

THE EIBHLÍN TRADITION

Written by

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Draft 2

EXT. RURAL LANEWAY - DAY

Towering blackberry bushes. Ripe fruit glisten in bunches.

A young hand reaches up, stained in dark purple juice, and pulls a handful of berries from the branches.

Eibhlín (6) reaches up on her tippy toes to the more plump fruit near the top of the bush. By her feet she has a picnic basket with a mound of picked berries.

The head of Eibhlín's stuffed fox friend pokes out from the pocket on her work dungarees.

Eibhlín loses her balance, recovers, reaches up again, and tumbles into the bush with a yelp.

EXT. RURAL LANEWAY - LATER

Pricks of blood seep from grazed knees hugged to Eibhlín's chest. She pokes her wounds gently with still-sticky fingers, and winces.

The basket of picked blackberries lies overturned by her feet.

Eibhlín brushes her fingers past a deeper gash on her cheek, smearing blood across her face.

RUSTLING.

She looks up to see a small fox emerge from the bushes opposite. They both freeze.

INT. KITCHEN COTTAGE - 18 YEARS LATER

Heaps of blackberries are tipped into a sink of water. The sour berries floating at the surface are scooped out in handfuls and deposited in a bowl.

The rest are put simmering in a lipped pot on the gas stove. The thick mixture bubbles as a stained wooden spoon swirls the juice around.

A lemon is squeezed into the mixture.

Hot jam is poured into a collection of varied jars.

Eibhlín O Cleirigh (24) washes the juice off her hands. She looks up through the kitchen window. A thin scar streaks across her left cheek.

Through the window, Granny Eibhlín (78) hunches over a vegetable garden, pulling up carrots with great effort. She pauses to stretch out her back.

A donkey grazes in a field nearby.

The kitchen door opens and closes.

EJ (O.S.)

Eibhlín?

Eibhlín turns away from the sink. Her daughter EJ (6) stands in the doorway, hair nested with twigs and leaves, shoes muddy. Small cuts graze her arms.

A mangled picnic basket droops by her side.

EIBHLÍN

What's this?

She gestures to EJ.

EJ

I fell into the bush.

They stare at each other.

EIBHLÍN

That sucks dude.

EXT. MARKETS - DAY

Colourful market stalls line the coast selling wares: jars of pickled vegetables, knitted clothing, paintings, soaps and cleaning mixture.

Eibhlín lounges behind a stall laden with produce, reading a book. A straw hat shades her face from customers.

Beside her is the sour bowl of unripe blackberries. She takes a handful for snacking.

GRANNY

Eibhlín.

Eibhlín looks up and squints towards Granny. EJ hangs at her side clutching a bag of butterscotch. Plasters cover the scratches on her arms and legs.

EIBHLÍN

Will that not ruin her teeth or something?

GRANNY

Everything in moderation.

She winks at EJ, who beams up at her.

EIBHLÍN

I make the jam. I shouldn't have to sell it too. I'm actually giving too much to the community at this stage.

GRANNY

You enjoy making the jam.

Eibhlín gives Granny a sour look.

GRANNY (CONT'D)

We need a new blackberry basket as well.

EIBHLÍN

EJ should pay for that.

Eibhlín sticks her tongue out at EJ, who returns the gesture. Granny and EJ join Eibhlín behind the stall.

EJ takes a sneaky handful of berries. Her face contorts in sour satisfaction.

From the market, Eibhlín can see small wooden sailboats bobbing along the sea. A few at the coast have docked and are setting up stalls.

GRANNY

How much have you saved now?

EIBHLÍN

Almost enough.

GRANNY

Take me with you?

Eibhlín laughs. Granny pops a handful of sour blackberries in her mouth.

EIBHLÍN

You've travelled.

GRANNY

Not with intention.

EIBHLÍN

What does that mean?

SMALL CHILD

Excuse me Ma'am.

Granny and Eibhlín look down to see a group of small children staring up at them.

EIBHLÍN

Yes?

SMALL CHILD

Can EJ come out to play?

EIBHLÍN

If she wants. EJ!

EJ rushes past and is swallowed up by the crowd.

GRANNY

Stay on the island!

EIBHLÍN

How is she not gonna do that?

Granny starts picking at her lip.

GRANNY

I get paranoid. There are boats.

EIBHLÍN

She doesn't have money.

GRANNY

I don't know, she could sneak on.

Eibhlín peers at EJ, running through the markets with her small friends.

EIBHLÍN

Why? She loves this place.

GRANNY

Let me have my worries please.

EIBHLÍN

They're not good for you.

Eibhlín picks at her lip.

GRANNY

And you have no vices.

EIBHLÍN

I actually don't.

INT. COTTAGE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eibhlín sits in an armchair, her lap covered in thick rope. She knots the material into intricate patterns. A tapestry emerges from her weaving. The cloak reaches down to her feet.

Granny and EJ are curled up together on an armchair. EJ dozes, clutching a stuffed fox teddy, as Granny reads a nature book.

GRANNY

What are you trying to catch, mermaids?

EIBHLÍN

Wouldn't we be doing well for ourselves if I did.

GRANNY

What sort of knots are you doing there?

Eibhlín exhales. Her cheeks puff out.

EIBHLÍN

Ehm. A mixture. There's a lot.

GRANNY

Like what?

EIBHLÍN

Do you really want me to name them all Nan?

GRANNY

I'm just asking you a question, Eibhlín.

EIBHLÍN

Ughh stop asking useless questions then.

GRANNY

So you don't want me to show any interest in what you're doing?

EIBHLÍN

No, it's not. Just. It's an empty question. There's no point in asking something if you're not genuinely interested.

GRANNY

Who says I'm not genuinely interested?

EIBHLÍN

You can tell. It just feels more awkward.

Granny goes silent. For a long time.

GRANNY

What am I meant to say if I
can't think of anything
genuine.

Granny's eyes look helplessly towards Eibhlín.
Eibhlín meets her gaze, mid knot. A little bit of
hurt crosses her face. She shrugs.

EIBHLÍN

It's not a big deal. Nothing
changes. We know everything
about each other.

Granny considers this. She crosses her arms. Eibhlín
goes back to her craft.

GRANNY

Time is a funny thing you know.

EIBHLÍN

That's such a complex way of
saying something. What are you
actually trying to say.

GRANNY

It's just very repetitive.

EIBHLÍN

What have you noticed?

GRANNY

Just some funny things.

Eibhlín looks up from her knotting.

EIBHLÍN

What's happening right now. Say
something that makes sense.

GRANNY

You know. It's easier to notice
these sort of patterns when
you've lived through them
yourself.

She stares at Eibhlín.

GRANNY (CONT'D)

You have no idea what's ahead.

EIBHLÍN

Do you?

GRANNY

I could guess. And I think I'd be right.

EIBHLÍN

What is it?

GRANNY

You'll see.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two single beds and a wardrobe.

Eibhlín carries a mumbling EJ to bed and tucks her in. She straightens up.

From her pocket she takes a handful of change. She counts it up and opens her wardrobe. The base is lined with jam jars filled with various coins and notes. On the door of the wardrobe is a chart tracking how much Eibhlín has saved.

She marks a line on the chart. Only a small amount left to go. She opens the door to leave but stops at EJ's voice.

EJ

(half asleep)

I'm too tired though.

Eibhlín makes her way back to EJ. She crouches down beside her.

EIBHLÍN

You are literally in the perfect place for that.

EJ

What if I don't dream about
foxes?

Eibhlín laughs.

EIBHLÍN

Do you have to dream about
foxes?

EJ

Uh yah.

EIBHLÍN

Okay well. Imagine.. our
sitting room.

INSERT: The sitting room. A mug of tea sits cold on the table where Granny sat. Her book lies open next to it, out from which pokes an envelope.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

You're sitting in your chair,
and you hear a scratching
outside. So you go to
investigate.

INSERT: Granny stands at the front door, wispy curtains blowing in the wind around her. She slides on her shoes absentmindedly.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Outside, through the dark, you
spot a creature - a fox. It's
fur is iridescent.

EJ

I-ri-desent?

EIBHLÍN

It glows. It has glowing fur.
Like a light.

INSERT: Granny walks down towards the front of the garden and disappears into an overgrown path. A white glow creeps through the bushes as she pushes through.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

It turns around and disappears
through the bushes.

EJ

Wait, fox.

EIBHLÍN

You follow it through. You can
see it glowing ahead of you.

INSERT: She emerges through the undergrowth. In front
of her is a small beach. Dark waves lap over the
sand. A full moon shines down on her brightly.

EJ

Where is he going?

EIBHLÍN

You keep following him.

INSERT: Granny's silhouette on the dark beach. She
clutches her chest. Slowly, she lowers herself to the
ground.

Eibhlín straightens up away from EJ. She stirs
slightly.

EJ

(mumbling)

I love you.

Eibhlín looks down at her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eibhlín enters. She looks around and frowns,
confused.

She notices the envelope on the table. It's addressed
to her. Eibhlín opens it to reveal more than enough
for her to fill in her savings chart.

Her face transforms with excitement. She screams
silently and leaps around the room.

A wind blows the front door open with a creak. Eibhlín stops celebrating. Granny's shoes are missing from the mat.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A circular window of stain glass illuminated a plain wooden coffin with a picture of Granny displayed on top.

