

Father

Written by

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F/X:           FADE IN THE SOUND OF SOMEONE  
                  INTERMITTENTLY BANGING THEIR HAND ON  
                  HARD PLASTIC.

CHRISTINE: Stupid thing...

F/X:           CHRISTINE FIDDLES WITH THE REMOTE,  
                  CLICKING DIFFERENT BUTTONS. A DOOR  
                  IS HEARD OPENING FROM THE HALLWAY.

EDDIE:         Hey Mom? It's Eddie!

CHRISTINE: Eddie, the TV isn't working!

F/X:           EDDIE ENTERS THE ROOM.

EDDIE:         What's wrong?

CHRISTINE: The sound won't turn up.

F/X:           CHRISTINE SMACKS THE TV AGAIN.

EDDIE:         Jesus, Mom! Don't break the damn  
                  thing! Sit down over here, come on.

F/X:           CHRISTINE SETTLES DOWN IN A CHAIR.

CHRISTINE: Well what's wrong with it?

EDDIE:         You have it on mute, Mom.

CHRISTINE: Mute?

EDDIE:         Yeah, it's... here just give me the  
                  remote.

CHRISTINE: No no, just show me how to do it.

EDDIE:         Look, you just press that button  
                  there. No not that one, here-

CHRISTINE: Don't coddle me.

EDDIE:         Oh, for fuck-

CHRISTINE: Eddie!

EDDIE:         I'm sorry. I'm just trying to help.

CHRISTINE: I just need you to show me the button.

EDDIE:         Yeah, it's... What are you even  
                  watching anyway?

CHRISTINE: A program.

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EDDIE: What program?

BEAT.

CHRISTINE: What time is it?

EDDIE: Mom, I - it's a quarter to two.

CHRISTINE: Better take Billie for a walk.

EDDIE: Mom, Billie's not... Billie's dead.

CHRISTINE: Oh... Oh yes that's right. Yes.

BEAT.

CHRISTINE: You look awfully tired Eddie.

EDDIE: I'm fine, just didn't really sleep  
last night. Don't worry about it.

CHRISTINE: Where's little Seán? Why didn't you  
bring him with you?

EDDIE: Jesus, he lives with Sally now,  
I've...

F/X: EDDIE RUFFLES AROUND IN A PAPER BAG.

EDDIE: Look, I brought you something from  
work.

CHRISTINE: I miss seeing that boy, he's such a  
dote--

EDDIE: It's Kevin Barry's new book. I know  
you liked his last one, and this  
one's short stories so it won't --

CHRISTINE: Ah, I don't like Kevin Barry.

EDDIE: What are you talking about? You  
loved Night Boat to Tangier.

CHRISTINE: Nah. Too dark.

EDDIE: (sighing) Fine.

F/X: EDDIE DROPS THE BOOK ON THE TABLE.

EDDIE: I thought you'd like it.

CHRISTINE: Did you bring me lunch?

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EDDIE: No, I didn't. Anyway, I gotta head off so --

CHRISTINE: Would you make me something?

EDDIE: No, Mom, I have to head, I just --

CHRISTINE: Oh, please Eddie.

EDDIE: (sighing) Ok, Ok. What do you want?

CHRISTINE: I don't mind.

EDDIE: How about a tuna sandwich? I know we have some -

CHRISTINE: I hate tuna.

EDDIE: What? Since when?

CHRISTINE: I always have! Your father would always make tuna sandwiches for his lunch at work, and I could still smell it off him when he came home. Disgusting.

EDDIE: Right. Well I'll whip up something else.

F/X: EDDIE WALKS OUT OF THE ROOM INTO THE KITCHEN. HE OPENS THE FRIDGE AND STARTS TO RUMMAGE INSIDE.

EDDIE: (calling to Christine) Y'know, you've talked more about my father in the last couple of weeks than you ever have before. And here was me thinking I must have been immaculately conceived.

F/X: EDDIE CLOSSES THE FRIDGE AND PUTS SOME PLASTIC PACKAGING ON THE COUNTER.

