

**JMG** Stories



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# misused

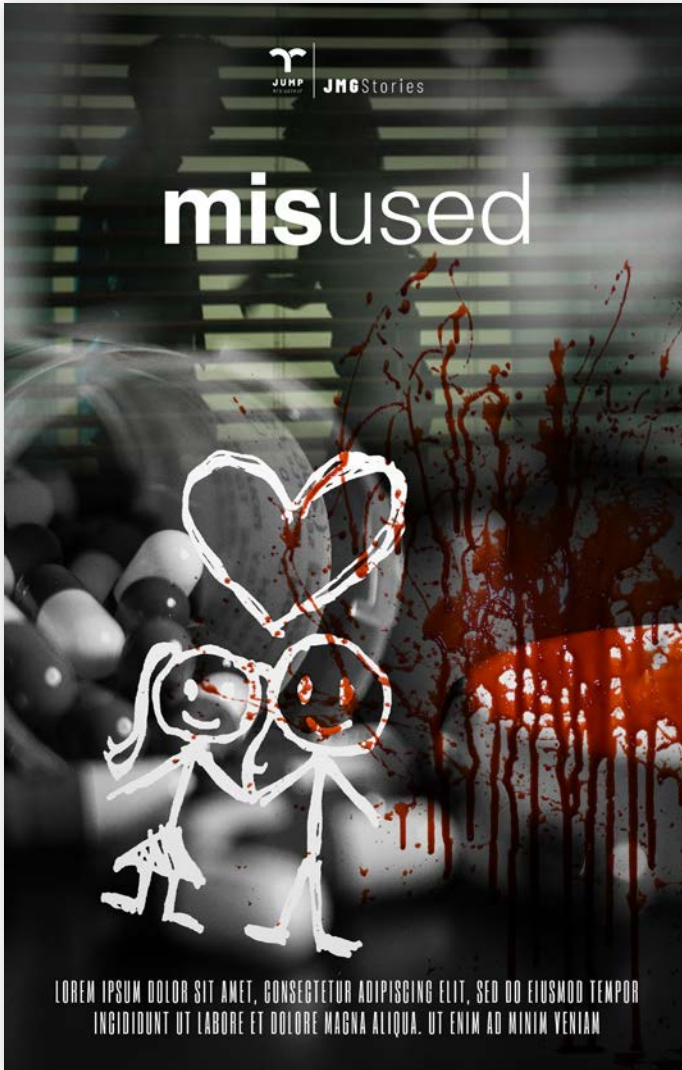


Written by:  
Rebecca Sandeman and Grant Andersen

# MISUSED

— *When the cure is the root of the problem* —

Written by: **Rebecca Sandeman & Grant Andersen**



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*Inside Shane's apt*

Shane wakes up, tied to a chair and is given a seltzer

*Aidan*

*I want you to tell me everything about Frank's nasty, little pharmacy-business.*

Shane's eyes widen in fear

*Shane*

*What! I know nothing about that*

Aidan reveals 4-5 big boxes of pills

They're all opened and empty.

*Aidan*

*See those? They were all mixed into the drink I just gave you. You have around 30-40 mins before your pulse rate starts to lower, your eyes go blurry and eventually your respiratory system shuts down....If I were you I would start talking real fast, or else I may be tempted not to call the ambulance.*

**Genre:** *Crime/Drama*

**Format:** *4 episodes of 60 mins*

**Targetgroup:** *15 years old and over*

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**A** desperate brother searches for his sister who has mysteriously disappeared from Cardiff. As secrets threaten his unravelling family he continues in his quest for the truth, all of them learning much more than they bargained for.

*An estimated 3% of people within the UK receive a benzodiazepine subscription each year, whilst the UK also possesses the highest percentage of high risk opioid users of any country within the EU. Of those statistics, an estimated 59% of users were found to be women, whilst the number of teenagers misusing illicit or illicitly obtained substances throughout the country has increased each year since 2013. This is a significant issue because a natural tolerance to benzos is built up by a user over time. This, when combined with protracted withdrawal symptoms which can linger for up to 12 months after a user's last dose, make benzos a highly addictive substance that can feel insurmountable to stop.*

*Following major countrywide scandals like the fake Xanax trade that persisted throughout the late 2010s, there continue to be concerns that prescription medication, drugs that would be completely legal with a doctor's recommendation, are finding their way into the hands of vulnerable people.*

This miniseries, which will run for four hour-long episodes, follows 26-year-old protagonist Aidan, a past-his-prime rugby player, and newly transitioned family man. The series is set between rural Wales and his 22-year-old sister Ellie's home in Cardiff, where she studies art.

The core plot surrounds the mystery of Ellie's complete disappearance as well as the developing struggles amidst the Phillins' family unit. To find out what really happened, Aidan and the rest of the family have to discover things about themselves, including aspects of Ellie's world that they would've rather remained oblivious to. Nate and Beth, Aidan's father and mother, have presided over a household mired with a web of fractious relationships, with more bubbling under the surface than it first appears.

These events, if already not difficult enough, occur in tandem with problems concerning Aidan's partner Katherine. After giving birth a year ago to their baby daughter, Evie, Katherine is struggling to cope with bipolar disorder, however has been misdiagnosed with PPD. She flits from inciting herself to be the best mother in the world, to periods of deep depression and sadness. Aidan tries to support her and Evie in any way he can, but Katherine's erratic actions are proving difficult to manage. Now with Ellie's sudden vanishing, this puts even more pressure on Aidan and his fragile young family.

The show juxtaposes settings of mundane reality, concerning Aidan's home life and rural roots, with the dark and unwelcoming side of city life. The cinematography will reflect this, exploring the colourless existence of someone impacted by over-prescribed medication, pitted against a beguiling and dangerous side that the initial allure of criminality and addiction promises. This emphasis on prescription medication unveils an uncomfortably plausible scenario, evidencing the possibility that

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Ellie's disappearance and the family's reaction could happen to anyone. *Misused* will broadcast a believable, balanced narrative of a private doctor manipulating their patients, broaching the inherent power dynamic between patient and caregiver. However, when looking more closely, who in fact is the one really holding the power?

