍGAN

Give them a chance before you give the dark another piece of yourself.

(EMMY looks at her wrist bandage / or a hidden object—lights snap.)

3.3 JACK & RANDY SCENE: “DON’T SAY THAT AGAIN”

SETTING: Minnesota energy plant. *RANDY is holding court. JACK enters. His 3am phone calls have been exhausting but the family connection has been fulfilling.*

RANDY: Larson! Look who crawled outta the Hallmark channel. Is your missus still doing that... “*Eat Pray Dump You*” thing?

JACK: (*flat*) Don’t talk about my wife like that.

RANDY: Whoa. Touchy. You get a little side action and suddenly you’re St. Jack?

JACK: Listen. That night was a mistake.

RANDY (*pounces*) A mistake? Nah, man—that was divine inspiration. Just what you needed to get your balls on straight.

BUDDY (*half-laugh, half-warning*) Randy... c’mon. Lay off.

RANDY: Listen, I’m making it honest. Jack finally got a win!

JACK (*quiet, direct*) It wasn’t a win. I was lonely and lost my mind in all the noise.

RANDY: Jesus, Jack. You been watching therapy videos or something?

JACK: No. I’ve been listening to my kid.

RANDY: Your kid’s running the house now? Man, I’d quit being a dad. (*In one clean physical action: he shoves Randy back. The room freezes.*) XX

JACK (*low, controlled*) You’re not funny—you’re dangerous. And you don’t deserve to be a father, ever.

BUDDY (*quiet, satisfied*) Ooh, no man.

RANDY (*rubbing his shoulder; venomous*) You’re psycho. Cara took your family, Jack. You really gonna let her do that?

JACK: No one took them. They left.

RANDY: Because you let ’em run the show.

JACK: No. Because I kept trying to run it.

RANDY: So what—now you’re gonna “set boundaries”? You got a script for that?

JACK: *(small nod)* Yeah. I do. *(Beat. Calm. No heat.)* Let's start with:
You don't talk about my wife. You don't talk about my daughter.
And don't ever again mistake my silence for permission.

RANDY: *(too loud laugh)* Ooo. Tough guy. You want us to applaud because you kissed a girl and now regret it? You want a little medal: "Most Improved Husband"?

JACK: Let me be clear *(sets his tool)* I'm not doing this anymore.

RANDY: Doing what?

JACK: Working here, with you. I'm going to start putting my wife and kid first.

RANDY: Aww, you're bluffing. You can't just walk out.

JACK: Watch me. *(Jack unclips his badge / lanyard; holds it so everyone sees.)*
Consider this my resignation. *(He slaps the badge onto the table and exits.)*

END SCENE.

3.35 AT THE THRESHOLD [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#)

Setting: Cara is outside EMMY's bedroom door, while EMMY sits on her bed.

Style: Pulse ballad (contemporary MT) *Tempo:* ♩ = 76 (steady, understated)

Meter: 4/4 *Key Center:* D minor Piano feel (through most of the song)

INTRO (4 bars) —

VERSE 1 — Cara

When did your sleeves / get shorter?
 When did your voice / get lower?
 When did I stop knowing / exactly / what you needed?
 I keep reaching / for the practical —
 Band-aids, / lunchbox,
 clean sheets folded square.
 But the things you need now / don't fit / in my hands.

VERSE 2 — Cara

You close your door. And I knock.
 And I wait / for you to say / "Come in."
 I used to walk straight through / with answers.
 Now I stand there with questions.
 And here's the part / I don't say —
 my family has a year / we fear
 A number that makes each day / treacherous
 I was eleven like you / when the sea took my Dad
 My mother was eleven / when her brother died in the war
 And now you're standing / at that same precipice
 And I've been watching you / like the storm will come again.

PRE-CHORUS — Cara

There's a place / I remember —
 Standing there / wanting someone
 to trust me / with myself.
 And I am standing / in that same place with you
 Only this time / I'm the one who has to move.

CHORUS — Cara

At the threshold— / not behind you, not ahead. / Not holding.
 Not pulling. / Just standing where the light / starts to change.
 If I try / to keep you little, I will lose you / sooner.
 If I try / to make you safe by making you small, / I will be the cage.

So I have to learn / how to stay without standing / in your way.

EMMY: (*separate light pool*)

When did your knock / get softer?
 When did your voice / start asking / instead of telling?
 You keep checking / if I'm okay.
 I don't know / how to answer that each time.
 I don't need / the nightlight.
 I don't need / everything fixed.
 I just need you / to not look scared when I change.
 And... you keep counting. /
 Like there's a trapdoor in the calendar. /
 Like eleven means I disappear. /
 But I'm not your past, Mom. / I'm right here.

OVERLAPPING SECTION (interwoven lines; no “togetherness swell”)

Cara: I don't want to lose you. **EMMY:** You won't.

Cara: I don't know how to guide you. **EMMY:** I can find my way.

EMMY: Just don't hold me back because we feel different.

CARA REALIZATION: HOOK #3 (clear but restrained)

At the threshold — I am learning
 how to step back without stepping away.

BRIDGE — CARA

I thought control / was love.
 I thought worry / was protection.
 But all this time / I've been holding you
 at arm's length / from your own life
 because I couldn't stand / my own memory.
 And I can't— / I can't hand you
 my haunted year / and call it “mothering.”
 I can't make my trauma / your training.

FINAL CHORUS — CARA + EMMY

CARA: At the threshold— / I won't make you carry what was never yours. /

EMMY: At the threshold— / I'm still me. I'm not a warning. /

CARA: I'll stay close enough / to catch you—far enough / to let you run.

EMMY: Then stay. / Not in front. Beside me.

OUTRO (2–4 bars: *No movement. No resolution. Just love.*)

EMMY: *(spoken)* I love you Mom.

CARA: Oh my precious girl.

3.4 THE MORRIGAN AND EMMY (IN HER ROOM BEFORE BED)

MORRÍGAN: Tell me your birth name.

EMMY: EMMY, that's an adult name in America.

MORRÍGAN: And what do your parents call you?

EMMY: Emmy, a nickname for a child.

MORRÍGAN: Does that still feel like you?

EMMY: Sometimes. From them it feels like a hug.

MORRÍGAN: Then keep Emmy. And choose one more.
A name that belongs to the YOU you are becoming.

EMMY: Eimear is who I am when I'm finding myself in Ireland.

MORRÍGAN: There you are. Good. And what does this mean to you?

EMMY: I don't have to be quiet. I don't have to be small.
I can be loved as "Emmy"— and grow into **Eimear**.
Not louder—not better—just the ME that I want to be.

MORRIGAN: Good. Now come with me to see the truth.

EMMY's DREAM SEQUENCE BEGINS:

Lights fade to blue night. **Ancestors** transition the scenery, a wall of loud whispers: "Your white lie"... "the moment you fold"... "your silent truth."

3.4 — THE SHEPHERD AND THE CROW

Tempo: ♩ = 154 (*relentless*) **Meter:** 4/4

Key: E minor (*optional lift to F# minor final chorus*)

Sound: cinematic kick + toms, storm synth bass, metal hits, wind FX, choir pad, sub drops **Staging cue:** Morrigan's full reveal happens *on* "temptress."

