

Transience

Scene 1 - your local tesco

Lights up. GINNY is standing down centre stage and looking ahead at an invisible cashier. She has a few groceries in her hand, not enough to need a bag for life. Probably oat milk and a packet of cookies, or a meal deal. Light rain blends with the quiet yet annoying radio music.

GINNY Hiya pal, how are you? Just these please. Actually, how much are your chargers? *(beat)* Lightning to USB? *(beat)* Nah, that's fine, thank you. Thanks.

GINNY has paid and goes to leave. The lights fade slowly before snapping back up as she quickly turns back, having been struck with an idea of resourcefulness.

GINNY Do you have any cardboard?

Lights down.

Scene 2 - packing

Lights up on a student flat. A patter of rain against the windows. GINNY sits on the floor centre stage, folding up a cardboard box. CHIARA enters theatrically, stage right, carrying parcel tape and a full black bin bag.

CHIARA I have a proposition for you

GINNY Thank you, but I am not sleeping on your crusty boyfriend's crusty couch. I'd sooner call my mother.

CHIARA throws the parcel tape at her friend, who catches it without looking up.

CHIARA You're a liar, you're a stubborn bitch and worst of all, you're a meanie. Liam is not crusty. *(beat)* He's not *that* crusty. Any port in a storm, y'know. But I've learned my lesson, no more gracious generosity from me. An offer you can't refuse, that's what I'm here for.

GINNY finally looks up with a grin.

GINNY I'm listening

CHIARA *(dramatically)* I hold in my hand a treasure trove, the first rain after a drought.

GINNY Really? Cause it looks like a bag of shit to me

CHIARA Ha! No, no... my darling. This is a bag of *the* shit.

GINNY Shut up.

CHIARA The dog's bollocks of bargain-hunting. The Queen's cache of the discerning thrift store enthusiast. And all of it could be yours.

GINNY I've struck gold

CHIARA I will allow you to rummage to your heart's content before these priceless artefacts find new homes via vinted if...

CHIARA pauses for dramatic effect.

GINNY ...if?

CHIARA If I get Briar.

GINNY gasps audibly. CHIARA grins.

GINNY You stone cold bitch

CHIARA I understand this is a terribly difficult decision. But if it helps, I've already told Briar the Air Fryer that although mamma and mummy won't be living together anymore, they both still love her very much. I'll even allow visitation.

GINNY You drive a hard bargain. Every weekend?

CHIARA Every night if you'd only swallow your damn pride

GINNY (*quietly*) It's not pride Chiara.

CHIARA Well, whatever it is, I'm sure it would taste better after 12 to 18 minutes of TLC from Briar. You can come stay, any time you want. Liam will-

GINNY You're not getting a penny of alimony out of me. And you'd better cherish her.

CHIARA She'll want for nothing.

GINNY Good. Now gimme.

GINNY reaches out both hands for the bin bag of goodies. CHIARA plops down beside her, but GINNY immediately stands after finding a piece of clothing that's piqued her interest.

GINNY What were you thinking when you bought this?

She holds a t-shirt (or dress, or jeans, or whatever. Something that your mother would look at and say 'did you put those holes in yourself?') up against her body.

GINNY Abercrombie and Needs Stitched?

CHIARA I prefer the term 'Vagabond Chic'

GINNY I think it suits me.

Lights down.

Scene 3 - the library

Lights up. We're in a library. GINNY and CHIARA are sitting comfortably, books or paraphernalia scattered modestly around their study space, backpacks lying open. Their voices slowly raise as they begin to overlap.

GINNY So she's talking about hospitalisation or whatever -

CHIARA shit, really?

GINNY Nah it's fine, I was like 'do I have a choice' and she goes 'yes we can't detain you, it would be voluntary'

CHIARA that's fine then

GINNY And I'm like 'well then, I choose no.'

CHIARA nope!