Aidan is forced to navigate increasingly perilous scenarios; a slow descent into behaving like the people he's chasing, forever on the outskirts of the law. Think *Broadchurch* meets *The Stranger*, with an out-of-his-depth everyman trying to get to grips with reluctantly embodying a detective role. His inabilities are then exacerbated further by the fragmenting of his family, careening towards the point of implosion as they're

unable to accept the reality of what's being presented to them. When Aidan discovers that Ellie is potentially mixed up in a blackmail plot concerning her doctor and his supply of prescription medication, he starts to wonder if he really knew his sister at all.

*Misused* is a mystery-thriller designed to leave the viewer wondering just how well they *actually* know the people around them; what lengths would anyone go to in order to uncover the truth about the people they love? The series forces the viewer to question the integrity of those we care about, as well as the professionals whom we're told to place our trust in.

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*- Misused -*  
EPISODE OUTLINES



## *Episode 1: The Disappearance*

Episode one opens with Aidan and Katherine and baby Evie in their apartment in rural Wales. They're getting ready to go to Aidan's Dad's 50th birthday. Aidan is trying to keep the peace but Katherine is growing increasingly more agitated at the thought of going. She's sat putting her makeup on in the mirror, tears running down her face. They have an argument and Katherine tells Aidan she hates going round his parents 'as the atmosphere is unbearable' and she's not surprised that his sister moved away to Cardiff.

Aidan asks if she's taken her medication, which she hasn't. Katherine becomes enraged by this, she tells him that the medication isn't working and she's not 'having one of her bad days' as Aidan's mum so delicately puts it. It's more than 'baby blues' and she's fed up of people not taking her feelings seriously. Aidan implores her to trust the process and their family doctor's recommendations.

'You never listen to me.' Katherine says. 'I'm trying to tell you that every morning I wake up and it feels like a piece of me has died.'

Katherine roughly takes her citalopram pills out of a drawer, making a big show of rustling the packet and swallowing the pill.

'So am I cured now?' Katherine asks sarcastically and folds her arms.

Aidan tries to remain neutral, knowing that his tone of voice can sometimes make things worse. He suggests they can make an appointment with their family doctor, Dr. Bennett next week if she's got concerns.

Katherine laughs. 'Dr. Bennett listens to me less than you do. He just tells me to do yoga and not eat too much salt. But sure, let's go round in circles again.'

Evie starts crying and Katherine puts her head on the dressing table, covering her eyes with her hands. Aidan sees that Katherine is exhausted. He relents and suggests that she spends the day in bed catching up on some sleep. He will take Evie to the party and make excuses why she isn't there. Katherine appreciates this gesture, she climbs into bed and Aidan brings Evie to say goodbye. Katherine makes a joke about Evie staying away from Granny Beth's quiche Lorraine as it tastes like salmonella. Aidan rolls his eyes but smiles.

'Make sure you stick up for me Aidan.' Katherine says before he leaves. 'You know how your parents can be.'

Aidan and Evie turn up at the party which is in full swing with whole host of extended family attending. Beth immediately thrusts a quiche Lorraine under Aidan and Evie's nose which he politely declines. Beth is in full hostess mode, fussing and making sure everyone is having a good time.

'Have you tried the hummus in the kitchen? Sundried tomato and basil. Make it this morning. It's extremely fresh'. Beth says to no-one in particular.

There is a slight desperation to Beth which is further escalated by the fact that Ellie, Aidan's sister, hasn't turned up to the party.

Nate comes to see his granddaughter and asks where Katherine is. Beth quietly interrupts and ask if she's having one of her 'bad days'.

Aidan nods his head. He isn't as defensive about

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Katherine as he conveyed he would be earlier.

Nate isn't very sympathetic, annoyed that both Ellie and now Katherine haven't shown up to his birthday. Beth tries to keep things light, glossing over the issues, not wanting to cause a scene.

'Let's talk about this later shall we-'

'What about the fact that my own daughter *and* daughter-in-law couldn't be bother to turn up to my birthday party?'

It's clear that this is a dynamic that happens often. Nate however won't let it go and starts complaining about Ellie's attitude towards the family in general. Other people at the party start to notice the heated conversation, which Beth tries to calm down.

Aidan, having had enough of his Dad already, asks Beth to look after Evie for a moment so he can go upstairs. Beth gladly agrees, taking Evie, who she dotes on, and goes to show her off to other people at the party, thankful to defuse the tension.

'Did you know she rolled over at three months? Very advanced for her age, always has been. Early indication for MENSA candidates actually.'

Nate goes outside on his own to smoke. He pulls of the heads of some of Beth's flowers as he stares at the family gathering inside.

Aidan enters Ellie's old room - which still looks like that of a teenage girl. Among the posters and keepsakes are little stick figures Ellie likes to draw, which become a motif in the series. Aidan sighs, and exits, going into his own room - again, resembling a teenager.

In Aidan's closet we again see these little stick

figures. *In a flashback scene there is a younger Ellie giving him the drawing which he hangs up.*

He sits on his bed, and texts his sister, asking her where she is and also telling her that he's been at the party for five minutes and their Dad has already caused a scene.

After a few minutes, he doesn't receive any response so he sends a follow up message, which also goes ignored. Looking more worried, he scrolls through his contacts until he finds "Becky - Ell's roommate".

"Hi, Aidan here, Ellie's brother. Can't get hold of her, know where she is?"

Becky replies instantly.

"Hi Aidan. Haven't seen her for days. She was with a guy in the club last weekend, maybe she's with him?"

Aidan looks concerned for the first time now. He goes downstairs to his parents who have moved to a private room to argue more about Ellie and her not being there. It starts to get incredibly personal, Aidan has to intervene and remind them that there's loads of people in the house, as well as their granddaughter, stirring in the chair next to them. Beth, now in private asks about Katherine and if she's taking her medication. Aidan discloses she is, but doesn't believe it is working.

'That's the problem with Katherine.' Nate says softly. 'She always thinks she knows better. I said this would come back to haunt you when you married her.'

'Oh for God's sake Nate, are you really going to bring this up now?' Beth intervenes.

'I'm just saying Beth, I mean were they even *really* ready to be parents?'

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‘You are going to say that, with Evie right there?’

A family member interrupts the argument to ask if they are ready to do the birthday cake. The atmosphere is excruciating.