INTRO (spoken over wind + low sub, 4 bars)

CALDWELL (spoken, close)

Your parents named you EMMY.
God blessed your name.
The contract is binding.

EMMY (spoken)

I want to be called Eimear.

CALDWELL (spoken with intensity)

You do not get to rename that which you did not create.

VERSE 1 — FATHER CALDWELL (8 bars, certainty as dominance)

I keep the world in categories—clean, contained, correct,
I take a child's confusion and I call it "disrespect."
You want a new name, new skin—like truth is something you try on,
But freedom turns to chaos when you let the wrong wind in.

CALDWELL (preached, weaponized)

"Nothing hidden shall remain concealed." (Ecclesiastes 12:14)
"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?"
I will not give this child to you, God has already claimed her soul.

PRE-CHORUS 1 — MORRÍGAN ARRIVES (8 bars, the air changes)

MORRÍGAN (V.O., too close)

*I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse—
therefore, choose life.*

CALDWELL: Tempter.

MORRÍGAN: Say it properly.

CALDWELL (spits it, disgusted) Temptress.

(FULL MORRÍGAN APPEARANCE. The wind drops out like the world is holding its breath.)

MORRÍGAN (terrifying calm)

“False balances are an abomination.” (Proverbs 11:1)

Now look at me. And keep telling yourself that Goddesses are not real.

(Caldwell’s certainty wobbles. He hates that it wobbles.)

CHORUS — MORRÍGAN HOOK (8 bars, anthem punch)

Stand up—clear-eyed, unbroken,
don’t let their “holy” make you small.
They dress control up like a virtue—
then punish women who stand tall.

MORRÍGAN (HOOK)

I claim your almost—

the truth you edit to survive.

I claim your almost—

the part of you that stays alive.

EMMY (echo, trying)

Between the shepherd and the crow—

I am divided...but I wish to be whole.

VERSE 2 — DEBATE (Caldwell strikes; Morrigan counters; 16 bars)

CALDWELL (regaining “debate mode”)

You quote scripture as if you own it.

MORRÍGAN (like a blade drawn slowly)

Your scripture would not have survived the centuries
had it not been kept by Ireland. My people
sheltered your texts through famine and fire and empire—
but do not confuse our protections with your permission.

CALDWELL (poisoned triumph)

You twist our words and create confusion

You are not canonized as a Saint

You are not licensed to preach your filth.

MORRÍGAN (turns—terrible and radiant)

You are a coward of a sheep pretending to be a shepherd.

CALDWELL (snaps to power)

“Fire goes before Him and burns up His adversaries” (Psalm 97:3)

You do not get to rename that which you did not create.

MORRÍGAN

And you do not get to claim
what you did not make.
Her body made her.
Her days made her.
Her choices made her—
and your control doesn't get a vote.

CALDWELL (to EMMY, velvet threat)

Emmy—this is how girls end up alone.

MORRÍGAN (flat, absolute)

Take your hand off her.
“The integrity of the upright guides them,” (Proverbs 11:3)
I will not feed on her doubt...

PRE-CHORUS 2 — THE TERMS (8 bars, percussive, legalistic)**MORRÍGAN**

When she speaks, she does not sweeten.
When she acts, she does not hide her hand.
You want obedience—pretty and quiet—
I want truth that takes a stand.

CALDWELL

So you want her difficult.

MORRÍGAN

I want her **free**.
(Drums climb; wind rises.)

CHORUS 2 — BIGGER (8 bars, choir pad opens)

Stand up—clear-eyed, unbroken,
don't let their rules make you crawl.
If they can't handle a thinking girl,
they don't deserve her at all.

MORRÍGAN (HOOK)

I claim your almost—
the truth you edit to survive.
I claim your almost—
I pull it up into the light.

EMMY (echo, cracking)

Between the shepherd and the crow—I am...divided.

BRIDGE — THE WEIGHT (half-time drop; EMMY mishears; 8 bars)

(Everything thins to heartbeat kick + wind.)

EMMY

If I don't say it perfect / Will they still love me?
If I'm not brave all the way / will I still be seen?
(Thunder hit.)

MORRÍGAN

Stop hiding. Stop editing.
Stop folding mid-sentence.

EMMY (mishearing the pressure anyway)

Then how do I stop shaking?

MORRÍGAN

Clear the tears from your eyes
Feel the blood in your veins
Ignite the fire your soul.

EMMY (cracking)

I don't know how.

MORRÍGAN (fatal voltage, intimate)

Reach deeper – your power comes from within.

FINAL CHORUS — DOUBLE

Stand up—clear-eyed, unbroken... *(repeat)*
They call it "proper," call it "peace,"
but silence isn't sacred.

MORRÍGAN (HOOK)

I claim your almost—**the truth you edit to survive.**
I claim your almost—and I will not let it die.

EMMY (last line, overwhelmed, the misread that triggers the next song)

Then make it stop...make me whole!

CONTENT WARNING: EMMY's self-injury happens **here**, then the rest of the number is EMMY's **dissociation / hallucination spiral**, and **Cara finds her mid-song**, calls emergency help, and the number ends by morphing into the **hospital sound world**.

3.45 "TRUTH TOO BRIGHT" [[LISTEN TO THIS SONG](#)] [[CLIP](#)]

Staging: Use light/sound/cloth to communicate blood and panic.

Style: Dark pop-cinematic

Meter: 4/4

Tempo: ♩ = 96

Key center: E minor

INTRO (2–4 bars)

(Wind fades into a low sub pulse. EMMY stumbles into a tight pool of light. She's trying to breathe. A quick, sharp sound. She looks down at her hands—red light blooms on the cloth. She wraps a towel around her wrist, panicked.)

MORRIGAN (spoken, breath-mic)

No—no, no, no—

EMMY, what did you just do? Ohh, not like this.

VERSE 1 (EMMY — immediate consequence, not graphic)

My hands don't feel like mine right now,

my skin is too awake.

I tried to make the noise be quiet—

it got louder when it drank.

There's red on my sleeve like a warning,

like a siren I can't hide,

and my breath is doing that thing again—

where it won't stay on my side.

PRE-CHORUS 1 (voices begin; she's splitting)

And I can hear 'em in the wind— like a lesson, like a threat:

CALDWELL "Heavier than they think..." MORRÍGAN (urgent): Not with blood.

EIMEAR: Then how do I stop shaking?

CHORUS 1 (big hook; overwhelmed, not triumphant)

It's truth too bright—
 it burns through my chest.
 I'm not trying to leave you,
 I'm trying to breathe.
 I can't carry "almost"
 like a stone in my throat—
 so I hold it where nobody sees
 and I start to float.

(On "float," lights tilt slightly; the room feels unreal.)

VERSE 2 (hallucination intensifies; "almost" hook returns distorted)

The mirror is a mouth tonight,
 it keeps calling me "not enough."
 I see the graveyard in the hallway,
 I smell the rain and rust.
 And every word I didn't say
 comes back with a sharper edge—

MORRÍGAN (V.O., distorted echo)

I claim your almost—
 the truth you edit to survive—

EMMY

I wasn't editing! I was trying to stay alive!

