

NEVER LET ME GO

Adapted from the novel by
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OPEN ON:

BLACK SCREEN

KATHY (V.O.)
My name is Kathy.

CUT TO -

EXT. FIELD - EARLY EVENING

Long shadows as the sun goes down.

A field, by a road, lined with a fence.

Snagged in the barbed wire are hundreds of plastic bags.
Refuse and litter, blown by the wind, until they were caught.

KATHY (V.O.)
I'm twenty six years old, and I've
been a carer now for seven years.

By the road, a car is parked up against the grass verge.

In the car's driver seat, a young woman with dark hair,
KATHY, looks towards the fields.

KATHY (V.O.)
My donors have always tended to do
better than expected. They are
hardly ever classified as agitated,
even before a fourth donation.

CUT TO -

INT. OPERATING CHAMBER

A twenty six year-old man is strapped to an operating table.

This is TOMMY.

KATHY (V.O.)
I'm not trying to boast. It means
a lot to me, being able to do my
work well.

TOMMY is awake, blinking at the bright lights above him, eyes flicking between the masked faces of the SURGEONS and NURSES who are leaning over him.

KATHY (V.O.)
Especially keeping the donors calm.

REVEAL - TOMMY'S chest is cut wide open, held apart by steel wires and clamps. His rib cage is mostly removed.

Beneath the missing section of rib cage, we can see one lung, inflating and deflating. The other lung is missing.

We can see his heart, pumping.

At the moment, the SURGEONS are in the process of removing a part of his liver. They work with quiet efficiency.

TOMMY watches them. There is no malice in his gaze. In fact, he is detached. We might assume he has been drugged, if not for the focus in his eyes - the obvious way in which he is watching the SURGEONS as they go about their work.

As TOMMY watches, a section of his liver is removed. One of the SURGEONS hands it to a NURSE.

As he does so, the gaze of the second SURGEON flicks to TOMMY.

Their eyes meet, and are held for a beat.

TOMMY nods. As if to say: it's okay. Carry on.

The SURGEON nods back.

Then looks away.

KATHY (V.O.)
Anyway, I'm not making any great
claims for myself.

BACK TO -

EXT. FIELD - EARLY EVENING

The plastic bags in the barbed wire snap and rustle in the wind.

KATHY (V.O.)
I understand how other carers can
be resentful. They say: she's from
Hailsham.

(MORE)

KATHY (V.O.) (cont'd)
 No wonder she has a great record.
 She can pick and choose her own
 kind.

As we CLOSE IN on KATHY, sat in the driver seat of the car...

... FADE IN the sound of children playing.

KATHY (V.O.)
 And it's true. Hailsham was
 special. We were lucky. Tommy,
 Ruth, me. All of us.

CUT TO -

EXT. HAILSHAM - DAY

HAILSHAM SCHOOL: a large Victorian house, set in flat, empty countryside.

The sky above is bright blue and cloudless. The sun is bright. It is an idyll of early summer.

The extensive grounds of the school are surrounded by high hedgerows. Nothing seems to connect it with the rest of the world except a single grey ribbon of road.

Title:

NEVER LET ME GO

The title is not seen, but is SPOKEN by TOMMY.

After a few seconds, a title does appear on the screen.

PART 1: HAILSHAM

EXT. HAILSHAM GROUNDS - DAY

In sunlight, two girls, aged twelve, lie on their bellies on a patch in front of the main house.

The grass is strewn with daisies.

One girl has striking blonde hair. This is RUTH.

The other is dark. This is KATHY.

They are interlocking the stems of the small flowers, working together, frowning in concentration, making a daisy chain.

KATHY makes the last link.

She lifts the daisy chain delicately.

RUTH
It's so pretty.

KATHY
You have it.

KATHY places it over RUTH'S blonde hair...

... where it looks like it belongs.

RUTH
... Look.

KATHY follows RUTH'S gaze.

By the entrance of the main house, two women have appeared. One is older, in her mid sixties. This is MISS EMILY, the head guardian of Hailsham.

The other is younger, in her late twenties.

RUTH
Who's that with Miss Emily? Do you think it's the new guardian they were telling us about?

KATHY
Miss Lucy. I think it must be.

RUTH
We haven't had a new guardian for ages.

A moment, as the two girls watch the two women, squinting against the bright sunlight.

RUTH
I wonder if she'll fit in.

CUT TO -

EXT. PLAYING FIELDS - DAY

- a group of boys run onto the playing fields, watched by...

EXT. PAVILION - CONTINUOUS

... a group of girls, watching from the shade of a sports pavilion.

The girls are joined by KATHY and RUTH.

LAURA

Ruth. Kath. Look - they're going to set off Tommy.

AMANDA

Light blue touch paper and stand well back!

On the playing field, we see the boy they are referring to.

TOMMY runs with the other boys, but is somehow separate. Lagging behind slightly. Not part of the shared exchanges and laughter.

RUTH

He really doesn't suspect a thing.

The girls all laugh -

- except KATHY.

KATHY watches TOMMY with slight concern.

From their vantage point, the girls can now see the boys have started lining up. Two CAPTAINS have stepped forward, and are about to start picking teams.

LAURA

Here it comes. He's completely convinced he's going to be first pick.

The CAPTAINS start choosing team members. TOMMY stands - almost a comical figure, puffing out his chest in order to make himself stand out.

The other boys are noticeably less keen. Chatting, or checking the tightness of their boot laces.

Even from a distance, we can sense TOMMY'S shift from bright eagerness to puzzled concern, as four boys are chosen before him...

Then five... six...

RUTH
It's coming. Hold on... any moment
now...

... Until eventually TOMMY is left standing alone.

Realising he hasn't been picked. And isn't going to be picked.

The boys all start sniggering.

RUTH
Seven seconds. Six, five, four,
three...

And SUDDENLY -- before RUTH'S countdown can complete - TOMMY explodes.

CUT TO -

EXT. PLAYING FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE UP on TOMMY'S face.

Head thrown back. Bright red. Shaking. Screaming. A nonsensical stream of swear words - a tantrum almost like an epileptic fit.

The BOYS are now laughing openly -

- then start to run away, on to the football pitch.

CUT TO -

- viewing from a distance, TOMMY alone, directing his insults at the clear blue sky, arms and legs oddly rigid.

EXT. PAVILION - CONTINUOUS

The girls watch, a mixture of transfixed and absently amused by this strange sight.

RUTH
I suppose it is a bit cruel, the
way they work him up like that.
(MORE)

RUTH (cont'd)
 But it's his own fault. If he
 learned to keep his cool, they'd
 leave him alone.

RUTH looks to KATHY, as if for approval -

- but doesn't get it.

KATHY has stood, and is walking out of the pavilion towards
 TOMMY.

EXT. PLAYING FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

KATHY approaches TOMMY, who is panting from the exertion of
 his tantrum, still gazing up at the sky.

KATHY puts a hand on TOMMY'S arm -

- and TOMMY recoils violently, throwing his arm up, knocking
 her hand aside and striking the side of her face.

The strike is an accident - a reaction of surprise and
 confusion more than anger - but TOMMY seems even more shocked
 than KATHY by what he has done.

A beat.

KATHY
 Isn't that your favourite shirt?

TOMMY says nothing.

KATHY
 I just wanted to say, you shouldn't
 play football in that shirt.
 You'll only cover it in mud.

TOMMY
 (mumbling, a little
 stunned)
 So what? It's nothing to do with
 you anyway.

TOMMY starts to walk away.

KATHY watches him go.

INT. PAVILION - CONTINUOUS

KATHY rejoins the girls in the pavilion - who make an
 outraged fuss over her.

LAURA
Are you all right, Kath?

RUTH
I can't believe he hit you!

KATHY
I don't think he meant to.

RUTH
Are you bleeding?

KATHY
No.

RUTH
He's an animal. That's what I think.

KATHY doesn't respond, and instead looks back to the playing field.

Where she sees TOMMY -

- standing on the edge of the playing field, talking to the new guardian, MISS LUCY.

TOMMY and MISS LUCY are too distant for us to hear their conversation, but we can read some of the body language. Whatever MISS LUCY is saying, TOMMY is listening intently.

RUTH
A mad animal.

INT. ART ROOM - DAY

A group of the Hailsham students are in the ART ROOM, quietly working on paintings and sculptures.

In the corner of the room, another of their guardians, MISS GERALDINE, is helping two of the children mix paint colours.

We close in on one table, on which is sat several children. Among them are TOMMY, KATHY and RUTH.

KATHY glances at TOMMY'S effort.

He's concentrating fiercely - working on a picture of an ELEPHANT standing in tall grass. Despite the effort, the picture is clumsy, and feels noticeably less accomplished than the work of his classmates.

The girl beside KATHY, AMANDA, leans over to look at what KATHY is making.

It's a sculpture made from modelling clay, of a HORSE.

AMANDA

That's so creative, Kathy! I bet
it gets into the Gallery!

Other of the pupils notice - including RUTH.

RUTH

It *is* creative. Amanda's right.
It's bound to be selected by
Madame.

KATHY

I'm sure it won't. I still haven't
got the back legs right.

RUTH

It *will* get selected. You'll see.

RUTH turns to look at TOMMY'S picture of an elephant.

Then she winks at KATHY.

RUTH

(pointedly)

I wonder if Tommy's will get
selected.

KATHY

(quiet, to Ruth)

No, Ruth. Don't.

RUTH

(ignoring Kathy)

Tommy. What are you doing? Show
us so we can have a look.

TOMMY looks up from his drawing, and sees a semi-circle of
faces looking back at him.

A beat, as he returns their gaze.

Then he spins the picture round so that it faces them.

RUTH

Oh! It's a -

(she feigns uncertainty)

- what is it exactly?

AMANDA

I think it must be a dog. Is it a dog, Tommy?

One of the boys, ARTHUR - who had been one of the team-pickers from the playing fields - joins in.

ARTHUR

It can't be a dog. Its eyes are too small. I think it must be a kind of rat.

AMANDA

Yes! That's it! Tommy's drawn a rat. Ruth, do you think Tommy's rat will be selected for the gallery?

RUTH

I don't know. Why don't we ask Miss Geraldine to come over and tell us what she thinks?

CLOSE UP on TOMMY'S face - flushing.

TOMMY

It's not finished yet.

ARTHUR

That's right. You need to draw the whiskers.

TOMMY

It's not a rat.

AMANDA

And a longer tail.

TOMMY

(voice rising)
It's not a rat!

On the other side of the room, the raised voice makes MISS GERALDINE'S head turn.

