GINGER & ROSA

A film by
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EXT. ARCHIVE FOOTAGE - DAY

The low rumble of an approaching aeroplane becomes louder and louder over the FRONT TITLES. A momentary silence is followed by the sound of a huge explosion.

An enormous mushroom cloud of dust rises into a fiery sky, followed by archive footage of the devastated city of Hiroshima after the nuclear bomb has fallen.

A caption fades up over the flattened, destroyed city:

Hiroshima, 1945.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

A young woman (NATALIE), lying in a stark, white hospital bed, is in the last stages of painful labour, about to give birth to her daughter, GINGER.

The caption changes to:


In the bed next to Natalie, another woman (ANOUSHKA) is also about to give birth to her daughter, ROSA. Anoushka reaches out towards Natalie. They hold hands across the gap between the beds.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Natalie’s husband (ROLAND) sits anxiously on a bench in a hospital waiting room. Another MAN (Anoushka’s husband) sits nearby. It’s been a long wait.

EXT. COURTYARD PLAYGROUND - DAY

Two small girls (GINGER and ROSA), now four years old, one red-haired and the other dark-haired, are holding hands as they swing back and forth on rusting swings in an austere playground, surrounded by shabby tenement buildings in East London.
Anoushka and Natalie are standing nearby. Anoushka looks tearful. This time it is Natalie who reaches out to comfort her friend.

**INT. BALCONY AND EXT. COURTYARD - DAY**

Rosa crouches on the balcony of an upper floor in the tenement buildings, staring through the railings at her father as he walks determinedly across the yard below, carrying a large kitbag.

He glances up, briefly, but continues to walk away.

**EXT. NATALIE’S GARDEN - DAY**

Roland throws little Ginger high into the air. She shrieks with pleasure and alarm as her red hair flies out around her.

**INT. BATHROOM (NATALIE’S HOUSE) - NIGHT**

Ginger - who is now a teenager - is wearing pyjamas and cleaning her teeth vigorously in front of the mirror in a large shabby bathroom.

A caption fades up:


The door is open onto the landing next to the bathroom and Ginger stops brushing her teeth to listen to a male voice coming from a radio in Natalie’s bedroom.

*RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)*

The Defence Department of the United States government has arrived at estimates of casualties should they and the Soviet Union adopt a counterforce strategy in the event of nuclear war.

(MORE)
The estimates are as follows: one hundred million dead in the US and one hundred and fifteen million dead in Europe, including twenty three million dead in Britain. Without any civil defence the counterforce strategy has the capacity to destroy all life in Western Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

NATALIE (O.S.)
It’s depressing. Turn it off, darling. I want to talk to you about the girls.

ROLAND (O.S.)
Alright. What about them?

Ginger creeps across the landing and peers through a gap in the doorway, listening intently as she watches her parents talk.

INT. NATALIE’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Natalie is lying in bed. Roland is sitting on the bed next to her, some books under his arm.

NATALIE
I think Rosa is a bad influence.

ROLAND
Meaning what, exactly?

NATALIE
Anoushka worries about her. She says she is disturbed.

Ginger suddenly steps forward into the open doorway.
GINGER
(hotly)
So would you be if you'd been told you're a failure when you're eleven years old.

ROLAND
- Yes, bloody eleven-plus exams -

NATALIE
(to Ginger)
- you did well, though -

ROLAND
- not that exams mean anything of real significance. You can’t measure intelligence.

GINGER
- Anyway, she's not disturbed. She's interesting.

Roland grins at Ginger.

GINGER (CONT’D)
And she's my best friend.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Rosa and Ginger are sitting on a long wooden bench under a shelter in a grim London park. Rosa is demonstrating to Ginger how to flirt and kiss with a boy.

ROSA
Close your eyes. Turn your head. Opposite way.

They angle their faces, awkwardly, at each other, before Ginger collapses into laughter. Then in a change of mood, they start a traditional girls’ clapping sequence, which gets faster and faster, their eyes shining with effort and excitement.
Rosa and Ginger are hanging out on a patch of wasteground near a corrugated iron fence. The rusty skeleton of a gas-works looms above them. It’s a scene of urban decay and destruction in the post-war years.

Rosa pulls two cigarettes out of a packet and puts them both in her mouth. Ginger strikes a match and lights them for her. Rosa hands one of them to Ginger. Ginger takes a puff but coughs and splutters and pulls a face of disgust.

ROSA
You’re not doing it right. Here, try again.

Ginger takes a drag and coughs again. Rosa laughs, wildly.

Ginger and Rosa are standing by a wall, necking with two long-haired young beatniks in a dark alleyway in London, just out of sight of a noisy pub. Ginger seems shy and tentative but Rosa eventually lies down in the shadows on the ground with the other boy and seems to be about to have uncomfortable-looking sex.

Ginger is trying to see what Rosa is doing. Rosa looks up at Ginger and their eyes meet. Rosa’s eyes are shining.

And then the two girls are on their feet, running away, hand in hand. They turn back to wave enthusiastically at the two beatniks who are shuffling off together in the opposite direction.

Ginger and Rosa creep along the hallway past the open living-room door where Natalie is sitting by the fire in her night-clothes. Roland is working at a desk at the other end of the room. The room is stark and barely furnished, some books and canvases stacked against the wall.

Natalie looks up, sees the girls and stands up, angrily.
NATALIE
Where the hell have you been?

GINGER
We were just, you know, roving about. Being free.

Ginger giggles and slides down to sit on the floor. Roland smiles to himself as he continues to work. Natalie shoots a worried look at him.

NATALIE
It's two in the morning. Roland, please. Say something.

ROLAND
Yes. Well, it is late. Indeed.

Ginger turns to Roland.

GINGER
You always stay up late.

ROLAND
True.

Ginger and Rosa glance at each other, giggling conspiratorially. Natalie looks at Rosa.

NATALIE
Anoushka must be crazed with worry.

ROSA
Doubtful.

NATALIE
Rosa...

Roland stops working, reluctantly, and looks up at the two girls.

ROLAND
Oh, come on. I suppose I'd better take you home, Rosa. Jesus. I should be working.
Ginger jumps up excitedly, and the girls skip out of the door, smiling happily. Ginger glances back momentarily and catches Natalie’s sad expression.

EXT. LONDON STREETS AND TUNNEL - NIGHT

The two girls sit side by side in the back seat of an old army jeep as Roland drives, scarily fast, the tyres screeching as they hurtle round corners.

He takes the girls on a joy-ride through a long, echoing tunnel, revelling in their laughter in the cold night air, as their long hair blows around their faces.

Roland grins delightedly and then accelerates as he watches the girls’ excited reactions in the rear-view mirror. His eyes briefly meet Rosa’s and she smiles, shyly.

Eventually the jeep squeals to a halt outside the tenement buildings. Rosa jumps out of the jeep and starts to walk away, jauntily.

GINGER
Tonight?

Rosa is caught in the jeep’s headlights as she turns back to Ginger.

ROSA
Today, actually.

GINGER
Good point.

ROSA
Bye, Ginger’s dad.

Roland frowns and peers out at her.

ROLAND
(pointedly)
It’s Roland. Actually.

Rosa smiles, wickedly.
INT. BATHROOM (NATALIE’S HOUSE) - DAY

Ginger and Rosa lie at either end of the bathtub in the draughty bathroom. They are wearing bras and reading girls’ comics: "Girl" and "Valentine".

ROSA
It says here that a girl's most important possession is a bubbly personality.

GINGER
Interesting.

Ginger pauses thoughtfully and lowers her comic to look at Rosa.

GINGER (CONT’D)
Do you think Simone de Beauvoir has a bubbly personality?

ROSA
Who?

Ginger covers her face with the comic.

GINGER (casually)
Oh, that French writer. She’s an existentialist.

ROSA
Maybe she hasn’t read “Girl”. It says here that boys don’t like girls who are too serious.

GINGER
Oh.

They sit quietly in the water as Ginger considers the implications of Rosa’s comment.

GINGER (CONT’D)
Well, even so, did I tell you I've decided to be a poet?
ROSA
I thought you were already.
Do you think they've shrunk enough yet?

They grip the sides of the bath and stand up, with difficulty, in the water, revealing sodden jeans clinging to their legs. Rosa starts to unbutton her jeans. Blue dye has seeped from her jeans onto her stomach. The two girls start giggling hysterically.

The door bursts open. It’s Roland. He stares briefly at the two girls, as Rosa looks at him, insolently.

ROLAND
Sorry!

Roland grins and then slams the door again.

EXT/INT. COASTAL ROAD AND CAR - DAY
Ginger and Rosa are standing side-by-side on a country road wearing their identical tight jeans and dufflecoats. They are hitchhiking. A car screeches to a halt, the car radio blaring out ‘Apache’ by The Shadows. The young DRIVER and his FRIEND are both wearing full teddy-boy regalia.

The girls run to the car and jump into the back seat. They look at each other with expressions of fear and excitement as the car screeches and veers round the bends in the wintry costal road near a forest of electricity pylons. The driver laughs maniacally as the girls scream and then drives even faster. When the car nearly goes off the road, he suddenly brakes.

Ginger grasps the door handle as the car squeals to a halt and the girls tumble out and run off across the shingle between the pylons.

EXT. BEACH - DAY
Ginger and Rosa are walking along a huge deserted beach, their arms around each others’ shoulders.
GINGER
I’ve been thinking.

ROSA
Unusual.

GINGER
Very funny. Listen.

ROSA
I’m listening.

GINGER
I’d prefer the world not to end, wouldn’t you?

ROSA
Probably. If I find true love.