A PRIEST (30s) stands at the altar and delivers an unconfident sermon.

PRIEST

And so, as eh, Ev-lin, makes her sacred journey into the next, uh, life. We also, um. Reflect, yes - relfect. On our own journey. Towards God.

Eibhlín and EJ sit side by side on a church pew in their Sunday best - tweed jackets and flat caps. Tears well down EJ's face. She clutches to Eibhlín's hands.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A coffin is lowered by rope into a plot. A modest gravestone reads: EIBHLÍN O CLEIRIGH, LOVING GRANDMOTHER.

Eibhlín and EJ look down as the coffin disappears. Eibhlín's face is now expressionless. EJ looks up at her.

EJ

Why do we all have the same name?

Eibhlín exhales.

EIBHLÍN

I think it was a tradition, once.

The priest approaches Eibhlín.

PRIEST
I am eternally sorry for your
loss, Eibhlín.

EIBHLÍN
Thanks, Patrick.

This ruffles the priest slightly.

PRIEST
Yes, eternally sorry.

He bounces up and down slightly on the balls of his
feet, looking around.

Eibhlín cops on and reaches into her bag. She smiles,
and hands him a jar of small coins. He holds it up
hesitantly as Eibhlín and EJ walk away.

START MONTAGE

EXT. MARKETS - DAY

Eibhlín haggles with a vendor for cleaning products.

INT. GRANNY'S ROOM - DAY

Eibhlín stands at the doorway. She clutches a cloth
and cleaning spray.

She turns away from the room.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - DAY

Eibhlín pulls up a carrot. The toppling over
backwards. The carrot is teeny.

EXT. - RURAL LANEWAY - DAY

EJ picks handfuls of berries. She puts them in a
saucepan at her feet.

EXT. MARKETS - DAY

Eibhlín argues with a customer at her stall. They refuse to pay for the teeny carrots.

EXT. COTTAGE GARDEN - DAY

Eibhlín argues with a man on a horse about some rent documentation. She slams the door in his face.

Seconds later she emerges with a frying pan. He scampers.

INT. KITCHEN COTTAGE - DAY

EJ pours the picked blackberries into a pot and begins stirring.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The mason jars of savings dwindle. There is hardly enough to last the next week.

Eibhlín looks on, picking at her lip.

INT. KITCHEN COTTAGE - NIGHT

Eibhlín presents dinner: a small vegetable pie with tiny carrots on the side. A carrot also adorns the top of the pie.

EJ offers a sympathetic smile.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. KITCHEN COTTAGE - DAY

Eibhlín pours blackberry jam into jars while EJ watches on, picking at her lip. Eibhlín puts the pot down and bats EJ's hand away.

EIBHLÍN
Stop doing that.

They admire the batch of jars.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
Looks like the biggest batch
yet! You're like the blackberry
whisperer.

EJ
(whispering)
I'm the everything whisperer.

EIBHLÍN
Surely not.

EJ nods.

EJ
(whispering still)
It's true.

EIBHLÍN
Does the everything whisperer
want to lick the spoon?

EJ gasps, nodding vigorously. She takes the spoon
takes a big lick. Stops suddenly, a face of disgust.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
What? What is it?

EJ doesn't answer.

Eibhlín takes a spoon from the drawer and scoops some
jam leftover from the pot. Her face winces as she
tastes it.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
Oh my god?! Did you only pick
sour blackberries?

Eibhlín looks at the counter. Looks at EJ, who is
picking her lip again.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
Where are the unripe ones?

EJ's face falls. She looks up to Eibhlín in guilt.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

She looks at the messy counter and the jars of unsellable jam.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Ughhh! Wasted! All of it wasted!

She bats EJ's hand away from her mouth.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

I told you not to pick your lip.

EJ

But you do it!

EIBHLÍN

That's different. You're not allowed.

EJ

Granny used to do it too.

EIBHLÍN

Granny's not here anymore.

A beat. They stare at each other. EJ's lip quivers.

Eibhlín roots in the kitchen cupboards for the cleaning spray. She grabs a cloth from the door.

INT. GRANNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eibhlín hovers by the doorframe. She rolls up her sleeves and enters.

Opened windows air out the room.

From the wardrobe, Eibhlín takes out Granny's clothes. Most items go into a cloth bag. A few select cardigans are saved in an apple crate box.

EJ looks on from the doorway before retreating.

Drooping plants on the windowsill are lowered from the windowsill to the vegetable garden outside.

Dirty windows are sprayed and wiped down from inside and out.

A drawer full of documents and letters is tipped into a separate box.

Granny's trinkets are bathed in a soapy basin, dried, and distributed to various boxes. A small glass figure of a fox is kept in the apple crate.

Bedsheets are stripped and piled in a corner.

Dusty surfaces are wiped down with a wet cloth.

Finally, the bare floor is swept.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eibhlín carries in the last of Granny's boxes and puts them with a pile against the wall.

She sits down on the armchair next to the box of documents and leafs through them.

Most are bills and receipts. Amongst them is the deed to the little cottage. In the midst are photographs of Granny, Eibhlín, and EJ. A particularly old photograph captures the toothy smile of a young girl with dungarees clutching a stuffed fox.

Eibhlín pockets the photographs.

Near the bottom of the box are two unopened letters. Curious, Eibhlín examines the return addresses. Both are signed by the same name: YOUR LOVING DAUGHTER, EIBHLÍN O CLEIRIGH.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eibhlín bursts in.

EIBHLÍN

EJ!

The two beds are made. No sign of EJ. Her stuffed fox is tucked into her bed.

INT. KITCHEN COTTAGE - NIGHT

Eibhlín marches in.

EIBHLÍN

EJ?

Her eyes dart around the kitchen. The pots and pans have been cleaned and put away. The surfaces are spotless. The soured batch of blackberry jam sit next to the bin.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - NIGHT

The drooping plants from Granny's room have been pruned and repotted. EJ lies asleep in the soil next to her work.

Eibhlín's shoulder's ease up at the sight. She exhales a sigh of relief.

She looks down at the letters-

INT. BANK - DAY

-nestled in her cloth bag.

Eibhlín retrieves the house deed and slides it across the counter to the bank clerk. Also on the table is Eibhlín's collection of mason money jars.

The bank clerk looks at her.

CLERK

Sorry, what is this?

EIBHLÍN

Oh, a deed. To the cottage owned by my grandmother.

CLERK

Is she. Is she here as well,
or..?

EIBHLÍN

She passed.

CLERK

Right.

The Clerk taps the desk in a drumming pattern.

CLERK (CONT'D)

So. What are we doing here?

EIBHLÍN

I want to sell the house.

CLERK

You want to sell the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eibhlín spreads out a map on the table in front of her. She marks a small island as the start of the journey. The letters sit on the table next to her. One address is clear, but the second only has two legible lines: 43 Trágainimh, Sráidbháile.

On the mainland, she circles two locations. Coiscósta: close to the coast, a house surrounded by fields. Sráidbhaile: much further down the coast, a house near a small village.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Eibhlín packs a bag of belongings: clothes, jewelry, photographs.

EJ packs up her own stuff beside her.

EJ

Should I bring Sionnach's
little boots?

She holds up her stuffed fox, now wearing a little pair of leather shoes.

EIBHLÍN

We're gonna be gone for a while
EJ. Bring anything you would be
really upset about not ever
seeing again.

EJ cocks her head to the side. Eibhlín shrugs.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

In case it's stolen while we're
gone.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - DAY

EJ sits waiting up on the cottage donkey. Her bag of clothes is slung over its back. She lies forward on his neck, petting his ears.

EJ

(sing song)

Sweet sweet Asal. Asal, Asal.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Eibhlín watches them from the window.

She opens the wardrobe door. Inside the mason jars have been replaced with a neat stack of notes. She takes some notes from the roll and folds them into her wallet. The rest is deposited in a pocket in her canvas bag.

EXT. RURAL LANEWAY - DAY

Eibhlín leads EJ on the donkey down the road. Blackberry bushes tower on either side of them.

EJ picks handfuls for snacking as they go.

In the distance, Eibhlín can see their little cottage.

EJ

When will we be there?

Eibhlín laughs.

EIBHLÍN

We can still see our house EJ!

EJ looks at Eibhlín blankly.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Mum's house is ages away.

EJ

Does she know we're coming to visit?

Eibhlín hesitates.

EIBHLÍN

It's a surprise.

EJ

Ooh! Surprise.

They walk a bit farther.

EJ (CONT'D)

How many times have you seen a fox?

EIBHLÍN

I don't know. I haven't counted.

EJ

You lost count?!

EIBHLÍN

Well how many have you seen?

EJ

Just one. We only have one that comes to visit. He's lovely though.

EIBHLÍN

More lovely than other foxes?

EJ

Well I wouldn't know, I've only ever seen him.

EIBHLÍN

Maybe he's actually not lovely then. In comparison to other foxes.

EJ considers this.

EJ

For now he's lovely.

EIBHLÍN

Wait til you see other foxes.

EXT. THATCH COTTAGE - CONTINUED

Eibhlín ties the donkey reins to a garden post. EJ jumps down off its back.

She hops up onto the garden wall. She balances along the stones.

EIBHLÍN

Do you wanna stay here?

EJ

Okay!

