

BBC
Home Front
Episode 2

5th August 1914 - Gabriel Graham

By KATIE HIMS

Cast

Gabriel	Michael Bertenshaw (RDC)
Hilary	Craig Els (RDC)
Sylvia	Deborah Findlay
Freddie	Freddie Fox
Dieter	Joe Sims

Directed by JESSICA DROMGOOLE

TX Date: 5th August 2014

EOS: 11'46

EOM: 11'58

**(HOME FRONT OPENING SIG MUSIC PLAYS WITH TITLE, THEN
FADES UNDER SPEECH – 33 SECS IN TOTAL)**

SCENE 1 **INT. TOWN HALL.**

OUNCILLOR GABRIEL'S OFFICE.

GABRIEL It didn't look good.

HILARY I know.

GABRIEL It made us appear – unprepared – disorganised –
and worse – it made us appear unfeeling.

HILARY I can only apologise.

GABRIEL On Sunday morning Folkestone woke to find the
streets littered with human beings.

HILARY I don't think it was quite as bad as all that.

GABRIEL People sleeping on suitcases on the pavement.
Children. All night. British citizens - fleeing
Europe –

HILARY But we didn't know they were coming.

GABRIEL But we ought to have known. We ought to have
been ready.

HILARY Well we won't let it happen again.

GABRIEL And the very same day - fighting – practically a
riot - breaks out at the harbour.

HILARY Perhaps that was inevitable. In the circumstances.

GABRIEL The young German men ought never have been
kept waiting alongside British soldiers.

HILARY No Sir. That's true.

GABRIEL There were women present. Tourists for goodness
sake.

HILARY I know.

GABRIEL It's so important for people to feel that everything
is carrying on as normal. That it's business as
usual.

HILARY Of course.

GABRIEL Not that we're ignoring the war. Quite the contrary.
We're doing all we can for our country. But the
Kaiser won't put us off our stride.

HILARY Absolutely.

GABRIEL This is the most crucial month in the calendar. We need to let the nation know that the water's warm, the sun is shining and there is no reason whatsoever not to enjoy everything Folkestone has to offer.

HILARY Of course.

GABRIEL I don't want the hotel proprietors. The lady who sells the candy floss. The man who operates the switchback. Saying that they have no custom.

HILARY Perhaps we could advertise Sir in the national papers. Folkestone. It's business as usual. Or something to that effect.

GABRIEL Yes yes I think we can probably find some extra funds for that.

HILARY I'll get onto it.

GABRIEL Oh and Hilary?

HILARY Yes Sir?

GABRIEL I heard something else that rather disturbed me.

HILARY What was that?

GABRIEL Two young men broke into the Fountain Hotel at Seabrook last week and stole a woman's bathing costume. Did you hear that?

HILARY Erm yes it rings a bell.

GABRIEL What I want to know is were they soldiers and were they drunk?

HILARY I've erm I've no idea. I could try and find out.

GABRIEL Because it's behaviour of this nature that concerns me most.

HILARY Shall I find out if they were soldiers?

GABRIEL Tourists. Or prospective tourists. Must not for one moment imagine that Folkestone has become over run with marauding drunken soldiers. Who will even go so far as to break into your hotel room and steal your wife's bathing costume.

HILARY GIVES A SLIGHT LAUGH.

HILARY I agree Sir.

GABRIEL It's no laughing matter. The police already have their work cut. Reeve tells me that his men are working overtime just to deal with the loutish drunken behaviour of the common soldier.

HILARY Yes. But Sir –

GABRIEL We may have to think long and hard about how to contain these young men.

HILARY Contain them Sir?

GABRIEL Placing restrictions on where the military can socialise. I'm not thinking of the officers of course.

HILARY But councillor, we already have restrictions on where they can drink.

GABRIEL But perhaps we ought to restrict the cinema and the theatre.

HILARY Do you think that would be politic Sir?

GABRIEL It maybe be alot more politic than doing nothing.

