

1 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT 1. 23.00 (2019) 1

TELEVISION IMAGE, in CLOSE UP, pixels bristling.

VIVIENNE ROOK. 55, smart, well-dressed, with a wry smile, making herself earthy, popular. Talking to an UNSEEN HOST.

VIVIENNE ROOK

I just don't understand the world any more. It made sense, up until a few years back. The left was the left, the right was the right, America was America and I couldn't even point to Syria on a map. I just kissed the kids good night and turned off the light and looked forward to waking up the next day. What a long time ago that was. I dread it now. Every day. Dread.

This is being watched by ONE FAMILY, the LYONS, spread across Britain, on the night it all begins.

CUT TO:

2 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.01 (2019) 2

A MANCHESTER terraced house, nicely converted, front and back knocked through. Not posh, but nice, the home of...

DANIEL LYONS, 30, a Housing Officer, sitting at the table, going through accounts, on paper & iPad. Diligent, hard-working. It's his house. With RALPH COUSINS (Ralph, not Rafe), primary school teacher, 30, feet up on the settee, on his phone. Always on his phone. Ralph's the fun one, Daniel's his straight man; they've been together 18 months.

Of the TV, neither really watching:

DANIEL

Who's she?

RALPH

Some woman.

CUT TO:

3 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.02 (2019) 3

LONDON, nice house in BARNSBURY, a bit of money. STEPHEN LYONS, 37, Daniel's brother, in front of the TV. He's relaxed, comfy, with a cuppa. He stayed at home to bring up the kids, working as a freelance financial adviser, while his wife, CELESTE BISME-LYONS, went out to work; she's a Chief Accountant, 37, slim, smart. Bit of a snob. She's focused equally on the TV and her phone. Of Viv Rook:

CELESTE

I like her.

Their elder daughter BETHANY BISME-LYONS passes by in b/g, in the hall, heading upstairs, with a glass of milk. She's 12, a bit sullen, quiet, not happy in herself.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Night then, sweetheart.

BETHANY

Night.

CELESTE

Milk's not good for you, darling,
it's just mucus.

Bethany just heads upstairs.

STEPHEN

Don't have a go at her.

CELESTE

No, I should do it more often.
(out loud)
Signor, who's Vivienne Rook?

SIGNOR is a MALE VOICE from a DEVICE, their version of Alexa.

SIGNOR VOICE

Vivienne Alison Rook, born 1964,
founding member of the J.J.C. think
tank, Liminal Stages.

CUT TO:

4

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT 1. 23.03 (2019)

4

Now revealing VIVIENNE ROOK is actually on Question Time.
The QUESTION TIME HOST points at the audience.

QUESTION TIME HOST

That woman there, in the blue.

WOMAN IN BLUE

I'd like to ask Viv. What would
you say to a Palestinian family on
the Gaza Strip, when Israel has
reduced the electricity supply to
two hours a day! Two hours!

Everything, everyone, in the studio, and at home, focused on
Vivienne. A simple moment. Her first step towards power.

VIV ROOK

I know. But I suppose... When it
comes to Israel. And Palestine...
(MORE)

VIV ROOK (CONT'D)
(deep breath)
I don't give a fuck.

CUT TO:

5 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.04 (2019) 5

RALPH DANIEL
Oh my God! What did she say?!

CUT TO:

6 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.04 (2019) 6

CELESTE
Well now I like her even more.

STEPHEN
She can't say that!

CUT TO:

7 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.05 (2019) 7

RALPH
Go on, say it again! Who is she?!
Daniel's phone pings - and he texts back -

DANIEL
Oh, Stephen's watching -

CUT TO:

8 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.05 (2019) 8

Ping! STEPHEN'S phone, as Celeste scrolls online.

STEPHEN
Danny's seen it. I bet he's
written a letter of complaint.

CELESTE
Number 1 trending topic, vivrook.
In what, 20 seconds?

CUT TO:

9 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.05 (2019) 9

DANIEL slides in next to RALPH, to watch together.

TV STUDIO continues:

QUESTION TIME HOST

I have to apologise to people at home, you really can't say that -

VIV ROOK

But I mean it. Yemen. Kiev. Qatar.

(baiting the host)

I simply do not give...

QUESTION TIME HOST

No! If you say that, one more time, I'll have to exclude you.

Ralph's phone beeps, Whatsapp & SMS, throughout Viv's speech:

VIV ROOK

Well that's the point. We're not allowed to say anything true. But I've had enough! I've literally had enough, I am bombarded with news, 24 hours a day, from every country in the world, all day, every day, headlines, shouting at me. And I just want my bins collecting once a week. I want the primary school two hundred yards from my house to collect its own litter. And for the love of God, my mother has to walk with a stick, will people stop parking on the pavements? So ask me about Israel. Ask me. And I will tell you...

RALPH

Lucy's watching.

(beep)

And Javindra.

(beep)

Nell.

(beep)

Lynne.

(beep)

Viv Rook for Strictly!

VIV ROOK

I do not give a... damn.

(victory in her eyes)

But now I've got you listening, haven't I?

DANIEL

Oh my God, she's a monster.

RALPH

I think she's brilliant.

Daniel's phone rings. ROSIE. It's odd, her phoning late.

DANIEL
Hello hello, you all right?

