

Shingle Street

By

Carl Bennett

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+44 (0)7881 206542  
carl.bennett@writer-insighter.com

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EXT., SUMMER BEACH, EVENING

1970. DAVID aged six walks happily, confidently, hand in hand with his father THEO and thier dog along a shingle beach drenched in golden sunset.

The waves hush against the shoreline.

Ugly concrete buildings like pagodas loom stark against the sunset across the water. The sun-tanned pair pause to watch the last of the day. A burned, summer holiday quality to the light.

BOY DAVID

What are those buildings, Dad?

THEO

Something to do with atom bombs.

BOY DAVID

Are there atom bombs there on the island?

THEO

No. I don't think so. It's not really an island. It looks like it, but it's joined up to the land, up the river.

BOY DAVID

But there could be atom bombs there, couldn't there Dad?

THEO

I don't think they'd have atom bombs this close to people. I think they used to test parts of them there.

BOY DAVID

Why are they shaped like that?

THEO

The pagodas? To withstand blast.

BOY DAVID

What are pagodas?

THEO

Temples. Like a church.

BOY DAVID

But they aren't churches.

THEO

No. Quite the opposite.

The man ruffles the boy's hair. They smile and walk on.

(CONTINUED)

BOY DAVID

What's the difference between an atom bomb and an ordinary bomb?

THEO

Well, an atom bomb is much bigger. The effect it has...

BOY DAVID

Would it set a town on fire?

THEO

Yes.

BOY DAVID

Would it set the buildings on fire?

THEO

Yes.

BOY DAVID

The cars? Would it set the trees on fire? Would it set the grass on fire?

THEO

Yes. Yes.

BOY DAVID

Would it set the sea on fire? Would it set the sky on fire?

THEO

I - I don't know. No, I don't think so. I don't think it works like that.

They stop at the door of their cottage on the edge of the beach to watch the sunset. David's mother ALMA comes out of the house to join them. There are strange large faded paint marks on the house.

ALMA

Almost as if the whole sky's on fire!

Theo smiles fondly at his wife. They hold hands. Theo puts his hand on David's shoulder.

They all watch the last of the sun.

2 EXT., BIKINI ATOLL, DAY

Old stock shot of nuclear explosion. The sea boils and the flash turns to the mushroom cloud stack of smoke.

V/O

If the radiance of a thousand  
suns were to burst at once into  
the sky, that would be like the  
splendor of the mighty one ...

3 EXT., NEVADA DESERT, DAY

Tiny buildings collapse one after the other in old stock footage of atom bomb tests.

V/O

I am become Death, the destroyer  
of worlds.

4 INT., BEDROOM, NIGHT

Present day. The room is furnished in the style of forty yers ago. A mobile phone and a laptop the only modern things in the room. A Teasmade clock shows 03:50.

The ADULT DAVID (late 40s) stirs uneasily in his sleep. His wife SARAH (late 30s) lies beside him. Her eyes open as he moves. She looks annoyed.

5 EXT., BEACH, EVENING

A glorious Technicolour sunset rages over the empty landscape, witnessed by the dog, David and Theo, dressed as they were walking on the beach.

High above a large silver airplane drones across the sky.

V/O

A thousand simultaneous suns  
arising in the sky might equal  
that great radiance.

A shockwave flows across sea and the beach. Whatever it touches bursts into flame.

V/O

With that great glory vie.  
Amazement entered him; his hair  
Rose up; he bowed his head; He  
humbly lifted folded hands, And  
worshipped God. . . .

The whole sky is on fire, igniting whatever touches it.

(CONTINUED)

V/O  
Death am I, and my present task  
Destruction.

SFX: A roaring noise builds.

The dog looks back at David then disappears in a wall of white heat. Whited out.

Theo looks back at David. Then Theo too becomes invisible in a white wall of fire.

SFX: Roaring noise builds more.

6 INT, CREMATORIUM, DAY

SFX: Gas jets roaring. Rock of Ages plays on an electric organ. Not very tuneful voices are singing the hymn, off-screen.

A curtain opens and a coffin moves towards us end-on, propelled along a track. The curtains close behind it. The coffin bursts into flames as the door closes on the viewing hatch.

7 INT, BEDROOM, NIGHT

David and Sarah lie in bed. Her eyes are open. David screams and wakes up in bed, jerked upright.

DAVID  
Betty!

Sarah jumps up.

SARAH  
Shit! David! (pause) Are you  
alright?

David looks round startled, panicked, sweating.

8 INT., 1970S BEDROOM, NIGHT

Startling bright light in Boy David's childhood bedroom.

ALMA  
Only a dream, David. It was only  
a dream.

Soiled bedsheets piled on the floor. Alma helps the terrified boy into clean pyjamas.

(CONTINUED)

BOY DAVID

But - but it was real! Everything  
caught on fire! Everything!

Theo stands on the landing, half-visible through the door,  
no role in this.

ALMA

It's alright David. It isn't  
real. Everything couldn't catch  
on fire, could it? It was a bad  
dream. A terrible dream. But it  
was only a dream.

Alma ushers David into his clean bed.

ALMA (cont'd)

There. You'll be alright now.

David tries to be brave

DAVID

Yes mummy. I'll be alright.

ALMA

I'll leave the light on the  
landing. It's alright. There's  
nothing to be afraid of. Mummy  
and Daddy are just downstairs.

Alma smiles, blows David a kiss. She automatically moves  
to close the door then checks herself, leaves it ajar.

Theo puts his head around the door, trying to help.

THEO

Night night. Mind the bed bugs  
don't bite.

Alma nudges her husband urgently. David looks at them both  
tiredly, still nervous as they move away.

9 INT., LANDING, NIGHT

Alma leads Theo downstairs in icy silence.

10 INT. LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Alma walks into the living room before Theo, then turns  
and shuts the door.

ALMA

This is your fault!

(CONTINUED)

THEO

But atom bombs are real!

ALMA

Yes! Which is exactly why he shouldn't have to know about it! Are you completely stupid? He's six!

THEO

He might never be seven, because of things like this! We can't pretend it's not there!

Alma pauses, looks towards an old photo of a young man in RAF uniform. A huge old bomber aircraft in another picture, the same young man with the rest of the aircraft crew.

ALMA

My father was one of the men who flew to Hamburg.

THEO

I - I knew he was in the RAF. Obviously. But I didn't know -

ALMA

Do you know how many people died from bombing in this country in the whole of the war?

11 INT., LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

THEO

Well, hundreds of thous -

ALMA

55,000. The same number that died in three days in Hamburg. Almost all of them civilians there.

Alma picks up the old photo, looks at the man who was her father.

12 EXT., BURNING CITY SKY, NIGHT

Stock shot of blackness pulsing with each flash of exploding bombs lighting up the airplanes sent to do this.

ALMA (V/O)

The first wave opened up the gas mains. He flew in the second wave. Two days later he came back to do it again. So that I could

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALMA (V/O) (cont'd)  
grow up free. So the Nazis didn't  
win.

Alma looks straight at her husband.

ALMA  
But he still did that. My lovely,  
gentle, kind, loving Daddy. My  
Daddy, who never, ever even  
smacked me, not once, whatever I  
did when I was a child. He still  
did that.

Alma puts the picture down.

THEO  
So we should just pretend that  
all this doesn't happen? That  
there are no atom bombs and  
firestorms? We should just  
pretend it's not there?

Alma looks at the photo. Then skewers Theo with her stare.

ALMA  
Yes. Precisely because it is.

13 EXT., PAGODAS, DAWN

The sun rises, just enough to illuminate the concrete pagodas in the darkness across the beautiful beach.

14 INT., DATED BEDROOM, DAWN

Present day. In the 1970s bedroom, Sarah comforts the regressing adult David. The carpet has been rolled back, cardboard boxes are packed with old people's effects, lit by a weak dawn light.

Seagulls call outside.

Old pictures of a young man in RAF uniform on the dresser. Sarah looks around the room, angry, despairing. Trying to comfort her husband.

SARAH  
It's alright. David, it's  
alright.

She puts a steadying arm around David's shoulders.

SARAH  
Are you alright now?

(CONTINUED)



DAVID  
I-yes. The sky -

SARAH  
I know. I know it's horrible. But  
it's just your dream again.

DAVID  
I - I think so. Yes, of course it  
is.

Sarah lets go of David.

SARAH  
David - who's Betty?

DAVID  
Sorry?

SARAH  
Betty. When you woke up. You were  
yelling 'Betty.'

DAVID  
Oh.

SARAH  
Oh.

DAVID  
Betty was our dog.

SARAH  
Your dog.

Sarah smiles. David is still stuck in the dream.

DAVID  
She - she was all burned up. In  
the fire.

Tears start to David's eyes. Sarah's smile fades.

SARAH  
Shit! Sorry.

SARAH  
David, in the dream or in real?

David looks around the room. Out of the window the pagodas  
are just coming visible in the sunlight.

SARAH (cont'd)  
David?

DAVID

In - in the dream. Betty, she was a lovely dog. She was fourteen when we had her put down. Why? What did you -

SARAH

Nothing. Are you ok now?

David nods. Sarah swings her legs out of bed onto the bare floor where the carpet used to be. Looks out of the window at the pagodas.

SARAH

God, this floor's cold! I'll go and make some tea. We'll have a look around this morning. See what needs to be done. Yes? (pause) David?

DAVID

Yes. Yes, we need to.

SARAH

Freezing!

Sarah lifts one foot, then then other. Shifts her gaze to the floor.

SARAH

This floor's made of concrete.

DAVID

Is it?

SARAH

It must weigh tons! Why the fuck would anyone put a concrete floor in here?

DAVID

I don't know.

Sarah walks out of the room, shaking her head.

15 INT, KITCHEN, MORNING

Sarah and David breakfast in the dated, 1960s kitchen jammed with David's parents' furniture, an old coat on the door with a dog lead for no living dog.

Sarah takes an envelope from her bag. Opens it. A bank statement.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Shit.

David stuffs toast in his mouth. Still holding his mug of coffee he grabs a notebook and binoculars and walks out of the kitchen door into the bright morning.

SFX: An incoming mobile phone text sound.

Sarah checks her phone. Looks around quickly.

DAVID

(off screen) Sarah?

She quickly puts the phone in her pocket, grabs a notebook and pen. Gulps coffee. Reluctantly stands, tries to open a sticking drawer.

SARAH

Coming.

She steps towards the door. Walks back. Re-reads the bank statement, angry. Puts it in her pocket. Walks out of the door.

16 EXT. HOUSE, MORNING

David leads Sarah on a walk around the house and garden, inspecting the property, looking for things that will need to be repaired. All of them.

Sarah takes a folding-knife from her pocket, digs it savagely into a window frame.

DAVID

What are you doing?

SARAH

All of the wood's rotten.

David looks up at the decaying house, the peeling window frames, the sagging guttering.

DAVID

It needs a little work. The last few years...you know they weren't easy.

SARAH

This whole place is falling to bits. Look!

David looks at the wood.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (cont'd)

No, look!

She gestures at the wall bowing outwards halfway up the building. The strange camouflage paint marks are fainter on the walls, but still there.

SARAH (cont'd)

Ten tons of concrete.

DAVID

It'll be great at weekends.

SARAH

You're not listening. The bedroom floor is concrete. Why?

David says nothing, looks awkward. Sarah stares at him hard.

SARAH

Maybe the original floor was buckling under the weight of all the crap your parents had in there? Was that it?

DAVID

Some of it I'm very fond of.

SARAH

Really? Let me remind you of something.

She angrily digs the bank statement out of her pocket, pulls it from its envelope. Brandishes it in David's face.

DAVID

Don't do that!

SARAH

Don't remind you of reality? No, I should never do that, should I? I should just shut up and play along like your mother.

DAVID

This house means....

SARAH

Bills we can't pay! A sodding great liability we can't afford is what it means! A childhood that has you screaming yourself awake is what it means! Great!

David turns his back on her.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Just fuck off, David. This house is crap. It's falling to bits. It probably hasn't even got any foundations under it.

Sarah walks furiously to the garden gate at the end of the path. There is no fence either side of it. She opens the gate and walks through, closing it, then angry with herself at that strides away onto the beach.

She stops, looking out to the concrete pagodas shimmering out of the morning heat haze at her, eerie, mysterious.

David appears behind her. She doesn't turn around.

SARAH (cont'd)

What are they?

DAVID

Mmm? The pagodas.

SARAH

What do you mean?

DAVID

My father - Dad told me that they were something to do with um....

SARAH

With what?

DAVID

Er...atom bombs.

Sarah turns angrily to face him.

SARAH

Are you trying to be funny?

DAVID

Well, no, actually. Back in the fifties apparently -

SARAH

Atom bombs. Three hundred yards from the back door. I must say, David, this period rural residence becomes more desirable by the minute. Just the thing for a romantic break.

DAVID

They didn't actually, you know. Blow them up or anything.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

David, I might have tits but I am not actually certifiable. What do you think they did? Polished them?

DAVID

They only blew up the triggers for them. According to Dad.

David's dream returns, the wall of light radiating out from the pagodas, crossing the water. Everything it touches becomes flame.

V/O

Brighter than a thousand suns.

The boats, the street lights, the people flash into nothingness. Boy David's dog is evaporated in a second. His mother, his father last.

Then the flame stops. Nothing. No damage. Everything as it was, shining in the morning sun.

And an even more furious Sarah.

SARAH

Well?

DAVID

Sorry?

Sarah strides away onto the beach.

SARAH

I said, if you want to pretend you didn't hear me, did anything else happen here?

David follows.

DAVID

Well.... There was always this story about something that happened in the war. And this was a military area for a long time. You know. From the First War, really. And -

Sarah abruptly stops walking. When she speaks she sounds furious. And tense, just holding it together.

SARAH

I see.

From behind her, David reaches out to put his hand on her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (cont'd)  
(shouts)  
Don't touch me. (More normally) I  
said, don't touch me!

David looks down, apologetic. And sees the metal canister poking out of the ground, under her boot.

DAVID  
Oh my God! Sarah?

SARAH  
I fucking know! Help me. For  
once.

David gingerly pulls out his mobile phone. Dials. Pauses.  
The mobile phone screen shows no signal.

DAVID  
I'll have to go over here. A bit.  
Don't move. No, not you. Hold  
on. Police please.

David walks away carefully, holding his phone, looking for a signal, looking back towards Sarah who stands rigid, staring out towards the sea towards the pagodas on the pebble beach.

DAVID  
Coastguard? I don't .... I think  
we've found a bomb or something,  
actually.

17 EXT. SHINGLE BEACH, DAY

On an empty shingle beach two uniformed men kneel close before Sarah who stands rigid, staring out to sea. An intimate scene.

A military Landrover, David, a police car, an ambulance, a local news crew all cluster the other side of a tape barrier on the beach.

Local newswoman KAREN WILSON speaks to camera.

KAREN WILSON  
- with hundreds of tons of live  
munitions known to be still in  
the area from two world wars as  
well as the Shingle Street  
mystery, making one couple's  
dream home a nightmare. This is  
Karen Wilson from Shingle Street,  
Suffolk Coast Live.

David looks on redundant while the kneeling soldiers move slowly, carefully, seeming to nuzzle Sarah's groin.

18 EXT. COUNTRY PUB. AFTERNOON

A military vehicle marked 'Bomb Disposal' turns into the car park of an idyllic country pub, closely followed by Sarah's car. The car park sports several other urban vehicles, a Land Rover, a van with workmen's ladders tied to the roof rack.

Sarah, David and athletic, smart, CAPTAIN PAUL and another SOLDIER get out of the vehicles.

Sarah is quite taken with Paul, leading the way to the door. David walks awkwardly with the other soldier, holding the door open as they enter the pub.

DAVID

And do you do a lot of this kind of thing?

19 INT. COUNTRY PUB. AFTERNOON

A cosy atmosphere and a good mix of people, Londoners up for the weekend, a sprinkling of children, BOB (a builder), as Sarah heads straight to POLLY (youngish, local, pretty) behind the bar while David fusses over a table, four ADULTS leaving with their Boden-clad CHILDREN and all their mess.

Sarah hands the soldiers pints and picks up a menu.

SARAH

Let me buy you lunch. The least I can do, in the circumstances.

PAUL

That's not necessary, ma'am.

SARAH

Ma'am? You have to let me now you've made me feel old.

PAUL

Well, I certainly didn't mean to do that.

DAVID

I thought you said we didn't have any money this morning?

SARAH

I think when someone saves my life it's a bit more important

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



SARAH (cont'd)  
than overdrafts. Don't you,  
Captain?

PAUL  
Paul! Ah, I have to say it wasn't  
actually viable.

SARAH  
Not viable? Try inheriting a  
wreck of a house with the  
assumption you'll have the money  
to put it right. Or actually  
David, try being on the local  
news while it looks as if two  
soldiers are licking you out.  
That's not fucking viable.

Sarah blushes as she speaks, gone too far.

PAUL  
Non-viable munition. It was  
harmless. Unless you dropped it  
on your foot.

SOLDIER  
You did the right thing calling  
it in though. Could have been.  
Can't tell by looking. Unless you  
know what you're looking at.

SARAH  
Are the eggs free-range? I think  
double egg and chips if they are.

Sarah raises her large glass of wine.

SARAH  
So it could have been a real,  
live bomb. And I could have been  
exploded. Cheers. Cheers David.  
Perfect.

The soldiers start to drink, then pause as they realise  
they're being drawn into this argument.

PAUL  
Your health.

Paul is careful to raise his glass to David after Sarah,  
but his eyes return to her. She passes him the menu,  
bypassing David. It's obvious. The other soldier looks  
embarrassed.

DAVID  
So, how did this non-viable  
ammunition come to be in the  
garden of our house?

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Do you think they just left it lying around somewhere, David?