RUTH

(whispers)
Here it comes!

The kids goading TOMMY wait expectantly.

Then TOMMY speaks.

And the calmness has returned to his voice.

TOMMY
It's not a rat.
(beat)
It's an elephant.

He spins the picture back to face him, and continues to work on it.

RUTH and AMANDA exchange a slightly puzzled glance -

- but let it go, because MISS GERALDINE is now walking over to their table...

... and the kids return to their respective works.

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

Lunch, in Hailsham's GREAT HALL.

The kids queue to take trays and food from the food trolleys, then take seats at long refectory tables.

The mood in the queues is cheerful. The noise level is high.

KATHY is standing with RUTH, AMANDA and LAURA.

She sees TOMMY in the queue slightly further behind.

As the queue moves forwards, and RUTH and the other two girls take their trays...

... KATHY lingers, hanging back so that the girls go ahead.

RUTH and the two girls don't notice, and continue on to take their food.

INT. GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

TOMMY sits at a table with a few spaces around him.

We can sense he is used to eating alone.

Not least from the surprise in his face when he looks up, and sees KATHY taking the seat opposite him.

TOMMY
Kathy.
(awkward)
Aren't you sitting with the girls?

KATHY looks around, as if half expecting to find the girls either side of her.

Then she looks back at TOMMY.

KATHY

I just checked, and I'm pretty sure
I'm not sitting with the girls.
I'm sitting with you.

TOMMY smiles.

TOMMY

I wanted to say I was sorry. I
didn't mean to hit you when -
(he breaks off)
I mean, I wouldn't want to hit any
girl. But particularly not you.

KATHY

Well. It was an accident, that's
all.

TOMMY

I didn't hurt you, did I?

KATHY

Sure. But I've learned to live
with the pain.

TOMMY

Seriously, Kath. No hard feelings.

KATHY

No hard feelings.

Beat.

KATHY

So... you didn't lose your temper
when they were teasing you earlier.
In the art room.

TOMMY nods seriously.

TOMMY

I'm not going to get angry like
that any more.

KATHY

Is that because you felt guilty for
lashing out at me...

KATHY leaves a calculated pause.

KATHY

... or was it something to do with
your conversation with the new
guardian?

(beat)

Miss Lucy.

TOMMY

You notice everything, don't you,
Kath?

KATHY

I'm nosy.

TOMMY

(smiles)

You are.

(beat)

There was something about the talk
with Miss Lucy.

KATHY

What was it?

AT THIS MOMENT, the seats immediately beside TOMMY and KATHY
are taken by some kids coming over with their trays.

About to reply, TOMMY seems to think the better of it -
apparently uncomfortable about their conversation being
overheard.

TOMMY

Why don't we talk about it later.
At the pond.

EXT. POND - DAY

At the back of Hailsham, tucked away in the grounds, is a
large pond surrounded by bulrushes and over-hanging trees.

It's quiet. Feels private.

The flat water surface is disturbed by a stone, thrown by
TOMMY.

He sits on a large flat rock, with KATHY beside him.

TOMMY

This shouldn't be spread, okay?
It's not the kind of thing that
should get around, because Miss
Lucy *is* a new guardian, and...

KATHY

Tommy, I don't know what it is yet.

TOMMY

I'm just saying.

A beat, as TOMMY throws another stone.

Then:

TOMMY

So - at the playing fields, she
asked me to come to her study,
before Art Appreciation. When I
got there, she made me sit in a
chair. Then she asked me to
explain what's been going on with
me. Why I have these... sort of...

KATHY

Temper tantrums.

TOMMY

Yes. But before I'd hardly started
answering, she broke in, and
started to talk herself. But she
didn't say anything about my
tantrums at all. Instead, she was
talking about being creative.

TOMMY frowns.

TOMMY

She said: lots of children weren't
creative.

Now KATHY is frowning too.

KATHY

Weren't?

TOMMY

Yes. Then she said, if I wasn't
creative, there was nothing wrong
with it.

KATHY

Nothing wrong with being uncreative? Are you sure that's what she said?

TOMMY

Of course I'm sure.

KATHY

I bet she said nothing of the sort. If you're going to make stuff up, Tommy, I can't be bothered to talk to you.

TOMMY

I'm not making anything up! And there's more. When she said all this, she was shaking. Just her hands. She was nervous. Or angry. Inside.

KATHY

... Angry? Why?

TOMMY

I don't know.

(beat)

Then she said we weren't being taught enough.

KATHY

She thinks we should be studying harder?

TOMMY

No. She meant, not taught enough about us. About who we were. She said she had a good mind to tell us herself.

KATHY

I don't get it. First she's talking about being creative. Then she's talking about this other stuff.

TOMMY

I don't get it either. But the funny thing is, even though I don't understand what she was saying, it helped. I've stopped feeling so angry about things, because -

(shrugs)

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)
 - whatever I'm doing wrong, or
 doing worse than the rest of you,
 it isn't my fault.

Silence.

Hailsham house is reflected in the pond surface.
 Then it splinters as TOMMY throws another stone.

EXT. HAILSHAM - NIGHT

A constellation in the night sky above Hailsham.

INT. GIRLS' DORMITORY - NIGHT

In one of the girls' dormitories, KATHY lies awake, gazing at the ceiling.

Thinking.

After a couple of moments, she looks to her side.

In the next bed is RUTH, whose eyes are closed.

KATHY
 (whispers)
 Ruth.

No response.

KATHY whispers slightly louder, not wanting to disturb the other girls in the dormitory.

KATHY
 Ruth. Are you awake?

RUTH
 No. I'm asleep. And this is the
 dream I'm having.

KATHY
 Why do you think Madame comes and
 takes our artwork? What's it for
 exactly?

RUTH'S eyes open.

RUTH
 It's for the Gallery.

KATHY

But that's what I mean. She comes here - what, twice a year - and selects our best pictures and sculptures and poems. And takes them away.

(beat)

She must have stacks of art by now. I asked Miss Geraldine once how long Madame's been coming here, and she said for as long as Hailsham's existed.

KATHY rolls over, to face RUTH.

KATHY

So what is this Gallery? And why would she have a gallery of things done by us?

RUTH

Maybe she sells them. Outside, out there, they sell everything.

KATHY

That isn't it. It has to be something to do with us. It's all linked in, but I can't figure out how.

A moment of silence, as both KATHY and RUTH contemplate these thoughts.

Then:

RUTH

She's scared of us.

KATHY frowns, and props herself up in bed.

KATHY

Madame?

RUTH

Yes.

KATHY

That's a strange thing to say.

RUTH shrugs.

RUTH

Well. She is. I used to think she was just snooty, but now I know different.

KATHY

How?

RUTH

I just do. I can tell.

Another of the girls, AMANDA, who has obviously been eavesdropping, sits up.

AMANDA

We can test to see if she's scared of us. She'll be coming here soon.

RUTH

How do you know?

AMANDA

The guardians have been sifting through our work, looking for stuff to show her.

LAURA is also awake.

LAURA

It's true. Miss Emily was carrying a pile of paintings to the billiard room, ready to lay out.

RUTH lies back down in her bed.

RUTH

Then that's what we'll do. Us - in this dorm. We'll test her.

KATHY

How?

RUTH

I don't know. It needs to be something simple. And civilised, so we can't get into trouble.

(beat)

I'll think of something.

EXT. HAILSHAM - DAY

We watch as, from a distance, a lone car approaches Hailsham, along a ribbon of road through the surrounding fields.

INT. WINDOW - DAY

KATHY, RUTH, AMANDA, LAURA, and the two other girls from their dormitory room stand at a window, watching the CAR approach.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

The car pulls up on the gravel courtyard of Hailsham, and parks.

The driver, MADAME, exits the car, then goes around to the boot -

- which she opens.

Inside is her briefcase.

She takes it out, closes the boot, then turns -

- and STARTS.

Because surrounding her, in a tight circle, are the six girls.

As if they materialised out of nowhere.

In a slightly stiff, glazed way, the girls each murmur, dream-like:

GIRLS

Excuse me, miss.

Then they separate, each walking in different directions...

... leaving MADAME alone.

It's a very odd moment. Surreal. But it reveals exactly what RUTH said it would.

MADAME'S reaction was as if she was suppressing a shudder. A kind of dread in her eyes, looking at the children as if they were spiders.

As she was afraid they might reach out and touch her.

EXT. HAILSHAM - DAY

Around the side of the building, the girls reconvene.

RUTH
You saw it, didn't you? In her
face. You all saw it.

AMANDA
Yes.

RUTH
There's no doubt. Kathy.

KATHY
(confirms)
No doubt.

One of the girls, LAURA, looks particularly shaken and close to tears.

LAURA
If she doesn't like us, why does
she want our artwork? Why doesn't
she just leave us alone?

The response from the others is silence.

There seems to be no answer to these questions.

INT. ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

The students of Hailsham stand in rows for morning assembly. There are about eighty children, of ages ranging from five to eighteen.

The head guardian, MISS EMILY, prepares to address them from a lectern.

Behind her, the other guardians stand, and among them is MADAME.

MISS EMILY
Good morning, students.

THE STUDENTS
Good morning, Miss Emily.

MISS EMILY
There are several points of order
today.

(MORE)

MISS EMILY (cont'd)

The first is that Madame Marie-Claude is visiting us today, and will be examining your works.

MISS EMILY turns to acknowledge MADAME, who nods in reply.

MISS EMILY

We will of course extend her every curtesy, and make her feel most welcome.

MISS EMILY pauses a moment.

MISS EMILY

Second point of order. It has come to my attention that three burned cigarettes were discovered, hidden behind a pot in the flower garden.

(beat)

I know that on occasion students have seen some of the caretakers or delivery men smoking cigarettes. But I must emphasise, once again, that it is much, much worse for a student of Hailsham to smoke than anyone else. I should not have to explain that students of Hailsham are *special*. Keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves healthy inside, is of paramount importance. Have I made myself clear?

THE STUDENTS

Yes, Miss Emily.

MISS EMILY

Good.

(beat)

And finally, I have a piece of good news for all students who have been diligent in collecting tokens. At the end of studies tomorrow, there will be a sale.

This piece of news creates an immediate buzz of excitement in the students -

- quietened by MISS EMILY raising a hand.

MISS EMILY

The delivery arrived today. And I was assured by the van driver that the boxes he brought contained...

MISS EMILY pauses deliberately, raising the STUDENTS' expectations.

MISS EMILY extends the pause, then allows a slight smile to creep into the corner of her mouth.

MISS EMILY
... a bumper crop.