The two girls sit down, side-by-side, on the end of a long wooden board-walk.

ROSA (CONT’D)
You know. The kind that lasts forever. If...

She pauses, with a worried expression.

GINGER AND ROSA
(simultaneously)
...if there is a forever.

They look at each other.

GINGER AND ROSA (CONT’D)
(simultaneously)
Good point.

Rosa and Ginger smile at each other, pleased at their complicity, then both turn and sit looking gloomily out to sea.
GINGER
But really Rosa...I think we should
do something. About the bomb. You
know, protest.

Rosa pauses before answering.

ROSA
I think we should pray.

She hesitates, briefly, then pulls out two lurid pink
plastic crucifixes. She hands one of them, shyly, to
Ginger.

GINGER
Oh...gosh...thank you...

This has come as a surprise. Ginger turns the crucifix
over, awkwardly, in her palm.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ginger and Rosa sit side-by-side in a pew in a huge,
echoing, gloomy church, fingerling the identical pink
crucifixes which are now hanging round their necks.

Rosa is gazing at the billowing incense being swung
rhythmically back and forth by the priest.

Ginger looks puzzled.

But Rosa looks increasingly rapturous.

EXT. BEACH SHELTER - DUSK

Rosa and Ginger are sitting huddled on a bench in a doublesided shelter by the windswept beach. A young tousle-haired
beatnik approaches and offers a cigarette to Rosa. She
glances at Ginger, then gets up and moves along the bench
to sit next to him.

After a while Rosa and the boy walk round to the other side
of the shelter and start necking, their figures just
visible through the scratched and misty glass.
Ginger reaches down and opens her duffle-bag, then sits perched on the bench reading intently and pointedly to herself from a battered edition of T.S. Eliot's poems.

EXT. ROADSIDE - EVENING

Ginger and Rosa stand by the edge of a road on the way back to London, their thumbs out, hitchhiking.

After a few cars have sped by, ignoring them, a lorry squeals to a halt.

INT. LORRY - NIGHT

Ginger and Rosa sit on the squeaky leather seat next to the driver as the lorry trundles along the dark country roads.

Ginger falls asleep on Rosa’s shoulder. Rosa’s eyes close, sleepily, as the lorry rumbles through the night.

INT. NATALIE’S KITCHEN - DAY

Ginger is carefully ironing Rosa’s hair on an ironing board. The iron goes dangerously close to Rosa’s head and she looks up at Ginger, warily. Ginger combs gently through Rosa’s hair with her fingers.

INT. GINGER’S BEDROOM - DAY

Rosa lies on Ginger’s bed as Ginger puts a record on her record player. It’s “Take Five” played by Dave Brubeck. When Ginger glances around, Rosa has disappeared.

GINGER
Rosa?

After a moment Rosa reappears with one of Natalie’s blouses. She pulls it tightly round her body, admiring herself in the mirror.

GINGER (CONT’D)
Isn’t that mum’s?
ROSA

So?

Ginger stares at Rosa, puzzled, then flops down on the bed as Rosa preens and poses, gazing at her reflection. Eventually Rosa shrugs and throws off the blouse. The two girls change into their identical sloppy sweaters once more and stare at themselves in the mirror before smiling at each other, happily.

INT. NATALIE’S KITCHEN – NIGHT

Ginger and Rosa appear at the door of the kitchen. They are wearing their dufflecoats on top of their identical sweaters.

Natalie is sitting at the kitchen table with her friend Mark and Anoushka. They are each clasping a mug of tea, and seem to be in the middle of a hushed, intimate conversation, which stops abruptly as the girls appear.

ANOUSHKA
Where are you two going?

GINGER
To a meeting.

MARK
What kind of meeting?

GINGER
A meeting to ban the bomb. It’s called the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. YCND.

NATALIE
What’s the Y for?

GINGER AND ROSA
(simultaneously)
Young.
MARK
Well, Good for you two girls.
That’s marvellous. Don’t you think so, Nat?

NATALIE
Roland would be pleased...

ANOUSHKA
Just don’t get home too late, Rosa.
You’ve got to help me with the little ones -

ROSA
- I haven’t got to do anything.

ANOUSHKA
(angrily)
God, if there was a man around -

ROSA
- you’d be lucky -

ANOUSHKA
(furious)
Rosa!

Natalie glances at Anoushka.

NATALIE
Speaking of which, when was the last time you did any washing up, Ginger?

GINGER
But I’ve hardly been here for any meals!

NATALIE
Well, exactly. Where have you been? I had a letter from your school. It was embarrassing.

GINGER
(sarcastically)
Embarrassing. How terrible.

(MORE)
Especially given that the world might blow up, which none of you seem to understand.

MARK
      (gently)
Are you quite sure about that, darling?

GINGER
Oh, Mark, I didn’t mean you.

Mark smiles fondly at Ginger.

INT. CHURCH HALL - NIGHT

Ginger and Rosa are sitting in the back row at the meeting, being held in a bleak church hall. The meeting is sparsely populated. A young, intense, bearded man, TONY, is standing at the front, talking to the group.

TONY
The question is what to do. Or, as Engels puts it: “What is to be done?” Nuclear weapons do not protect us. They threaten our very existence. The missiles on bases here in Britain are hundreds of times more powerful than those used in Hiroshima. We have to take direct action. We must do everything we can to stop this madness.

Rosa glances at Ginger, who is listening intently.

YOUNG MAN
The government can’t ignore it if there are enough people on the streets.

TONY
So how do we get people out? How do we get people out of their homes and marching with us?
Tony pauses and scans the hall, then points at Ginger and Rosa.

TONY (CONT’D)
You back there. Well, girls, I haven’t seen you here before. What do you say? Do you think the politicians will listen to us?

Rosa looks down, hiding behind her hair. Ginger looks tongue-tied and embarrassed.

INT. GINGER’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Ginger lies in bed, writing in a small notebook. A large ‘Ban the Bomb’ sign hangs on the wall behind her.

GINGER
(murmuring to herself)
In my dream I heard the warning:
You have three minutes left, it said...
Tell the others...tell the others now...

Ginger stops writing and listens to Natalie and Roland who are just audible, arguing somewhere downstairs in the house.

NATALIE (O.S.)
How could I not suspect something? You’re never here!

ROLAND (O.S.)
I’m here now.

Roland’s voice is low and measured and all the more terrible for it. Ginger continues writing, attempting to stay focussed.

GINGER
Tell the others now, this morning...
ROLAND (O.S.)
For God’s sake, Natalie. That’s enough.

NATALIE (O.S.)
Don’t tell me what’s enough!

ROLAND (O.S.)
(shouting)
Oh, God, Natalie!

A door slams, violently. Ginger pauses, then continues writing, searching for the words.

GINGER
(murmuring to herself)
Or you soon... Or you soon will all be dead.

Ginger pauses again, then suddenly closes her notebook, puts it down next to her pillow and turns over to face the wall.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Roland has taken Ginger out to eat in a traditional pie and mash cafe.

They sit opposite each other at an oil-clothed table as he tucks into a steak-and-kidney pie and Ginger picks at her mashed potato.

Roland suddenly notices the crucifix hanging round Ginger’s neck and puts down his fork.

ROLAND
What on earth is that crucifix doing round your neck?

GINGER
Rosa and I went to church.

ROLAND
Church?
GINGER
Once. She wanted me to.

ROLAND
You do realise that God is an invention?

GINGER
Sort of...

ROLAND
Every man needs to struggle for his own authority, Ginger. For autonomous thought. Which is why you mustn’t listen to a word I say.

Ginger brightens.

GINGER
Well, exactly. I autonomously decided to go to church with Rosa, to see what it’s like.

Roland laughs affectionately and reaches over to examine the plastic crucifix more closely.

ROLAND
It’s a bit kitsch...

GINGER
(quickly)
Rosa gave it to me.

ROLAND
Did she, now. What was it like?

GINGER
It was sort of exciting. Like going to the theatre. Then we went to a meeting.

Roland pauses.

ROLAND
What kind of meeting?
GINGER
(proudly)
Ban the Bomb.

Roland smiles.

ROLAND
That’s my girl. You’re an activist, not a supplicant.

Ginger glows, looking admiringly at her father, clearly flattered by his praise. She hesitates, then starts to speak, tentatively.

GINGER
But don’t you think... you know... people need something to believe about what happens when you die...

ROLAND
The concept of life after death is a superstition, designed to keep people satisfied with their limited existence in the present. The only life is the one we have now, which is why we must seize it and live while we have the chance.

GINGER
Good point.

Roland smiles affectionately at Ginger and then starts eating again, voraciously. Ginger picks up her fork and follows his lead, munching her food with relish.

INT. GINGER’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ginger lies alone in bed, holding her teddy bears, the huge “Ban The Bomb” sign on the wall above her. She is reading her usual battered copy of poems by T.S. Eliot, but puts the book down on her chest as she hears the sound of an accordion playing somewhere downstairs in the house.

Ginger closes her book, with a little sigh, and gets out of the bed.
Ginger creeps down the stairs in the darkness and then sits down on one of the steps. She watches Natalie, who is sitting by the dying embers of a fire in the living room, playing her accordion and singing "The Man I Love", quietly and mournfully to herself.

NATALIE
"Maybe I’ll meet him Sunday,
Maybe Monday, maybe not.
Still I’m sure I’ll meet him one day,
Maybe Tuesday will be my good news day.
We’ll build a little home,
Just meant for two,
From which I’ll never roam,
Who would? Would you?"

Ginger moves slightly and the stair creaks. Natalie stops playing and looks up.

