



RED PLANET PICTURES

Death in Paradise Series 6

Episode 2
(Complete with GREEN Amends)

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A beautiful Caribbean day on a lush, sprawling estate. NSE GUESTS are arriving at a garden party in the grounds as NSE WAITERS circle with trays of canapes and champagne. A small stage with a screen is set up in front of chairs. A welcome banner announces: SAINT MARIE LITERARY FESTIVAL.

The guests are collecting passes and printed copies of the Festival Programme at a welcome table. ESTHER MONROE (24, Anglo-Caribbean, pretty, bookish) is handing them out. But her face is tense, unsmiling. Attention clearly elsewhere.

ANNA WOLF (45, professorial but glamorous, confident, one half of an academic power couple) approaches.

ANNA
(low to ESTHER)
Don't forget to smile please.
(to guests)
Do have a drink and enjoy the
gardens, we'll be starting very
soon...

OLIVER WOLF (44, senior academic, handsome but middle-age just beginning to encroach) heads up with two glasses of champagne.

OLIVER
Look at this place.
(he hands Anna the
champagne)
You did it, darling.

ANNA
We did it.
(chinks glasses with him)

She kisses his cheek. An NSE JOURNALIST approaches saying something like 'time for a quick interview?'

ANNA (CONT'D)
(introducing)
This is my husband, Dr Oliver
Wolf...

OLIVER
You know it's you they want,
Professor.

With a gracious 'if I must' shrug Anna heads off - clearly loving this attention. As she goes Oliver catches Esther's eye - smiles at her. Esther smiles back thinly.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Can I get you a glass?

1

CONTINUED:

1

ESTHER

No thanks.

OLIVER

Come on, you've been working all week. Time to enjoy yourself.

But Esther turns away, her face falling. She's anxious. Why?

GO TO: Anna is with the NSE Journalist and an NSE PHOTOGRAPHER, near the stage.

ANNA

A three-day celebration of Caribbean literature in all its forms. Tours, readings, book signings.

Anna spots a Caribbean woman in her 60s approaching (this is SYLVIE BAPTISTE, striking-looking, charismatic). Accompanying her is PATRICIA LAWRENCE (mid 40s, British, a book editor).

ANNA (CONT'D)

And of course our star guest - Sylvie Baptiste. This is her family estate. And the setting of her most celebrated novel, 'The Flame Tree'.

SYLVIE

Welcome. A pleasure to be hosting the first year of this wonderful festival.

As Sylvie goes to take a glass of champagne from a tray, Patricia intercepts quietly.

PATRICIA

(her hand stopping Sylvie's)

After the reading. Please.

SYLVIE

Remind me not to invite you to my next party.

But she leaves the drink - a twitch of a smile on her face - and gives her handbag to Patricia, who steps back out of the way. Sylvie goes to pose next to Anna for the photo. As The photographer snaps away.

GO TO: Oliver is stood next to Patricia as the photos are taken. She is nervously checking through some cue cards.

OLIVER

You all ready for your talk, Patricia?

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

PATRICIA

I think so. If I can just stop my hands from shaking. It's usually Sylvie who does this sort of thing. I'm more used to being behind the stage, not on it...

Oliver offers a reassuring smile.

OLIVER

You'll be great.

Patricia clocks Oliver is distracted by something - his eyes going to Esther.

PATRICIA

Esther seems a little...stressed.
Is she all right?

OLIVER

Probably just tired.

But as Oliver glances over at Esther, we see he doesn't look quite as certain as he sounds.

CUT TO:

2 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [13:10]**

2

We're close on Esther standing alone, her face drawn and anxious. In the b/g, Anna is still over with the photographer but Sylvie has broken away and now approaches.

SYLVIE

Esther?

Esther snaps back into the present to see Sylvie next to her. It does nothing to lessen her anxiety.

ESTHER

Ms Baptiste.

SYLVIE

(low, pointed)

I was wondering if you'd had a chance to think about our little chat.

ESTHER

I have. And the answer's still no.

Esther checks her watch and hurries away - leaving Sylvie annoyed and perturbed.

CUT TO:

3

EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [13:15]

3

A large SCREEN, showing a slide of the estate entitled '*Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Island Setting Of The Flame Tree*' is erected on a large scaffold framework with canvas siding. Behind this is an area where audio visual equipment is kept just out of sight. Patricia is checking her laptop is set up and working. Power point remote control in hand.

ANNA

Are we good to go?

PATRICIA

(nodding)

All ready.

Anna heads out and there is a small ripple of applause. She notices Oliver take his seat in the audience.

ANNA

(into mic)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to...

Anna smiles, a little embarrassed as the microphone isn't working. She looks to Patricia at the side of the stage and gestures it's not working. Patricia checks the receiver box and adjusts the channel frequency. Nods to Anna to try again.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Testing...

The microphone is now working.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'll try again. Ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the very first Saint Marie Literature Festival. To kick things off, we're starting with a talk from Sylvie Baptiste's long-time editor and assistant, Patricia Lawrence, about the iconic locations of '*The Flame Tree*'. Patricia Lawrence...

As Patricia joins Anna on stage to a polite ripple of applause, the two women notice a nervous-looking Esther at the back of the garden, slipping away into the foliage.

PATRICIA

Thank you Anna.

(beat)

When Donald and Iris first meet in '*The Flame Tree*', they are worlds apart. Donald an Englishman managing a plantation, Iris a newly-freed slave determined to make the most of her liberty.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

In the audience, Oliver clocks Esther's disappearance too as Anna leaves the stage and takes her seat next to him.

CUT TO:

4 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [13:16]** 4

We go with Esther as she leaves the garden and takes a dense, jungly path that leads away from the house.

CUT TO:

5 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [13:17]** 5

Patricia is on stage continuing her talk...

PATRICIA

...it's at this sacred place that Donald learns about the power of obeah...

She clicks on a handheld button to reveal the first slide - a waterfall/river. As the slide comes up, Patricia finds she is blocking the image. She casually moves out of the way, to the side of the stage, so the full image can be seen.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

It's here that he buys a love-spell, one that will bind Iris to him, even against her will...

CUT TO:

6 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GROUNDS. DAY 1 [13:18]** 6

Esther pushes her way through foliage - heading down the path away from the garden.

CUT TO:

7 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [13:28]** 7

We're with Oliver and Anna as Patricia (unseen) speaks in the b/g. We might perhaps glimpse the slide on screen of dramatic clifftop. Sylvie is also visible in the audience.

PATRICIA (O.C)

And this is the cliff, right here on the estate, where Iris decides she can no longer live with what Donald has done to her.

Oliver squeezes Anna's hand discreetly. (NB. the following dialogue is whispered as Patricia talks in the b/g).

OLIVER

You looked wonderful in the photo.

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

7

Anna squeezes his hand back.

ANNA
(to OLIVER)
Where did Esther go?

OLIVER
(shrugging - no idea)
Maybe I should go and look for her.

ANNA
Not now, love

GO TO: We're close on Patricia stepping forward on stage as she now opens a copy of 'The Flame Tree' to a bookmarked page, and begins reading.

PATRICIA
Let me read you the text at this point...
(reads from book)
Iris walked towards the edge of the cliff.

CUT TO:

8

OMITTED

8

9

EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. CLIFFTOP. DAY 1 [13:30]

9

We're now on a cliff-top - the same one we just saw on the slide. A dramatic view out to sea now visible in front of us. As Patricia reads, the camera tracks forwards towards the edge of the cliff.

PATRICIA (V.O)
Her heart was burning in her chest,
with fear, or with desire - she did
not know and perhaps it did not
matter. She heard his voice in the
garden behind her, calling her away
from the cliffs.

As she speaks we follow the camera as it pans over the edge of the cliff... down the sheer drop...

PATRICIA (V.O) (CONT'D)
But she wanted to see over the
cliff, over the water, all the way
to the horizon and beyond it-

And we see Esther's dead body lying at the bottom of the cliff...

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

TITLES: "DEATH IN PARADISE"

CUT TO:

10 **INT. HONORÉ POLICE STATION. DAY 1 [14:40]**

10

HUMPHREY is working his way through a massive stack of paperwork, whistling cheerfully as he does so. FLORENCE, DWAYNE and JP are watching him. He checks his phone - clearly just received a text. A big soppy grin spreads over his face.

Humphrey looks up to see the others staring at him, amused.

FLORENCE

Never realised the Commissioner's reports were so much fun, Sir.

DWAYNE

Had that grin on his face all week. Like my granny when she'd been at the rum.

FLORENCE

Do we take it things are going well with Martha?

HUMPHREY

(playing it cool)

You could say that, Florence. You could say that.

It takes about half a second for this facade to melt away.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

She's moving in for the rest of her stay.

(excited beyond words)

The shack is going to have an actual human woman living in it.

DWAYNE

Nice one, chief!

The phone rings - JP goes to answer it.

FLORENCE

So when's she planning to move in?

HUMPHREY

End of the week. When she's back from Montserrat. In fact - could you help me get the shack ready?

(Florence nods - of course)

Need to clear out the junk, make it more of a...

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED:

10

DWAYNE

Love shack?!

On Humphrey's blush... as JP gets off the phone.

JP

Body of a young woman's been found.
On the beach at the Malbonne
estate.

FLORENCE

Malbonne?

(awestruck)

That's Sylvie Baptiste's home...

CUT TO:

11

EXT. BEACH. DAY 1 [15:00]

11

Humphrey and Florence are heading down the beach.

FLORENCE

She wrote a novel we all studied at
school. Set on Saint Marie.

HUMPHREY

'The Flame Tree'?

FLORENCE

You've read it?

HUMPHREY

Heard of it of course, but I had no
idea it was set on the island.

FLORENCE

It's about an Englishman who falls
in love with an Islander, Iris, a
former slave. He marries her
against her will. When she realises
she's enslaved again, in a
different way - she kills herself.

Esther's body comes into view - lying face down on soft sand
beneath the cliffs, no blood visible, NS PARAMEDICS already
there with Dwayne.

HUMPHREY

How?

FLORENCE

(stunned, seeing the body)

She jumps from the cliffs.

CUT TO:

12

EXT. BEACH. DAY 1 [15:01]

12

Humphrey crouches next to Esther's body, looks up at the cliffs above. In the b/g, Dwayne heads back from talking to the paramedics.

FLORENCE

Exactly the way Iris kills herself.