HILARY But these men – they are about to leave to fight a war – to make the ultimate sacrifice –

GABRIEL Yes Hilary I am all too aware of this fact. Why my own son is heading to France very shortly –

HILARY Sorry Sir I –

GABRIEL But it's about finding a balance between the needs of the town and the needs of the military.

HILARY It's not as if the military is new to Folkestone.

GABRIEL Yes that's true but something has changed. Something in the air. In the excitement of war there's an attitude. A devil may care sort of feeling.

HILARY Which is understandable.

GABRIEL Of course it is. Of course. And no one is more proud of the King's Army than I am but the relationship between the town and the military needs managing. Careful managing. We shall discuss it after lunch.

HILARY Yes Sir.

FX: THERE IS A BRISK KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

SYLVIA WALKS STRAIGHT IN.

SYLVIA Good Afternoon darling.

GABRIEL Sylvia.

SYLVIA Hello Hilary.

HILARY Good Afternoon Mrs Graham.

GABRIEL I thought we were meeting at the Hotel.

SYLVIA Well I fancied a little walk. What have you two been up to this morning?

GABRIEL I've been haranguing Hilary.

SYLVIA Poor Hilary.

HILARY I'm alright.

SYLVIA Well I shall rescue you temporarily at least. I am whisking my husband away for lunch.

GABRIEL We're going to the Grand.

SYLVIA I myself would prefer the Metropole. They have a new Palm Tea Court and an orchestra.

GABRIEL But they do such a damn fine steak at the Grand.

SYLVIA You certainly are a creature of habit.

GABRIEL Am I terribly dull to you my darling?

SYLVIA Dull? Not at all. Quite the contrary.

GABRIEL My wife ought to have been a diplomat.

SYLVIA Are you ready? Shall we go?

HILARY Oh Councillor before you go. You asked me to write something up for the paper. Would you have take a quick look now? It's only a few lines.

GABRIEL Give it here.

HILARY HANDS OVER A PIECE OF PAPER.

GABRIEL 'Don't get in too big a quantity of provisions at once. Remember there are others who cannot afford to do so. Don't be selfish; help to keep down the prices. Britain is well stocked.'

HILARY What do you think?

GABRIEL I'd like to ponder it.

HILARY Of course.

GABRIEL I'll take it with me.

SYLVIA Have you ever eaten at the Grand Hilary?

HILARY No Madam.

SYLVIA Oh you must.

GABRIEL You absolutely must.

SYLVIA You're in for an absolute treat.

GABRIEL But have the steak rather than the duck.

SYLVIA The duck is very nice.

GABRIEL But the steak is superb. Best steak in all of Folkestone. Probably all of Kent. Do you like steak?

HILARY Erm actually I'm a vegetarian.

GABRIEL You're what?

HILARY I'm a vegetarian.

GABRIEL What do you mean?

HILARY I don't eat meat.

GABRIEL What not at all? Not ever?

HILARY No Sir not ever.

GABRIEL Good lord. Isn't that extraordinary?

SYLVIA It is unusual.

GABRIEL I've never heard anything like it in my life.

HILARY I just don't believe in killing animals so that we can eat them.

GABRIEL Isn't that extraordinary.

**(MUSIC: HOME FRONT CLOSING SIG USED AS TRANSITION AT
5'13. TOTAL '10 SECS USED CARRIES ON UNDER BEGINNING
OF SCENE)**

SCENE 2 INT. THE GRAND HOTEL.

GABRIEL Freddie.

SYLVIA Darling.

FREDDIE Hello Mother. Father

HILARY Hello.

GABRIEL Dear Boy.

SYLVIA Kiss me.

**FREDDIE GOES TO KISS HER. THEN SHE
HUGS HIM.**

FREDDIE Gently Mother. I've got a crashing hangover.

SYLVIA Have you been drinking?

FREDDIE No Mother it was vimto gave me this head.

SYLVIA What on earth is vimto?

GABRIEL It's a tonic drink I believe.

SYLVIA Could they spare you darling? At Shorncliffe.

FREDDIE Absolutely.

SYLVIA You aren't missing anything important?

FREDDIE Not unless you call deathly dull training exercises
important.