Eibhlín walks up the path to the door of the cottage. Before she can knock, it is opened with a whip. DERMOT (45) stands like a pillar in the doorway. His top lip is weighed down by a thick moustache.

EIBHLÍN

(nervously)

Heyyyyyy Dermot!

Dermot grunts.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Just popping by to give Séamus a message.

Dermot's eyebrows furrow angrily.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

No no , not like the last message don't worry. Ehh. Is he in?

Dermot goes to close over the door.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

(hurredly)

The message is me going away forever.

Dermot stops. He narrows his eyes.

He retreats inside and closes the door.

Muffled talking, before quicker approaching footsteps.

Eibhlín looks back at EJ, who cocks her head. Eibhlín shrugs.

The door whips open a second time. This time, SÉAMUS (23) blocks the door. Or tries, for someone of his small stature. He looks hurt, in preparation for the conversation where that happens inevitably.

SÉAMUS

You're leaving?

EIBHLÍN

I found mum's address.

SÉAMUS

Oh my god that's huge!

EIBHLÍN

I don't know how to feel about it yet.

SÉAMUS

Is that where you're going so?

EIBHLÍN

(sarcastically)

No, I'm going on an unrelated journey of discovery.

Séamus blinks.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
Yes that's where I'm going.

SÉAMUS
How do you feel about it?

EIBHLÍN
Oh my god I literally just said
I don't know how I feel.

SÉAMUS
I dunno, maybe you had some
sort of epiphany just thinkin
about it there.

Eibhlín looks at him.

EIBHLÍN
EJ is coming with me.

SÉAMUS
Oh right yah?

Séamus looks around Eibhlín to EJ.

SÉAMUS (CONT'D)
How are ya, EJ!

EJ waves back cordially from where she stands on the
stone wall around the cottage.

EJ
Hi dad!

She resumes tightrope walking.

EIBHLÍN
EJ's well.

Eibhlín hands him a piece of paper where she copied
the addresses from her mother's letters.

SÉAMUS
There's two of them?

EIBHLÍN

We don't know which one she's in yet. If you need to contact us, just send a letter to both.

SÉAMUS

How does that work out?

EIBHLÍN

Jesus wept Séamus will you just figure something out no?

SÉAMUS

Ay usually, but this seems a bit complicated and all that.

EIBHLÍN

I'll send you a letter from the real address in a couple weeks - if I remember. I just wanted to let you know.

Eibhlín turns to leave. Séamus shouts after her.

SÉAMUS

I still love you!

EIBHLÍN

Jaysus Séamus you say that every time, would you not just move on? For you family's sake.

Eibhlín motions to Dermot, whose eyebrows furrow from where he views the encounter in the kitchen window. He closes the blinds in a huff.

EJ climbs onto the donkey from the wall.

EJ

And we're off?

EIBHLÍN

And we're off. How's Sionnach?

EJ

I think excited. But sometimes I can't tell.

EIBHLÍN

I never really could either.

EJ ruffles through Eibhlín's bag.

EJ

Did you bring any food?

Eibhlín whips around.

EIBHLÍN

Hey! Don't go rummaging. No, I didn't. All we had were mini carrots.

EJ's face contorts into disgust.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Yeah thought so.

EXT. PIER - DAY

Eibhlín and EJ arrive at a stone pier. A handful of fishing boats are packing for the day ahead. EJ looks around nervously.

EJ

Are we leaving the island?

Eibhlín takes a breath. She doesn't meet EJ's gaze.

EIBHLÍN

Yep! A true adventure.
Uncharted territory for you eh?

EJ

When will we be back?

EIBHLÍN

Well, we don't really have an exact time..

Eibhlín looks around at EJ's worried face.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Soon. Soon we'll be back.

EJ

Promise?

EIBHLÍN

Sure. Promise.

Eibhlín turns back around towards the dock and winces.

She approaches the nearest boat captain, JIMMY (53). He looks on as his crew pile nets and fishing spears into the boat. Being promoted to captain meant the only physical thing Jimmy is now required to do is drink. Judging by the belly on him, he excels in this area.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Afternoon Jimmy.

JIMMY

Eibhlín . Sorry to hear about your grandmother.

EIBHLÍN

Nothing to be sorry about, unless you gave her the heart attack.

JIMMY

Mhm. That's hereditary Eibhlín. I'd be watching out if I were you.

Eibhlín eyes up Jimmy's beer belly and red nose.

EIBHLÍN

Thanks Jimmy, I'll keep that in mind.

JIMMY

How's things EJ.

EJ

Good Sir. This is Sionnach.

EJ introduces the stuffed fox.

JIMMY

Ay I know Sionnach . Yer mam
used to carry him around same
as you.

EJ

He was in-her-it-ed. To me.

JIMMY

You take care of him. That's a
generational fox. Wouldn't want
to separate him from his
family.

EIBHLÍN

How much to the mainland Jimmy?

JIMMY

With or without the donkey?

EIBHLÍN

..with?

JIMMY

Nothing. We don't take donkeys.

EIBHLÍN

Right. Without?

JIMMY

Also nothing. I wouldn't go
charging you, Eibhlín . I'll
look after the donkey while
you're away.

EIBHLÍN

That's just another a favour to
us Jimmy.

JIMMY

Earn your keep on the boat so.
You can just about sail her
yourself.

Eibhlín beams.

EIBHLÍN

Yes Sir!

EJ
 (whispering)
 Tell him donkey's name is Asal.

EIBHLÍN
 And the donkey's name is Asal.

EXT. BOAT (GRÁINNE MHAOL) - DAY

Gráinne Mhaol sails along the channel towards the mainland. The handful of crew shuffle around the deck with various fishing utensils. Eibhlín stands at the wheel with Jimmy lounging on a deck chair nearby.

JIMMY
 I should just hire you.

EIBHLÍN
 I wouldn't fish, Jimmy.

JIMMY
 No temptin you, eh?

EIBHLÍN
 I want the freedom of my own boat. A little sail boat. My independence. Not having to rely on anyone but myself. One day I'll be out on my own on a fine day, in no sight of land, and I'll find peace.

Jimmy considers this.

JIMMY
 You know, there's an auction coming up.

EIBHLÍN
 A boat auction?

JIMMY
 Ay, near Díolbád . Best for beginners.

EIBHLÍN
 Why's that?

JIMMY

Ah boat auctions are nothing but a bit of craic. You know a piece of rust from a good piece of rust.

Eibhlín considers this.

EIBHLÍN

Díolbád is a good bit out of the way from where we're going.

JIMMY

I'm not sayin you havta.

Jimmy shrugs.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Just a good opportunity is all.

Jimmy looks down to the deck.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Eh. Eibhlín?

Eibhlín looks around at him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I think yer girl is havin a bit of trouble.

EJ is sat slumped against a barrel at the mast of the boat, visibly green.

EIBHLÍN

Ah Christ.

Eibhlín jogs down to her.

JIMMY

(laughing)

Ay you'd never get that lass to live on a boat, would you now.

EXT. MAINLAND PIER - DAY

Eibhlín and EJ wave to Jimmy as they watch his little boat drift away. EJ still clutches her stomach uneasily. They each carry a rucksack on their back.

EIBHLÍN

You could have waited til we got to shore.

EJ

It didn't seem like I could.

EIBHLÍN

Would have saved me cleaning up your mess.

EJ

I'm sorry.

Eibhlín ruffled EJ's hair.

EIBHLÍN

S'alright.

Eibhlín holds the map up in front of her.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Off we go. This way I think.

EXT. CROSSROADS - DAY

Eibhlín and EJ look up at a wooden signpost. Multiple arrows point off to signs on Eibhlín's map.

One sign is plastered over with a printed sign: FOX SHOW - CLOSING SOON. EJ gazes up at it in adoration. A basket of cute baby fox cubs beckon her from underneath the typography.

EJ

Eibhlín they have a fox show.

EIBHLÍN

It's a petting zoo, and that seems really shifty.

EJ

It means seeing foxes, how is that shifty?

EIBHLÍN

I don't think we're really meant to see foxes whenever we want.

She folds the printed advertisement back to reveal the signpost's location: Aitcrúalach. It points to a different direction entirely to Díolbád, which leads travellers to the right, and Coicósta, which leads travellers to the left, where the beginning of a path is eaten up with overgrown shrubbery.

A poster pasted underneath the sign to Díolbád confirms Jimmy's information about a boat auction in the town the next day. EJ leaps up to the sign and grabs the poster. She scans over it.

EJ

And the last show is tomorrow!!

EIBHLÍN

It's not a show, it's a zoo.

Eibhlín looks to where the Coicósta arrow leads.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

There's meant to be a path here.

She looks up at a wall of greenery. Both Eibhlín and EJ start picking their lip. Eibhlín bats EJ's hand away from her mouth.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Stop doing that. Go up and see if there's a path will you?

EJ looks at Eibhlín, shoulders slouched.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

What?

EJ groans and marches up to the shrubbery. She folds the poster into her back and disappears into the undergrowth.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Anything?

EJ

(shouting)

There definitely USED to be a path here.

EIBHLÍN

Perfect.

EXT. SHRUBBERY - DAY

Eibhlín and EJ trek through the overgrowth.

EIBHLÍN

You'd think mum would take better care of her garden.

EJ

Maybe it's a wild garden. For foxes.

EIBHLÍN

Is that what they like?

EJ looks down at Sionnach.