DWAYNE

Paramedics say her injuries are consistent with a fall from this height.

(glancing up)

JP's up on the clifftop near where she fell cordoning it off...

Humphrey nods - good.

HUMPHREY

And do we know who she is?

DWAYNE

Her name's Esther Monroe. She's a PhD student currently living in England...

FLORENCE

(recognises name)

Esther Monroe...

Florence moves to look at her face.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

I went to school with her...

HUMPHREY

Really?

Florence nods, a little thrown.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Was she a friend?

FLORENCE

For a while. But she and her family moved to England when we were teenagers. A long time ago now.

HUMPHREY

I'm sorry, Florence. You okay to carry on?

FLORENCE

Sure. Of course...

(CONTINUED)

12

CONTINUED:

12

Florence gathers herself, but - despite her assurances - it's clear it's been a bit of shock.

HUMPHREY

(to Dwayne)

So who found the body?

DWAYNE

Her tutor, Anna Wolf, and Anna's husband Oliver. They went looking for her after she disappeared from an event up at the house.

HUMPHREY

Event..?

DWAYNE

Literary festival. Readings, lectures, that sort of thing. If you can call that a festival.

Humphrey crouches and examines Esther's watch.

HUMPHREY

Watch is smashed and stopped at 1.25. I think we can take that as time of death.

Humphrey looks at Esther's face.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Do you know how old she would have been?

FLORENCE

She was a year below me. So twenty six.

Humphrey takes it in.

HUMPHREY

So young.

Dwayne offers a sympathetic look to Florence. Humphrey stands.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Okay, Dwayne. We can release the body. Then let's take a look up top.

CUT TO:

12A

EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. CLIFFTOP. DAY 1 [15:20]

12A

Humphrey, Florence and Dwayne approach JP on the clifftop. Police tape has been

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED:

12A

used to seal off the area above where Esther's body was found on the beach. There is a large-ish handbag sat on the ground and its contents laid out beside it.

HUMPHREY

Morning, JP.

JP

Sir. Sarge.

HUMPHREY

So - in the novel - this is where Iris jumped to her death?

FLORENCE

(nods)

It's become a bit of tourist destination.

HUMPHREY

And you've all read it, I suppose?

FLORENCE

Of course, sir. It's required reading at school...

We may notice Dwayne is a little sheepish, but the team don't...

JP

I can't imagine anyone growing up on this island having not read it...

DWAYNE

(covering)

And that includes me, Chief. It's one of my favourites...

HUMPHREY

Sounds like I've got some catching up to do.

(beat)

So, JP, what have we got?

JP

Well, sir. The victim's bag was found on the edge, just here...

He points to where the bag was. Humphrey edges closer to the cliff edge - looks over.

JP (CONT'D)

I've gone through it. Nothing out of the ordinary. Purse. Pen. Diary. Laptop cable. And then this...

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED:

12A

JP holds out a blank envelope. Humphrey takes it. He opens the envelope and removes and unfolds a printed letter. He reads it...

HUMPHREY

'To My Family. I'm so sorry. I tried but I couldn't do it any longer. Please forgive me. I love you. Esther.'

It's signed with a handwritten 'Esther'. Humphrey takes this in. Florence takes the letter...

FLORENCE

Poor Esther.

HUMPHREY

Yes...

(beat)

It's odd, though...don't you think?

FLORENCE

What is?

HUMPHREY

That she chose to write the letter on a computer. Print it and then sign it. Something rather impersonal - almost formal - about it. Wouldn't you say?

Florence isn't sure - a bit thrown by it all. Humphrey looks down at the contents of the bag laid out on the ground. Then back at the letter in Florence's hands. Something starting to niggle, ever so slightly. He crouches down and picks up the pen and looks at it. JP and Florence exchange a look, wondering what he's up to...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Montblanc fountain pen. These aren't cheap.

He puts it down and then picks up the small appointments diary and opens it. As he flicks through, we see it contains various appointments and meetings etc. All written in fountain pen. He puts it down. Thinks...

JP

Is something troubling you, sir?

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED:

12A

HUMPHREY

Well it is a bit, JP, if I'm honest. It's that suicide note. It doesn't quite make sense...

FLORENCE

That it wasn't handwritten..?

HUMPHREY

Yes, that. But also the fact Esther's signature is written in biro...

Florence and JP look down at the signature on the letter. It is indeed written in biro.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Esther uses a rather expensive fountain pen to write all her appointments into her diary. But when it comes to signing her final letter to her family, she plumps for a biro...

(beat)

Like I say, it's odd. Isn't it?

He looks up at them.

FLORENCE

So... Are you saying that you don't think Esther wrote this letter..?

Humphrey thinks. And then...

HUMPHREY

I think I might be, Florence, yes. And until we're sure that she did, we shouldn't rule out that this wasn't suicide...

On Florence - woah.

CUT TO:

13

EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [15:30]

13

Humphrey is in the garden with Florence, Dwayne and JP, heading towards Anna, Oliver, Sylvie and Patricia who are now gathered together. Shell-shocked guests milling around.

DWAYNE

So, Chief, there were about a hundred guests here today. Anna Wolf's pretty sure Esther didn't have contact with any of them until until they arrived here this morning.

(CONTINUED)

13

13

CONTINUED:

13

HUMPHREY

So who did she know?

DWAYNE

Anna, her husband Oliver, Sylvie Baptiste and her assistant Patricia Lawrence.

HUMPHREY

(to Dwayne and JP)

Okay. Then talk to the other guests, confirm whether Anna's right about that. And also, the laptop cable in Esther's bag would imply she has a laptop. See if you can find it hereabout...

Dwayne and JP nod and head away as Humphrey and Florence reach a pale Anna and Oliver, supporting each other. Sylvie and Patricia there too.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

D.I. Humphrey Goodman. I understand you both found Esther?

Oliver and Anna nod.

ANNA

Do you have any idea what happened yet? I mean - was it accidental, or did she...

HUMPHREY

We found a note.

ANNA

(hand going to her mouth)

Oh, God.

Oliver squeezes Anna's hand - both clearly deeply shaken.

HUMPHREY

I know this is a difficult time. But I need to ask you a few questions.

(they nod)

When did you all last see Esther alive?

ANNA

I noticed her leaving the garden, at about...

PATRICIA

Quarter past one.

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

FLASHBACK: As seen in Scene 3, Esther is seen leaving the garden.

HUMPHREY

You're sure?

PATRICIA

Quite sure. I was on stage about to start my talk.

SYLVIE

I saw her then too.

OLIVER

So did I.

HUMPHREY

Leaving the garden alone?

They nod.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

(to all of them)

And where were you for the next ten minutes?

ANNA

(a little thrown)

In the audience - listening to Patricia.

(re Oliver and Sylvie)

All of us were.

FLASHBACK: as in scene 7, Anna, Oliver and Sylvie are in the front row of the audience listening to Patricia talking.

HUMPHREY

Can you tell me about how Esther seemed in the last few days? Her mood, behaviour?

OLIVER

She'd barely left her hotel room since we arrived five days ago.

HUMPHREY

Do you know why?

ANNA

She was working late every night. On a new chapter of her thesis. It's on 'The Flame Tree'. She was doing some research here on the island.

HUMPHREY

What sort of research?

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

ANNA

She hadn't shared it with me yet.
But it was obviously preoccupying
her. Obsessing her, even...

HUMPHREY

Really?

ANNA

Esther was a very dedicated
student. Cared about her work.
Perhaps a little too much...

Humphrey takes it in.

HUMPHREY

(to Sylvie and Patricia)
Had you had much contact with
Esther?

PATRICIA

She was here yesterday, helping me
with the festival admin. Printing
the programmes, setting up the
equipment...

HUMPHREY

And Sylvie? Did you speak to her
then?

SYLVIE

Yesterday, no more than a word or
two.

ANNA

She came to interview you on
Thursday, didn't she?

SYLVIE

She did. And we spoke a little more
then.

HUMPHREY

What did she want to talk about?

SYLVIE

My writing. She had some research
questions. Like Anna said, I did
notice she seemed tense.

HUMPHREY

Do you know why?

SYLVIE

I've no idea. Presumably she was
already planning to throw herself
off my cliff.

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

Anna and Oliver look at Sylvie - a little shocked.

HUMPHREY

You say you were still all present
at Patricia's talk at 1.25. Are
there other guests who can confirm
this?

SYLVIE

Ask anyone else in the audience.
There were a hundred people there
and we were sitting in the front
row.

OLIVER

But...you're not thinking...
(hesitant)
Esther...jumped, didn't she? She
wasn't...[murdered]

HUMPHREY

We're not ruling anything out just
at the moment.

The four react to this, a little shocked.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Thank you. We'll be in touch with
any further questions.

On the four suspects - suddenly unsettled.

CUT TO:

14

OMITTED

14 *

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 14

*

15 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [16:30]** 15

The festival is resuming in the b/g. Humphrey and Florence are joined by Dwayne and JP.

JP

So, sir, we've had a look round and there's no sign of Esther's laptop that we can see.

Humphrey takes it in - interesting.

DWAYNE

We've also spoken to most of the guests. And it's true they only know Esther from meeting her when they arrived earlier this morning...

JP

A couple noticed Esther leaving the grounds during Patricia Lawrence's talk.

HUMPHREY

Any of them see anyone following Esther..?

JP

(shakes head)

Apparently everyone stayed in their seats for the duration of the talk.

Humphrey churns this over in his head.

FLORENCE

What are you thinking, sir?

HUMPHREY

I'm thinking that if, as I suspect, that suicide note was faked and Esther was pushed to her death. Then, as there seem to be only four people at the festival who knew her, it has to be one of them that did it...

DWAYNE

But if they were all in full view at the time it happened... it can't be, can it?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

HUMPHREY

No, Dwayne. It can't. You're right.

Humphrey is a little concerned now that it doesn't seem to make sense.

JP

Maybe it was suicide?

Humphrey thinks a moment, still not sold on it.

15

CONTINUED:

15

HUMPHREY

We need that note dusted for prints
as soon as possible.

Nods all round - sounds like a plan.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Also. Dwayne. JP. Find out if
anyone else was present on the
estate at the time of death. Apart
from the guests I mean. Any staff,
neighbours, anyone who might have
witnessed anything.

(remembering)

There was a small bungalow over the
way, I noticed. Be worth checking
that out.