‘We’ll be there in one moment Rachel’.

Rachel leaves, happy to be free from the tension. Beth, then makes a strange disclosure about taking some medication herself once, just to get to sleep, which baffles everyone.

Aidan, having not defended his and Katherine’s relationship at all, promises to go to Cardiff to get Ellie tomorrow and bring her home next weekend.

The parents register this, somewhat, however are more consumed with their animosity of each other. Beth goes back out to the party to get Nate’s birthday cake ready. She stabs the candles in the cake so hard it almost ruins the icing on the top.

There’s an awkward scene with everyone singing happy birthday to Nate with Nate and Beth furious at each other, but trying to pretend everything is fine.

On returning to his house, Katherine is still very low and hasn’t eaten anything all day, you see her tossing and turning in bed. She asks how it went, Aidan replies: ‘Like it always does.’

‘Did you defend me to your Mum and Dad?’ Katherine probes.

‘Yeah of course I did’. Aidan replies. ‘I can’t believe you would think I wouldn’t.’ He looks shocked, and a little wounded which is confusing to the viewer as this is a complete lie.

Katherine tries summon the energy to hold Evie, but

Evie is fussy. This makes Katherine sink even lower.

Aidan puts Evie to bed and then makes Katherine something for dinner, which she reluctantly eats, whilst lamenting what a terrible mother she is. Aidan reassures her but Katherine doesn’t take any of it onboard. Aidan is seen checking his phone a lot, still with no response from Ellie. He voices his concerns to Katherine about Ellie’s lack of communication. Katherine reminds him of what Aidan was like when he was 22, but agrees he should drive to Cardiff just to check in on her.

The next day Aidan visits his sister’s flat and is let in by her flatmate Becky. Aidan is surprised about how overfamiliar and flirty she is. She insists she hasn’t seen much of Ellie lately, as she has been away a lot. Becky assumed she was sleeping at her new love interest’s place.

*There is a flashback of Ellie and Becky, Becky goes to Ellie’s room to check if she’s in but Ellie is already heading out the door with great purpose of going somewhere.*

Aidan uses the bathroom and checks their medicine cabinet, discovering it is filled with boxes of antidepressants, tranquilizers and opioids. All from the same psychiatrist in Cardiff, a Dr. Ashford. He confronts Becky and asks if she knows whether Ellie has been depressed, or if she knows a reason she would be on such a dangerous cocktail of medicines. Becky pleads ignorance: they normally just party together, they don’t share secrets with each other.

Aidan searches Ellie’s room for any other indications of her state of mind, but cannot find any clues, except from perhaps some very sad versions of the stick figures. He finds her laptop and decides to take it back to his place, despite Becky’s objections.

On Becky’s alternative suggestion he seeks out some



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of Ellie's other friends to get their impression of her state lately, but doesn't unearth any clues. Later that night, he researches the name of the psychiatrist who prescribed her meds, Doctor Ashford, to find his office and to see if there are any stories about him. He tries to open Ellie's laptop but to no avail.

Katherine has now reverted back to a more positive state, playing with Evie and reading to her at bedtime. She is making various different organic baby foods for Evie as she is fixated about her nutrition. Aidan has to convince her to go to bed.

Beth phones to find out if there's any update on Ellie, Aidan tells her what he's learned. She's as confused as Aidan. She tells Nate who is immediately dismissive, saying that this behaviour is typical of Ellie. This causes more tension.

Aidan also mentions to his mum about Katherine's manic state, not realising that Katherine is listening in. Katherine doesn't let Aidan know that she's overheard, but is now wary of what he's been saying to his family.

When Aidan is asleep, Katherine sneaks out of bed and gets dressed up; a complete contrast to how she's been previously. She pours herself a couple of drinks and logs into a chatroom. She spends a few hours talking to strangers and flirting with them. She sends a couple of suggestive photos, enjoying the attention and escapism.

The next day Aidan seeks out Dr. Ashford at his office. Dr. Ashford breezes in, late, exuding confidence and charm. Everyone in the waiting room visibly reacts to his presence which Aidan picks up on.

Aidan then notices one of his sister's pictograms with a sad and bruised face hanging on the wall. He makes enough of a disturbance in the waiting room to be let in to see the doctor, despite not having an

appointment.

Dr. Ashford surveys Aidan and asks him what he can do for him, as well as asking Aidan's full name and where he lives which strikes Aidan as odd. Dr. Ashford seems to make a mental note of something that he will return to later.

When questioned about Ellie's disappearance Dr. Ashford claims confidentiality and says he cannot say anything about Ellie and why she got so many pills from him.

*In a flashback you see Ellie looking troubled and harrowed, as if she's just disclosed something major. She walks around the room, Dr. Ashford tries to calm her down, telling her that nothing is her fault.*

In the present, Dr. Ashford carefully alludes to Ellie having childhood traumas to tackle and insinuates it may concern with child abuse. With this disclosure Ashford also states that, although he didn't see signs of it with Ellie, patients experiencing the same circumstances can, at times, decide to take their own lives to escape the trauma. This exchange seems to invigorate Dr. Ashford, as if he is enjoying Aidan's discomfort, although it's not explicitly clear.

Aidan excuses Dr. Ashford of being a liar. He gets quite aggressive and tries to intimidate Dr. Ashford, looming over him and being physically a lot stronger than him.

Dr. Ashford remains quite calm and says:

'I see, this type of behaviour runs in the family.'

Aidan becomes further incensed by Dr. Ashford's goading.

'Now Mr. Phillin, I really don't want to have to call the

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police, but this conduct is unacceptable. You need to leave I'm afraid.'

As Aidan gets up to go, Dr. Ashford says, 'Have you thought of having therapy for your own anger issues? You could definitely do with some intervention work. My business cards are on the front desk. Maybe I could do a family discount?'

Aidan furious at Dr. Ashford's retort, decides to go before he punches Dr. Ashford in the face. He's now more worried than ever before. He calls home, a little out of balance and tries to get his Mother to tell him if there is any truth to Dr. Ashford's claims. His Mum feigns ignorance, and tries to change the subject, which annoys Aidan even further. As he speaks with his mother a young woman interrupts the conversation, saying: 'Were you looking for Ellie?'