CHRISTINE: (from the other room) I have not talked about him!

F/X: EDDIE STARTS MAKING A SANDWICH.

EDDIE: (under his breath) Yes you have.

CHRISTINE: He used to write, you know. He was really quite good. A lot better than Kevin Barry.

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F/X: EDDIE FINISHES MAKING THE SANDWICH  
AND WALKS BACK INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

EDDIE: Well then I guess it's a damn shame  
the world didn't get to see his  
genius, huh?

CHRISTINE: Well, I don't know. He could've  
released a book since then. Oh,  
thank you dear.

EDDIE: "Released"... What?

CHRISTINE: Oh Eddie, did you put mayonnaise in  
this? You know that --

EDDIE: Mom, stop, wait. What do you mean  
"since then".

CHRISTINE: What?

EDDIE: Just now, You just said my father  
could've released something "since  
then".

CHRISTINE: Did I?

EDDIE: But he's dead, right?

BEAT

EDDIE: Mom?

CHRISTINE: Oh, Eddie. I'm quite tired. Could  
you help me up to bed?

EDDIE: Hold on, don't change the subject.  
You've never spoken about this man in  
all the years you've been raising me,  
always said he was dead. Is that the  
truth?

CHRISTINE: Please Eddie, I don't want to -

EDDIE: Is he alive?

CHRISTINE: Oh, I've had enough of this! I'm  
going to bed!

F/X: CHRISTINE GETS UP AND STORMS OUT OF  
THE ROOM.

EDDIE: Mom! You can't just-

F/X: Eddie sighs.

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FADE OUT SCENE.

FADE IN.

F/X: THE BEEPING OF A PHONE RINGING OUT.

MARTHA: (On the other end of the phone)  
Hello?

EDDIE: Hey, Aunt Martha?

MARTHA: Oh, is that Eddie?

EDDIE: Yeah, that's right.

MARTHA: Oh Eddie, how are you? It's been so long!

EDDIE: I'm fine, I'm fine. Look I-

MARTHA: How's little Seán?

EDDIE: Uh, he's well, last I checked. So I was-

MARTHA: And how's Christine?

EDDIE: Ah, she's doing ok. She has good days and bad. So I wanted to talk-

MARTHA: Did you get any of the scones I dropped off? I hope Christine didn't eat them all-

EDDIE: Did you know my father?

BEAT.

MARTHA: Well... yes, of course.

EDDIE: And he's dead.

BEAT.

MARTHA: That's right. Sure haven't we always-

EDDIE: Martha. Is he dead?

MARTHA: I... I don't think it's my place to-

EDDIE: So he's alive then? My dead father?

MARTHA: Eddie, please, you don't understand-

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EDDIE: I understand perfectly. I've been  
lied to my entire life.

MARTHA: No, it's not like-

EDDIE: What's his name?

MARTHA: Eddie...

EDDIE: What. Is. His. Name.

BEAT.

MARTHA: His name is Richard Brooke.

EDDIE: You know where I can find him?

MARTHA: Eddie, you don't want to -

EDDIE: Just stop, ok? I deserve to know.  
After all these years, give me that  
much.

MARTHA: Ok. Ok Eddie. You're an adult, so  
I'll tell you. But you should  
know... these things don't usually  
have happy endings.

EDDIE: Where is he?

FADE OUT SCENE.

F/X: FADE IN AS EDDIE STORMS UP STAIRS,  
AND BURSTS INTO A BEDROOM.

EDDIE: So he's alive?!

CHRISTINE: (Jolting awake) Jesus Eddie! Don't  
give me a heart attack!

EDDIE: You told me he was dead. Dead!

CHRISTINE: What are you talking about?

EDDIE: My father! I've spent all these  
years thinking it was just me and  
you, but he was out there and you  
never told me?

CHRISTINE: Eddie, please. You didn't need to  
know about him. It was better off-

EDDIE: It was better off lying to me?

CHRISTINE: I'm sorry Eddie.

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EDDIE: That's it? Sorry?

CHRISTINE: Eddie, I... I don't... Eddie...