EJ

I'm not actually sure. Sionnach doesn't know what other foxes like.

EIBHLÍN

Well maybe he'll find some to ask-

Eibhlín trips over something shin-level and falls forward.

EJ

Mum??

EIBHLÍN
I'm alright!

She looks back and sees through the undergrowth - a pumpkin. It's waxy skin bulges out under the strain of a vegetable that big.

Prickly vines swirl around it. Eibhlín follows the nearest one to another pumpkin.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
We're in a pumpkin.. forest?

With a yell, EJ falls through the shrubbery.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
Mind your step.

EJ
Look!

From where they sit on the ground, the bottom of a rusty gate can be seen.

EXT. DILAPIDATED COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Eibhlín and EJ emerge from the undergrowth through the rusty gate. Through the small clearing, a little circular cottage becomes visible.

Its thatched roof has seen better days. Only a handful of windows remain. The red door lies ajar. As they approach, a flock of small finches erupts from the loft.

Eibhlín pushes through the open door.

INT. DILAPIDATED COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Looking up, the sky is visible through gaps in the rotting wooden beams. Small leaks drip down in discordant rhythms. Moss covers the remaining windows in a glaze.

Through to the kitchen, the evening sun shines through beautiful stained glass images of lush green forests. A small stained glass fox peeps out from one of the portraits.

The green shimmers over Eibhlín's face.

EJ

A fox! Nan liked foxes too!

EIBHLÍN

And forests. No wonder she made her own. She was so close to us.

EJ looks towards a pile of letters on the floor beside the front door.

EJ

She has a lot of post.

Eibhlín picks up the pile and leafs through. Most is junk mail from the services of a milk man. The others are confirmation letters from the bank: PURCHASE COMPLETE. They bought back the house.

Eibhlín opens the letter. A map reveals the location of the house is ideal for cattle farming. The bank paid a large sum of money for the property.

EIBHLÍN

That's a lot of cash.

The next letter, also from the bank, admits a mistake in their calculations. The land is worthless. They want to void the deal and return the property.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

She was long gone by then.

Eibhlín turns around to find EJ gone.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

EJ is curled up with Sionnach on an old queen bed, the dusty duvet discarded by her feet.

Eibhlín stands in the doorway.

She lowers her rucksack to the floor and takes out the first letter to her grandmother. She brings it to a small desk in the corner of the room, and opens it up.

Her eyes scan over the words.

A voice speaks the words as she reads.

V.O.

Dear Mum, it has been a while
since I left you last.

INT. BEDROOM - 18 YEARS AGO

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (24) sits at the same desk writing the letter. Her ink pen flows across the parchment.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER

Walking away was not easy,
despite what you think.

Eibhlín's Mother looks up from her letter to the open window.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

I found a house for myself.
Just in from the coast on the
mainland.

She walks through the garden of the house in the evening. The shrubbery is tame. Neat rows of vegetables run along the ground. Trellises of sweet pea and runner beans reach upwards.

She pulls up a healthy carrot.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

I managed to plant a vegetable
garden for myself. Grandmother
would be so surprised.

She climbs a small hill upwards from the cottage and looks down over her surroundings.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

It's a beautiful area.
Surrounded by green.

She passes an old tree. The entrance of a burrow pokes out from the twisting roots. Little paw prints decorate the mud leading towards a thicker forest.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

The fauna remind me of EJ.

INT. BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Eibhlín jolts from her reading and looks over to EJ on the bed. She sleeps on silently, snoring softly.

She turns back to the letter.

EXT. FIELD - 18 YEARS AGO

Eibhlín's Mother lies on her back in the vegetable garden, surrounded by pumpkins and cabbage. Tears well down her face.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (V.O.)

These past few months I have
settled into a routine.

She balances on a wooden step stool, reaching out to the top of a towering blackberry bush.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER

I have made a life for myself.
I tend the garden. I forage. I
sell my produce and make jam.

She just can't reach the top of the bush, where the ripe berries are.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

I write this letter in the
midst of the dream I have
always imagined for myself.

The bush shudders, and grows higher, surrounding Eibhlín on all sides.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Not to instill jealousy, but to
 admit regret. Loneliness I have
 felt since moving away.

A hand reaches out from an overwhelming sea of
 leaves.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 I hope to hear back from you.

It sinks into the greenery.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Perhaps yourself and EJ could
 visit me, in paradise.

Silence.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Signed, your loving daughter..

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (CONT'D) EJ
 ..Eibhlín Eibhlín!

INT. BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Eibhlín wakes up with a jolt. Her hair sticks to the
 side of the face she slept on.

Morning sun works its way through dusty blinds,
 illuminating old particles in the air.

Eibhlín realises with disgust that she has drooled on
 her mother's letter in her sleep. She dabs the
 parchment, but the signature has bled into a smudge.

She looks around to EJ.

Who is no longer in bed.

EJ
 (panicked)
 Eibhlín??

Eibhlín sprints from the desk, knocking the chair over on her way.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

EJ kneels down in a muddy puddle, her legs caked. Eibhlín stands over her, a hand on her shoulder. A wind whips around the legs of her trousers.

Sionnach lies face down in the mud. Dirty water seeps into his fur.

Small tears run down EJ's face.

EJ
I left him there for two
minutes.

EIBHLÍN
It's windy. He probably just
fell over.

Eibhlín runs a hand through EJ's hair.

EJ
I should have looked after him
better.

EJ's soft brown hair.

EIBHLÍN
Look, we can get him washed up.

Eibhlín looks down at EJ.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
And you too.

EJ nods, sniffs. Wipes a line of snot on her sleeve. She stands beside Eibhlín as she fishes Sionnach out of the mud. His face is caked with mud, features indistinguishable.

Eibhlín leads EJ sniffing into the house.

INT. DILAPIDATED COTTAGE - DAY

Eibhlín turns on the tap in the bath and hopes for the best. It splutters for a moment. Green sludge empties into the basin before turning clear.

EIBHLÍN

Whoop!

Eibhlín starts a fire and boils a pot of water over it. She pours this into the tub with the rest of the water, with a drizzle of soap for bubbles.

EJ gets in the bath and peels off Sionnach's muddy clothing and boots. A bar of soap left by the bath lathers up the fox's fur.

Eibhlín gently shampoos behind EJ's ears, and rinses off the suds.

INT. DILAPIDATED COTTAGE - LATER

A cleaner EJ wraps Sionnach delicately in a hand towel. Only his face peaks out of the warm cocoon.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Sionnach's clean clothes hang drying on the laundry line.

Nearby, EJ cuddles him like a baby, rocking him back and forth.

Eibhlín sits on a pumpkin, watching her.

From out of the bushes, a POSTMAN (26) stumbles through. He regains his balance, disheveled, and brushes himself free of remaining leaves. He steps forward confidently, and sees Eibhlín staring at him.

POSTMAN

Argh!

He leaps back into the bushes. A head peaks out again.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Good morning, ma'am. You don't,
uh, live here by any chance.

EIBHLÍN

My mother used to.

POSTMAN

Ah, right.

He exits the bushes again.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for your loss.

Eibhlín squints up at him.

EIBHLÍN

She's not dead yet.

POSTMAN

Ah, right.

EIBHLÍN

Not that we know of.

POSTMAN

I have a letter for her anyway.

EIBHLÍN

A letter? For this house? Have
you seen the state of it?

The postman looks on cheerfully.

POSTMAN

Better safe than sorry, ma'am!
That's why we Officers of the
Post wear iron jockstraps under
our trousers.

He chuckles.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

You just never know.

Eibhlín looks down at his trousers.

EIBHLÍN
It doesn't look very
protective.

POSTMAN
I forgot to wear mine today.

EJ calls from the other side of the garden.

EJ
Eibhlín I think he's cold!

EIBHLÍN
I can take that letter for you,
if you'd like. We're headed to
her next.

POSTMAN
Ah see um. Officers of the Post
are meant to personally ensure
safe delivery of each and every
letter and parcel.

Eibhlín stares at him.

EIBHLÍN
Which means?

POSTMAN
I need to see it through to
delivery, ma'am.

EIBHLÍN
Wouldn't you usually just put
it through the letterbox?

POSTMAN
Yes, ma'am.

EIBHLÍN
Of this obviously dilapidated
house?

POSTMAN
Er. Yes, ma'am..?

EIBHLÍN
You could just do that now.

POSTMAN

I would know, ma'am, that the job is not complete, ma'am. It's like an itching at the brain, ma'am.

EJ arrives at Eibhlín's side. The postman shifts between his feet, unsure.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Er, hello. Smaller ma'am.

EJ

Hello! This is Sionnach.

EJ holds Sionnach up to the Postman. He takes a furry paw and shakes it gingerly.

POSTMAN

Good morning, sir. What exquisite fur you have.

The postman looks to Eibhlín for help.

EIBHLÍN

Are you coming with us?

POSTMAN

..coming with you! Yes! Yes I am.

Nobody moves.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Uh. Where to exactly?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The postman rides a rusty old motorcycle. Each element of the vehicle clinks together like jewelry as it moves. Eibhlín rides behind him on the seat.

Towed behind the bike, EJ lies in a small mountain of undelivered post. Brown sacks announce the area to which the letters should be delivered in typed black letters.