GINGER
(gently)
Where’s Roland?

NATALIE
I don’t know. I never seem to know where he is anymore.

Ginger stares at her, sadly.

GINGER
Want a cup of tea, Mum?

NATALIE
Thank you, darling.
She lights the gas with a match then turns the knob and watches the small circle of flames rise and fall.

Then she sits on a stool by the stove and listens to the mournful sound of the accordion in the distance.

This looks like it’s happened before.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD – DAY

Ginger and Rosa, dressed identically, are walking side by side in the “Young CND” contingent of a very long column of marching protesters.

Young mothers push small children in prams. Older men with grizzled beards, wearing knitted socks with their leather sandals, march determinedly, carrying “Ban the Bomb” placards. Young students march and talk, animatedly. It’s all very friendly, a mix of ages and types united in their beliefs.

TONY (the bearded youth from the meeting) suddenly appears behind Ginger and playfully gives her a squeeze. She blushes as he smiles at her, warmly, before joining his friends at the head of their contingent.

The air fills with the distant sound of soaring jazz riffs, coming nearer. An open jeep approaches, some young male jazz musicians perched on the back, playing their hearts out.

Roland is driving the jeep, a YOUNG WOMAN with long blonde hair by his side.

Ginger turns and waves at her father enthusiastically. She manages to catch his eye and he grins and waves happily back at her, but drives on without slowing down.

ROSA
Who’s that with Roland?

GINGER
The jazz band?
ROSA
No, the girl. The blonde one
sitting next to him.

GINGER
Oh, a student, or something.

Ginger pauses.

GINGER (CONT’D)
Mum’s not too happy about it at the
moment.

Rosa turns and stares after Roland, admiringly, fingerling
her crucifix.

INT. MARK’S KITCHEN - DAY

Ginger sits unhappily at a scrubbed table in a very tidy,
beautifully-decorated kitchen, furnished with an oak
dresser, a motley collection of antique chairs, a polished
stove and small framed prints on the wall. A boiled egg in
an egg cup and some toasted ‘soldiers’ have been placed on
the table in front of her, but Ginger sits, motionless,
staring down at the plate.

Mark stands watching Ginger with a kindly expression.

MARK
You could consider eating it,
Ginger.

Mark pauses, then sits down next to her at the table.

MARK (CONT’D)
How is school by the way? Or are
you still not bothering with that
very much at the moment?

GINGER
Is that why you asked me round? Did
Mum ask you to talk to me?
MARK
Don’t be silly. We always love seeing you. And besides, I thought you might like to meet Bella.

Mark’s partner, who is also called Mark, and is known to their friends as ‘MARK TWO’ lurches into the kitchen clutching his sides and laughing silently. He speaks with an American accent.

MARK TWO
(whispering hysterically)
She asked for dish soap!

GINGER
What’s dish soap?

MARK
That’s American for washing up liquid, Ginger.

MARK TWO
Bella washes her hair with dish soap!

MARK
(in a stage whisper)
That’s because she’s from New York, you see.

MARK TWO
Don’t listen to him. That’s got nothing to do with it.

MARK
I’m teasing, I’m teasing.

Mark Two kisses Mark lightly on the cheek, before hurrying back out of the kitchen, still chuckling.

MARK TWO
Coming!

Ginger smiles and starts to dip the ‘soldiers’ into the egg yolk. Mark smiles, approvingly.
MARK
There you are. Good girl.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

The two Marks, Ginger and BELLA, are walking amongst trees on Hampstead Heath. Bella is clutching a bulging, heavy-looking briefcase close to her body.

BELLA
So much nature. Right in the city.
So civilised.

MARK TWO
The English need their parks so that they can get away from each other. It must be the pressure of being so nice. Even the Ban The Bomb march was polite, Bella.

Ginger stops in her tracks.

GINGER
Were you there too?

MARK
Of course we were!

GINGER
I didn’t see you.

MARK
There were so many people, darling.

MARK TWO
We were up at the front. It was led by a vicar, Ginger. A vicar!

MARK
A canon, actually.

BELLA
Oh, a vicar with a cannon?
They all laugh.

MARK

Yes, Canon Collins. A worthy Christian. A good man, actually, despite his beliefs.

Ginger suddenly runs ahead and does a cartwheel.

MARK (CONT’D)

Oh, bravo.

Ginger walks jauntily amongst this little group, looking suddenly more child-like as she revels in the presence of their easygoing friendship.

Bella drops back and strolls next to Ginger.

BELLA

So I gather from your two god-fathers here that you might be a militant, like me. Good for you, Ginger.

Ginger smiles shyly but happily and skips along by her side.

INT. NATALIE’S KITCHEN – NIGHT

Ginger and Roland are sitting at the kitchen table. It looks as though an effort has been made. Natalie is wearing a dress and a frilly apron. There is an embroidered tablecloth on the table and the room is candlelit.

Natalie turns her back and bends over to reach into the oven.

Roland lifts a candlestick and attempts to read a journal, peering exaggeratedly at the page. He glances conspiratorially at Ginger, who smiles back at him.

Natalie puts a pie-dish carefully down onto a mat on the table. Roland serves himself and Ginger and starts eating, abstractly.
Natalie stands watching him, the tension mounting.

NATALIE
Can't you thank me? Even one word?
I made you a pie! Your favourite.

Roland slowly puts down his fork, and sighs. He looks down at his plate before replying, quietly.

ROLAND
Yup. I noticed.

NATALIE
And?

ROLAND
Thanks.

There is an icy pause. Ginger looks down at her plate.

NATALIE
Is that it? Is that all you can say to me?

ROLAND
Thank you very much indeed. Is that what you want?

NATALIE
What’s wrong with wanting my cooking to be noticed?

ROLAND
Nothing. But I don’t believe this... performance...

He gestures at the kitchen, at the candle, and the frilly apron she is wearing over her dress.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
It’s just not you, Nat. So why don’t you come out with it?
NATALIE
Come out with what?

ROLAND
If you want to shame me, again,
with this display-

NATALIE
- but I didn’t say anything!

ROLAND
But you meant it. And as I tell my
students, just say what you mean.

Natalie turns away and pulls off her apron, furiously.

NATALIE
I’m not your student. I’m your
wife. Or have you forgotten?

ROLAND
The martyred wife finally comes out
with it.

NATALIE
With what?

ROLAND
The accusation.

NATALIE
Roland. I...Why do you?...

Natalie gives up and stares at him, speechless. Roland
looks up and sees her anguished, tearful expression. His
face softens and he gets up and wraps his arms round her,
tenderly.

Ginger’s head is lowered but she is watching them.

ROLAND
(tenderly)
Why do I what? Oh Nat.

For a moment Natalie melts into Roland’s embrace.
NATALIE
Why do you twist my words? You make everything seem as if it’s my fault... Why can’t you just be normal -

Roland pulls away from her, abruptly.

ROLAND
Normal? What the hell is normal?

He crosses the kitchen, flicks a switch, and the room is suddenly flooded with a harsh white light.

NATALIE
You know bloody well what I mean.

ROLAND
Natalie. Please. How can I enjoy eating in this atmosphere of resentment?

He sits down, heavily.

NATALIE
And how can I enjoy cooking when you just gobble it up -

ROLAND
- Oh for God’s sake. I’ve been working all day -

NATALIE
But I made it for you.

ROLAND
Emotional blackmail, again.

Natalie reaches for a handkerchief and blows her nose.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
If the transitory nature of cooking and eating offends you so much then why don’t you take up your painting again and make something for posterity?
NATALIE
(shouting)
With what? I'm scraping to pay the bills, with the money -

ROLAND
- yes - the money I earn -

NATALIE
- well it's not enough for paint -

ROLAND
(shouting)
- then get a job!

Roland stands up abruptly and starts to walk out of the room.

NATALIE
While you sod off to your bloody yacht -

ROLAND
(quietly)
- boat. It's a small boat -

NATALIE
- your bloody boat with some blonde student again, for all I know...

Roland marches off angrily up the stairs, slamming the door behind him. There is a long silence.

NATALIE (CONT’D)
(quietly)
Anyway, what kind of job could I get?

Natalie sits down at the table. Ginger stares unseeing at her untouched plate of food. They slowly turn to look at each other.
Ginger and Rosa sit side-by-side in their school uniforms on the swings in the familiar tenement courtyard where Rosa lives with her mother. A wooden roundabout is the only other piece of equipment on the tarmac. A few young children dash about in the background. Ginger looks sad.

GINGER
Roland’s moving out. They’re separating...

GINGER/ROSA
(simultaneously)
...again.

GINGER
Not that it’ll make any difference. He’s hardly ever at home anyway.

They swing back and forth, slowly.

ROSA
Well, at least you have a dad. Who takes you out and stuff.

Ginger turns and looks at Rosa.

GINGER
(gently)
I’m sure he wouldn’t mind if you came with me this weekend.

ROSA
You don’t want me tagging along with your beloved Dad.

GINGER
Don’t be silly.

Rosa brightens, visibly.

GINGER (CONT’D)
But anyway I have a Roland, actually. He won’t let me call him Dad.
ROSA
I know. You told me. Lots of times.

GINGER
(guiltily)
Did I?

Ginger is silenced, momentarily. She glances at Rosa’s profile.

GINGER (CONT’D)
Did I also tell you he says the word ‘dad’ makes him think of slippers by the fire and other bourgeois death-traps? He has a point, of course.

They both swing back and forth, rhythmically.

ROSA
What’s Natalie’s view of death-traps?