The assembly hall erupts with the STUDENTS' cheers.

EXT. PLAYING FIELDS - DAY

A game of ROUNDERS is being played. The players are all dressed in white.

It is KATHY to bat, with ARTHUR pitching.

It is clear from KATHY'S face that she is only half focusing on the game.

ARTHUR throws -

- and KATHY misses.

But she is clearly unconcerned, and starts walking back to the pavilion, carrying the bat.

EXT. PLAYING FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

As KATHY approaches the pavilion, the next hitter leaves.

It's TOMMY.

As they pass each other, KATHY hands TOMMY the bat.

KATHY
Hit a big one, Tommy.

TOMMY smiles.

TOMMY
Okay, Kath! You watch! I'll hit it for you!

EXT. PAVILION - CONTINUOUS

Inside the PAVILION, the rest of KATHY'S rounders team sit, waiting for their turn. They include RUTH, AMANDA, and LAURA.

There is also a guardian present. The one TOMMY and KATHY discussed when they sat by the pond: MISS LUCY.

As KATHY arrives, RUTH is talking about the forthcoming SALE.

RUTH

I can't believe I haven't kept more tokens! I'm not going to be able to buy anything in the sale.

RUTH turns to KATHY.

RUTH

Have you been saving tokens, Kath?

KATHY

(distracted)

I have some.

RUTH

Lucky.

MISS LUCY

It's not luck, Ruth. If Kathy's been saving tokens, she's been sensible.

RUTH

Well I call it -

(breaks off)

- oh, look! Good hit, Tommy! Good hit!

On the field, TOMMY has connected hard with the ARTHUR'S throw, and sent the ball flying towards the brick wall that runs along the far perimeter of the playing field.

ON KATHY - noticing the way RUTH is cheering for TOMMY.

RUTH

It's going over the wall!

EXT. PLAYING FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

We track the BALL -

- and the FIELDER who pursues it.

It does indeed make it over the wall...

... and comes to a rest in long grass, about twenty feet beyond the boundary.

The FIELDER looks at it a few moments, then turns away, jogging back to the game.

EXT. PAVILION - CONTINUOUS

MISS LUCY, watching this from the pavilion, frowns.

MISS LUCY

Why didn't he get the ball? It
couldn't have been far from him.

The children look at MISS LUCY, slightly confused.

LAURA

That's the boundary of the Hailsham
grounds.

RUTH

Why take the risk just for a stupid
ball?

MISS LUCY

... What risk?

LAURA

We don't go outside the boundary,
Miss Lucy. It's too dangerous.

RUTH

There was once a boy who had a big
row with all his friends, and ran
off beyond the boundaries. And
they found him two days later in
the woods, tied to a tree.

LAURA

With his hands and feet cut off.

RUTH

Dead.

MISS LUCY looks shocked.

MISS LUCY

And when was this supposed to have
happened?

RUTH

It was before we all got here.

AMANDA

But only just before.

RUTH

And there was the girl who climbed over the fence by the front gate.

MISS LUCY

What happened to her?

RUTH

She climbed over to see what it was like outside.

LAURA

This was in the older days, when the guardians were much stricter. Before Miss Emily.

RUTH

And when she tried to get back, she wasn't allowed. But she kept hanging around outside, pleading, and they still wouldn't let her in. And then she starved out there, right by the gates.

ON MISS LUCY - obviously disturbed by what the children are saying.

MISS LUCY

Who told you these stories?

RUTH

Everybody knows them.

MISS LUCY

And how do you know they're true?

RUTH

Well of course they're true.

RUTH'S interjection is oddly forceful. It makes everybody turn to look at her.

Under this attention, she flushes.

RUTH

Who'd make up stories as horrible as that?

INT. ART ROOM - DAY

Back in the art room, the kids are continuing to work on their paintings and sculptures.

KATHY is working on her CLAY HORSE.

She's concentrating. Trying hard. But it seems to be getting away from her.

Almost helplessly, the sculpture starts to become ruined in her hands. Until eventually, quietly, she starts to crush it.

RUTH notices...

... and watches, as she returns the horse to a shapeless lump of clay.

INT. GIRLS' DORMITORY - NIGHT

RUTH and KATHY are the only girls awake.

They are moonlit.

KATHY lies on her back, gazing at the ceiling.

RUTH lies on her side, gazing at KATHY.

RUTH

Have you heard the rumour?

KATHY doesn't reply.

RUTH

There's a rumour going round.
Started by some of the older kids.
Something about couples. Getting
preferential treatment when we
leave Hailsham.

KATHY

There are always stories going
round. Like the stories about kids
who leave the boundary. It was
obvious Miss Lucy didn't believe
that for a minute.

Beat.

RUTH

I think Laura likes Arthur.

KATHY

All the girls like Arthur, don't
they?

RUTH

Maybe.

(beat)

I'm not sure you do.

KATHY says nothing.

RUTH

Tommy's changed.

KATHY

Changed how?

RUTH

Just changed. That's all.

A moment of silence.

RUTH

I think Laura and Arthur will be the first in our year to have sex, because if Arthur wanted to, Laura wouldn't stop him.

KATHY

I'm sure you're right.

RUTH

Right about Laura wouldn't stop him, or right about them being the first to have sex?

KATHY rolls over on her side, and closes her eyes.

KATHY

Both, I'm sure.

RUTH stays in the same position, eyes remaining open, watching KATHY.

INT. HAILSHAM - DAY

A school bell is ringing.

Over the ringing, we can hear excited shouts, and laughter.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

We pick up KATHY running down a corridor in Hailsham -

- being tugged along by RUTH'S hand.

And we see that they are at the head of a large group of children, who are also running...

... and being joined by other children, streaming out of classrooms and side corridors.

TOMMY is ahead of them.

RUTH

Come on Tommy! It's the sale! The
SALE!

We lose KATHY and RUTH and TOMMY in the mass of kids...

... and track the mass of children through the school.

Out of the **CORRIDOR**...

Through the **ASSEMBLY HALL**...

Up the **STAIRS**...

Along another **CORRIDOR**...

Until they explode into the -

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

- GREAT HALL, where the SALE is now underway.

The refectory tables double as stalls, with the sale items laid out along them.

The oldest children work as monitors, standing behind the tables, exchanging tokens for goods, and keeping their highly excited young customers under control.

We TRACK ALONG one refectory table, seeing the excited faces and grabbing hands of the kids on the other side, as they pick the sale items up, searching for the best stuff at the best prices.

And we finally see the sale items themselves -

- which reveal themselves to be the kind of things one might find in a junk shop, or a car-boot sale.

Nothing new, nothing complete. Toys out of their boxes. Watches with no clasp on the strap. The top half of a track-suit. Football boots without laces.

Among the kids, we see the faces of children we have already met, including RUTH, TOMMY, ARTHUR, LAURA, and AMANDA.

INT. GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

We pick up KATHY at the back of the throng, moving away from the tables, not towards them.

She heads towards the back of the GREAT HALL, where the dining chairs have been stacked to make room.

She chooses one, and sits down, watching the melee.

A moment.

Then:

TOMMY

Hey.

KATHY turns, and sees TOMMY beside her.

TOMMY

Aren't you buying? If you've already spent all your tokens, you can have some of mine...

KATHY

I have tokens.

(beat)

I'll wait until the rush has died down a bit. I'm sure something good will be left.

Beat.

TOMMY

What's the matter, Kath? Ever since our conversation the other day, you've been a bit out of sorts.

KATHY considers this a moment.

And her gaze catches sight of MISS LUCY talking to MISS GERALDINE on the other side of the hall.

KATHY

I'm not sure I like Miss Lucy. Neither of us really understand what she says, but even so, she affects us both.

(MORE)

KATHY (cont'd)
Her words seem to make things
easier for you, and harder for me.

TOMMY
... Harder for you? Why?

KATHY
I don't know.

A short silence.

TOMMY
Well anyway. It doesn't matter if
you can't find anything in the sale

TOMMY reaches into his pocket.

TOMMY
- because I already found something
for you.

He produces a CASSETTE TAPE.

*On the cover, it reads: Songs After Dark, by Judy
Bridgewater. The cover shows a woman, presumably the singer,
wearing an off-the-shoulder purple satin dress. There are
palm trees behind her, and a black waiter in a white tuxedo
is bringing her a drink.*

A cigarette burns in her hand.

CUT TO -

- KATHY'S response.

Genuine surprise and delight.

KATHY
A music tape?

TOMMY
I don't know much about it. If
it's much good or anything.

KATHY leans forwards and gives TOMMY a kiss on the cheek.

KATHY
Thank you!

From the expression on TOMMY'S face, this was clearly worth
the tokens.

INT. GIRLS' DORMITORY - SUNSET

KATHY is alone in the girls' dormitory.

Outside the window, the light is a deep yellow from sunset, and it bathes the room.

Dust motes hang in light shafts.

KATHY has the tape that TOMMY gave her, and she is inserting into a CASSETTE PLAYER that the girls in that room share.

She presses PLAY -

- and a song starts.

It's a slow ballad. The singer, Judy Bridgewater, is American.

KATHY is immediately transported by the sound.

She reacts as if it is the saddest, most beautiful song she has ever heard.

As the song moves into its second verse, KATHY picks up a pillow from one of the beds, and holds it close to her chest, as she starts to sway in time to the music.

By the time the second chorus comes around, she has learned the melody, and picked up the repeating lyric of the chorus: *Baby, never let me go.*

Her eyes close, and she starts to mouth these words...

... until the short song is over.

As the noise from the cassette player returns to the hiss between music tracks, KATHY opens her eyes, as if waking from a dream -

- to find herself looking at MADAME, framed in the doorway of the dormitory.

Both KATHY and MADAME are frozen in the act of seeing each other.

But whereas KATHY'S expression is simple surprise, MADAME has tears pouring down her face.

In fact, she is sobbing.

A beat later, MADAME turns, quickly, and leaves.

As her hurried footsteps disappear down the corridor...

... the next track on the cassette begins.

EXT. HAILSHAM - DAY, RAIN

The next day.

Rain falls from a slate sky.

EXT. POND - CONTINUOUS

A low mist of exploding water droplets lies over the pond surface.

EXT. WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

MISS LUCY looks out of a window at the rain -

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

- then turns back to her students.

In the classroom are KATHY, RUTH, TOMMY, ARTHUR, LAURA, AMANDA, and the others of that year.

At the front of the class is a pull-down diagram of male and female anatomy.

MISS LUCY returns the gaze of her students for a few moments...

... then starts to speak.