GINNY but anyway /

CHIARA ~ (sobering a little) Do you not think that it - /

GINNY / she's listing all of the benefits /

CHIARA / that it probably would be good for /

GINNY / and I'm trying really hard to look serious /

CHIARA / you at the moment, I mean /

GINNY / and listen /

CHIARA / I know it's not ideal but you -

GINNY / no listen -

The girls' conversation is cut off by THE LIBRARIAN, probably a Voice Over:

LIBRARIAN (chastising) Shhh!

A beat. The girls are suitably chastened, for only a moment.

GINNY (returning to story-mode, furtively) Listen, I'm sitting there, nodding solemnly, and I say 'Well, at least it would be somewhere to stay!' /

CHIARA Shut up

GINNY / Like, expecting them to *laugh* and then she's nodding so serious and says 'yeah it *would* be somewhere to stay' /

CHIARA every cloud has a silver lining I guess

GINNY / she's so serious, and then I laugh and I say -

CHIARA Nurses have no sense of humour

LIBRARIAN SHHHHH

beat.

CHIARA (hushed) and librarians have no sense of timing.

The girls 'watch' as THE LIBRARIAN 'walks away', before continuing at their previous volume, unbothered.

GINNY ... I'm laughing, because all I have is this image in my head of /

CHIARA ~ (still staring after THE LIBRARIAN, tutting, as if he was the one being rude) We're trying to have a conversation here.

GINNY / You know, like, right. I say, 'you know how, if you're in A&E. And then a junkie comes in, and purposefully stubs his toe on a table or something... (She demonstrates) and then he limps up to the reception desk like "ah've hurt meh foot" just because he wants a bed for the night? That is literally what you're proposing to me right now'

CHIARA bursts out in uncontained laughter. GINNY claps her hands once, or points excitedly at her friend.

GINNY (Triumphant) There! See! That's all I wanted!

Uncontrollable laughter from both, until:

LIBRARIAN SHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

GINNY (somewhat petulantly) She didn't laugh.

CHIARA Nurses have no sense of humour.

Lights down.

Scene 4 - On the fence.

Lights up. GINNY and CHIARA are sitting on a fence somewhere, passing a joint between them. They are clearly having two different conversations.

GINNY That reminds me, the hostel I was in last night-

CHIARA ~ And he says - wait, you were in a hostel last night?

GINNY Where do you think I've been? Anyway /

CHIARA / You should've said, I could have -

GINNY / this couple, like, stumble into my dorm at 2am, like, clearly out of it /

CHIARA / Liam is always out late on a saturday anyway

GINNY / and next thing I know they whip out a bunsen burner.

CHIARA Pass the light?

A beat. GINNY hands the lighter to CHIARA, who re-lights the joint, but does not take a proper draw for some unfathomable reason. She watches it dwindle. The momentary silence is broken by both girls at once

CHIARA if you'd said t-

GINNY ~ So they've got their wee chemistry set out and I'm thinking, shit. I'm about to be part of a crack den -

CHIARA (giving up on any hope of serious conversation) more likely meth

GINNY or a meth den, whatever -

CHIARA doesn't quite have the same ring to it

GINNY And they get out this little metal dish and I'm, like, in full blown panic mode now. I've never been part of a crack den.

CHIARA meth den.

GINNY Am I implicated now? What am I meant to /

CHIARA Do you remember Mrs Methven from /

GINNY / do? No one ever prepares you for this situation /

CHIARA / Clydeport? Liam thinks that /

GINNY / And they start cooking /

CHIARA / we should have reported her.

GINNY / and, obviously, I don't know what meth smells like but I'm pretty sure it doesn't smell like... this? And so in true Clydeport style I'm twitching the curtains and they are not cooking meth.

CHIARA Wait, go back, what?

GINNY These people in my dorm. They're cooking... black pudding. On a bunsen burner. At 2am in a random hostel down Charing Cross.

CHIARA Shut up.

