



# Home Front II

## Episode 1

**1st December 1914 – Mrs Sylvia Graham**

By Sarah Daniels

### **Cast**

Sylvia	Deborah Findlay
Dorothea	Rachel Shelley
Esme	Katie Angelou
Gabriel	Michael Bertenshaw
Hilary	Craige Els
Isabel	Keely Beresford
Juliet	Lizzie Bourne
Nancy	Jane Whittenshaw
Ralph	Nicholas Murchie
Pallbearer	Clive Hayward

Directed by JESSICA DROMGOOLE

**PLEASE BRING HARD-SOLED SHOES TO THE STUDIO**

**TX Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014

**SCENE 1            INT. GRAHAMS. 2.00. PM**

**SYLVIA AND ISABEL ARE IN THE DRAWING  
ROOM. GABRIEL COMES IN.**

GABRIEL:            Ready when you are.

SYLVIA:            We are all going out as a family and the eyes of the  
world will be watching.

ISABEL:            Hardly the world, Mother.

SYLVIA:            Well, the town of Folkestone then.

GABRIEL:            Our world.

SYLVIA:            Precisely, and we are not going to let ourselves  
down.

GABRIEL:            For Goodness sake Sylvia, this is my best suit.

SYLVIA:            I can see that but I also specifically asked for your  
best shirt to be starched and pressed yesterday-

GABRIEL:            I prefer this one.

SYLVIA:            And I find my gardening clothes more comfortable  
but completely inappropriate for wearing in public.  
Please go upstairs and change it.

GABRIEL:            Oh Sylvia. Hardly any of this shirt can be seen  
underneath my jacket and waistcoat.

SYLVIA:            At least put some cufflinks on then.

GABRIEL:            I couldn't find any... I even looked for some of  
Freddie's but (SLIGHT FALTER) I couldn't find any  
of his either.

SYLVIA:            Not today of all days, Gabriel. Today is a proud day  
for our family. We need to go out there with our  
heads held high.

1      ISABEL:            I'll go and get you some, Father.

2      SYLVIA:            You'll do no such thing, Isabel. Ring for the girl.

3      GABRIEL:           I need a drink.

4      **FX:                    BELL RINGS FOR ESME.**

5      SYLVIA:            That's why she's here. I don't want you tiring  
6                            yourself out before the day's even begun.

7                            **ESME COMES IN**

8      ESME:                You rang, mam.

9      SYLVIA:            Esme would you please go upstairs and find Mr  
10                           Graham a pair of cufflinks? They will be in the top  
11                           left hand drawer on my side of the bed.

12     ESME:                What any old pair, mam?

13     SYLVIA:            Perhaps you'd bring the box down?

14     ESME:                Yes, Mam.

15                            **SHE GOES.**

16     SYLVIA:            And look sharp about it. It wouldn't do at all to be  
17                            late.

18     **FX:                    KNOCK AT DOOR. MRS PARKER COMES IN.**

19     NANCY:              Begging your pardon, Mam but I'm hoping you won't  
20                            mind if I have a head start, what with my legs and  
21                            all.

22     SYLVIA:            Of course Mrs P. I take it that preparations for the  
23                            meal are all under control?

24     NANCY:              All as we discussed mam, fit for a king, if I say so  
25                            myself.

1        ISABEL:            You must have been up at the crack of dawn, Mrs  
2                               Parker. No wonder your legs ache.

3        NANCY:            Ache? Oh Miss Isabel, that's not even the half of it. I  
4                               don't know what's throbbing worse me veins or me  
5                               haemorrhoids.

6        GABRIEL:          (COUGHS)

7        NANCY:            Begging your pardon, Sir. I didn't see you there. Oh,  
8                               I don't know where to put myself now.

9        ISABEL:            Please don't concern yourself. You look very smart,  
10                              doesn't she mother?