EDDIE: Christ, I've had enough of this.

F/X: EDDIE LEAVES.

CHRISTINE: Eddie! Eddie? Don't leave me...  
please...

FADE OUT SCENE.

F/X: FADE IN AS RAIN BEATS DOWN ON AN  
UMBRELLA. CARS WHOOSH PAST,  
SPLASHING THROUGH PUDDLES OF WATER ON  
THE ROAD. EDDIE SIGHS AS HE STARTS  
WALKING ALONG THE PATH. HE PULLS  
OPEN A DOOR, AND ENTERS A BUILDING.

F/X: EDDIE CLOSES HIS UMBRELLA AND SHAKES  
OFF THE RAIN. HE WALKS ALONG A HARD  
FLOOR, HIS FOOTSTEPS ECHOING. HE  
STOPS.

EDDIE: Hi, I'm here to see Richard Brooke?

NURSE: Sure thing, just sign the log.

F/X: EDDIE CLICKS A PEN AND STARTS  
SCRIBBLING.

NURSE: Friend or family.

BEAT.

EDDIE: Family.

F/X: EDDIE PUTS DOWN THE PEN.

EDDIE: Where can I find him?

NURSE: Should be in the day room, just down  
the hall. If not, just ask one of  
the other nurses.

EDDIE: Thanks.

F/X: EDDIE STARTS WALKING DOWN THE  
HALLWAY. HE REACHES THE DAY ROOM,  
AND ENTERS. THERE'S LOW SOUNDS OF  
ELDERLY PEOPLE MUMBLING, BUT NO ONE  
TALKING VERY LOUD. SOMEONE PLAYS A  
MELANCHOLY PIANO PIECE ON THE OTHER  
SIDE OF THE ROOM.

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EDDIE: Uh, excuse me. Looking for Richard Brooke?... Oh, great. Thanks.

F/X: EDDIE CONTINUES INTO THE ROOM, AND SITS DOWN ON A CHAIR.

EDDIE: Excuse me...

RICHARD: I took them, I took them, ok? I'm not sticking my tongue out to show you again, you'll just have to --

EDDIE: I'm not a nurse. I'm just visiting.

RICHARD: Oh, you Tommy's kid? Well tell your dad to stop playing the piano all the damn time, some of us like a bit of piece and quiet in this place.

EDDIE: No, I'm not... Are you Richard Brooke?

RICHARD: That's right. Who are you?

EDDIE: I'm... Frank. I'm here to...

BEAT.

EDDIE: Did you know Christine Flanagan?

RICHARD: Christine Flanagan? Son, there's not a day that goes by where I don't think about her.

EDDIE: Really?

RICHARD: Oh yeah, absolutely. A stunning woman, so she was. I never loved anyone the way I loved her. And she loved me too. Do you know her?

EDDIE: Yeah, she's... a neighbour of mine. I've been helping her around the house on the occasion.

RICHARD: So she's still...

BEAT.

RICHARD: Not marrying her... that was the biggest mistake of my life.

EDDIE: So why didn't you?

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RICHARD: We were supposed to. Engaged for five years, if you can believe it.

EDDIE: Five years? Wow.

RICHARD: (chuckles) That's right. But you know how it is, things kept coming up. The house, the insurance... we weren't exactly made of money. But those were happy years. It was us against the world. We worked across the street from each other, you know? I was in the butchers and she the bookshop. And we... we used to blow kisses to each other when we would spot each other through the windows during the day. Passers by would sometimes get confused if they'd spot one of us and think it was meant for them.

F/X: RICHARD AND EDDIE BOTH CHUCKLE.

EDDIE: That's... that's really sweet.

RICHARD: Yeah, it was great. I think I still love her, if I'm being honest.

EDDIE: Well she's still --

RICHARD: Then there was the kid.

BEAT.

EDDIE: What kid?

RICHARD: You have kids?

EDDIE: Yeah, I... I have a son.

RICHARD: Planned?

EDDIE: Um... Well...

