

Setting: SCHOOL

SIOBHAN. "So I went into his bedroom and opened up the wardrobe and lifted the toolbox off the top of the shirt box and opened the shirt box. I counted out the letters. There were 43 of them. They were all addressed to me in the same handwriting. I took one and opened it. Inside was this letter."

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Dear Christopher. I said that I wanted to explain to you why I went away when I had the time to do it properly. Now I have lots of time. So I'm sitting on the sofa here with this letter and the radio on and I'm going to try and explain. I was not a very good mother Christopher. Maybe if things had been different, maybe if you'd been different, I might have been better at it. But that's just the way things turned out. I'm not like your father. Your father is a much more patient person. He just gets on with things and if things upset him he doesn't let it show. But that's not the way I am and there's nothing I can do to change it. Do you remember once when we were shopping in town together?- And we went into Bentalls and it was really crowded and we had to get a Christmas present for Grandma? And you were frightened because of all the people in the shop. And you crouched down on the floor and put your hands over your ears and you were in the way of everyone so I got cross because I don't like shopping at Christmas either, and I told you to behave and I tried to pick you up and move you. But you shouted and you knocked those mixers off the shelf and there was a big crash. And everyone turned round to see what was going on and there were boxes and bits of string and bits of broken bowl on the floor and everyone was staring and I saw that you had wet yourself and I was so cross and I wanted to take you out of the shop but you wouldn't let me touch you and we just had to wait until you stopped screaming. And I remember that night I just cried and cried and your father was really nice about it at first and he made you supper and put you to bed and he

said these things happen and it would be OK. but I said I couldn't take it anymore and eventually he got really cross and he told me I was being stupid and said I should pull myself together, and I hit him, which was wrong, but I was so upset. We had a lot of arguments like that.