11       SYLVIA:            Indeed, she does.

12       NANCY:            Well, I want to look my very best don't I? It's a big  
13                              day.

14       GABRIEL:          It is Nancy. It is.

15       NANCY:            If you'll excuse me I'll go and get me hat and coat.

16                              **NANCY GOES AND BUMPS INTO ESME COMING**  
17                              **BACK IN.**

18       NANCY:            Watch where you're going, girl.

19       ESME:                Begging your pardon, Mrs Parker. (TO SYLVIA)  
20                              There was quite a lot of odd ones in there so I only  
21                              brought the pairs

22       SYLVIA:            Very good Esme. There was a time early on when I  
23                              thought we'd never get here. But you seem to have  
24                              miraculously developed the knack, albeit a moderate  
25                              one, of showing initiative.

26       ESME:                Thank you, mam. What do you think of the silver  
27                              ones then?

1 SYLVIA: I think they'll do just splendidly.

2 ESME: Yes. Mam.

3 GABRIEL: I better go and get my coat, so I don't get barked at

4 again.

5 **HE GOES.**

6 ISABEL: I'll come with you father and see if I can find my

7 gloves.

8 **SHE GOES**

9 ESME: What shall I do, Mam, while you're all out?

10 SYLVIA: You need to just hold the fort, Esme.

11 ESME: You mean polish it?

12 SYLVIA: Polish it?

13 ESME: The fork?

14 SYLVIA: No, the fort. Please don't make me take back

15 everything I've just said.

16 ESME: Suppose someone calls?

17 SYLVIA: Take their card and ask them to come back another

18 day.

19 ESME: Not later today?

20 SYLVIA: No, today is just for us, for family.

21

**SCENE 2. EXT. HARBOUR. 2.30. PM.**

**SYLVIA, GABRIEL AND ISABEL ARE WAITING  
AT THE HARBOUR.**

**FX: WAVES CRASHING, SEAGULLS SQUAWKING**

SYLVIA: And of course she keeps us waiting, today of all  
days.

ISABEL: We are a bit early, Mother.

GABRIEL: She'll be here. She's never let us down.

SYLVIA: But she's never been on time either.

**FX THE SOUND OF A CAR HORN**

SYLVIA: How unseemly. It can't just stop there. Gabriel, go  
over there and tell them to move that wretched  
automobile, please.

GABRIEL: It is a public highway.

ISABEL: (SEES JULIET GET OUT OF THE CAR) It's Juliet.

SYLVIA: Where?

ISABEL: Getting out of that car. Look.

**JULIET COMES OVER TO THEM**

JULIET: I'm not late, am I?

GABRIEL: No, dear.

SYLVIA: What have you done with your driver?

JULIET: I'm right here, Mother.

SYLVIA: You drove yourself?

ISABEL: Whose car is it?

JULIET: Mine. Lovely to see you, Sis.

1      ISABEL:            And you. (THEY HUG)

2      SYLVIA:            (DISAPPROVING) You bought that for yourself.

3                        JULIET:    There's no need to look so shocked.

4      SYLVIA:            Gabriel, say something.

5      GABRIEL:          What horsepower is it?

6      SYLVIA:            I meant about the danger and complete

7                        inappropriateness of a young lady owning a car,

8                        never mind driving it.

9      JULIET:            Hardly that young. I have two children.

10     ISABEL:            (IN AWE) Did you come all the way from Biggin Hill

11                        by yourself?

12     JULIET:            Yes, it went by in a flash. Honestly, mother I didn't

13                        know what freedom was until I got behind a steering

14                        wheel.

15     SYLVIA:            Whatever is the world coming to?

16     JULIET:            Mother, the world is changing and for the better.

17     **FX:                    THE TRAIN CARRYING THE COFFIN**

18     SYLVIA:            Your world might be.

19     JULIET:            I'm sorry, I didn't mean-

20     GABRIEL:          Shush, not now, dear.

21     **FX:                    SLAM DOORS OPEN. MEN ALIGHT**

22     ISABEL:            I don't recognise those men. I thought you said you'd

23                        arranged for Prebble and Spain to do it.