GINGER
Oh she just bursts into tears, as usual, when he says stuff like that. Which he then says is -

GINGER/ROSA
(simultaneously)
- emotional blackmail.

ANOUSHKA (V.O.)
Rosa!

They both look up at Anoushka, who is leaning over the balcony, several floors up.

ANOUSHKA
Rosa! Can you bring the girls up now?

The two girls sit and swing, silently. Rosa stubbornly ignores her mother. Anoushka gives up and disappears. Rosa suddenly gets up and walks over towards the roundabout. Ginger follows her.
ROSA
(decisively)
Our mothers are pathetic. They don’t believe in anything –

GINGER
- or do anything, more to the point.

They sit down on the roundabout. Ginger starts pushing it and it begins to rotate.

ROSA
Except moan about stuff.

GINGER
At least your mum has a job.

They are turning, faster and faster.

ROSA
Cleaning? You call that a job? She hates it. She moans on and on...

GINGER
Roland really hates the moaning thing.

ROSA
It’s no wonder –

GINGER
- no wonder what?

ROSA
It’s no wonder they can’t keep their men.

Ginger looks questioningly at Rosa as the roundabout spins and the background behind them becomes a blur.

EXT. ROWING DINGHY - DUSK

Ginger and Rosa are sitting perched next to each other on a narrow wooden seat in a small rowing dinghy, gripping the sides of the boat.
Ginger's father is rowing, pulling the dinghy against the strong current.

Rosa stares at him admiringly. He catches her eye, briefly, and smiles.

The dinghy moves slowly across the darkening expanse of water towards a small sailing boat bobbing in the distance in the evening mist.

INT. MAIN BOAT CABIN - DUSK

Ginger and Rosa lower themselves down a steep ladder into a small cabin and sit side-by-side on a bunk as Ginger's father strikes a match and lights a lamp. It flares into life.

He hangs the light on a hook, and stares at it for a moment, before sprawling luxuriantly on the other bunk.

The girls sit wide-eyed in the flickering shadows; Rosa with admiration, Ginger with a nameless anxiety.

Roland looks lovingly around the cabin.

ROLAND

What could be better than this? Isn't she marvellous? Am I right, girls?

Ginger nods mutely.

ROSA

(softly)

It's lovely. It's so romantic.

ROLAND

Indeed. There is poetry in small spaces, isn't there, Rosa?

He lies there, lost in thought, as the waves lap against the hull of the boat.
ROLAND (CONT’D)
Confine ment can be utterly beautiful, but only when it’s a matter of choice.

ROSA
(quietly)
What do you mean?

ROLAND
What I mean is that a prison cell, on the contrary, is the ugliest expression of minimalism.

Rosa stares at him. He looks up and meets her gaze.

ROSA
It must have been really terrible.
Ginger told me about it...

Roland glances questioningly at Ginger, who looks down at her hands.

ROLAND
Did she?

ROSA
We tell each other everything.

ROLAND
(lightly)
I’ve nothing to hide.

The girls sit silently as Roland gazes up at the roof of the cabin.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
Prison was pretty brutal. First they strip you of your clothes. Then, if you dare to protest, they strip you of all human contact.

Roland turns his head, slowly, and looks at Rosa, as if he is looking through her. She returns his gaze, intently.
ROLAND (CONT'D)

But the worst thing about solitary confinement, Rosa, is not that they make you feel like an abandoned child, but that you start to doubt your beliefs.

Rosa's eyes fill with tears.

ROSA

I understand.

Roland suddenly focuses on Rosa, gazing at her thoughtfully and tenderly.

Ginger sits rigidly still, glancing anxiously from one to the other.

INT. SMALL BOAT CABIN - NIGHT

Ginger and Rosa lie silently in two narrow bunks in the tiny cramped secondary cabin in the prow of the boat. Rosa is gazing into the darkness while Ginger listens to Roland fiddling with the controls of a short-wave radio in the main cabin.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The Soviet Defence Minister said today that their missiles could, with one blow, wipe off the face of the earth the industrial centres of the United States. The British government has announced that nuclear missiles located on Royal Airforce bases in the United Kingdom are capable of the ultimate retaliation against any Soviet attack.

GINGER

(whispering)
Did you hear that?

ROSA

What?
GINGER

About the missiles.

Ginger watches Rosa's profile in the dark, etched by the moonlight streaking in through a porthole. Rosa's eyes are gleaming.

Then Roland re-tunes the radio to a classical music programme. Schubert's 'Fantasie' (a piano duet) is playing. After a while the music is joined by the sound of Roland softly weeping.

Rosa turns her head towards Ginger, questioningly.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Oh, he always does that. Especially with Schubert.

Rosa sits up quietly, and presses her eye to a crack in the door to the main cabin.

She stares at Roland, mesmerised, as he sits with his head in his hands, softly weeping.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Ginger is standing by a table in a chemistry lab.

She adds a few drops of water through a pipette into a flask, which creates a sudden small but dramatic explosion.

Ginger gazes at the flames, then something catches her eye. She stands up straight, suddenly, as she catches sight of Natalie approaching the school gates and walking determinedly through them.

She peers out of the window as Natalie walks across the tarmac and disappears into the school building.

INT. COFFEE BAR - DAY

Rosa and Ginger sit opposite each other at a formica table in a coffee-bar in Soho; a cup of coffee in front of each of them.
Rosa is chewing a pencil as she tries to compose a letter on a small pad of pale-blue notepaper.

ROSA
What do you think I should say?

GINGER
Who to?

ROSA
Roland.

Ginger looks startled.

GINGER
Why are you writing to Roland?

ROSA
Well, I want to tell him that I understand him. You know, like sometimes in your soul you feel... well... someone else's pain.

Rosa stares down at the blank paper, oblivious of Ginger’s facial expression.

ROSA (CONT'D)
But I can't decide whether to start with 'Dear Roland' or 'Dearest Roland'. What do you think?

Ginger's mouth moves but she can't speak.

She gets up abruptly, and turns away to put a coin in the jukebox. She chooses Little Richard singing “Tutti Frutti”. She leans against the jukebox and feels its rhythmic, pulsating vibrations with her fingertips.

A young MAN comes and stands nearby, watching her.

MAN
Fancy a drink?
INT. GINGER’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ginger leans over the edge of the bed and vomits onto the floor. Natalie suddenly appears in the doorway.

NATALIE
Oh, Ginger. You and Rosa...

Ginger screams at her, between retching.

GINGER
Go away! You don't understand!

Ginger moans. Natalie approaches the bed.

NATALIE
Ginger...

GINGER
You came to my school! I saw you! My teacher told me you said there should be more so-called domestic science lessons.

NATALIE
Is that what this is all about?

GINGER
How could you? You want me to learn housework. At school.

Natalie sits down on the bed next to Ginger.

NATALIE
(heatedly)
Listen, Ginger. When I had you I was just a teenager. A teenager. I didn't know how to boil a bloody egg. Roland never lifted a finger to help with anything.

GINGER
That's not my fault!

NATALIE
Listen to me.
Natalie puts her hand gently on Ginger’s shoulder.

Natalie (cont’d) (softly)
I just don’t want you to struggle
like I did.

Ginger (screaming at her)
But I’m never going to have any
babies! Never! I don’t want to be
like you! So bugger off!

Natalie stares down at Ginger’s contorted face, as her own
face drains of colour.

Natalie
You and Rosa are turning into
little sluts.

Natalie gets up and turns to leave the room.

Ginger
Anyway, I’m going to go and live
with Roland!

Natalie stops in her tracks in the doorway.

Natalie (quietly)
What are you talking about?

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ginger walks up to the entrance of a dark, deserted-looking
building. She rings the bell.

After a long wait the door is opened by a tall, elegant
man, Roger.

Roger
Hello.

Ginger
Is Roland in at all?
INT. HOUSE - ROLAND'S ROOM - DAY

Ginger follows Roger up the stairs towards the sound of a "roneo" machine which is rhythmically churning out duplicated pages.

Roger ushers Ginger into Roland's room - a sparsely furnished attic space containing a mattress on the floor, a desk, some piles of books and the Roneo machine, which Roland is operating.

ROGER
Visitor, Roland!

Roland turns around, with an expression of surprise.

He switches off the machine as Ginger approaches and embraces her, warmly. Roger disappears back down the stairs.

ROLAND
What a surprise!
Is everything alright?

GINGER
Oh yes, absolutely.

She fidgets. Roland looks slightly tense, lost for words.

ROLAND
Is Nat doing alright?
Not too many scenes, or anything?

GINGER
Not too many.

ROLAND
Good. I'll put the kettle on.

He disappears for a moment and Ginger stands, gazing round the room. Roland comes back and pulls out the chair next to his desk.
ROLAND (CONT'D)
Here, have a seat.

She sits down. Roland perches on the edge of his desk and looks down at Ginger. There is an awkward silence.

GINGER
The thing is, I was wondering...

ROLAND
Yes?

GINGER
If, for example, there was any room, I mean - I don’t know, it may not be feasible at all - but...

She trails off, looking at Roland, hopefully.

ROLAND
Room?

GINGER
Here.

Roland looks momentarily shocked.

ROLAND
Well. Jesus, Ginger. It’s a bit ...you, here?

Roland’s face softens. He looks touched.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
I supposed I could ask Roger...but look. You do realise, of course, I’m working more-or-less non-stop?

Ginger nods, mutely.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
And that this is a completely unsuitable environment for you in every possible respect?

GINGER
Absolutely.
Ginger beams, delightedly. Roland looks at her affectionately, ruffles her hair and laughs. A flicker of sadness, or perhaps guilt, flashes across Ginger’s face.