PAUL

Munition. Well, to an extent they did, back in the 1940s. First they thought there would be an invasion here, then they stocked up for the invasion of Europe. There were bombs and munitions lying all over the place. Excuse me.

Paul stands and takes the menu back to the bar, orders food for himself and the soldier.

Bob dressed in work clothes at the bar, looks over towards the table.

BOB

It's true, that.

Paul looks carefully at Bob.

BOB

Testing range, wasn't it? They used to fire missiles there and that. Then the secret listening thing. Radio waves.

DAVID

Cobra Mist.

SARAH

So there's more than just bombs lying around then?

DAVID

Cobra Mist was the CIA's secret listening station. It took them ten years to build it. The towers we can see from the house -

SARAH

Jesus Christ!

BOB

You won't run out of bombs and that. Ask him!

Paul nods reluctantly and angles his back towards Bob.

Polly brings food to the table for Sarah and the two soldiers.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Better and better. Thank-you!

Sarah takes a big gulp of her wine, spears a chip on her fork, dips it in the egg. Turns to David.

SARAH (cont'd)

Aren't you hungry?

DAVID

I haven't ordered yet.

Polly points to the clock, pointing to five past two.

POLLY

Sorry sir, chef's gone home.

DAVID

What, already?

POLLY

No, two o'clock every day sir. We could do you some crisps or nuts if you like?

DAVID

No. No thanks.

David looks towards Bob, hovering at the edge of the group trying to join in.

DAVID

So you know the area then?

BOB

I was born here. You two got that house down on Shingle Street.

Sarah stares at Bob blankly and continues eating.

SARAH

Have a chip Paul, if you like. Help yourself.

PAUL

Thanks. Are you both living here now?

DAVID

Yes. It belonged to my parents. It was thier folie a deux.

SARAH

Best idea. Folly, adieux!

Captain Paul catches her eye. They smile. First contact.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Is your name Bob, by any chance?

SARAH

David inherited it. We've come up to have a look at it to see whether to sell it or I don't know. Do it up and sell it. If it doesn't fall down first.

BOB

Bob Whatley. I used to do a bit for your Mum and Dad now and again. Keep an eye on the place in the winter, keep the gutters clear, that sort of thing.

SARAH

An eye.

PAUL

So, do you think you'll stay here?

SARAH

I don't know. It's suddenly got some unexpected attractions, in a way.

DAVID

So you know the history of it? I mean, I don't. It was Mum's - she inherited it herself. We used to come here on holidays.

BOB

I thought I recognised you. That gun platform need fixing, but I don't know how you'd do it without taking the house down.

SARAH

Sorry? Gun platform?

BOB

All the top floor's concrete, isn't it? Used to be, anyway. Back in the war they wanted to put a big gun up there for the invasion but the floor wouldn't take it. So they poured a load of concrete in.

DAVID

But that would be tons of the stuff!

(CONTINUED)

BOB

Yes, that's why the walls are all bowing. You know all that though, don't you? I could come round, Anything you wanted done normally. Not that though! That's too big for me!

Sarah glances at Bob sceptically, then back to Paul. The two soldiers have finished eating and are looking at their watches.

SARAH

Paul! Let me get you another drink! Both of you!

PAUL

That's very kind but we have to be back to work. Places to go, bombs to see!

SOLDIER

Thank-you for the drink. And the meal, ma'am.

DAVID

Thank-you both for coming out to us so fast. Appreciated.

SARAH

Thank-you for saving my life.

PAUL

We didn't really do that. You could have stubbed your toe, but that's all.

SARAH

But you didn't know that. Thank-you. Here.

She hands Captain Paul her business card. He studies it.

PAUL

Insight Research Services. What do you research?

SARAH

What insight do you need?

Paul looks blank.

SARAH (cont'd)

Sorry. Bad habit. Saturday brittle. Mainly marketing research. Sorry. Weekend. And nearly being blown up. But give

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (cont'd)  
me a call next time you're in  
London and I'll tell you all  
about it.

PAUL  
Thank-you.

The two soldiers stand. Crisp and neat. Sarah looks up at Paul with interest. He knows it, focuses on her husband, holds out his hand to shake. David gets awkwardly to his feet, shakes Paul's hand.

PAUL  
Thank-you both for lunch. Very  
kind. And don't hesitate to call  
us if you find anything else  
suspicious. Better safe than  
sorry.

SARAH  
Good-bye Captain. If I think of  
anything you should look at I'll  
certainly be in touch.

DAVID  
Yes, bye.

PAUL  
Good-bye. Come along.

SOLDIER  
Sir, ma'am.

Sarah smiles. So does Paul. He shakes her hand awkwardly. She holds his hand a little too long.

The soldiers leave. Bob edges closer to the table.

BOB  
I could come down and have a look  
this afternoon if you wanted  
anything done on your house?  
Anything needs doing?

DAVID  
Well, we were going to have a  
weekend then see.

SARAH  
That's ok. I think I'm going to  
go back home and do some catch-up  
stuff while you get on with it  
here.

DAVID  
Are you alright to drive?

SARAH  
Sorry?

DAVID  
I mean, you've had some wine.

SARAH  
I've had one glass of wine.

DAVID  
You just seem a bit - you know.

SARAH  
Upset? Yes. So far as I knew I was going to be blown up this morning. You sort things out here. I'm going back to earn some money to pay for it. Before we sell it.

DAVID  
I haven't decided -

SARAH  
Sorry?

DAVID  
I didn't mean -

Sarah stands up, swings her bag onto her shoulder.

SARAH  
You're fucking right you didn't.  
I'll phone you later. Have a nice  
time with Bob the builder. Bye.

David stands awkwardly, half-crouched, hemmed-in by the table.

She kisses David's cheek. David aims to kiss her lips but Sarah has already moved away. She shuts her eyes and walks towards the door. Bob moves closer to the table.

BOB  
Pint of Broadside, please.

Sarah opens the door.

BOB  
Yeah, so anyway, I do all sorts,  
guttering, fascia cleaning,  
plumbing, gardening -

SARAH  
Fucking sponge.

20 EXT. PUB CAR PARK. AFTERNOON

Sarah walks towards her car. She wipes her lips with the back of her hand, gets in and drives away crisply.

21 EXT. ROAD. LATE AFTERNOON

Sarah drives through country lanes, then onto a LARGER ROAD but still with few other cars and no trucks, then onto a

DUAL CARRIAGEWAY

Which is a lot busier, taking the turning marked London/M25, cars, caravans, trucks, all heading back towards London. Very few cars are going the other way.

22 INT. PUB. LATE AFTERNOON

David and Bob are still drinking while Bob talks about how great he is as everything he so wonderfully does.

An old, visibly drunk BOB'S DAD sits down with them, unasked.

BOB  
This is my Dad! He knows  
everything that goes on around  
here!

The old man nods to David.

BOB'S DAD  
Bob.

BOB  
Got the Lookout house down on  
Shingle Street.

Bob's dad nods at David.

BOB'S DAD  
Come to solve the mystery then?

DAVID  
The concrete?

BOB  
No, he means the Shingle Street  
thing. In the war.

(CONTINUED)



DAVID  
What's this?

BOB  
Some people reckon there was an  
invasion here. The Germans.

BOB'S DAD  
There were burned bodies on the  
beach.

DAVID  
I've never heard of this. Is it  
true?

BOB  
It's all Official Secrets Act.

BOB'S DAD  
Some people said they were  
wearing German uniforms. That's  
what they said when I was a lad,  
anyway.

23 EXT. ROAD. LATE AFTERNOON

Sarah's car is snarled in a traffic jam somewhere in  
Essex. She looks bored and irritated.

Sarah winds the window down. Her hair is blown about by  
the wind, the only noise the steady hum of idling engines  
and the occasional car passing on the other carriageway.

24 INT. PUB. AFTERNOON

The pub door opens, PIERS (raffish, vaguely  
artistic-looking) enters the pub. Nods to Bob, but not  
overly-friendly towards him. Which Bob ignores and waves  
him over.

BOB  
Piers! You ought to meet David  
here. What is it you do again?  
David?

DAVID  
I, well....I'm getting the old  
house up together.

BOB  
He's got The Lookout down on  
Shingle Street.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Well, my parents had it, so -

Piers walks to the bar, smiles warmly at Polly. Who smiles and looks down, a little shyly, a little embarrassed.

PIERS

A large glass of Merlot, please.  
And something for you?

POLLY

I'll put one by for later, if  
that's alright.

PIERS

I'll have to stay to make sure  
you drink it.

POLLY

Well, we're open all day. I go  
home at six though. Sundays.

PIERS

Perhaps you'd like a drink  
somewhere else at six then?

POLLY

I might.

Piers nods, glances at David.

DAVID

Would you like to join us?

Piers hesitates.

PIERS

Yes, yes, I will. Piers Harrison.

DAVID

David Timpson.

PIERS

So you're doing The Lookout up?

DAVID

Yes. Sort of. Mom and Pop let it  
go a bit, the last couple of  
years. Can I get you a - oh,  
you've got one! I'll put one in.  
Excuse me?

David raises his voice to get the barmaid's attention. The clock behind her says past four now. Polly looks at her watch before she looks at David.

25 EXT. TRAFFIC JAM. LATE AFTERNOON

Sarah looks worried, sitting in her car talking on her mobile. The traffic drowns her voice. She ends the call.

SARAH

Shit.

26 EXT. THE PAGODAS. MORNING

The sun streams across the pagodas, turning them gold in the sunlight.

The sun glints on the water running out into the sea on the pebble beach.

It's going to be a beautiful, peaceful day.

27 INT. KITCHEN. MORNING

David sits at the kitchen table surrounded by his parents' leftover household trivia. A mug and an empty plate are in front of him. The sun shines outside. He looks shaken.

The old clock on the wall says 10:10.

David stands, takes the plate and mug to the sink and washes them up. There's no washing-up liquid.

As he dries the plate he can see Alma out of the window, hanging-out washing.

He stares. Blinks.

Nobody there. And no washing on the line.

A knock at the door. David jumps at the interruption.

Bob comes into the kitchen, unasked.

BOB

Morning!

DAVID

Good morning, ah, Bob.

BOB

You said to come round early!

DAVID

Yes, but -

BOB

Said I'd see what needed doing!  
Is the kettle on?

(CONTINUED)

Both look at the kettle expectantly. It isn't on.

David fills the kettle from the tap, plugs it in and switches it on.

BOB (cont'd)  
Lovely! How long you had this  
place then, yourself?

28 INT. OFFICE. MORNING

Sarah sits in her office, behind her desk. She looks up from a calculator. She writes numbers on a pad. Crosses some out. Writes others.

She stands and nods towards MARTIN, the sales guy, who is on the phone.

SARAH  
Can you come in a minute? Sally,  
can we have some coffee please?

SALLY stands. Martin smirks at her, raises his eyebrows, watches her arse as she walks away.

MARTIN  
Yeah, catch you later. Tuesday,  
yeah? See you.

Martin puts the phone down then walks into Sarah's office in his own time.

SARAH  
Busy this morning?

MARTIN  
Oh, you know.

SARAH  
No, that's why I asked.

MARTIN  
Calm down.

SARAH  
Sorry?

MARTIN  
Chill!

Sally approaches, carrying a tray with three mugs and a full cafetiere. Sarah stops her, takes the tray, nods at the third mug.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
Thanks, Sally. Is this yours?

SALLY  
Yes. Thanks!

Sally tries to give Sarah the tray and to take the third cup, awkwardly.

SARAH  
Just put it down on the table.

Sally leans forward to put the tray down. Martin takes the opportunity to look down her top. As she knows. She blushes, irritated.

SARAH (cont'd)  
Thanks Sally.

Sally leaves the office.

SARAH (cont'd)  
So Martin, did you check them out?

MARTIN  
What?

Martin looks uncomfortable.

SARAH  
The figures I asked you to check out. That's what you were doing this morning, wasn't it?

MARTIN  
Oh. Yeah.

SARAH  
And?

MARTIN  
I haven't sort-of finished them yet. You only asked me this morning.

SARAH  
I asked you on Friday.

MARTIN  
Yeah, when we were going home.

SARAH  
At lunchtime.

MARTIN

I had to see Yellowshoe.

SARAH

Good! How are they doing with that proposal?

MARTIN

Well, you know. Need a bit more time on it.

SARAH

Which bit?

MARTIN

Nothing in particular. They just got a lot on.

SARAH

So if I phone Tony Yellowshoe that's what he'll say, is it? They can't say anything about our proposal because they've got a lot on.

MARTIN

Well, you know him.

SARAH

Yes, I do.

Sarah lets this hang for a moment.

SARAH

Martin, I think you're ready for more responsibility.

Martin smirks.

SARAH (cont'd)

So let me put you in the picture a bit more. We launched the financial reports on the basis of your experience and your market knowledge. We committed substantial resources to the launch.

MARTIN

I'm fully confident -

SARAH

You've said that every month for the last three months.

MARTIN

The first two aren't supposed to make a profit. They never do.

SARAH

And you said that when, exactly, before the launch?

MARTIN

I thought you knew.

SARAH

How would I know that, Martin? When you're the market expert?

MARTIN

The next one will get it back on track.

SARAH

Good. What sales are you expecting?

MARTIN

Well, it's early days.

SARAH

Ok, what sales are booked?

MARTIN

NU and Parkinton are definitely interested. And I've got to go to see Lymes in Birmingham. I can see Townsends while I'm there.

SARAH

So, none then.

MARTIN

They said they wanted to talk about it. They did a lot last year.

SARAH

Good. But I asked you what was booked. And so far as you've just told me, nothing is. Am I wrong?

MARTIN

They're interested.

SARAH

I'm not. But i had an idea. I'll tell you how it all works. Then you can run it.

(CONTINUED)

MARTIN

Yeah?

SARAH

Oh yes. First, you get a loan for £50,000. Then you let someone tell you a load of crap about all their definite sales. Then they miss every target they're set. Then - No. You can tell me what I should be doing next.

MARTIN

I'm fully confident that -

SARAH

I'm fully confident that whatever you say won't happen. This project has been an expensive mistake. I'm not running with it any longer.

MARTIN

You can't do that!

SARAH

You know, I think you've fundamentally misunderstood who actually runs this company. You've consistently missed your sales targets. Your record-keeping - so far as anyone else can see - is non-existent.

MARTIN

It's on my phone. Do you want to see it?

SARAH

I'm giving you a month's notice, effective immediately. And as everything is on your phone I want to see that every client record is deleted.

MARTIN

You haven't got the right to do that.

SARAH

That would have made my mind up for me. This isn't school. Get your things together quietly and leave. I'll write you a cheque.

(CONTINUED)



MARTIN

But what about -

SARAH

If you want to argue let's get  
Sally as a witness, shall we?

Martin looks embarrassed, trapped and greedy.

MARTIN

What do I tell people?

SARAH

That due to production  
difficulties the reports have  
been suspended.

MARTIN

I'll tell them you can't afford  
me!

SARAH

You're absolutely right. I can't  
afford someone who lies to me,  
who harasses my staff and who  
never, ever does what he says  
he'll do. I want you out of this  
office by twelve. Do you want  
some coffee?

Martin shakes his head. He stands.

Sarah picks up a pen and makes notes.

After a moment Martin quietly leaves her office. He starts  
to clear his desk.

Sarah watches him for a moment then does more calculations  
on her pad. Uses a calculator. It's not working.

SARAH

Sally?

SALLY

Everything alright?

SARAH

Let's make it alright. Can you -

Martin wanders over with his bin bag of possessions.

MARTIN

I'll want a reference.

SARAH

You'll get a reference completely  
100% truthful. Trust me.

(CONTINUED)

Martin stands as if expecting something.

SARAH  
Got everything?

Martin looks at his bin bag.

SARAH (cont'd)  
Office keys?

SALLY  
They're all here. I counted them  
just now.

SARAH  
Car keys?

MARTIN  
I thought I could keep it until  
the end of the month.

SARAH  
Why?

MARTIN  
For goodwill.

SARAH  
There isn't any. Goodbye Martin.

MARTIN  
Aren't you going to wish me good  
luck?

Sarah and Sally share a glance.

SARAH  
No. Goodbye.

MARTIN  
That's not very friendly.

SARAH  
I'm not your friend. Sally will  
send you your P60.

SALLY  
My pleasure.

MARTIN  
Yeah. Well.

Martin tries to look defiant then slinks out of the  
office. Everyone ignores him.

(CONTINUED)

SALLY  
Are you alright?

SARAH  
Me? I haven't felt so good since  
we launched his crappy reports.  
We've got a lot of sorting-out to  
do.

SALLY  
OK, what do we need to do first?

29 EXT., LONDON STREET, NIGHT

The door opens, spilling light. Sally comes out of the door, followed by Sarah. She activates the alarm and waits for it to set.

SALLY  
Night, then.

SARAH  
Hmm? Yes, goodnight Sally. See  
you in the morning.

SALLY  
Do you fancy a drink?

SARAH  
Ah, no, no thanks. Not tonight.  
I'm a bit bushed after today,  
aren't you? Another time.

Sally nods sympathetically.

SALLY  
That's alright. See you tomorrow.

SARAH  
Yes. Be safe.

The two women walk off in different directions. Sarah looks at her watch as she walks slowly to the Tube. She looks in the window of a bookshop, studying the titles in the window, killing time. She opens the door of the shop and steps inside.

Sarah collides with Captain Paul coming out, dressed in civilian clothes.

PAUL  
I'm so sorry!

SARAH  
No, my fault, sorry!

Then she recognises him.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (cont'd)

Oh! You!

PAUL

Oh, me! Sarah! Or is it Mrs Timpson?

SARAH

How do you know that?

PAUL

You gave me your card.

SARAH

Well, it's Sarah. Mrs Timpson sounds like a 1930s Royal floozy.

PAUL

And it's not the 1930s.