'Ellie left this the last time I saw her.'

She hands him a small bit of paper with a pictogram on that Ellie's drawn. It's of a stickman with a noose around it's neck. Underneath it has the words, 'Save Me' scrawled in blood red letters.

### *Episode 2: The Trick*

The second episode begins with Aidan quickly hanging up the phone and looking at the young woman. She looks tired and in poor health. She clearly knows something about Ellie so he asks if he can buy her a coffee at the shop across the street. She looks hesitant but agrees.

*In a flashbacks we see a montage of her and Ellie meeting in the doctor's waiting room and making polite conversation. As the montage goes on, Ellie appears more distressed and unkempt.*

'We used to have appointments almost at the same time. But I haven't seen her for a while now. Is she alright?'

Aidan explains he cannot find her, but he found lots of pills from Dr. Ashford in her medicine cabinet.

The young woman nods and says 'Yeah, she always complained the pills made her sick, but trying to quit them was making her even worse.'

Aidan is about to say something but she interrupts him as she nods up to the office building across the street, warning him that Dr. Ashford is incredibly charming but a bit too generous with meds - he's notorious for it.

Aidan asks about why she has the pictogram.

*In a flashback the woman explains that Ellie left the pictogram on a chair in the waiting room before going into the office. The woman picked up the pictogram and hasn't seen Ellie since.*

Aidan asks if he can keep the pictogram, she agrees, wishes Aidan luck, and leaves.

Aidan is now getting really worried and goes to the police to ask if they have found any bodies lately, or to report her missing if she has not been found. He is worried that after what he has heard from Dr. Ashford that she could have potentially harmed herself or worse. They are not particularly helpful, but one helpful detective approaches him as he is about to leave and gives him his card and says to call if he finds out anything or needs help. Aidan also shows the detective the pictogram that Ellie left in the waiting room.

In a scene back at Katherine's and Aidan's home, Beth goes round to see Katherine to give her some

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flowers to see if she's feeling better. However, Beth is immediately concerned about Katherine's behaviour, she's acting irrationally, as well as talking fast and frantically. Nate is waiting in the car outside, Beth goes out to ask Nate to help, but he's not helpful at all and just makes the situation worse. Not knowing what to do she calls Aidan.

He's still annoyed from earlier, but this is forgotten when Beth explains that Katherine is displaying manic symptoms and that he should come home as quickly as possible.

Aidan returns to Katherine, who's in a mixed and hyper state, the house is in disarray and filled with Katherine's half completed tasks surrounding Evie. Beth is watching over her and leaves when Aidan arrives, first quietly saying to Aidan about potentially calling a doctor.

Aidan echoes Beth's concerns which infuriates Katherine, she screams at him that she knows that him and his mother are conspiring against her and trying to take Evie away from her. She details his conversation with Beth the previous evening as evidence. Aidan gently suggests that maybe they need to go to the doctor to get some help regarding her high and low moods. Katherine refuses this and then in response bans Beth from coming over to help with Evie, demonizing Beth in the process.

In the evening, with Katherine having calmed down and taking a bath, he again tries to open Ellie's laptop and this time he succeeds.

On the laptop he finds photos of what seems to be Ellie's boyfriend. On one of them they have taken a selfie behind the counter of a bar. The name of the bar is mirrored in the window behind them.

He opens various programs to try to find clues to her

whereabouts and discovers she is friends with Dr. Ashford on Facebook, and he soon finds out she has been chatting with him extensively on messenger. This in itself is alarming to Aidan.

*In a flashback scene you see a montage of Ellie interacting with Dr. Ashford over a period of several weeks in her bedroom. The audience can only see Ellie's side of the interaction. Over the course of this, her behaviour and appearance visibly deteriorates.*

*The conversation begins jovially enough, with Ellie slowly becoming more and more dependent on the correspondence.*

*Dr. Ashford's messages are clever and manipulative, without being obviously so. Towards the end, Ellie is frustrated that the pills are making her worse. She is feeling constantly stressed and wants to quit. Dr. Ashford replies by telling her to up the dosage. When Ellie comes back and tells him upping the dosage made it even worse, he suggests adding another medicine.*

*Ellie does not reply for several days, but when she does she seems desperate. Her symptoms are worse than ever and she says she is going to quit the meds. Dr Ashford does not reply.*

*Ellie's next message is 3 weeks after this, and she is now begging him for meds. she can't quit cold turkey and needs more. She makes it clear she will do anything. Ashford tells her to come to his office that night and they will make an arrangement. The conversation ends here, there are no more messages. The flashback ends.*

Aidan researches the meds the doctor had prescribed her and amongst the side-effects it states that suicidal tendencies can occur.

When Aidan goes to bed, Katherine pretends to be asleep. She again slips out of bed, gets dressed up and calls someone. A taxi arrives to pick her up and she

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goes to a bar and orders three shots. She downs all of them and gets talking to a group of men who then also buy her drinks. She leads one of the men to the dance floor and starts dancing with him overly sexualised. She looks into his eyes, completely oblivious to everyone around them.

In the morning, Katherine arrives back at her home, reeking of alcohol, her makeup smudged and hair dishevelled. Aidan wakes up and realises she isn't in bed, he goes downstairs to see her sneaking in.

'Where on earth have you been?' Aidan is stunned.

'Out.' Katherine, tries to unbuckle her shoes but is swaying slightly.

'What is going on Katherine? You left your daughter in the middle of the night to do what? Go out drinking?'

'You were here weren't you? Anyways, will give your Mum and Dad more ammunition won't it?' Katherine's unstable, she can't possibly be a fit mother.' That's what you say behind my back.'

'I can't believe you are turning this into something about my parents. This is beyond reckless behaviour. What the fuck is the matter with you?'

Katherine ignores Aidan, goes up to take a shower. Evie starts to cry in the background and Aidan goes to pacify her. He listens to the shower running, at a loss to know what to do.

He makes up his mind and charges into the bathroom, which isn't locked. He pulls back the shower curtain and scares Katherine.

'I need to go and find out what has happened with Ellie, you know, your sister-in-law which you have barely mentioned since we found out she's disappeared.'