PRE-CHORUS 2 (panic peak; body failing)

My ears are full of footsteps,
 but nobody's at the door.
 My heart is sprinting circles
 and I can't find the floor.
 If I call for my mother,
 she'll make it small again—
 but if I don't—
 I don't know if I can—

CHORUS 2 (bigger; then fractures)

It's truth too bright—
 I'm shaking in the flame.
 I don't want your pity,
 I just want my mind to stay.
 I'm not trying to hurt you—
 I'm trying to make it stop.

I'm twelve in a storm now—
and I can't find the top—

(She drops to her knees. Cloth/towel slips; red light flares. She's dizzy.)

BREAK / INTERRUPTION (Cara enters mid-song)

A hard snap of "real" light from the hallway.

CARA: EMMY—!

EMMY: Mom— I'm— I'm sorry—

CARA *(already kneeling, pressing the towel, not looking away)*

No. No apologies. Look at me.

Stay with me—okay? Stay with me.

(Cara pulls out her phone with a shaking hand.)

Hello—emergency—my daughter—

she's bleeding and she's faint—

we need an ambulance—please—

we're at— *(she forces herself to say the address)*

(As she speaks the address, the ensemble can appear as "paramedics" in silhouette downstage, moving in slow motion—reality rushing in.)

BRIDGE (EMMY drifting; voices collide; Cara anchors)

(Music drops to heartbeat + low synth. EMMY's voice is fading; Cara's is grounded.)

EMMY (half-sung, fading)

I tried to be brave...

I tried to be real...

I tried to stop hiding...

CALDWELL (V.O., taunting)

Heavier than they think.

MORRÍGAN (V.O., breaking her composure—rare)

No— not like this.

CARA (to EMMY, steady, fierce love)

Breathe with me. In—out. That's it.

You're here. I've got you. I'm not going anywhere.

(A distant siren sound grows—not American panic, Irish response—still urgent.)

**FINAL CHORUS (short, collapsing; then handoff to hospital)
Voiced by the Ancestors as if EMMY is already with them.**

It's truth too bright—
and I couldn't hold it clean.
I wasn't trying to disappear—
I was trying to breathe.
If I'm "almost," I'm human—
if I'm "whole," I'm still me—
Mom—don't let me—don't let me—
(Her voice cuts. Not dead—just gone under.)
CARA (spoken, shattered whisper)
EMMY. EMMY, stay—
HELP!! Brigid, where are you? Help me, please!

OUTRO (transition into hospital world)

LIGHT CUE: Paramedic lights wash.
SFX: Paramedic Siren in the distance.
BLACKOUT → Hospital Scene

OPTIONAL Chant of protection: (ancestor ensemble creeps from the shadows)

Every day and every night
That I say this prayer of Bride,
I shall not be killed, I shall not be harried,
I shall not be put in a cell, I shall not be wounded,
Neither shall Christ leave me in forgetfulness.
No fire, no sun, no moon shall burn me,
No lake, no water, nor sea shall drown me,
No arrow of fairy nor dart of fay shall wound me
And I under your protection our Mary of Gael

3.5 HOSPITAL SCENE ACT 3, SCENE 5 — “THE BEEP”

(Lights up. A hospital monitor beeps. EMMY lies asleep, pale but stable. A bandage on her wrist. CARA sits in a chair at bedside—still. Not crying. Not moving. The way someone sits when they’re trying not to fall apart in public.)

SFX: *beep... beep... beep...*

CARA *(low)* I thought I could move us somewhere safer. And she still ended up in a room like this.

Anxious, CARA doesn’t touch EMMY yet. A DOCTOR enters—female, calm, competent.

DOCTOR Cara O’Rawny?

CARA *(stands too fast, then steadies)* Yes. Yes—hi. I’m here. I’m—I’m her mum.

DOCTOR

She’s stable. This looks like panic, overload, exhaustion—
not a long-established pattern. But it could have been much worse.

CARA

How could this have happened? I moved us here to Ireland to keep her safe.

DOCTOR

You moved her away from one danger but she’s at a difficult age for instability.
Sometimes children of this age have a difficult time with change, especially girls.

CARA *(the guilt finds words)* So it’s my storm. I moved us. I pushed it. I thought I was being brave and I just—I ripped her out of everything she knew.

DOCTOR *(steady, kind, not indulgent)* You took her out of one danger. You put her into another kind of strain. That’s not villainy. That’s parenting.

CARA What happens now? We’re in Ireland alone. Her father is... in Minnesota.

DOCTOR We keep her overnight for observation.

(Cara sits still at EMMY’s bedside, wrecked. Brigid and Morrigan appear — with the gravity of those who have seen too much.)

3.5 BETWEEN THE CROW & THE FLAME [[ART](#)][[LISTEN TO SONG](#)]

A duet for Morrígan & Brigid

CARA: Oh baby girl, I should've seen. I should've known.

BRIGID: Cara O'Rawny...my sweet lady, you saw what you knew how to see.

Brigid's Verse

I blessed this child beside the wellspring,
I will not have her blood answer grace.
I praised a care that turned to keeping,
and fear made control of love's embrace.
The daughter needs a hearth within her,
a warmth she does not have to earn.
She must not bleed to prove she's living—
she needs a kinder way to burn.

Morrígan's Verse

And I asked truth of one too tender,
so pain rose up and spoke instead.
The mother needs an edge that steadies,
a line that holds, a cleaner thread.
Not hard—for hard is brittle armor,
but clear enough to name the lie.
She must not grip to prove she loves them—
she needs a sharper way to guide.

Pre-Chorus — Together

BRIGID: Then we change the medicine.
MORRÍGAN: We give each one the missing art.
BRIGID: I'll take the maiden.
MORRÍGAN: I'll take the mother.
BOTH: And lead them back to their own hearts.

Chorus — Together

BRIGID: Warmth for the child.
MORRÍGAN: Edge for the mother.
BOTH: Truth without terror,
love without smother.
Between the crow and the flame,

between the wound and the name,
we will call them back to balance—
whole enough to live again.

CARA(The phone rings, she answers.) Oh, Jack!

JACK (*mechanical noise*) I called as soon as I got your message. How is she?

CARA She's resting. Apparently, she's cut herself before. I didn't realize, she's kept her arms covered; in all this rain, I didn't...

JACK How could you have known. It's not your fault. She's a strong-willed teenager now, well almost. She's tough and...

SFX: beep... beep... beep...

EMMY stirs—just enough to register that she's not at home. Her eyes open a slit.

EMMY (*small, hoarse*) Mom...? Dad?

BOTH (*instantly, soft*) We're here. Sweetheart.

(EMMY's gaze drifts past Cara—toward the dark corner, toward nothing.)

EMMY (*barely*) Did I... do it wrong?

CARA Wrong? Oh! No, honey—you didn't do anything wrong. You had an accident.

EMMY (*whisper*) Morrigan said...if I didn't cross a threshold, that I couldn't become...