She considers Paul carefully. She smiles.

SARAH

No, it's not. So what brings you to the wilds of London, Captain?

PAUL

Paul.

SARAH

Captain Paul?

PAUL

Yes, but just Paul will be fine.

SARAH

Good. But you haven't answered my question. Any bombs to defuse?

PAUL

Lots, probably. Always are, in cities. But I'm on leave. Visiting an aunt. And getting something for a birthday present.

SARAH

For your aunt.

PAUL

For my aunt.

SARAH

This actually is all very 1930s, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

I know what you mean. Perhaps I should invite you for cocktails and do the whole thing.

SARAH

Perhaps you should.

PAUL

May I invite you for cocktails, Mrs Timpson?

SARAH

If you don't call me Mrs Timpson again, you may.

PAUL

Then may I invite you for cocktails, Sarah?

SARAH

I'd be delighted, Captain.

PAUL

I'll get a cab.

He raises his hand for a taxi. Almost at once a black cab slides up to the curb.

PAUL (cont'd)

The Zanzibar Lounge?

SARAH

Woah! I thought you meant some time! Not now!

PAUL

Is there anything wrong with now?

SARAH

The more I think of it lately, no, there isn't.

Sarah ducks into the cab as Paul holds the door open for her. Their faces are close.

SARAH (cont'd)

It's the only time anyone ever has, isn't it? Now?

Paul looks into her eyes. Then speaks to the driver, still looking at her.

30 INT. ZANZIBAR CLUB, NIGHT

Sarah and Paul talk and drink, drink and talk as the evening wears on. She pulls out her phone then changes her mind. She toasts Paul. They drink, smiling.

He stands, holds her chair for her. She appreciates the gesture.

He helps her on with her coat. She appreciates this too. Her hand touches his as she slips her coat on.

31 EXT., OUTSIDE SARAH'S FLAT, NIGHT

Sarah and Paul get out of a taxi. Paul pays the driver.

Sarah and Paul walk up the steps to her flat. She opens the door, pauses. Then lets him in.

The door closes in our face.

32 EXT, PAGODAS, NIGHT

The pagoda buildings on the beach emerge from the night, the sun red in the sky behind them.

A flash from one pagoda after another, a howling wind.

Something big is blown past as a wall of flame races towards us. The sea burns. The beach is on fire. The driftwood, even the seaweed bursts into flame. Even the stones melt.

A glimpse of a 1950s snapshot, the house, David's mother, father, dog, all standing happily, safely in the past, evaporates into flame.

33 INT, 1970S BEDROOM, DAWN

A sleeping David screams, sits bolt upright in bed, sweating, staring at the window where the pagodas glow in the dawn.

He looks at the clock. 03:59.

David whimpers. Looks at the place in the bed where Sarah should be.

34 INT, SUFFOLK PUB, DAY

The same pub as before, the same faces. Piers is holding court, centre of attention, braying for Britain. Bob sits at the bar towards the edge of the group, smiling but not keeping pace.

PIERS  
And she said, if your Majesty  
hadn't spoken I'd have thought it  
was the horse!

Piers' disciples bellow with laughter as the door opens abruptly.

David enters the pub. He turns to shut the door, steps back and trips over a tourist's dog. It barks at him.

PIERS  
Did I tell you my dog bites if  
you stroke it?

DAVID  
I didn't stroke it. I just -

PIERS  
That's not my dog!

The little crowd goes wild with laughter. David is totally non-nonplussed. Piers looks compassionate.

PIERS (cont'd)  
Oh come in! David, isn't it? You  
look a bit shaken-up. What will  
you have?

DAVID  
I - er -

PIERS  
They should have got that step  
fixed years ago. Everybody's  
always tripping over like that.  
Damn dangerous. Isn't it, Polly?

Polly smiles at David kindly.

POLLY  
Only when the locals are drunk.

PIERS  
Don't take any notice of Polly.  
She's fierce! What will it be?

David hesitates, then plunges in.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Thank-you. What's best?

PIERS

Polly, around here!

More laughter from the little crowd around Piers.

POLLY

All I'm best at is guessing drinks. But I'm very good at that.

PIERS

That's not all, at all!

DAVID

Well - guess mine then.

PIERS

This is on me, I insist. We only want people falling over in here once they've had a drink, not before.

Polly looks deep into David's eyes. Something happens between them. She smiles.

POLLY

I see red.

PIERS

Usually around closing time!

ALL

(Laughter)

POLLY

I do. Shut up Piers. (To David)  
Are you alright?

DAVID

Um, no. Yes. Bad dreams. It's nothing. It just shook me up a bit.

POLLY

Probably not red wine, then?

PIERS

Give him what he wants, Polly.

BOB

She usually does.

Piers smiles a vicious strained smile nobody should trust.

(CONTINUED)



PIERS

David?

DAVID

I don't know. Whatever's best?

POLLY

Don't drink Best. I think, for you, something sweeter. Stronger. Are you driving?

DAVID

No. No, I've got the whole day not driving. Doing the house. Planning what to do, anyway. You know?

Polly pours a pint from the pumps, slides it across the bar to David.

POLLY

I'll put that on yours, Piers.  
(to David) You'll like that.

David sips the drink. Nods.

POLLY

Is that what your bad dream was about?

Everyone in the pub stops talking just as David speaks.

DAVID

I dreamed the sea caught fire.

The silence gets longer. David is embarrassed.

DAVID

I mean, silly really. It was just a dream.

BOB

Wasn't though, was it?

PIERS

That old story, Bob?

BOB

My Dad was there. He -

PIERS

We've all heard it a million times.

BOB

There were bodies all up and down this beach. The sea was on fire.

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

They were having a war! Of course there were bodies washed-up on the beach!

BOB

I know what I know.

PIERS

No, you don't. You take what you want from a story, make up the rest and say it's all true.

BOB

They were doing experiments down on that beach (to David) where your house is (to anyone). Secret weapons. Then the Germans invaded and got all burned.

PIERS

Says no evidence whatsoever.

BOB

Then why is everything kept secret then?

PIERS

So if something's secret it means whatever you want?

BOB

Why is it kept all secret if nothing happened?

DAVID

Why is what kept secret?

PIERS

Bob's going to say -

BOB

Too right I am! Everything around here was taken by the army back in the war. And there's still loads of things you can't find out about it because of the Official Secrets Act. There!

DAVID

But that's seventy-odd years ago!

PIERS

And every detail of compulsory purchase by the army during the war's subject to a hundred-year rule. Everything.

(CONTINUED)

BOB

That proves -

PIERS

That proves nothing except that there are still secrets. It's to protect people's private details about their families. Not to prove Hitler was walking up and down Shingle Street.

BOB

Why's it so important to you to say nothing happened?

PIERS

Because there isn't any proof anything did! And if you -

POLLY

That's it. If I hear any more of this you're both barred.

PIERS

Polly! You wouldn't do that.

POLLY

If you can't have a conversation without arguing in this pub then you can do it somewhere else. Starting now.

Bob and Piers stop mid-flow, like schoolboys.

BOB

I've got to get back to work. David mate, I'll come and have a talk about your house again later if that's all right.

DAVID

I -

PIERS

I've got things I need to do. David, nice to see you again. Catch-up soon, yes? Bye! Bye Polly.

Polly nods at Piers as he leaves, nods at Bob as he leaves, serves another drink. David stays at the bar. He doesn't know anyone here now. People are leaving. Suddenly the pub seems quite empty. He looks up at the clock. 2:55.

Polly puts money in the till, moves towards David on her own side of the bar.

(CONTINUED)

POLLY  
Time for another one, sir?

DAVID  
I - yes. Yes please. It's - I'm  
David, by the way.

Polly pulls another drink for David.

POLLY  
That's three fifty please. Polly.

David pushes money across the bar.

DAVID  
What was that all about? The two  
of them arguing like that?

POLLY  
Always do. Bob calls himself a  
builder. He does odd jobs. He's  
always going on about some  
conspiracy theory or other.  
Reckons his Dad helped to bury  
dead Germans on the beach, back  
in the war.

DAVID  
Did he?

POLLY  
I don't know. I wasn't here!

The pair laugh shyly.

DAVID  
No, I don't suppose you were.

POLLY  
Nor you. So you've got The  
Lookout.

DAVID  
You know everything that goes on  
here?

POLLY  
Difficult not to in this place.

DAVID  
I don't. It was somewhere I used  
to come in the holidays. From  
school. You know.

POLLY  
No, not really.

DAVID

I expect you know a lot more about here than I do.

POLLY

I'm walking down past yours in a minute. See my granddad. I could tell you all about the mystery if you like.

DAVID

I - yes, I'd like that. Yes. If you don't mind.

POLLY

'Course.

Polly looks around the now empty, neat and tidy pub. She takes a cloth and wipes the tables down.

POLLY

Won't be a minute. Could you just bolt the door for me please? In case anyone else comes in?

David looks surprised.

POLLY (cont'd)

We shut at three off-season. You end-up standing here while two old blokes make a pint last three hours.

DAVID

Really?

POLLY

You know what I mean! Grab my scarf, would you? Please?

David picks up a silk scarf on the bar.

She finishes wiping the table. Throws the cloth expertly into the sink. Surveys her domain.

POLLY

That'll do.

35 EXT., PUB GARDEN, DAY

David follows Polly out of the pub, before she reverses the role and ushers him out and locks the door.

POLLY

Come on then! I don't go home with everyone who comes in here!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

POLLY (cont'd)  
(laughs) Whatever Bob thinks.  
(pause) Tosser.

Polly sets off fast down the street towards the beach.

DAVID  
Ex?

POLLY  
You're joking. Anyway. You never really have exes in a place like this.

DAVID  
What do you mean?

They walk across land that's half-marsh, half shingle now. Polly moves quickly. David can't get his stride to match hers.

POLLY  
Round here you don't lose your boyfriend. You lose your turn.

DAVID  
Joke?

POLLY  
It's the other way round in summer!

DAVID  
So, you lost your boyfriend?

POLLY  
You're fast!

DAVID  
No, I meant - I mean, you said -

POLLY  
Aw! You're going to tell me your wife doesn't understand you!

DAVID  
Ha! Got me! She doesn't, actually.

POLLY  
I'm like her then.

DAVID  
How?

(CONTINUED)

POLLY  
Leaving you here.

Polly takes a sudden turning onto the path down to the beach.

DAVID  
Oh! Ok, bye!

He walks on alone. Then stops, turns and walks slowly back to where he last saw her. Polly stands alone, still, beautiful, as she lights a cigarette from a foreign packet.

POLLY  
Stalker?

DAVID  
I - no, I - what happened here?

Polly looks at him askance, one eyebrow raised.

DAVID  
I mean here, at Shingle Street?

Polly is still looking at him full on, very aware he's looking at her as if doing an inventory of every curve.

POLLY  
Why?

DAVID  
The stories. My house. I keep - I keep getting these horrific dreams.

POLLY  
What do you want to have happened here?

They both look out to sea.

DAVID  
What do you mean?

POLLY  
My wife doesn't understand me -

David screws his face up regretfully.

DAVID  
Well, true, but I don't want to talk about that, really.

Polly smokes her cigarette, looking out towards the pagodas in the sun, bathed in its light. She looks young. Sensual. Available.

(CONTINUED)

David hesitantly takes a step towards her. She turns her back on him. But not ignoring him.

POLLY'S GRAND-DAD potters around his beautiful small wooden boat on its mooring in the distance. Polly moves away from David.

POLLY  
That's my granddad.

DAVID  
It's beautiful, isn't it?

POLLY  
Nothing is real, here.

DAVID  
Of course it is.

POLLY  
Only here.

Polly raises one foot to stub the cigarette on the sole of her shoe. David moves to steady her, holding her.

POLLY  
I said you were fast.

DAVID  
I'm not.

POLLY  
Maybe you could be.

She slips away, still holding the stubbed cigarette in her fingers.

POLLY  
Leave things as you find them.

She moves away.

DAVID  
What do you mean?

She keeps walking, speaking over her shoulder, smiling.

POLLY  
See you!

DAVID  
When?

Polly stops walking. Still smiling.



POLLY

When you come to find me.

She walks away quickly, towards a small, old house down the beach path. Chickens grub in the grass beside the path. A rickety wooden stall advertises eggs for sale. A dog greets Polly.

She fondles the dog's ears.

POLLY

Hello, Spark! I haven't got anything for you!

Polly turns and waves.

POLLY

(shouts)

Your wife would like some of these! I'll leave some for her when she comes down on Friday evening!

David looks around to see if anyone is in ear-shot.

DAVID

How do you know she's coming down on Friday evening?

POLLY

They always do.

She laughs, taps on the door and goes inside the old house.

David watches her go. Even after she's out of sight he still looks for sign of her.

Piers walks past, taking his muscular dog for a run along the beach.

PIERS

David!

David looks flustered. He realises he's still holding Polly's scarf, stuffs it in his pocket quickly.

Piers raises his eyebrows and carries on along the beach with his dog.

36

EXT. BEACH, EVENING

David walks alone as the sun starts to set.

(CONTINUED)

V/O  
Brighter than a thousand suns.

David looks frightened. He stops. Shakes his head.

He kneels on the shingle, poring over something. Intense. He moves a stone. Picks it up. Studies it carefully. Puts it down again. Picks up another.

Over his shoulder we can see a stone sculpture taking shape. Polly, made of small stones. Primitive but powerful. Abstract. It takes a long time. The light changes as the sun sinks.

Tired, David gets to his feet. Rubs his knees. Stiffly, he walks away towards his home. He looks back at the sculpture of Polly, then walks on.

The waves lap against the shingle.

Piers and his dog walk briskly down the beach again. They pause at the stone picture. Piers studies it carefully.

PIERS  
Never knew old David had it in  
him, did you? (pause) I wonder if  
she has?

The sun is nearly gone now. Piers looks toward the direction David went.

PIERS (cont'd)  
Come along.

Piers and his dog march along the shore together.

37 INT. DAVID'S HOUSE, NIGHT

In the kitchen David potters about making himself a cup of cocoa before bed.

He takes his coat off. Starts to put it on the hook behind the door. It won't hang-up with the old coat already there. David pauses. Then takes the old coat and puts it in the bin. The dog lead hanging there too. Then he puts his own coat on the hook.

He pats his pocket, takes Polly's silk scarf out and puts it slowly to his nose.

The milk in the pan boils over.

DAVID  
Damnation!

He opens one cupboard then another. Every one of them full of his parents' old stuff.

(CONTINUED)

Theo taps David on the shoulder. David doesn't react at all.

THEO  
Mind out old boy.

Theo takes a tin of polish and shoe brushes out of the cupboard David holds open. He sits and polishes his shoes, ignoring David entirely. Then fades from our view. David looks around the kitchen.

DAVID  
This is silly. Do all this in the morning.

He yawns.

DAVID  
Just - do it in the morning.

Peacefully, quietly, David takes a last look around the kitchen before switching off the light and climbing the stairs. The scarf is where he put it.

38 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

David sleeps peacefully.

In his mind, Polly walks down the beach, wind blowing her hair, cigarette in hand.

He smiles in his sleep.

A mobile phone rings somewhere in the house. David sleeps on.

39 INT. KITCHEN, NIGHT

A flashing light comes from David's coat pocket. The mobile phone rings much louder here, but the kitchen door is shut.

40 INT. SARAH'S FLAT, NIGHT

A door shuts. Not in this room.

Sarah adjusts her neckline. Walks to a chair. Sits and pulls out her mobile phone. David's number is on the display. She presses the screen.

No answer.

Sarah looks irritated. Tired. Guilty. She rings off and dials again. Still no answer.

41 INT. SARAH'S FLAT, NIGHT

Sarah stands beside her rumpled bed, phone in hand, wearing nightclothes. She looks at her watch. Puzzled.

She lies down and turns her phone over to hide the glare of the screen.

She closes her eyes.

42 EXT. SARAH'S OFFICE, AFTERNOON

Sarah walks a group of people out of her office and turns to Sally. Sarah wiggles her hand from side to side. So-so.

Sally raises her own hand, fingers crossed.

SALLY  
Patterson's pitch?

SARAH  
At four.

Sarah starts towards her bag on her desk.

SALLY  
Lucky it's not four in the morning.

Sarah stands still.

SALLY (cont'd)  
Are you ok?

SARAH  
I'm - I'm fine.

SALLY  
What is it?

SARAH  
Nothing. Just a - not sleeping very well. You know.

Sally gets on with her work as Sarah gets organised for yet another meeting.

SALLY  
Are you going to be alright? Do you want me to come with you?

SARAH  
No, no! I'm fine! Someone's got to be in charge here! See you!

Sarah quickly leaves the office. Sally looks out of the window, concerned as she watches Sarah get a taxi in the street.

43 EXT, CENTRAL LONDON STREET, DAY

Sarah gets out of a taxi outside an old-fashioned-looking building. She checks her watch. Just before four pm.

Sarah looks doubtful as she stands outside. She checks the address before she enters, still looks doubtful.

She squares her shoulders and walks through the old-fashioned wooden doors.

44 INT. OFFICE BUILDING, DAY

Everything about the office dates from the 1940s. Sarah stands uncertainly in the empty lobby. A painted door opens.

A tall, much OLDER MAN dressed in a shabby old-fashioned suit, hair short and Brilliantined, appears in a doorway.

OLDER MAN  
Mrs Timpson?

SARAH  
Hello?

OLDER MAN  
Come with me please.

The man turns and walks along a corridor. Sarah follows. Red fire buckets hang on the walls. Just the loud sound of their footsteps on the parquet floor. The man abruptly stops in front of a door. Opens it.

OLDER MAN (cont'd)  
This way, please.