JP and Dwayne nod.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

In the meantime, Florence, let's
take a look at Esther's hotel room.
If she's pretty much been holed up
there since she arrived in Saint
Marie, it might give us a clearer
idea as to what Esther's been up to
this last week.

FLORENCE

Good idea, sir.

HUMPHREY

And we should phone Esther's
parents...

Florence nods - knew this was coming.

FLORENCE

I'd like to do it, sir. If that's
alright with you.

HUMPHREY

Of course.

Humphrey offers her a supportive look.

CUT TO:

16

EXT. LIZZIE'S BUNGALOW. DAY 1 [16:50]

16

Dwayne and JP approach the bungalow and knock. The place
looks a little neglected - there are flower pots etc that are
untended and overgrown with weeds.

(CONTINUED)

19

16

CONTINUED:

16

JP

I've never been to the Baptiste estate before, Dwayne. To think this is where the book actually takes place. Really brings it to life, don't you think?

And now he's lied about reading the book, Dwayne has to commit to it.

DWAYNE

Yes, JP. I'm seeing it very much in a new light now.

JP

What was your favourite bit in the book?

On Dwayne - he hasn't a clue. A beat. So...

DWAYNE

You know JP, I don't think anyone is home...

But JP thinks he spots a flash of movement inside the house.

JP

Wait a minute...

Dwayne bends - calls through the letterbox.

JP (CONT'D)

Honore police. Can you open up?

After a moment, the door opens a crack and we see a glimpse of LIZZIE (60s, quiet, withdrawn, nervous looking). During the following, JP notices Lizzie fiddling with her hair in a repetitive, anxious movement.

DWAYNE

Good afternoon, madame. We're investigating an incident that's taken place near here. Did you happen to see a young woman, early 20s, heading to the cliff at about 1.15 today?

LIZZIE

Sorry. No.

DWAYNE

Do you live here alone?

But Lizzie starts to shut the door-

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
Excuse me! Can we take your name-?
(she shuts the door in his
face)
Nice to meet you too!

They exchange a shrug and move to go on their way.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
(shaking head)
Some people, eh...

JP is looking back and spots Lizzie looking out at them
through the window. He catches her eye, intrigued. What's
going on with this woman?

CUT TO:

17 OMITTED

17

17 CONTINUED: 17

18 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR/ROOM. DAY 1 [17:05] 18

Humphrey joins Florence in the lobby area outside the hotel room where she is just finishing off on her mobile phone.

FLORENCE
...of course we will. And again,
I'm so sorry. We'll speak soon. Bye

She hangs up.

HUMPHREY
How were they?

FLORENCE
Shocked and devastated. Of course.
And they refused to believe Esther
would kill herself. They were aware
she was stressed about her studies.
But not to the extent that she
would...

She doesn't need to finish the sentence.

HUMPHREY
Well. That tallies with our
thinking.
(beat)
The receptionist said she saw
Esther arguing with a male English
guest two nights ago... Sounded
like Oliver Wolf from her
description. We should speak to
Esther's university - see if they
can offer any insight into her
relationship with Doctor and
Professor Wolf.
(beat)
Shall we...

He gestures for them to head into Esther's room. Florence notes the 'Do Not Disturb' sign hanging on the door - shows it to Humphrey. She unlocks the door and they go in...

Inside, the curtains are closed and the room is a mess. There are piles of annotated notes, discarded scraps of paper, notebooks, academic journals and textbooks lying around. There is also a well thumbed copy of The Flame Tree. Plus a stack of printed programmes for the Saint Marie Literary Festival lying untouched on the side.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
Looks like she really was burning
the midnight oil...

(CONTINUED)

18

CONTINUED:

18

Humphrey spies Esther's mobile phone and picks it up. Starts scrolling through it. Florence pulls back the curtains - revealing a beautiful sea view. The sun pours in on the messy, abandoned room.

FLORENCE

Look at this place...

Florence moves to the more personal things by the bed: a battered old cuddly toy, a copy of a trashy celebrity magazine, some shells clearly gathered from the beach. She picks up a few of the shells.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

We used to love collecting shells as kids. Used to go to the beach after school. The shells were our treasure.

HUMPHREY

Treasure?

18

CONTINUED:

18

Florence moves to search through the piles of papers on Esther's desk.

FLORENCE
(smiling sadly)
We'd play pirates. Make my brothers
walk the plank.

HUMPHREY
Then she moved to England?
(Florence nods)
Did you keep in touch?

FLORENCE
Wrote a few times. But that was it.
Until today I hadn't thought about
her for years.

Humphrey nods, understanding...

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Anything on her phone?

HUMPHREY
I've only had a quick look through,
but it seems to me that Esther
liked to keep herself to herself.
Hardly any personal texts or
photos, even.

FLORENCE
(a little saddened)
Really?

Humphrey offers a sympathetic look.

HUMPHREY
Any sign of a laptop over there?

Florence shakes her head.

FLORENCE
No. There isn't...

They look at each other.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Someone's taken it, haven't they..?
Why?

HUMPHREY
I don't know, Florence. But as we
now not only have a suspicious
suicide note, but also a laptop
that's gone missing, I'm sorry to
say that
(MORE)

18 CONTINUED: 18

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
we're treating Esther's death as
murder.

On Florence - starting to confront the truth of it all.

CUT TO:

19 INT. HONORÉ POLICE STATION. DAY 1 [17:30] 19

Esther's notes are now piled up on Florence's desk along with the copy of 'The Flame Tree'. She is on the phone. Dwayne and JP sat at their desks. Humphrey is perched on the side of his desk. Esther's purse sits close by and is open. Humphrey has removed a couple of credit/debit cards. He is comparing the signature on them with the one on the suicide note...

HUMPHREY
It does look like the same
handwriting to me. But then it
could just be a good forgery. Not
hard to do.

*
*
*

Florence comes off the phone.

FLORENCE
Sir. I've just spoken to the Dean
of the University. He said Esther
had made an appointment with the
union welfare officer. He didn't
know why but I've asked her to get
in touch.

Humphrey, taking this in, heads to the board. Takes a pen.

HUMPHREY
So. Our victim dies in an apparent
suicide. She'd been on the island
for five days and we've established
she'd only had contact with four
people. They are...

(CONTINUED)

19

CONTINUED:

19

FLORENCE

Professor Anna Wolf, 44, Esther's tutor and Head of the English Faculty at Esther's University. The Dean spoke very highly of her. Seems to be the star of her department. Married to...

JP

Oliver Wolf, 43, Anna's husband. An academic too but we can't find much about him online. Hasn't published anything for some years, it seems.

Humphrey writes the names up on the board.

DWAYNE

Sylvie Baptiste, 66. Big deal novelist, has lived on Saint Marie all her life. And Patricia Lawrence, 46. Lives at the estate. Originally from the UK.

HUMPHREY

How long she been here?

DWAYNE

Twenty five years. Originally from Lewisham. Apparently she came here while travelling, got a temporary job as Sylvie's assistant and ended up staying.

HUMPHREY

(pen poised)

And this woman in the bungalow. She didn't give you a name?

DWAYNE

Just slammed the door in my face. Seemed very reluctant to talk to us.

HUMPHREY

Suspiciously so?

Dwayne's about to reply, when...

JP

I don't think so, sir. Something about her. She didn't seem well, you know...

Dwayne shoots a look to JP - not sure what JP's basing this on, but whatever.

(CONTINUED)

19

CONTINUED:

19

HUMPHREY

Okay. Well. Call Patricia. See if
she can tell you who lives there.

19

CONTINUED:

19

JP nods. The phone rings. Florence goes to answer.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

So. Four possible suspects - all of whom were clearly present at a talk at the moment Esther was pushed to her death.

(beat)

Which means. If one of these four suspects is our killer, just how did they manage to push Esther off a cliff a few minutes walk away, when they were all in plain view at the time it happened?

*

Humphrey, Dwayne and JP think for a moment. But no answer comes...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

But while the 'how' of it all remains elusive, let's focus on the who and why. So. Get that suicide note fingerprinted. And get in touch with Esther's internet provider. See what her emails show up. Also, check with immigration and find out about Sylvie and Patricia's travels the last few years. See if there's any chance either of them have crossed paths with Esther before.

Dwayne and JP - nod. They're on it. Florence gets off the phone.

FLORENCE

Sir. That was the university welfare officer. Apparently Esther had reported a case of sexual harassment - against Oliver Wolf.

HUMPHREY

So the argument in the hotel...

Florence nods.

FLORENCE

Exactly.

HUMPHREY

Then I think we need to speak to Oliver Wolf a.s.a.p., Florence.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

She nods.

CUT TO:

20 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [17:50]** 20

Humphrey, Florence and Oliver are in a quiet corner of the garden. Oliver nervous but defensive.

20

CONTINUED:

20

OLIVER

It comes with the territory. The odd flirtation. Nothing more than that.

HUMPHREY

What exactly happened between you?

OLIVER

It was after a seminar recently. Too much red wine. We ended up kissing.

(beat)

Look, these girls are young, they're hormonal, if you're halfway decent looking and under fifty they do flirt -

On Florence's unimpressed look -

HUMPHREY

Thing is, Oliver. We've just spoken to the union welfare officer at your university.

Oliver shrugs. A trace of tension on his face now.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

They told us Esther's version of that seminar is rather different to yours. You were the one drunk. You were the one who cornered her in your office. And the next day Esther made an appointment - to report you for sexual harassment. And I think you knew that, didn't you?

On Oliver - unable to hide his dismay.

FLORENCE

We spoke to the receptionist at your hotel. She said she saw you and Esther arguing, two nights before she died.

HUMPHREY

You could have lost your job over this, couldn't you? That is, if Esther was still alive. Conveniently for you, she isn't.

OLIVER

I had nothing to do with her death...

(CONTINUED)

27

20

CONTINUED:

20

HUMPHREY

What were you arguing with her
about, Oliver?

OLIVER

(guilty - busted)

I was just trying to get her to be
reasonable-

HUMPHREY

(in)

Had she threatened to tell your
wife? After all, Anna was her
tutor.

OLIVER

I swear, I-

HUMPHREY

Perhaps you wanted to shut Esther
up before she could do any more
damage...

OLIVER

Anna knew!

Off Humphrey and Florence's surprise-

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Anna always knows. She... turns a
blind eye.