EMMY's eyes close again. She's gone—back under. Cara's face shifts: horror, rage, grief—she can't place who "she" is. She doesn't have to. The audience will.

JACK Emmy, EMMY, honey. It's Daddy. Dad...

CARA She's sleeping again.

JACK What did she mean? Who said that to her?

CARA Whoever did is going to pay (*call drops*). Jack?

SOUND: beep... beep... (*A crow calls faintly.*)

3.55 MORRÍGAN COACHES CARA

SETTING: *Hospital corridor in Ireland, late night. EMMY is inside the room beyond. Rain against the windows. Cara stands outside EMMY's door, wrecked, furious.*

SOUND: *faint crow. MORRIGAN enters.*

CARA: No. I can't do this right now. You do not get to be here.

MORRIGAN: And yet, here I am.

CARA: Get out.

MORRIGAN: This is not your house to command.

CARA: Did you do this—to EMMY? How could you? What kind of a monster...

MORRÍGAN: You want to protect her? Stop shrinking her reality to fit your fear.

CARA: Don't you dare say that to me. You came to her with all your talk of thresholds and becoming... and now **my child** in there stitched back together.

MORRIGAN: Yes, and it's clear that you love her fiercely. But you make an altar of vigilance, Cara. You hover, you manage, you anticipate, you press.

CARA: So now this is my fault. Can't you show some mercy?

MORRIGAN: Stop reaching for blame like it is a life raft. If it is my fault, you can hate me. If it is yours, you can crucify yourself. Either way, you avoid the harder thing.

CARA: Which is?

MORRIGAN: Change. If you walk into that room wearing your guilt, she will smell it like smoke. Then she will try to comfort you. She will turn herself from patient into penitent just to make room for your grief. (*That lands.*)

CARA: ...She would do that.

MORRIGAN: Yes.

CARA: And I would let her.

MORRIGAN: Yes.

CARA: Then what am I supposed to do?

MORRIGAN: Stop asking, “How do I stop this from happening again?” That is a cowardly question. Ask instead, “How do I meet EMMY’s needs without deepening her pain?”

CARA: I don’t know how.

MORRIGAN: When she wakes, do not ask her to reassure you. Instead say, “I am here. You are not alone. We will get help. I love you.” Then hold your own terror without handing it to her.

A small sound from EMMY’s room. Cara turns instinctively toward the door; then stops herself.

MORRIGAN: She wakes. Do not rush in there to collect a promise as her judge nor her jailer. Instead, stay steady. As her mother, offer her a future.

CARA: I can do that, but I still don’t forgive you.

MORRIGAN: I can tolerate your resentment. Go.

Cara takes a steadying breath and opens the door. The Morrigan remains a moment in the humming light, then is gone.

3.56 EMMY’S ROOM

Hospital room in Ireland. Low light. The steady pulse of a monitor. Cara enters. EMMY turns her head. Her voice is rough.

EMMY: Mom.

CARA: Hey. Hey, sweetheart. I’m here.

EMMY: You look awful.

CARA: *(chuckles)* Thank you. That is... brutally honest. Do you need water? Ice? Should I get the nurse? *(She stops herself. Closes her eyes.)* Sorry. Too many questions. You do not have to manage me. I’m here for whatever you need.

EMMY: *(weak smile)* I’m sorry. Mom.

CARA: I know. And I believe you. But you do not owe me an explanation right now.

EMMY: *(ashamed)* I didn't mean for it to be... this bad.

Cara goes very still. She reaches for EMMY's hand, then pauses, making sure. EMMY notices, and after the smallest hesitation, grasps Cara's hand.

CARA: Thank you for telling me that.

EMMY: You're not yelling.

CARA: I have considered it.

EMMY: *(chuckles, then weeps)* You should. I'm insane.

CARA: No. You are hurt, and you are overwhelmed. That is serious. It is not the same thing as you being broken beyond reach.

EMMY: I feel broken.

CARA: I know.

EMMY: Are you mad at me?

CARA: No... I'm terrified by what almost happened to you. I'm angry that you were in so much pain and I couldn't fix it. But I am not angry at you for being hurt.

EMMY: *(trembling)* I thought you'd hate me.

CARA: Never. I may become unbearable. But hate you? I could never.

EMMY: I scared you.

CARA: You scared me so badly, EMMY, I thought— *(She stops, hears the trap, and changes course.)* No. That's mine to carry. You do not need to comfort me tonight.

EMMY: *(sees her mom fully for the first time)* I was going to.

CARA: I know. It's scary how efficient you are at that. *(EMMY winces)* No stand-up comedy. Hospital rules.

EMMY: I don't know what happens now.

CARA: Now?... we slow way down. Now, we heal your body first. Then we get real help. You and me, and your father, we tell the truth to each other more. We do not pretend this was nothing. We also do not turn it into the only thing that is true about you.

EMMY: Are you going to watch me all the time now?

CARA: (*nods*) I'm going to help keep you safe. And I realize that I am probably going to get that balance wrong sometimes, especially at first, because I care—and because I can be a little intense.

EMMY: You'll still hover.

CARA: Almost certainly.

EMMY: A lot.

CARA: Yes.

EMMY: Like... as a lifestyle.

CARA: Rude. Accurate, but rude.

EMMY: I don't want Dad to look at me like I'm glass.

CARA: He won't be able to help it at first. Because he loves you, but we'll work on him.

EMMY: I don't want everyone whispering.

CARA: Then we decide together who gets told what. Not because this is a shameful secret — it is not — but because your story is still yours.

EMMY: Thanks. And Mom, don't make me promise some huge thing right now.

CARA: I won't. Thank you for saying it before I did. See? Growth.

EMMY: Can you just... stay until I fall asleep?

CARA: Yes. (*She sits. EMMY still hasn't let go of her hand.*)

EMMY: Mom?

CARA: Mm-hm?

EMMY: I'm still here.

CARA: I know. I know you are.

EMMY closes her eyes. Cara watches her, then looks upward once — in gratitude.

Blackout.

3.6 — Jack's Arrival —

SETTING: Cara's and EMMY's corporate housing flat in Ireland, evening. Rain at the windows. A lamp on. Hospital papers on the table. EMMY is on the sofa under a blanket, pale, worn out, recently discharged. Cara stands nearby. There's a knock at the door. Cara opens it. XX

Jack enters with a roller suitcase, a backpack, and a fresh takeaway bag that smells delicious—cheeseburgers, fries, still hot. Tucked awkwardly under one arm are a few airport impulse buys: chocolate, a stuffed sheep, a magazine with a horse on the cover. He takes in the room—EMMY on the sofa, Cara standing too still—JACK does what he always does when he's scared: he leads with usefulness.

JACK: Hello, my beautiful family. Emmy...Oops, she's asleep. *(quick cheek kiss to Cara)* The taxi driver took me on a maze of three counties, but I thought you might be hungry... I had the driver stop nearby.

He sees EMMY's sleeping and crosses to Cara to embrace her. She lets out a laugh that breaks halfway into tears.)

CARA: I'm so glad you came.

JACK: Of course I came. Took me a minute to rent our house in Minnesota. How is she?