45 INT. WALDORF ASTORIA TEAROOMS, THE PAST

Sarah walks into the Waldorf tearooms. The door shuts behind her, leaving her among the palms. A slow tango plays. Captain Paul rises from his table in a shabby 1940s dress uniform.

Sarah and Paul dance to 1930s music in the tea rooms under the palm trees, dreamlike. They laugh. Sarah inclines her head towards his, he does the same. They come as close as it's possible to kissing without kissing. Paul whispers in her ear. She nods.

They leave the tearooms. Paul helps her into a fur coat.

46 EXT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL, NIGHT

The Waldorf entrance is shabby, blacked-out. A long, old-fashioned car waits outside the once-grand steps of the hotel.

Paul and Sarah come out of the doors of the hotel, get into the car and are driven away.

Sirens wail. Searchlights flicker over the sky.

PAUL  
Another heavy raid, I'll wager.

SARAH  
I look to you for protection,  
Captain.

PAUL  
At your service, Ma'am.

SARAH  
You don't talk like this,  
normally.

PAUL  
Nobody does.

A wall falls into the street, blocking their way with a cloud of dust. A huge bomb lurches to a halt in the middle of it. The car stops. Paul gets out of the car.

SARAH  
Paul? Paul!

PAUL  
I'll deal with this.

Paul walks purposefully towards the metal object. Peers at it. A bomb. He kneels, pulls out a stethoscope and listens to the bomb.

SARAH  
Captain Paul?

Paul stands, removing the stethoscope. Impossibly, he picks up the bomb with one hand.

He turns to Sarah. Smiles. Strangely.

PAUL  
A three five nine. It's time.

SARAH  
What does that mean?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Mean?

SARAH

What does it mean? What are we going to do?

PAUL

It doesn't mean anything. This is all a dream. Here! Catch!

Paul playfully throws the bomb towards Sarah. It weighs nothing. She cradles it as if it's a newborn, a present.

SARAH

Captain Paul! You shouldn't have!

He smiles bashfully.

PAUL

People like us...well, we always do in the end.

A white flash obliterates everything.

47 INT, SARAH'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

It's now. Sarah jerks upright in her own bed. Eyes wide.

SARAH

Shit!

Something changes in the light in the hall.

The sound of the front door of the flat opening and closing.

SARAH (cont'd)

(more softly)

Shit.

She reaches for her mobile. Hesitates. Then dials David's number.

It rings. She hears David's voice mail message.

SARAH

David, I know you won't get this but - we need to talk. I'm coming up tomorrow. Not tomorrow. Friday. I don't know. Fuck sake! I'll see you soon.

48 EXT. THE LOOKOUT. DAY

Outside the house David talks to another unenthusiastic builder.

DAVID

So you'll send me a proper written quotation? Email would be best.

BUILDER

I don't really do email, but if you want. Won't be this week though. I've got a lot on.

DAVID

Well, as soon as you can, please!

BUILDER

I'll see what I can do, right?

The builder drives away, shaking his head. David watches him go. At the corner of his vision Theo and Alma watch him go.

When David turns towards them they aren't there.

Piers and his dog walk up behind David.

PIERS

They're all the same, you'll find. Builders. The jokers who call themselves builders here.

DAVID

I don't understand it. It's as if they don't want the work. That - Bob is it? Your friend? Just the same.

PIERS

Not a friend, exactly. I use him for some jobs. Nothing too technical.

DAVID

It's as if they think there's loads of work here.

PIERS

The Sunshine Coast economy.

DAVID

What's that?

(CONTINUED)



PIERS

People with hardly any skill  
employed by people with hardly  
any money.

DAVID

(Sarcastically) Well thank-you  
for the warning!

PIERS

Didn't think you'd have needed  
it, your ma and pa having this  
place all these years. Sorry to  
hear about their passing, by the  
way. They were pleasant folk to  
talk to.

DAVID

I didn't know you knew them.

PIERS

Everyone knows everyone here. If  
they stay long enough.

David looks at Piers, wondering if he is being made fun  
of.

PIERS (cont'd)

Did you do those stones, by the  
way?

(Piers pronounces the word  
'stains').

DAVID

The stains?

PIERS

Yes. On the beach the other day.  
How long have you been doing  
them?

DAVID

The stains? On the house, you  
mean?

Piers stares at David, wondering if he's simple-minded.

DAVID (cont'd)

The stones!

PIERS

Did you do them?

DAVID

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

You're obviously a bit pre-occupied. When you want to talk about the stones and the way you make little statues out of them, come and have a chat.

DAVID

About the stones?

PIERS

Whenever you like. I think I have an idea.

DAVID

Ok. Yes. Right.

Piers looks to his dog.

PIERS

Come along Rupert. See you in the Anchor, I expect.

DAVID

Yes, I expect.

Piers walks away briskly, shaking his head. His muscular dog looks at David for a moment, almost pityingly, then follows its master away down the beach.

DAVID (cont'd)

Stains!

PIERS

As if he didn't even know what stones were.

David looks worriedly at his house, even more defects visible to his eye the longer he looks at it.

49

INT. SHED, DAY

David looks for tools in the shed, finds old screws in jam jars, their lids nailed to the underside of shelves, a ratchet screwdriver, everything old and out of date but usable.

He spends some time oiling and cleaning the old tools. He oils the doors of the shed, planes the drawers of the tool chest.

Theo watches him through the window until David looks up towards the light. Nobody there. David shakes his head then returns to fixing the old tools.

Hours later, a good days work done, David walks out of the shed back to the house. We can see David through the window in the kitchen for a while, then the kitchen light goes out. The bedroom light comes on, then off.

50 EXT. BEACH, EVENING

The fire dream begins again.

David walks on the beach as a boy, happy, the atom bomb bursts silently over the pagodas, the wall of fire rolls silently across the water, the shattering bursts from the buildings, the stones are turned into a hail of rocks, driftwood catches fire.

David turns to watch the sunset. He's almost at the door of the house.

The wall of fire reaches him with a roar. He becomes fire.

51 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

David wakes. Screaming. Sweating.

He looks at the clock. 04:00. The first streaks of dawn coming up in the sky over the pagodas. Slowly, timidly, David lies down again.

After a while, he sleeps.

52 INT., SARAH'S OFFICE, DAY

Sarah takes a break. She pushes back from her desk. Takes her mobile and goes out to the street.

53 EXT. STREET, DAY

Sarah walks next door to a coffee shop, out of the noisy street. She gets a coffee and sits at an empty table.

She takes out her phone and is about to dial.

Sally walks into the shop.

Sarah puts her phone down at once.

SALLY

Oh hi!

SARAH

Hello Sally. Just getting a coffee.

(CONTINUED)

SALLY  
Yes! Yes! Me too!

BARRISTA  
What can I get you today?

SALLY  
Flat white please. Medium.

BARRISTA  
How do I spell your name?

SALLY  
S.A.L.L.Y - why?

She puts money on the counter.

BARRISTA  
We want to brighten your day by  
writing your name on the cup?

The barrista's voice rises in inflexion towards the end of the sentence, as if it's a question instead of a statement.

SALLY  
Will that do it?

BARRISTA  
Company policy?

The barrista gives Sally her change, dead-eyed.

SALLY  
(to Sarah)  
Anyway, back to it!

Sarah smiles. Thinly. Waits until Sally has gone then picks up her phone. Taps the face of it. David's number comes up on the screen.

Sarah takes a deep breath and presses the Dial button.

It rings. And rings. And rings.

54 INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN, DAY

Late morning by the kitchen clock.

Still in the pocket of David's coat on the back of the kitchen door, his mobile rings for a long time.

55 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM, DAY

Upstairs, David stirs in his sleep. Opens his eyes.

Waking up, groggy from deep sleep too late. He gropes for his mobile phone on the bedside table. Not there.

DAVID

What?

He sits up in bed.

DAVID (cont'd)

Coat pocket.

David gets out of bed and blunders down the stairs.

He takes his phone out of his coat pocket.

Nothing on the screen. At all.

DAVID (cont'd)

Phone charger. Where did I...?

David starts to search for his phone charger. On the table, the kitchen drawer, the few plug sockets, each with multi gang-plugs in them.

56 INT. COFFEE SHOP, DAY

Sarah dials David's number again.

Her call goes straight to voice-mail.

DAVID V/O

This is David Timpson. Please leave a message after the tone.

SARAH

David, I. It's Sarah. I've got something to tell you. I - I'm not speaking to voice-mail. We need to talk. I'm coming up. I don't know if it'll be today or tomorrow. Stuff I need to sort out if there's going to be any business left at all. I - forget it. David - I'll speak to you when I get there.

Sarah ends the call and looks at her watch.

SARAH

Shit!

She gets up from the table and leaves the café.

(CONTINUED)

BARRISTA

We hope you enjoyed your visit?  
Come and coffee with us again?

SARAH

Fuck off!

57 EXT. LONDON STREETS, DAY

Sarah enters an impressive office building. Traffic passes. A youngish, affluent, urbane man walks Sarah to the door, opens it for her. Two fake kisses, one on each cheek. She walks onto the street.

As soon as her back is turned he looks at his watch. As soon as his back is turned she does the same.

She walks through more streets, calls at another office. Another media farewell as she leaves.

Sarah walks in London traffic, crossing a busy central London road with hundreds of other people until we lose sight of her.

58 EXT. BEACH, NIGHT

Pitch black darkness.

SFX: The soft sound of calm waves on shingle. Water lapping on wood. Muffled thumps of oars on boat sides. A small splash. Muffled voices.

Movement in the dark, as black boats full of shadowy men row quietly towards the shore.

Dark movement. Faces covered with black paint. Eyes the only evidence of sentience in the dark.

The clack of metal as weapons are readied. Muffled commands.

A wristwatch face showing 03:40.

59 INT. 1940'S MILITARY OFFICE, NIGHT

A map on the wall shows the coast at Shingle Street. WAAFs and a few older men type and file papers urgently.

A big map table shows the East Coast in detail, with British military units and numbers displayed on it. Model ships in different colours point towards other markers on the table.

A BRITISH OFFICER puts a telephone back in its cradle.

(CONTINUED)

A SOLDIER pauses near a window to light a cigarette. His shoulders brush the curtains behind him.

A WOMAN IN UNIFORM looks at him sharply.

WOMAN

Mind the blackout! Whose side are  
you on?

The soldier jerks away from the curtain sheepishly, shaking the match out. A second WOMAN IN UNIFORM takes a tray of papers from the same desk and walks out of the room.

60 INT. UNDERGROUND, NIGHT

We follow the track of the telephone cable, the wires and pipes snaking underground, through a darkened sleeping London, through Tube stations blacked out and full of sleeping civilians lying on the platforms, through tunnels, along walls.

Along railway tracks, out into open darkened country where nothing moves, no lights show. Just the outline of trees, barns between dark railway stations.

Along dark rail lines to a dark country road, along telephone lines strung between poles, along telephone lines routed along walls, looking temporary now.

Across shingle to a small concrete bunker by a dark sea.

61 INT., MILITARY BUNKER, NIGHT

1940. SOLDIERS wait attentively in a concrete bunker. They wear steel helmets and coats against the cold. Their breath steams as they breath.

An ARMY CAPTAIN picks up a black Bakelite telephone. Listens. Nods. He looks remarkably like Captain Paul.

CAPTAIN

Yes sir. Blue seven four five.  
Sector Charlie Alpha. Zero three  
five nine. Five. Yes sir.

He puts the phone back in its cradle. The soldiers turn towards him expectantly.

He nods.

CAPTAIN

Zero three five nine. Five. Five.

(CONTINUED)

SOLDIER

Zero three five nine. Five, sir.

The soldier crosses the room to a wall of pipework studded with valves and handles. One by one he turns stopcocks and taps to 'On.'

As he does so the other soldiers urgently check maps, make phone calls repeating the order.

SOLDIERS

Charlie Alpha. Three five nine.  
Zero three five nine. Five. Five.  
Got that? Three five nine, five.

The Captain glances up at a large clock. The hands move towards three fifty-seven. The second hand sweeps on.

The soldier opens yet more taps on the pipework. Then nods to ANOTHER SOLDIER who winds up a plunger detonator. He raises the plunger and looks towards the Captain.

62

EXT. BEACH, NIGHT

A network of pipes disappears under the shingle towards a small temporary pier standing out into the water.

Under the waves the pipes continue out into the sea, ending at small metal boxes linked to a cable on the sea bed.

Dark liquid starts to flow out of the pipes into the water.

CUT TO

Men rowing in the dark. A boat crunches into the shingle. Voices. A splash. Men standing in the water next to the boats. We can just see weapons, but it's too dark to see any detail.

CUT TO

The clock in the bunker standing at three fifty-eight. The second hand sweeps round counting the last five seconds to three fifty nine AM.

CUT TO

Soldier's face as his hand is poised over the plunger.

CUT TO

The open taps on the pipework.

CUT TO

(CONTINUED)



The clock hands click to three fifty nine.

CUT TO

The Captain nods.

The soldier pushes the plunger home on the detonator.

63 EXT. BEACH, NIGHT

Dark shapes of men stand in the water surrounded by small assault boats.

They sniff the air.

Small blocks of material float to the surface of the sea, just visible as the light slowly strengthens.

The floating blocks start to fizz and smoke. A flare snakes into the sky starkly illuminating men in the silver water, boats landing on the beach.

The flare arches gracefully down into the water.

A huge explosion. The entire sea bursts into flame.

Screaming, burning men try to escape burning boats into water that burns.

Everything burns.

Everything.

64 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM, DAWN

Sarah wakes and sits bolt upright with a scream. Wild-eyed, she looks at her phone.

Four in the morning.

Shaken, frightened, she starts to dial a number. But stops. She puts the phone down again.

Lies back on the bed, nervous, breathing fast. Her eyes wide.

65 EXT. SHINGLE STREET BEACH, MORNING

A bulging wall slowly slides into focus filling the screen.

In the garden David looks lowers his binoculars and shakes his head.

A beautiful day on this coast.

(CONTINUED)

He pulls his phone from his pocket, looks at the screen. Sarah's name. 6 missed calls. And no signal.

He pauses, then puts the phone away again. Turns and walks along the beach. He looks tired. Saddened.

He sits next to a rusting old pipe leading into the water, the only feature on the beach.

He looks out to sea, idly throws a pebble. A very old sign, paint fading and peeling, says 'War Department: Prohibited Area.'

David looks hard at the pebble he was about to throw.

He kneels and starts to make a picture using the pebbles. Slowly it develops into Polly. David looks at it for a while, then scatters the stones.

He looks up, startled. Polly's grandfather's DOG SPARK sits close by, watching him.

DAVID

Hello! What's your name?

The dog stays still as David reaches out to read the name-tag on its collar.

DAVID (cont'd)

Spark! I know you! We'd better get you home!

The dog leads David towards Polly's grandfather's house. It runs, then stops and looks back. It barks at David. He walks forward.

A little boat is floating half-capsized near the shore.

The dog looks at David and barks again.

David looks up and down the empty river bank, then runs down to the empty little boat. A sodden lifejacket floats under one of the seats.

David hesitates at the water's edge.

He pulls out his phone. The dog watches him curiously as he makes a call.

DAVID (cont'd)

Hello? Yes, Coastguard please.  
I've found a boat. I think  
there's been an accident.

66 INT. COUNTRY PUB, AFTERNOON

David is a little bit drunk, the centre of a small crowd in the pub. OLD TOM, and other quiet, drunk, respectful friends of POLLY's grandfather.

DAVID

So I called the Coastguard. I mean, it was obvious something was wrong. I didn't do much. Just that lovely little boat floating there.

Polly is red-eyed, still serving behind the bar. The LANDLORD fusses nearby, getting in her way. He dries a glass and puts it down just as Polly turns with a customer's drink. The empty glass smashes on the floor.

Heads turn towards the bar but nobody says anything.

LANDLORD

Poll, go on. You don't have to stand here and do this. Go home. I'll see you're paid for today.

POLLY

It's all right.

LANDLORD

No, it's not. Go on. Get the other side of this bar and have a drink. On me. Then go home.

POLLY

Well - alright. Thanks. Thanks, I will.

The landlord and sweeps up the smashed glass. Polly takes her apron off and pours herself a glass of wine before she goes to the customers' side of the bar.

OLD MAN

Young Polly. He was a good bloke, your granddad.

POLLY

Yeah, he was. Thanks.

David realises Polly is standing next to him.

DAVID

I - I'm sorry to be the one to um, you know. Find him.

POLLY

You didn't though.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Well, no. The Coastguard did. But well, you know. Sorry. I didn't know him.

POLLY

No. He was doing what he always liked doing, messing about with his boat. There's worse things.

Piers enters the pub, larger than life despite the sombre atmosphere in the room.

PIERS

David! Ah, Polly! I am so sorry! Here, let me.

Piers picks up an opened bottle on the bar and pours Polly another glass of wine before she can protest.

PIERS (cont'd)

The hero of the hour who took care of Spark. Where is he now?

DAVID

I took him back to my house. Left him in the lobby with some water. I made a bed for him with an old coat.

POLLY

You did that?

DAVID

Well, I didn't know what to do with him. Couldn't leave him wandering about.

POLLY

Thank-you for doing that. I should've.

PIERS AND DAVID TOGETHER

You probably had enough...

PIERS

To think about...

DAVID

To do....

POLLY

Where is he now?

DAVID

I hope he's still at my house.

(CONTINUED)

POLLY

I'd better go and get him.

PIERS

He'll be alright where he is for the moment. Drink your drink then we'll all go and get him. David, this may not be the time, but. Want to talk to you about something. Not being rude, but what is it you actually do?

DAVID

I'm - I was, I used to work in land investments. You know. Portfolio work.

PIERS

Yes. What is it you do?

DAVID

Well, Sarah's agency.... I'm renovating the Lookout. That takes up pretty much all of my time these days.

PIERS

Yes. Look, these sculptures of yours.