INT. MARK’S KITCHEN - DAY

Ginger looks tearful as she pulls off her coat and sits down at the kitchen table with the two Marks.

MARK
Are you quite sure this move is a wise idea, Ginger?

Ginger turns to Mark Two.

GINGER
How old were you when you left home, Mark Two?

MARK TWO
I was about your age. I had to go, my mother was an absolute monster.

Ginger turns tearfully and triumphantly to Mark One.

GINGER
You see?

MARK
Nat is not a monster.

GINGER
Not to you.

MARK
Anyway Mark, your mother was in fact, as I understand, not a monster but a gangster.

Mark Two laughs.

MARK TWO
Yes, yes!
GINGER

(quietly)
Was she a happy gangster?

Both Marks fall silent. Bella quietly appears in the doorway behind Ginger, clutching her bulging briefcase. Bella is about to greet Ginger but Mark silences her with a small gesture. They all turn to study Ginger, kindly.

MARK
Nat is unhappy, darling. But it's not because of you.

Ginger is silent for a moment.

GINGER

(softly)
But was she always unhappy? You know, when she was my age? You knew her then.

MARK
I did. Yes.

GINGER
Did she cry all the time before she had me?

MARK
She was troubled darling. But then, we were all troubled. It was wartime.

MARK TWO
It must have been an absolute nightmare. Bombs falling all the time everywhere. Nothing was secure. Nothing.

GINGER
But what's the difference? We could all die tomorrow.

Bella nods.
BELLA  
We could, Ginger. For sure. We could.

Mark Two glares at Bella.

MARK TWO  
Bella!

BELLA  
She’s right. It is getting serious.

Ginger turns to face Bella.

GINGER  
But I don’t want to die! I want to grow up and do things!

The two Marks gaze at Ginger, lovingly.

MARK TWO  
And you will honey, you will.

MARK  
My darling Ginger...can't you be a girl for a moment or two longer? You'll be a woman soon enough.

EXT. WASTEGROUND – DAY  
Rosa and Ginger are hanging out near a smouldering fire amongst the bricks and rubble in the wasteground. Rosa sits on a rickety chair, smoking a cigarette and gazing into the fire while Ginger hovers nearby.

Small children are running about, playing and shouting as they throw stones and set fire to broken furniture.

ROSA  
(dreamily)  
Roland replied to my letter.

GINGER  
(quietly)  
Did he? What did he say?
ROSA
He said he was very touched. He has such deep feelings. Such *fierce* feelings.

GINGER
I know.

ROSA
And he’s a pacifist.

GINGER
I *know*.


ROSA
Well, I think it’s really noble. It’s evil to kill.

GINGER
Well *exactly*.

ROSA
It’s one of the ten commandments.

GINGER
Though shalt not, etcetera, etcetera.

ROSA
You sound a bit cynical.

GINGER
Absolutely not. But I don’t need a *commandment* to work that one out. I think there are times for *action*, to stop total death.

Ginger walks away angrily through the billowing smoke. It looks like a war-zone. Rosa gets up slowly and follows her. Ginger turns back to Rosa and speaks heatedly.
GINGER (CONT’D)
Look, Rosa, I totally admire my father in every way, but I’m just not sure, is it really so noble to decide not to fight someone like Hitler? Mark says —

ROSA
- you’re always quoting Mark —

GINGER
- and you’re always quoting Roland these days. Mark told me he chose not to fight in the war, because he didn’t want to kill anybody. He was an ambulance driver instead.

ROSA
But Roland was in prison. For being a conscientious objector.

Ginger suddenly looks very angry.

GINGER
I know. He’s my father. And I’m going to go and live with him starting this week.

ROSA
And I’m going sailing with him next weekend. Do you want to come? Actually, he thought you should, probably.

GINGER
What do you mean, should?

Ginger stares at Rosa, coldly, trembling slightly.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Ginger is following Roland up the stairs into a small room across the landing from his attic space.

The room is extremely small and is piled high with boxes and a clutter of old furniture.
It has been furnished austerely with a narrow bed. A bare light-bulb dangles from the ceiling.

Ginger stands holding a small record-player in one hand and a basket with a few possessions in the other.

ROLAND
(grinning)
One of the best rooms in the house. Small, but perfectly formed. Happy?

Ginger smiles brightly - perhaps too brightly - and nods her head vigorously.

Roland leaves the room. Ginger puts her teddy-bears down on the bed, plugs her record-player into a socket dangling from the wall, and takes a record out of her basket. She lowers the needle carefully onto the record.

It's Sidney Bechet playing 'Petite Fleur'.

She sits down on the bed pulling her dufflecoat tightly around her, and looks around the room as the music soars heartbreakingly.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

Ginger, Rosa and Roland are sitting in the cockpit of his boat, sailing on the open sea.

Rosa glances at Ginger and then moves closer to Roland, who guides her hand onto the tiller. They whisper to each other, intimately.

Ginger stares out at the sea, then leans out and dangles her head in the rushing water. Then she gets up and starts to edge along the deck. She eventually reaches the prow of the boat as it plunges up and down through the waves.

She sits there, trembling, as wind lashes her face and body.

Behind her, Roland and Rosa are oblivious of everything except each other; high, delirious with the danger of their flirtation.
Ginger lies in her sleeping bag in the tiny cabin in the prow of the boat, clutching her paperback copy of T.S. Eliot. The other bunk is empty.

She reads the same phrase over and over to herself:

GINGER
(muttering)

“This is how the world ends, this is how the world ends... not with a bang... not with a bang...”

There is a low murmur of voices in the main cabin.

Then silence.

Some giggling.

Then a low masculine moan.

Ginger grabs the pillow and desperately covers her ears with it as the moans are joined by high, female yelping noises.

FADE TO BLACK.

Ginger sits silently at the table at a small dinner party held by the two Marks. Natalie sits opposite her and has clearly made an effort to dress up for the occasion. Bella sits clutching her bulging briefcase on her lap, which is making it awkward to reach forward to sip her soup.

Another MALE GUEST notices and gestures questioningly at Mark.

MARK
Bella will not be parted from her work in progress. Under any circumstances.

Bella nods, affirmatively.
BELLA
Well, there are certain things that one must hold on to.

MARK TWO
Don't you think there's occasionally an argument for letting go dear?

Bella turns towards Ginger.

BELLA
Don't be fooled by such phoney modernity, Ginger. "Letting-go". Please.

Ginger tries to smile.

MARK TWO
(gently)
Surely even a poetess should be able to enjoy her soup, especially when it’s been made by Mark.

BELLA
But one is not a poet-ess, Mark Two, just as one is not a doctor-ess, or a physicist-ess.

Ginger looks up at Bella, intrigued.

DINNER GUEST
Here we go.

BELLA
No, this is not a matter of principle, but one of precise language. Names are word-objects and must be given due respect.

MARK TWO
That’s an interesting concept, Bella.

Bella turns to Ginger.
BELLA
By the way, I'm curious. I understand why you have this adorable nickname, Ginger, but what's the name on your birth certificate?

Ginger glances anxiously at Natalie, who looks down at her plate.

There is a long silence as Ginger hesitates, awkwardly. She turns to Mark for help. He smiles at her, encouragingly.

GINGER
(shyly)
My father named me... Africa...

BELLA
Africa! Any particular reason?

GINGER
(quietly)
He said it was in honour of Freud's theory of the dark continent of woman.

The other dinner guest lets out a guffaw, but is silenced by Mark, who makes a protective gesture.

BELLA
(muttering)
Oh dear, Freud.

DINNER GUEST
Is this the famous Roland who holds us all in his theoretical spell?

Mark Two kicks him, vigorously, under the table. Natalie gets up quietly from the table and disappears out of the room. There is an awkward pause in the conversation.

BELLA
Well let’s just stick with Ginger then, shall we?

(MORE)
BELLA (CONT'D)
Although you could always move on to Scarlet, in due time. As in flame, not O'Hara. That’s a good name for an activist. How’s all that going, by the way?

Ginger brightens, for the first time in the conversation.

GINGER
I’m thinking of joining the Committee of 100, actually. I agree with Bertrand Russell.

BELLA
And what do you agree with?

GINGER
About direct action. He says “the danger of nuclear war is too great for lawful protest”.

Mark gets up quietly from the table. He gestures to Mark Two, indicating that he is going off to check on Natalie.

BELLA
So you think marching is not enough?

GINGER
It may not be enough to save us. You know, from total extinction.

Bella looks at Ginger with interest. The others no longer know where to look.

INT. ROLAND’S KITCHEN - NIGHT
Ginger and Rosa are standing side by side in front of the sink in Roland’s untidy kitchen. They look stiff and ill at ease in each others’ presence in sharp contrast to the easy familiarity they once had.

Ginger pins a ban-the-bomb badge on her sweater and glances at Rosa’s outfit. The two girls are no longer wearing identical clothes.
Rosa is in a skirt and tight sweater, while Ginger is wearing jeans with her sloppy sweater, as usual. Rosa expertly applies dark make-up round her eyes.

There is an uncharacteristic silence between the two girls. The air is heavy with tension.

GINGER
(quietly)
Where are you going?

ROSA
To a restaurant. Where are you going?

GINGER
To a meeting.

ROSA
See you later, then.

GINGER’
(anxiously)
So you’re coming back here?

ROSA
Maybe.

They glance at each other, uneasily.

ROSA (CONT’D)
Do you want to try?

She hands Ginger her eye make-up, awkwardly, before turning and walking out of the room. Ginger holds the eye make-up and stares at herself in the mirror.