CARA: That's a relief. Good thinking. Emmy's still sore and tired. Embarrassed. Still here. Thank God. *(a beat)* I was so scared, Jack. I keep replaying every signal that I may have missed—everything I might have said.

JACK: Cara—don't blame yourself. We're going to be...

CARA: Please don't say "we're fine." It doesn't help.

JACK: I kept insisting that "we were fine" because if I admitted that I was scared too, our family might fall apart.

CARA
We did anyway.

JACK
I won't ask either of you to lullaby a siren for me again.
I won't call it normal just because I'm afraid of the sound.
I won't be in such a rush to cover up the problems.

*Cara believes him because he is finally not fixing.
EMMY wakes enough to hear the last part.*

EMMY: You guys are loud. Dad? You made it?!

(He wants to fix the room and grabs the food. He turns back toward EMMY.)

JACK: I'm here kiddo. I brought your favorite, cheeseburgers and fries. And some little gifts. How do you feel?

EMMY: Tired. Thirsty. Glad to see you. *(reaches out for a hug, Jack accepts.)*

JACK: Right. Let's get you better. We eat, we relax. We get some sleep. Tomorrow we start fresh.

EMMY: Start fresh.

JACK: I mean... not like nothing happened. Just—we get our feet under us. One step at a time.

EMMY: So that's it? You flew over and now there's a plan?

JACK: No, sweetheart, that's not what I—

EMMY: It kind of is.

Jack stops. EMMY shrinks the second she says it. Cara sees both halves of that exchange land.

CARA: Let's not simply imply that we're back to "being fine" already.

JACK: I wasn't going to say "we're fine."

CARA: You were walking straight at it.

EMMY: You are kind of doing your "we're fine" voice.

JACK: I do not have a "we're fine" voice.

EMMY: The one you use when the turkey's on fire and you want everybody to calm down.

JACK: That example is oddly specific... *(then remembers himself)* right. Tough crowd.

A tiny smile flickers across EMMY's face. Jack sees it and does not chase it. Instead he sits, finally, in the armchair instead of looming over the room.

JACK: All right. Fine. I have a "we're fine" voice. I don't know why that's so bad. I brought dinner to be helpful. And I've...missed you both. What I can do?

CARA: That's better, actually.

EMMY: I don't really want a burger. Fries maybe.

JACK: Fries are a good compromise.

EMMY reaches. Jack half-rises to help, sees she can manage it, sits back down.

JACK: I'm trying to be useful because I don't know what else to be in this room yet. I knew not to come in here trying to fix everything in six minutes... and then I walked in and tried to fix everything in six minutes.

EMMY: More like three.

JACK: Fair. Also, I'm a man who has spent twenty years around guys who judge each other on how much equipment they can drag into a disaster. And then there's Randy, patron saint of "Quit bleeding on it and hand me a wrench."

EMMY: Mom said he was the worst.

JACK: Your mother was being diplomatic.

CARA: Randy doesn't deserve diplomacy.

JACK: Also true.

EMMY: You really quit your job?

JACK: Yes.

EMMY: Because of me?

JACK: Because of all of it. Because I was over there and you were over here and it stopped making any sense. Because I don't know how to be your dad from six time zones away. Also because Randy said, "Do what you gotta do, buddy," in a tone that made me want to set his truck on fire.

EMMY: You did not.

JACK: In my heart, I absolutely did.

CARA: *(chuckles)* You're a model of restraint. *(gets a real laugh out of EMMY)*

JACK: I don't know what this version of me looks like yet.

EMMY: I don't know what I'm supposed to do either.

CARA: Then nobody does. That's honest.

EMMY: Sorry. (Jack winces. Cara is on it first.)

CARA: No. See? That. That's the pattern we have to change.

EMMY: I just meant—

JACK: I know what you meant, sweetheart. I'm saying you don't have to tidy this up because I'm uncomfortable.

EMMY: Okay. Are you here to stay?

JACK: Yeah. If you'll have me. Me and my emotional-support cheeseburgers.

EMMY: I missed you. It was hard having my dad overseas.

JACK: I know. I missed you too. More than you know.

EMMY's stomach growls audibly.

EMMY: Can I have a cheeseburger now?

JACK: (joyfully) You sure can. *(He hands it to her.)*

EMMY: Dad?

JACK: Yeah?

EMMY: The stuffed sheep can stay.

JACK: That is deeply generous.

CARA: Don't let it go to your head.

JACK: Too late. Stuffies for the win.

3.7 “FIRE AT THE WELL, REPRISE”

Setting: Ireland flat living room at night. A table. The Killymoon flame unlit. Jack unpacking quietly in the background.

Downstage Center: EMMY at the table with the candle + matchbox / note.

Surround sound / ensemble: “faerie/ancestor” voices

JACK (*quiet, practical*) Kettle’s on if you want tea.

EMMY Thanks.

Jack exits. EMMY is alone with the lamp —unlit. She stares at it, suspiciously. EMMY pulls out a small matchbox from her pocket. On the front: a Celtic knot. She shakes it, matches inside rattle. She reads aloud from the box.

EMMY “Never hide your fire. Light what’s yours.” (*scoffs*) Gee, that’s cryptic.

She strikes the match and lights the lamp. Upstage, on the stair landing, Brigid appears—seen by the audience only.

ANCESTORS (staggered) Light what’s yours...Never hide your fire...

EMMY: (*to the flame, low; testing her hunch*) I don’t know who I am here.

BRIGID: May the fire within you be kindled, not to burn the world, but to light your own path through the dark.

ANCESTORS: May your inner flame illuminate your path through darkness.

EMMY: I don’t know who I’m meant to be

BRIGID: May what you bless be healed,
and may what you tend with love quietly shape who you are becoming.

EMMY: Life feels so hard.

BRIGID: Nothing broken is beyond grace. Even the reed once split can sing
when the right breath finds it.

ANCESTORS: Let the maiden be healed in mind, heart and spirit.

EMMY: How do I even start?

BRIGID: May your life be forged with care—shaped by patience, tempered by
trial, and guided by the quiet wisdom of your hands.

ANCESTORS: The path is already blessed by those who have walked before.

EMMY Okay. Then I'm going to make it.

EMMY reaches for a letter opener (or wooden spoon) laying near the candle. Jack and Cara appear in the opposite doorways, see her with the lamp and the "sword." They remain to witness. EMMY doesn't look at either of them yet. She speaks to the flame.

EMMY (*clearer*) I'm not doing "fine" anymore. I will "Light what's mine."

EMMY (sung, intimate)

I've been walking like a guest in my own skin,
smiling so nobody asks where I've been.
I tried to borrow "okay," tried to act brave—
but you can't live your life in what you save.

BRIGID & ANCESTORS

Light the flame—don't hide it.
Let it warm what you name.
Drink the well—slow and steady.
You are not your shame.

EMMY (landing the turn)

So I'll light it from inside. I'll let it stay.
I'm not a problem to manage. I'm a girl on her way.

(Candle flare cue—subtle. Not magic, just a breath of brightness.)