CUT TO:

10 INT. CAR/EXT. STREET/INT. DANIEL LYONS'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 10
23.06 (2019)

The third LYONS, ROSIE, 28, on her mobile, in a CAR, being driven by her NEIGHBOUR, MR JAYASUNDERA, 60, a happy, helpful soul. ROSIE's spirited, sharp, born with spina bifida; her WHEELCHAIR is stashed in the back. And right now she's 9 MONTHS PREGNANT. Her son LEE, 5, skinhead, is in the back, on his phone, using Snapchat filters, his face with DOG EARS & TONGUE on screen; he does this listlessly, no sense of fun.

ROSIE
Hi, now don't make a fuss, but can you take Lee? Just get him to bed and give him toast for breakfast, he'll be fine. I'm on my way to the hospital, I started, I'm early.

INTERCUT with Daniel, sc.9 cont. He moves away from the TV, indicates to Ralph: Rosie. Baby. Ralph: Oh my God, now?

DANIEL
Right, yeah, what about Jan? I thought she was helping you.

ROSIE
She was, according to the birth plan, but that's for next Monday, she's in London tonight. And Runi's had a drink so she's useless, we're going to Salford City, can you meet me there and pick him up, and can you tell Gran?

DANIEL
But who are you with, then?

ROSIE
I'm being driven by Mr Jayansundera. From number 6.

MR JAYASUNDERA
Everything's under control!

DANIEL
I mean who's going to be with you? For the birth?

And now she starts to cry.

ROSIE
I don't know.

Daniel horrified. Whispers to Ralph.

DANIEL
On her own.

Ralph mimes, why? Daniel back on the phone:

DANIEL (CONT'D)
But... will you be okay?

Ralph hooting, realising, points at Daniel. You! You! You!
Go! Go! Go! Daniel: Me?? Oh no! No way!

ROSIE
I'm all right. It's not my first.
(sad)
Mum should be with me, really.

DANIEL
Do you... want me to be there?

Ralph flips backwards over the settee, silently hooting.

ROSIE
Would you?

DANIEL
Right! Yes! Course I will.
(throws a pen at Ralph)
I'm on my way.

CUT TO:

11 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.10 (2019) 11

Beep! STEPHEN gets a text from Daniel.

STEPHEN
Oh God. Rosie's going into
hospital. Is that now? I thought
she was months away.
(getting laptop)
Danny's with her, he says I've got
to tell Gran.

CUT TO:

12 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.15 (2019) 12

MURIEL DEACON is the Lyons' GRANDMOTHER, 87, sharp as a knife. She's in the kitchen, in her dressing gown. Ready for bed, but she doesn't sleep much. Nice whisky in hand. The house is large, rambling, detached with a rolling garden, South Manchester. Dilapidated, but valuable; this property will always be a home for the Lyons, in the years to come.

She's got a LAPTOP on the table, STEPHEN on screen.

MURIEL
I could go. I could get a taxi,
it's only half an hour.

CUT TO:

13 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1. 23.15 (2019) 13

STEPHEN on the laptop to MURIEL, CELESTE in b/g.

INTERCUT Sc.12 CONT., Muriel in her kitchen.

STEPHEN
Oh don't add to the panic, Gran,
the last thing we need is one of
your little adventures. Danny says
she's having an ultrasound for the
epidural, so everything's fine.

MURIEL
Your mother would be there.

STEPHEN
I know, but. Yes. But there's
nothing we can do about that.

MURIEL
Bit odd for Daniel, childbirth with
his own sister. If he wasn't gay
before, he will be now.

CELESTE
That's gynaephobic.

MURIEL
What was that?

STEPHEN
Celeste says hello.

No love lost between Celeste and Muriel.

MURIEL
Well let me know the news. Any
time. Even if it's 4am.

STEPHEN
I will, but don't stay up all
night. Promise me. No adventures.

MURIEL
You talk to me like I'm a child.

And blink, she switches off.

Stephen pissed off, but Celeste leans in.

CELESTE

If you go to bed now, you could get
up at five. Drive to Manchester.
You could be at your Gran's by
eight o'clock.

STEPHEN

I've got Lou Havins coming round in
the morning, about that trust.

CELESTE

Cancel him, email him now, go on.
Family emergency. You should be
with your Gran. The old goat.

Stephen smiles, moves in for a hug.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Don't ever tell her I was nice.

CUT TO:

14 OMITTED 14

15 EXT. MANCHESTER - DAWN. DAY 2. 05.45 (2019) 15
Sunrise. A proper beauty shot. The palaces of the north.
This is our last morning in the present day.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. MOTORWAY/INT. CAR - DAWN. DAY 2. 06.00 (2019) 16
STEPHEN driving north, low sun through the windscreen.

ON THE RADIO: that day's news, Radio 4. Literally, news from the DAY OF TX, dropped into the mix before transmission.

CUT TO:

17 OMITTED 17

18 INT. MATERNITY WARD, SALFORD CITY HOSPITAL - DAY 2. 07.30 18
(2019)

ROSIE in bed, exhausted, happy, holding her BABY; A BOY, mixed race, half Chinese. DANNY at the side of the bed. He feels almost as exhausted as Rosie, wrung out, but happy.

ROSIE
He's so Chinese.

DANIEL
Oh my God, I was waiting for you to say it first! He is, isn't he? I wondered how Chinese he was going to be, but he's like 100%.

ROSIE
Tiny little version of Gau.

DANIEL
You'll have to tell him.

ROSIE
I know. I'll call him later.

DANIEL
What about dad?

ROSIE
None of his business.

DANIEL
D'you want me to phone him?