FLORENCE

Why on earth would she do that?

OLIVER

Because I've sacrificed everything
for her!

(beat)

She's the star academic... *Her*
career always comes first... while
I'm the one who rubs her feet and
does the laundry and makes sure
there's food in the fridge...

HUMPHREY

And in return she allows you a few
discreet dalliances?

OLIVER

Well, yes... It might seem a little
dysfunctional to you, Inspector.
But it works for us.

Humphrey and Florence look to each other.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

HUMPHREY

Except, with Esther making a complaint - things had become less discreet. Hadn't they?

Oliver's a little awkward now...

OLIVER

I suppose so...

HUMPHREY

Which makes me wonder what Anna felt about it all...

Humphrey catches Florence's eye - their next lead presenting itself. On Oliver - the dawning realisation that he might have dropped his wife in it.

CUT TO:

21 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 1 [18:00]**

21

In another part of the estate, Humphrey and Florence are with Anna.

HUMPHREY

He told us you knew all about it.

ANNA

Of course I didn't.

HUMPHREY

He told us about the deal. About you... turning a blind eye.

Anna stares at them.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

But you couldn't turn a blind eye to this, could you? He'd pushed it too far. Wrecked your cosy agreement. A few discreet affairs, fine, but a sexual harassment charge... that would really take the shine off the university's golden couple.

ANNA

I had no idea about this 'charge'--

HUMPHREY

We did a bit of digging into your work at the university. Discovered you're on no less than nine boards and committees. Including the Faculty women's committee. Do you
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

21

CONTINUED:

21

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
really expect us to believe you
weren't aware of Esther's claims?

ANNA
(a little flustered now)
I don't involve myself in every
detail...

HUMPHREY
Florence, call Ms Hoskins back. Ask
if she can clear this up for us-

Florence pulls out her phone-

ANNA
He wasn't meant to go after
students!

On Humphrey and Florence - seeing they've got her...

ANNA (CONT'D)
It was only ever meant to be women
I didn't know. Things I would never
have to hear about.

She sits down heavily. The fight going out of her.

ANNA (CONT'D)
But of course Ollie couldn't resist
a girl like Esther. So utterly
unavailable and uninterested in
him. I'm sure he saw her as a
challenge.

FLORENCE
So you knew Esther had reported
him?

ANNA
Yes. I knew. It was only a matter
of time before something like this
happened.

She looks utterly exhausted - the confident polish gone.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I told myself it was a good deal.
That I needed his support in my
career. But the truth is - I could
have coped on my own.

FLORENCE
Then why let him get away with it?

ANNA
Because I loved him. Still do.
Idiotic, I know.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

She's vulnerable now, emotionally exposed.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You don't... think I had anything to do with Esther's death do you?

HUMPHREY

You can see how it looks. She was a threat to your marriage *and* your career...

ANNA

My marriage is already over. It has been for long time. I just hadn't let myself believe it.

Humphrey and Florence meet eyes - with a feeling she's telling the truth.

CUT TO:

22 INT. HONORÉ POLICE STATION. DAY 1 [18:20]

22

Humphrey and Florence are at the whiteboard.

HUMPHREY

So. Our victim was on the cusp of reporting Oliver Wolf to the university authorities for sexual harrasment. Which means both he and his wife had a great deal to lose. Either - or indeed both - of them had reason to kill her.

Humphrey writes 'sexual harassment charge' and an arrow to both Oliver and Anna's name.

FLORENCE

But as they were sat next to each other in the front row during Patricia Lawrence's talk at the exact moment Esther died...

HUMPHREY

...in theory neither of them could have done it.

They look at each other - grrrrr. It's frustrating. As Humphrey turns to the room, Florence returns to her desk...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Dwayne. How are you getting on?

DWAYNE

Well, sir, I've fingerprinted the suicide note.

(CONTINUED)

22

CONTINUED:

22

HUMPHREY

And?

DWAYNE

I'm afraid only Esther's prints are on it.

Humphrey takes this on the chin.

HUMPHREY

Still doesn't prove she was definitely the one to write it.

DWAYNE

(finding print-out)

I also checked with immigration and it seems Sylvie and Patricia travel a lot. All over the world.

HUMPHREY

The life of a celebrated novelist, eh.

DWAYNE

While Patricia's never been back to the UK, Sylvie has made four trips there in the last seven years for other literary festivals. But from a quick check, Esther wasn't in attendance at any of them. So it's unlikely they met prior to Esther's arrival on the island.

Humphrey nods, taking this in.

HUMPHREY

JP - anything of interest in our victim's email account?

JP

I've looked back over the last six months. And there are four emails sent to Patricia Lawrence, requesting an interview with Sylvie Baptiste. All politely refused. A couple of emails exchanged with Anna about the festival.

HUMPHREY

And that's it?

JP

(nods)

Just a few emails to her mum, utility bills, some from the university and the library. Esther pretty much seems to...

(CONTINUED)

22

CONTINUED:

22

HUMPHREY

...keep herself to herself. Yes,
that's the impression we got.

Humphrey looks to Florence, the apparent loneliness of
Esther's life confirmed.

JP

Also. I left a message for Patricia
to call me back about whoever lives
in that bungalow. In the meantime,
I checked the Electoral Register
and the owner is Sylvie Baptiste.
No occupier registered.

HUMPHREY

How odd. Chase Patricia - we need
to find out who her mysterious
tenant is.

22

CONTINUED:

22

JP

Yes, sir.

HUMPHREY

But do it first thing tomorrow.
It's getting on. We should call it
a day.

(beat)

Also, I wouldn't mind popping to
the library before it closes to get
a copy of The Flame Tree to read.
But if anyone fancies a beer after
I've done that, I'm buying...

DWAYNE

That's very good of you, chief.

JP nods - sounds good.

HUMPHREY

It'll be good to pick your brains
about Sylvie's novel. As you've all
studied it...

On Dwayne's private expression - oh dear... As Humphrey sees
Florence now immersed in Esther's notebooks.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Florence? Beer maybe?

FLORENCE

I'll see you there.

But we sense Florence, immersed in Esther's world, isn't
going anywhere for the immediate future.

CUT TO:

23

INT. CATHERINE'S BAR. DAY 1 [18:40]

23

Dwayne and JP are at the bar, Dwayne flicking through a copy
of The Saint Marie Times. As Catherine gets their drinks, she
notices the headline - 'Victor Pearce Standing for Mayor'.

CATHERINE

(shaking her head)

Victor Pearce standing for Mayor.
Eurgh. Just as bad as the last one.

She puts beers down in front of them.

DWAYNE

(making sure)

On the chief's tab, Catherine.

She nods, more interested in talking about the mayor.

(CONTINUED)

33

23

CONTINUED:

23

CATHERINE

I love this island. But I wish
that, just once, we could elect a
mayor who deserves the job.

DWAYNE

What's so wrong with him?

23

CONTINUED:

23

CATHERINE

A bully and a crook. Out drinking every night. And it all goes on his expense account. Never pays for a thing...

Dwayne suddenly self conscious as he sips the beer Humphrey has paid for.

JP

Maybe you should stand, Catherine.
(off her smile)
Running Saint Marie can't be so different to running this place.

Dwayne laughs/scoff - the thought of it. And Catherine eyes him - daggers.

CATHERINE

What's so funny about that?

Dwayne quails.

DWAYNE

Nothing. My beer went down the wrong way...

Catherine scowls at him then turns and goes. Dwayne gestures for him and JP to make a quick exit.

GO TO: Beers in hand, Dwayne and JP join Humphrey, who sits reading a copy of 'The Flame Tree'.

HUMPHREY

Fine beer and classic literature.
What more could a man want?

JP

Enjoying the book, sir?

HUMPHREY

Very much. An impressive piece of writing.

JP

I was saying to Dwayne earlier how much it affected me as a kid.

HUMPHREY

Yes, powerful, isn't it? You liked it as well, Dwayne?

DWAYNE

Me?

(CONTINUED)

23

CONTINUED:

23

HUMPHREY

Yes. What did you make of it when
you first read it?

DWAYNE

Well, you know... It's, er...

His eyes alight on the book lying on the table. Humphrey and
JP don't clock this.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Richly evocative. A classic tale of
destiny and desire.

Humphrey and JP stare at him, impressed.

HUMPHREY

Crikey.

DWAYNE

(enjoying this)
A triumph of post-
(faltering)
Post-colonialism...

JP

Post...
(realising - he picks up
the book - reads the
back)
Kathy Morrison, New York Herald.

On Dwayne - busted!

DWAYNE

Maybe I didn't... quite get to the
end.

On Humphrey and JP - amused. Humphrey suddenly notices...

HUMPHREY

Where's Florence? I thought she'd
be here by now.

CUT TO:

24

INT. HONORE POLICE STATION. DAY 1 [19:00]

24

The station now empty except for Florence - who's picking
though the notes from Esther's hotel room. Carefully, wearing
gloves, she places the items in evidence bags. As she lifts
one notebook, she notices a photo - and sees, to her
surprise, it's a photo of two little girls dressed as
pirates. A very young Florence and Esther.

Florence stares at the photo - unexpectedly floored by it.
She wasn't expecting that at all.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

But something else has fallen to the floor - she bends and picks it up. It's a matchbook of a bar in Honore. She frowns - what's this doing here?

CUT TO:

24A **EXT. SAINT MARIE. EVENING 1 [19:30]** 24A

The sun sets on our little island.

CUT TO:

25 **INT. SAINT MARIE BAR. NIGHT 1 [21:00]** 25

Florence enters a dingy, old-fashioned cafe/bar. A bohemian feel, very relaxed. Old photographs crowding the walls.

As Florence looks around, puzzled, her eye is caught by the photographs on the wall. She moves closer to look. Old newspaper clippings, old black and white photos of people in the bar, framed paperback book covers.

One picture catches her eye. An old 1960s photo of a young Sylvie - surrounded by other people, drinking and having fun. Florence stares at the picture's caption. It reads 'The Writers of Saint Marie, 1969'.

CUT TO:

26 **INT. HONORÉ POLICE STATION. DAY 2 [10:00]** 26

Next morning. Florence is studying Esther's notes, as Humphrey strides in looking dishevelled but energetic, carrying the novel. Dwayne and JP at their desks.

HUMPHREY

Morning all.

DWAYNE

Morning, chief.