From now on, I'll decide what's "Appropriate"
When to go and when to remain.

EMMY doesn't look up. But she hears it in her bones.
She holds her hands near the flame—not touching, just letting it warm her.

NAME CHANGE TO EIMEAR – TO PARENTS & FRIEND

Doorbell rings. EMMY hesitates then answers. SOIFRA enters.

EMMY Hi Sheef-ra.

SIOFRA (*bright, casual, Irish accent*) EMMY! I'm so happy you're back!
Are you feeling...better? (*Jack and Cara enter*)

EMMY Yeah, I'm grand. Thanks for coming over.

SIOFRA Okay—so—tomorrow we're doing the walkout, right?

EMMY Sorry, I don't remember. What walkout?

SIOFRA You know—to cancel the security drill.
You're the one who's supposed talk to Father Caldwell,
you make the joke, you smooth it over.
Like... you've got that AURA, you know?

EMMY Soifra, the plan's not going to work. For me.
If you all still want me to talk to Father Caldwell, I will.
But not in a way that hides how freaked out we all are by the lockdowns.

JACK (*entering in the commotion*) Hi there. Emmy, who's your friend?

EMMY Oh, this is Sheef-ra...she's in my class at school and lives up the road.

SIOFRA Hi Mr. Larson. EMMY's my new twin, actually. (*back to EMMY*)
Listen, I know you're low-key sus of teachers, but, we need your help.
Are you... mad at me or something?

EMMY No. I'm just... different. I can't be that person you want me to be.
Something happened to me...and...MOM, DAD, I want you to hear this too.

MORRIGAN (*Upstage, Brigid nods opposite*) Say the name you've chosen.

EMMY (*breath*) I want to be Irish and belong here. I want to make some of my own
choices. I want people to know who I really am and what I really think. I want people to
call me Eimear, now.

CARA I think we can do that. Right Jack? Eimear. How do you spell that?

SIOFRA E – I - M- E A R. Eimear.

JACK (*trying it*) Ee—mare?

EIMEAR (*gentle, patient*) Ee-mer. Eimear. Emmy was who I was when I was little. EMMY was me when I was trying to make everything fine. Eimear is who I am when I stop pleasing everyone else. I want to be **loved for the real me**.

JACK Of course! Whomever you need to be is OK with us. Eimear.

EIMEAR One more thing, I want to stop trying to be perfect. To hold it all together and pretend everything is “fine.” But...can you still love me if I’m not perfect??

CARA You don’t have to be perfect. No one is. Not even me...as hard as I try.

JACK We’re crazy about you even on your worst days. And on ours.

SIOFRA That’s SIGMA Mr. Larson. (*small*) So... EIMEAR, tomorrow?

EIMEAR That’s a BET. Except, we’ll do it my way.

SIOFRA Skibidi–Peace Out, Girl scout.

CARA And Sheefra, you’re always welcome to visit us anytime.

ALL (Adlib Goodbyes).

3.7 “AT THE THRESHOLD” — REPRISE

*EMMY has chosen **Eimear**. Jack appears in the kitchenette doorway; Cara stands opposite. This is calm, earned, and bright.*

EIMEAR

You didn’t fix it. You just listened. That felt different.

CARA

I didn’t rush in. I stayed present—even when my old fear knocked.

JACK

Whenever you need me, I’ll be right here.
Not in front. Not in the way.

TOGETHER

At the threshold—not holding, not pulling.

EIMEAR

I can keep “Emmy” like a blanket—
and still be strong without leaving you.

CARA + JACK

And we can nurture without shrinking you.
We can love you without writing your life for you.

EIMEAR *(small smile; the reframe lands)*

Eleven was a haunted year...until we fixed it as a family.

ALL

At the threshold—not behind, not ahead.
At the threshold—we'll all step through.

(Brigid's warmth. Morrigan's shadow. Jack doesn't notice—he doesn't have to.)

JACK: Eimear, I noticed that the sky's clear tonight. Let's go look at the stars.

EIMEAR: Can you take a raincheck?

JACK: That's an ironic phrase in Ireland...but sure, let's do it another time.

EIMEAR: *(hugs both parents)* Goodnight Mum and Dad.

Blackout.

3.8 APPROPRIATE” [\[ART\]](#) [\[LISTEN TO THIS SONG\]](#)

Meter: 6/8 (Irish stepdance drive) **Key:** D minor (shadow) → lifts to F major

Tempo: dotted-quarter = 120–132 (fast enough for hard-shoe, not frantic)

Vocal range (Eimear): A3–E5 (keeps it singable for a young performer)

Feel: bodhrán heartbeat + fiddle ostinato + feet as percussion

Staging engine (simple, big)

- Ensemble forms **two lines** like a céilí set. Their feet become the “institution.”
- Eimear starts **contained** (small steps). Each chorus she takes more space.
- **Principal-voice phrases** are chanted in rhythm (percussive), not dreamy.
- Morrígan = **shadow edge**; Brigid = **warm side-light**. They don’t sing *at* her; they **witness**.

INTRO (8 bars) — Fiddle riff + hard-shoe pattern

Bodhrán: | DUM–da-da | DUM–da-da | **Feet** (ensemble): soft shuffle → sharper trebles (build tension)

VERSE 1: **EIMEAR** — 16 bars – Dm | Dm | Bb | C | (x2)

I learned to smile with my hands at my sides,

learned to stand like a “good girl” stands.

Learned to keep my questions tucked in my sleeve

like a note you don’t hand in.

And I learned the trick of being “fine,”

like fine is a spell you cast—

But my heart keeps tapping on the door

and it wants to come out *fast*.

CHANT 1 (Ensemble / Principal Voice) — 8 bars – Bb | C | Dm | Dm |

ENSEMBLE (crisp, smiling, percussive)

Ap-pro-pri-ate. Ap-pro-pri-ate. Calm words. Good choices

Inside voice. Nice face. Just in case. Just in case.

(They stomp a tidy step pattern. It’s “order” embodied.)

PRE-CHORUS **Eimear** — 8 bars – Bb | C | Dm | Dm |

But calm isn’t true if it’s covering fear.

And “nice” isn’t love if it makes me disappear.

If “good” means I’m quiet when I’m not okay—

then I’m done being good that way.

CHORUS (**Eimear + Ensemble response**) — 16 bars – F | C | Dm | Bb | (x2)

I'm not your "just in case," not your practice run,
not your polite little prayer when the day is done.
I'm not a rule you can tie around my waist—
I'm not your "just in case."

ENSEMBLE (snapping back, rhythmic) Ap-pro-pri-ate!

EIMEAR No— I'm **awake**.

DANCE BREAK 1 — 16 bars (hard-shoe feature) – Dm | Dm | Bb | C | (x2)

- Ensemble does symmetrical céilí footwork = "the machine."
- Eimear dances **against** it — syncopations, cutting across their lines.
- Brigid's warm side-light flickers in time with the foot hits (like forge sparks).
- A single crow call punctuates the final beat (Morrígan's stamp).