INT. CHURCH HALL - NIGHT

Ginger edges her way through a large crowd in the church hall. Tony is addressing the meeting.

TONY
This crisis is taking the world to the brink of catastrophe.

(MORE)
The Russians have put their missiles on Cuba, as we know, as part of the deadly battle with the United States for world supremacy that could end with no world at all. And what is our government doing about it?

Ginger pushes her way into a space where she can see Tony. She looks breathless, intense, and is wearing dark eye make-up for the first time.

TONY (CONT’D)
They tell people to put sandbags over their windows and stay indoors. Meanwhile, the government has built top secret bomb shelters underground. But only enough space for themselves.

Ginger suddenly raises her hand. Tony stops speaking and gestures towards her.

GINGER
Then who will be left for them to govern? Everyone else will be dead. Burnt to cinders. I think it’s immoral. You know, to use precise language.

Tony, nods at Ginger, affirmatively, as people in the crowd turn around to look at her, intrigued.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Tony and Ginger are standing at the bar in a noisy, crowded, smoke-filled pub amongst a lively, voluble group who have moved on after the meeting.

TONY
Let me guess. You shouldn’t really be in here. You’re still at school, aren’t you?
Ginger shrugs, nonchalantly.

GINGER
Some of the time.

TONY
Don’t worry, I’ll buy you a drink.

Tony gets the attention of the barman.

TONY (CONT’D)
A pint and... and a half, please.

GINGER
Thanks. Anyway, I learn more at these meetings than I ever do at school.

TONY
That goes without saying, I think.

The barman hands Tony the drinks. He gives the half-pint glass to Ginger.

GINGER
Thanks.

They edge their way through the crowd and sit down next to each other, pressed close in the crush.

GINGER (CONT’D)
Are you... Are you a student?

Tony smiles at Ginger.

TONY
I’m at art school. Do you draw?

GINGER
(hurriedly)
Oh yes, definitely. Sometimes.

She blushes, confused.

GINGER (CONT’D)
But I think I’m more of a poet, actually.
TONY

Are you?

GINGER

My mum used to be a painter, though.

TONY

What’s her name?

GINGER

Oh, you wouldn’t know it. She gave it up, you know, to...to have me. I live with my father now, anyway.

Tony looks a little surprised at this sudden rush of private information.

GINGER (CONT’D)

He’s a pacifist. He writes articles and stuff.

TONY

Anything I might have read?

GINGER

‘The Idea of Freedom’...

Tony looks impressed.

TONY

He’s your father?

Ginger nods and looks down, shyly, tongue-tied, and gulps at her beer. She grimaces at the bitter, unfamiliar taste.

INT. ROLAND’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ginger walks quietly up the stairs towards her attic room.

She can hear music and the sound of typing coming from Roland’s room. She tiptoes towards the door and peers through a crack.
Roland is sitting at his desk, concentrating on his writing. Rosa appears behind him, wraps her arms around him, sensuously, and kisses the top of his head. Roland looks up and smiles at Rosa.

Ginger creeps away into her room and shuts the door. She lies down on her bed, clutching her teddy-bears, and stares into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ROLAND’S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Roland is sitting drinking wine at the table in his kitchen. The bottle is nearly empty and Roland seems distinctly tipsy. The table is laid for supper, but it looks as if Roland has been waiting for a while.

Roger is standing nearby, clutching a wineglass.

Ginger and Rosa are hovering by the stove over a huge saucepan of spaghetti.

ROSA
Ginger. Try it. I think it might be done.

Ginger tests a strand of spaghetti, then drains the pan into a colander and carries it towards the table. Rosa follows with another pan and starts ladling sauce onto the spaghetti on the plates. She turns towards Roger.

ROSA (CONT’D)
Are you sure you don’t want any?

Roger smiles.

ROGER
I’m fine thank you. I’ve already eaten.

Roland eats a mouthful.
ROLAND
Not bad. Not bad.

Roger chortles as Roland leans back and catches his eye, smiling.

ROGER
Who’s the chef?

ROSA
We made it together. Me and Ginger.

ROLAND
Mutual aid. This is good.

ROGER
Communist cooks. How marvellous.

ROLAND
Anarchists, I think.

ROSA
It’s Italian actually. Bolognese.

Roger laughs.

ROGER
Oh, there’s lots of anarchists in Bologna.

Rosa suddenly looks confused. Is he making fun of her?

Roland takes another swig of red wine, stops eating, and looks Rosa up and down. He studies her legs, the fish-net stockings, the short skirt.

ROLAND
(quietly)
You are a thing of beauty, Rosa.

Ginger looks down at her plate.

Roland stands up, and walks over towards Rosa. Rosa falls into his arms and rests her head on his chest, blissfully.

Roger stares, fascinated, at Rosa’s ecstatic expression and then at Ginger’s lowered head.
When he sees that tears are rolling down Ginger’s face, Roger’s expression changes and he starts to walk away, quietly. He leaves the room.

Roland sits down again at the table opposite Ginger. He looks up at her face, which is etched with misery. Rosa stares at Ginger, guiltily. Roland’s face softens as he studies Ginger’s face.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
Oh, Ginger...

INT. NATALIE’S FRONT DOOR AND HALLWAY - DAY

Ginger runs up the steps towards Natalie’s front door and knocks, rapidly. Natalie opens the door and seems surprised to see Ginger standing there.

NATALIE
Ginger!

Ginger walks through the hallway into the living room, followed by Natalie. They stand, facing each other. There is an awkward silence. Then they both start talking at once.

GINGER
(hesitantly)
Look Mum...

NATALIE
(simultaneously)
How is everything?

They fall silent again. Then Ginger tries again.

GINGER
Can I stay the night tonight?

Natalie looks closely at Ginger, who avoids her gaze and wanders away across the room.
GINGER (CONT’D)
I'm not moving back or anything...

Ginger stares at an easel placed where Roland’s desk once stood. She looks at the painting on the easel, the brushes and the tubes of paint.

GINGER (CONT’D)
You’re painting again.

NATALIE
Yes, I am. And a bit of studying, now that...

Natalie hesitates and gestures around the empty house, then looks down at her hands.

Ginger pauses, before answering in a small voice.

GINGER
Well, that’s good.

NATALIE
But I could make up your bed...

She trails off, and glances at Ginger, noticing her hurt expression. Ginger turns away and looks out of the window to hide her face.

NATALIE (CONT’D)
Aren’t you happy at Roland’s? After going on and on about wanting to live with him instead of boring old me?

Ginger turns back to look at Natalie.

GINGER
I never said that. About being boring. But, of course I’m happy over there. It’s really interesting.
Ginger starts moving back towards the hallway. She puts on a bright expression.

GINGER (CONT’D)
It was just a thought, anyway.
Don’t bother with the bed or anything. I was just passing.

55 EXT. WASTEGROUND - DUSK.

Ginger sits alone, leaning against the corrugated iron fence which surrounds the wasteground. She doesn’t move. It’s an image of desolation.

56 INT. HOUSE - GINGER’S ROOM - NIGHT

Ginger is startled awake.

It is Roland, who has switched the light-bulb on in her room and is carrying a steaming bowl of stew towards her bed.

He holds it out, stiffly, defensively. Ginger blinks in the light.

ROLAND
I’ve made you some supper.

GINGER
(blearily)
What time is it?

ROLAND
About two. Or so. Somewhat late. But I cooked it. You said you were hungry.

GINGER
Well I was...

Roland looks hurt.

ROLAND
You’re not going to eat it?
Ginger sits up, hurriedly.

GINGER
Oh yes, yes, it looks delicious. I didn’t know you could cook.

ROLAND
Nor did I.

Roland sits down on the bed next to Ginger. He watches as she forces down the hot chunks of meat and potatoes.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
Look, I know it’s all got a bit complicated.

Ginger eats, avoiding his eyes.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
Perhaps I can never be the kind of father you really want. I’m not sure that I’m father material really.

Ginger looks up at him, wide-eyed, anxious.

GINGER
Oh, but you are. I never said I wanted anything different did I?

ROLAND
You’ve never really complained about anything. You’re not a moaner, as a rule, thank God. But look...

Roland gets up and crosses the tiny room. He leans back against the wall.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
Things have been difficult for me with Nat for a long time.

Ginger pauses between mouthfuls and glances at Roland's expression. Intense, preoccupied, preparing to say more.
ROLAND (CONT’D)
One day you will understand that
real love, when it comes, is like a
siren-call. One simply has no
choice. One must surrender.

Roland makes a gesture of submission.

Ginger isn’t eating anymore.

Roland comes back and sits down next to Ginger again. He
suddenly seems lost, uncharacteristically, for words.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
But listen... I am aware... that
perhaps, you might not be entirely
happy with the situation?

He looks at Ginger, his eyes brimming with anxiety. Ginger
gazes at him, fighting down her nameless feelings. Then she
seems to make a decision and speaks in a strong, reassuring
voice.

GINGER
How can anyone be happy? When you
know about the Bomb? Happiness is
not really an option, when you know
the world could be blown to pieces
any minute.

Roland visibly relaxes.

Ginger studies his face. Yes, she has pleased him.

ROLAND
You are a good girl, Ginger. A born
radical, unsurprisingly.

Ginger attempts a smile. Roland looks at Ginger, fondly,
gets up and walks over to the door. But he hesitates.
ROLAND (CONT’D)

Listen. It’s probably best not to
say anything to Nat about the times
with Rosa on the boat and so on.
I’m sure we agree on this.

Their eyes meet and each hurriedly looks away again.