Sionnach climbs up the down the piles with EJ's help. He jumps over trees at the side of the road, somersaults over distant mountains.

EXT. CROSSROADS - DAY

They come to a stop at the same crossroads as the day before. EJ gazes longingly up at the advertisement for the fox show.

Eibhlín looks to the direction of Díolbád. She looks back at EJ, still staring at the printed foxes.

POSTMAN

Where to, ma'am?

EXT. ÁITCRUÁLACH - DAY

The postman's motorbike rides past colourful pastel houses in the main street. From this vantage point on the hill, the coast can be seen in the distance.

The bike whizzes past a signpost: Welcome to Áitcrúalach.

EJ's head pokes out of the wagon, eagerly looking out for signs of foxes. Every second lamppost is decorated with posters of the petting zoo with the distance underneath, drawing closer.

They leave the pastel houses behind for grey brick exteriors. Shops on the road display their produce to passers by with stalls full of produce, products, and bouquets of flowers. Hanging signs outside the shopfronts declare various wares for sale.

Eventually, a wooden sign points them through a stone arch. The postman stops the motorbike as Eibhlín and EJ dismount. He stares through the alleyway. Bags of rubbish leak out into the street. Flies buzz around eye level.

POSTMAN

(hesitantly)

This is where your mother lives? How.. lovely.

EIBHLÍN
This is just a stop, don't
worry.

The postman sighs with relief.

POSTMAN
Oh thank god.

Eibhlín eyes up the alley, warily.

EIBHLÍN
We'll be back in a few minutes.

POSTMAN
Yes ma'am!

EJ bounces up and down with excitement. She takes Eibhlín's hand and leads her impatiently through the archway.

EJ
Come on come on!

POSTMAN
I will see you shortly!

EIBHLÍN
Listen, EJ, this place looks a
bit dodge.

They come to the end of the alley. FOX MAN (40) stands blocking the entrance to the petting zoo. A sign next to him reveals extortionate prices for entry.

Eibhlín approaches him cautiously.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
Em. Good afternoon, sir.

Fox Man's voice resonates two octaves lower than normal speaking range.

FOX MAN
Ma'am.

Eibhlín looks at the ticket prices and winces.

EIBHLÍN
Two tickets for the fox show
please.

FOX MAN
Extra for the little one.

EIBHLÍN
It doesn't say that on your
sign.

FOX MAN
It's the last day. I make the
rules. You pay or she doesn't
see the fox.

EIBHLÍN
Singular fox?

FOX MAN shrugs.

FOX MAN
Won't know unless you pay.

Eibhlín glances back at EJ, staring at another
advertisement for the petting zoo, eyes wide.

She holds Sionnach up to the poster and points to the
fox.

EJ
(whispering)
That's you, Sionnach.

Eibhlín turns back to FOX MAN.

EIBHLÍN
How much extra?

FOX MAN
How much you got?

Eibhlín's face contorts in frustration.

INT. PET SHOP - DAY

Fox Man leads Eibhlín and EJ through the door of the shop. The room is dark. Only one window near the top of the end wall shines a musky light through the room. Piles of cages are stacked against the wall.

Only slivers of sunlight make it through the shut blinds, the air packed with dust. A raucous of whimpering animal sounds resonates through the building.

Their eyes adjust. Rows of shelves display pet care items: leads, bowls, food. Multiple dogs whine in another room, clawing at locked cages.

Near the back of the room, a small creature quivers in the corner of a cramped cage. Fox Man gives it a small kick and the creature inside yelps. It scuttles around inside, panicked.

FOX MAN

Here's the boy.

From inside the cage, two terrified eyes gleam out at them. The skinny fox cowers in the corner, shaking. Its ears lie flat against its head. Its tail is tucked away between its legs. It whimpers nervously.

Fox Man scratches his head.

FOX MAN (CONT'D)

He never really seems too pleased with me.

The fox folds itself further into the corner. His skin stretches around bare ribs.

EJ's eyes well up with tears.

EIBHLÍN

What is this? How are you advertising this as a petting zoo?

FOX MAN shrugs.

FOX MAN

People still pay to see him. I don't understand the hype personally.

Eibhlín bristles.

EIBHLÍN

We're leaving. And I want my money back.

FOX MAN

You can leave. But you paid to see the fox. You saw the fox. You can't unsee the fox.

EJ crouches down beside the fox.

EJ

You poor boy.

She strokes the cage gently with her fingers. The fox lashes out with a growl.

EJ jumps back. She runs behind Eibhlín.

EIBHLÍN

Let's go.

EXT. PET SHOP - DAY

EJ looks back at the printed photos of small baby foxes in a cardboard box.

EJ

There used to be more of them.

She bursts into tears.

Eibhlín comforts her with a hug. She strokes her hair.

EIBHLÍN

Hey hey maybe not. Maybe it was just the one. He got unlucky. Probably tried to steal food from them.

EJ
He's in prison now?

EIBHLÍN
Kinda?

EJ meets Eibhlín's eyes.

EJ
We have to free him.

EIBHLÍN
EJ I don't think we can.

EJ
What happens to him after
today?

EIBHLÍN
What?

EJ
The poster says the zoo ends
today.

EIBHLÍN
Well, I don't really know. But
he's not being looked after
very well.

Eibhlín looks at EJ suggestively. EJ looks at the pet shop.

EJ
There's nothing we can do?

EIBHLÍN
There's nothing we can do. I
promise.

EJ brings her gaze away from the shop. Tears still well in her eyes, but she walks away down the alleyway. Eibhlín follows.

At the other end, the postman is waiting for them on his motorcycle. EJ climbs into the wagon and curls up on the bags of mail.

The postman lights up when he sees Eibhlín.

POSTMAN

Ma'am! All post delivered to
the village of Athcruálach .
Plus, I found some limited
edition regional stamps.

He holds the stamps up to Eibhlín , who nods weak
encouragement. She mounts the motorcycle. The postman
dulls a little.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Right so. Where to next?

EIBHLÍN

Sráidbháile.

POSTMAN

Which one?

Eibhlín blanks him.

EIBHLÍN

What do you mean which one?

POSTMAN

Well there are three
Sráidbháiles along the coast
here.

EIBHLÍN

What? How are there three?

The postman looks at Eibhlín blankly.

POSTMAN

Sráidbháile means 'village'.

Eibhlín drags her hands down her face.

EIBHLÍN

Do you know where each of them
is?

The postman beams.

POSTMAN

Yes ma'am! In fact, I have post
to deliver to each one of them.

EIBHLÍN

(dully)

Hurray.

Eibhlín looks back at EJ, cuddling Sionnach. A look
of guilt crosses her face.

EXT. SRÁIDBHÁILE 1 - LATER

Eibhlín leans against the motorcycle and watches as
the postman delivers letters to each and every one of
the houses on the main street. He carries a sack over
his shoulder.

EJ stirs in the wagon, sleeping.

A store across from Eibhlín catches her eye - it's a
toy store, but there are very ornate dolls in the
window with a myriad of fancy dresses.

She creeps away from Eibhlín.

Through the glass of the store, we see Eibhlín
talking to the shopkeeper, who looks at her confused.
Eibhlín points to the doll and makes a weird hand
movement.

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

A jack-in-the-box on the ceiling pops up as Eibhlín
enters the store, frightening her. The shopkeeper
pops up from behind the counter.

SHOPKEEPER

Good morning all! Happy
shopping! Let me know if I can
help you with anything!

EIBHLÍN

The dolls in the window?

SHOPKEEPER

Yes!

EIBHLÍN

How much for just their
clothes?

The shopkeeper hesitates for barely a moment.

SHOPKEEPER

Why just their clothes when you
can have the full doll!

EIBHLÍN

I just need the clothes.

The shopkeeper laughs comically. He pretends to wipe
a tear from his eye.

SHOPKEEPER

What could I do with the doll
afterwards!

Eibhlín glances out the window, worry across her
face. She's left EJ out there alone.

EIBHLÍN

You'll sell it.

SHOPKEEPER

But how can you be sure!

Eibhlín glares at the shopkeeper.

EIBHLÍN

Sell me the clothes or I'll
take yours.

SHOPKEEPER

..okay!

EXT. SRÁIDBHÁILE 1 - DAY

EJ sleeps in the wagon. A shadow crosses her face.

EIBHLÍN

Pssst.

She stirs. Looks up. Her eyes widen. She screams.

Eibhlín leaps back, covering her ears with one hand. In the other, she holds the pinkest, frilliest dress ever made.

EJ stops screaming to catch her breath.

EJ
Oh. My. God.

Eibhlín offers her the dress. She takes it gingerly. Eibhlín looks on as she fumbles with it briefly. EJ then holds up Sionnach, in dungarees no longer. Flowers and sparkles radiant from his new outfit. His eyes seem to glisten with happiness.

EJ (CONT'D)
(whispering)
It's so perfect.

Eibhlín ruffles her hair.

EIBHLÍN
Only for you, Anything
Whisperer.

EJ leaps out of the wagon and leaps up to Eibhlín for a hug. Eibhlín stumbles back, surprised, but embraces the affection.

The postman returns.

POSTMAN
Thirty more houses to go here,
ma'am!

Eibhlín groans.

START MONTAGE

EXT. SRÁIDBHÁILE 1 - LATER

Eibhlín and EJ lounge with the motorcycle outside various different houses.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Eibhlín shows the clerk her mother's address - 43 Trágainimh. They shake their head.