24     GABRIEL:          Prebble Spain don't have enough men to go all the

25                        way to France and back.

26     SYLVIA:            Gabriel, there is no need to snap.

1 GABRIEL: Where is he?

2 SYLVIA: Patience.

3 **FX: THE MEN TAKE THE COFFIN FROM THE TRAIN**

4 **AND LIFT IT ONTO THEIR SHOULDERS AND**

5 **WALK TOWARDS THE FAMILY.**

6 GABRIEL: Steady, steady, easy does it.

7 ISABEL: There.

8 JULIET: Oh Freddie.

9 GABRIEL: My son.

10 ISABEL: Home at last.

11 SYLVIA: Gentlemen, please would you lower the coffin so I

12 can see the lid?

13 PALLBEARER: Yes, marm.

14 SYLVIA: Thank you.

15 PALLBEARER: Will that be all, marm?

16 SYLVIA: Yes. The carriage is waiting.

17 PALLBEARER: Very good, marm. Gentlemen.

18 **FX: THEY TAKE THE COFFIN OFF TO THE HORSE**

19 **DRAWN HEARSE.**

20 ISABEL: What were you doing, Mother?

21 SYLVIA: I had to make sure.

22 ISABEL: Of what?

23 GABRIEL: That the lid was screwed down rather than nailed.

24 SYLVIA: As befits an officer.

25 JULIET: And, was it?



1 SYLVIA: Yes.

2 **HILARY COMES UP TO THEM.**

3 HILARY: Councillor, Mrs Graham.

4 GABRIEL: Thank you so much, Hilary, for arranging everything.

5 HILARY: I'm very honoured to have been of help, Councillor  
6 Graham, and I do beg your forgiveness if what I'm  
7 about to say offends in any way...

8 ISABEL: Mr Pearce, the cortege is waiting for us.

9 HILARY: I'm really very sorry but I've been asked if perhaps  
10 you'd change the route it takes to St Jude's.

11 SYLVIA: By whom?

12 HILARY: Sergeant Major Davies at the recruiting office. It  
13 wouldn't perhaps be the ... it might affect  
14 morale...adversely.

15 SYLVIA: No might about it. I should think it will.

16 HILARY: They're having a very hard time recruiting anyone at  
17 present and they are obviously rather keen not to  
18 exacerbate the situation.

19 ISABEL: My brother died doing his duty for this country. We  
20 will not skulk around the back streets, hiding his  
21 body.

22 HILARY: I do apologise, Miss Isabel, but it's now become a  
23 national crisis. There are so few men willing to join  
24 up, not just here but everywhere.

25 GABRIEL: Understood, Pearce. Absolutely.

26 ISABEL: Father?

1       GABRIEL:       Surely you don't want Freddie to have died in vain.  
2                       Because if we put other young men off from joining  
3                       up and we lose the war as a consequence then  
4                       that's what it will have been. Leave it with me Hilary.  
5       HILARY:       Thank you, Councillor.  
6

**SCENE 3. INT CHURCH. 3.00. PM**

**RALPH IS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH**

**FX THE HORSE DRAWN HEARSE - WITH THE  
FAMILY FOLLOWING IN A HORSE DRAWN  
CARRIAGE - ARRIVES.**

**(ORGAN MUSIC – 1”14’)**

RALPH: (GOES TO GREET THE GRAHAMS) Councillor,  
Mrs Graham, Isabel, and Juliet. Just to let you know  
that Mrs Parker is already inside.

SYLVIA: Thank you, Mr Winwood.

RALPH: Would you like to go in before or after the coffin?

SYLVIA: I would like to walk behind Freddie, but my husband  
and daughters would like to go in before.

RALPH: As you wish – if you’d like to go in and take your  
seats now.

ISABEL: Come on Father.

SYLVIA: I’ll wait here.

**THEY START TO GO IN.**

JULIET: I just hope Mrs Parker doesn’t attempt to kneel.

ISABEL: Juliet.