ROSIE
If I want to tell anyone, I want to tell mum. And I can't. So dad can just piss off. Don't tell him, okay? Have you got that?

DANIEL
Okay, all right, I won't.
(pause)
So have you thought of a name?

CUT TO:

19 INT. CORRIDOR, SALFORD CITY HOSPITAL - DAY 2. 08.00 (2019) 19

DANIEL now striding down the corridor, much more energised.
He prefers taking the piss out of his sister. On the phone:

DANIEL
Lincoln. I don't believe it, she's
calling him Lincoln, Lincoln Lyons!

CUT TO:

20 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 2. 08.00 (2019) 20

Boyfriend RALPH in boxers, at the juicer, on the phone:

RALPH
Like Abraham Lincoln? He's a
Chinese Abraham Lincoln?

CUT TO:

21 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 2. 08.10 (2019) 21

Seeing the house from the outside: free-standing, impressive,
but old. A sizeable, rolling garden at the rear.

STEPHEN's waiting by the car, on his mobile. As he talks,
MURIEL's coming out of the front door, with coat and bag (he
pulled up, beeped, she's coming out to go to the hospital).

STEPHEN
(on the phone)
She's saying Lincoln. Lincoln
Lyons. Who's called Lincoln?
(calls to Muriel)
She's calling him Lincoln!

MURIEL
I know, I got an email from Danny.
I warn you, he'll get called Lin.

STEPHEN
(on the phone)
Gran says he'll get called Lin.

CUT TO:

22 INT. KITCHEN, STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - DAY 2. 08.10 (2012) 22

CELESTE getting everything ready for the day: orange juice and fruit for daughter RUBY, 8. On her mobile, to Stephen:

CELESTE

So? Tell her that's a boy's name, too. Nothing wrong with it. I just wonder where she got it from.

RUBY

Maybe she had sex in Lincoln.

CELESTE

Oh, that's enough of that.
(on the phone)

Ruby says maybe she had sex in Lincoln.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 2. 08.11 (2019) 23

MURIEL just reaching STEPHEN, he's still on his phone.

STEPHEN

Tell Ruby she can stop being so rude. Better go, see you tonight.
(hangs up)
Congratulations. Again. Great grandmother.

And they have a nice little kiss. Getting into the car:

MURIEL

I am great. Don't you forget it. Come on, let's go and see the little swine. Mr Lincoln Lyons.

CUT TO:

24 INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM - DAY 2. 08.15 (2019) 24

CELESTE enters. Cautious. BETHANY just curled over in bed, wrapped in the duvet, but awake. Unhappy eyes.

Celeste puts the bowl of fruit down. Gently:

CELESTE

You've got a new cousin. Auntie Rosie had a little boy, called Lincoln. Like Lincoln green.

No reply. Celeste looks round, addresses the SIGNOR DEVICE:

CELESTE (CONT'D)
Signor, give me the origin of
Lincoln as a boy's first name.

And now Bethany stirs, interested. Only when Signor speaks.

SIGNOR VOICE
Lincoln as a boy's first name is
from the Latin, meaning lithe.

BETHANY
What does lithe mean?

CELESTE
Kind of... thin. Is it thin? Or
slight, more like... slim.

BETHANY
Signor, what does lithe mean?

SIGNOR VOICE
Lithe, adjective meaning pliant;
limber; supple; flexible.

BETHANY
Thank you.

And she curls up again. Celeste feels upstaged by a device.

CUT TO:

25 INT. MATERNITY WARD, SALFORD CITY HOSPITAL - DAY 2. 09.00 25
(2019)

ROSIE handing BABY LINCOLN over to MURIEL.

DANNY and STEPHEN watching. Big moment for the family.

MURIEL
Hello. Hello, hello, hello.

ROSIE
He's looking at you.

MURIEL
Good boy. Little Lincoln.

WIDER: four-bed ward, only one other bed occupied with a nice
smiling WOMAN. A TV on silent at one end of the room. All
grouped around Rosie's bed, LEE swinging his legs on a chair.
Daniel taking PHOTOS on his mobile.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
I keep thinking of your mum.

ROSIE

I know, but don't set me off again.
Has anyone told Edith?

STEPHEN

I left a message, she never
replies, God knows where she is.

MURIEL

Indonesia, last I heard. They
imprison children, she says.
Apparently, if you haven't got a
birth certificate, they determine
your age by x-raying your wrist,
and if your x-ray says you're 16,
then you're 16, even if you're 12.
So off goes Edith! Into battle.
Just like her mother.

STEPHEN

No, mum liked a hot bath and proper
towels, Edith lives like a hippy.

Daniel, standing, to go.

DANIEL

Come on, they said two to a bed.
I'll take Lee to Macdonald's, how
d'you fancy that, yeah?

LEE

Yeah!

DANIEL

Let me say goodbye.

He reaches out, and Muriel hands Lincoln over.

MURIEL

You're looking a bit broody, there.

DANIEL

No chance. No way.

STEPHEN

You'd be great, you and Ralph.

DANIEL

I don't know if I could. Have a
kid in a world like this.

ROSIE

Oh that's happy. Thanks.

Daniel glancing at the TV, BBC News. VIV ROOK: NO APOLOGY.

DANIEL

Really, though. It's like that Rook woman said. Things were all right, a few years ago. Before 2008. D'you remember back then, we used to think politics was boring?

STEPHEN

Those were the days.