The postman reunites with a friend of his behind the counter. They start a very intricate and complicated handshake routine.

EJ tugs at Eibhlín's sleeve. She points to a book store Across the way.

INT. BOOK STORE - DAY

Eibhlín takes a few bills from the saved roll of cash to buy a storybook. EJ's head peers over the counter.

EXT. MOTORBIKE - DAY

Eibhlín and EJ both crowd into the wagon behind the postman. Eibhlín reads the storybook to EJ, who hangs on every word.

EXT. SRÁIDBHÁILE 2 - DAY

The motorcycle is parked next to a small park of lush grass.

Eibhlín and EJ roll around in the green.

They pick daises and make chains.

EJ does Eibhlín's hair: it looks like a nest.

Eibhlín does EJ's hair: a pristine french braid with daisies interwoven.

The postman returns, his eyes lighting up.

EXT. MOTORBIKE - LATER

The postman rides happily down the street, his hair pinned up with many braides and plaits.

Eibhlín sits next to a sleeping EJ in the wagon. She embroiders the sea landscape, pulling through the last few touches. She holds it up, proud, then looks to EJ sleeping.

She lowers the embroidery, tucking it away deep in her bag.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Eibhlín holds up the address to another clerk.

This one hasn't heard of it either. She shrugs.

Eibhlín turns around to see Postman in the middle of another handshake routine, with five people at once in a circle.

EXT. MOTORBIKE - DAY

Eibhlín and EJ try to recreate the postman's handshake.

They end up making their own.

EXT. LONE HOUSE - DAY

The postman stops at an isolated house on the outskirts of Scráidbháile 2.

Eibhlín and EJ explore as he approaches the door to deliver the letters. EJ leaves Sionnach in Eibhlín's bag in the wagon.

Behind the house is a stone beach.

Eibhlín teaches EJ how to skim stones.

EJ gives up and tosses the biggest stone she can carry into the water.

It splashes both of them.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. MOTORBIKE - DAY

Eibhlín rides with the postman again. They shout over the noise of the wind blowing past.

EIBHLÍN

Do you know if there's a Trágainimh in this next town?

POSTMAN

Yes ma'am! It's along the seafront here.

Eibhlín picks her lip as they continue.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Is your mother expecting you, ma'am?

EIBHLÍN

No. No she isn't.

POSTMAN

Well I'm sure she'll be thrilled to see you, ma'am!

EIBHLÍN

It'll be the first time in. About eighteen years now I think.

POSTMAN

Well! That's quite a long time. Just about as long as I've been working towards my post quota.

EIBHLÍN

Post quota?

POSTMAN

Yes ma'am. Every Officer of the Post declares a goal at the beginning of their journey. I knew I wanted to be an Officer from a very young age, so they took me on board.

EIBHLÍN
As a toddler..?

POSTMAN
I could fit into small spaces
see. Really helped me those
first few years. Anyway,
everyone declares their own
quota, but me as a toddler had
no concept of numbers, so I
chose one million.

EIBHLÍN
How many have you got left..?

POSTMAN
I'm very close now, ma'am! Less
than a hundred, and I've still
to deliver the last couple of
sacks.

EIBHLÍN
Woah! We could help you out, if-

POSTMAN
I'm afraid I can only count the
letters I deliver myself,
ma'am. I appreciate the offer,
but it's the integrity, see.

Eibhlín nods in understanding.

EIBHLÍN
Of course. Integrity.

EJ
Mum?

Eibhlín looks back to see EJ once again green in the
face.

EIBHLÍN
Oh no.

EXT. TRÁGAINIMH - DAY

Eibhlín stands next to the parked motorbike, looking up at a gorgeous little cottage. A post box next to it sports the number forty-three. The walls are completely covered with inches of ivy. The cottage itself is part of a long row of identical cottages.

EJ sits in a grass patch by the motorbike. Her face is pale from the motion sickness. She picks daisies and knots them into a chain.

Eibhlín picks her lip.

EJ

You shouldn't do that.

Eibhlín stops, and looks back at EJ.

EIBHLÍN

You're right.

She walks up the steps and knock on the door.

A WOMAN (25) answers.

WOMAN

Hi there. Can I help you?

Eibhlín's face falls.

EIBHLÍN

Oh I'm. Sorry. I think we have the wrong house.

An ELDERLY MAN (76) exits the cottage next door and makes his way slowly down the garden.

WOMAN

No worries at all. We just moved in here recently. Maybe you're looking for the previous owners.

EIBHLÍN

You wouldn't know them yourself would you..?

WOMAN

Unfortunately not, we meet them at all actually. Although living in someone's house right after them means you get to know them a bit.

The Woman gestures up to the walls.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

We still haven't been able to get rid of this ivy. Whoever you're looking for must have loved greenery.

Eibhlín looks up at the ivy again. It could have been the work of her mother, but all hope is lost. They don't have any more leads.

EIBHLÍN

Thanks for your help.

She turns to leave. At the bottom of the garden, Postman looks at a letter and scratches his head.

POSTMAN

Ma'am, I have a letter for this house, but it is addressed to the same name as the letter I'm keeping for your mother.

Eibhlín looks up at him blankly. The elderly neighbour reaches the bottom of his garden and turns towards them.

EIBHLÍN

You. What?

The postman holds up the two letters. One addressed to Coiscósta, the other to Trágainimh. Both sport the same name.

POSTMAN

Eibhlín O Cleirigh.

The elderly neighbour looks around.

ELDERLY MAN

Did somebody say Eibhlín O
Cleirigh?

EJ appears by Eibhlín's side. She pulls at her sleeve.

EJ

Mum, where's Sionnach?

EIBHLÍN

One second, EJ.
(to the neighbour)
Did you know her?

EJ reaches for Eibhlín's bag. She plonks it onto the ground and starts searching inside.

ELDERLY MAN

She was my neighbour, for many years actually. And a good one too. Always lent me sugar when I needed it.

Eibhlín is excited now.

EIBHLÍN

She's my mother. We're looking for her.

EJ pulls out the wad of money in Eibhlín's bag. She turns it over, amazed.

ELDERLY MAN

You missed her by a couple of months, dear.

EIBHLÍN

Do you know where she went?

The elderly man hesitates. He answers slowly.

ELDERLY MAN

I do.

Eibhlín sports a wide grin. Her eyes tear up.

Postman hands the elderly neighbour a pen, and one of mother's letters.

POSTMAN

Thank you so much sir, could you note down her new address? You cannot fathom the service you are doing for postal integrity.

EJ tugs at Eibhlín's sleeve. Eibhlín stares transfixed as the neighbour writes the new address.

EIBHLÍN

One second EJ.

The neighbour hands the postman back the letter and pen. The postman salutes him.

ELDERLY MAN

You must be EJ.

Eibhlín looks at him with watery eyes.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)

She talked about you. And your grandmother. She predicted this, you know.

Confusion flashes across Eibhlín's face.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)

She said you'd come looking for her some day. With a daughter of your own. She went as far as to guess her name.

The elderly man looks at EJ, who now hides behind Eibhlín's leg.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)

Little Eibhlín.

He turns his gaze back to Eibhlín.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)

It's easier to notice these
sort of patterns when you've
lived through them yourself.

He passes Eibhlín.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)

When you do find her, tell her
Donnacha was asking after her.

Donnacha gives them a final smile before turning away
down the street.

The trio looks on, before EJ pipes up.

EJ

I didn't know we were rich!

Eibhlín sees the wad of cash in EJ's hand. She grabs
it off her.

EIBHLÍN

I told you not to go poking
your nose in my bag!

EJ is taken aback at this sudden reaction.

EJ

I was just looking for
Sionnach.

EIBHLÍN

That doesn't mean you can mess
with my stuff!

EJ

How did we even get this much
money anyway?

Eibhlín looks at EJ, shameful. She takes a breath.
They are so close to finding her mother.

EIBHLÍN

I sold our house.

EJ steps back. Her voice catches.

EJ

What?

EIBHLÍN

We're not going back.

EJ

But. Our cottage

EIBHLÍN

It's not ours anymore.

EJ tears up.

EJ

I didn't even get to say
goodbye.

Eibhlín comforts EJ with a hug.

EIBHLÍN

Hey hey it's alright. It's just
a new chapter. You're going to
live with mum. When we find
her.

EJ comprehends this sentence. She pulls away from
Eibhlín.

EJ

I'm going to live with her. But
not you.

Eibhlín freezes.

EJ (CONT'D)

That's why you're trying so
hard to find her.

Tears roll down EJ's cheeks. She turns towards the
wagon and curls up with the rest of the post.

The postman watches nearby, sad with empathy. He
looks to Eibhlín before turning towards his
motorcycle. He mounts it, waiting for her.

Eibhlín crouches down to her bag and deposits the wad of cash. She ruffles around for Sionnach, pulling him out to find that his leg is tangled with rope.

Eibhlín pulls them apart, hard. A ripping sound. Sionnach's leg remains with the heap of embroidery. She hold the rest of him. White fluff pokes from his amputated stump.

Eibhlín looks up to see EJ staring at her from the wagon. She turns away from her. Eibhlín puts Sionnach back in her bag and mounts the motorcycle.

POSTMAN

Are you okay?