RICHARD: We never planned it, y'know? We were always on the same page about it. Or so I thought. When she got pregnant it was... I thought we'd both agree: adoption was the only choice. But she wanted to keep it. Wanted to make it work. Do you have kids?

EDDIE: So you left?

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RICHARD: No, no. I tried. I stayed. I loved her after all. I tried it her way. But he was... it was unbearable. He cried, and wailed all the time. We never slept. And when he got a bit older he was such a little... brat. And Christine, well she tended to his every need. Suddenly, it wasn't us against the world. It felt like them against me. She wouldn't talk to me the way she used to, she wouldn't... sleep with me. She loved that boy more than she ever loved me and that... I couldn't take it. And she wouldn't give him up, never even considered it. All those years saying she didn't want kids? A lie. She lied to me all those years.

EDDIE: So you left her to deal with it herself?

RICHARD: No. I tried to fix it. Make everything right. Put the world back to the way it was supposed to be.

F/X: THE PIANO MUSIC STOPS.

EDDIE: What... what does that mean?

RICHARD: I... I ran a bath. Christine wasn't home. So I... I put him in, and... and I...

EDDIE: Jesus...

RICHARD: It... It was the only way. She needed to see what he was... what he was doing to us. He was turning us against each other and... I loved her. I needed her. She didn't understand.

EDDIE: I'm... I have to go.

F/X: EDDIE STANDS UP.

RICHARD: Wait! Why are you asking about her? Who are you?

EDDIE: It doesn't matter.

RICHARD: Can I see her? Christine?

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BEAT.

EDDIE: She's dead.

F/X: EDDIE WALKS AWAY. RICHARD STARTS TO  
CRY.

FADE OUT SCENE.

F/X: FADE IN AS A PHONE DIALS OUT, AND WE  
HEAR IT RINGING OUT. THEN IT CUTS TO  
VOICEMAIL:

SALLY: Hey, it's Sally. I can't come to  
the phone right now, but just leave  
your message at the tone.

F/X: A BEEP.

EDDIE: Hey, uh... it's Eddie. I know I  
don't... look, I was just wondering  
if you could call me back at some  
point? I'd love to talk to Seán.  
Even just for a little while. Um...  
yeah that's it, I guess. Bye.

F/X: EDDIE HANGS UP. HE SIGHS.

FADE OUT SCENE.

F/X: FADE IN AS A DOOR OPENS AND  
FOOTSTEPS TREAD ON A CARPET.  
CHRISTINE STIRS FROM HER SLEEP.

CHRISTINE: Eddie?

EDDIE: Hey, Mom.

BEAT.

CHRISTINE: I thought... I thought you were  
gone.

EDDIE: I'm back.

BEAT.

EDDIE: Hey Mom?

CHRISTINE: Hmm?

EDDIE: Do you remember my night terrors?  
As a kid?

BEAT.

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EDDIE: Well they... they never stopped like I said they did. Not really. They stopped being as frequent as they were when I was little but... I told you they stopped when I moved out because I guess I didn't want you worrying. And Sally always worried when they happened, but I feel she was freaked out more than anything. Me, flailing in my sleep, only to wake up gasping for breath. I feel like... I guess I've always been ashamed. Figured that's not something grown men do. And one night I... I ended up sleepwalking into Seán's room and screaming my head off. He was terrified. I was shaken awake by Sally to see him crying, and I... I'll never forget his face. I never wanted him to be afraid of...

BEAT.

EDDIE: They were always the same, you know? I'd be underwater. And for a moment, it would be beautiful. The sun beaming through the water, blue as far as the eye could see. And then something would grab my leg and just... pull. And I could never see what it was. But it was strong and it just dragged me down into the darkness. The sun and the blue just slipping away. And then I'd wake up and... and you'd be there and...

LONG BEAT.

CHRISTINE: Eddie?

EDDIE: Yeah?

CHRISTINE: Did you feed Billie?

EDDIE: Mom, Billie's... Yeah. Yeah, I fed her.

CHRISTINE: Thank you. Thank you, Eddie.

EDDIE: No problem, Mom.