'I have, I also care about-'

'Well you've got a funny way of showing it. Acting like this, staying out all night, with god knows who, whilst I'm trying to-'

'Oh, I'm sorry shall I turn off all my emotions and feelings until Ellie's found?'

'If she's found. Aidan replies. 'You're so selfish. Everything is always about *you* and how *you* feel. My mum is coming round today to help with Evie, no discussion.'

Katherine tries to protest, Aidan in return slams the bathroom cabinet so hard that it almost flies off the hinges. Katherine falls silent.

Beth comes to Aidan's door with a few toys for Evie, Aidan and her exchange worried looks. Beth gingerly enters, shouting to Katherine: 'Hi Katherine, I've bought a few bits for Evie from the jumble-sale. Do you want me to put the kettle on?'

Aidan reluctantly leaves his home and then goes to the bar in the photo of Ellie and her boyfriend to see if they know him there and if he can give him any news on where Ellie is. At the bar, there is only Frank, the manager. He says Ellie has helped at the bar sometimes and that her boyfriend is Shane, one of their bartenders.

He has not been working for a few days, and he cannot help with info on where Shane is. On the wall behind the bar there is a board with postcards from various foreign guests that have sent a postcard from their hometown and amid these another of Ellie's drawings with a waving pictogram this time.

Aidan leaves but he has no time to dwell, because after

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reading his sister's conversation with Dr. Ashford the night before, he has a plan.

Aidan waits outside Dr. Ashford's office until he sees him finish at the office for the day and get into the expensive car he has parked outside his office. Aidan quickly follows in his own car. When Ashford pulls up in his own driveway in Cardiff, he jumps into the car. At first, Dr. Ashford is full of bravado and sneers at Aidan.

'I'm starting to think you're stalking me Mr. Phillin.'

Aidan punches him hard in the face, his head rebounds against the headboard of his chair.

'Perhaps I am.'

Aidan punches him again. Blood falls from Dr. Ashford's nose. He catches it in his hand, a little surprised.

'I wonder where all this anger stems from exactly?'

Aidan punches him again and now Ashford starts to get a bit scared. He decides attack is the best form of defence and lashes out.

'You know what's funny is Ellie never actually properly disclosed who was abusing her in her family. I'm just a bit suspicious why your so invested in this?.'

Ashford, expecting Aidan to go nuclear is shocked when Aidan appears very calm. He takes a wrench out of the back of the car.

'I'm going to ask you again, what happened with Ellie? Every time you lie to me, I'm going to break one of your fingers. It's quite simple. How's that for aggression?'

Ashford tries to determine if Aidan is bluffing. He can't tell.

'I know about the conversations you had with Ellie. I know you arranged to meet her at your office.'

Dr. Ashford is defiant and silent. Aidan takes Dr. Ashford hand and uses the wrench to break one of his pinkie fingers. Dr. Ashford screams out in pain. Aidan moves to break another one but Dr. Ashford begs him to stop.

'Okay, okay, I'll tell you. Ellie scammed me.'

'I don't believe you.'

'No it's true. I swear, I swear.'

*In a flashback you see Ashford wanted extra pay to give her the meds she wanted. But Ellie saying she couldn't pay and instead trying to seduce him to get the meds for free. Dr. Ashford is shown giving into her advances.*

*Ashford is shown bumping into Shane, who was waiting outside the office and threatens Ashford with improper conduct. He has a recording to prove Ashford's complicity with selling additional medication illegally, as well as having an improper relationship with a patient.*

In retaliation for Dr. Ashford sleeping with Ellie, Aidan smashes Dr. Ashford's face into the steering wheel.

According to Dr. Ashford, he was then forced to supply the drugs to Shane and Ellie to sell under the counter at the bar.

Aidan is just about to beat Dr. Ashford again but Aidan's phone rings: it is his mother. She's in hysterics.

'Trouble at home?' Dr. Ashford comments sardonically.

Aidan slaps him round the face.

His mother is in tatters, as she confronted Nate with Dr. Ashford's allegations about potential abuse in Ellie's childhood when he came over to Aidan's earlier.

'And you've left Katherine on her own?'

'Your father has locked himself in Ellie's room. I'm worried what he might do. I can't be everywhere at once!'

'And I'm trying to work out where your daughter is, Mum. Katherine is unstable and might be a danger to herself.'

'You need to come home now Aidan. This is all getting very out of hand.'

'I think that stating the obvious a bit, don't you think?'

Aidan reluctantly lets Dr. Ashford go, realising that he needs to go and defuse all the trouble at home.

'In my professional experience, secrets usually have a way of working themselves out into the open, with a bit of encouragement.' Dr. Ashford remarks after hearing the one-sided conversation. 'No hypocrisy intended.' He wiggles his hand with his broken finger at Aidan.

When Aidan arrives back to his town, he doesn't know whether to go to his parents or to Katherine first. After a bit of deliberation he goes to his parents. His mum signals that he's still locked in Ellie's room. Aidan decides to break down the door, after a few attempts he forces entry to find Nate sat, rocking and weeping on Ellie's childhood bed, clutching her favourite teddy.

### *Episode 3: The Rift*

*In a flashback we see a younger Ellie and her dad having a massive argument. We learn that*

*Ellie had a girlfriend at 16 and Nate found out when he discovered them together in her room. He did not react well to his daughter's attempts at explaining she is pansexual and it became a festering grievance between them. He does everything in his power to make her life difficult, eventually asking Ellie to move out, as he didn't want her in the house.*

*This was the trauma she had been alluding to Dr. Ashford.*

In the present Aidan is shocked to learn this, having moved out of the family home already at this point. This secret been completely kept from him. He is furious at his Dad for his actions.

In the meantime, Katherine having been left on her own, has entered another depressive episode. she is wandering about the house, in her nightclothes, Evie is crying as she continues to pace around. She considers going to Evie, but instead reaches for the phone to dial an unknown caller.

Aidan returns to Katherine, exhausted by all the family revelations. He sees she is suffering, but can't support her in the way he needs to so checks if Evie is okay and ignores Katherine.