SLOW CREEP IN on Daniel & baby, closer and closer; underscore with a noise, a hum, the sound of pressure slowly building...

DANIEL

But now. I worry about everything. I don't know what to worry about first. Never mind the government, it's the sodding banks, they terrify me. And it's not even them, it's the companies, the brands, the corporations, they treat us like algorithms. While they go round poisoning the air. And the temperature. And the rain! Don't even start me on Isis. And now we've got America, I never thought I'd be scared of America in a million years. But all we've got is fake news and false facts and I don't know what's true any more, what the hell sort of world are we in? Cos if it's this bad now...

(to the baby)

What's it going to be like for you? In 30 years' time? 10 years? Five years? What's it going to be like?

And the pressure BURSTS, the picture goes RIP - !

CUT TO:

26

INT. ROSIE'S FLAT - DAY 3. 14.15 (2020)

26

- and sc.26-46 ROCK FORWARD! The picture rips, the noise of pressure ramps up, kerrang! (Muse, 'Uprising', loud and hard.) All driving forward, next scene, next, next, next -

A BIRTHDAY CAKE. 'I am 1.'

It's LINCOLN'S first birthday party, a whole year ahead. Rosie lives in a nice, small, cramped flat, and now she's holding up 1-year-old LINCOLN. DANIEL's there, with RALPH, and little LEE. Grandma MURIEL's there, with MR & MRS JAYASUNDERA, and a few FRIENDS, all local mums.

They all sing Happy Birthday, but time moves on, *RIP - !*

CUT TO:

27 INT. MEDIA 24 NEWSROOM - DAY 4. 06.10 (2020) 27

NEWSREADER to CAMERA. Graphics: US ELECTION 2020.

NEWSREADER

And the world awakes to a second term for President Donald Trump.

CUT TO STOCK FOOTAGE CROWDS, 'U.S.A.! U.S.A.!!'

STOCK FOOTAGE: TRUMP at a podium, victorious.

CUT TO:

27A INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, STUDY - NIGHT 4 2200 (2020) 27A

A smaller room, once her husband's domain. Now MURIEL's watching Trump on TV, raises a whisky to him, cynical.

MURIEL

The President you get, you deserve.

CUT TO:

28 OMITTED 28

29 EXT. EMBANKMENT - NIGHT 5. 00.01 (2021) 29

STOCK FOOTAGE FIREWORKS, the London Eye ablaze. It's 2021.

CUT TO DANIEL and RALPH squeezed together in the CROWD.

DANIEL

Okay. So. Right. Don't laugh. But will you marry me?

RALPH

Oh my God, you are hilarious.

DANIEL

But will you?

RALPH

Yes!

And they're delighted, kiss, hug.

CUT TO:

30 INT. ROSIE'S FLAT - DAY 6. 15.20 (2021)

30

A BIRTHDAY CAKE. '2 TODAY!'

LINCOLN in a high-chair, ROSIE, LEE, DANIEL & RALPH, MURIEL,
MR & MRS JAYASUNDERA & FRIENDS singing Happy Birthday.

CUT TO:

31 INT. BBC NEWSROOM - DAY 7. 18.10 (2021) 31

NEWSREADER to CAMERA.

NEWSREADER

...and China has named the new
island, Hong Sha Dao, which means
the Island of Red Sands.

NEWS GRAPHIC: A NEW ARTIFICIAL ISLAND in the South China Sea.
The birth of an island which could end the world, one day.

CUT TO:

32 INT. REGISTER OFFICE - DAY 8. 14.20 (2021) 32

DANIEL and RALPH in front of the REGISTRAR.

Behind them: ROSIE with LEE & LINCOLN, STEPHEN & CELESTE with
daughters BETHANY & RUBY, MURIEL, RALPH'S FAMILY & FRIENDS.

DANIEL

I, Daniel Samuel Lyons, take you,
Ralph Joseph Cousins, to be my
legally wedded husband.

JUMP CUT to guests clapping, whooping, as the newlyweds kiss.

CUT TO:

33 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, STUDY - DAY 9. 14.00 (2021) 33

MUSIC STOPS DEAD, sudden PAUSE.

MURIEL stands to attention. Hand on her heart. A little
upset. Dressed all in black. Watching the TV. Screen OOV,
but it's playing the Funeral March.

Long live the King.

And back to top speed as MUSIC BLASTS BACK IN -

CUT TO:

34 INT. POINT FIVE NEWSROOM - DAY 10. 18.01 (2022) 34

NEWSREADER to CAMERA, Number 10 in b/g, ELECTION 2022.

NEWSREADER

The date of the General Election
has been announced as Thursday May
the fifth.

CUT TO:

35 INT. NEWSNIGHT STUDIO - NIGHT 10. 22.40 (2022) 35

VIVIENNE ROOK being interviewed, insisting:

VIV ROOK

I will be standing, yes! It's
about time. But I'll be standing
as an independent candidate.

CUT TO:

36 INT. MUNICIPAL HALL - NIGHT 11. 03.30 (2022) 36

BBC TV FOOTAGE. The constituency of METLOCK, North West.
RETURNING OFFICER at the MICROPHONE. Behind her, CANDIDATES,
with VIVIENNE ROOK. She has a BLACK ASTERISK-BADGE on her
lapel (a slim white rectangle with a small asterisk top
right; the asterisk is her symbol, because she swore on TV).

RETURNING OFFICER

Vivienne Alison Rook,
Independent... 3,576.

Bad result, laughter from the crowd, heckling!