MISS LUCY

I haven't been a guardian at Hailsham long enough to know all the stories and rituals, and ways of doing things. In that respect, I'm still an outsider.

The children look surprised.

TOMMY

We don't see you as an outsider, Miss Lucy.

MISS LUCY

No, Tommy. Please. You don't -
(breaks off)

It may be good that I'm an outsider. It means I haven't yet grown accustomed to aspects of Hailsham that are unnatural.

She pauses.

MISS LUCY

No one else will talk to you. That is what I've seen while I've been here. You are told, but not told. Things are explained, but not in a way you can understand.

(beat)

I've decided that I'll talk to you in a way that you will understand.

PAN across the children's faces.

MISS LUCY

Do you know what happens to children when they grow up?

Silence.

MISS LUCY

No - you don't. You don't, because nobody knows. And that mystery is the essence of children. They might grow up to become actors, and move to America. Or they might work in supermarkets, or teach in schools. They might become sportsmen, or bus conductors, or racing car drivers. They might do almost anything.

Beat.

MISS LUCY

But with you, we do know. None of you will go to America. None of you will work in supermarkets. None of you will do anything, except live out the life that has already been set out for you.

Beat.

MISS LUCY

You are clones. You will become adults, but only briefly. Before you are old, before you are even middle-aged, you will start to donate your vital organs. And some time around your third or fourth donation, your short life will be completed.

MISS LUCY turns back to the window.

MISS LUCY

You have to know who you are, and what you are. It's the only way to lead decent lives.

(beat)

Not just for you. For any of us can.

EXT. PATH - DAY

KATHY walks down a path through tree at the back of Hailsham, towards -

EXT. POND - CONTINUOUS

- the pond.

Across the water is the large flat rock.

On which, to KATHY'S surprise, RUTH and TOMMY are sitting.

Chatting. Unaware of KATHY'S presence on the far side of the pond.

KATHY (V.O.)

I didn't understand why, after all her teasing, Ruth would decide that Tommy was the boy she liked most of all.

KATHY watches as RUTH takes TOMMY'S hand and puts in her own.

FLASHBACK TO -

INT. ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

MISS EMILY addresses the students.

MISS EMILY

I have only one announcement this morning, which is to say that Miss Lucy, who was guardian to the fourth year students, is no longer working with us at Hailsham.

A shocked ripple response from the ranks of the standing children.

Particularly from TOMMY.

KATHY'S response is less readable.

MISS EMILY

A replacement will be found for her, but in the meantime her classes will be divided between Miss Geraldine and myself.

CUT BACK TO -

EXT. POND - DAY

From the far side of the pond, we watch as KATHY starts to make her way towards RUTH and TOMMY.

FLASHBACK TO -

INT. ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

We are on KATHY'S face, as MISS EMILY'S speech becomes increasingly passionate.

MISS EMILY

We are aware, of course, very aware, of the ways in which our fine institution can be maligned. There are those who would seek to thwart us. But I will not be coerced! Oh no! *And neither will Hailsham!*

Along with the other students, KATHY breaks into dutiful applause.

CUT BACK TO -

EXT. POND - DAY

As KATHY approaches RUTH and TOMMY, she sees as -

- RUTH lifts her hand, and turns TOMMY'S face towards hers.

KATHY (V.O.)

They say girls are always mean to
the boys they like. So maybe Ruth
had liked him all along.

KATHY stops, as -

- RUTH leans forwards to kiss TOMMY.

ON KATHY'S FACE, stunned.

KATHY (V.O.)

Maybe I should have teased him too.

CUT BACK TO -

TOMMY and RUTH are sitting on the rock, now aged eighteen.

We can recognise them at once, from RUTH'S distinctive blonde hair, and the fact that they occupy the same positions on the stone.

CUT TO -

EXT. POND - DAY

The pond surface is disturbed by a stone.

But we reveal it was not thrown by TOMMY.

KATHY sits alone on the flat rock, aged eighteen.

TOMMY and RUTH are gone.

FADE TO BLACK.

Title:

PART 2: THE COTTAGES

FADE UP TO -

EXT. THE COTTAGES - DAY

A small collection of farm buildings, with a central house, are nestled in remote countryside.

A MINIBUS pulls up outside, and eight Hailsham students get out, each carrying a large rucksack and a suitcase.

Among them are KATHY, RUTH and TOMMY, all aged eighteen.

KATHY (V.O.)

Eight of our year were sent to the Cottages. It was our first contact with the outside world. It was also the first time we encountered others like us, who had not had the privilege of growing up in Hailsham.

FADE IN the sound of a TV sitcom LAUGHTER TRACK.

CUT TO -

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

In the living room are RUTH and TOMMY. They are sitting on a sofa. Ruth is leaning back into TOMMY'S arms.

At the other end of the sofa is KATHY.

On another sofa are two people we haven't met before - RODNEY and CHRISSIE. Slightly older than the Hailsham group, aged twenty, they have already been living at the Cottages for two years.

Although RODNEY and CHRISSIE are less physically enmeshed than RUTH and TOMMY, it is clear they are also a couple.

All of them have slightly glazed expressions -

- because they are watching the TV, which is showing a generic American sitcom, circa early nineties.

In the background, other inhabitants of the Cottages come and go. On the floor are empty plates of food, presumably from a dinner eaten in front of the television.

CLOSE UP on the TV screen -

- where a group of attractive young Americans are sitting around in a New York apartment.

One of the HANDSOME BOYS shakes his head at one of the PRETTY GIRLS.

HANDSOME BOY
Jennifer, get real. I saw you with
Ricky.

PRETTY GIRL #1
Jen and Ricky, sitting in a tree, K-
I-S-S-I-N-G.

PRETTY GIRL #2 looks indignant, and rolls her eyes.

PRETTY GIRL #2
That is so not true!
(beat)
We weren't in a tree.

The laughter track kicks in again.

INT. TOMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

RUTH and TOMMY are having sex.

RUTH is being slightly noisy, and the movement of the bed is bumping against the wall.

INT. KATHY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Next door, KATHY lies awake, hearing them.

EXT. COTTAGES - MORNING

Daybreak over the fields around the Cottages.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The same group of people that were watching TV - KATHY, RUTH, TOMMY, RODNEY and CHRISSIE - are in the kitchen fixing breakfast.

CHRISSIE and RUTH are cooking up some scrambled eggs, and the others are sitting at the table.

Also at the table are two other young people. One reads a book, and the other eats cereal while reading the back of the cereal packet.

KATHY is eating cereal too, and has an open book in front of her...

... but is tuned-in to RUTH and CHRISSIE'S conversation.

RUTH

I never even said I was going to apply to be a carer. Just several people had told me I'd be good at it. But then Laura went around telling people that I had been saying I was the most likely to get selected.

CHRISSIE rolls her eyes.

CHRISSIE

That is so not true.

RUTH

(echoes, in agreement)
So not true.

KATHY, subtly, reacts.

RUTH brings over a plate of scrambled eggs and puts them in front of TOMMY.

As she does so, she gives his shoulder a little squeeze.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

The kitchen is now empty apart from KATHY and RUTH, who stand at the sink, washing up.

While KATHY washes, RUTH dries.

For a while, they do this in silence.

Then KATHY speaks.

KATHY

Ruth, I've been meaning to ask you. Why do you do that thing - squeezing Tommy's shoulder whenever you pass him?

RUTH looks slightly confused.

RUTH

I'm allowed to touch Tommy, aren't I?

KATHY

It's the way you're touching him.
You know what I'm talking about.
The way you squeeze his shoulder.

(beat)

It's copied from that television
show.

RUTH

That's -

KATHY

(cuts in)

And please don't tell me 'that's so
not true.'

RUTH shuts her mouth.

KATHY

All that behaviour: it's not what
people do, out there, in real life,
if that's what you were thinking.

Hold on RUTH'S face. She looks angry - but unsure how to
fight back.

So she shrugs.

RUTH

So what? It's no big deal. A lot
of us do it.

KATHY

What you mean is, Chrissie and Rod
do it.

And now the anger on RUTH'S face becomes, for a flashed
moment, triumph.

Which she quickly shifts into concern.

RUTH

Oh, Kathy. So that's what this is
about. It must be awful for you,
surrounded by all these couples.

KATHY

(hotly)

I never said that. I'm just saying
it's daft: you copy what they do,
and they copy the TV show.

RUTH

But I'm right, aren't I? And you don't like the fact that Tommy and I are friends with Chrissie and Rod. Whereas you hardly talk to anyone.

KATHY

No, you're not right.

RUTH raises her eyebrows.

RUTH

(sarcastic)

'So' not right?

RUTH puts her drying cloth down, and walks out of the kitchen.

Leaving KATHY alone.

EXT. COTTAGES - DAY

KATHY is carrying a a full bin-liner of rubbish to the bins, around the back of the main farmhouse.

When she opens the bin to put the rubbish-sack inside, she sees, sitting on top of the bag already in the bin...

... a slightly crumpled PORNOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE.

KATHY reacts.

Then looks around, to see if anyone is near, or can see her.

INT. BARN - DAY

Daylight filters into what was once an old barn, and is now used as a general storage area.

Judging by the dust and cobwebs, the space doesn't get used much.

KATHY enters, with the magazine.

She takes a seat...

... and starts to flick through the pictures.

We watch KATHY scan the girls. She pauses on each image for the same amount of time, regardless of the pose or size of the photo. Although there is no way of knowing this, she is in fact only looking at their faces.

KATHY is absorbed in what she is doing.

And doesn't notice at first that someone else has entered the barn, and is watching her.

But she senses the presence.

She tenses, and looks up.

And sees TOMMY.

TOMMY smiles, a little sheepishly.

TOMMY

Hello, Kath.

KATHY

Hi Tommy.

(beat)

Don't just hover in the doorway.
Come in. Join the fun.

TOMMY walks over to where KATHY sits.

TOMMY

I didn't know you liked that sort
of stuff.

KATHY

Girls are allowed to look too,
aren't we?

Beat.

KATHY starts flicking through the pages again.

TOMMY

I wasn't trying to spy on you.

KATHY

You're welcome to take them after
I've finished.

TOMMY gives a short laugh.

TOMMY

I expect I've seen them all
already.

A beat.

KATHY looks up at TOMMY again -

- and finds him returning her gaze with a serious expression.

TOMMY

Kath - what are you looking for?

KATHY

What you mean? I'm just looking at dirty pictures.

TOMMY

Just for kicks.

KATHY

I suppose you could say that.

TOMMY sits beside KATHY.