JULIET: Well, it’ll be the devil’s own job to get her on her feet  
again.

ISABEL: Don’t say devil in God’s house.

**GABRIEL, ISABEL, AND JULIET GO INTO THE  
CHURCH.**

1    **FX:**                    **PALLBEARERS CARRYING THE COFFIN FROM**  
2                                **THE CARRIAGE TO THE CHURCH GO**  
3                                **TOWARDS THE CHURCH DOOR.**  
4                                **DOROTHEA COMES UP BEHIND THEM.**  
5    DOROTHEA:            Good afternoon, Sylvia.  
6    SYLVIA:                Dorothea.  
7    RALPH:                Dorothea, whatever are you doing here?  
8    DOROTHEA:            I've come to pay my respects to Freddie and his  
9                                family, Ralph.  
10   RALPH:                But I told you this is for close family only.  
11   DOROTHEA:            A funeral is a public act in a public place.  
12   **FX:**                    **ORGAN MUSIC STARTS UP (MENDELSSOHN?)**  
13   SYLVIA:                (TAKING A COUPLE OF STEPS BACK TOWARDS  
14                                THEM) If you're joining us, Dorothea, the time to go  
15                                in would be now.  
16   DOROTHEA:            Thank you Sylvia.  
17                                **DOROTHEA GOES IN.**  
18   **FX**                    **THE COFFIN FOLLOWS**  
19                                **RALPH AND SYLVIA GO IN**  
20   **FX**                    **THE MUSIC SWELLS.**  
21                                **THEN THE DOOR IS SHUT**  
22

**SCENE 4. EXT. GRAVESIDE. 3.45 PM**

**EVERYONE STANDING BY THE GRAVESIDE  
AFTER THE SERVICE.**

**FX: HANDFULS OF EARTH THROWN ON TO COFFIN.**

SYLVIA: Rest in peace.

GABRIEL: Sleep well dear chap.

JULIET: Bye Fred

ISABEL: Darling brother.

GABRIEL: Thank you Ralph. You will come back and have  
something to eat with us?

RALPH: That's very kind -

GABRIEL: And Mrs Winwood of course.

RALPH: - but I think not. We wouldn't want to intrude.

ISABEL: Are we ready, then?

SYLVIA: I'd just like a moment alone at the graveside. You go  
on. Take Mrs P in the carriage. I'll meet you back at  
the house.

JULIET: If you'd take me back to my car, I could come back  
for you, Mother.

SYLVIA: Thank you but no.

GABRIEL: Come on then if you're coming.

RALPH: (CONCERNED, TO SYLVIA) I'll take my leave then,  
Mrs Graham.

ISABEL: No, need to worry about her, Ralph.

JULIET: (AS THEY GO) Tough as old boots.

**THEY GO. CUT BACK TO SYLVIA NOW ALONE  
AT THE GRAVESIDE.**

SYLVIA: Well, Freddie. It's just you and me. Now. I don't think we ever had much of that time – when it was just us – not even when you were born. There were always other people in the room - doctors and then later nannies and cooks and servants. Then you were sent away to school. I saw you of course in between term times but, as I recall, only after you had had your tea.

And yet there is something singular between us which is never spoken of out loud – a cord that joins us – not the one that was cut in the hour of your birth but the invisible one, the one through which a mother feels all her child's joy and pain. It was there, part of me, invisible but so real, right up until the moment the telegram arrived. And in that moment the thread that held you taut to me all your life snapped. As though someone had punched through my heart and left a permanent emptiness in its centre.

I have borne a lot, Freddie, but I cannot bear the thought that when the last hour came I was not there to stand between you and the darkness, to take your place.

You are back with me now. Would that you were not. Would that you were out in the world, breaking my heart or disgracing the family name. I would happily strike that bargain with God. You could do

1                    anything now just so long as you were alive and not  
2                    as you are now, silent and cold.  
3                    But know, please know, that you are safe, you are  
4                    home. You are home at last, where you belong - my  
5                    beloved only son.