Later that night, Aidan goes to his car by his apartment building to retrieve the wrench as it has Dr. Ashford's blood on it and could be used as evidence against him. He is suddenly jumped by two men that beat and kick him badly, warning him to leave his sister's disappearance alone and stay away from the bar. Aidan picks himself up and stumbles into his apartment, passing out. Katherine is now more mellowed but also

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really worried and wants to call the police. Aidan says he will take care of it himself. He wakes in bad pain the morning after and decides he has to strike back.

To do this, he needs to find Shane, prove that the bar is selling prescription drugs under the counter and convince Ashford to come clean to the police. Most importantly, he must find out what has happened to Ellie. Is she still alive? And if so, where is she?

Aidan decides to stake out the bar. He does this for several days and sees the two men that attacked him stop by the bar and talk to the manager several times. He also sees various exhausted individuals drop in and order a drink, before quickly leaving as soon as they have finished their drink, with a box of pills slipped in their pocket.

Over the period of these couple of days, Katherine is back on a more even keel, but still exhibiting worrying behaviour that both Beth and Aidan pick up on. However, Aidan is unable to be there much due to him staking out the bar. Beth decides to spend most of the hours that Aidan isn't there with Katherine and Evie to look after them and help out. Katherine is also seen flirting with people online again, drinking and taking photos of herself. She's also using gambling sites and ordering expensive clothes for herself and Evie that come delivered to the door which she hides.

Nate is also doing a lot of soul-searching and looking at pictures of Ellie when she was little, not knowing if she is still alive he is incredibly remorseful of the way he has behaved towards her. Police officers come to Beth and Nate's door to get more information but say they have no news of Ellie's disappearance.

On the third day, Shane shows up. He is clearly on a more equal rank to the bar-manager than the men who beat Aidan. After a while Shane leaves and Aidan follows him, and by doing so, he discovers where he

lives. There is no sign of Ellie.

Aidan comes prepared and picks up a bag he has in the backseat of his car and follows Shane into his apartment building. From a little distance, he sees him take the elevator up to the 4th floor and walk up to the door of his apartment. Aidan strikes as Shane opens his door, clubs him down and pulls him inside his own flat, picks up the bag from the floor of the hallway and locks the door.

Shane awakens to find himself tied to a chair, with a dry throat and a throbbing pain in his head. Aidan is sitting across from him. He offers him a seltzer and puts it to Shane's lips and pours it into his mouth. Shane gulps it down, coughs and swallows.

When the glass is empty and he has regained his breath and a little composure he asks who he is and what's going on. Aidan wants to know everything he can tell him about Frank's bar and his side business of selling prescription medication. Shane's eyes widen in fear and he denies all knowledge. Aidan moves a little to the side, revealing 4-5 big boxes of pills. All opened and empty. They are the meds from Ellie's medicine cabinet.

"Those were all mixed into the drink I just gave you. If I were you, I would start talking, or else I might not be tempted to call the ambulance that could save you. If it gets here in time, of course, before you pass out, and your heart stops beating".

Shane suddenly realizes his situation and panics, tries to break free of the chair but it has no effect. He cracks and tells Aidan about the whole operation.

*In a flashback you see Aidan convincing Ellie to exaggerate the extent of her trauma and to twist her words, to insinuate abuse in past in order to get access to*

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*more meds from Dr. Ashford. Ellie isn't happy with this idea, but eventually as she becomes more dependent on her prescriptions, she agrees.*

*In another flashback, Shane is shown threatening Dr. Ashford with the recording, aligning with what Ashford had said previously.*

Exhausted and afraid for his life, Shane again demands to know who his attacker is. When he learns Aidan is Ellie's brother he claims not to have seen her since the day she gave him that silly drawing with the waving pictogram.

"I need the recording." Aidan says. Shane tells him where to find it, but warns him Frank has a stick with a copy in a safe in his office at the bar. Shane knows the combination. Aidan prepares to leave, and says he will call 999 as soon as he is out the door. And wishes him luck with the stomach pumping process.

As soon as he gets in the car, he calls Dr. Ashford and demands he contacts the police and tells them Frank & co have been threatening and pressuring him into giving them prescription drugs. He also sends an email with an attachment that's a recording of Shane's confession to Aidan.

Ashford initially refuses, but is convinced when Aidan plays part of the recording to him over the phone, claiming he now has the only recording and that contacting the police to say he was under threat is his only way out. Dr. Ashford yields. Before Aidan hangs up Dr. Ashford has one parting shot:

'Ellie's not the only one in your family that's good at keeping secrets.'

Before Aidan can ask him what he mean, Dr. Ashford hangs up. He is perplexed but doesn't have time to process this properly because he's heading to the bar

for the final part of his plan. He stakes it out and waits until he sees Frank leaving before venturing around to the back. He breaks in through the back door and sneaks quietly in the dark to find Frank's office. After some searching he finds the safe and manages to open it. At that same time Frank comes back to the bar, followed by the two men who beat Aidan. They catch Aidan in the act, but he manages to slide the stick with the recording underneath a large bookshelf before Frank and the others see it.

They pounce on him as soon as they see him. And a violent struggle seems to end very badly for Aidan. Just before the end of the episode, Katherine is seen going to a secret stash of pills under her bed, she takes one and the prescription is written by Dr. Ashford.

### *Episode 4: The Truth*

Episode four begins with Aidan being saved at the last minute by the police arriving at the bar to arrest Frank and his gang after Dr. Ashford has held his word and phoned the police. On searching the bar they find a large stock of prescription drugs tucked away and the game is clearly up for the operation. Before the police take them away Aidan gets to ask Frank about Ellie, but he too says he has not seen her since the day she gave Shane the waving emoji.

The kind police officer from an earlier episode comes and sits by Aidan, explaining about the call from Ashford, and saying how lucky Aidan was they came when they did. They say they are waiting for Ashford to speak, and have received the email of the recording Aidan made of Shane's confession. The officer takes a deep breath, and continues:

'We found a dead body in the harbour this morning. A girl, twenties.'



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Aidan suddenly feels faint and has to sit down. ‘Is it her?’

The policeman says they are not sure. Age and ethnicity fits, but he needs Aidan at the morgue to help with identification. Aidan takes his car and follows the policeman into the morgue, his stomach churning as the coroner unveils the body. He is silent for a long time, staring at the young woman in front of him. Finally, he mutters ‘it’s not her.’