JP

Morning, sir.

HUMPHREY

Sorry I'm late. Didn't get to sleep til 5.

(holding up the novel)

Couldn't put it down.

FLORENCE

Esther's parents called me first thing this morning. They'd remembered something she said about uncovering a secret during the research she'd been doing here on the island.

HUMPHREY

A secret? About what?

(CONTINUED)

FLORENCE

They didn't know. But they said
she'd seemed worried by it.
Nervous.

Humphrey takes this in, intrigued.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

I started going through her notes
here, seeing if there's any clue as
to what it is was...

HUMPHREY

But no joy?

FLORENCE

Not yet...

(beat)

It looks like some kind of textual
analysis. Comparing different works
by Sylvie Baptiste, word usage,
styles of phrasing. I'll keep
looking.

Humphrey nods, encouraging.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

Also. I found this matchbook from a
bar...

(hands it to Humphrey)

...in amongst the things we took
from Esther's room. I went to visit
it last night and showed them her
picture.

HUMPHREY

Did they recognise her?

FLORENCE

(nodding)

The barman said Esther didn't
really talk much. But she had shown
interest in this... It was hanging
on the wall there...

She shows Humphrey the black and white photo.

HUMPHREY

Sylvie Baptiste.

FLORENCE

Not just her. See the caption.
Lizzie Baptiste too.

HUMPHREY

Lizzie Baptiste?

26

CONTINUED:

26

FLORENCE

Turns out she's Sylvie's sister.
There's a record of birth and where
she went to school. But after that -
nothing. It's like she just...
disappeared.

HUMPHREY

How strange.
(thinking)
Could she be the 'secret' Esther
discovered?

FLORENCE

I can't see any *secret*, exactly.
Just not many records of her. Never
married, no job, no children.

JP moves over to look at the photo.

*

JP

I think that's the woman from the
bungalow. She's older now, but...
Same eyes...

FLORENCE

The woman you met yesterday is
Lizzie Baptiste?

*

JP nods.

*

HUMPHREY

(intrigued)
So Sylvie's sister is living on her
estate, not a hundred metres from
the scene of the crime and Sylvie
neglected to mention it...?
(Dwayne and JP nod)
I think you need to pay her another
visit.

Dwayne and JP nod and head out. Humphrey surveys the mounds
of stuff Florence has already worked through. He notices the
photo - of the two little girls dressed as pirates - on
Florence's desk.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Is this you?

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

FLORENCE

(nods)

Esther kept it all these years.

Humphrey looks at it, and at Florence's face - and can see now quite how affected by it all she is - though covering.

CUT TO:

27 **EXT. LIZZIE'S BUNGALOW. DAY 2 [11:00]**

27

Dwayne and JP approach the door. Dwayne's about to knock...

JP

Err...Dwayne... Maybe I could handle this one?...

Dwayne looks at him. Not sure what he's up to. But...

DWAYNE

Be my guest.

JP steps forward and knocks. After A moment Lizzie opens the door a crack.

JP

(gentle, kind)

Morning. It's Lizzie, isn't it? I'm JP Hooper. From Honore Police. I was wondering if we could come in for a moment?

LIZZIE

(barely audible)

Sorry.

Lizzie makes to close the door.

JP

We just have a few questions.

LIZZIE

(scared, quiet)

You should speak to my sister. I don't like to have visitors.

The door closes. Dwayne gives JP a look. JP sees the overgrown flower pots/beds. An idea forming. He goes to the window - sees Lizzie inside looking scared.

JP

(gentle but loud enough for Lizzie to hear)

Lizzie. I see your flowers need a bit of weeding. Would you like us to give you a hand tidying them up? Wouldn't be a problem at all.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27
She catches his eye. Is she softening? On Dwayne - surprised.

CUT TO:

28 **EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 2 [11:05]** 28
In the distance, we see Dwayne's motorbike parked up outside Lizzie's.

GO TO: We now see the POV is Sylvie's - in a quiet corner of her grounds, watching them. Clearly very concerned.

CUT TO:

29 **EXT. LIZZIE'S BUNGALOW. DAY 2 [11:10]** 29
JP and Lizzie are tidying up the flowers together. Lizzie still wary but calmer now. Dwayne watches them.

JP
So you live alone, Lizzie?
Lizzie nods.

JP (CONT'D)
Does your sister come and visit you?

LIZZIE
She's good to me. She takes care of me.

JP
How long have you lived here?

LIZZIE
A long time. Since... I came out of the hospital.

JP
You weren't well?

LIZZIE
Things went a bit wrong.
(touches her head)
Up here.

JP gets it - it's sort of what he expected. He gives her reassuring smile. No need for her to say any more. They carry on working on the flowers in silence for a few moments.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
She wanted to know about...a poem.

Dwayne and JP suddenly alert - exchanging a look.

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

29

JP

Who did?

LIZZIE

The girl. The one whose body you found.

(beat)

I told her I didn't know anything about any poem.

JP

Where did you speak to her?

LIZZIE

She came here. I told her I don't like to have visitors, but she wouldn't listen...

JP

When was this?

LIZZIE

A couple of days ago, I think.

DWAYNE

Lizzie, where were you yesterday lunchtime?

LIZZIE

Yesterday?

DWAYNE

Just before we first visited you.

LIZZIE

I was here. All morning.

DWAYNE

You're sure about that?

And the fact they're questioning makes Lizzie question it.

LIZZIE

I think so...?

But Lizzie's eyes are vague, glassy. Dwayne and JP exchange a look - concerned.

CUT TO:

30

INT. HONORE POLICE STATION. DAY 2 [13:00]

30

JP and Dwayne are back with Humphrey and Florence.

HUMPHREY

A poem?

(CONTINUED)

30

CONTINUED:

30

DWAYNE

Apparently that's what Esther was interested in.

HUMPHREY

I wonder why? And why on earth would she want to talk to Lizzie about it?

(to Florence)

Sylvie doesn't write poetry, does she? She writes novels. That's what Esther was researching...

FLORENCE

I think I saw some poetry in the notes.

Florence goes to check.

HUMPHREY

And she can't say for sure where she was at the time that Esther was pushed off the cliff?

DWAYNE

No chief.

JP

I don't think she's our killer though, sir.

(beat)

I know she's vulnerable. Had some sort of breakdown. But that doesn't mean she's violent. And there's no motive that we know of...

Humphrey can see JP's made a connection of some sort.

HUMPHREY

(gentle)

I know. And I'm sorry, JP. But she currently has no alibi and was in the vicinity of the murder at the time that it happened. We have to do due diligence and add her to the board...

JP's concerned as Humphrey writes Lizzie's name on the board.

FLORENCE

(finding what she is looking for)

Here it is...

Humphrey comes to look - a few handwritten lines of a poem.

(CONTINUED)

30

CONTINUED:

30

HUMPHREY

'Perhaps if I jump I will fly.
Perhaps if I jump I will be free'.

JP looks too. Humphrey frowns. It's ringing a bell.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

I'm sure I've seen that in the
novel somewhere.

JP

That's when Iris goes to the cliffs
for the first time...

HUMPHREY

That's it! Now where was that?

Humphrey reaches for his book and starts leafing through.

FLORENCE

About halfway through. Just after
Donald visits the obeah-woman...

JP

Yeah - and then he follows her to
the clifftop...

HUMPHREY

(intrigued)
The clifftop again...
Interesting...

All Dwayne can do through this is watch on - suddenly feeling
a bit left out...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

(finding the page)
Here we are.
(reads)
'Perhaps I'll fly if I jump.
Perhaps I'll be free....'.
(looks up)
Almost identical to the poem.
Phrasing's just slightly different.

As Humphrey glances back at the notes, he spots an 8 digit
number written next to the poetry lines.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

What's that number next to it?

FLORENCE

Don't know. There's a few of them
in the notes. All eight digits.

JP

Phone number?

(CONTINUED)

30

CONTINUED:

30

FLORENCE

Don't think so.

Dwayne, watching on, notices the ISBN number printed on the library label (on the spine of the book).

DWAYNE

There's a number on the book. Eight digits.

HUMPHREY

Where?

Dwayne points to the spine of the book.

DWAYNE

There.

HUMPHREY

(realising)

They're library reference numbers.
So Esther had been researching this
all at Honore library...

(beat)

Dwayne. I want you to get down
there. See if you can find whatever
it was Esther had been digging
out...

DWAYNE

Right away chief!

(beat)

Where would the library be,
exactly...?

FLORENCE

(a little amused)

I'll come with you.

On Dwayne - what has he let himself in for..?

CUT TO:

31

INT. SAINT MARIE LIBRARY. DAY 2 [14:00]

31

Florence sits at a library desk - working through a stack of dusty old editions of a poetry periodical. Dwayne blows dust off another stack of journals - coughs loudly.

DWAYNE

(hissing to Florence)

Why do they keep all this old
stuff?

FLORENCE

It's a library.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

DWAYNE

It's a fire hazard, is what it is.

As the NSE LIBRARIAN brings another stack of journals over - hearing this. Dwayne beams like butter wouldn't melt. Florence sees Dwayne pick up a copy of The Flame Tree - turns to the final page.

FLORENCE

You should read it. I think you might enjoy it.

DWAYNE

(loud)

Five hundred and ten pages! You've got to be joking!

Annoyed glances from nearby NSE READERS. Florence gives him a look, works her way through the pages of a poetry periodical - not quite sure what she's looking for. She turns to the index of writers' names - looking for 'B'. Looking for Baptiste. She runs her finger down the Bs where, before Sylvie's name, she sees 'Elizabeth Baptiste' listed.

FLORENCE

Elizabeth Baptiste. Listed here in the index.

She turns to the page listed - a poem is printed there. Off Florence's surprise...

CUT TO:

32 INT. HONORÉ POLICE STATION. DAY 2 [14:30]

32

Back at the station - an animated Florence with Dwayne, Humphrey and JP. Florence holding the journal.

FLORENCE

It's the poem Esther wrote out. Similar to the lines in the novel. But it's by Lizzie Baptiste. Published two years before The Flame Tree.

HUMPHREY

(intrigued)

So Sylvie stole the lines?

FLORENCE

Maybe that's not all she stole.
(gesturing the notes)
Esther's notes compare 'The Flame Tree' to Sylvie's other works. They analyse how many times she used certain words, styles of phrasing, sentence structures. There are
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

32

CONTINUED:

32

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
significant differences. It's
almost like she's comparing...two
different authors.