DAVID

My what?

PIERS

The little two-dimensional tableaux you create. The bass-reliefs.

DAVID

The stains?

PIERS

The stones. I want a serious chat with you. That house of yours, that's got to eat up money fixing that up. And I think I can see a way of you earning a considerable amount with your art.

PIERS (cont'd)

My art?

Polly swigs her wine, almost in one. She stands.

POLLY

I - look, thank-you so much for looking after him but I'd better

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

POLLY (cont'd)  
- I mean, could I have Spark  
back, please?

DAVID  
Of course. I'll go and get him.

PIERS  
I'll come with you. We can chat  
on the way.

POLLY  
What, are you coming as well?

PIERS  
Unless it's a private occasion,  
Polly? You didn't tell me!

Polly blushes.

DAVID  
(too loud)  
Yes! Let's all go!

Polly, Piers and the landlord scrutinise David carefully.

PIERS  
Come on then, Polly!

David stumbles on the step.

POLLY  
Careful!

PIERS  
Easy does it!

DAVID  
It was all this talk about Art!

PIERS  
I'll explain it on the way.

Piers and Polly exchange glances, half as conspirators,  
half as adversaries. And entirely of long acquaintance.

67 EXT. STREET, DAY

David, Piers and Polly walk along the small High Street  
towards the beach and David's house.

As they pass the Off-Licence Old Tom leaves the building.  
He lurches threateningly in front of David, blocking his  
path.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I got something to say to you.

Tom puts his hand on David's shoulder.

TOM

It was good what you did.

DAVID

What I did?

TOM

It was the right thing. You -  
you're alright.

DAVID

Er - yes. (Beat) Thanks.

Tom opens the door of the off-licence and turns to David.

TOM

You drink scotch, don't you?

DAVID

Well, I -

Tom shouts inside the off-licence.

TOM

A bottle of whatever scotch he  
wants. On. Me. He's alright.

DAVID

Really, I -

Piers nudges David sharply. Polly glares at both of them.

PIERS

Just say thank-you.

DAVID

Thank-you.

He nods, bemused, as Tom lights a cigarette. The smoke  
blows in David's face. Polly wrinkles her nose and steps  
out of the way of it.

POLLY

Tom.

TOM

Polly. I shall see you at the -  
at the you know. My respects.

Piers ushers David into the off-licence.

68 INT. OFF-LICENCE, DAY

Through the big window Piers keeps an eye on Polly getting rid of Tom.

David stands looking at the single malt whiskies with their large price tags.

DAVID  
I always like the -

PIERS  
Don't take the piss.

Piers nods towards a mid-range bottle, half the price of the malt. He picks a bottle of wine off the shelf carefully, holds it up for Polly to inspect, through the window.

Tom stumbles off.

Polly looks impatient. She nods at Piers, smiles slightly and waits for Piers and David to come out of the shop.

69 EXT. ROAD, DAY

Sarah drives along a motorway. A bag in the passenger seat. A box of papers on the front seat. She looks grim, composed.

The car passes a sign for the A12 off the M25, takes the turning to begin the journey east.

70 EXT. SMALL TOWN HIGH STREET, DAY

David and Piers walk either side of Polly along the small High Street towards the beach path. David looks uncertain, Polly as if she's seen this before and doesn't entirely approve. Piers looks fully in charge. They pass Piers's antique shop.

PIERS  
Did you lock-up, Polly?

POLLY  
'Course, same as always.

PIERS  
We have a little painting you might be interested in, David.

POLLY  
The Royal we. He means he's got.

(CONTINUED)



DAVID

I got the impression that -

POLLY

No we are not.

PIERS

Don't frighten the poor man,  
Polly. I told you she was fierce,  
David. You see?

Piers gestures towards the picture of David's house, an odd, painting that shows the house striped in weird colours.

DAVID

Why on earth is my house painted  
like that?

PIERS

You're a figurative art fan,  
David?

DAVID

I like to be able to make out  
what I'm looking at, if that's  
what you mean.

PIERS

The work of the Leamington  
school.

DAVID

But this is Shingle Street.

PIERS

Leamington School of camouflage.  
World War Two. Lots of famous  
painters did very well out of  
that. They painted your house  
once. Quite astonishing. Did  
wonders for Ravilious. Kept him  
in beer money until he died.

DAVID

Ravilious?

POLLY

He was a painter. He became a  
military artist. That's how he  
died.

DAVID

And this painting of my house is  
one of his?

(CONTINUED)

PIERS  
I couldn't -

Polly glares at Piers.

POLLY  
Of course it's not.

PIERS  
Of course it's not. Similar.

Piers glances apologetically at Polly. She glares back.

PIERS  
But interesting to know your  
preference for figurative art,  
David. Abstraction's all very  
well, but you can't pin it down,  
can you?

Polly's expression says she heard this joke before. A lot.

DAVID  
And my little pebble people, you  
think they're actually Art? And  
people will pay for them?

PIERS  
Art is -

POLLY  
Anything you say is Art.

PIERS  
According to Duchamp.

POLLY  
According to Elsa.

PIERS  
Polly!

DAVID  
What? Who are these people?

Piers halts the little party where the beach path turns off the High Street. Someone has dumped builders' rubble and a discarded, chipped porcelain urinal in the grass.

Piers produces paper cups out of his pocket and opens the wine.

He looks at the view of the sea as he pours three cups, the first for Polly, the second for David.

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

David, let me ask you something.  
Is a urinal art?

DAVID

Of course not.

PIERS

Well that's where the Art world  
and you differ. They think it is.  
In fact, they've thought so since  
1917.

POLLY

Since 1967.

PIERS

Oh Polly!

DAVID

I have no idea what either of you  
are talking about. My pictures,  
they're just pebbles. Shingle.

PIERS

If you say so. But you can make  
some serious money out of them if  
they're Art.

Polly looks resigned to the truth of this as they all  
drink, taking in the view of the shingle beach. As David  
looks at the pagodas they swell, turn red, then stop  
changing. They're just old concrete buildings.

DAVID

So, this Elsa Duchamp?

POLLY

Exactly!

PIERS

Polly, there's no evidence  
whatsoever! Marcel Duchamp,  
David, was a French artist.

POLLY

Piss artist.

PIERS

Oh, very funny! The point is, he  
entered a urinal into an  
exhibition in France. There was,  
as you can imagine, uproar.

POLLY

Except he only remembered he'd  
done it fifty years later.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

What? Nice wine, by the way. How drunk was he, exactly?

PIERS

Well don't drink all of it, that's Polly's favourite. Let me explain.

POLLY

Duchamp was this famous old French drunk who people said was an artist. Then they forgot about him until he was old and broke. Then he suddenly remembered he'd put the urinal into an exhibition. Except he hadn't. His friend Elsa had.

PIERS

Well whether or not she had, she was long dead by then anyway. So it doesn't matter.

Polly glares at Piers. Who walks on, then halts the group near a dead fish on the beach.

PIERS

The point is David, much like Damien Hirst's shark -

POLLY

Which he didn't even cut in half himself -

PIERS

Which he didn't even cut in half himself- if you can get the critics to agree something is Art, then it's Art. And when it's Art with a capital A then it costs a lot.

POLLY

Before that you can't give it away in the village hall.

DAVID

It can't be that simple.

PIERS

Tell him all about bed, Polly.

POLLY

Do I have to?

71 INT, DAVID'S BEDROOM, DAY

Piers, Polly and David line up together in David's bedroom, facing the bed. Polly in the middle. The atmosphere is strained, as if nobody knows where to start. Or how.

POLLY

I'm not sure about this, Piers.

PIERS

It's nothing we haven't done before.

Polly looks annoyed with Piers. Again.

PIERS

Tracy Emin's Bed. It's just a bed. In fact, each time that goes on exhibition she makes it again.

POLLY

Unmakes it, anyway.

PIERS

Unmakes it then. It's not even the same mess.

DAVID

Even if all this is true I don't know any Art people.

PIERS

I do.

POLLY

He does.

Piers is still holding the wine bottle. He pours more wine. He gives the first huge cupful to David. Polly gives Piers a hard stare as her favourite wine is given to someone else.

POLLY (cont'd)

I thought that was for me!

David drinks deeply, then reaches for the bottle. He studies the label.

DAVID

I've got some of this downstairs.

Piers raises his eyes at Polly. She looks exasperated at being brought into this. Again.

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

So, David, I had an idea -

72 EXT, ROAD, DAY

Sarah's car turns off the main road onto a much smaller road at a road sign marked Shingle Street.

She drives down smaller and smaller lanes, parks outside a small shop.

73 INT, RURAL SHOP, DAY

Sarah enters the quiet country shop. She picks-up a basket and looks around at the things for sale. All she can find that she would eat is a jar of pesto and some cheap spaghetti. Sarah makes her way to the till. She picks up a box of eggs on the counter.

SHOP WOMAN

You can get them next door.

SARAH

Sorry? I thought this was the only shop here?

SHOP WOMAN

Next door to your house. You've got the Lookout, haven't you?

SARAH

Yes. Yes. For the moment.

SHOP WOMAN

Not staying then?

SARAH

I - well, there's a lot of work to do on it.

SHOP WOMAN

After what they did to it.

SARAH

Who?

SHOP WOMAN

In the war, I mean. Not the Timpsons! (Laughs)

SARAH

Someone seems to have poured concrete all over the top floor at some time.

(CONTINUED)

SHOP WOMAN

They did more than that, some of them say.

SARAH

What actually happened here?

SHOP WOMAN

I don't rightly know. Before my time! Some people say there was a big fire.

SARAH

The house caught fire?

SHOP WOMAN

Not the house. All the men in the sea.

SARAH

Who?

SHOP WOMAN

I don't know. They said they were Germans. Some people said they were ours, dressed up as Germans. You know what stories are like round here!

SARAH

No.

SHOP WOMAN

I don't know. I shouldn't have said. It's a nice house, yours.

Sarah and the Shop woman speak simultaneously.

SHOP WOMAN

I always used to wish it was mine.

SARAH

It's falling down. I hate that house.

The two women pause, embarrassed. Sarah reaches for the eggs on the counter next to the till.

SARAH (cont'd)

I - I'll take these eggs as well, please.

SHOP WOMAN

That's £4.86. (Pause) I expect it's all just stories. When people haven't got anything better to do.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Thank-you.

Sarah puts the few things she bought in her bag in the silence of the shop.

SHOP WOMAN

Thank-you. Good-bye.

SARAH

Yes, thank-you. Goodbye.

Sarah leaves the shop and gets into her car. The Shop woman looks towards her car.

Sarah starts the car and drives away.

SHOP WOMAN

I always liked that house.

74 INT. THE LOOKOUT, EARLY EVENING

David fusses in cupboards, looking for the wine he promised Polly. Piers sits on the sofa, watching. Polly sits next to him then remembers why she's there and stands quickly.

POLLY

Spark!

DAVID

Oh, of course! In the back room.  
Next to the garage -

He leaves Sarah to find the dog herself while he hunts for the bottle of wine. He emerges from under the stairs triumphant as Polly returns with the dog.

POLLY

Thanks for looking after him,  
David. Thanks!

She kisses his cheek but misses, a little drunk. Disengaged. She kisses his lips sloppily.

David tries to kiss Polly back. But she moves away.

POLLY (cont'd)

My favourite wine!

PIERS

I thought you had to get the dog  
back?

(CONTINUED)



POLLY  
I can just let him out from here!  
Is it alright if I open the door?

Polly opens the kitchen door and lets the dog out.

POLLY  
It's only next door, anyway!

David opens the bottle.

DAVID  
I knew I had a bottle somewhere.  
I got a case when we - when I was  
down there a couple of years ago.  
Near Toulon.

Polly looks blank.

DAVID  
Hyeres.

Polly still looks blank.

DAVID (cont'd)  
St Tropez.

PIERS  
Polly has a taste for topless  
bathing. Don't you?

POLLY  
Sometimes.

Piers looks at the empty fireplace.

PIERS  
Bit cold, isn't it?

Polly looks down and folds her arms over her chest. David opens the bottle of scotch.

DAVID  
For you?

PIERS  
I'll stick to wine, thanks. Any  
logs about?

DAVID  
In the shed, I think.

POLLY  
I'll go.

Polly looks meaningfully at Piers and at her watch. He pretends he hasn't noticed. She walks out of the back door towards the shed.

75 INT. SHED, EVENING

Polly shuts the door of the shed behind her. She sniffs.

POLLY  
Grand-dad!

Polly cries for a short while then rubs her face with the back of her hands to get rid of the tears.

She pulls herself together, sniffs again, squats and gathers up logs in her arms. Sniffs again. Stands and checks her reflection in the window pane. Sniffs again.

She squares her shoulders and leaves the shed, heading for the house.

76 INT, DAVID'S KITCHEN, EVENING

As Polly opens the back door and steps into the kitchen from outside, David flicks the light switch.

A "phut" sound and the lights go out.

Startled, Polly drops the logs on her foot and bursts into tears.

Equally startled, David springs forward to catch the logs and instead catches a sobbing Polly in his arms.

Utterly stupidly, he kisses her.

The back door opens. An outside light is still shining, the only light in the kitchen.

Sarah steps in. Puts a heavy weekend bag down on the kitchen floor.

SARAH  
Hello David.

David holds Polly at arms' reach. But still holds her.

Piers gets to his feet.

PIERS  
Ah, hello! Sarah, isn't it?

DAVID  
What are you doing here?

Sarah says nothing, just looks at David levelly as Polly disentangles herself from him.

(CONTINUED)

POLLY  
I'd better go.

SARAH  
Oh please, not on my account.

Sarah turns and walks towards the door.

She pauses, nods to Piers. She turns to face David.

SARAH (cont'd)  
I'll talk to you tomorrow, David.

DAVID  
But where are you going?

SARAH  
I think we've made our own  
arrangements, don't you?

Sarah glares at David before she walks away into the dark.  
Her feet crunch on the stones.

Her bag still sits on the kitchen floor.

POLLY  
You've forgotten your bag!

SFX Sarah's car door slams. The engine starts. The car  
crunches along the track. The sound fades to nothing, just  
the sound of the waves on the shingle beach.

POLLY (cont'd)  
I'd better go. Piers, you walking  
me back?

PIERS  
Ah - I want to have a chat with  
David, Polly. I might drop by  
later.

Polly bridles at this. She pecks David on the cheek.

POLLY  
Goodnight, David. I'm sorry your  
wife got the hump. I'll explain  
to her next time I see her.

DAVID  
Oh, you don't have to do that!

POLLY  
I think I do. 'Bye. 'Bye Piers.

PIERS  
I'll see you later.

POLLY

Yeah, right.

Polly snorts and leaves the house.

Piers finds the fuse-box, opens it, flicks a switch inside. Nothing.

He finds a box of candles inside the fuse box. Lights one with his vintage brass lighter and sticks it in the top of a bottle.

PIERS

David, it'll all sort itself out in the morning. Now sit yourself down and I'll explain how you can make enough money to sort this house out and make your lady wife happy again.

David sits down next to Piers on the crappy 1960s sofa. He pours them both a big glass of the off-licence Scotch. David is quite drunk.

DAVID

It's not money that's making her unhappy. It's not having any. Money.

PIERS

Just a figure of speech, David. None of my business.

DAVID

Her business. Things aren't (beat) I don't think things are going that well. I know they aren't. She keeps telling me to sell this place.

PIERS

Why don't you?

DAVID

It's my parents'. Was my parents'. It belongs to them.

Piers looks around the shabby, old-fashioned furniture. He is not impressed.

PIERS

Well you're going to need some serious money to do this place up either way.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

I should put a urinal in an exhibition, you were saying?

PIERS

No. Just use the same principle. Let me ask you a serious question, David. You're not stupid. How much do you think it's going to cost to fix this place up?

David looks around at the shabby furniture. The ceiling bulges ominously above them.

DAVID

I don't know. Maybe fifty.

PIERS

Fifty thousand.

The two men look around the room again. David nods, certain and drunk.

PIERS

For starters.

DAVID

This place has got to be worth six times that.

PIERS

If you can sell it.

DAVID

We could re-mortgage it.

PIERS

In the condition it's in.

DAVID

Nobody knows about the concrete upstairs.

PIERS

Everyone here knows about the concrete upstairs. They have since 1940.

DAVID

We - I. Sarah. My wife. We haven't got it.

PIERS

Maybe you don't need it.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID  
Even I can see -

PIERS  
I mean I don't think you'll need  
to find that much. Do you want to  
hear my plan?

David nods.

PIERS (cont'd)  
Are you sitting comfortably? Then  
I'll begin.

David sits listening as if he's four years old.

PIERS  
What was Tracy Emin's bed?

DAVID  
A bed?

PIERS  
Correct. Damien Hirst's shark?

DAVID  
A shark. Cut in half. In a case.

PIERS  
That leaked. D'you see?

DAVID  
I've got to have a case that  
leaks?

PIERS  
David, focus. Is a bed art? Is a  
shark in a case art?

DAVID  
No. No, not really.....Art.

PIERS  
So why did it make them  
millionaires?

DAVID  
Why did people buy this stuff,  
you mean?

PIERS  
You've got it.

DAVID  
No idea. Why did they?

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

Because someone told them it was Art.

DAVID

Who?

PIERS

Art critics. Collectors. Gallery owners. Influencers.

DAVID

And why will they say my stuff is Art?

PIERS

Because they'll all agree it is. Trust me. It's just knowing how to manage these people.

DAVID

And you do?

PIERS

I've dealt with these people for donkey's years.

DAVID

But I don't know any.

PIERS

As I've told you, I do. This is what we do. But it needs ten k. Up front.

DAVID

Ten thousand?

PIERS

Can't do it for any less. But you can definitely do it for that. Thing is David, are you up for it? Do you want to smooth things over with your wife?