JUMP CUT, the Labour winner, ARCHIE GOOLDING, 50, bald,
pompous, arms aloft, surrounded by cheers. Viv standing
back, dignified, brave face. Biding her time.

JUMP CUT, 20 minutes later, Viv being interviewed.

VIV ROOK

Don't worry. I'll be back.
(right into camera)
You watch me. I'll be back!

CUT TO:

37 INT. ROSIE'S FLAT - DAY 12. 14.30 (2022) 37

BIRTHDAY CAKE: a great big 3.

LINCOLN, with ROSIE and DANIEL & RALPH, plus MURIEL, and MR &
MRS JAYASUNDERA & FRIENDS, all singing Happy Birthday.

INTERCUT WITH:

NEWS FOOTAGE: EXTREME WEATHER. STORMS, FLOODS, HEATWAVES,
WHIRLWINDS, TYPHOONS. The MUSIC, the EDIT, pushing on -

CUT TO:

38 INT. NETWORK 85/POINT FIVE NEWSROOMS - DAY 13. 18.06 (2022) 38

NEWSREADER to CAMERA, background photo: XI JINPING.

NETWORK 85 NEWSREADER
- President Xi Jinping has demanded
the removal of American warships
from within 200 miles of Hong Sha -

JUMP CUT to POINT FIVE NEWSREADER , background graphics:
UKRAINE.

POINT FIVE NEWSREADER
The Ukrainian army has taken
control of the government -

JUMP CUT TO NETWORK 85 NEWSREADER.

NETWORK 85 NEWSREADER
- they have invited the Soviet army
into Kiev to maintain stability -

CUT TO:

39 OMITTED 39

40 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 14. 14.00 (2022) 40

TABLE laden with BUFFET, CU on CAKE-BOX as STEPHEN lifts off
the lid, revealing a BIRTHDAY CAKE with the number 90.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, GARDEN - NIGHT 14. 19.00 (2022) 41

Nov. 2 2022. All singing 'Happy Birthday' to MURIEL, the
family gathered for the special occasion: DANIEL & RALPH with
ROSIE, LEE & LINCOLN, plus STEPHEN & CELESTE with BETHANY &
RUBY; Bethany's face obscured by a sleek new VR HEADSET.
Some on WINE, some on MUGS OF SOUP. All wrapped in COATS &
SCARVES around a BARBECUE, with HEATERS. Aglow in the dark.

JUMP CUT, Stephen giving a toast:

STEPHEN
And here's to absent friends. Our
beloved sister, out there on the
oceans deep, here's to Edith.

ALL
To Edith/Edith!/Aunty Edith.

JUMP CUT, everyone chatting, Muriel handing out cake.

MURIEL
We should do this every year. On
my birthday. It's a new tradition.

RALPH
It's freezing!

MURIEL
Let's call it the Winter Feast!

An eyeroll between Ralph and Celeste, the outsiders.

CUT TO:

42 INT. HAVE I GOT NEWS FOR YOU? STUDIO - NIGHT 14. 20.00 (2023)

ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG is the HOST, to CAMERA:

ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG
And with Germany still in mourning
after the death of Angela Merkel -

VIV ROOK
Oh good riddance.

Shock from the audience! VIVIANNE ROOK is on PAUL MERTON's
team. He looks askance, sighs. IAN HISLOP is laughing.

VIV ROOK (CONT'D)
Well I don't want to be rude but
the world just got a lot prettier.

IAN HISLOP
You've got a great future in
politics, Viv!

PAUL MERTON
(to Ian)
That's the rudest thing you've ever
said to anyone.

CUT TO:

43 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 15. 21.10 (2023)

43

DANIEL and RALPH watching Have I Got News For You, Ralph with
a savage laugh, while texting, Daniel horrified.

DANIEL
Why is she even on?! She's not
anyone, she's no one!

YEARS & YEARS. EPISODE 1. RUSSELL T DAVIES. DOUBLE GREEN AMENDS 19A

RALPH
Oh, lighten up!

CUT TO:

44 EXT. STOCK FOOTAGE. N.Y.E. FIREWORKS - NIGHT 16. 00.01 (2024) 44
FX SHOT: LASERS write in the smoke above London: 2024.

CUT TO:

45 INT. ROSIE'S FLAT - DAY 17. 15.06 (2024) 45
BIRTHDAY CAKE. A big blue 5.
5-year-old LINCOLN LYONS blows out candles. His mother ROSIE LYONS is now 33, with 10-year-old son LEE. Rosie's brother DANIEL is 35, his husband RALPH is 35, and grandmother MURIEL's 91. Plus MR & MRS JAYASUNDERA and FRIENDS, all packed into the kitchen, cheering Lincoln.

And then Lincoln cheers himself, everyone laughing.

CUT TO:

46 INT. DANIEL'S BATHROOM - DAY 18. 07.10 (2024) 46
DANIEL in the SHOWER.
Radio 4: reports of Ukrainian refugees, fleeing the Russian regime, protests at Dover to stop them entering the UK.
BUT NOW, everything starts SLOWING DOWN, as sc.26-46 comes to an end. The drive, music, energy ENDING. Becoming just the echo of a bathroom, a radio voice, the splash of water. The ordinariness should be stunning. This scene is a landing-strip, a slice of domesticity, to settle into normality.

Then RALPH carries a CHAIR into the bathroom.

He stands on the chair to reach over the glass shower screen.

RALPH
Pass me the soap.