Humphrey catches Florence's eye - thinking the same thing.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Is it possible that the secret
Esther discovered is that...

HUMPHREY
There are two different authors?!

FLORENCE
That Sylvie didn't write 'The Flame
Tree' at all? That Lizzie did?

HUMPHREY
And Sylvie found the manuscript?

FLORENCE
(nodding - excited now)
I think that's what Esther's
research was about. It explains why
she was so stressed, why she hadn't
felt able to tell anyone...

HUMPHREY
(animated but puzzled)
But why would Lizzie allow her
sister to take the credit for her
work?

JP
Lizzie said she doesn't remember
the poem...

HUMPHREY
So maybe she doesn't remember the
novel either? Is it possible you'd
forget you wrote a novel..?

JP
If her breakdown was severe, as it
seems it maybe was, then...[yes]...

HUMPHREY
If that's the case - Sylvie
Baptiste must have thought she'd
committed the perfect fraud. Until
the day Esther came along...

FLORENCE
And threatened to ruin it all.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

They stare at each other - realising the magnitude of this.

CUT TO:

33 OMITTED 33

34 EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 2 [15:45] 34

An unruffled Sylvie walks through the gardens towards the house, with Humphrey and Florence.

SYLVIE

Esther came to see me here, yes. As
I already told you. A strange girl.

*
*

FLORENCE

What did she want to talk about?

*

SYLVIE

Oh, my creative methods, my
inspirations. I told her I have
only two. The beauty of this
island, and single malt whisky.

HUMPHREY

Did she tell you about her
research?

Sylvie looks at him sharply, just for a moment.

SYLVIE

I don't believe she did.

HUMPHREY

I've read the novel. It's
incredibly powerful.

Sylvie inclines her head graciously.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Soucriants flying round the island
as balls of flame. Obeah magic.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

34

CONTINUED:

34

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Must need a very vivid imagination,
to write that.

SYLVIE

No imagination required. My
grandmother was an obeahwoman. She
would kill a chicken with her bare
hands and paint symbols with its
blood. She had the power of love
and death. Real power. Because
people believed in her.

HUMPHREY

Amazing what people will buy, isn't
it? If it's sold to them with
enough panache.

Sylvie catches his eye, suddenly unsettled. She now sees
Dwayne and JP approaching in the B/G.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Ms Baptiste we have a warrant to
search your house.

CUT TO:

35

INT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. STUDY. DAY 2 [16:00]

35

Patricia is typing with practised speed on a laptop as Sylvie
enters. A Dictaphone lying on the desk, playing.

PATRICIA

(seeing Sylvie's face)
Sylvie..?

Sylvie just heads to the drinks tray without a word - pours
herself a large Scotch - as Humphrey and Florence enter too.

SYLVIE (ON DICTAPHONE)

Idea for a short story. A married
woman in a close knit community who
begins an affair with-

Patricia turns the Dictaphone off. Stares at the police.

PATRICIA

What's going on?

Sylvie takes a gulp of her Scotch. Not looking at Humphrey.

SYLVIE

She was obsessive. She was losing
her mind.

HUMPHREY

Obsessive, yes. Losing her mind?
No. Esther knew she was onto
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED:

35

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
something. She believed she had
discovered a secret. That the
original manuscript for 'The Flame
Tree' had been written by Lizzie.

Humphrey looks to Patricia - did she know already? Patricia
sits perfectly still - just a trace of anxiety on her face.

FLORENCE
Esther discovered a poem that
Lizzie had written. About a young
woman who, unable to cope with
life, throws herself off a cliff.
But then Lizzie had a breakdown,
didn't she? She was hospitalised.
And she never fully recovered.

Sylvie says nothing.

HUMPHREY
We've been researching your
background. You were rejected by
publishers many times. But then
suddenly - you came up with 'The
Flame Tree. And you were an instant
critical hit.

Sylvie doesn't meet Humphrey's eye.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
Did you find a manuscript of
Lizzie's? And decide to keep it for
yourself?

PATRICIA
(still sitting -
controlled)
I don't see what any of this
nonsense has to do with the *police-*

HUMPHREY
(to Sylvie)
We're not here to judge you on
Esther's claims. We just need to
get to the truth about her death.
Esther's theory is correct, isn't
it?

Sylvie can't deny it. We see, for the first time, emotion
building up - tears of guilt and regret pricking her eyes.

SYLVIE
Lizzie would never have done
anything with it!

She collects herself. Pours more Scotch.

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED:

35

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

She never worked at it. She never deserved it. She wrote things and forgot them, like a child. I was the one who took it seriously. I was the one who gave it to the world.

She slurps her Scotch but starts coughing badly, staggering a little, emotional now - Patricia jumps up to help her.

JP and Dwayne enter the study holding a laptop - hand it to Humphrey.

DWAYNE

It's Esther's. We found it hidden in Ms Baptiste's room.

HUMPHREY

(to Sylvie)
You stole it.

SYLVIE

(guilty look to Patricia)
She did.

HUMPHREY

On your instructions, no doubt.

Sylvie can't deny this.

PATRICIA

(low to Sylvie)
You said you'd got rid of it.

FLORENCE

Tell us exactly what happened when Esther came to see you on Thursday morning.

Sylvie sits heavily. Shaken. Defeated.

SYLVIE

She asked me if I could produce any original notes for 'The Flame Tree'. Anything to prove it'd been my work. She said she had a new chapter which posited I wasn't the author. I think a part of her was still hoping I'd prove her wrong.

HUMPHREY

But you couldn't.

SYLVIE

So she said she'd go ahead and publish. She had the laptop with
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED:

35

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

her. The new chapter was saved on it.

HUMPHREY

Which you then instructed Patricia to steal from her. While Esther was helping you prepare for the festival.

Sylvie nods.

FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE - 37 PART 2/EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. MAIN HOUSE. DAY 0 [12:00]

Esther helps Patricia prepare the paperwork for the festival - the printed festival programmes etc. We now see Patricia, unseen by Esther, deftly slip her hand into Esther's bag and take the laptop. Sylvie, nearby, sees this - as she catches Patricia's eye, we see a quick flash of guilt on Sylvie's face.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

But you knew she'd just rewrite the chapter...?

SYLVIE

I panicked. I wanted to delay her-

HUMPHREY

(in - pushing now)

Esther's work threatened to destroy your reputation and career. You needed to deal with matters more permanently.

SYLVIE

No, I didn't-

HUMPHREY

You needed to make absolutely sure she would never breathe a word about what a fraud her idol had turned out to be.

SYLVIE

You're right. I am a fraud. I told myself I could help Lizzie. Take care of her better. The truth is I did it for myself.

(beat - intense)

I may be a fraud but I'm not a murderer. I had nothing to do with Esther's death. I swear it.

Do they believe her?

CUT TO:

36	OMITTED	36
37	OMITTED	37
38	EXT. SYLVIE'S HOUSE. VERANDAH. DAY 2 [16:30]	38

They're all now on the verandah. Sylvie is very shaken, can hardly stand.

SYLVIE
I need to go and lie down for a
while.

PATRICIA
We've got the book signing at 5...

SYLVIE
You do them beforehand. Tell the
guests I'm not well.

Sylvie nods and heads away.

PATRICIA
(to Humphrey and Florence)
If you'll excuse me...

HUMPHREY
(in)
How long have you worked for
Sylvie?

PATRICIA
Twenty six years.

HUMPHREY
A long time.

As Patricia turns to go.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
You stole for Sylvie. I wonder -
would you kill for her too?

PATRICIA
(turning back to him)
What?

HUMPHREY
Sylvie got nervous, didn't she? She
knew Esther would just rewrite it.
She asked you to do one more thing
for her. The ultimate act of
(MORE)

38

CONTINUED:

38

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
loyalty from an employee whose
devotion knows no bounds.

PATRICIA
I'm afraid that's where you're
wrong. I wish I could summon the
sort of devotion you imagine. I
wish to God Sylvie inspired it.

Patricia looks utterly exhausted.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
I have no pension. No savings. I
work twelve hour days that end in
putting her to bed drunk, then
mopping up her vomit.
(with a bitter smile)
I draw the line at killing for her
too.

Thoughtful, Humphrey watches her head away.

CUT TO:

39

INT. HONORÉ POLICE STATION. DAY 2 [18:00]

39

Back at the station, the team are gathered by the whiteboard.
Humphrey writes 'LAPTOP - THEFT' next to Sylvie and
Patricia's names.

HUMPHREY
Sylvie Baptiste. She had everything
to lose. A lifetime's worth of
reputation destroyed in an instant.
Or Patricia Lawrence. Loyal
assistant protecting her employer.
Either of them could have done it.

DWAYNE
Maybe they were in it together..?

HUMPHREY
Maybe.
(beat)
But they, just like Mr and Mrs
Wolf, were in full view of an
audience of a hundred at the time
Esther was killed.
(beat)
Which leaves Lizzie Baptiste as our
only suspect who doesn't have an
alibi.

Humphrey sees JP react and counters...

(CONTINUED)

39

CONTINUED:

39

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

But why would Lizzie want to kill Esther Monroe? She hardly knew her. And, it seems, knew nothing of the long-held secret Esther was uncovering.

Humphrey stares at the board, unable to make sense of any of it.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

I'm afraid we're not going to solve this tonight. Let's call it a day for now. Pick up again tomorrow.

JP and Dwayne nod, start to grab their stuff.

DWAYNE

(to JP - comforting)
Come on, I'll buy you a beer.

Humphrey sees Florence sitting back down at her desk - tense, focused.

HUMPHREY

Florence..?

FLORENCE

I thought I might make a start looking through Esther's laptop.

Humphrey puts the Jeep keys in front of her.

HUMPHREY

Actually you're dropping me home.
(gentle - but insistent)
Not often I pull rank.

On Florence - a bit touched by his concern.

CUT TO:

40

INT. CATHERINE'S BAR. DAY 2 [18:30]

40

JP and Dwayne are at the bar sharing beers. In the b/g, Catherine is sticking a large poster (which we make out) to the wall. Dwayne is eyeing JP, curious.

DWAYNE

So earlier on. The gardening thing. How did you know that'd get her to open up?

Beat. JP sees Dwayne has read him.

JP

My Auntie Pearl. Same thing.