GINNY They're not junkies, they're American tourists trying to taste a little bit of culture

CHIARA Cooking up a storm

GINNY Wait, it gets better. The girl turns to the guy and goes *(she adopts a very poor american accent)* is this gluten free?

GINNY holds her breath as she waits for her friend's unmistakable bark of laughter. It doesn't come. The silence edges into awkwardness. CHIARA takes a draw, pondering.

CHIARA ...Is it?

GINNY *(laughs)* No, you bampot. It's literally blood and guts and all the crap of the day, wrapped in a shitty little skin. The barley is the only thing holding it together.

CHIARA *(finally cracking a smile)* Sounds familiar.

GINNY (teasing) What, and you're my barley?

CHIARA'S grin doesn't quite reach her eyes. She passes the joint back to GINNY, who stubs it out. Silence again, broken by the first soft roll of thunder.

CHIARA Are you holding it together?

GINNY Barely.

Lights down.

Scene 5 - telephone

Lights up. GINNY is pacing, holding a cracked mobile phone in front of her, on loudspeaker. Hold music plays. If there exists anywhere an instrumental version of 'Thunder' by imagine dragons, this would be perfect.

*

A tiny pause in the music. GINNY's face lights up, but the beat continues. She rolls her eyes and continues to pace.

*

Another pause, and then a breath from the phone's loudspeaker. GINNY lights up again, but:

V/O Thank you for your patience. We know you are waiting and will answer your call shortly. Please continue to hold.

The hold music continues. GINNY paces, not in time to the music. She catches a glimpse of the moon, and pauses to stare at it.

*

A steadying breath

*

A roll of thunder, less gentle than the first. The sound of rain, drips at first, before lashing, all-encompassing, drowning out the hold music.

Lights fade.

V/O (fading in time with black out) Thank you for your patience. We know you are waiting and will answer your call shortly. Please cont...

Scene 6 - the eye

Lights up. The eye of the storm. GINNY stands centre stage and addresses the audience.

A breath

GINNY You taste it, first. Maybe taste is the wrong word. There's this dryness on your tongue that nothing can quench.

A pause. How to make this make sense?

GINNY When I quit smoking, the first time, I thought I was an addict. That the sweet niccy rush that makes your brain fizz and leg stop bouncing would be impossible to go without on a monday morning. But that isn't the absence I noticed. The stench of death that clung to my tongue and cold, delicate fingertips; the insatiable, unquenchable fire that licked its way into my lungs, that's what I was longing for. You can wrinkle your nose at me but inhaling refined cherry-adjacent battery acid, it doesn't come close.

You taste it, the stillness in the air rests like sandpaper. The subtlest of warnings: don't get used to it.

We've committed to the story now.

GINNY A change, somewhere. A butterfly beats its wings. Maybe you forego your pret subscription and go to bagel mania for lunch, on a whim. Or a different brand of coffee has a clubcard price, I dunno. But something's shifted, and you can smell it. Petrichor is impatient. The calm is suddenly fragile.

She's lost the thread a bit, mixing her metaphors.

GINNY Of course, this all starts to make a bit more sense when you see the stormclouds. Not little silk sky-high things that wisp like smoke, but the *big* boys. You ever read Agatha Christie? And you get to the end and feel so, like, 'how, *how* did I not see this coming?' stupid, but also satisfied because finally the hairs on the back of your neck settle, cause it all makes sense. The clouds, colour of ash, they lie so low that the sun is a distant memory. Not that that's an uncommon feeling, here, anyway - this country is so collectively choking for Vitamin D - but bear with me. I'm really trying to make this metaphor work. The big boys, storm clouds. Make the sky seem smaller, and it's not a gut feeling anymore, you *know* what's coming.

The first roar of thunder, soft as a marble in a sink. It's warming, in a way. And then the first pitter patter, the metronome of droplets on

gravel. Or some kind of ticking, anyway. A clock. Or a time-bomb.
You hear the rain and...