INT. ROLAND’S KITCHEN - DAY

Ginger tiptoes across the kitchen towards the sink in the
early morning light. She looks exhausted. She starts
washing her face at the sink, scrubbing her skin violently
with a face-cloth. Roland coughs in the adjacent room and
switches on the radio. It’s a broadcast of President
Kennedy in the middle of making a speech.

Ginger freezes as she listens to his voice.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY (V.O.)
We will not prematurely or
unnecessarily risk the costs of
worldwide nuclear war in which even
the fruits of victory would be
ashes in our mouth. But neither
will we shrink from that risk at
any time it must be faced.

EXT. PARK GARDENS - DAY

Ginger sits on the long wooden bench she had once sat on
with Rosa to play clapping games. She looks dazed, frozen.
The ground is covered with snow.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY (V.O.) (CONT’D)
The cost of freedom is always high,
but Americans have always paid it.
And one path we shall never choose:
the path of surrender or
submission.
Ginger lies down on her back on the snowy ground, then reaches out and grasps a handful of ice and mud as if she is holding onto the earth itself.

INT. COFFEE BAR - EVENING

Ginger sits at a table at the usual coffee bar, still wearing her snow-soaked school uniform. She is concentrating intently as she writes in her notebook.

GINGER (V.O.)

(quietly)
I dreamed there was
A wall of flame.
I screamed because
I was to blame.
I looked around:
No night, no day,
No sky, no ground,
Nothing to say...

She suddenly looks up as the door opens and Rosa walks in. Ginger closes her notebook.

ROSA

(distractedly)
Sorry I’m late. We were talking and talking, I didn’t notice the time.
It was so...

GINGER (CONT’D)

(sarcastically)
- intense. Right.

Rosa avoids her gaze.

ROSA

Well it was. And I think... I think
Roland is wounded.

Ginger looks startled.

GINGER

What do you mean? What’s happened?
ROSA
Wounded *emotionally*, I mean. And *spiritually*. I think I can help him.

GINGER
(hotly)
Help him? How can you help him?

ROSA
We have a lot in common, you know.

GINGER
Such as?

ROSA
(defensively)
Such as the fact that his mother left him when he was little. You know, like my father left me.

GINGER
(sarcastically)
Oh. What a way to *bond*.

ROSA
(defiantly)
Well, yes, actually. We understand each other. He *confides* in me.

Ginger stares at Rosa, who looks away, uncomfortably. The two girls sit, silently, for a moment.

Then Rosa looks down at Ginger’s notebook.

ROSA (CONT’D)
Anyway, what are you writing?

GINGER
A poem. About the end of the world. Haven’t you heard?

ROSA
Heard what?
GINGER
About the crisis. Remember those missiles in Cuba?

ROSA
What missiles?

GINGER
Where have you been? Don’t you care about the future any more?

ROSA
Not everyone can save the whole world like you, Ginger. Some of us have to concentrate on just one person.

Ginger’s face is burning.

GINGER
You can’t save my dad!

ROSA
Why not?

GINGER
Who do you think you are?

ROSA
Who do you think you are? You can’t stop a war if there’s going to be one. It’s in the hands of God.

GINGER
That’s convenient.
Whose hands are you in then?

Rosa looks away, avoiding Ginger’s angry gaze.

GINGER (CONT’D)
Just wait, he’ll dump you too when you’re older.

ROSA
No he won’t.
GINGER
He will, he will.

There is another awkward silence. Then Rosa looks at Ginger, calmly.

ROSA
We didn’t want to tell you.

GINGER
Didn’t want to tell me what?

Ginger stares at Rosa, the colour draining from her face.

GINGER (CONT’D)
What? What didn’t you want to tell me?

ROSA
I think...I’m pregnant.

INT. HOUSE - GINGER’S ROOM - NIGHT

Ginger is lying fully dressed and rigidly still on her bed in her tiny room.

Wild, frantic jazz is playing extremely loud on her record player ("Bird Gets the Worm - Charlie Parker and Miles Davis).

Ginger stares, unseeing, towards the ceiling.

EXT. STREETS - DUSK

Ginger runs and runs, breathing hard, oblivious of her surroundings, which become a blur behind her desperate figure.

EXT. ROAD-SIDE - DUSK

Ginger stands restlessly by the side of the road, hitchhiking. A car draws up and she gets in, hurriedly. The car radio is playing.
Ginger stares out of the window, appearing more and more agitated as she listens to the broadcast.

**RADIO ANNOUNCER**
There are persistent reports that the American government is about to make a sensational move in the Cuba Crisis. Lord Bertrand Russell in a statement released today said: 'While life remains to us we will not cease to do what lies in our power to avert the greatest calamity that has ever threatened mankind'.

**EXT. AIRFORCE BASE - NIGHT**

Ginger runs through the middle of a chaotic crowd of demonstrators at an airforce base outside London. There are angry shouts and waves of chanting as the crowd surges up to the barbed wire enclosure.

**CROWD**
(chanting)
Block the gates! Block the gates!

This is a demonstration that looks as if it could become violent. The ominous sound of marching feet in the distance indicates the heavy presence of police. The headlights of military trucks shine blindingly onto the crowd as the vehicles attempt to push through towards the gates. Ginger looks frightened.

**CROWD (CONT’D)**
Ban the bomb! Ban the bomb!

**VOICE IN LOUD-HAILER**
Sit down. Everybody sit down.

Some people start sitting on the ground in front of the gates. Others trip over them as they run away. Ginger looks around, suddenly panicking, until she catches sight of a familiar face in the distance. It's Bella.
Ginger pushes her way through the crowd and sits down on the ground next to Bella.

**BELLA**

Ginger!

**GINGER**

Yes, it’s me.

Ginger looks wide-eyed with fear.

Bella looks round at the sound of shouts and scuffling in the distance. A long line of police is getting closer and closer, lifting up demonstrators and throwing them violently out of the path of the advancing trucks. Bella looks closely at Ginger.

**BELLA**

Are you alright? My God, you’re shivering. Here, lean on me. This could get rough, okay? Hold tight.

Bella puts her arms protectively around Ginger.

The line of police gets closer and closer and the noise and confusion increases. Ginger is dragged away roughly by two policemen.

**GINGER**

(screams)

Bella! Bella!

**BELLA**

Ginger!

Ginger is thrown into the back of a police van where she sits, shivering.

**INT. POLICE CELL - NIGHT**

Ginger lies on a bench in a tiny police cell, immobile, during a long, dark night.
INT. POLICE CELL - DAY

Ginger now sits leaning against the wall, in the cell in the morning light. A POLICE DOCTOR is in the cell with her.

POLICE DOCTOR
I am a doctor. You can speak freely to me.

Ginger doesn’t respond. She looks catatonic. The police doctor sighs.

POLICE DOCTOR (CONT’D)
I can’t help you if you won’t talk.
Do you understand? You seem depressed. Are you depressed?

Ginger shakes her head, but does not turn to look at him.

POLICE DOCTOR (CONT’D)
Then speak.

But Ginger remains silent.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Ginger is led out of her cell by a policewoman, along a long corridor towards a waiting area.

Mark and Mark Two, accompanied by a shaken-looking Bella, have come to bail out Ginger and take her home. They stand in the long neon-lit corridor with the police doctor. He looks from one to the other, puzzled.

POLICE DOCTOR
Are you the girl’s mother?

BELLA
No. No, I’m not.

POLICE DOCTOR
Where is the mother?
MARK
She doesn’t know her daughter is here.

POLICE DOCTOR
Then is one of you the girl’s father?

MARK
(firmly)
We are family friends. We’ve come to take her home.

Ginger sits on a bench, the policewoman standing beside her. Ginger is apparently oblivious of the small group standing talking together in the corridor.

POLICE DOCTOR
(softly)
She needs help. All this protesting is a front, you know. The girl may be seriously mentally ill.

BELLA
(muttering)
Oh for Christ’s sake.

MARK TWO
(angrily)
Maybe she is justifiably worried about a possible nuclear holocaust. Have you considered this?

Ginger sits motionless, unresponsive, staring into the distance.

INT. NATALIE’S LIVING ROOM – DAY

The two Marks and Bella are hovering near Ginger who is now sitting on a chair in Natalie’s living room. The room looks emptier and more bleak than ever.
Natalie is sitting on a chair opposite Ginger, watching her anxiously. Roland is sitting on the stairs in the hallway, making it clear that he is a reluctant participant in this group meeting.

NATALIE
(pleadingly)
Just talk to us darling. Come on.

Ginger sits, immobile, silent.

MARK
Did they hurt you? Ginger, you must tell us.

Natalie turns around and gestures at Roland to join them in the room. He stays put. She sighs and turns back towards Ginger.

NATALIE
(softly)
Please. Say something.

There is no response from Ginger.

NATALIE (CONT’D)
Okay, listen. I’ve asked Anoushka to bring Rosa over. I thought maybe you’d talk to her if you don’t want to talk to us?

Ginger’s face starts to move for the first time, in an expression of fear and disgust.

NATALIE (CONT’D)
Don’t make that face at me -

MARK
Nat, don’t -

NATALIE
- but I care about her...

Ginger suddenly breaks her silence and bursts out.
GINGER
You don’t care!

BELLA
Actually I think she does, sweetheart.

GINGER
She doesn’t care that the world might end!

NATALIE
Of course I do! I’m on your side, Ginger.

Ginger looks up at Natalie, her face agonised, contorted.

GINGER
You don’t know anything.

BELLA
What else doesn’t she know?

There is a long silence as Ginger struggles. Bella gazes at her, calmly.