TOMMY

Kath, you don't -
(breaks off)

If it's for kicks, you don't do it like that. You have to look at the pictures more carefully. Nothing really happens if you go that fast.

KATHY

How do you know what works for girls?

TOMMY

Kath. You aren't looking for kicks.

A beat.

KATHY stands abruptly, and drops the magazine into TOMMY'S hands.

KATHY

Here. Give it to Ruth. See if they do anything for her.

She exits.

TOMMY watches her go.

INT. KATHY'S ROOM - DAY

KATHY is reading on her bed.

RUTH enters.

RUTH
Hi.

KATHY
Hi.

RUTH sits on the bed.

RUTH
I suppose you've heard what
Chrissie and Rod have been saying.

KATHY puts her book down, bristling slightly - thinking that this conversation will relate to their earlier exchange, and that in some way RUTH is going to rub KATHY'S nose in her friendship with the older couple.

KATHY
No. I haven't.

RUTH
They're probably just having me on.
Their idea of a joke. Forget I
mentioned it.

KATHY
You obviously want to tell me.

Beat.

RUTH
You know that Rod has been thinking
of applying to be a carer. So he's
been learning to drive.

KATHY
Yes.

RUTH
Well - last weekend, Rod and
Chrissie went for a drive together,
and they went up to a town on the
Norfolk coast.

(beat)
And they think they saw this
person.

KATHY
What person?

RUTH
A lady. Working in an open-plan
office. And...

RUTH glances at KATHY, and suddenly KATHY sees how vulnerable
and anxious RUTH looks.

KATHY sits up, concerned, their earlier spat forgotten.

KATHY
What is it, Ruth?

RUTH
I'm sure it's not true. Or a
mistake. But - they thought this
person was a 'possible'.
(beat)
For me.

KATHY looks genuinely amazed.

KATHY
They found your original?

RUTH
They aren't sure, obviously. But
Rodney said the resemblance was
really striking.

KATHY sits beside RUTH on the bed.

KATHY
My God, Ruth.

RUTH
I know.

KATHY
What are you going to do?

RUTH
Rod and Chrissie want to drive me
back up there, so I can see for
myself. Tommy will come, but... I
feel nervous...

KATHY
Do you want me to come too?

This is clearly what RUTH was hoping for.

RUTH
 Would you, Kath? Please say yes.
 I mean, I know it will be strange,
 but it's good for us to get out and
 see the real world, isn't it? And
 if they did find my original, I
 have to try to see for myself.

KATHY cuts in.

KATHY
 Ruth, of course.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A slightly battered estate car drives along an empty Norfolk A-road.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

RODNEY is driving, with CHRISSIE in the passenger seat.

KATHY, TOMMY and RUTH are in the back.

RODNEY
 So - exactly how much experience
 have you guys had with the outside?

RUTH
 Quite a lot.

TOMMY
 No we haven't!

RUTH
 We did a lot of role-playing
 exercises in our last year at
 Hailsham...

TOMMY
 They don't count.

RUTH
 (continuing)
 ... and we had three excursions.

RODNEY and CHRISSIE exchange a glance.

RODNEY
 Okay. Well, don't feel scared.
 There's really nothing to it.

RUTH
We aren't scared.

RODNEY
Good.

CUT TO -

INT. CAFE - DAY

KATHY, RUTH, TOMMY, RODNEY and CHRISSIE all sit around a table in a small seaside cafe for lunch.

A WAITRESS is taking their order.

RODNEY
I'll get sausage, egg, and chips.

The WAITRESS nods and turns to TOMMY - who looks slightly panicked, as if confronted with an elaborate menu at an intimidating French restaurant. So he defaults to RODNEY'S order.

TOMMY
Sausage, egg, and chips, please.

KATHY
(quickly)
Yes. Sausage, egg, and chips.

RUTH
(quickly)
Sausage, egg, and chips for me too.

CHRISSIE laughs.

CHRISSIE
I suppose I'd better get the same.

WAITRESS
Right. Five sausage, egg and chips. Drinks?

A beat.

Then KATHY, RUTH and TOMMY all look to RODNEY.

RODNEY
Five cokes, please.

INT. CAFE - LATER

The five of them eat their lunch.

TOMMY seems distracted by the sight of the sea and the shore line, just outside the window.

They are eating in silence.

Then CHRISSIE shoots a glance at RODNEY, who nods, almost imperceptibly.

KATHY sees it.

CHRISSIE

You know, there's something I've been wanting to talk to you lot about. The problem is that back there, at the Cottages, it's impossible. Someone is always listening in.

Something about CHRISSIE'S tone feels a little over-casual. Again, KATHY notices this - and also the way RODNEY has leaned forwards, and is now watching RUTH closely.

CHRISSIE

So - it was just something we had heard about Hailsham students. Someone was saying that some Hailsham students, in the past, had managed to get a deferral. Apparently, those Hailsham students could have their first donation put back by three, or even four years.

(beat)

As long as they qualified.

CHRISSIE pauses, and checks the faces of KATHY, TOMMY and RUTH, for any clue that they know what she is talking about.

RODNEY

If there was a boy and a girl, and they were in love with each other - really, properly in love, and you could prove it - then you would be given a few years together, before you began your donations.

CHRISSIE

I suppose -

CHRISSIE can no longer maintain the enforced casualness of her voice.

CHRISSIE
- you lot would know about that.
Being from Hailsham. You'd know
the rules about that sort of thing.

RODNEY
Who is it you go to? Who would you
talk to if you wanted to apply?

Silence.

Then KATHY says, delicately:

KATHY
There were lots of stories in
Hailsham. I don't think many of
them turned out to be true.

A flash of anger in RODNEY'S face.

RODNEY
Oh, come on. Do you expect us to
believe that? Everyone knows
Hailsham is special. So what is
it? Why keep all these things to
yourself?

KATHY
Hailsham was special.
(aware that Ruth is
watching her)
But I don't remember hearing
anything like that.

EXT. SEAFRONT CAFE - DAY

Exterior shot of the seafront cafe, and the estate car parked outside it.

EXT. SHORELINE - DAY

Waves lap on a shingle beach.

FADE TO -

EXT. STREET - DAY

KATHY, TOMMY, RUTH, CHRISSIE and RODNEY are walking down a street in a seaside town.

There is a sense that they are following RODNEY...

... and RODNEY isn't very sure where he's going.

He turns back to them, talking to no one in particular.

RODNEY

I probably won't be able to find this office again. In fact, I can't even be sure this is the right town.

RUTH is looking quietly desperate.

RUTH

Please do try to remember, Rod.

RODNEY

I'm doing my best. I'm just saying: none of this is looking very familiar.

KATHY walks up to RODNEY and speaks quietly but firmly to him.

KATHY

Rod - I hope you didn't make up this possible for Ruth, just to create the opportunity to ask us about Hailsham.

RODNEY

I wasn't making it up.

KATHY

Then I equally hope you are not failing to find the office as a punishment for us not knowing about this deferral scheme.

RODNEY

... Of course I'm not.

KATHY

Then *find* the office. *Now*.

RODNEY nods, clearly a little taken aback by KATHY'S tone.

RODNEY
It may have been down here.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

On RODNEY'S FACE.

RODNEY
... Yes.

He turns to the others.

RODNEY
Yes. That's it.

The five of them are looking towards an office building, over the road.

The office is glass-fronted, and through the window we can see a large, open-plan room, with a dozen desks arranged in irregular L-patterns.

Some of the OFFICE WORKERS are moving between the desks, chatting. Others have pulled their swivel chairs together, and are drinking coffee or eating sandwiches.

The sight of these workers - the sight of these normal lives, unfolding behind the glass - transfixes the five young adults.

KATHY
... Do you think it's their lunch break.

TOMMY
It must be...

With KATHY, RUTH, TOMMY, RODNEY and CHRISSIE, we watch the OFFICE WORKERS for a while.

The way their mouths move. Smiling, talking.

The way their eyebrows raise, or the way they shake their heads.

The way they loosen their ties, or roll up their shirt sleeves.

They way they drink their coffee.

We are broken out of the moment by RUTH.

RUTH
 (quiet)
 Oh God. I think I see her.

We see what RUTH sees.

A WOMAN, about thirty years older than RUTH, in her late forties.

And there is a resemblance there. Facially, and in the way she has tied her hair...

... but the resemblance is not striking.

RODNEY
 Yes. That's her.

But it *isn't*. This woman is not RUTH'S genetic match, with thirty years of age on her. And KATHY knows it.

The five continue watching the WOMAN for several moments...

... then one of the other OFFICE WORKERS, a MAN, notices the five young adults across the road, all staring in at them.

The MAN nudges the WOMAN beside him, and gives a slightly uncertain wave.

This gesture breaks the spell over KATHY, RUTH, TOMMY, RODNEY and CHRISSIE...

... and as one, they all turn and start to walk away.

INT. CAR - EVENING

The sun is going down as they drive through Norfolk, back towards the Cottages.

RUTH
 It wasn't her.
 (beat)
 Or - I'm not her.

KATHY
 ... No. You aren't.

TOMMY
 But it was close, wasn't it? I mean, you could see why Rod and Chrissie thought she might have been a possible.

RUTH
 Oh shut up, Tommy. It wasn't
 close. It wasn't close at all.

An awkward beat.

Then RUTH continues - cold anger growing in her voice.

RUTH
 And I knew it wouldn't be her
 before we even got there. It was
 never going to be her. They never,
 ever model us from people like that
 woman.

KATHY
 Ruth - don't -

But RUTH isn't going to stop now.

RUTH
 We all know it. We just never say
 it. We're modelled from trash.
 Junkies, prostitutes, winos,
 tramps. Convicts, maybe, so long
 as they aren't psychos.

RUTH turns away from the others, to look out of the windows.

RUTH
 If you want to look for possibles,
 if you want to do it properly, then
 look in the gutter. That's where
 we come from.

EXT. ROAD - EVENING

The car drives through flat, open countryside.

FADE TO -

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

KATHY is cooking bacon over the stove.

A couple of other faces from the Cottages are sat at the
 kitchen table, eating their dinner.

Coming from the living room, we hear the sound of raised
 voices.

An argument.

We can't make out the words, but we can recognise the voices as RUTH and TOMMY. It sounds as if RUTH is doing most of the shouting.

People around the dining table look round at the noise, then exchange glances, then go back to whatever they were doing.

KATHY slides the BACON out of the frying pan onto two slices of white bread, already buttered, then pushes the two slices together.

INT. STAIRS - NIGHT

KATHY climbs the stairs, carrying her bacon sandwich up to her room.