DAVID

What do you think I could get back if I spent ten thousand?

PIERS

What do you think you could lose if you don't?

Silence between them. A kitsch cuckoo clock on the wall chimes midnight. David loosens his shirt. Both men are sweating in the candlelight.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

It gets hot in here. Ok. Tell me.

77 EXT. HIGH STREET, NIGHT

Sarah drives up the empty High Street. The only lights are at the pub.

She drives to the end of the street, then turns the car and drives back along the street again before stopping outside the pub.

78 INT. SARAH'S CAR, NIGHT

Sarah parks her car in the street outside the pub. She switches off the engine and looks at the pub through the window of her car. She shivers. The sign outside the pub advertises Bed & Breakfast.

She gets out of the car, goes to the boot, opens it.

She pauses. No bag.

SARAH

For fuck's sake.

She slams the boot shut and marches into the pub.

79 EXT BEACH, EVENING

Fifteen years before. David and Sarah walk along the shingle beach towards his parents' house as the sun sinks blood red into the sea.

A romantic walk. They're laughing, fooling around.

CUT TO

David, now, restlessly turning in his sleep, in his own bed.

CUT BACK TO

Sarah throws a stone into the sea. An ancient dog runs into the waves to fetch it, barking.

While Sarah busies herself with the dog David makes a sculpture out of the shingle and driftwood.

Sarah and the dog walk up to have a look. Behind Sarah's smiling face the pagodas are lit by the sun's last rays.

CUT TO

David turning in his bed again.

(CONTINUED)



CUT BACK TO

Out near the pagodas, a flash.

A rushing wind.

A wall of red advances across the landscape, enveloping everything.

The pagodas. The beach, the dog.

David.

Finally Sarah herself.

80 INT. PUB BED & BREAKFAST ROOM, NIGHT

Sarah sits bolt upright in the bed, panicking, sweating.

She looks around fearfully.

Nothing there. A church clock strikes four.

Slowly she relaxes, lies back on the bed.

She turns, eyes open, then closes them, trying to get back to sleep. A cheap alarm clock displays the time: 03:59.

Looking out of the window the first fingers of dawn creep across the sky as Sarah turns once more in the bed.

81 INT DAVID'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Dawn lights David peacefully sleeping alone.

A 1970s clock shows the time as 04:00.

82 EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE, EARLY MORNING

Sarah's car drives up the track towards The Lookout house. She looks grim. The Shipping Forecast on the car radio this early morning.

Sarah parks the car and walks unwillingly to the house.

She stops to look around at the view. Then back towards the house, thinking.

She walks slowly to the window. Looks into the house.

To see Piers and David cuddled up asleep on the sofa, empty glasses around them, candles burned out, clothes awry.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Fuck me!

Sarah quietly walks round to the back of the house and opens the kitchen door. Her bag is where she left it on the kitchen floor.

She sniffs, seeing the slew of empty bottles. And as she bends to pick-up her bag, Polly's scarf.

She walks out of the house to her car, quietly starts the engine and drives back towards the little town.

83 EXT. HIGH STREET, DAY

Sarah goes from shop to gallery to shop, talking to everyone, the postman, the traffic warden.

She pauses outside Pier's shop. An old, odd picture of David's house hangs in the window.

Intrigued, Sarah walks in to the shop.

84 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP, DAY

Sarah looks around the shop, alone. She picks-up the picture of David's house to examine it.

It's a painting. It's definitely David's house. But painted to show it in camouflage paint, with cubist soldiers and military equipment all around it.

Sarah walks towards the back of the shop. The door is open. A radio on.

She walks through into a bigger shed-like workspace. An odd mixture of domestic and business uses inside. A little kitchenette. A washing machine and a line of washing hanging inside. Overalls. T-shirts. Some extraordinarily brief thongs.

A worker in baggy coveralls, a breathing mask and goggles is stripping paint from old furniture.

SARAH

Excuse me?

The worker pauses then carries on with his job. Or hers. The line of the coveralls say the wearer is female.

SARAH

Hello? Excuse me, I was wondering..

(CONTINUED)

Sarah walks forward towards the worker. Who resignedly puts down the paintbrush and thinners carefully. Takes off the goggles. Removes the breathing mask and turns around.

POLLY

Hello.

SARAH

Hello.

Sarah takes a breath to speak.

POLLY

I don't know your name. Sorry. But I think I need to tell you that I dropped some logs on my foot. At your house. I tripped. It really hurt. It wasn't David. I mean, your husband.

SARAH

What wasn't?

POLLY

He didn't have his arms around me.

SARAH

No, he definitely did.

POLLY

I mean he didn't mean to.

SARAH

No, he definitely did.

There is a silence between the two women. Sarah is still holding the painting of David's house.

SARAH (cont'd)

Are you fucking my husband?

Polly pauses before she speaks. When she does she looks Sarah straight in the eye.

POLLY

No. Are you?

SARAH

Not really any concern of yours, is it?

POLLY

Not really.

Polly dips her brush back in the paint pot.

(CONTINUED)

It's Sarah's turn to pause. She looks around, torn between going and staying.

SARAH

This is interesting. Is this your shop? Do you work here?

POLLY

No, I just work here now and then. Did you - did you want to buy that painting of your house?

SARAH

It is my house, isn't it?

POLLY

It definitely is. Local artist. What's it say on it?

SARAH

The signature?

POLLY

No, the price.

SARAH

Oh. £350.

POLLY

Call it £15.

SARAH

Sorry?

POLLY

I was the one got it from the auction. It was a house clearance. Last month. Piers keeps trying to pretend it's a Ravilious. It's not. Anyone can see that. And it would be catalogued if it was, anyway.

SARAH

That's a bit of a drop in the price.

POLLY

If it was a Ravilious you could put two naughts on the price. I don't like ripping people off. We paid £15 for it. In the circumstances -

SARAH

Not that there are any.

(CONTINUED)

POLLY

Not the ones you might have  
thought, anyway.

SARAH

Piers - he's the owner?

POLLY

Yes. In the pub. You've met him.

SARAH

Yes. (Beat) What's he - what's he  
like?

POLLY

How do you mean?

SARAH

I don't mean in bed.

Polly blushes.

SARAH (cont'd)

You can do what you like with  
David. And good luck.

Polly opens her mouth to speak.

SARAH (cont'd)

Don't. I just don't want to see  
him screwed over by some village  
wide-boy.

POLLY

I know what you mean. The thing  
is, Piers - he's good at making  
something out of nothing.

SARAH

Antiques out of bric-a-brac?

Polly nods. Seriously. Sarah looks around at the other  
items being painted. At one end of the room it's junk room  
crap. In the middle of the room, Polly and her brushes. At  
the other end, drying paint and high-price cool, muted  
colourways on artfully distressed furniture.

Polly picks up a jar of gilt cream, wipes it on some  
furniture sparingly. It glitters in the sun.

POLLY

Junk to gold. That's something  
he's very good at, Piers.

SARAH

The only thing?

(CONTINUED)

POLLY

Not really any concern of yours,  
is it?

SARAH

Not really.

The two women grin at each other. Truce. Polly cleans off her brush. Pushes her hair back with the back of her hand.

POLLY

Piers has a wide range of tastes.

SARAH

I think I'll leave that  
unexplored.

Polly looks at Sarah as if appraising her for Piers. Sarah smiles.

SARAH (cont'd)

Don't even think about it.

POLLY

I think he has gay phases.

Polly moves towards a small, tidy, clean, kitchen area, puts the kettle on. She puts leaf tea into a china teapot.

POLLY (cont'd)

Tea?

SARAH

I think so. Yes. Yes please. So  
you didn't tell me. What's he  
like?

Polly makes and pours the tea.

POLLY

Single. A bit fussy about his  
clothes. Knows a lot of the  
people here. The people with  
money. The London people.  
Weekenders. He sort of makes  
himself useful.

SARAH

How do you mean?

POLLY

He hustles things. Sets things  
up. Puts people in touch with  
other people.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
Is he straight?

POLLY  
Depends what you mean.

SARAH  
Honest?

Polly leads Sarah to a doorway looking out into the street. An affluent weekending family are unloading their big new car the other side of the street, unpacking bicycles, a pile of upmarket leisure items obviously not bought anywhere within 50 miles. The kids are plugged into headphones, bored, uncommunicative. A bird swoops through the open window, then out again.

POLLY  
They're like the swallows. Easter to September. After that there's nothing. No tourists. Most of the houses here are empty, just for weekends. They talk about how they live here.

The wife humps Waitrose bags out of the boot of the car into the holiday house. The husband carries piles of sailing bags, wellies, tons of expensive coats, bags, cameras inside.

SARAH  
But they buy everything somewhere else?

POLLY  
Pretty much. Depends what you can get them interested in.

SARAH  
I'm sorry, I forgot your name.  
I'm Sarah.

POLLY  
Polly.

SARAH  
Do you like Piers?

POLLY  
He's alright.

SARAH  
Do you trust him?

POLLY  
To do what?

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
That's what I thought, too.  
Thanks for the tea.

POLLY  
That's alright.

Sarah turns to go. Then stops. Remembers the picture she's still holding.

POLLY (cont'd)  
Did you want that? Your house?

SARAH  
I - I don't know any more.

POLLY  
It gets like that, here.

Sarah hesitates to leave, still holding the picture.

POLLY (cont'd)  
Keep it while you think about it,  
if you like.

SARAH  
On approval?

POLLY  
Yes. To see if you do.

SARAH  
Again. But yes. Thank-you. I'll  
see if I do.

Sarah puts her tea down and slowly leaves. She turns at the door. Polly has returned to her painting. She looks up at Sarah. Their eyes meet.

85 INT. THE LOOKOUT KITCHEN, DAY

David is pottering about in the out-of-date kitchen, wearing his mother's old apron, looking very feminine. Sarah enters the kitchen from the garden, surprising David.

DAVID  
Sarah! You startled me!

SARAH  
Why?

DAVID  
Let's not argue again.

(CONTINUED)



SARAH  
I'd rather not.

DAVID  
Tea?

Sarah shakes her head.

DAVID (cont'd)  
The thing is Sarah, I've had an  
idea.

Sarah raises her eyebrows at him.

SARAH  
I'm listening.

David looks suddenly nervous, hesitant. He gathers his  
strength.

DAVID  
As you know, we need quite a lot  
of money for this house.

SARAH  
To fix it so we can sell it.

DAVID  
Well, to do the things that need  
doing.

Sarah looks exasperated already. She looks at the out-of  
date kitchen, the faded colourways, the 1960s cooker, the  
metal sink unit.

And sees Polly's scarf. She picks it up. Holds it against  
her cheek.

SARAH  
Oh David, you shouldn't have!

DAVID  
I haven't! I mean -

SARAH  
Yes?

DAVID  
That belongs to a friend.

SARAH  
Who took it off.

DAVID  
No, it was in my pocket.

A heavy silence.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
Start again.

DAVID  
I - I'd like that.

SARAH  
Start again with what you were saying.

DAVID  
Right. Piers - you know Piers?

SARAH  
I don't know him that well,  
David. I'd have thought he'd go  
for something a bit more butch.

DAVID  
Look, let me explain what Piers  
said. It's important.

SARAH  
Is it?

David looks out to the shingle beach outside. He focuses on the stones.

DAVID  
I've discovered something about  
myself. Since you went back to  
London.

SARAH  
That was quick.

DAVID  
Piers - he thinks I have a  
talent. But I need to invest in  
it. In myself.

SARAH  
So do it.

DAVID  
I - we. You know I can't.

SARAH  
So when you say you need to  
invest in yourself because  
someone you cuddle told you you  
do, what you actually mean is you  
need me to invest in you.

Sarah angrily opens a cupboard. It sticks.

DAVID

That's what husbands and wives do, isn't it? Invest in each other. Other wives.

SARAH

Don't fucking talk to me about other wives, David. Other wives don't have husbands who call getting sacked taking early retirement. Other wives don't have husbands who live off their parents' estate and think it's an income.

DAVID

I don't think -

SARAH

No you fucking don't. And I haven't. Not till I came here and found when you're not feeling up the barmaid you're shacking up with some dodgy fixer.

DAVID

What?

Sarah takes a cup from the cupboard. She peers into it, not liking what she finds in it and walks to the sink. She pushes David out of the way and rinses the cup, her back to the room, the door and David. She reaches for the kettle.

Piers enters the room, mistaking Sarah for Polly. He pats her backside as he walks past.

PIERS

Oh, I'd love a cuppa!

Sarah continues what she's doing, forcing the words through tight lips.

SARAH

I had better not be who you think I am.

PIERS

I am so sorry. I thought you were - I thought you were somebody else.

SARAH

I'm not.

Sarah's voice sounds deceptively sweet and reasonable.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (cont'd)

So, David was about to tell me what you've both been up to.

PIERS

Well, more what your husband's been up to, really.

SARAH

I see.

PIERS

I was quite surprised myself.

SARAH

I think we've both been.

PIERS

He's really pretty good.

SARAH

Is he?

Piers nods, seriously, enthusiastically.

PIERS

He's told you about Duchamp and the urinal?

SARAH

I don't think I really want to know.

DAVID

It's an Art thing, Sarah.

Sarah looks towards David and past him, outside the window, towards Alma, dressed in 1960s clothing, the epitome of stay-at-home wife and mother and cook and lover, hanging clean nappies to dry while her husband Theo smokes a pipe. The boy David plays happily on the lawn with his dog.

Sarah blinks. Nobody out there any more.

Sarah's voice is level. Matter-of-fact.

SARAH

Don't you dare fucking patronise me, David. You want to tell me something about men's lavatories. Ok. Go on.

DAVID

Piers has an idea that can make us considerably better off. Enough to fix up this place, anyway.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
And get rid of it.

DAVID  
If necessary, yes.

Sarah is taken aback by this.

SARAH  
Go on.

DAVID  
I don't know much about Art, but  
-

SARAH  
This sounds like 'I'm not a  
racist but -' And you just know  
nothing good is going to be said  
afterwards. And so far as I've  
ever seen you know fuck-all about  
Art.

PIERS  
May I call you Sarah?

Sarah considers this unexpected politeness.

SARAH  
Yes. You can.

PIERS  
Well, the thing is Sarah, this  
place offers some opportunities.

SARAH  
This place?

Sarah looks around the dated room. Piers does too. He almost laughs.

PIERS  
Ha! No this place! Shingle  
Street.

SARAH  
There's nothing here.

PIERS  
Not here, no. But that's what  
brings people here. The  
isolation. The purity of the  
landscape. The quaint old houses.  
The famous composers. The music  
festival.

SARAH

None of which are part of my  
life, at all.

PIERS

None of which are much to do with  
anyone who lives here. Lives here  
all the time, that is.

SARAH

Do you?

PIERS

I was born here. Like most  
people, my parents sold up to the  
incomers.

SARAH

So what do you want? Sympathy?

PIERS

I just want their money. Put the  
kettle on, would you David?

Piers pulls out a chair at the kitchen table for Sarah,  
goes the other side of the table and pulls out a chair for  
himself.

PIERS (cont'd)

The thing about this place is,  
it's beautiful. And there are no  
jobs. And nobody born here can  
afford to live here.

Sarah looks as if she's about to speak. Piers holds up his  
hand to cut-off her flow.

PIERS (cont'd)

Because their parents sold the  
houses off to the highest bidder.  
I know. Mine did. (pause) David's  
didn't.

SARAH

And it's falling to bits.

DAVID

It's not -

PIERS

And it's falling to bits.

The kettle boils. A cloud of steam envelopes the plug  
socket. The electrical fuses in the house blow again.

(CONTINUED)

PIERS (cont'd)

Tea please, David.

David obediently makes tea. Sarah looks from one to the other. Irritated. But she wants to hear what Piers has to say.

David pours tea for them all and hesitantly sits at the table, odd man out.

DAVID

The music festival. The documentary film festival. The poetry festival. All this means lots of Arts people coming up from London. Lots of people who want to be seen with lots of Arts people.

SARAH

So?

PIERS

So David's sculptures can sell. A lot.

SARAH

What sculptures?

DAVID

You know how I used to make pictures with stones? When we met?

PIERS

Those little pictures from stones can bring you enough to fix this house up. Not a fortune, maybe, but enough. Seriously.

Sarah looks from Piers to David to Piers again.

SARAH

So let me get this straight. The little stone things you do for fun, you David, think are Art, all of a sudden. And you, Piers? You think you can sell them.

David looks strangely confident.

PIERS

I know I can.

Sarah is disconcerted. The silence lengthens as she looks from one to the other.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Do you know what's happened,  
David? At work? Hmmm?

DAVID

Well, no. You don't tell me.

SARAH

Then I'll tell you now. I had to  
let someone go this week. I'll be  
lucky if I can keep the rest on.  
There's a massive hole in the  
accounts. Now you come up with  
this.

DAVID

The thing is Sarah, I need ten  
thousand to make it happen.

SARAH

To put into this place?

DAVID

Well yes, I -

SARAH

You know what David? Fucking take  
it. I've had it.

Sarah gets out a cheque book. Slams it on the table and  
writes a cheque. She rips it out and gives it to David.

She straightens up. Picks up her bag. Moves towards the  
door.

Pulls out her car keys.

SARAH (cont'd)

If you can sell a single  
sculpture then you can have this  
money to fix the house. And then  
it's sold. If you can't sell any,  
that's it. The end, David.

DAVID

That's - the end?

SARAH

Oh just fuck off.

Sarah stalks out of the house. David moves towards the  
door.

PIERS

I wouldn't. If you know what's  
good for you.

SFX: Car door slams. Engine starts and drives away.

(CONTINUED)



David picks up an old photo of Alma and Theo standing in the door of the cottage.

He moves towards the door, looking the way Sarah's car went.

Piers picks up the cheque.

DAVID

She's going to divorce me.

