

PAIN

Draft 11

By

ANNA ROSE DUCKWORTH

Anna Duckworth
711 New North Road
Mount Albert
Auckland

1. INT. INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE. LATE AFTERNOON EVENING.

MUM and SARAH walk through an indoor sports centre.

MUM, 30s, cropped short black hair, glasses and SARAH, 7 years old, curly hair, big blue eyes, overbite, dimples.

The space is split into different areas; soccer, netball, cricket. All adults, after work leagues. Lots of noise, balls being hit, caught, kicked. Players calling out to each other. The space is colourful and energetic.

SARAH skips along next to her MUM, who is scanning the players of each of the indoor cricket games.

SARAH

There he is.

SARAH, grinning, peers through the net and sees DAD, 30s, ginger hair and beard, tall, blue sport uniform. A batsman is putting on a pair of gloves. DAD jogs over to the edge of net.

DAD

Hey monster, almost done.

SARAH smiles big. She holds both her arms out in a circle, as if she is hugging an invisible person. Her hands overlapping, she claps one hand with other hand.

SARAH

Bucket.

Grinning, DAD mirrors the gesture.

DAD

In the bucket.

DAD turns and jogs away.

MUM and SARAH find a bench along the side of the game and sit down. MUM pulls out a folded newspaper and a pen and gets to work on the Sudoku puzzle.

SARAH watches her DAD and scans the other players.

Red shirt, young guy with a moustache. Blue shirt, bigger guy going bald. Red shirt, curly haired short guy.

SARAH shuffles around in her seat.

SARAH

Did Dad win?

MUM

I don't know.

SARAH

Dad showed me how to do a proper throw.

SARAH gets off the bench and mimes an overarm bowl - badly.

SARAH

Dad's the best bowler aye? Cos he got that award.

SARAH walks around the back, and hops up on the bench on her knees. She eyes up the batsman in her Dad's game. Red shirt, moustache. He positions himself while the blue shirt bowler rubs the ball on his shorts.

SARAH

At school when we play cricket we don't wear all the pads and white costumes either.

MUM

Mmhmm.

SARAH stands up on the bench and walks along to the end, she loses her footing, her legs go out underneath her, her bum hits the bench hard and she falls forward onto the floor.

MUM holds her breath waiting for a reaction. SARAH, unfazed, climbs straight back up onto the bench.

SARAH

We just wear our PE clothes at school.

MUM unfreezes, relieved, and returns her attention to the Sudoku puzzle.

SARAH

Is this just a practice game?

SARAH jumps down behind the bench and drapes herself over it, lying next to MUM.

SARAH

Nah, cos Dad doesn't need more practice cos he practices with me. What's the boss of the team called? Is Dad the boss? Does he tell - [everyone what to do?]

A man's guttural yell cuts through the whole sports centre.

MAN

AHHHHHH, FUUUUCK. FUCKING HELL.

SARAH bolts upright, possum in headlights.

The screaming is coming from a man in the court in front of them. It's DAD. His face is red and contorted.

All the courts fall quiet. For a moment, no one moves.

DAD is clutching his hand. Screaming in agony.

He is sweating and his whole face is gnarled and distorted, mouth open.

His whole body heaves with every breath.

MUM jumps up from her seat.

MUM
(weary)
Jesus, Kevin.

SARAH's uncomprehending stare is locked on the screaming man.

SARAH
(almost a whisper)
That's not Dad.

Two of the blue shirt men help DAD off the court, they walk along the edge of the netting in front of SARAH and MUM.

SARAH
Is that Dad?

MUM flings her arm back searching for SARAH - she instinctively completes her half of the gesture, taking MUM's hand. SARAH clambers over the bench, wrapping herself to her mother's side.

MUM takes a sudden step forward, dragging SARAH with her.

The men hold open the netting for DAD. He's moaning. They walk through the centre toward a medical bay.

SARAH
(insistent)
That's not - [Dad]

MUM
He's hurt.

MUM pulls SARAH after them. Resistant, her eyes dart between the court and her mother - pushing together puzzle pieces that don't fit.

The other games slowly start up again. SARAH desperately looks back to her DAD's game. The players have started to pile out of the court. Sarah searches through the blue

shirts, determined.

Big bald man, sweaty curly haired man. No.

It's getting harder to see as Sarah is pulled away from the court.

Freckles. Pony tail. Skinny man. No.

The last player files out - the court is empty.

DAD is not there.

2 2. INT. OUTSIDE MEDICAL ROOM. EVENING.

SARAH looks towards where she is being pulled. They have arrived at an official looking Medical Room, the door half open.

Through the crack SARAH can see DAD lying down on an examination table, his face screwed up, making low, long sounds in between gasps. A MEDICAL WOMAN stands next to him holding his wrist.

MUM puts a hand on the door to walk in. SARAH yanks out of her grip and takes a step back, wide-eyed.

MUM turns back to SARAH, stern.

MUM
Don't.

MUM grabs SARAH by the wrist, SARAH pulls against her.