They go outside and the policeman asks how Aidan is. He answers that he does not know whether to be happy, because maybe she is still alive, or sad, because she is probably dead and now they may never know what happened to her. The policeman doesn’t reply.

As Aidan is reeling from the experience his Mum calls and he ignores it, not wanting to deal with speaking to her. She rings again so he answers it, Beth tells him that as she was tidying up at his house when Katherine was taking a nap, she found some prescription pills, not prescribed by her regular doctor. Aidan asks her to send a picture of the bottle who then realizes that Dr. Ashford also prescribed Katherine medication.

Aidan returns to Dr. Ashford’s home, he doesn’t even bother to knock and just walks right in. He pins Dr. Ashford to the wall.

‘What can I do for you, Aidan?’

‘Why does my wife have medicine prescribed by you hidden under our bed?’

‘That’s technically confidential.’

‘Is there anyone’s life you won’t try and ruin?’

‘Maybe you should have tried listening to her.’

Aidan puts his head in his hands, trying not to scream.

*In a flashback, Dr. Ashford sees Ellie and Katherine out in a bar having a few drinks. Ellie beckons Dr. Ashford over and introduces them. Dr. Ashford is seen comforting Katherine and slips her his business card. The flashback ends.*

‘It’s a bit suspicious that Katherine didn’t tell you that she was also having sessions with me though, don’t you think?’ Dr. Ashford remarks.

Shane is laying in a hospital bed, looking bleak. He has had his stomach pumped.

A doctor is standing by his bed, and tells him that there was only a small amount of drugs in his body, and next time, please don’t waste resources by calling an ambulance for a safe dose of prescription meds. Shane looks completely dumbfounded.

Aidan tricked him. Police officers approach the room, ready to talk to Shane.

Aidan is seen returning to his apartment. The viewer doesn’t know how the exchange between Dr. Ashford and him ended. He confronts Katherine about Dr. Ashford’s claims and the pills. And whether she knows anything about Ellie’s disappearance as she’s been so mysteriously silent about everything, despite being close with Ellie. Katherine is astounded that he would even ask her that and she, in turn, reacts to his beaten up face and the dodgy behaviour he’s exhibited the past few days.

After a stand-off Katherine breaks down and admits that she has been unable to cope since the birth of Evie and didn’t want to seem like a failure. This is why she sought out Dr. Ashford on Ellie’s recommendation a few months ago, after meeting at the bar. She’s been getting Valium from him so she can get to sleep. This has been helpful at staving off some of her manic

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symptoms however, has not been fully working– hence why she’s been continuing upping the dosage. Aidan is angry that Katherine withheld this information from him, critical information that could have helped him with solving Ellie’s disappearance.

Katherine is apologetic and distraught, going to the kitchen to fetch a frozen bag of peas to help with Aidan’s injuries. Whilst Katherine is doing this, Aidan notices a few letters on the doormat. He finds a postcard among the letters. It’s a picture of a mountain area in France. He flips it over and there is one single pictogram with a heart.

Aidan tells Katherine he needs to go out and drives to Ellie and Becky’s apartment. He bangs on the door, and Becky opens it. Aidan shows her the postcard, and demands he is told everything.

Inside the apartment, Becky explains everything, which is told through flashbacks.

*Becky came home to find Ellie about to slit her wrists. Ellie was overwhelmed and ashamed of what she had done and become involved in, she felt there was no other way out. An all-consuming addiction to the medication she has been using didn’t help either.*

*Becky took care of Ellie and suggested a way out. From friends in France, she knew about a secluded clinic in the French Alps, that helps people recover from prescription drug addiction. She paid to send her there in complete secrecy to allow her to escape Shane, Frank and the whole mess she had entwined herself in.*

Becky goes to the kitchen and opens a drawer and picks up a postcard sent to her. It’s clearly from Ellie and has a pictogram of two people hugging and two hearts merging.

Aidan looks at the card and realizes Becky is more

than just Ellie’s roommate.

*A flashback shows Becky and Ellie hugging on her bed, Becky acting protective towards her and kissing her head.*

The look on her face confirms his suspicions. He gets up and gives Becky a hug. He tells her, “Give her my best.” He leaves, to resume his normal life, in the knowledge his sister is safe, and well cared for.

Aidan returns to Katherine and Evie, they embrace as he explains where Ellie is.

Him and Katherine both resolve to tackle Katherine’s mental health problems and potential bipolar diagnosis together, with no secrets. She admits to her reckless spending and her risky behaviour with people online and in person. Aidan’s is upset, but understanding, he promises to be more attentive and listen to her more in the future.

Nate and Beth are also shown to be given the news that Ellie is alive and well. Nate and Beth are relieved, but don’t know how to communicate that with each other. Nate goes outside to smoke, he silently cries looking up at the sky.

Ellie is seen in the French Alps, drawing the pictograms in a bright room, a nurse brings her a tea and she is seen content.

Montage 1 month later:

Dr. Ashford is at a tribunal hearing, he is being suspended from practising medicine.

A scene is shown of Katherine and Aidan attending a therapist session with the therapist explaining Katherine’s recent bipolar disorder diagnosis. They explain how to identify and spot triggers for her manic episodes as a couple. Aidan is taking notes and asking a lot of questions to try and support Katherine.

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After the session they are at a playground with Evie. Aidan takes Evie on the slide, he pauses to squeeze Katherine's hand.

Beth and Nate arrive at the clinic in France, they see Ellie who is also there with Becky. They embrace for a long time, Nate apologising and crying, asking her to forgive him.

End of series.

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*- Misused -*

## CHARACTER BIOS



### *Aidan Phillin*

Aidan is a 26-year-old trapped inside of his own life. He's a man who regularly tries to do the right thing, for both his family and the new family he's trying to create, but despite his strong moral compass it rarely feels as if he causes significant change for either of them. As a young man he had a promising career as a rugby player ahead of him, but ended up, as his father might say, getting mixed up with the wrong kind of crowd. Aidan never did anything too serious, but his deviations were enough to make the promise of a career as a rugby forward dwindle away. His anger issues are a continual source of contention for him, often making him lash out and seem unsympathetic in the eyes of the viewer. And, it makes you ask the question: why is he so seemingly at ease with the violence he can conjure at a moment's notice?