BELLA (CONT’D)
Ginger?

Ginger looks up and meets the tenderness in Bella’s eyes.

GINGER
I can’t say it! I’ll explode if I say it.

BELLA
No you won’t, sugar. It’s alright. Speak it out.

GINGER
(screaming)
I can’t! I can’t!
We’re all going to die! You said it!
BELLA
No. I said we could. A nuclear war would probably obliterate us all if it happened. But that’s not what you mean is it?

Ginger shakes her head.

BELLA (CONT’D)
(firmly)
Then what is it that you can’t say?
Ginger? What can’t you say?

Ginger glances quickly at Roland, who is staring darkly at the floor in the hallway, almost out of earshot.

There is a moment, that seems forever, where all the adults - except Roland - stare at Ginger. Then the dam bursts and the tears stream down Ginger’s face.

GINGER
(sobbing, quietly)
That Roland is... is sleeping...with Rosa.

Natalie freezes. She stares at Ginger.

NATALIE
(quietly)
What? Rosa?

Natalie suddenly stumbles to her feet and rushes out towards Roland.

NATALIE (CONT’D)
Is it true?

Roland avoids her gaze and remains silent.

NATALIE (CONT’D)
I knew it. I knew something was going on - and you...

Bella has put her arms round Ginger and is comforting her.
GINGER
(sobbing quietly)
It’s not my fault!

BELLA
No, of course not.

Natalie suddenly loses control and lashes out at Roland.

NATALIE
(shouting)
How long has this been going on?

She hits him wildly, but he turns and holds her at arm’s length, gripping her wrists.

ROLAND
For God’s sake, Natalie...

NATALIE
Let go of me. Let go of me. I have to get hold of Anoushka! I don’t want to see Rosa! I don’t want to see that little bitch!

Natalie wrenches herself free and runs upstairs.

Ginger struggles to her feet, her face contorted.

GINGER
I’ve got to get out onto the streets - leaflets, got to give out leaflets -

MARK
- Not right now, darling -

GINGER
- Yes, now. Don’t you understand? The world may be about to end.

Ginger looks wildly around the room with an agonised expression. Bella puts her arms around her again and helps her to sit down. Mark turns to Roland.
MARK
(furiously)
Do you see what you’ve done?

Roland turns, slowly, to confront the group of angry faces glaring at him. He turns ashen, and looks as if he is facing a firing squad.

ROLAND
(quietly)
What right have you to judge me?
I’ve spent my whole life fighting against tyranny.

BELLA
(sarcastically)
Congratulations.

ROLAND
Not only the tyranny of government, but also the tyranny of the shoulds and oughts of so-called ‘normal’ family life -

BELLA
- Oh how fucking convenient.

Roland suddenly moves further into the room, staring coldly at Bella, who is standing protectively next to Ginger.

ROLAND
And who the fuck are you to lecture me? We’ve only just met. Not that it’s any of your business, but Natalie and I are separated, you know.

BELLA
You have a child together.

She indicates Ginger, whose tear-stained face is contorted with anxiety.
ROLAND
She’s no longer a child.

Ginger looks up slowly at Roland. He quickly looks away.

Mark takes a step towards Roland.

MARK
(angrily)
Ginger may be grown up enough to try to save us all from nuclear catastrophe, Roland, but she is also young enough to need some looking after.

Roland turns towards Mark.

ROLAND
Listen. Autonomous thought, personal truth; freedom of action...

Roland puts a hand on Mark’s arm.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
You believe in those don’t you, Mark?

MARK
Yes, of course I do but this is –

ROLAND
– well, these have been my guiding principles.

Roland stares at the Marks and at Bella, scanning their hostile faces.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
I deeply believe in them. And I was jailed for them.

Ginger looks up, slowly, and stares at Roland, with an agonised expression; a mix of fear, guilt and empathy.
There is a silence as Roland edges crosses the room and sits down opposite Ginger.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
(gently)
Don’t you see, Ginger, there would not even be the possibility of nuclear war - or any war - if millions of men had been prepared to stand up against authority, as I did, and refuse to join the army.

The doorbell rings. Nobody moves.

Roland moves closer to Ginger. She listens intently as he speaks to her, in his quiet, passionate, voice.

ROLAND (CONT'D)
Refuse to take orders.

The doorbell rings again, insistently.

The two Marks look at each other, questioningly.

ROLAND (CONT’D)
(urgently)
It’s mindless obedience that is the killer, Ginger. I’ve broken the rules - all the rules - because someone has to say no. Do you see?

Ginger?

The doorbell rings a third time and Mark starts to walk out of the room towards the front door.

Natalie runs down the stairs and blocks his path.

NATALIE
No! Please, Mark. No.

Mark grips Natalie firmly by the arm.

MARK
Come on, ducky. We’ve got to get this sorted out, once and for all. Come on.
Natalie seems to crumple at his reasonable, affectionate tone of voice, and they disappear into the hallway to answer the front door.

Roland reaches out and cautiously takes Ginger’s hand. His expression changes, as if he is really seeing her for the first time.

ROLAND
(whispering)
Oh Ginger...

Roland’s eyes start to brim with tears.

Natalie and Anoushka start talking in low, angry voices in the hallway as Rosa appears in the doorway to the living room. She stands nervously, looking at Roland’s back-view as he sits holding Ginger’s hand. Ginger looks up at Rosa. Their eyes meet.

NATALIE (V.O.)
She’s sleeping with Roland.

ANOUSHKA (V.O.)
Who?

NATALIE (V.O.)
Rosa.

ANOUSHKA (V.O.)
What? Rosa? With Roland?

Roland turns around and looks at Rosa standing just inside the room, then gets up and walks over to stand beside her. Anoushka marches into the room, white-faced. She stops, glances around, taking in the scene, then takes a step towards Rosa.

ANOUSHKA
Is it true? Rosa?

Rosa remains silent and looks away.

Natalie appears in the doorway and stares at Rosa. Rosa instinctively places a hand on her gently swelling belly.
Natalie sees the gesture and turns slowly to look at Ginger. Ginger nods, mutely. Natalie freezes, horrified, and then runs up the stairs, noisily. A door bangs and then everything goes silent.

**ANOUSHKA (CONT’D)**

Answer me, Rosa.

**ROSA**

(quietly)

Why should I?

**ANOUSHKA**

Because I’m your mother.

**ROSA**

I didn’t notice.

Anoushka slaps Rosa, violently, across the face.

Roland wearily lifts up a hand to protect Rosa, but is too late.

Ginger rises slowly to her feet and walks over to Mark. He looks at her, tenderly.

**GINGER**

(whispering anxiously)

Do you think Mum’s alright?

**MARK**

Come, come.

Mark and Ginger leave the room together.

**INT. LANDING OUTSIDE NATALIE’S BEDROOM – DAY**

Ginger and Mark are standing outside the door to Natalie’s bedroom.

**MARK**

Nat, Nat darling. Can we come in?

There’s no response.
MARK (CONT’D)  
Right We’re coming in.

He turns the handle and pushes the door. It’s locked. He starts to pummel at the door.

MARK (CONT’D)  
Nat, open the door. Nat, open this door. Nat, open up!

Ginger shouts down the stairs, frantically.

GINGER  
Roland! Come quick!

69  
INT. OUTSIDE NATALIE’S BEDROOM – DAY  
69

Roland is throwing himself against Natalie’s door, again and again.

The door eventually crashes open.

Natalie is crouched on the floor, cramming pills from a small bottle into her mouth. Empty bottles lie strewn on the floor around her.

GINGER  
(screaming)  
Mum! Mum!

Roland looks aghast. He runs over to Natalie, kneels down and cradles her head in his arms.

ROLAND  
Oh Nat, darling, oh Nat...

Mark hovers in the doorway. Rosa appears silently behind him, staring into the room, shocked.

ROLAND (CONT’D)  
(quietly)  
Call an ambulance.

Ginger runs out of the room. Rosa reaches out and clutches at her as she passes.
ROSA
Ginger... Forgive me. Please.

Their eyes lock, briefly, before Ginger pulls herself free and clatters down the stairs.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - NIGHT/DAY

Ginger and Roland sit silently, side by side, on an uncomfortable-looking bench in the stark, depressing waiting area of the Emergency Department. They look exhausted, beyond words.

It’s a long and agonising wait.

As the morning light creeps through the windows Roland closes his eyes and leans his head back against the wall. Ginger takes her notebook out of her coat pocket, turns away from Roland, and slowly starts to write. She pauses from time to time as she searches for the right words.

GINGER (V.O.)
We had a dream that we would always be best friends.
When we were born, for some it was the end;
Now it seems there may not be tomorrow.
But despite the horror and the sorrow,
I love our world. I want us all to live.
Now Rosa, you’ve asked me to forgive...
One day, if Mum survives this bitter night,
Then we shall meet again and I will say...

Ginger pauses, gazing into space.

GINGER (V.O.) (CONT’D)
I loved you Rosa. Don’t you see?
But we are different.

(MORE)
You dream of everlasting love. Not me.

Roland opens his eyes and sits very still. He turns his head and watches Ginger writing.

GINGER (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Because what really matters is to live...
And then there will be nothing to forgive.

ROLAND
What are you writing?

GINGER
A poem. About the future.

Roland stares sadly at Ginger’s back-view.

ROLAND
I’m sorry, Ginger. I’m so sorry.

Ginger turns, slowly, and looks at him. They gaze at each other, silently. The Ginger turns back and continues to write in her little notebook.

GINGER (V.O.)
But I’ll forgive you anyway.

She slowly and quietly closes her notebook.

THE END