As she is drawn towards the room, her vision fills with DAD's red, contorting face. In revulsion, she turns away, still caught in her mother's grip.

The games are back in full swing. So many adults sweating, catching, throwing, kicking. The sound is overwhelming.

Her view narrows as MUM pulls her into the room and shuts the door.

3 3. INT. MEDICAL ROOM. EVENING.

A MEDICAL WOMAN is attending to DAD. Ice pack. Preparing tape. Two blue shirts stand alongside. MUM fits in beside them.

SARAH retreats, as far away from the examination table as she can get. In between two chairs. Breathing fast. Her

back against the wall. Trapped.

MUM is talking to the blue shirts, asking questions. They answer in hushed voices. The MEDICAL WOMAN manipulates his hand, cotton balls, tape.

SARAH squirms inside her clothes, seeking any escape. She catches a glimpse of DAD between the other adults. Her eyes close tight.

A last ditch disappearing act:

SARAH
I need to go to the toilet.

4 4. INT. WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOMS. EVENING

A locker room. Empty, calm. A refuge.

SARAH runs her hand along a bench as she slowly walks the length of the room. She soaks in the sensation, pushing the medical bay from her mind; The wood is smooth, cold, paint worn in places.

She arrives at the sinks.

She turns one tap on, then the next. The soothing sound of running water fills the room. She dips a finger in each stream, then turns them both off.

Next to the row of sinks is a full length mirror.

She turns to face the mirror. Examines her reflection.

She screws up her face and tries to make a contorted, gnarled expression. She opens her mouth in a faux-scream. No sound comes out.

SARAH bends over and looks under the toilet stalls, all empty.

She approaches the mirror. She holds her breath until she goes slightly red. Tries again, a different face but this time in a hushed voice she lets a out a protracted -

SARAH
FUUUUUUUUCK!

She releases the expression, unconvinced, and wanders to the bench. She sits on it.

Examining the room she kicks her legs back and forth.

Her gaze lands on her reflection. Her legs stop.

A pause; something has stuck in her mind.

SARAH returns to the the mirror.

She flexes her fingers, examines her face.

Holding steady eye contact in the mirror, she braces herself, then starts to bend one finger slowly back as far as she can. Her breathing quickens but her face is stoic.

SARAH releases the finger, clenches then stretches her hand a few times.

Again she makes eye contact but this time pushes her sleeve up to the elbow, then pinches her forearm as hard as she can. Her eyes dart to her arm and then back again to eyes, pinching as hard as she can.

She releases. A deep nail mark in her arm.

Dissatisfied, she scans around the room, searching.

A scientist looking for the missing puzzle piece, she notices one of the locker doors left slightly ajar. She marches over to it and places her hand on the edge of the locker, her fingers curled inside. She pulls back the door.

Her attention shifts from the locker door to her fingers.

She looks away and slams the locker door.

Upon impact she lets out a stifled grunt. The door bounces off her fingers. She rushes to the mirror to inspect her face.

Breathing heavy. Eyes wet. She blinks hard before a tear can form. Her eyes dart around the details of her eyes and mouth. As if she expects some transformation. Her face flushed, a puzzled look which slowly fades to a blank expression.

She holds eye contact with her reflection. She shakes her hand and squeezes the slammed fingers.

5 5. INT. MEDICAL ROOM. EVENING.

The MEDICAL WOMAN has turned her attention to a NETBALLER, dark black ponytail. SARAH sits in one of the chairs and watches as she wraps the woman's ankle in a long gauze bandage. Around and around. The NETBALLER winces.

MUM starts collecting up their belongings.

DAD
Monster.

SARAH ignores him. Staring at her hands in her lap.

MUM shoots a pointed look at DAD.

DAD
Hey monster.

DAD gets down off the examination table, he leaves an ice pack where he was sitting and walks over to SARAH. His fingers are taped together. SARAH looks at MUM, sending a distress signal.

DAD sits in the chair next to SARAH. Judas.

SARAH
Don't be like that. The way you were.

DAD takes his good hand and his taped hand and makes a circle in front of him, an empty hug.

DAD
Bucket.

SARAH looks up at him, questioning. She slowly moves her arms up, a question.

SARAH
In the bucket.

SARAH lowers her arms, searching his face - he seems a lot like DAD. MUM, satisfied, heads out the door with a nod that says 'come on'.

SARAH
You promise? Promise you wont do that again.

DAD smiles.

DAD
I'm all better now.

A flicker of confusion, then SARAH nods.

She stands facing DAD. Looking into his face she calmly reaches forward, grabs his taped fingers and squeezes.

DAD's face explodes in agony.

DAD
FUUUUUUUUCK!

SARAH squeals and yanks her hand back. Horrified.

Both are silent for a split second then almost in unison start to cry.

SARAH holds her hand as if she had received an electric shock. Confusion melts into sadness.

A fallen hero.

6 6. INT. CAR. DUSK.

SARAH sits in her booster seat in the back of the family Mazda. She stares past her reflection in the window to the passing world outside. The light fading, her eyelids heavy.

CUT TO BLACK