[GINNY has lost her train of thought. The story is too convoluted for her to maintain, and the storyteller mask drops, for a moment]

GINNY The thing is, right. You have to laugh. Being untimely ripped from everything you knew and plonked in the mouth of charybdis is fucking hilarious. I am the embodied definition of situational comedy. You're allowed to laugh. This girl on my course, my old course, she was commuting from *Paisley* in her first year, that's where they fucking housed her. Genuinely never thought anything could be worse than Murano, but fuck me, *Paisley*? The *stories* she used to hear on her commute, though. Ended up stealing some dialogue from the train for her creative writing diss. She made the most of it. Danced in the rain.

And I'm trying, here. But this isn't a ballet. There is nothing graceful about this sodden reality. A metronome isn't music, And you can't learn to dance if no one will show you the steps. Do you - ha, do you know what this is? It's a fucking conga line. Do do do, and around and around we go but we're not *getting* anywhere. The circle rejoins and there is no escape until the song ends. And so I'm waiting. And I think of myself as quite a patient person, but -

A breath. Too close to real.

GINNY Finally, you feel it. Not just the torrent connecting in one chain the dank split ends of your fringe to every spongy pore in your wrist; or the brittle chill in your bones that creaks with every breath, but really *feel* it. The tempest inside of you. The brutal wind that whips around your ribcage, whistles turning to howls in the gaps. Your heart isn't safe here. And the rain comes down and the floods come up, your stomach is sunk and your throat is clogged with... it's not pride. But even if you could - did - ask for help, it'd be drowned out, anyway. And the sparks of lightning that sizzle at your fingertips, the desire to do something, *anything*, vying, *dying* to get out. But all you can do is wait. That promised clarity that comes after, it'll all be worth it. This too shall pass.

They say that, anyway. One day at a time. Except, days and days and days, that's how they getcha. The days turn into months and I'm still standing here. And I'm drenched and I'm cold and exhausted and I'm waiting. The conga line storm, we aren't going anywhere. And it makes you think, is this it? Is this it, now?

I'm so tired. And I'm waiting. And I'm waiting.

Lights down

Scene 7 - telephone

Lights up. A soundscape. The cacophony of a storm overlaps with hold music, a ringtone here and there, and various voices (voice over). GINNY stands centre stage, unmoved after her monologue. If directors have an interest in movement, this could be an opportunity for physical theatre or dance. Alternatively if directors have an interest in experimental theatre, this could be an opportunity for silhouettes/visual art/puppetry/allegory/anything really. Alternatively this could work with GINNY standing still and using some funky lights to signify that the days turn into weeks, etc. The sequence should last around 3 minutes, and directors/sound artists are encouraged to take full creative reign, assigning/editing/repeating/moving/cutting the lines as they see fit.

[NB: Numbers indicate distinct voices. 16 voices would be preferred. Letters denote function: A = An advisor (from housing, drs, womens aid, uni etc) B= robotic voice you hear on hold for various services C= family or friends]

1A I'm sorry, Miss Brunton, unfortunately we have no female spaces available tonight

*

2/CHIARA Hi, it's me. Was just checking in, hope you're ok. Briar misses you, so come visit soon.

*

3B Please hold the line, we are trying to direct your call. Please hold the line, we are trying to direct your call. Please hold the line, we are trying to direct your call.

*

4C Hi darling, are you remembering it's Arran's birthday on wednesday? We're planning on having a barbecue if the rain clears up, it would be lovely to see you. Do you still have your discount card?

*

5A Unfortunately we're full up tonight, do you have anywhere else you can stay?

*

6B Thank you for your patience. We know you are waiting and will answer your call shortly.

*

2/CHIARA Hi, it's me again. Call me when you get this.

*

6B Please continue to hold

*

1A I understand that Miss Brunton but we keep single-sex spaces for a reason, and by making an exception we make ourselves liable, not to mention yourself unsafe.