Daniel does so, Ralph above him, leaning over the glass to wash his hands in the shower, on top of Daniel's head.

DANIEL
What are you doing that for?

RALPH
I just had a shit downstairs. And you tell me off when I run the tap.

DANIEL
Have you got shitty hands?!

RALPH
I haven't got actual shit on my hands.

DANIEL

Well, don't! Get off! Stop it!

Daniel trapped, half-trying to dodge the water.

RALPH

I'm done.

Hands the soap back to Daniel.

DANIEL

That's disgusting.

RALPH

Your rules.

And Ralph hops down, to dry his hands. But that's how the relationship is, now. Niggly.

CUT TO:

47 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN DAY 18. 08.15 (2024)7

CELESTE, now 42, walks in, ready for work.

She runs this house, she's the powerhouse at the centre, organising everything, while over the years, STEPHEN's taken a back seat. He's now 42, in t-shirt & boxers, at work on his laptop - an impossibly slim laptop. With the kids growing up, he's now a Financial Advisor, full-time.

Celeste grabs a coffee, kisses RUBY, now 13, happy, sharp, drinking juice with CLYDE, 13, tall, school jock, nice lad.

CELESTE

Morning. You look nice. Hello Clyde. Stephen, I left that thing on the shelf, don't forget it, it needs to go today. So tell me Clyde, are you living here now?

CLYDE

Mum says, thank you very much.

CELESTE

That's every day this week, I'll send her a bill. Morning -

- and a kiss on the head for BETHANY.

BETHANY BISME-LYONS is 17, now. Uncomfortable in herself. She sits with a VITAMIN BAR, but she's wearing a FILTER. It's a flat panel of graphene IN FRONT OF HER FACE like a welder's mask, held in place by a thin hook over the ears. But the graphene's so thin, it's only visible when light catches it at certain angles.

Otherwise, the whole thing is invisible, and acts as a screen to IMPOSE A FILTER over Bethany's face. Like, today, a Snapchat filter changes a face to add dog ears, nose, a lolling tongue; this, here, is imposed on Bethany's face in real life. She's got the setting on DOG. She has BIG EYES, a BLACK SNUB NOSE, FURRY EARS. The superimposed elements move with her face.

A microphone within the mask makes her voice high and funny.

BETHANY

Hello mummeeee.

CELESTE

And how's Bethany under there?

BETHANY

She's fiiiine!

CELESTE

Well it would be nice to see her one day, give her my love.

STEPHEN

Signor, remind Edith, it's Gran's birthday on the 2nd.

SIGNOR VOICE

Reminder to Edith Lyons, sent.

CELESTE

Oh God, the Winter Feast, do we really have to go?

STEPHEN

Don't be daft, we'll have a nice time. Plus! It means we don't have to see them at Christmas.

Ruby & Clyde standing, heading off.

RUBY

Okay, nobody can use the Vision tonight cos me and Clyde have booked it, we've got upstairs from 7 till 10, have you got that?

STEPHEN

Clyde and I.

RUBY

It's the worldwide premiere of Guardians 4, so you can't interrupt, not for anything.

CLYDE

Chris Pratt is such a hot Daddy, he could have me any day. Bye!

And they're gone, off to school. Stephen and Celeste boggle!

CELESTE
Thirteen years old.

Stephen's laptop and Celeste's mobile PING!

STEPHEN
Bethany says, she's booked us for
Saturday, are you free?

Celeste edgy. Bethany just stares. Big cartoon eyes.

CELESTE
Bethany sweetheart, you don't need
to make an appointment with me.
I'm here. Right in front of you.

BETHANY
I'm sowwee mummee.

CELESTE
Seriously, though. Really. I
might have to start limiting Filter
time, just talk to me properly.

BETHANY
Sowweee priddy mummeee.

CELESTE
D'you want me to take that off you?

STEPHEN
Don't, now, it's all right.

CELESTE
No it's not, it's not all right.
Beth. I'm here. In front of you.

Celeste leans in. CAMERA creeps round CU Bethany, so it can
see BEHIND THE FILTER. Bethany just a scared girl.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
If you want to talk to us, you
don't need to make an appointment.
Why don't you turn off that Filter?
So we can see you. Properly.

Bethany takes a breath. Almost. But...

BETHANY
Sowweeeee.

CELESTE
Oh for God's sake - !

Celeste's got a short fuse with Bethany, but only because
Bethany worries her so much. Stephen's always peacekeeping:

STEPHEN

I think if Beth wants to see us,
then Saturday makes sense. Because
you won't be rushing off, and
Ruby's at her sexfighting class, so
the three of us can sit down
together and have a nice long chat.
Isn't that right, Beth?

Bethany nods.

CELESTE

I like how that became my fault.
Rushing off.
(to Bethany)
But yes. Okay. Saturday.

Bethany controls it from her MOBILE, clicks it from DOG to
BABY. Her face becomes a BIG BABY's, mouth all wriggly.

BETHANY

Yaaaay! Fank oo! Fank oo!

The smiling baby hiccups, gurgles, giggles.

Celeste and Stephen, chilled to the bone.

CUT TO:

48

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 18. 08.20 (2024)

48

DANIEL slams the front door, hurrying out on Ralph. He's now
ready for work, heading straight to his car.

(The outside world stays looking NORMAL. Apart from the
I.T., there's nothing flash or futuristic. If fashions have
moved on, it's calm; say, collarless shirts are in, but even
then, if you're over 35, you've settled into your own thing.
Younger characters will show more changes, but for now, most
cars are 5, 6 years old. Houses and streets don't change.)