EIBHLÍN

You know where to go.

They speed off.

EXT. ÁITDEIRIDH - DAY

The postman pulls up in front of a well kept cottage. The roof is slabbed. Trellises with ivy line the walls. Lines of vegetables grow in neat rows of fertilised soil. A small path by the house leads to a nearby stone pier.

Eibhlín dismounts the bike. EJ jumps out of the wagon and marches ahead up the steps without waiting.

EIBHLÍN

EJ wait.

She keeps walking.

Eibhlín grabs her bag from the wagon. Postman stands beside her with the two letters both for Eibhlín's mother. She turns to him.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

Thanks for the ride.

POSTMAN

No worries, ma'am, I was heading in this direction anyway, I-

EIBHLÍN

I'll take those letters.

The postman stammers.

POSTMAN

I'm sorry, ma'am, but being an Officer of the Post ensures that integrity is upheld at all times-

EIBHLÍN

I could not care less.

The postman very slowly hands Eibhlín the two letters. She grabs them and he flinches.

POSTMAN

I trust that you will undertake this task with the greatest care and-

EIBHLÍN

They're just letters. Nobody cares about them as much as you do.

POSTMAN

But-

EIBHLÍN

Honestly. I don't think people would actually notice if half of these stupid letters were never delivered.

Postman looks hurt. He regains his posture, and salutes Eibhlín.

POSTMAN

I wish you all the best with your future endeavours, ma'am.

He turns swiftly and marches back to his motorcycle. Swiftly, he skids away. The sounds of the bike disappear.

EJ has reached the door. She knocks insistently. Eibhlín follows her up the path. Halfway there, the door opens.

EIBHLÍN'S MOTHER (42) stands at the doorway. Their features are almost identical. She wears an apron stained with blackberry juice, on top of light dungarees.

EJ looks up at her only briefly

EJ
Surprise.

She brushes past her inside. Mother lets her go before looking back to Eibhlín.

MOTHER
EJ.

EIBHLÍN
Eibhlín.

Mother shifts her weight between her two feet. She closes the door over and makes her way towards Eibhlín, who takes a step back.

MOTHER
I've had a lot of time to
prepare something to say to
you.

Eibhlín meets her gaze, hurt. She stands defensively.

EIBHLÍN
I don't want to hear anything
you have to say.

MOTHER
EJ, I think-

EIBHLÍN
I don't want to hear what you
think either.

Eibhlín holds out the letters. Mother takes them.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
I just came to deliver these.

MOTHER
And your daughter.

Eibhlín looks to the ground, ashamed.

EIBHLÍN
You'll take care of her better
than I can.

MOTHER
That's what I told myself as
well.

Eibhlín's eyes light up in anger. She turns away from Mother and walks away from the garden.

Through the gate, she disappears into the high bushes on either side of the pathway.

Mother watches her go.

INT. ÁITDEIRIDH - DAY

Mother closes the door and makes her way through to the kitchen. She looks out the window to where Eibhlín disappeared.

MOTHER
I wasn't expecting a postman,
that much is new.

She looks down at the letters.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
As are these.

She turns away from the window and puts the letters unopened on the dining table.

Back to the stove, blackberries simmer away in various pots. She hums to herself as she stirs them.

She takes a handful of unripe berries from a bowl on the counter to snack on.

Little footsteps announce EJ's presence. Mother peers around to see her peering around the doorframe. She offers the bowl to EJ, who takes a handful herself.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Do you want to help me make this batch?

EJ hesitates, then nods. Mother pulls a chair up to the stove from the kitchen table. EJ hops up and starts stirring the pots.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You know, all of the flavour is in the stirring.

She winks at EJ, who smiles shyly. Mother looks around.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Where's your little fox friend?

EJ glances up at Mother - how did she know about Sionnach?

EJ

Mum has him still. She broke him.

Mother thinks about this. She looks out the window where Eibhlín and the Postman headed off.

MOTHER

Hm. That's new as well.

EXT. DÍOLBÁD - DAY

A fishing peninsula, scouring with colourful markets and stalls selling anything that can be caught with a net. Every single person wears a short coloured beanie. Most are in stained dungarees. A healthy portion have very thick bristly moustaches.

Eibhlín hops off the back of a truck transporting livestock. The driver tips his hat to her and she waves him off. She makes her way down to the auction.

The last few boats are being driven around the circular pier, like a cattle auction. The auctioneer calls out digits from a little shed on the other side. Eibhlín looks on over the rails towards the line of waiting boats.

INT. ÁITDEIRIDH - DAY

EJ lies in her new bedroom. It's neat, with a small single bed, desk and chair. A chest of draws in the corner boasts an array of plants, as does the windowsill.

The walls are bare expect for one piece of artwork: a ring of embroidery, depicting a house surrounded by greenery.

EJ roots in her back to unpack. She folds her spare clothes in the chest of drawers, and arranges a small collection of stuffed toys on her bed. From the bottom of her bag, she pulls out the poster for the fox show.

EXT. DÍOLBÁD - DAY

The same poster hangs on a post near where Eibhlín awaits the next boat to enter the ring.

It's beautiful: a rustic log cabin built with the base of a riverboat. It's thin width is made up for in height and style. Yellow accents compliment the white washed walls. Circular windows allow peaks into its spacious interior.

AUCTIONEER

Okay folks next up we have a beauty: BEAN SAOR . We're starting the bid off at one hundred euros!

A woman in the audience raises her ballot.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

One hundred, can we make it to
one fifty? This year old
houseboat boasts a very
spacious three bedroom
interior.

Eibhlín raises her ballot.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

That's one fifty folks, can I
get two hundred?

The woman betting against Eibhlín shoots her a dirty
look. She raises her ballot again.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

Two hundred!

Eibhlín counts her wad of cash as the auctioneer
babbles on. She raises her ballot.

EIBHLÍN

Seven hundred!

Gasps from the crowd. The auctioneer is blissful.

AUCTIONEER

Seven hundred! Anyone for seven
fifty?

The betting woman bristles momentarily, but shakes
her head.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

Sold!

The auctioneer pulls a rope, which leads to a bell in
the middle of a pier. Like one that you would find at
the top of a fishing boat crane. It rings out across
the pier as the crowd cheer for Eibhlín's brash win.
She beams.

INT. BEAN SAOR - LATER

Eibhlín enters her new houseboat. It is docked with a myriad of other vehicles at the docks of Díolbád. She runs her hand along the walls as she walks through.

INT. BEAN SOAR BEDROOM - DAY

In her bedroom, she unpacks her bag. In the same pattern as EJ, she folds her clothes and puts them in a fine wooden chest of drawers.

She takes Sionnach out from the bottom of the bag, and fishes his leg out from the pile of rope. She discards the unfinished rope blanket on her desk.

INT. BEAN SAOR KITCHEN - DAY

Eibhlín stands in the middle of Bean Saor's kitchen. It's open plan allows her look through windows out at the sea from either side. She clutches Sionnach to her chest.

EXT. BEAN SAOR - DAY

Eibhlín lies in a chair on the deck of Bean Saor. She sips a glass of water. There is no land in sight.

Her leg bounces up and down as she looks around. She squints into the sun. She picks her lip.

INT. BEAN SAOR - DAY

Eibhlín gathers Sionnach and his leg from her desk.

She takes a needle and starts sewing up his leg. A few other rips are mended alongside it. They look like small pink scars.

Undressed, Sionnach bathes in a sink full of bubbles. Eibhlín washes behind his ears and scrubs his feet clean.

She cocoons him in a fluffy handtowel and pats him dry.

She dresses him in his frilly pink dress. She looks from Sionnach, to her unfinished rope blanket.

INT. HEAD POST OFFICE - DAY

Eibhlín walks through turnstile doors into the lobby of the head post office. Rows of marble pillars lead her to a comically small reception desk, behind which a normal man squats, writing furiously in a notebook. Eibhlín coughs to get his attention. He glances at her, still writing.

RECEPTIONIST

Good afternoon, ma'am. Name and business please.

EIBHLÍN

Em. Eibhlín . And I'm looking for someone.

RECEPTIONIST

Name of missing person?

EIBHLÍN

He's not missing, he just works here.

RECEPTIONIST

Name of employee?

EIBHLÍN

Er. I don't actually know.

Receptionist's pen stops. He looks at Eibhlín skeptically.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

He's a friend! An Officer of the Post! He rides a motorcycle! I was just calling him Postman!

RECEPTIONIST

Is this query post-related?

EIBHLÍN

I guess..?

Eibhlín holds up a small package.

RECEPTIONIST

Wait one moment, ma'am.

(shouting)

Jeff!

A uniformed Officer of the Post, JEFF (16) sprints to attention from the corner of the reception. The receptionist rips a page from his notebook and hands it to Jeff, who sprints away into the darkness.

Eibhlín and the receptionist wait awkwardly as Jeff's footsteps echo away. They return a few seconds later. He bears another letter. The receptionist opens it. He mumbles under his breath as he reads. Jeff retreats to the corner.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Mhm. Right, one moment, ma'am.

Another awkward silence. Eventually another pair of footsteps appear, and Postman rounds the corner. He approaches Eibhlín with a curt salute.

POSTMAN

Ma'am.

EIBHLÍN

Postman.

They stare at each other awkwardly.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about what I said. I actually do think that post is important.