(CONTINUED)

40

CONTINUED:

40

DWAYNE

Really?

JP

She had a breakdown. When she was young. She was just sort of lost for a while.

(beat)

People used to avoid her. Think they were embarrassed or freaked out or something.

DWAYNE

But you visited her?

JP

Used to go and help her in the garden after school. We wouldn't talk much but it was like...things made more sense to her there.

Dwayne nods, taking this in. Raises his beer.

DWAYNE

You did well, JP. I was impressed.

They chink bottles. A warm moment. In the b/g, Catherine finishes pinning the poster to the wall and joins them.

CATHERINE

So, JP. I decided to take your advice.

(to Dwayne)

We could use a little more idealism in politics. The spirit of protest! A woman's touch! Wouldn't you say, Dwayne?

Dwayne looks at the poster - double-takes - and nearly spits out his beer. It reads - 'Catherine Bordey for Mayor!'

CUT TO:

41

INT. HUMPHREY'S SHACK. DAY 2 [18:45]

41

Florence is in the shack - surveying the inside of the wardrobes and storage space. All full to bursting with clothes and junk. Humphrey brings in two beers.

FLORENCE

Wow.

HUMPHREY

Came here with one suitcase. Seem to have accumulated...rather a lot. Never thought there'd be anyone except me here. Well, me and Harry.

(CONTINUED)

55

41 CONTINUED:

41

FLORENCE

If you haven't used it in three months, it goes.

Florence pulls out a particularly garish Hawaiian shirt.

HUMPHREY

I wear that a lot actually.

They grab bin bags and start working together.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Thanks for helping me. I know how hard you've been working.

Florence shrugs - it's fine.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

I know you feel a responsibility to Esther.

Florence's face has a flicker of sadness on it.

FLORENCE

I used to have that photo.

HUMPHREY

The little pirates?

FLORENCE

I lost it. Can't even remember when. Probably about the time I stopped writing to her.

(beat)

I told you our lives moved on. But it was my fault. I was the one who stopped writing.

HUMPHREY

You were kids. It happens.

A beat.

FLORENCE

I keep thinking - maybe if I'd stayed in touch things would've been different for her.

Humphrey now sees what's at the heart of what's bothering her.

HUMPHREY

It's not your fault she died, Florence.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

FLORENCE

She was harassed. She was stolen from. She spent a week on this island alone with no-one to turn to and she ended up on that clifftop with someone who...

(beat)

If I'd been a friend to her - if I hadn't *forgotten* her...

HUMPHREY

You can't think like that. Looking back and dwelling on the if's and maybe's...well, it's a fool's game, as they say.

On Florence - she knows this is true.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

What Esther needs most now is a detective who'll catch the person who did this to her.

Florence nods, a little comforted.

FLORENCE

And you'll help me?

Humphrey looks at her.

HUMPHREY

I'm surprised you need to ask.

Florence nods, appreciative.

CUT TO:

42 OMITTED

42

43 EXT. HONORE POLICE STATION. DAY 3 [08:30]

43

Humphrey ascends the steps arriving for work.

CUT TO:

44 OMITTED

44

45

INT. HONORE POLICE STATION. DAY 3 [08:30]

45

Humphrey enters to find JP stood with Florence at her desk. Esther's laptop is open in front of her.

HUMPHREY

Morning, Florence. JP. No Dwayne?

JP

Not yet, sir. But you should come look at what Florence has found...

Humphrey moves to join them.

HUMPHREY

Oh yes?

FLORENCE

Something interesting on Esther's laptop. A video file - recorded on Thursday.

She clicks on the file and a video starts playing.

FOOTAGE: Esther and Lizzie sitting in Lizzie's bungalow.

ESTHER

Lizzie can you remember this poem?

Lizzie is vague, unresponsive.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

If we read it together, in the place where you wrote it, it might help you remember...

She pauses the footage...

FLORENCE

The poem we read is set on the cliffs. So maybe Lizzie Baptiste did go to the clifftop with Esther...

HUMPHREY

She is the only suspect not to have an alibi...

JP

Except. The faked suicide note, sir. I don't believe Lizzie could have planned that.

On Humphrey, acknowledging this.

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

45

FLORENCE

But if Esther was going to the
clifftop to meet Lizzie - could
someone else have seen her going
there? Decided to follow her?

Humphrey moves round to the whiteboard. Florence and JP
follow.

HUMPHREY

It's too convenient. Whoever did
this *knew* Esther was going to be on
that cliff. And they planned their
alibi accordingly.

(beat)

I just don't know how they were
able to make it appear like they
were at the festival with the rest
of the attendees, when they were
actually on the clifftop committing
murder.

They stare at the board. On Humphrey, frustrated. Dwayne
enters wearing headphones.

DWAYNE

Sorry I'm late chief. Overslept.

FLORENCE

Up late on a school night?

DWAYNE

(pleased with himself)

Finishing 'The Flame Tree'
actually.

JP

No way.

He puts the headphones and his phone down on the desk.

DWAYNE

Audiobook.

JP

That's cheating!

FLORENCE

What did you think?

DWAYNE

(smug)

Loved it. Glass of rum, feet up,
headphones on...think I'll start
reading more often.

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

45

As Dwayne pulls out the headphones Sylvie's recorded voice plays out.

SYLVIE (V.O.)

Chapter 57. Iris woke early the next morning and walked down to the beach. The storm had cleared by then and the sea was calm...

DWAYNE

Like having her there in my living room.

Dwayne pauses the audiobook. Humphrey moves towards Dwayne, unnerving him. He picks up the headphones. Stares at them. And then looks at Dwayne, his eyes blazing. Dwayne is even more unnerved.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Everything all right, Chief?

HUMPHREY

In your living room, you said. Like having her there in your living room.

DWAYNE

Yes, Chief..?

Dwayne looks to Florence and JP - what's going on?

On Humphrey - brain whirring, thoughts suddenly taking shape.

FLASHBACK: As in Scene 5, Patricia brings up the first slide.

FLASHBACK: As in scene 7, Anna, Oliver and Sylvie are in the front row of the audience listening to Patricia talking.

FLASHBACK: As in scene 35, Sylvie enters the study where Patricia is typing with the Dictaphone in front of her.

FLASHBACK: As in scene 22, JP tells Humphrey Esther's requests to see Sylvie had been refused.

Humphrey's solving it - but the pieces haven't all fallen into place yet. He moves to the whiteboard.

HUMPHREY

But the suicide note. How did they manage that? How?!

FLASHBACK: as in scene 13, Patricia tells Humphrey Esther helped with the festival admin.

FLASHBACK: as in scene 18, Humphrey sees the pile of printed festival programmes in Esther's hotel room.

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

45

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Of course! That's how!

(to Dwayne)

I need you to collect something
from Sylvie's estate and get it to
the lab.

DWAYNE

Chief.

HUMPHREY

I also need the folders containing
our background checks. Then gather
up the suspects. Most importantly -
Lizzie Baptiste.

On JP - concerned...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

(to JP - reassuring)

Trust me on this.

CUT TO:

46

EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN. DAY 3 [11:30]

46

Oliver, Anna, Sylvie, Lizzie and Patricia are gathered in the
garden of the estate. Florence and JP there too, but no
Dwayne as of yet. Humphrey holds a copy of the novel.

HUMPHREY

This place is quite something,
isn't it? The real-life setting for
a famous novel. You can see how it
would inspire a writer. What has
been less clear - is why it would
inspire a young woman to take her
own life.

(beat)

Esther Monroe died here three days
ago in what appeared to be a
suicide. She was anxious, obsessing
about her work. Jumping from the
same cliff that her literary
heroine had jumped from - might

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

61

46

CONTINUED:

46

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
seem the ultimate escape from her
problems.
(beat - with emphasis)
Or so someone - who is here with us
today - intended us to think.
Because this was no suicide. Esther
was *murdered*.

On the suspects - unsettled.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
But every one of you has a
convincing alibi for the time of
the murder.

**FLASHBACK: As in scene 7, Patricia is on stage while Sylvie,
Oliver and Anna are visible in the audience.**

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
Esther left the party at 1:15pm.
When her body was found, her
smashed watch had stopped at 1:25.
A hundred witnesses vouch for you
all being at Patricia's talk during
that period. In the front row.
Patricia on stage. So it's
impossible for any of you to have
left to commit murder. Unless every
one of those impartial witnesses
were mistaken.

Nervous silence from the suspects...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
Which is exactly what they were.

On the suspects - all restless, casting nervous glances.

FLORENCE
Early on Thursday, the day before
her death, Esther had been to visit
Sylvie Baptiste. Esther had
confronted Sylvie about the true
authorship of 'The Flame Tree'.
Esther knew by then her theory was
right. But she wanted one final
piece of evidence. She wanted to
interview Lizzie herself. To try
and uncover Lizzie's long-forgotten
memories of writing.

**FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 2/EXT. LIZZIE'S BUNGALOW. DAY 0
[09:30]**

**Lizzie opens the door to a tentative but smiling Esther -
Lizzie frowning, mistrustful.**

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

Florence holds up the laptop.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

Esther planned to record Lizzie's testimony on her laptop. Which she did. But Lizzie could remember nothing. So Esther suggested they visit the place where Lizzie wrote the poem. The clifftop.

All eyes go to Lizzie. Is she the killer?!

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

But we think Lizzie wasn't the only person present during this conversation.

HUMPHREY

I think someone else was there. Off camera, as it were. Which would mean someone else knew about the plan to visit the cliff. In fact, I believe they suggested it in the first place - a 'helpful' idea to tap into Lizzie's memories.

(looks to Lizzie)

Am I right, Lizzie? That someone else was in the room that day?

A beat. She thinks. Unsure. But...

LIZZIE

Yes. There was someone else there...

Humphrey continues before Lizzie can point the finger, keen to keep the suspense going just a little longer...

HUMPHREY

But in fact, this person told you to stay at home, and went to meet Esther alone - intent on murder.

*
*

Beat. The suspects are nervous. In the b/g Dwayne appears, carrying a brown paper evidence bag. He nods to Humphrey. Humphrey acknowledges and continues.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

So the following day, Esther left the festival reception at 1.15pm. She knew her research was going to ruffle feathers. To discredit previous academic work. So she told
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
nobody about who she was going to
meet.