Daniel sees his NEIGHBOUR, three doors down, heading out.
FRAN BAXTER, 40, black, dreadlocked. They're strangers,
she's new. In a few years, they will go to hell together.

FAST JUMP CUTS, Daniel at the wheel of his car. Pulling out.
Passing Fran, walking along. SLOWING, lowering the window.

DANIEL

Not got your car?

FRAN

I was in Rusholme last night, it
was all sealed off with that bomb
factory, I've got to go and get it.

DANIEL
I'll take you. About time we said
hello. It's Daniel.

FRAN
I'm Fran. Fran Baxter. Thank you!

CUT TO:

49 EXT. CITY STREETS/INT. CAR - DAY 18. 08.25 (2024) 49

FIVE MINUTES LATER, DANIEL and FRAN driving along.

DANIEL
So what brought you up here?

FRAN
Oh, I gave up on London, in the
end. I tried my best. But it
finally beat me.

DANIEL
Why? Too expensive?

FRAN
£12 for a coffee. And those areas,
getting fenced off, like you can
only enter Kensington if you're
means-tested! I thought, I've had
enough, I can do my job anywhere.

DANIEL

Which is what? What do you do?

FRAN

I'm a Storyteller.

DANIEL

Oh, right, good. What's that?

FRAN

I tell stories. For a living. I go into schools and businesses, I teach masterclasses. The shape of stories and the need for them. You think it's ridiculous, don't you?

DANIEL

No! Not at all.

FRAN

It's a real thing though, it's worldwide, I've done a TED talk.

DANIEL

Oh God, wow.

FRAN

Well, it was TED X, but it's amazing in schools. Kids love it. Like, stories help them to make sense of the world. Is your sister Edith Lyons?

DANIEL

Yes. Yes she is, yeah. Why? How d'you know? Who said? You'd get on with her, she'd love you.

FRAN

Mike at number 12 told me. I think she's amazing, I've read all of her books.

Daniel's just a bit grudging about his sister.

DANIEL

They're not exactly books. They're more like essays that never stop. But no, yeah, I haven't seen her for years, she didn't even come home when our mum died. She's in Lagos now. Causing trouble.

FRAN

And you work for the council, yeah?

DANIEL
Yeah, I'm just a Housing Officer.
I know. Boring.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. CONTAINER ESTATE - DAY 18. 11.30 (2024) 50

DANIEL, with clipboard, shouting:

DANIEL
No! No! No!

In the middle of BEDLAM.

It's a HUGE BUILDING SITE, made out of metal SHIPPING CONTAINERS. Like a shipyard, but inland. The containers have been STACKED ON TOP OF EACH OTHER, two storeys high, with makeshift wooden runways and stairs connecting them. Three doors welded into each container, making three HOMES. They're wired up and plumbed with visible pipes and wires.

They are HOMES FOR REFUGEES. (They're being suggested now, in 2017 - search 'shipping container homes' or Container City. For the working model of this: snoozeboxhotel-co.uk. Though that's the upmarket version, Daniel's estate is cheaper, rougher, more of an emergency.) The ground's a mudbath, Daniel and his ASSISTANT VIJAY BABU, 23, a geeky lad, yomping through in wellies and yellow HI-VIZ JACKETS.

To one side, in the distance, behind fences: CRANES, WORKMEN lowering more CONTAINERS into place. Doubling the size.

To the other side, on the road: COACHES arriving, discharging REFUGEES, with one OPEN TRUCK with REFUGEES standing in the back, like wartime. There's a chaotic system, COUNCIL STAFF in hi-viz jackets at tables, taking names, directing everyone over to a LARGE CANVASSED AREA labelled DIVESTITURE.

In the middle, life goes on. KIDS, football, a barbecue.

Daniel shouting at a REVERSING 4X4. Expensive 2024 model, driven by DEBBIE GREEN, 35, Short, round, hostile.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
No cars on site! Read the signs.
Parking's at Denholm Fields.

DEBBIE
Well I don't know where that is.
I'm Debbie Green, they sent me from
Blackpool. I'm with the Exchange.

DANIEL

Okay, go back to the road, turn right, follow the parking signs, then come back and find me. Daniel Lyons. I can show you what's what.

DEBBIE

Thanks Danny!

DANIEL

Daniel.

And she drives off.

CUT TO:

51

EXT. CONTAINER ESTATE - DAY 18. 11.45 (2024)

51

15 MINUTES later. DEBBIE GREEN in wellies & hi-viz, taking notes as she walks with DANIEL and VIJAY BABU. All of this on the hoof, through the mud. She hates every second of it.

Taking in the REFUGEES, the CONTAINERS, the CHAOS.

DANIEL

...so they arrive and they're sent over there, to Divestiture. That's where they have to abandon all their belongings, except clothes and essentials. Cos you wouldn't believe what they try to bring in. Chairs. And heirlooms. Pets! We keep saying, they're not homes, they're emergency housing.

DEBBIE

How many, on site?

VIJAY

Sixty, so far. But expanding to 200 by the end of the week.

DANIEL

So what's the plan in Blackpool? Are you building one of these?

DEBBIE

Oh God no, I'm trying to stop them!

DANIEL

What d'you mean?

DEBBIE

We don't want this, it's a bloody nightmare. I voted leave.

DANIEL

These aren't immigrants. These are refugees. There's a difference. Do you know what the difference is?