Piers comes to stand next to David. Their stance mirrors the way Alma and Theo stand in the old picture.

PIERS

Only if you can't sell any. And you will.

DAVID

Some wives believe in their husbands.

Piers looks down at the cheque in his hand.

PIERS

Looks to me as if she just did, old boy.

86

EXT. LONDON STREETS, DAY

Montage: Sarah has a busy day getting in and out of taxis. Walking across a river bridge, one of hundreds of people.

She stops to use her mobile, as a crowd mills about her.

She walks down steps into a Tube station.

Walks up the steps of another Tube.

Walks along the street, on her phone on yet another call.

Walks to her office door, opens it one-handed as Sally steps out, almost colliding with her.

Sarah nods, smiles, still on the phone, juggling her bag, the door, her keys, her phone in the crook of her neck.

SALLY

Hi Sarah, everything ok?

Sarah smiles, nods her head, mimes a 'yes'.

SALLY (cont'd)

See you in the morning.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Yes. Yes. Ten o'clock. Yes, see  
you in the morning Sally. No....

87 INT. SARAH'S OFFICE, EVENING

Sarah walks through her empty office. Only the cleaner  
there.

SARAH

Hello!

The cleaner nods, eyes down. All but ignores her.

Sarah walks to her desk. Unpacks her bag. Sits. Alone. She  
takes out her phone, scrolls through the Addresses.

Paul's name on the screen as a Missed Call.

She puts the phone on the desk, wondering whether to dial.

Suddenly the phone rings.

David's name on the screen.

Sarah's finger pauses over Answer and Refuse.

Her finger moves slowly to Refuse.

88 EXT. SHINGLE BEACH, EVENING

David puts his phone in his pocket. Trudges on along the  
shingle beach, the pagodas glowing in the fading light.

Sarah appears on the horizon.

She waves, says something, her words lost on the wind.

David walks on.

Eventually he finds what he was looking for. Driftwood. He  
starts arranging stones around it, building a picture.

Out for his own evening walk, Piers and his dog pause as  
they see David working.

Piers nods, like a foreman inspecting a factory. Then man  
and dog walk on. Piers pulls a phone from his pocket,  
talks animatedly into it.

PIERS

Anton! How are you? Yes, yes,  
long time! Look, there's  
something you might want to take  
a look at -

89 EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE, DAY

A month later.

Sarah's car pulls up to the house.

She opens the door and gets out. Cautiously.

She walks slowly to the door, looking at the shingle sculptures all around.

90 INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN, DAY

The door opens. Sarah walks in.

SARAH

David?

Silence.

The interior of the house is covered with models, David's sculptures, photos of statues, photos of the beach, the shingle, the pagodas. It looks creative, artistic, totally unlike the house it was. Sarah looks around, with a growing sense of wonder.

She smiles.

The door opens. David walks in, not expecting her to be there. Both surprised to be in the same room.

DAVID

Oh! Hello!

SARAH

I - Hello.

Sarah looks around at David's artwork. At him.

He looks different. More confident. Younger, in his scuffed-up clothes marked with stone dust and salt from the sea. He looks like a man with things to do.

DAVID

I didn't really expect to see you here.

SARAH

No. I've been busy. The agency - it's not been a good time. But you've been busy?

DAVID

I have. I know you don't think it's anything.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
I didn't say that. I can see  
you've really been working here.

DAVID  
You sound surprised.

SARAH  
You're different somehow. Like  
you used to sound. Like the man I  
met.

David is a bit embarrassed. He picks up some stones,  
absently holds them up to the light.

DAVID  
Early days, but I think it might  
actually turn out alright.

SARAH  
So what's the plan?

DAVID  
Well, I make the statues and  
Piers is going to look after the,  
you know.

SARAH  
Marketing?

DAVID  
Well, you know. The main event.

SARAH  
Which is what?

DAVID  
Well, the main event.

SARAH  
David, you said that. But what is  
it?

DAVID  
I - well, I leave all those kinds  
of things to Piers.

SARAH  
David, what do you mean?

DAVID  
Well, he knows all these  
important Art people and so on.

SARAH  
You've given him all the money,  
haven't you?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

He'll be here in -

The door opens. Piers walks in without knocking, as if he lives there.

PIERS

What ho, David! Oh! Sarah! What are you doing here?

SARAH

(Flatly) What ho, Piers. It's still my house, remember? Or didn't David tell you we were married?

PIERS

'Course you are! All the best ones get snapped up fast!

Sarah begins to warm to this charm, against her will.

SARAH

David was about to tell me about the £10,000 I invested in this project.

Piers breezily indicates all the sculptures.

PIERS

You can see the results all around! And some you can't.

SARAH

It was the ones I can't that interested me more. Like the sales.

PIERS

After the show. There you go, David!

Piers hands David a huge wedge of receipts.

SARAH

What show?

David looks shocked as he reads the receipts.

DAVID

Piers -

Sarah looks up at David's anxious tone.

SARAH

What is all this?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Nothing.

PIERS

Incidentals.

Sarah snatches the wedge of receipts from David.

SARAH

What the -

She looks wildly from Piers to David and back to the receipts. She slams one down on the table. An off-licence bill in the thousands.

SARAH (cont'd)

Momentous Wines. £3,800. Is this a joke? And this? Sole Bay Taxis, £2,200.

Sarah slams down another invoice, for limo hire. Again in the thousands.

DAVID

I know it seems a lot but -

SARAH

Limo hire? And what the fuck is this?

Sarah slams a huge invoice decorated with hearts onto the table.

SARAH (cont'd)

Sunrise Surprises? A fucking escort agency?

PIERS

No, they're not supposed to do that as well.

Piers was hoping Sarah would laugh. She's more coldly furious.

SARAH

You've spent three grand on amateur hookers?

PIERS

Invested. All part of the plan, Sarah, let me explain.

DAVID

There's still £600 left.

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

And we've religiously kept all  
the receipts.

Sarah gathers herself to her full height. She walks over to David. She puts her face close to his. When she speaks she speaks calmly, flat.

SARAH

When I came here, when I saw all  
this, I thought I'd found you  
again.

DAVID

Sarah -

SARAH

The trouble is David, I have.

She takes a last look around the room.

SARAH (cont'd)

That's it.

Sarah walks firmly out of the room.

DAVID

Sarah, wait!

91 EXT., DAVID'S GARDEN, DAY

Sarah walks furiously to her car. She clutches her head before she opens the door, as if she's in pain.

She opens the car door and slumps into the seat. Straightens, starts the engine.

David runs towards the car.

Too late, it drives away.

Piers walks along the garden path placidly to stand behind David. He places a hand on David's shoulder.

DAVID

What am I going to do? Piers?  
What am I going to do?

PIERS

Keep on making your statues.

DAVID

Has the money really all gone?

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

It's all in hand, David.

DAVID

What am I going to do?

PIERS

It'll all be alright David. Just you see.

DAVID

Think so?

PIERS

Trust me.

92

EXT. SNAPE MALTINGS CONCERT CENTRE, NIGHT

Establishing shot of the Maltings, the car park full, well-dressed people milling about happily, eating and drinking in the warm evening, lit by decorative flaming torches. Waitresses carry little trays of food and drink through the crowds.

David's phone rings in his pocket. He answers but nobody there. He looks at the screen. Sarah. Six missed calls.

Piers is surrounded by Polly and a gaggle of pretty, made-up girls in formal party wear, each with a small handbag as he walks towards the concert halls doors.

PIERS

Right girls! Show me!

The girls open their bags stuffed full of miniature spirits bottles, brochures, business cards and stiff formal engraved invitations. Piers holds one aloft.

PIERS

These are formally called 'stiffies.'

GIRLS

(Laughter)

PIERS

Invitations. To the world opening of a premier Art event at Shingle Street.

POLLY

And how do we know who to give these to?

Piers looks over the girls approvingly.

(CONTINUED)



PIERS

Find them, darling, talk to people. Ask for them by name. Use your charm. Your assets!

GIRL

We just ask for them, find them, give them their ticket. Then we come back tomorrow and get them to the limo, right?

PIERS

With a little more charm, yes.

GIRL

And we're getting £50, cash?

PIERS

Cash. For each punter - I mean Art critic, journalist or serious collector - who goes to David's exhibition at Shingle Street. They go, I pay. They stay, no pay. Comprenez-vous? Capisce? (pause) Oh for God's sake, do you get it?

GIRL

Why will they go?

PIERS

Because it's Art, darling! Art! And they've been invited. Some of these people would go to the opening of an envelope.

GIRL

No strings?

PIERS

Your call. The same goes for you, lads.

The crowd of girls parts to reveal handsome local boys, late teens and early twenties.

BOY

How do we know we'll get paid?

PIERS

You get their business card. We check them in at Shingle Street. You get paid for each one that's yours. Cash. On the spot.

Piers looks over his assembled troops.

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

So good luck. Stick with them like glue. Get them to that exhibition. Tell them you love them and they're fabulous. And whatever else you do with them...

The girls and boys look towards Piers, expectantly.

PIERS

I really don't want to know!

The girls look from one to the other. Then they look at Piers. So do the boys. He winks.

The gang all laugh.

Lead by Polly the boys and girls mix into the crowd, tapping shoulders, whispering in old men's ears, bending low to open their bags and find the invitations, flashing cleavage and leg and bicep to get the privileged old white men and older media women on-board the fleet of limos that begins to arrive.

Conversations break up, whole groups of media people examine their invitations, cast longing looks at the girls and boys who recruited them, then relax in anticipation as they are steered by the arm towards the waiting cars, drink in hand.

Piers spots a woman in the crowd and launches himself off at her.

PIERS (cont'd)

Natasha! So good of you to come!  
Have you got your invitation for tomorrow?

93 EXT, SHINGLE STREET, DAY

The next day.

David stands alone, looking at his shingle sculptures. The pagodas brood behind him in the sun.

A van bounces along the track towards him.

It stops, suddenly quiet in the stillness of this early sunny summer morning.

The door opens and Piers gets out, ludicrously flamboyantly dressed to be driving a van. He bustles round to the back of the van and pulls out crates of champagne, boxes of glasses,

(CONTINUED)

PIERS

All set, David? Here, help me get this out of the sun before it gets too warm.

Piers carries a box of glasses into a pristine marquee on the shingle beach.

He comes out again for another load. David hasn't moved.

DAVID

It'll never work, Piers.

Piers carries another box of glasses into the big tent. He looks apprehensively at the sky. He speaks to David as he passes him.

PIERS

Looks like thunder later. Hope not.

DAVID

I just think -

Piers stops abruptly.

PIERS

Do something for me, David? Don't. Don't think.

DAVID

It's all a con, Piers. All of it. This stuff isn't Art.

PIERS

Ever heard of Banksy, David?

DAVID

Of course I have.

PIERS

Oh good. So tell me, pray do - exactly what is so fucking artistic about stencils sprayed on someone's wall?

DAVID

Well -

PIERS

Well what? Are you trying to tell me some slapper's bedsheets are Art? A sodding fish chopped in half is Art? That'll be news in the chip shop, won't it? They'll have to put their prices up considerably!

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

But these are just stones I  
re-arranged a bit!

PIERS

And so is Michaelangelo's David!  
Or Rodin's Thinker. Or any bit of  
old tat they'll pay for. And at  
least you did it yourself!

DAVID

How could it be my work if I  
didn't do it?

PIERS

At last! Spoken like a true  
artist!

DAVID

It's a con.

PIERS

What is? Are they real stones?

DAVID

Of course they are!

PIERS

And you designed the patterns you  
arrange them in?

DAVID

I didn't get them out of a  
pattern book, if that's what you  
mean!

PIERS

And you did it yourself? Well?

DAVID

I used my own hands and heart and  
mind to make these sculptures.

PIERS

Well that's more than some then.  
David, just do me a favour and  
shut the fuck up. They'll be here  
in a minute. If you want to help,  
get this wine out of the sun. If  
you don't, just be quiet while I  
make you some money.

Piers glares at David's expensive old clothes, stained  
with stone dust.

(CONTINUED)

PIERS (cont'd)

And for heaven's sake get dressed  
prop- you know, actually, don't.  
Stay as you are.

David and Piers frantically move wine boxes, glasses boxes into the marquee. A van pulls up outside. A huge, unshaven TATTOOED MAN driving. David looks up apprehensively.

PIERS

Ah! Security.

DAVID

What for?

PIERS

For our precious cargo!

Piers rushes out of the marquee. He shoves a £50 note at the huge driver then bangs on the side and doors of the van.

The doors open.

A gaggle of under-dressed sexy local girls pours out of the van, followed by lithe young local boys, all primped and primed as hosts and hostesses.

They pour into the marquee and turn expectantly to Piers as their leader. He inspects them like a general before a battle, adjusting a cleavage here, smelling a boy's aftershave up close there.

As Piers gives his battle speech the faces change, some wincing as they hear the words. All filled with a steely determination by the speech.

PIERS (cont'd)

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to welcome the cream of England's art world. Literary giants, gallery owners, collectors, art critics. Influencers. the people who tell us what to think. People who come here from Easter to August Bank Holiday. People who buy houses here and don't live in them. Our mission: to take some serious money off these people. Keep filling their drinks. Make them think they're the most important people on earth. Because they already think they are.

(CONTINUED)

ESCORTS

We will!

PIERS

And not a drop past your lips  
until it's over!

ESCORT BOY

We're not stupid, Piers.

ESCORT GIRL

Yeah! We're professionals!

PIERS

What you do in your free time is  
up to you.

ESCORTS

(All laugh).

Piers' mobile phone rings in his pocket. He looks at the screen.

PIERS

Right! They're here!! Action  
stations! Go to it, my pretties.

The van moves off. The first of a long line of limos appears, heading towards the marquee.

As the first cars stop the escorts surround them like locusts, opening doors, helping the occupants out, smiling, flirting, local accents suddenly gone, helping each distinguished guest, male and female towards the marquee.

A male escort diffidently approaches an elderly invitee. She brushes him off like a fly, points to one of the female escorts, crooks her finger.

The female escort swaps a glance with a friend, adjusts her neckline a little lower and dutifully takes the much older woman's arm as they walk into the marquee, smiling submissively.

94 INT. MARQUEE, DAY

The entire Art world marvel at David's sculptures, chatting and laughing. The escorts welcome everyone individually, all curtsy and cleavage or standing-too-close, a hand on an arm. Drink flows. Almost everyone is smiling.

David's phone rings in his pocket. He gets it out, looks at it. The screen says seven missed calls.

A clearly DRUNK OLDER MAN is indignant.

(CONTINUED)

DRUNK

Does whoever he is think he can  
buy the entire art world with  
these, these tawdry pebbles and  
some free drinks?

The huge tattooed van driver appears behind the Drunk.  
Ominously close. Expressionless. He whispers in the  
Drunk's ear.

The Drunk seems to consider what was said.

Together the two wander to one of the pebble sculptures.  
The Tattooed Man hoists a drink from a passing Escort girl,  
gives it to the Drunk. Soon they hold hands.

CROWD

Unique new talent - unexplored.  
Raw beauty. It's more than  
transitional art.

Piers passes David in the happy crowd.

PIERS

Going well, isn't it!

CROWD

- tightrope walk between irony  
and kitsch. It's a wholesale  
departure into an exciting new  
littoral liminalism.

David's mobile phone rings.

DAVID

Hello? Hello, Sarah?

CROWD

I'm particularly struck by the  
knowing playfulness of the use of  
useless decoration! It's a  
seminal work of post-post  
modernism. Seminal!

ESCORT GIRL laughs and nearly spits out her drink. Which  
is fizzy water.

ESCORT GIRL

Oooops! Bubbles up my nose!!

DAVID

Sarah? I can't hear you. I'm in  
the middle of the event. (beat)  
Sorry, I really can't hear you.  
Text me if it's important, ok?

(CONTINUED)

David ends the call and puts the phone in his pocket. Almost at once it rings. He pulls out the phone again, irritated, looks at the screen.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Wanted to tell you in person.  
Instructing solicitors for  
divorce. Pity you didn't have  
time.

David puts the phone back in his pocket. He walks out of the marquee.

Piers sees David's stricken face and steers him safely out of the marquee.

PIERS  
David, be a trooper. Smile or  
fuck off for a bit, yes? You're  
putting people off.

DAVID  
It's Sarah. She -

PIERS  
She isn't doing anything that  
can't wait until this show is  
finished.

PIERS  
That's all it is to you, isn't  
it? Show.

PIERS  
No actually, David. It's about  
making a living.

DAVID  
Conning people.

PIERS  
Oh really? Where's the con? Who's  
fooling who, exactly? Who goes  
and writes the reviews saying how  
pebbles are art? Who goes on TV  
and stares into a camera saying  
how fucking seminal your work is?

DAVID  
I haven't got time to listen to  
this!

PIERS  
Then make time! You don't have a  
job. You were living off your  
wife. And she'd just about had  
enough of it. So tell me David,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



PIERS (cont'd)  
exactly where the fuck do you  
think you get off with your moral  
scruples about what is and isn't  
Art?

Piers takes David by the shoulder and turns him to look at the cream of London's Art and literary scene. They look like rampaging pigs, tucking into the free food and drink, this louche crowd now blatantly trying to feel-up the escorts and get off with each other, men and women, women and women, men and men alike.

PIERS  
Just take a look at the people  
who hold the moral high ground in  
this country. Tell me which one  
of them knows what Art is and  
what it isn't.

David is silent in front of the gluttony. The stupidly big watches, beards and egos. The people on flashy mobile phones even as they stand face-to-face talking to someone else.

DAVID  
I don't stitch people up. I'm not  
a liar.

PIERS  
Then you go and tell them, David.  
Go and tell them they don't know  
what Art is. See him, there?

Piers points out a florid, loud man holding court to a small crowd.