VERSE 2 **Eimear** — 16 bars – Dm | Dm | Bb | C | (x2)

They taught me to say "yes" with my eyes,
even when my mouth said "no."
Taught me to laugh when a line felt wrong
so nobody had to know.
But I'm in a new place, new rain, new stone—
and I hear the old words crack.
If my "yes" isn't mine, it isn't yes, and I'm taking it back.

CHANT 2 **Ensemble**— 8 bars (sharper, losing control) – Bb | C | Dm | Dm |

Appropriate. Appropriate. Be careful. Be sweet.
Don't be trouble. Don't take up heat.

(Eimear answers with a single stomp that knocks the rhythm sideways)

BRIDGE (Eimear) — 12 bars (half-time feel within 6/8)
Bb | F | C | Dm | Bb | C | Dm | Dm |

Here's my rule— If I don't invite it in, it doesn't enter.
If I don't mean it, it's not my answer.
And if I feel small, that's not "safe"... that's a warning.
(Door latch clicks softly again on "warning.")

FINAL CHORUS (Key lift feel: brighten to F major) — 16 bars

Chords: | F | C | Dm | Bb | (x2)

EIMEAR I'm not your "just in case," not your Sunday smile,
not your "good girl" costume you can hang in a file.

I'm not a thing you manage, I'm a name you say— **Eimear**— *(beat)*
Eimear— *(beat)* when I choose it my way.

ENSEMBLE (breaking; now joining her rhythm) Not your just in case!

EIMEAR I'm **true**— and I'm here— and I'm staying— in my own skin.

EIMEAR'S PAYOFF SCENE FOLLOWING "APPROPRIATE"

Setting: School office / chapel-adjacent hallway (Minnesota memory bleeds into Ireland staging as needed).

(LIGHT CUE: a sterile school-office pool. A cross or framed "VALUES" poster. P.

CALDWELL sits behind a desk with a binder labeled SAFETY.

EIMEAR stands still. Bandage visible if you want the audience to clock stakes.)

CALDWELL Hello EMMY. Thank you for coming in.

EIMEAR It's Eimear now. You called me out of class. (not snarky, a statement)

CALDWELL *(pleasant)* Because I care about your wellbeing. And because we take *safety* seriously here. *(slides a paper across the desk)* I understand that you and your friends are protesting our new school safety rules and procedures.

EIMEAR *(using finger air quotes)* Your new policy says I can't spend class time discussing "violent topics" or "political topics" or "social media rumors."

CALDWELL Right. We don't wish to amplify fear amongst our student body.

EIMEAR So we just... ignore what's happening.

CALDWELL *(smiles tighter)* We choose language that builds peace.

EIMEAR Isn't that disguising the problem?

CALDWELL Eimear, you're a bright girl and bright kids can accidentally... influence others the wrong way. Your classmates look up to you.

EIMEAR I'm eleven. They mostly look up to my snacks.

CALDWELL (*chuckles; then*) What I'm saying is—the things you've been asking about...the hand signals, the drills, the “what ifs”...those are adult concerns.

EIMEAR Then why do you demand our cooperation?

CALDWELL We prepare. That's responsible.

EIMEAR You tell us not to be scared while you you prepare our hiding places.

CALDWELL (*stands*) I need you to sign this agreement. That you'll be appropriate. (*Eimear glances at the paper*)

EIMEAR No. You don't realize how this hurts us. All the students.

CALDWELL (*soft threat dressed as care*) Eimear... let's not make this hard.

EIMEAR I'm not making it hard. I'm making it honest.

CALDWELL Your parents will want you to cooperate.

EIMEAR My parents are still learning. As are you...with all due respect.

CALDWELL If you won't sign, we may need to discuss consequences.

EIMEAR (*tiny, lethal calm*) Go ahead. You can keep your contract. But don't tell me it's “peace” when it's blackmail. (*Eimear turns to go.*)

CALDWELL Eimear—I must ask you to be appropriate.

EIMEAR (*over her shoulder*) Yeah, I will Father Caldwell.

She exits. CALDWELL knows he's been duped.

3.9 “THE FUNDING COMES THROUGH”

Setting: CARA is in her pajamas, relaxed and working from the dining table in the Dublin corporate flat.

MORRÍGAN (*appears, direct, no mirror*)
You keep trying to buy safety with control.

CARA (*whips around*) Who—Jesus. Why are you here again?

MORRÍGAN

Jesus of Nazareth is the wrong deity. He was a sweet kid. I am the Morrigan, as I’m sure you recall. I’m here because we have some unfinished business. If you want to protect your daughter? You need to set a better example of a woman who stands her truth no matter how the world turns.

CARA I’m not a... warrior.

MORRÍGAN (*dry*)

You’re an accountant. Your power is how you track money.
Stop acting like that isn’t a battle...like being “head of household” is too hard.
Tomorrow, you speak to Reece. Not to beg. Not to apologize.
To set terms. You don’t ask for permission to exist in Ireland—you **declare the branch**.

CARA (*the old Cara tries to reason*) It doesn’t work like that.

MORRÍGAN

It works like that when you stop **appeasing** those who would steal your power.
And tell Reece exactly what funding is needed. (*A crow calls*) You’ve been “good” your whole life. Try being **true**—to yourself, to Eimear. (*She’s gone. Cara stands alone, The open laptop rings. Cara answers with all the confidence she can muster.*)

REECE (Zoom) Cara—you’re not going to believe this—they just approved your request for a new branch in Dublin.

CARA Um, right! Of...of course they did.

REECE No, like... approved the hiring of a whole team. That never happens this fast.

CARA The CFO must have been strongly persuaded.

REECE Okay. Tell me what you did, because last week you were— (*searches*) —a “special circumstance.”

CARA Well, it just makes sense. The Minnesota team is already strained and it doesn't need to fall apart while we focus on this international account.

REECE (*blinks, impressed*) That's... impressively succinct.

CARA Thank you.

REECE Okay, so—finance called it “risk reduction and operational continuity” which to humans means: “fewer fires, fewer people crying, and the client stays happy.”

CARA Correct.

REECE So what did you actually *do*?

CARA I told the client no.

REECE You told the client no—(*corporate voice*)without adversely impacting the relationship? (*translates*) And they didn't throw a chair?

CARA No chairs. And actually three no's.

REECE (*genuinely delighted*) Three no's! Okay. That's—boundary setting. (*translates, softer*) That's... ballsy. (*A crow call outside*) Was that a crow?

CARA Haha, yeah. I've gotten used to Ireland's most prolific critic.

REECE (*chuckles*) Alrighty. So you said no, and then what?

CARA I gave them a plan that didn't require anyone to bleed for it.

REECE (nods) Bleeding is not—(*corporate*)an approved resourcing model. (*translates*)Also: I hate that it ever was.

CARA Me too.

REECE Okay. (*corporate*) Given successful stakeholder alignment—(*translates*)since you somehow got everyone to calm down—we need a lead on the ground. (*Cara nods her head*) So. You want to head the branch?

CARA I'm already doing it. You're just... catching up.

REECE (*wry*) Please say “aligning” instead of “catching up.” It makes me feel behind.

CARA You're aligning.

REECE Perfect. Since you're our new Ireland Branch Lead, you pick the first hires. I'll get you a budget that works.