*

7B Thank you for calling Norrad Street surgery. The surgery is now closed and will re-open on Monday at 8am.

*

8B Or press one to speak with an advisor.

*

2/CHIARA Liam's away for the weekend if you did fancy coming over. Call me back and let me know.

*

7B If your call is an emergency, please hang up and redial 999. That number again is 999.

*

1A I'm sorry I can't assist you further today.

*

9B All of our advisors are currently busy. Please hold the line, or try again later.

*

10A Perfect, Ginny. Could I just take the first line of your address and postcode?

*

2/CHIARA Hi, I'm trying really hard not to be upset because I know you've got a lot going on right now, but I'd really appreciate it if you could call me back.

*

11A ...right. Do you have a mailing address?

*

5A Do you have anyone we can call?

*

12A We've nothing tonight, Miss Brunton. Try again first thing tomorrow.

*

13A Good morning, Burnbank, this is Marina speaking. How may I direct your call?

*

14B We are currently experiencing a high volume of calls. Please continue to hold.

*

15C Hey Ginny what's up?! Sorry to bother you but I was wondering if you could lend me just like ten quid, I get paid on friday.

*

4C Where are you?

*

11A And is this the best number to reach you on?

*

15C ...maybe twenty quid.

*

13A Our first available appointment is thursday 17th november at 11:05.

*

4C Are you coming home?

*

11A Right. And have the council come back to you with a decision yet?

*

5A We've nothing tonight, Ginny, but we've got spaces in a dorm on monday if that's any good?

*

13A Sorry about that, I was just checking something.

*

11A Right ok. Unfortunately we can't provide temporary accommodation to people who have not been recognised as homeless by the council. Give them a phone and ask about the status of your section 5.

*

2/CHIARA Hi this is Chiara, sorry I'm not here right now, leave a message, or don't!

*

13A And where are you staying right now, Ginny?

*

16B Thank you for holding. Your call is important to us.

*

11A So it's a points system, housing is allocated based on need. You're currently a bronze band, but if you could arrange a section 5 to be sent over to us we could bump you up to silver.

*

13A Are you able to keep yourself safe?

*

15C Speak soon

*

11A The waiting time is currently about 4 months for silver bands.

*

1A Thank you for your patience. We know you are waiting.

Lights down

Scene 8 - On the Fence

Lights up. GINNY sits at a bus stop, cold. It's late. The sound of cars driving through puddles every so often.

JAKE enters, stage left. He's a bit out of it. GINNY glances at him politely, but in a please-don't-come-sit-next-to-me sort of way. JAKE does just that.

[NB - for readers unfamiliar with Scots, a glossary of Jake's dialect-specific words can be found at the end of this scene]

JAKE 'scuse me, doll, you got a spare cigarette?

GINNY I don't smoke, sorry.

JAKE Tha's a shame. Keeps the cold out yanno? aw

JAKE reaches into his coat pocket and produces a packet of cigarettes.

JAKE D'you want wan?

GINNY No thanks.

He tries to light his cigarette with a shitty disposable lighter.

JAKE Fuckin' useless hings.

He shakes it and tries to spark up again. No joy. A few moments pass. JAKE is appraising GINNY, as if he's trying to figure out what her deal is.

JAKE Ye got an antiseptic wipe?

GINNY shakes her head.

JAKE aw, shame.

JAKE reaches into his jacket again and pulls out hand sanitizer, unlit cigarette still dangling from his mouth.

JAKE ye want some?

GINNY's resolve cracks, and she holds out her hand deflatedly. There's no escaping this guy. JAKE tends to his track marks absent-mindedly.

JAKE Where're'ye off tae?

GINNY Not sure.

JAKE aw, rite. Where'd'ye come fae, then?

GINNY Just around.

A beat

JAKE fuckin' crackin' conversation this in'tit.