Now, he's stuck between the life he was working towards back then and the life he's working towards right now. His mother and father pull him backwards, dredging up old failings, whilst Katherine and their new baby, Evie, pull him forwards to an existence he's uncertain of. Ellie is something of a mediator for Aidan, someone who also understands their family's dynamics as well as the crushing weight of expectation. With her disappearance, Aidan puts his entire life on hold to protect his younger sister. Using his initiative, he tracks Ellie's prior movements to uncover a conspiracy that leads closer to home than he could ever have considered.

In conjunction with Katherine's mental health spiral, he is pressured into scenarios and emotional outbursts that exacerbate and fuel already deep-seated issues within his family dynamic. However, Aidan, as relentless as he is, will stop at nothing to get to the truth.

### *Ellie Phillin*

Ellie is a 22-year-old who holds her individuality in high regard. She's a deeply creative, artistic person who seeks to find the good in everyone, regardless of circumstances. This is true even of her father, Nate, who all but wrote her out of the family several years ago when she came out as a pansexual. Ellie moved to Cardiff to study art, in the hope that distance and a change of scenery might help her both develop her craft and take the time to reflect on her relationship with her parents.

This relationship however, and its many problems, impacts Ellie more than she'd anticipated. After years of increasingly depleting mental health throughout university, Ellie was at a loss and, during a particularly bad episode, ended up in contact with a man named Dr Ashford. Ashford agreed to help Ellie tackle her problems through medication, one of many facets of her private life that she keeps hidden from her family. She's also concerned that her family could find out unless she does so through Ashford's private practice. Her disappearance is sudden and inexplicable to even her closest friends, leaving Aidan and her parents to piece together what may have happened from the breadcrumb trail of secrets she's left behind.

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### *Katherine Phillin*

Katherine is a woman who's struggling to place herself within the present because of all the responsibilities that come with it. Her and Aidan have always wanted to start a family early, but the dream of children has crash-landed into the reality of early motherhood as well as her now dealing with Bipolar disorder brought on by the birth of Evie. This however, has been misdiagnosed as depressed and she feels no one is taking her opinions into consideration.

Katherine is a caring mother and a loving partner, but right now finds herself flitting from manic tendencies to depressive episodes, with little means of controlling or rectifying the situation. She's sick of following the guidelines, taking medication that isn't working and trying to get enough rest. This is also tricky with a one year old who is going through the weaning stage and won't sleep. Over the course of the series, we see Katherine settle into risky and dangerous behaviour, putting herself into hazardous circumstances that fractures her relationship with Aidan and his family. She has always had a complex relationship with Aidan's family; she finds it hard being around them, despite Beth's assistance with Evie, sensing a deeply damaging atmosphere that the rest of the family seem to ignore. At a loss as to what to do about her unstable moods as well as being sleep deprived, she receives contact details from Ellie which potentially points to her having something to do with Ellie's disappearance.

### *Dr. Ashford*

All routes appear to lead to Dr Ashford. A doctor in his mid-40s, Ashford chose to leave the NHS several years ago in order to continue his career on a private basis. Citing a desire for the freedom setting his own work schedule might offer, Ashford's management of his practice has grown increasingly duplicitous as his private years have gone by. He is more concerned with the money and flashy lifestyle his private practice brings him as opposed to keeping within the confines of the law, as well as not necessarily acting in the best interests of his patients.

Confidentiality in the medical profession is agreed on, but Ashford has forged a career out of leaving no records for those he treats, praying on individuals who are irrationally afraid of their records coming back to haunt them.

In going private, Ashford became more of an individual in the eyes of his patients, rather than a representative of a whole. This forced him to recognise in greater detail the nature of the patient-caregiver dynamic, and the ways it swayed in his favour. He began to find a heightened sense of purpose in adopting this role, but found himself dismayed when patients were cured and ceased to meet with him. Ashford began to crave this relationship, adopting a position of power over people, in his own selfish messiah complex. To maintain this position over his patients he began slightly modifying medications and doses, beginning down the slope that he continues descending today.

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He enjoys manipulating people, and goading them into uncomfortable outbursts, revelling in how far he can push others to their limits. He sees his interactions with Aidan as a game and a form of one-upmanship. But has he met his match with Aidan? And is Dr. Ashford the actual villain he appears to be?

### *Nate Phillin*

Nate is in many respects the archetypal father figure; caring for the perception of his children that he harbours in his head, and dismissing any deviation from this that they dare present. He remains disappointed by Aidan's failure to become a notable rugby star, though acknowledges and appreciates his efforts to start a family of his own.

His relationship with Ellie is far less amicable. His dismissal of her pansexuality serves as one of the major causes of her leaving for Cardiff, but the issues between them may delve even deeper than this singular event. Having never spoken about his feelings or emotions in significant detail, Nate finds himself at a loss following Ellie disappearance. In his inability to react appropriately to situations he lashes out in anger, behaviour that succeeds in making everything worse for Aidan and the rest of his family.

His quiet moments of introspection based on his previous actions that were damaging to his children or wife indicates that he is a man who is self-reflective, yet unable to communicate this to the people he cares about.

### *Beth Phillin*

Beth has always put her children and her family first, whatever happens. The trouble with Beth is that her perception of her family is somewhat warped; she sees only the good in everyone, like Ellie, but refuses to filter this through the lens of reality. This key difference means Beth is always broadcasting an alternative imagining of her life to outsiders, and is never able to properly process what's going on around her.

Ellie's disappearance forces her to confront this aspect of herself as well as this darker side of the Phillin family. Her care over Evie also causes her to regularly clash with Katherine, the two of them twisting the dial on a melting pot that threatens to boil over everyone.

### *Becky Rose*

Becky is Ellie's roommate, which in all likelihood makes her one of the last people to see Ellie before her disappearance. Which is why her behaviour following Ellie's disappearance is deeply confusing to Aidan. Any time Aidan tries to discuss the matter with Becky or obtain information, it feels as if he's not receiving anything close to the full picture. She is somehow even more elusive and mysterious than Ellie herself; by forever holding such a tight grip on her private life she ultimately serves as an intricate puzzle Aidan will need to crack to find his sister.

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