CARA Appreciated. *(a crow caws.)*

REECE Okay, I have to ask—and this is not—a formal inquiry—but does your candle always flare like that? *(Cara glances at it, then back.)*

CARA Only when something's... decided.

REECE Great. *(corporate)* Send me your branch plan.

CARA Of course. I'll send you a realistic one—not a diplomatic one just to be palatable.

REECE And Cara—*(corporate)* excellent work. I'm proud of you.

CARA Thank you, Reece. *(Cara closes the laptop gently but excitedly.)* Jack! EMMY! I just got a promotion! We can stay in Ireland!

JACK Wait—*staying for good?!*

CARA Staying as long as we want. I'm a Branch Lead, baby. Real budget. Real team. No "temporary." No "maybe." We're here to stay.

(Beat. Jack's face does the thing it does when he's about to fix, then he catches himself. He steps in and just holds Cara.)

JACK Okay. Okay... that's—*(swallows)* That's incredible!

EIMEAR *(hopefully)* Does that mean... I don't have to start over somewhere else?

CARA We'll have to find our own home eventually. But we'll see that you don't have to change schools again, if you wish to stay where you are.

JACK *(gently)* Happy out! We can be the Irish family we've been wanting to be.

EIMEAR *(deadpan)* I'm still not eating white or black pudding for breakfast.

(They laugh as joyous family. Cara wipes her eyes.)

JACK: Hey—speaking of established—I looked at that high-demand careers list you sent. Mechanical engineers are still on it.

CARA: Of course they are.

JACK: *(grinning)* Ireland needs more people who read the manual.

EIMEAR: Yeah, well—people need people who don't treat them like a manual.

JACK: *(nods)* Fair point.

CARA: *(turning to Eimear)* Okay. Your turn. What happened at school?

EIMEAR: *(tries casual, fails)* I got nominated for class representative.

JACK: What—really?

EIMEAR: After I met Father Caldwell.

CARA: Nominated... why?

EIMEAR *(shrugs)* Because I asked tough questions at the school assembly.

JACK *(soft, to Cara, amazed)* Look at our baby girl, all grown up!

EIMEAR *(annoyed, but pleased)* Don't make it weird.

CARA *(smiling)* Can we be at least a little ecstatic?

LIGHTING / SOUND CUE: *Bodhrán heartbeat grows with fiddle. Lanterns appear.*

EIMEAR: Is that... the parade?

CARA: Yes, tomorrow is St. Brigid's bank holiday. That is the Imbolc Parade.

JACK: Go grab your coat and "wellies." Let's go join in the craic!

(Eimear bolts for her coat. Cara grabs scarves and hats. Jack kills the kettle)

CARA: *(to Jack, quick)* It's wonderful to be a family again.

(They step out together. The music swells into procession.)

4.0 FINALE: “CARRY THE LIGHT HOME”

Staging: *The family joins an ensemble of druids in white who gather into a soft spiral. Toward the end of the line, is a small coven of witches in black, purple and orange.*

[Intro — processional pulse, bodhrán + strings + piano]

EIMEER: Who are you?

WITCH 1: We’re the PTA! Our Ditch Witch procession got rained out last October, so we decided to dress up again.

CARA: Are you celebrating St. Brigid too?

WITCH 2: No darlin **BOTH:** Long live The Morrigan. *(The witches cheer.)*

Cara and Eimeer laugh at each other, incredulous.

Spotlight: *Brigid reaches her hand out to Morrigan, welcoming her onto the dias.*

BRIGID: Well, Mom, it looks like you finally get your moment in the flame.

MORRIGAN: Mom? Ha! You haven’t called me that in a millenium. Don’t tell your father.

BRIGID: Dagda? Are you kidding? He’s had enough time to run things.

MORRIGAN: And I’ve seen enough of his Kerry Green Hats to last a lifetime.

BRIGID: Most humans don’t realize they celebrate Dagda and St. Patrick simultaneously. Well, now that you’re up here, what do you want to say?

MORRÍGAN (sung low, clear):
I named your almost. I call you now to remain.

BRIGID (sung warm, steady) :
I don’t erase the darkness— I teach it how to flame.

BOTH: Between the crow and the flame, between the scar and the name—
you are not divided. Between the crow and the flame.

(The Family Takes Center Stage: Cara, Eimear, and Jack step forward—not as a “pose,” but as people who have lived through something.)

CARA :

I can hold without gripping. / I can love without fear.

EIMEAR: *(clear, grounded)*

I can speak before I break / I can stay and still be here.

JACK

I can stand in what I don't know. I can listen and not run.
I can stay in the room with the truth / until the morning comes.

Chorus 1

ALL FIVE: Between the crow and the flame,
between the scar and the name— we belong, unchained.
Between the crow and the flame.

BRIGID : Warm-handed, open—

MORRÍGAN: Clear-eyed, unbroken—

ALL FIVE: Held and defended, between the crow and the flame.

(Processional Lift: Ensemble swarms around them, carrying lanterns / ribbons / drums. The rhythm grows, but stays elegant.)

ENSEMBLE (layered, then unified) :

What you bless, you heal. What you tend, you become.

Kindle the flame within— carry the light home.

(Repeat once, with building harmony)

ANCESTRAL CHOIR

Táim sa bhaile ionam féin / Faoi scáth na sinsear
Nearth i mo chroí, solas i m'anam / Táim sa bhaile ionam féin

Bridge (Legacy Hand-Off)

(Music drops slightly. This is the “teaching” moment—the goddesses leave something behind.)

BRIGID No more fear called mercy / No more shrinking love to fit the room.

MORRÍGAN

No more silence called strength / No more bleeding just to be believed.

CARA No more “fine” when I mean frightened.

JACK No more fixing when what's needed is to stay.

EIMEAR No more making myself smaller / so other people don't have to change.

(A beat. Brigid and Morrigan look at each other—then at the family.)

BRIGID *(to the family)* Carry the hearth.

MORRÍGAN *(to the family)* Carry the line.

BOTH GODDESSES Carry the light home.

Final Chorus - FULL COMPANY

Between the crow and the flame, between the scar and the name—
we belong, unchained—between the crow and the flame.

Between shadow and fire, between blade and balm— we are not divided.

We are held. We are fierce. We are warm.

Coda (Quiet / Assured)

(Cara & Eimear are given fairy crowns; Brigid & Morrigan step to opposite sides.)

BRIGID Held.

MORRÍGAN Defended.

BOTH Whole.

COMPANY (soft, final) When the crows gather and the hearth still glows,
that's not contradiction— that's how wholeness goes.

BRIGID *(gentle blessing)* Walk softly.

MORRÍGAN *(firm blessing)* Stand true.

BOTH GODDESSES Carry the light home.

FINAL TABLEAU

BRIGID and MORRIGAN on center stage riser. They are still. They are watching. Not at each other. At CARA and EIMEAR who stand down center with JACK. The ensemble flanks on either side.

BRIGID: Tend it.

MORRIGAN: Guard it.

CARA and EIMEAR: “It is ours.”

CURTAIN