She can hear the argument more clearly here, because the living room door is open.

TOMMY (O.S.)

(calmer)

It's just not like that, Ruth. It never was.

RUTH (O.S.)

(angry)

So what is it like, Tommy? Spell it all out for me.

INT. KATHY'S ROOM - NIGHT

KATHY lies on her bed.

She's wearing a cassette-playing Walkman.

We can't hear the music, but in her hands is the tape box for the JUDY BRIDGEWATER ALBUM, bought by TOMMY in the sales, years ago.

FADE TO -

INT. FRONT HALL - EARLY MORNING

KATHY sits in the front hall of the Cottages, pulling on a pair of Wellington boots.

She then stands, and opens the front door.

It's a beautiful morning outside. The sun is just coming up.

TOMMY

Where are you going?

KATHY turns and sees TOMMY standing in the hallways behind her.

KATHY

I thought I'd go for a walk.

TOMMY

... Does that mean you want to be alone? Or can I come too?

INT. TOMMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RUTH stands at the window of TOMMY'S room, peering out of a gap in the curtains...

... watching TOMMY and KATHY walking away from the Cottages, towards the fields.

EXT. FIELDS - EARLY MORNING

KATHY and TOMMY walk across a field that shimmers with spider webs and dew.

TOMMY

Chrissie and Rod are pretty obsessed with this rumour, aren't they?

KATHY

The one about people having their donations deferred if they're really in love.

TOMMY nods.

TOMMY

I was thinking about it again last night. And I really don't remember anyone talking about it at Hailsham.

KATHY

No, nor do I.

Beat.

TOMMY

But then I started to think, there were a lot of things that didn't make sense back then. And if this rumour was true, it might explain quite a lot.

KATHY

What kind of things?

TOMMY

Well - the Gallery for instance. We never got to the bottom of it, what the Gallery was for.

Beat.

TOMMY

Pictures, poetry, sculptures. It tells you something about yourself. That's the point about art, isn't it? It says what's inside you.

KATHY

That's what they used to tell us. It reveals your soul.

TOMMY

Exactly. Your soul.

(beat)

So suppose for a moment that the rumour is true. A special arrangement has been made for Hailsham students. If they're in love.

TOMMY stops walking, and turns to KATHY.

TOMMY

Then there would have to be a way to judge if they're telling the truth, and not just lying to put off their donations.

Beat.

TOMMY

Well that's what the Gallery would be for. In the Gallery, they can find out everything about us that they need to know.

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)
So if we say we're in love, they
can look into our souls, and
they'll know if it's real love, or
just a lie.

Beat.

KATHY
That's a strange idea, Tommy...

TOMMY
Is it? I don't see why it's
stranger than any other idea.

KATHY
... and didn't Miss Lucy tell you
that making art for the Gallery
wasn't important?

TOMMY
Yes. She did. But look what
happened to her.

A moment between TOMMY and KATHY.

Looking at each other. Standing still in the early morning
light.

KATHY
So - are you thinking of applying.
You and Ruth.

TOMMY
It wouldn't work.

Beat.

KATHY
Why?

On TOMMY.

As if weighing up two possible answers.

Then:

TOMMY
You forget: you had a lot of stuff
in the Gallery over the years, so
they'd know a lot about you.
They'd know if you were properly in
love. But if I applied, they
wouldn't have anything to go on.

KATHY

Did you never get anything into the Gallery? Even when you were very small?

TOMMY shakes his head.

KATHY shivers.

TOMMY

You're cold. Let's start walking again.

They continue across the field.

KATHY

It's all just rumours and theories, Tommy.

TOMMY

I know. But it makes sense. Why else would the guardians have wanted us to work so hard on our art and our poetry?

KATHY

I don't know, Tommy. I really don't.

EXT. COTTAGES - NIGHT

The Cottages, under a clear starry sky.

INT. TOMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

RUTH and TOMMY are having sex.

INT. KATHY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KATHY can hear RUTH and TOMMY.

She puts a pillow over her head.

FLASHCUT TO -

- images from the pornographic magazine.

CUT BACK TO -

KATHY lying on her bed.

She removes the pillow.

And rolls over, away from the wall.

Then JOLTS -

- at the sight of a figure, standing in her doorway.

It's RUTH.

She enters KATHY'S bedroom, and quietly closes the door behind her.

Then she pads over to KATHY'S bed, and kneels down.

The room is only lit by moonlight, filtering through the window.

RUTH'S face, though close to KATHY'S, is in shadow.

A strange beat.

Then RUTH speaks.

RUTH

(quiet)

I know what you think, Kathy.

(beat)

I know you think that you and Tommy would have made a natural couple. And you believe there's a chance that Tommy and I will split up some day. And when we do, perhaps that will be your chance with Tommy. A chance to do it right this time.

RUTH'S hand reaches out, and gently brushes against KATHY'S hair.

RUTH

(quiet)

But the thing is, Kathy, although Tommy really likes you as a friend, he just doesn't see you *that way*.

RUTH laughs softly.

RUTH

(quiet)

Tommy told me all about the porno magazines. We had quite a laugh about it.

RUTH voice lowers to barely whisper...

... and she puts her mouth so close to KATHY that she is almost kissing KATHY'S ear.

RUTH
(quiet)
He didn't understand what you were doing. But I did.

A moment later, RUTH stands...

... then leaves, closing the door softly behind her.

A beat, on KATHY'S moonlit face.

Her open eyes.

Then -

FADE TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN

KATHY (V.O.)
By the time Ruth and Tommy finally separated, I had made my decision to train as a carer, so I was hardly ever at the Cottages.

EXT. FIELD - EARLY EVENING

Plastic bags. Litter in barbed wire.

In the field, we can see a figure standing. Too distant to clearly make it out.

But it might be TOMMY.

KATHY (V.O.)
It had never occurred to me that our lives, until then so closely interwoven, could unravel and separate with such speed.

EXT. COTTAGES - DAY

KATHY, aged twenty, is carrying a suitcase out of the front door to the Cottages...

... towards the open boot of a car.

KATHY (V.O.)
If I had known, maybe I'd have kept
tighter hold of them, and not let
unseen tides pull us apart.

A YOUNG MAN helps her with a second suitcase.

From the doorway of the Cottage, two other young people, a BOY and a GIRL, watch them.

We glimpse RUTH watching from an upstairs window.

KATHY kisses the YOUNG MAN who helped her with the suitcase. Then she turns back and waves to the two standing in the doorway -

- who wave back, smiling.

KATHY'S gaze flicks up to the window from which RUTH was watching -

- but RUTH has gone.

KATHY gets into the car...

... and drives away.

FADE TO BLACK

Title:

PART 3: COMPLETION

FADE UP TO -

INT. KATHY'S BEDSIT - NIGHT

KATHY, aged twenty six, is lying on a single bed.

She sleeps fitfully.

KATHY (V.O.)
For the most part, being a carer
has suited me fine.
(MORE)

KATHY (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I can handle the solitude, the
 broken sleep, and the constant
 shuttle from hospital to hospital.

While KATHY sleeps, we see around her bedsit flat.

It is Spartan, tidy, functional, and gives no indication of a life shared with anyone else.

The kitchen and lounge are one room. Through a crack in the drawn curtains, we can see that the flat is located in a small seaside town or village.

There is a sense that KATHY only uses her flat for eating an early breakfast, or a late dinner, and sleeping.

The one suggestion of a life outside work and sleep is, lined on a shelf -

- a collection of different coloured scented candles.

At 5:30 am, KATHY'S bedside alarm goes off.

INT. KATHY'S BEDSIT - EARLY MORNING

KATHY leans against the counter of her kitchenette, eating cereal, gazing absently out of the window.

KATHY (V.O.)
 The true test of a carer is when a donor completes earlier than expected, on the second or even first donation. Many go through the carer training, only to find they aren't cut out for it.

INT. CAR - DAY

KATHY drives along an A-road.

INT. WARD ROOM - DAY

Seen through the doorway, KATHY sits beside a hospital bed.

In the bed is a woman about KATHY'S age. HANNAH.

KATHY (V.O.)
 I'd never say I've become immune to the completions. But they are something I am able to live with.

KATHY and HANNAH are talking quietly, out of our earshot.

As they are talking, a MALE NURSE enters.

The three of them talk for a few moments, then KATHY stands, and kisses HANNAH on each cheek.

EXT. DOVER RECOVERY CENTRE - DAY

The Dover Recovery Centre is in its own grounds.

It is in countryside, but near enough to a motorway to hear the soft rush of traffic, like wind.

INT. WAITING AREA - DAY

KATHY sits on a chair in a waiting area.

She is asleep, dozing with her head resting to the side.

A young FEMALE NURSE approaches.

NURSE

You're Hannah's carer, aren't you?

KATHY stirs, and opens her eyes.

NURSE

Hannah's carer.

KATHY

Yes.

Beat.

KATHY scans the NURSE'S face, and understand immediately what she sees.

NURSE

I'm sorry. It's always hard. But there were complications.

KATHY

What kind of complications?

The NURSE'S expression remains neutral.

NURSE

Unexpected complications.

Beat.

KATHY

Right.

KATHY stands.

She looks very tired.

KATHY

You need me to sign the release.

NURSE

Please.

KATHY follows the NURSE to the ward desk.

INT. WARD DESK - CONTINUOUS

KATHY stands at the ward desk, filling out the forms that the NURSE puts in front of her.

As KATHY writes:

NURSE

Are you going to leave now? We can quite easily provide you with a bed tonight if you've got a long drive.

KATHY

I can be back home in under two hours.

NURSE

Always better to wake at home, isn't it?

KATHY smiles perfunctorily at the NURSE'S polite small talk, and starts on the next form -

- then seems to notice something.

It's on the PATIENT REGISTER just behind the desk.

She stops what she's doing, and picks the register up.

NURSE

Is it someone you know?

KATHY

Yes. Actually, we grew up together.

NURSE

Oh.

Beat.

KATHY

How is she?

NURSE

... Were you close?

KATHY

Very close as children. Though we haven't seen each other now for nearly ten years.

NURSE

Well, Ruth isn't as strong as we would hope at this stage.

KATHY

(checking the patient form)

She's done two donations.

(looks up)

You think she'll complete on the third.

Beat.

NURSE

I think she wants to complete. And as you know, when they want to complete, they usually do.

INT. RUTH'S WARD ROOM - DAY

KATHY enters RUTH'S ward room.

The bed is empty.

The room feels very still.