POSTMAN

That is also my opinion, ma'am.

EIBHLÍN

You don't need to call me ma'am every time.

POSTMAN

It's a matter of integrity,
ma'am.

Eibhlín looks around.

EIBHLÍN

How many more packages do you
have to deliver?

POSTMAN

One, ma'am, funny enough. There
was a lot of hate mail
addressed to the last
Sráidbháile, ma'am.

EIBHLÍN

So you're going to reach your
quota?

POSTMAN

Not til next week, ma'am. I'm
off duty until the next
delivery of post.

EIBHLÍN

Ah. But if I had let you
deliver the letters..?

POSTMAN

Yes, ma'am. But I can wait
another week.

He pauses.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

(sheepishly)

I watched you deliver them to
your mother, ma'am. From afar.
Officers of the Post have
custom telescopes for occasions
such as that.

EIBHLÍN

Did I do okay?

POSTMAN

You would make a great Officer,
ma'am.

Eibhlín reaches into her bag and pulls out a small package.

EIBHLÍN

Maybe. But I think you would be
better off delivering this.
Instead of me.

Postman's eyes light up. He stifles an excited yell and bounds towards her, taking the package. He inspects it thoroughly.

POSTMAN

Excellently wrapped! And those
stamps are high quality, ma'am,
my goodness.

He shakes Eibhlín's hand, and doesn't stop. Eibhlín laughs.

EIBHLÍN

I hope this makes up for
earlier!

She pauses, mid shake.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, I never even
asked you for your name.

Postman shrugs.

POSTMAN

I never asked you for yours.

EIBHLÍN

It's Eibhlín.

POSTMAN

Isn't that your mother's name?

EIBHLÍN

Yes it is. Is your name
actually Postman?

POSTMAN

Yes, ma'am, it is. I instilled
my mother's belief in
nominative determinism.

EIBHLÍN

Do you have any siblings.

POSTMAN

Yes. Yes I do.

EIBHLÍN

What do they do-

POSTMAN

We don't talk about them.

INT. ÁITDEIRIDH - DAY

Mother stands in the hallway outside EJ's door with a
tray of food: toast with blackberry jam.

MOTHER

Eibhlín ? I made some toast.
Thought you might want to taste
our handiwork.

She waits for a response.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Eibhlín?

She inches the door open.

INT. EJ'S ROOM - DAY

Mother looks around the empty room. A breeze flows in
through the open window.

EJ's fox poster lies abandoned on her bed.

Sounds of a motorbike pulling up outside.

Mother abandons the tray on EJ's desk with a rattle.
She runs out of the room.

EXT. ÁITDEIRIDH - DAY

Postman waits at the foot of the garden as EJ approaches the house. Mother bursts through the front door. They both stop suddenly, surprised.

MOTHER
Eibhlín??

EIBHLÍN
Yes??

MOTHER
You're back??

Eibhlín shuffles on her feet. She shrugs.

EIBHLÍN
I came back for EJ.

Mother touches her chest, and cocks her head.

MOTHER
Awh.

She pauses, scratching her chin.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
That's new as well.

EIBHLÍN
Woah, harsh??

Mother returns to her panic. She grabs Eibhlín's shoulders. Eibhlín flinches under her touch.

MOTHER
She's gone. She's run away.

EIBHLÍN
What?!

EXT. ÁITCRUÁLACH - DAY

EJ steps off a bus in front of the grey archway that leads to the pet shop, tiny fists clenched by her side.

She walks through the alleyway and disappears into the shadows.

EXT. MOTORBIKE - DAY

Postman races down rural lanes. He turns left at a crossroads, where a sign directs him to Áthcruálach.

Eibhlín and Mother are squeezed into the wagon behind him.

MOTHER
Another traveling adventure,
so.

EIBHLÍN
(bitterly)
Just like old days.

MOTHER
All we're missing is your
little fox friend.

Eibhlín eyes the a package peeping out of her bag by their side. She turns to Mother.

EIBHLÍN
I left her with you for less
than a day.

Mother doesn't meet her eye.

EIBHLÍN (CONT'D)
I should never have trusted you
to look after her.

MOTHER
And yet you did. As I trusted
your Grandmother. Your Eibhlín
seems to have a particularly
passionate spirit.

Mother puts a hand on Eibhlín's arm. There are tears in her eyes.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
You came back for her.

EXT. ÁITCRUÁLACH - DAY

The motorbike skids to a stop outside the grey archway. Eibhlín and Mother jump out and are about to run into the mist of the alleyway when a shape appears.

It's EJ. Behind her, FOX MAN carries the fox cage into the sunlight.

EJ freezes at the sight of her family. Both Eibhlín rushes to embrace her. EJ freezes at Eibhlín's embrace. Mother stands nearby with a hand over her mouth.

Eibhlín holds EJ by her shoulders. She looks into her eyes. EJ is still skeptical.

EIBHLÍN

EJ I'm so sorry. I should never
have left you. I-

EJ rushes into a hug. Eibhlín holds her tightly.

Postman stares aghast at Fox Man as he approaches with the cage. He stops in his tracks.

POSTMAN

Foxman??

Fox Man breaks into a toothy smile.

FOXMAN

Brother!

He lowers the cage, and picks his brother up into a bear hug.

POSTMAN

(strained)

I should have worn my.
Protection.

Foxman lowers his brother and slaps him on the back hard. He stumbles forward.

EIBHLÍN

(to EJ)

How did you get him to give you
the fox??

EJ looks over at Foxman, still talking to his brother excitedly.

EJ

He was never really a fox
person. He just didn't know how
to look after them. You're not
really meant to be able to see
foxes whenever you want to.

Eibhlín smiles at her warmly. She looks over to
Postman.

EIBHLÍN

Postman? Do you want to do the
honours?

Postman salutes.

POSTMAN

Yes, ma'am!

He bounds over and fishes the parcel out of his bag.
It is addressed to EJ.

She opens it carefully, and lifts out Sionnach,
reunited with his leg.

She gasps, and looks up at Eibhlín with a big smile,
before burying her head in Sionnach's fur.

GRANNY (V.O.)

Young EJ. I write to you now as
an old woman, with the
knowledge that I no longer know
you.

Mother helps Foxman load the fox cage into the
motorbike wagon as Eibhlín and EJ continue their
embrace.

EXT. FOREST AREA - LATER

Eibhlín, Postman, and Mother watch as EJ opens the door to the fox cage. He steps out gingerly, looks at EJ for a brief moment, and darts into the bushes.

GRANNY (V.O.)

No doubt you have grown into a
fine, strong, independent
woman.

Mother stands in the sunlight as Eibhlín puts an arm around EJ as they look through the trees at the fox scurrying away.

EJ

I think it best that he looks
after himself.

EXT. ÁITDEIRIDH - WEEKS LATER

EJ helps Mother pull up carrots from her vegetable garden. Postman arrives at the foot of the garden with some letters. He wears an even more impressive outfit. Feathers and tassels protrude from every crevice.

EJ runs up to greet him. She leaps up and he swings her around before straightening up. He shows off his new badge.

GRANNY (V.O.)

Looking back through my life,
with the benefit of hindsight,
makes all of my mistakes seem
brash and stupid.

From the house, the small stone pier is visible. Eibhlín's houseboat sits outside it.

GRANNY (V.O.)

But it really does take making
those mistakes to really learn
from your actions.

EXT. STONE PIER - DAY

Eibhlín sits outside her houseboat on a rocking chair. She finishes her embroidery ring. She hangs it on her front door and steps back to admire it.

GRANNY (V.O.)
I regret leaving you, all those
years ago.

EJ runs up behind Eibhlín, covered in dirt, straight into the house.

EIBHLÍN
HEY!

EJ giggles, and doesn't stop. Eibhlín chases her into the house.

GRANNY (V.O.)
But I'm so so glad that you
came back, if only briefly.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - LATER

Eibhlín rocks EJ on a hammock made of thick rope knots. She strokes her hair.

EIBHLÍN
How's the motion sickness now?

EJ
Much better.

GRANNY (V.O.)
Raising Eibhlín was a gift. I
hope you can appreciate that. I
know I did.

INT. COTTAGE LIVING ROOM - WEEKS BEFORE

Granny sits at her armchair, writing a letter. Her words are illuminated by a ring of candles around the table.

GRANNY (V.O.)
Signed, your loving mother,
Eibhlín.

Granny folds up her parchment paper and slides it gently into an envelope. She uses the wax from a candle to drip onto the seal, and her fingerprint to flatten it out.

An identical letter already sits on the table. The addresses on the two envelopes: Coiscósta and Trágainimh.

INT. ÁITDEIRIDH - PRESENT DAY

These same envelopes are proudly displayed in Eibhlín's mother's kitchen, alongside the letter which is framed for everyone to read.

Beside it on the wall is a colourful crayon drawing of the O'Cleirigh family tree. EJ depicts herself, Eibhlín, Mother, and Granny holding hands under a big tree.

Peeking out from the corner of the picture, an orange fox watches the scene.

EXT. ÁITDEIRIDH - DAY

The three Eibhlín's stand at the edge of the garden, where a tower of blackberry bushes grow. Baskets of picked berries rest at their feet. EJ stands on a kitchen chair from Eibhlín's house. They laugh together.

From the other side of the garden, a fox peaks out from the bushes before darting back into the shadows.