GABRIEL

Waiter!

DIETER APPROACHES

DIETER

Yes Sir. Can I get you something to drink?

GABRIEL

Something to drink. Yes. Will you have something to drink Freddie?

FREDDIE

Why not? Hair of the Dog and all that.

SYLVIA

What is hair of the dog?

GABRIEL

It's having a drink to dull the effects of the previous drink. Am I right?

FREDDIE

Something like that.

DIETER

Should I come back in a moment?

GABRIEL

Not at all. Not at all. I'm just looking at the wine list

FREDDIE

You do look well Mother.

SYLVIA

Ahh flatterer. You look very handsome but a little pale.

GABRIEL

He needs a steak.

SYLVIA

Do you know when you might be leaving?

FREDDIE

Not sure yet. Could be end of next week.

GABRIEL

Next week?

FREDDIE

Or the week after.

GABRIEL

Do let us know as soon as you hear.

FREDDIE

Of course.

GABRIEL I envy you. I do.

FREDDIE Yes well it is pretty bloody marvellous. That it's actually happening. It's just the waiting around that's so damn difficult.

DIETER Do you need any help sir?

GABRIEL Help?

DIETER With the wine list, sir

GABRIEL I think I know my way around this wine list

DIETER I'm so sorry...

SYLVIA Darling ought we to drink champagne?

GABRIEL Champagne now there's an idea.

SYLVIA After all it is a rather special occasion.

GABRIEL It is indeed. Alright we'll have a bottle of moet.

DIETER A bottle of moet?

GABRIEL That's right.

DIETER Thank you Sir. I'll be back in a moment.

GABRIEL No wait. Why don't we order food as well? Are you ready darling?

SYLVIA I think so.

GABRIEL Freddie?

FREDDIE Absolutely.

DIETER What can I get you madam?

SYLVIA Oh no, Freddie you go first.

FREDDIE I should like the pigeon to begin. And then I'll have the steak.

GABRIEL Good man.

DIETER Pigeon. Steak. And you Sir?

GABRIEL I should like the foie gras followed by the steak.

DIETER The foie gras. And the steak. Very good Sir. And for you Madam?

SYLVIA Just a moment. I'm having second thoughts. Just a moment.

GABRIEL Do you know something rather extraordinary?

FREDDIE What's that?

GABRIEL My new secretary is a vegetarian. Have you ever heard of such a thing?

FREDDIE Well I've heard of it. I've never met one before.

GABRIEL He doesn't believe in killing animals in order that we can eat them.

FREDDIE Well I suppose if one really thinks about it. I should hate anyone to kill Nelson and have him for supper.

SYLVIA No one would want to eat Nelson darling.

GABRIEL The Frenchies might. They're very fond of horse meat. Better keep a good eye on him when you get to B.

SYLVIA What about the Germans?

FREDDIE What about them?

SYLVIA Do they eat horses?

DIETER Madam?

SYLVIA Yes?

DIETER What would you like to order?

GABRIEL Perhaps that's what they put in those sausages.
 Those bratwurst things.

SYLVIA Oh I can't decide between the duck –

GABRIEL The steak is the best thing on the menu -

SYLVIA Or the lamb. Oh honestly. Which would you
 recommend?

DIETER The lamb is very good today.

SYLVIA Where are you from young man?

DIETER Sorry?

SYLVIA Which country do you come from?

DIETER Erm Switzerland.

SYLVIA Switzerland?

DIETER Yes Ma'am.

SYLVIA Where abouts exactly?

DIETER Geneva.

SYLVIA Geneva. Wonderful.

DIETER Yes Madam.

SYLVIA My husband and I adore Geneva. Don't we darling?

GABRIEL Well you do. I prefer to stay at home. Enjoy the cricket.

FREDDIE Damn shame they cancelled cricket week at Hythe.

GABRIEL Damn shame.

DIETER Madam?

SYLVIA Yes.

DIETER You haven't ordered.

SYLVIA Oh goodness how right you are. I'll have the Duck.