GINNY smiles tightly. JAKE goes back to clicking his lighter.

JAKE Whit time's the bus due?

GINNY about half an hour ago

JAKE aww, fuckin' typical isnit. That's whit's wrong wi this country, a think. Aw yer folk zippin about in their hondas and fuckin electric scooters but there's nae busses. Aw these politicians, fuckin lunchin on each others arses and no gein a fuck about ebody else, no the wee man, no the planet, and certainly no us.

GINNY nods at this amazingly original philosophy. A silence.

JAKE here, am no trying to be rude or anythin, but are you awrite? Ah've seen ye sitting at this bus stop every night for, like, four days man, every time I come out the pub, there ye are. And you look sad as shit.

GINNY Having a bit of a rough time at the moment.

JAKE I hear that.

Finally the lighter sparks, a glimmer of success. JAKE lights his cigarette and inhales once, before wordlessly offering it to GINNY. She accepts.

GINNY I'm going to Aberdeen.

JAKE Aw, commiserations. Is that your family up there?

- GINNY No
- JAKE Wis away to say, you dinnae sound Doric. Whits up there, then?
- GINNY Nothing.
- JAKE Wit, you're gonnae get the night bus up to granshit city, dae nothin, then come back doon again?
- GINNY Yep.
- JAKE Fair enough. Life's aw about the journey, no the destination.
- GINNY Return ticket was £12. Hostel was 38. It made sense.
- JAKE A see. *(a beat)* Here, I know this is none o'ma business, but does somdy know where you are? *(a beat)* I'm no tryin to be creepy or that doll, but y'get some fuckin weirdos about. *(a beat)*. Right. Well. I'll leave you tae it then. Enjoy your bus ride.
- GINNY Thanks. *(beat)* For the cig.
- JAKE S'awrite doll. You look after yersel. Hold it thegether.
- GINNY nods. JAKE goes to leave and the lights fade, before snapping back up as he returns, with one last piece of hammered wisdom:*
- JAKE The hing is right, naebody ever prepares ye for this situation, but yiv got tae keep goin. Ma maw, god rest her soul, sayd that life... life isnae about waiting for the storm tae pass. It's about grabbing the thunderclouds by the baws while they're pissing down on you. D'y'know what am sain?
- GINNY *(She shakes her head in disbelief, but a small smile creeps up her lip)* Honestly? Not really, pal.
- JAKE *(grinning widely)* It gets better.

Lights down.

[GLOSSARY:

A/am = I/I'm;

Aw = all, OR a glaswegian sound that acts as punctuation, often an exclamation point;

Aw, rite = oh, ok (not to be confused with awrite = alright);

Baws = testicles

Dinnae = don't

Doon = down

Doll = a term of endearment for women. Not usually meant in a sexist way, although it can be received as such.

Doric = from the north-east of Scotland

Ebody = anybody OR everybody;

Gein = giving;

Gonnae = going to

Granshit city = a pun on 'granite city', a popular nickname for Aberdeen

Hings = things;

In'tit/isnit = isn't it;

Maw = mother

Nae/naw = no;

No = not;

O = of

Sayd = said

Somdy = somebody;

Tae = to;

Thegether = together

Wan = one;

Wee man (in this context) = average person (as opposed to a leader, 'big man')

Whit/wit = what;

Wi = with;

Wis away to = was about to

Yanno = you know;

Ye/yer(sel) = you/your(self);

Yiv = you've]

Scene 9 - the library

Lights up. We're in a library. GINNY sits centre left with a book in her hand, not so much reading as looking at the pages. Her backpack is held tight to her lap, zipped closed. It's quiet.

CHIARA enters, stage right, a backpack slung over her shoulder. She crosses the stage and is about to leave SL, before noticing GINNY.

CHIARA *(brightly)* Oh shit, hey! Long time no see.

GINNY looks up. She smiles, tightly.