KATHY walks up to the bed. On the bedside table is a glass of water, half-full, and an open copy of a novel, the spine bent back to keep it's place.

KATHY checks over her shoulder, then opens the bedside table drawer.

She sees a wrist-watch, and some hair-clips...

... and a photo of Hailsham, showing RUTH, KATHY and TOMMY, aged eleven.

KATHY reacts.

Then shuts the drawer.

Almost as soon as she has shut the drawer, KATHY hears a noise in the corridor outside, and turns -

- just as RUTH arrives at the door to her room, pushing herself along on her wheelchair.

RUTH freezes at the sight of KATHY. Momentarily stunned, dislocated.

For a moment, they gaze at each other.

Then the moment is broken -

- as a smile breaks over RUTH'S face.

RUTH

Kathy.

EXT. DOVER RECOVERY CENTRE - DAY

KATHY pushes RUTH through the grounds of the Dover Recovery Centre.

A tarmac path winds through close-cut lawns and neat flower beds.

RUTH

So - you're an experienced carer now, Kathy. Quite well-known, too. I've heard you talked about. I've kept tabs on you over the years.

(beat)

And Tommy too.

KATHY

What do you hear about Tommy?

RUTH

That he's done his second donation too. Just like me. And apparently, he's doing very well on it. Apparently, he's in better shape than some after their first donation.

KATHY

Good old Tommy. I'm not surprised.

RUTH

... Are you surprised at me?

(beat)

I expect I look a bit broken, Kath.

KATHY makes no response.

RUTH

But that's okay. I'm not sure I'd want to survive the third donation anyway. You hear things, don't you?

KATHY

... What kind of things?

RUTH

Oh, you know. How maybe, after the fourth donation, even if you've technically completed, you're still conscious in some sort of way. And then you find out there are more donations. Plenty of them. Except there are no more recovery centres, and no more carers. There's just watching, and waiting. Until they switch you off.

(beat)

I don't think I fancy that.

Silence.

RUTH

Is it the end of the day already?

KATHY stops pushing, and looks up to the sky.

The sun is low.

RUTH

It's funny. Over the last few months, I've probably thought about you every day. Hoping I'd see you. And actually I felt sure I would. It seemed impossible that I'd complete without seeing you one last time.

Beat.

KATHY
 It's not the last time, yet, Ruth.
 They offered me a bed here. I was
 planning to stay the night anyway.

INT. RUTH'S WARD ROOM - DAY

The following morning.

KATHY is peeling an orange, watched by RUTH - who is lying in her bed, propped up on pillows.

KATHY pulls the segments neatly apart, then hands them to RUTH.

RUTH smiles.

RUTH
 I knew you'd be a good carer. Your
 donors are very lucky.

KATHY smiles back.

RUTH
 Look - I was lying awake last
 night, and I suddenly had an idea
 that we'd take a trip together.

KATHY
 Where to?

RUTH
 (casual)
 I didn't much think of where. Just
 a trip.

A moment.

RUTH
 Though a place did occur to me.
 One of the boys on the next floor
 was telling me about it. It's near
 the Kingsfield recovery centre.

KATHY reacts slightly to the name Kingsfield.

KATHY
 Is it the boat? The boat stranded
 in the marshes.

RUTH
 You've heard about it too?

KATHY
 From a carer who had worked there.
 (beat)
 It's quite a drive from here. Are
 you sure you're up to it?

RUTH
 Quite sure.

Beat.

KATHY
 (gently)
 And do you suppose, if we're
 driving all that way, we should
 think about calling in on Tommy?
 Seeing as he's staying at
 Kingsfield.

Another beat - then RUTH smiles.

RUTH
 All right, Kathy. I did know he
 was there. I told you I'd been
 keeping tabs on both of you.
 (beat)
 Have you seen him?

KATHY
 Not since the Cottages.

RUTH nods.

RUTH
 No. Neither have I.

FADE TO -

EXT. GATES - DAY

Large, automated cast iron gates.

A sign reads: *Kingsfield Recovery Centre*

The gates start to swing open, and KATHY'S car drives
 through.

INT. CAR - DAY

KATHY drives up towards the front of the main building.

Outside the front doors, there is a group of four people, patients, standing and chatting.

RUTH makes a sudden sharp intake of breath.

RUTH
Look. There he is.

One of the figures is TOMMY. Older, heavier than the last time we saw him. But entirely recognisable.

He turns to watch the approaching car.

RUTH
Do you think he's recognised us through the glass?

As if in answer, TOMMY lifts his hand, as if shielding his eyes from overhead light, and squints at them.

This sends RUTH into a slight panic.

RUTH
What do we do? Do we get out? No, no, let's not get out.

But KATHY has already opened the door.

We stay in the car with RUTH -

- who watches, like a silent film, as TOMMY breaks into a jog towards KATHY.

And then hugs her.

EXT. KINGSFIELD RECOVERY CENTRE - DAY

Now we are with TOMMY and KATHY...

... as KATHY is spun round by TOMMY'S embrace -

- so that she now faces RUTH, watching through the car windscreen.

RUTH face is oddly blank, almost frozen, as if she is watching people in a play.

KATHY
Ruth's in the car.

TOMMY pulls back from KATHY, and goes to open the passenger door...

... and now it is KATHY'S turns to watch through the windscreen, as TOMMY leans in and kisses RUTH on each cheek.

It is a different kind of greeting. More restrained. And KATHY can see that.

EXT. NARROW COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

KATHY'S car drives down a narrow, winding country road. Almost a dirt-track.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

KATHY drives, with RUTH still in the passenger seat, and TOMMY in the back seat.

TOMMY

I can't believe I have the two of you here. Does it feel to you like we're back at Hailsham again? Like no time has passed?

KATHY

No. It doesn't.

TOMMY laughs.

TOMMY

No, it doesn't at all, does it! It feels really weird.

(beat)

But good weird!

TOMMY laughs again.

TOMMY

So I suppose you both heard that Hailsham was closed.

KATHY

Three years ago, wasn't it?

TOMMY

From what you hear, the new schools are very different. Like battery farms, they say.

(beat)

I'm sure it's an exaggeration.

KATHY

We always were the lucky ones.

RUTH is looking out of the passenger window a little anxiously, as the narrow road gets rougher and more overgrown.

RUTH
Are you sure this is the right way?

KATHY
Yes. I'm sure.

EXT. NARROW COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

KATHY stops the car.

The dirt track has come to an end.

KATHY and TOMMY exit the car.

RUTH opens her door and peers out.

Again, we see the same slight panic in RUTH that we saw when they arrived at Kingsfield and saw TOMMY. It is as if, over the intervening years, all her power and authority has gone.

RUTH
My wheelchair is going to be
useless here.

TOMMY
It's okay. We'll carry you.

RUTH sees that the way ahead is blocked by an and tangled barbed wire fence.

RUTH
Oh no. No one said anything about
this. No one said anything about
barbed wire.

TOMMY
Ruth, just relax.

INT. FOREST - DAY

KATHY and TOMMY carry RUTH, with one of her arms around each of their shoulders.

RUTH is not paralysed - she just has very little power in her legs. But the effort for TOMMY and KATHY is considerable.

RUTH
Kath - really, are you absolutely
sure -

KATHY snaps slightly.

KATHY
Oh do be quiet, Ruth. I've already
told you I'm sure.

TOMMY
Yes, Ruth. For God's sake.

RUTH closes her mouth, and sinks a little deeper into
herself.

EXT. SAND DUNES - DAY

The three of them exit the forest...

... into sand dunes.

And there, a little way ahead of them, is a BOAT.

An old fishing vessel - sat in the dunes as if in a snapshot.
Listing slightly. Paint peeling, rusting, and rotting.

TOMMY
(quiet)
Wow.

KATHY and TOMMY lower RUTH to a seated position on the bank
of a dune overlooking the boat.

Then they sit beside her.

For a few moments, they just look at the boat, taking it in.

RUTH
It's just as they described it.

KATHY
I wonder how it got here...

TOMMY
Maybe this is what Hailsham looks
like now.

Beat.

TOMMY

Do you ever hear, Kath. About the other students from Hailsham?

KATHY

Sometimes.

TOMMY

I heard that Amanda completed on her first donation.

RUTH

I think that happens more than they ever tell us.

KATHY

There's no conspiracy. It does happen sometimes. But it's not common.

TOMMY keeps gazing at the boat.

TOMMY

There was a guy, at my centre. He always worried he wouldn't make it past his first donation. But it all turned out fine. He's come through his third now, and he's completely all right.

(beat)

It's funny. I don't think I'd have been a good carer. But in a way I think I'm a pretty good donor.

RUTH

Well, it's what we're *supposed* to be doing, isn't it?

A beat.

Then:

RUTH

I'd like you both to forgive me. I don't expect you to.

A long silence.

None of them look at each other.

Then:

KATHY
... Forgive you for what?

RUTH
Keeping you and Tommy apart.

Silence.

RUTH
It should have been you two
together. I always knew it, as far
back as I can remember. But I kept
you apart. It wasn't just because
of the rumours about deferrals. It
was because I was jealous. You had
real love, and I didn't. And -

RUTH takes a breath. This is the truth, and it's hard.

RUTH
I didn't want to be the one that
was left alone.

Silence.

RUTH
It's the worst thing I ever did.
(beat)
And now I want to put it right.

TOMMY
(quiet)
I don't know how you can do that,
Ruth.

RUTH
I can. If the two of you get a
deferral.

Tears start running down KATHY'S face, and she wipes them
away quickly.

KATHY
It's too late for that. Way too
late. It's stupid to even think
about it.

RUTH
It's not too late, Tommy. You tell
her.

TOMMY says nothing.

RUTH

You'll see. Both of you. I wanted to do this trip because I had something to give you.

RUTH reaches into her pocket and pulls out a crumpled piece of paper.

RUTH

Tommy - you'd better take this.

TOMMY

What is it?

RUTH

It's Madame's address. That's who you apply to. That's who you have to go and see.

TOMMY

... How did you get this?

RUTH

It wasn't easy. But I've had years to think about what I did, and years to work out how to make it better.

(beat)

Now it's up to you two.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

A breeze whips up sand around the fishing boat.

KATHY, TOMMY and RUTH have gone.

FADE TO -

EXTREME CLOSE UP

- of a drawing.

Many thousands of careful pen-strokes build up to depict an ELEPHANT standing in tall grass.

It is oddly similar to the clumsy drawing that TOMMY did as a child. In fact, compositionally it is the same.

But this drawing shows the opposite of clumsiness. If anything, it shows a meticulous care, bordering on obsessive.

