

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie, 8, is hooked up to a ventilator and has various life-giving tubes coming out of him.

His bedroom is full of toys and family photos. Full of innocence.

A figure creeps past the gap in the doorway.

TITLE CARD: WHILE WE SLEEP

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hannah, 44, and Stephen, 47, are in the middle of a gigantic argument

Stephen prepares an IV bag for their son, using this as a way of ignoring his wife.

HANNAH

For fuck sake, Stephen! It's getting worse!

No response. Stephen continues preparing.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Stephen?

Still no response. Stephen continues to fiddle.

Hannah walks over to him to silently demand an answer.

STEPHEN

Look, It's fine. Fucking drop it.

HANNAH

Fine?

STEPHEN

We just need to stay focussed.

HANNAH

You need to get your head out of the fucking sand.

STEPHEN

It's nothing, alright? It's Just a blip.

Stephen finishes preparing the IV bag.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
It'll pass.

He proceeds to their child's bedroom.

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stephen begins to affix the IV bag to it's holder.

HANNAH  
It's not gonna fucking pass if we  
don't do anything about it.

STEPHEN  
We just need to stick with it and  
ride it out.

Hannah put's her head in her hands and lets out a built up  
sigh.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
Just give it time, and let's see it  
how things go.

There's an issue with the IV tube.

HANNAH  
So, what? We're just gonna carry on  
like nothing's wrong? Forever?

Stephen ignores Hannah, choosing to concentrate on the tube.

STEPHEN  
(to himself)  
This is the third one of these  
that's broken.

HANNAH  
You really need to wake up,  
Stephen.

Stephen goes to get the phone.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Stephen?

Stephen begins to dial on the phone.

Hannah patiently watches him and waits for a response.

Stephen avoids eye contact until just before the phone is  
answered then he turns away from Hannah.

STEPHEN  
Yeah, I'd like to put a call out  
on.

She exits. Slamming a door on the way out.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Hannah sits silently, just looking at a load of mess.

Stephen stands nearby.

HANNAH  
You've got to admit, there's an  
issue here. I mean, you cannot  
pretend anymore.

Hannah gesturing to the obvious evidence.

STEPHEN  
It's nothing we can't get through.

HANNAH  
We can't carry on like this,  
though.

Stephen doesn't respond.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
We need a proper solution, Stephen.  
For everyone's sake.

STEPHEN  
Yeah and I've told you we just need  
to hang on, stick with it. We've  
got this far. How can you expect us  
to get through this if all you want  
to do is give up?

HANNAH  
You know, admitting there's  
something wrong isn't necessarily  
giving up.

Beat.

There's a knock at the door.

Stephen ignores Hannah's statement and goes to answer the  
door.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

It's the Nurse who Stephen rang in the previous scene.

NURSE  
Hi, Stephen.

STEPHEN  
Yeah, Hi.

The Nurse enters and they head towards the kids bedroom.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
Look, is there nothing more permanent you can give us? This is the 3rd time I've had to replace this.

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Nurse inspects the IV tube.

NURSE  
Sorry Stephen but you've known from the outset that was always only going to be a temporary fix. They only last for so long. They only have a cycle of so many doses.

STEPHEN  
But are there not one that lasts three times as long or even just twice as long?

NURSE  
Unfortunately not, but even if there was, all you'd be doing was be delaying the inevitable. You're always gonna have to keep replacing them.

Beat.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Now, you're gonna have to run this sterilising fluid through it for a while before you can attach it.

STEPHEN  
Right.

NURSE

Have you and your wife ever  
discussed any alternatives?

STEPHEN

There are no alternatives, are  
there?

Stephen stands defiant.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stephen is gliding round, sleepwalking.

He goes to the fridge to make himself some food. Taking out  
various cheeses, meats and spreads.

He grabs some nearby bread and picks up a knife

He cuts himself and wakes up screaming.

STEPHEN

Eurgh-Aghh!

There's blood everywhere.

Hannah comes rushing through.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

(trying to hide the wound)  
Go back to sleep.

HANNAH

For God's sake!

STEPHEN

It's fine! Just go back to sleep.

HANNAH

Can you not see the damage this is  
causing!

STEPHEN

It's nothing.

HANNAH

What's it gonna take to get you to  
wake up!

Stephen attends to his wound.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I can't do this anymore Stephen. I just can't.

Hannah gives in and goes back to bed.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Hannah is tending to Stephen's wound.

HANNAH

You need to at least put some measures in place, for your safety if nothing else. Locks on doors, hide any sharp objects things like that.

STEPHEN

I don't need to be kept locked away in some room, Hannah.

Stephen takes his hand away from Hannah before she's finished tending to the wound.

HANNAH

And what if this happens again, or worse?

STEPHEN

I don't care what happens to me.

Stephen prepares an IV bag.

HANNAH

So you're just gonna carry on regardless of the consequence?

STEPHEN

Yep.

HANNAH

For how long, exactly?

STEPHEN

As long as I can.

Stephen goes to the child's bedroom. Hannah follows.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stephen focuses on getting the new tube fitted.

He gets increasingly more agitated the more Hannah presses him.

HANNAH

Carrying on like this isn't right, though.

STEPHEN

Maybe not, but sometimes you have to do certain things in order to hold on to what's yours.

HANNAH

So, doing the wrong thing is OK as long as you get to keep what's yours.

STEPHEN

If I have to lie to myself or you or any Doctor to keep what's mine, I'll do it. No one is taking anything away from me. This is something I'm not letting go of.

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephen sleepwalks into the child's room. Hannah follows him in.

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hannah recoils with this revelation.

Stephen is ashamed of his outburst. Though, he still defiantly believes it.

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - NIGHT

As he wanders round, Hannah guides him over to the ventilator and forces his hand to turn it off.

HANNAH

What?

STEPHEN

Look, if burying your head in the sand is what you have to do to get by, do it.

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephen stands there, oblivious. Hannah disappears into the background.

INT. CHILDS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stephen finishes attaching the new tube. A healthy beep comes from the ventilator signaling the issue has been resolved.

Stephen seems content.

END.