DIETER The duck. Excellent. And to start?

SYLVIA The salad.

DIETER The salad very good Madam.

DIETER LEAVES.

SYLVIA Do you know I could have sworn that young man was German.

GABRIEL Really?

SYLVIA Could have sworn it.

FREDDIE Do you think the Regatta will go ahead?

GABRIEL I do hope so.

SYLVIA Do you know this year we've collected 78 pounds and 17 shillings in prizes - Sir Philip Sassoon, Lord Rothschild, Earl Radnor. They've all been remarkably generous.

GABRIEL It's all your mother's doing. She's very good at tapping nobility. And it's because she's one of them. They don't see her as the enemy. Not like me who made all my money in trade.

SYLVIA Don't be silly darling.

GABRIEL It's true. I'm only an interloper but you're blue blooded.

SYLVIA Might I look at that note your secretary read out?

GABRIEL Why?

SYLVIA Oh I'm just interested.

GABRIEL Here.

SYLVIA Have you got a pen as well?

GABRIEL Certainly.

SYLVIA Do you mind if I add something?

GABRIEL What do you want to add?

SYLVIA Something about the importance of cheerfulness. Do you mind me interfering?

GABRIEL Not at all. You always do.

SYLVIA LAUGHS A TINKLEY LAUGH

GABRIEL Actually Freddie I should like some advice from you.

FREDDIE Oh yes?

GABRIEL We're thinking about restricting access to the theatres and possibly the cinema. Not ban the military entirely. But simply to restrict when they might attend. Hilary thinks it might have too detrimental effect on morale. But I wondered what you thought.

FREDDIE Honestly Father? You honestly want to know what I think?

GABRIEL I do.

FREDDIE Well I think your vegetarian secretary is absolutely right.

GABRIEL Really?

FREDDIE Yes. In a few weeks some of these men will lay their lives down for this country.

SYLVIA Oh darling.

FREDDIE It's true Mother. You can't say it isn't because it is. And you know some of the officers drink just as much if not more than the men. You should hear the Brigadier raving about weak and dissolute leadership. So I don't you can place any further restrictions on the men. When they are placing no restrictions at all on what they give for the country.

SYLVIA Well said darling. Rather beautifully said in fact.

FREDDIE You might want to think about opening up the reading room at the library on Sundays. Just for the soldiers. At least it would give them an alternative to the public house.

GABRIEL But do they read these men?

FREDDIE Some of them read a great deal.

SYLVIA But what sort of books?

FREDDIE Hardy. Dickens. Tennyson.

GABRIEL Good Lord. Tennyson?

FREDDIE Some of them are very bright.

GABRIEL Well I'll look into it. The library business.

FREDDIE I think you'd find plenty of takers.

SYLVIA Might I read you both something? This is to go in the newspaper Freddie. Along with a request not to stockpile I also add. 'Don't get low spirited. Help to cheer those who have relatives in the King's Services. In fact be cheerful to everyone at all times. We shall all be the better for it. Don't waste your time. There is plenty to do.'

GABRIEL That is excellent.

SYLVIA Well you might want to edit it.

GABRIEL No it's perfect. Absolutely perfect.

DIETER ARRIVES WITH THE CHAMPAGNE.

DIETER Your champagne Sir.

GABRIEL Ah yes.

DIETER Shall I open it for you?

GABRIEL I'll do it.

DIETER Certainly Sir.

GABRIEL TAKES THE CHAMPAGNE.

SYLVIA Young Man.

DIETER Yes?

SYLVIA Do you know – I just assumed you were German.

Isn't that awful?

FX: HALF WAY THROUGH DIETER'S REPLY THE CHAMPAGNE POPS OPEN. AND THEY LOSE INTEREST IN WHAT HE IS SAYING.

DIETER Erm. Well I am Swiss German. I speak German of course. But my passport is Swiss.

(MUSIC CLOSING SIG FADES IN AT 11'39 AND CONTINUES TO END. 19 SECS USED)

GABRIEL To you Freddie.

SYLVIA To you my darling.

FREDDIE Cheers.