CHIARA *(sobering slightly)* How are you?

GINNY Grand, yeah. *(beat)* A bit better.

CHIARA That's good, that's so good! They say lightning never strikes twice, so.

Despite the relatively low volume and excitement of their voices -

LIBRARIAN Shh!

As before, the girls 'watch' the librarian 'walk away' in sync. In many ways, nothing as changed. In others -

CHIARA I, uh. I didn't expect to see you here /

GINNY Only place you can sit all day without spending money

CHIARA / Did you get your course sort- oh.

A beat.

CHIARA Good to get out of the rain.

GINNY ~ And they have wifi, so.

Silence. CHIARA considers putting her bag down, but awkwardly shrugs it back onto her shoulder. She desperately tries to fill the void, to close this space that has come between them, but stumbles over her words

CHIARA You'll be able to get back into your reading, you always loved that. Unlimited free books! Now that you're, I mean, well that you're free, most of the day... I mean, you'll have time, for, you know, reading. Reading stuff you enjoy, not uni books, bleurgh. So, you know. Every cloud has a silver lining, I guess. *(beat)* Did you - did you see that TikTok about /

GINNY Nah, my charger finally packed it in.

CHIARA Maya Jama and Stormzy- oh.

GINNY I go down to the defibrillator outside Buchanan Galleries in the mornings, they have a wireless charger attached to it, so.

CHIARA has been rustling in her bag. She pulls out a lightning cable.

CHIARA This is my spare, you can have it /

GINNY it's fine

CHIARA / Sorry I don't have a plug.

GINNY *(before she can stop herself)* well that's a first

CHIARA laughs, properly. Just like old times. She fiddles with the wire.

CHIARA Yeah, I- I gave all that up. I've got placement this year, and the last thing I want is a random drug test and chucked out on the stree-

She realises, too late, what she's said. GINNY smiles tightly again.

CHIARA Shit, sorry.

GINNY It's fine.

LIBRARIAN SHHH!

GINNY You're right, though. Good for you. Although I'm sure I could tell your coursemates a very entertaining story or two about us down firewater on a friday night.

CHIARA *(grinning fondly)* I doubt it. Nurses have no sense of humour. *(a beat)*. Although... I did hear from Rhiane - she's this girl on my ward, just qualified - that one of the students from last year nicked pills from the med cupboard, and was planning on selling them to his wee pals. I mean, entrepreneurship at its finest, but- anyway, as he comes out of storage he sees the senior charge nurse walking towards him and he panics, so swallows everything he's got in his hand. Gets caught anyway, of course. Cameras everywhere, it's a hospital, the bampot. Dragged in front of the exec panel. Not that he should have been on the course, anyway, reprobate, because what he's nicked is Bisacodyl. Laxatives. *(she pauses for theatr-chiara-cal effect)* Talk about scared shitless.

GINNY laughs, properly.

CHIARA There, see. That's all I wanted.

They smile.

CHIARA You know, Ginny, I'm really worried about you. You didn't return my calls. And- and Briar misses you. You should come and stay, we've got the room-

GINNY Are you still with Liam?

A long pause

CHIARA He's good to me.

A longer pause.

CHIARA He's different, now. And he definitely won't mind you coming to stay, he wouldn't want to see you out-

GINNY Then I choose no.

Silence.

CHIARA Well. I can't detain you.

Silence.

CHIARA I'll see you around, Gin.

CHIARA turns to leave, but remembers the wire in her hand. She holds it out to GINNY who doesn't take it. GINNY stands and takes a few paces away from CHIARA.

GINNY (coolly) What happened to no more gracious generosity?

CHIARA tosses the charger to GINNY, who catches it reflexively.

CHIARA Just take the fucking lead, Ginny.

CHIARA exits, SL. Lights down.

Scene 10 - unpacking

A flashback. Lights up. We see a fresh faced GINNY stage left, on the phone and balancing too much stuff on her hip. She'll be damned if she makes two trips. No rain.