PIERS  
Paul Sanderson.

David makes no reply.

PIERS  
Who owns the Sanderson Gallery.

Piers points out a short woman talking animatedly in the crowd.

PIERS  
Sheila Harcourt. The Met Times  
Art Critic. Simon Parson - David,  
you don't know any of these  
people so why not leave this end  
of it to me, hmm? While you do  
the thing I can't do? The way we  
agreed? There's a love.

David looks at the crowd, disgusted.

(CONTINUED)

He turns and walks away.

Piers shakes his head. He wanders slowly into the food area of the marquee, absent mindedly eats a vol-au-vent. He walks into the smaller marquee where Polly is pouring water from a stand-pipe into expensive-looking mineral water bottles with a Shingle Street label.

POLLY  
Alright, Piers? Got another  
bottle?

PIERS  
I do. I don't think David does.

Polly looks at him quizzically. Irritated.

POLLY  
Thanks Piers, I'll do it myself.

PIERS  
What?

Polly shakes her head and reaches for the next bottle to fill.

POLLY  
Don't you worry about it. I'll do  
this. You go and do what you do  
best, go and talk to people.

PIERS  
Yes. Yes, you're right. Sorry,  
Polly.

POLLY  
That's alright. Go!

Piers walks to the tent flap, looks back.

POLLY  
Go!

She smiles. Piers squares his shoulders and exits. As he enters the big marquee he puts on a fantastic smile.

PIERS  
Torquil! So good of you to come!

95 EXT. SHINGLE BEACH, EVENING

David walks along the beach slowly, towards his house in the fading light.

(CONTINUED)

He sees Alma and Theo in the garden. Then they're walking with him, then looking out of the windows of the house, but each time he looks to see them clearly there is nobody there at all.

David approaches the door.

SFX: The clink and clatter of washing-up and a long-ago radio programme from inside the house.

David opens the door. The sounds immediately stop.

David takes out his mobile phone. Looks at the screen. He crosses the room to the old-fashioned landline phone.

David sits down with the old phone. Dials the number deliberately. He reaches out and taps the cradle, ending the call. He pauses, then dials again.

DAVID

Sarah! It's me. (Pause) David.

96 EXT. SHINGLE STREET, DUSK

Sarah stands on the beach at Shingle Street in the half-dark. She can hear David - or someone - walking on the shingle.

DAVID

Sarah?

SARAH

It's too late David.

A sheet of flame races across the water, turning night into day, whiting out David, racing on towards Sarah.

The wall of flame blasts everything in front of her.

SARAH (cont'd)

(Screams) No!

97 INT. SARAH'S OFFICE, EVENING

The end of another busy day at work. Sarah inspects her make-up at her desk. Sally enters, smiles reassuringly.

SARAH

I look that bad?

SALLY

No, no, not that. At all.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

I'm not sleeping. I keep getting these horrible dreams. Everything's on fire. Everything - everything's gone.

SALLY

It'll be ok.

SARAH

Yes. It'll be ok.

She smiles bravely. It looks false.

SALLY

Anyway....

SARAH

Yep. See you in the morning. Bright eyed and bushy tailed!

SALLY

Yes. New day. New dawn.

Sarah shudders.

SALLY (cont'd)

Night then.

Sarah nods.

Sally gathers her things and leaves quietly.

Sarah looks around the empty office for a long time.

SARAH

Night, then.

She gathers her bag and coat and slowly, silently, walks to the door and sets the alarm. She takes a last look around then opens the door and steps through into the night.

98 INT. SARAH'S FLAT, NIGHT

Sarah sits on the floor of her darkened living room with a glass of red wine. Her laptop is perched on the coffee table next to her. She's a bit drunk. Her phone rings.

SARAH

Hello? (surprised) Paul!

She reaches for her glass of wine. Knocks it over.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (cont'd)  
Shit! No, sorry! Not you! (Pause)  
Trying not to go to sleep. Trying  
to sort my life out. Trying to  
keep my business running. Nothing  
much. (Pause) No, I didn't mean  
it like that. (Pause) No, not  
tonight.

Red wine is starting to drip off the coffee table onto the carpet. The wine drips onto Sarah's yoga pants, making a stain that spreads like the fire surging across the sea in her dream.

SARAH (cont'd)  
Paul, no. I've got a lot of stuff  
to sort out.

Sarah stares fascinated at the red stain on her yoga pants.

FLASHBACK

The fire surges across the beach, across the water, across the shingle.

BACK TO NOW

Sarah is shaken, but her voice gets stronger as she speaks.

SARAH (cont'd)  
My husband? Well firstly, what I  
do with my husband is no concern  
of yours. Secondly, I've decided  
he isn't going to be my husband  
any more.

The wine stain stops growing.

SARAH (cont'd)  
So there we are. And still not  
tonight. Another night maybe.  
(Pause) Yes. Maybe. (Pause) Bye,  
Paul. Bye.

She puts the phone down. Sarah pinches her nose hard and blinks.

She reaches for her laptop and opens an email screen. She types, then pauses.

SARAH (cont'd)  
Dear David? Dear David. (Pause)  
I'm divorcing you for screwing me  
over you utter fuckhead. (Pause)  
Maybe not the right tone. (Pause)  
Dear David, I did love you. I do.

(CONTINUED)

Sarah types on her laptop. We get glimpses of the words on the screen.

SARAH V/O

Your parents dying - look, I know everything hit you at once. But it hit me too. I don't know who you are now. A shadow who wakes at night screaming. I know you're in pain. But you add it to mine. Everyone's parents die, David. Everyone's parents die. And when something makes you unhappy you either try to fix it or you get rid of it. Not just let it get you down and drag you under.

Sarah pauses. Reaches for her empty wine glass. Shakily pours some more and after a sip starts typing again.

SARAH V/O (cont'd)

This is all rubbish, David. You don't talk to me. You can't be bothered to even answer the phone any more. I'm not even going to talk about my ten k. This isn't about getting my money back. I want - I wanted my husband back, the man who believed in himself. The man who walked with his head up. Not the shadow running from ghosts.

Sarah closes the laptop, and stands, stiffly. She knocks a book off the table as she gets up.

SARAH

Oh bollocks to it all.

She bends to pick the open book up and reads a page.

SARAH (cont'd)

Through the looking glass.

She stands reflected in a big mirror as she reads.

SARAH (cont'd)

When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, it means just what I chose it to mean. Neither more, nor less. The question is, said Alice, whether you can make words mean so many things.

Sarah catches sight of herself in the mirror.

SARAH

The question is, said Humpty  
Dumpty, which is to be master.  
That's all.

She drops the book onto the coffee table.

SARAH

And sleep perchance to dream.

Sarah walks to the window. Rain is sliding down the pane outside. A crack of thunder. She almost falls onto the bed.

She turns on her side and catches sight of a photograph of her and David. A tear rolls down her nose. She turns her back on the picture and falls asleep almost instantly. Lightning flashes outside. Rain splatters against the window.

99 EXT, BEACH CAFÉ, DAY

Autumn, three months later. A grey, blustery day. Hardly anyone on the beach except a man parasurfing. It looks dangerous. The weather is unwelcoming. Rain splatters the pavement and the very few people around.

100 INT BEACH CAFÉ, DAY

Inside the café Sarah sits alone at a table, reflected in a big mirror on the wall in front of her. The café window keeps steaming up from the un-seasonal cold outside.

A large, official-looking manilla envelope is on the table next to her half-drunk coffee. A Solicitor's address stamp on the envelope.

A MAN in a long leather jacket sits with his friends at another table and looks over towards Sarah. She avoids his gaze. He says something to his friends then stands and walks over to Sarah's table.

MAN

Excuse me -

SARAH

No.

MAN

I was going to ask if anybody was  
sitting here?

SARAH

Yes, they are.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

I don't mean to be rude but -

SARAH

Then don't be. My husband is joining me at this table. So thank-you for whatever it was but no thank-you.

MAN

I was going to ask if we could have the chair if you're not using it, actually.

Sarah puts her bag on the empty chair.

MAN (cont'd)

Fine.

The man retreats to his own table and resumes the conversation with his friends. He glances at Sarah from time to time. She sits head up, ignoring him.

Sarah opens the big envelope and pulls out divorce proceedings papers. She studies them carefully.

The man in the leather jacket gets up and walks towards the serving counter, off-screen to the left.

A man in an identical jacket walks on-screen from the left, blocking our view of Sarah. She ignores him, then turns her head towards him angrily.

SARAH

What exactly is it you want? Oh!

David stands next to Sarah, wearing much smarter, somehow more artistic clothes than before. Including his long leather jacket.

DAVID

Hello. You wanted to see me.

101 EXT. BEACH CAFÉ, DAY

From the street outside the beach café, looking through the window we can see David sit down at the table with Sarah. Cars pass between us and the window.

The couple sit at a neutral distance. Not talking. Both avoid eye contact, looking out of the window, at the table, anywhere except at each other.



102 INT. SARAH'S TABLE, BEACH CAFÉ, DAY

Sarah and David sit at a café table. The big mirror on the wall reflects everything they do. Sarah fiddles with the nearly empty coffee cup in front of her.

SARAH  
So there we are.

Sarah makes a wry face then retreats into her coffee.

DAVID  
This isn't something you want to do.

SARAH  
No, it's not. But I don't see what else I can do. This isn't any good for either of us.

DAVID  
Things have changed. A bit.

SARAH  
Yes, they have. I've had to totally change my business and find a cheaper office. If you hadn't - oh. No. I'm just arguing with myself. This is what happens.

DAVID  
I'm not going to argue.

SARAH  
No. You don't. That's you arguing. It's like living with a ghost. You're not even not there.

There is a long silence.

DAVID  
I am, actually.

SARAH  
What?

DAVID  
There. Somewhere, anyway.

Sarah sips her coffee.

DAVID  
You know my stone sculptures?

Sarah raises her eyebrows and looks away from David.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

David -

DAVID

I've sat silent and listened to what you have to say. I'd like you to do me the courtesy of doing the same. Please.

David has her attention. And surprise.

SARAH

If you're going to tell me all about your chum Piers and the cosy arrangements you make on a winter evening you can save it for my solicitor.

David pulls a thick envelope out of his jacket. And another, longer, wider envelope.

DAVID

Well, there have been some arrangements with Piers.

Sarah looks as if she might cry. She blinks and sips more coffee.

SARAH

You know David, the worst thing about a woman having a relationship with a gay man? It's not the fact that he's gay. It's the total fucking waste of time.

David frowns, nonplussed.

DAVID

I didn't know. (long pause) When - when did this happen?

SARAH

What?

DAVID

You, going to bed with a gay man.

SARAH

What?

DAVID

I mean, is that what this divorce is all about? Because you've been to bed with a gay man?

(CONTINUED)

SARAH  
Are you trying to be funny,  
David?

David pushes the fat envelope across the table.

DAVID  
See if you think this is funny.

Sarah looks at the envelope blankly.

SARAH  
What is it? A silk scarf you  
never saw before?

DAVID  
If you opened it you'd find out.

Sarah looks at David carefully, then opens the envelope.  
£10,000 in £50 notes, in bank wrappers.

Sarah's face is expressionless.

SARAH  
Where from?

DAVID  
My art.

SARAH  
You don't do Art, David.

DAVID  
Apparently I do.

SARAH  
You make little sculptures on the  
beach out of pebbles.

DAVID  
Exactly.

SARAH  
That's not art!

DAVID  
Do you know Alice in Wonderland?

SARAH  
Not personally, no.

They both share a smile, almost accidentally.

David pushes the bigger envelope across the table.

DAVID  
I don't know if you've seen any  
of this.

SARAH  
What is it?

DAVID  
Open it and see.

She does.

SARAH  
David, I - oh.

The envelope is full of press cuttings. David. David and Piers. David, Piers and art critics. David's sculptures, in Art magazines, reviews, articles in journals.

DAVID  
And I agree with you.

SARAH  
About what?

DAVID  
They're just little pictures I  
make out of pebbles.

SARAH  
Not Art?

DAVID  
When I use a word, said Humpty  
Dumpty -

SARAH  
It means anything I want it to  
mean.

DAVID  
Just what I chose it to mean.

The pair are joined in the mirror.

SARAH AND DAVID TOGETHER  
Neither more nor less.

An almost embarrassed silence.

SARAH  
The question is, said Alice,  
whether you can make words mean  
so many different things.

DAVID

Not me. Other people write this stuff. I just make my pictures with shingle. And anyway the question is -

SARAH

Which is to be master, that's all.

DAVID

In Wonderland.

SARAH

Through the looking glass.

Without thinking, their hands reach out for each other's across the table.

David looks at their reflection in the big wall mirror.

DAVID

What?

SARAH

What?

DAVID

You said -

SARAH

The book was Through the Looking Glass. Not Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

DAVID

Oh. Different book.

SARAH

Same author.

DAVID

Yes.

David and Sarah sit holding hands, looking surprised, then fondly at each other.

The door opens. Piers and Polly walk in, arm in arm. More than this. She's all over him.

The couple approach David and Sarah's table. Piers is in fine form. And a bit elegantly drunk.

PIERS

The golden couple! Hello! Sarah! Haven't seen you in ages!

(CONTINUED)

Piers leans in and kisses Sarah on both cheeks, suddenly and confidently. He sees the press cuttings on the table.

PIERS

A nice bit of publicity, although  
I say it myself.

SARAH

You did this?

POLLY

It's what he does.

Piers fondles Polly, not as discretely as he imagines. He's much more happily drunk than he seemed.

PIERS

Well, not everything!

Polly looks quite happy with this.

SARAH

And the money? All this is  
because of these little pebble  
pictures?

PIERS

People like them. Where's the  
harm? Anyway, we're celebrating!  
What will you have?

SARAH

I don't think -

PIERS

Bring us the finest wines  
available to humanity!

The girl behind the café counter looks as if she's heard this a thousand times, most of them from him. She shares a sympathetic glance with Polly. Who avoids looking at David.

DAVID

Piers and I, we're both very  
grateful to you for financing the  
exhibition.

SARAH

The what?

PIERS

The show! The thing we spent all  
the money on!

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

I thought that was all just on  
tarts and alcohol.

POLLY

It was. They called it Art  
though.

A young couple dressed for walking and carrying guide  
books enter the café. The young man walks diffidently to  
the the counter.

YOUNG MAN

Excuse me, two coffees please.  
Can you do them to go?

Piers appraises Polly hungrily and fondly while the girl  
behind the counter makes the coffee.

PIERS

Anyway, it all worked out in the  
end. We won't keep you. Things to  
see, people to do!

Piers pats Polly's rear to guide her towards the door.

POLLY

Piers!

YOUNG MAN

Can you tell me whereabouts the  
Lifeboat Inn used to be?

Piers rolls his eyes theatrically.

PIERS

Oh God, not another mystery  
hunter.

The young and the girl look around.

YOUNG MAN

Do you know where it was?

PIERS

It's gone. Along with the bodies  
on the beach and the sea on fire.  
All gone years ago.

Piers ushers Polly out with a dismissive wave.

PIERS

You can deal with this, you two,  
now you live here! We're off!

Piers and Polly leave the café, in a hurry to get to bed  
with each other.

(CONTINUED)

David and Sarah sit as a couple again. Unexpectedly. The younger couple look towards them.

YOUNG MAN

Excuse me, do you live here?

DAVID

Only at the moment. We're going home soon.

Sarah looks wonderingly at David.

DAVID

We have a house here. But we're selling it.

SARAH

Possibly.

It's David's turn to look wonderingly at Sarah.

YOUNG MAN

I'm just wondering if you know what happened here? In the war?

The young woman brandishes a guide book.

YOUNG WOMAN

It says there's this big mystery at Shingle Street, something about the sea being on fire and the Lifeboat Inn.

DAVID

I really don't know anything about it.

SARAH

Sorry! Me neither.

YOUNG MAN

Well, thanks anyway. Nobody seems to know anything about it.

DAVID

Maybe it didn't happen.

YOUNG WOMAN

There's quite a lot written about it though. Thanks anyway.

The young couple leave.

Sarah and David look at each other again, steadily.

(CONTINUED)



DAVID

My bad dreams have stopped. Ever since -

SARAH

Ever since you started being you again. I - I had the same dream for a while.

DAVID

Did you?

Sarah looks out of the window at the improving weather.

SARAH

It's clearing up. Come on.

David and Sarah get up from the table and leave the café.

103 EXT. SHINGLE STREET, DAY

Sarah and David walk companionably along the beach, a stiff wind clearing the clouds away.

The pair walk past the Aldeburgh Shell sculpture outlined against the sky. The sun shines through the inscription cut into the metal. Sarah reads it:

SARAH

I hear those voices that will not be drowned.

DAVID

I heard them too. The same bad dream.

SARAH

It was the past. Come on.

DAVID

Where to?

SARAH

To now, of course. The future. There are other dreams.

DAVID

Yes. Yes, there are.

104 INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN, EVENING

Theo and Alma sit quietly, contentedly at the kitchen table, holding hands.

The back door opens. David enters, looks straight at them. Sarah enters the room behind him.

(CONTINUED)

David looks towards Sarah. Smiles.

Alma and Theo share one more happy glance at each other, then disappear.

SARAH  
Is someone here? In the house?

DAVID  
No?

SARAH  
I was sure someone (pause) was here.

Sarah looks around uneasy then shrugs.

SARAH  
Nice walk. I'll put the kettle on.

DAVID  
I'll get the fire going. Sarah ... (beat) Nothing.

SARAH  
Go and make the place warm. I might make you warm later. (pause) Might.

David leaves the room, smiling. Sarah puts the kettle on and looks around the kitchen again before she loads the washing machine.

She stops. Squats next to the laundry basket. Digs her hand deep into it.

Pulls out a tiny lace thong.

SARAH  
David?

FADE TO BLACK.