And there is something strange about the surface of the elephant. It is drawn as if it is reflective, or metallic.

TOMMY (O.S.)
What do you think?

INT. KINGSFIELD/TOMMY'S WARD ROOM - DAY

KATHY sits on the floor of TOMMY'S room in Kingsfield.

She is surrounded by more of these intricate black and white pictures, all depicting different animals. But the one she holds is of the elephant.

TOMMY
I started doing them when we were in the Cottages. After that trip to find Ruth's possible. I realised, you see. If I was ever going to apply to a deferral, I'd need something to show them.
(beat)
I've done hundreds over the years. I never showed anyone until now. They were my secret.
(beat)
Like you reading those porno magazines.

KATHY looks up.

KATHY
You remember that?

TOMMY
I remember.

KATHY
... Ruth said you didn't understand what I was doing.

TOMMY
No. I think *she* didn't understand what you were doing. She thought you were looking at the dirty pictures in order to find out about sex. To find out what you were missing.
(beat)
But I knew you were looking for your original.

Beat.

KATHY

I used to get these huge urges to have sex. Sometimes they were so powerful I thought I'd do it with anyone.

(beat)

So I thought that had to tell me something. Something about what kind of person I was modelled from. I guessed the magazines would be the most likely place I'd find her.

TOMMY

You know those urges are natural, don't you? Normal. We all had them. You know that now.

KATHY

Yes. I know that now.

(beat)

Most often I thought of doing it with you.

TOMMY leans forwards, and kisses KATHY.

KATHY kisses him back.

FADE UP TO -

INT. KINGSFIELD/TOMMY'S WARD ROOM - NIGHT

TOMMY and KATHY lie together on TOMMY'S bed.

TOMMY

What's the plan, Kath? Have we got one?

KATHY

We just go there. Next week, I'll take you lab tests. I'll sign you out for the whole day. And we'll visit Madame on the way back.

TOMMY nods.

TOMMY

If we get this - she gives us the deferral - and she gives us, say, three years, just to ourselves... what do we do? Where will we go?

KATHY

I don't know. Maybe they'll send us back to the Cottages. Or maybe they have a separate place for people like us. We'll have to wait and see.

TOMMY

We'll have to decide which of my pictures to take. We'll only take the best. Maybe six or seven or them.

KATHY

Good.

KATHY nestles closer to TOMMY.

KATHY

It's decided then.

FADE TO -

INT. OPERATING CHAMBER

RUTH is strapped to an operating table.

She is surrounded by SURGEONS and NURSES, who are operating on her opened torso.

Her eyes are open, but glazed.

CUT TO -

INT. CAR - DAY

KATHY and TOMMY sit in the car -

- looking at a red brick terraced house.

A woman is outside the house, weeding large terra-cotta planters in the front garden.

The woman is MADAME.

EXT. MADAME'S HOUSE - DAY

KATHY and TOMMY approach the front gate.

MADAME doesn't appear to notice them.

KATHY

Madame.

MADAME starts - and looks up. Confused.

KATHY

Sorry. I didn't mean to startle you. But we were at Hailsham. I'm Kathy. This is Tommy.

(beat)

We haven't come to give you any trouble.

MADAME

From Hailsham...

(beat)

If you haven't come to give me trouble, then why are you here?

TOMMY

We came to talk to you. I've brought you some things.

TOMMY lifts his bag.

TOMMY

Some things you might want for your Gallery.

A long beat, as MADAME gazes at them, head tilted slightly.

Then she nods.

MADAME

Very well, then. Come inside.

INT. MADAME'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The inside of the house is dark, and MADAME doesn't switch on the lights.

The interior is lit by what light filters through the net curtains.

It reveals a Victorian living room, with period furniture, and a feeling of dust and age.

A large watercolour of Hailsham is hung above the fireplace.

MADAME takes a seat in an armchair beside the fireplace, and KATHY and TOMMY sit on the sofa opposite.

A beat, as they three of them regard each other.

Then:

MADAME

I remember you both. Kathy, a bright girl, and so creative. Tommy, a big heart. And terrible rages.

(beat)

So you're in love.

TOMMY

Yes!

TOMMY turns to KATHY, encouraged. Then back to MADAME.

TOMMY

That's exactly right, we're in love. True love. Verifiable.

MADAME

Verifiable. I see.

(beat)

Go on.

TOMMY

Well, we'd heard about the deferrals. And we'd worked out the purpose of the Gallery.

MADAME

Tell me the purpose.

TOMMY

To use our art from Hailsham to look into our souls, which would verify that we deserved a deferral.

MADAME does not react.

TOMMY

The trouble is, I was a bit mixed up in those days. I didn't really do any art, so you never took anything. I know that's my fault, and it's probably much too late...

He reaches down and opens his bag.

TOMMY

... but I brought some things with me now.

He starts to lay the drawings out on the floor for MADAME to see.

TOMMY

Some were done quite recently, but a lot of them are several years old, so there's a spread. And you should have Kath's stuff already. She got plenty into the Gallery, didn't you, Kath?

ON KATH -

- looking at MADAME.

She's a step ahead of TOMMY. Realising the mistake that she and TOMMY have made. Perhaps because, deep down, she already knew.

MADAME

I'm sorry.

(beat)

I don't know what to do at this point. I never know what to do. Should I let you continue, or should I stop you now?

TOMMY is motionless, holding one his drawings in his hand.

MADAME

I used to get two or three couple a year. But not so much these days.

(beat)

You're the first for quite a while.

TOMMY still doesn't quite understand.

TOMMY

To apply for deferral?

KATHY

(quiet)

There are no deferrals, Tommy.

TOMMY looks at KATHY, uncomprehending.

Then back at MADAME. Who gently confirms.

MADAME

There are no deferrals. And there never have been.

Beat.

MADAME

We didn't have the Gallery in order to look into your souls. We had the Gallery in order to see if you had souls at all.

In the silence, MADAME stands.

She goes to the Hailsham watercolour above the fireplace, and gazes at it a moment.

MADAME

We at Hailsham were the last group to examine the ethics of donations. We thought we could prove that the donor children were as human as the people their organs would one day save.

(beat)

But it was all a mistake. Because we were providing an answer to an ethical question that no one was asking.

MADAME turns back to TOMMY and KATHY.

MADAME

You have to understand, a great many diseases have been cured now for thirty years. Cancer used to kill almost everyone. Now, in the Western world at least, it kills almost no one at all.

(beat)

You see, it's not an ethical issue. It's just about the way we are. If you ask people to return to darkness, the days of lung cancer, and breast cancer, and motor neurone disease...

(she shrugs)

... they simply say no.

Beat.

MADAME

Do you understand?

KATHY

Yes.

MADAME turns to TOMMY.

MADAME
Your drawings are very good. If
you want, I'll keep them.

TOMMY doesn't answer.

He just stares blankly into space.

EXT. MADAME'S HOUSE - DAY

TOMMY and KATHY leave MADAME'S house.

TOMMY walks ahead of KATHY, straight to the car parked
outside, and gets inside.

KATHY pauses at the doorway, where MADAME stands.

KATHY
Thank you for talking to us.

MADAME says nothing.

Beat.

KATHY
I believe I can guess what you're
thinking.

MADAME reacts, slightly dreamily, as if she has momentarily
lost focus.

MADAME
Tell me.

KATHY
There was a time you saw me. It
was one afternoon, in the
dormitories. There was no one else
around, and I was playing this
tape. This music.

MADAME smiles distantly.

MADAME
Yes.
(beat)
I still think about that occasion
from time to time.

KATHY
... So do I.

A beat.

Then MADAME reaches out, and touches KATHY'S cheek.

MADAME

You poor creatures. I wish I could help you. But you're by yourselves now.

INT. CAR - EARLY EVENING

KATHY and TOMMY drive in silence through countryside, back towards Kingsfield.

Shadows are long. The countryside is bathed in the last of the day's sunlight.

Fields line the road on either side.

Fences line the fields.

And caught in the barbed wire...

... are hundreds of abandoned plastic bags.

TOMMY

Could you stop the car?

KATHY turns to TOMMY, but TOMMY is looking directly ahead, his gaze fixed on an indeterminate point.

KATHY slows the car, pulls over to the side of the road.

They stop on a small grass verge.

Without saying another word, TOMMY gets out of the car, and shuts the door behind him.

Leaving KATHY in a little bubble of silence.

She watches as TOMMY climbs over the barbed wire fence, and walks some distance into the field.

Then, just as he did as young boy, on the playing field -

- he throws his head back and starts to scream at the sky.

Insulated from the sound, KATHY watches.

CUT TO -

INT. OPERATING CHAMBER

RUTH still lies on the operating table.

Suddenly, there is a flood of blood hemorrhaging from her open torso.

An immediate commotion among the NURSES and SURGEONS -
- trying to stem the flow.

One SURGEON jams his hand into RUTH'S chest-cavity, and tries to clamp an artery.

Another SURGEON hurriedly attempts to complete the organ removal procedure he was working on before the hemorrhage started, while a NURSE uses a vacuum to suck away the excess blood. But nothing is going to stop RUTH from dying.

RUTH blinks once.

Then the alarm on the heart-rate monitor starts to sound.

EXT. KINGSFIELD RECOVERY CENTRE - NIGHT

KATHY and TOMMY stand by KATHY'S car.

They embrace, holding each other tightly for several moments.

Then:

TOMMY
I do love you, Kathy. I always
have.

KATHY
I always loved you too.

FADE TO BLACK

BLACK SCREEN

KATHY (V.O.)
Tommy completed on his fourth
donation.

CUT TO -

EXT. ROAD - DAY

KATHY'S car is driving along an empty road.

KATHY (V.O.)
I've been given my notice now. My
first donation is in six weeks.

INT. CAR - DAY

KATHY isn't sobbing, but her eyes are filling with tears.

KATHY (V.O.)
What I'm not sure about is whether
our lives have been so different
from the lives of the people we
save. We all end up dying.

She pulls over to the side of the road, and gets out of the car.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

KATHY stands by the roadside, collecting herself.

KATHY (V.O.)
And none of us really understand
what we've lived through. Or feel
we've had enough time.

As she stands there, she sees another car approaching from the opposite direction.

She watches it get closer.

And closer.

Until the vehicle is about to flash past her -

- and at that moment, KATHY gets a glimpse of the WOMAN behind the wheel.

It's her.

There's a man sat in the passenger seat, but his face isn't clear, obscured by the reflection on the windshield.

And in the back is a young kid, strapped into a child-seat.

Then the car is gone.

END