GINNY I swear, I'm fine. I've got everything, here safe and sound, we're grand. Now could you just let me go so I can unpack before she starts digging up the carpets. Yes. Yep. All good. Ok. Bye mum, love
-

The signature apple doot-doot-doot of an ended call. GINNY grins.

GINNY CHIARA! Can you come help me with all of this shit?

CHIARA enters stage left, carrying one single box. Pulling her weight, indeed. She brushes past GINNY and places it down centre stage and sighs dramatically.

CHIARA You know, if we don't unpack right now, we could use this as a coffee table. But for wine. A wine table. A wine table box.

GINNY struggles over to CS with the remainder of their crap

CHIARA And if we bought boxed wine it would be a boxed wine table box.

GINNY finally settles on the floor next to her friend, and opens up the table-box. She pulls out a bottle of bubbly. CHIARA gasps

CHIARA A boxed wine box wine table box!

GINNY I'll box you in a minute. Go find some glasses.

CHIARA sighs dramatically and exits SR. GINNY folds the boxed-wine-box-wine-table-box back up. She pulls out a sheet from a black binbag. Upon unfolding it, it's full of holes.

GINNY straight from the Shite Company home furnishings.

She sighs and lays the make-shift tablecloth over the box. CHIARA re-enters, clinking the glasses.

CHIARA I was thinking, now that we're free, we can get anything we want! Oh, we could *decorate* /

GINNY I am not letting you paint 'live laugh love' on the bathroom tiles /

CHIARA / We'd need a sofa, of course. I can't really afford new right now /

GINNY / There will be absolutely no murals about learning to dance in the rain in this flat

CHIARA / But I'm sure we could pick one up from Shelter that isn't too crusty/

GINNY Better than sleeping on the ground

CHIARA / And, *oh*, we could get a dog!

GINNY We are not ready for a dog. You barely feed yourself.

CHIARA That's because you stopped making breakfast! /

GINNY *(While pouring CHIARA a generous helping of wine)* Because you said last time it was minging!

CHIARA / Man I would kill for a slice of black pudding right now. *(light hearted)* And I didn't say it was minging, I said it was you were hardly about to take the culinary world by storm and it hurt your precious little pride.

GINNY *(matching her theatrics)* It's not pride Chiara, it's the principle! You want something done your way, you can damn well do it yourself.

CHIARA Meanie. So that's a no to the dog, then, because of your unresolved commitment issues /

GINNY Oh, I love you too

CHIARA But I have a proposition for you. An offer you can't refuse.

GINNY I'm listening

GINNY fills her own glass.

CHIARA Ginny Brunton, would you do me the honour of... purchasing an air-fryer with me?

A moment

GINNY ... Only if you don't call it a stupid name.

CHIARA You drive a hard bargain.

GINNY hands a glass to Chiara, who raises it in appreciation.

CHIARA Deal.

The girls get comfy behind the boxed-wine-box-wine-table-box. GINNY raises her glass to clink Chiara's.

GINNY To new beginnings.

CHIARA To new beginnings.

Lights down.

Scene 11 - your local tesco

Lights up. GINNY is standing down centre stage and looking ahead at an invisible cashier. She has few groceries in her hand. Probably something with a yellow sticker. The rain overpowers the same, incessant radio music.

GINNY Hiya. Just these please.

a crack of thunder. GINNY looks to her left.

GINNY How much are your brollies?

A long silence. GINNY nods, resigned.

Fun fact: the cheapest umbrellas in a tesco express - if they have any at all - are £9, and they will definitely snap in the scottish wind, anyway. You're better off with a poncho for 3 quid. Or a bag for life for 30p. Or -

GINNY looks to her left again. The rain is somehow louder. Battering. Nobody says anything. She swallows.

GINNY ... D'y- (*crack*) Do you have any cardboard?

Lights down.

End of play.