46

CONTINUED:

46

**FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 3/EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN.
DAY 1 [13:00]**

**Esther works alone at the reception looking tense and
anxious. We see Oliver and Anna both clock her - eyeing her
beadily.**

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Esther went secretly to meet Lizzie
at the clifftop as she believed she
had arranged.

FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 4/EXT. CLIFFTOP. DAY 1 [13:20]

**Esther alone at the clifftop looking at her watch - looking
anxious.**

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

But the person who'd helped her
arrange it met her there alone.

**Esther hears a sound - turns and, relieved, sees the person
approaching - obviously expecting them...**

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

There are only two people who could
have been the third presence in
that room. Who could have let
Esther into Lizzie's house, been
present during the interview, and
thus known about the clifftop plan.
Sylvie Baptiste. Or Patricia
Lawrence.

(beat)

That person was not Sylvie
Baptiste.

The suspects are stunned as Humphrey fixes Patricia with a
laser stare.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

It was Patricia Lawrence.

(turns to her)

You were the third person in that
room.

Patricia stares at him. Shocked.

(CONTINUED)

46

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46

PATRICIA
You can't possibly believe...

HUMPHREY
(in)
Wasn't she, Lizzie?

And after a moment, a nervous Lizzie nods - she was. Humphrey turns back to Patricia.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
Once you told Lizzie the clifftop rendez-vous wasn't happening any more, you then went and impressed on Esther the importance of not telling anyone else about the planned meeting with Lizzie.

(beat)
Then when the time came, you left the festival opening to meet with Esther at the clifftop.

PATRICIA
This is ridiculous. I was giving a speech when she died. They all heard me...

FLASHBACK: as in scene 7, Patricia's voice is heard as Oliver, Anna and Sylvie sit in the audience.

HUMPHREY
They heard you. But did they see you?

On Patricia - oh dear...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
I must say you had me fooled. Until I remembered seeing you typing Sylvie's notes from her Dictaphone.

(beat)
You're quite adept with technology, aren't you Patricia?

FLASHBACK: As in scene 3, Patricia sorts out Anna's mic.

FLASHBACK: As in scene 13, Patricia tells Humphrey about setting up the audio-visual equipment.

Humphrey holds up the Festival Programme.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
You were in charge of setting up the laptop and the AV equipment for the festival. And you gave a presentation - showing slides of the locations of 'The Flame Tree'.

(CONTINUED)

46

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46

**FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 5/INT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. STUDY.
DAY 1 [11:00]**

Patricia alone in the study preparing her slides...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

But you also made a recording of
your speech, didn't you? On an
audio file on your laptop.

We see Patricia now speaking into the laptop's microphone...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

You started the talk genuinely
enough. On stage, holding the
microphone. But then I think you
retreated to the side to let the
slides play.

**FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 6/EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE. GARDEN.
DAY 1 [13:18]**

**Patricia slips down to the shadowed side of the stage - she's
still speaking into the microphone but now hidden - the
audience members all watching the images on screen.**

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Where you then pressed play on the
audio file you'd already set up.

**During a momentary pause in her speech, Patricia presses play
on an audio file - and lowers the microphone.**

Humphrey nods to Dwayne who steps forward and removes
Patricia's laptop (as seen at the start of the episode) from
the evidence bag and opens it up.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

(to Patricia)

The second laptop vital to solving
this case. Your laptop. We knew
you'd have deleted the audio file,
the second you came off that stage.
But our lab was able to recover it.

On Patricia - what? Humphrey nods to Dwayne to press play.

PATRICIA'S (V.O.)

And this is the cliff, right here
on the estate, where Iris decides
she can no longer live with what
Donald has done to her.

The other suspects look to Patricia, shocked.

(CONTINUED)

46

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46

HUMPHREY

And while the audience would have
sworn you were still there giving
your talk, in fact you had slipped
away to the clifftop...

FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 7/EXT. CLIFFTOP. DAY 1 [13:25]

46

CONTINUED:

46

Esther smiles as Patricia approaches her. But her smile drops - as Patricia comes towards her too quickly...

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

To push a young woman to her death.

With a forceful outstretched hand Patricia pushes Esther backwards - where she teeters for a second and then plunges out of sight...

Everyone silent with shock.

PATRICIA

This is nonsense. The girl killed herself.

No response - they all stare at her. Patricia starting to lose her composure now.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

It's obvious - she left a *suicide note*...

HUMPHREY

The note was a nice touch. The fact you'd got Esther's fingerprints onto it - and no-one else's - was smart.

(beat)

We already know Esther had helped you with the festival admin. There would have been reams of paper with Esther's prints on. All you had to do was use gloves to take a piece, print the note, and sign it.

PATRICIA

Sign it? How on earth could I...

HUMPHREY

You sign Sylvie's books for her when she's... indisposed.

FLASHBACK: as in scene 38, Sylvie tells Patricia to sign some copies of the book for her.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

For someone practised at forging signatures - it wouldn't be difficult to forge Esther's handwriting. I'm sure it was easy enough to lay your hands on a copy of Esther's signature. You'd been working closely with her setting up the festival. I'm sure you could

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
find a moment to sneak a credit
card from her bag, if she left it
lying around...

FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 8/EXT. SYLVIE'S ESTATE GARDEN.
DAY 0 [12:00]

Esther tells Patricia she's going to get some more paper.
When she goes, Patricia sees her bag lying on the ground and
steals a moment to sneak Esther's purse out of it. She looks
in and finds a credit card. Eyes the signature on the back
and takes a photo of it with her phone.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
Then all you had to do was slip the
faked suicide note into her handbag
after you'd killed her.

FLASHBACK/NEW SCENE 46 PART 9/EXT. CLIFFTOP. DAY 1 [13:27]

Patricia slips the envelope containing the suicide note into
Esther's bag, sat on the clifftop. She then moves away
leaving the bag sat ominously on the side of the cliff.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
But as clever as it was, that
suicide note was also your undoing.
(beat)
That it was a typed note meant it
somehow lacked credibility. But
also the fact Esther's signature at
the bottom was written in biro,
rather than the fountain pen she
always used, confirmed for us that
Esther neither wrote nor signed it.

Patricia is silent. No counter-argument she can make.

SYLVIE
Tell me this isn't true.

Patricia can't meet her eye.

OLIVER
But...why would she want to kill
her?

HUMPHREY
Why indeed. Did Sylvie's loyal
assistant kill to protect her
employer?
(to Patricia)
You implied to us that you're
Sylvie's own personal slave. Work
twelve hour days, do everything for
her, even put her to bed, for a
pittance of a salary. All true. And
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
you don't even get the chance to
visit home.

**FLASHBACK: as in scene 38, Patricia tells Humphrey she
doesn't get the chance to go home.**

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
But that's not quite true, is it?
We know Sylvie had visited the UK
several times for work trips. Four
times, in fact, in
(MORE)

46

CONTINUED:

46

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
seven years. But our immigration
checks show you didn't accompany
her once.

Patricia stares at him.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
It's not that you didn't get the
chance to go home. You chose not
to, didn't you?

He holds up the background file he asked for in scene 45.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
We looked into your background.
Twenty six years ago you left a
grey, dead-end council estate in
London. You came here travelling
and through luck and perseverance
you landed a job working for a
successful author.
(beat)
What a life you must have lived
these last twenty-odd years. You
got to travel the world. Meet other
famous writers. And when you
weren't doing that, you were living
in this Caribbean paradise. It was
like a dream come true, wasn't it?
A fantasy made real.
(beat)
Unfortunately, you then realised
that was exactly what it was. A
fantasy that could be destroyed at
any time. Was it when Esther first
got in touch that you realised
Sylvie was a fraud?

He looks at Patricia's face - reads her.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
No. You'd known for years, hadn't
you? That's why you stopped Esther
from meeting her.

**FLASHBACK: as in scene 22, JP tells Humphrey Esther had sent
four email requests to meet Sylvie, all declined by Patricia.**

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)
You knew what Esther was onto. And
if Sylvie's fraud was exposed - you
were the one person who had even
more to lose than Sylvie herself.
You would be left with nothing, and
the dream would be over for ever.
So you killed an innocent young
woman to protect it.

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

Patricia stares at him - then at Sylvie -

46

CONTINUED:

46

PATRICIA

She left me with no choice. Don't you see? She was going to destroy it all...

HUMPHREY

(to Dwayne and JP)

Take her away.

PATRICIA

I had no choice..!

They move to handcuff Patricia and take her away.

SYLVIE

I still want to fund a scholarship. For students of my work.

FLORENCE

We spoke to the Head of Faculty at Esther's university. They're planning to award her PhD posthumously. So I'm afraid it's Lizzie's work from now on.

On Sylvie - crushed.

JP

(to Lizzie)

Do you understand? It's your novel.

The ghost of a smile on Lizzie's face. And finally, with all that done, Humphrey turns to Florence. She gives a smile back.

FLORENCE

Thank you, sir.

He nods. Any time.

CUT TO:

47

INT. HONORÉ POLICE STATION. DAY 3 [17:30]

47

Humphrey and Florence in the station. Florence is boxing up the evidence. Humphrey is shutting the station doors as they finish up for the day. Nearly done, he watches Florence a moment.

HUMPHREY

You know. I don't say this nearly enough. But you're a brilliant detective, Florence Cassell. And you're a good friend. To Esther - and to me. If I was in trouble - I can't think of anyone I'd rather have on my side.

(CONTINUED)

70

47

CONTINUED:

47

Florence smiles, genuinely moved. Humphrey pulls on his jacket.

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

You hungry? Fancy braving my cooking and coming for dinner at the shack?

FLORENCE

Isn't Martha back tonight?

HUMPHREY

In an hour.

FLORENCE

If it's just the two of you...

HUMPHREY

Harry'll be there too.
(beat - as if a trump card)
I'm making shepherd's pie.

On Florence - a broad grin.

FLORENCE

Then how can I resist?

Humphrey smiles.

HUMPHREY

I better go get the spuds on. Join us when you're ready.

Florence nods and smiles. Humphrey heads out. Florence finishes neatly putting away the last of Esther's things into a box. Closing the lid.

Only the photo of her and Esther as little girl remains on the desk. She picks it up and looks at it a moment. Then, with a fond smile, tucks it into her wallet.

She grabs her coat and goes to the door. Flicks the lights off. And then closes the door shut. Another end to another case.

END OF EPISODE