DEBBIE

I think it's one thing taking in starving kids. But not Ukrainians! They've got shops over there, they've got TV. They've got roads!

VIJAY

They've got soldiers on the streets.

DEBBIE

Are we at war with Russia?

VIJAY

No, not yet.

DEBBIE

Then they're not refugees. They're asylum seekers. And that's a very different apple in the custard.

DANIEL

97% of Ukraine voted for Russian citizenship. If you can believe that wasn't fixed. And now Russia's got the names of the other 3%, whether that's legal or not, and they're talking about rehousing them, and they won't give a definition of what rehousing means. Which is terrifying. Frankly. In other words, it's a purge. So these people are refugees, which means they're allowed to seek asylum, and that's got nothing to do with Europe, we're still part of the United Nations, whether you like it or not, who says apple in the custard?

DEBBIE

My mother.

DANIEL

She's an idiot. Vijay. Get her off the site.

He strides on. A lion at work! Gives a FOLDER to a WOMAN -

DANIEL (CONT'D)

- June, that's for D.P., thanks -

Runs up WOODEN STAIRS, SECOND STOREY, looks at his clipboard -

DANIEL (CONT'D)

- fifteen, fifteen -

- passing 13, 14, final DOOR, 15, knocks and enters -

CUT TO:

52 INT. ROOM 15, CONTAINER ESTATE - DAY 18. 11.47 (2024) 52

- and there's VIKTOR GORAYA, 29, yellow t-shirt, a lanky strip of muscle, always sort-of-smiling. Daniel immediately thinks 'Oof.' But he's professional, hides it.

The room is small. One third of a container. Like the real Snoozebox Hotel layout, but cheaper. BUNK BEDS, shower & sink, small table and chair. Simple, efficient, ingenious.

DANIEL

Hi there, Mr Barabash, you applied for a transfer to Dublin because...
(rifles through papers)
...you've got family there, is that right? Sorry, how's your English?

VIKTOR

It's good.

DANIEL

Okay, we can't process that until the Sanctuary Scheme has worked out a border deal with Ireland. And that's a long way off, so we can't do anything right now. Sorry.

VIKTOR

Good. But. I'm not Mr Barabash.

DANIEL

Oh. Right. Is he around?

VIKTOR

No, he's gone.

DANIEL

Where's he gone?

VIKTOR

Dublin.

DANIEL

Well I'm here to tell him he can't.

VIKTOR

That bastard.

Both laugh.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

My name's Viktor. Viktor Goraya.

DANIEL

Right. I should know that,
shouldn't I? I'm with Housing.
Daniel. I'm normally more
efficient than this, I promise.

VIKTOR

I thought you'd come to join me.
(of the bunks)
They said I'd have to share. I
thought, wow, I've got lucky.

DANIEL

(did he just..?)
Yeah.
(makes to go)
Anyway. Thanks. I'd better...
(decides to stay)
So how are you settling in?

JUMP CUT TO Daniel and Viktor with coffee. Two men in a
small space. Daniel on the chair, Viktor on the lower bunk.
There's something very sexy about a man on a bunk bed.

VIKTOR

...they got me a lawyer, Mrs
Vennering, she prepares my case.
For asylum. It'll take months,
so... thank you for my home!

DANIEL

You were meant to have proper
insulation. But the money ran out.
The roof's only made of a light
gauge steel, so... Sorry, I could
talk about containers forever.
(deliberately mentions:)
My boyfriend gets sick of it.

VIKTOR

Yeah.

Pause.

DANIEL

So... What does your lawyer say?
I mean, what are your chances?

VIKTOR

Well they need to prove. Torture.
That I was tortured.

DANIEL

Oh right.

VIKTOR

They asked me questions and applied electricity to the soles of my feet. I think that is torture.

DANIEL

Course it is. God, that's terrible. I'm so sorry.

VIKTOR

They demand proof, here, in the UK. Which, I understand. But they electrocute, because it leaves no marks. So no proof.

He takes his trainer off, extends his leg so his bare foot is in Daniel's lap. Daniel naturally holds it, gently.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

You see? There was a tiny scar. Where the electrode goes in. But not any more, it fades away.

DANIEL

Does it still hurt?

VIKTOR

Yeah. But it's okay.

And Daniel smooths Viktor's feet. Genuinely, kindly.

DANIEL

What were they asking you? What sort of questions?

VIKTOR

My friends. Their names. Addresses. The bars we'd go to.

DANIEL

But I thought... it's legal in Ukraine, isn't it?

VIKTOR

Not with the new Russian laws. But the point is, the inquisitors were Ukrainian. They were people who'd been waiting a long time.

(smiles; of his feet)

That's nice.

Crucial moment. But...

DANIEL

Better get back to work.

VIKTOR

Well. Say hello. Any time.

DANIEL
I know. But we're not allowed
to... Preferential treatment,
y'know. Anyway! Thanks.

And Daniel heads off. Head spinning with this man.

CUT TO:

53 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 18. 23.10 (2024) 53

Night. Pools of light. Classy, simple bedroom, huge bed.
CELESTE sitting up with her state-of-the-art iPad; almost a
single paper-thin sheet. STEPHEN curled up, half-asleep.

CELESTE
Signor. Give me Bethany's internet
history, past 24 hours.

SIGNOR VOICE
That account is private.

CELESTE
Germany. Lemon. Five. Parasol.

STEPHEN
(surfacing)
Don't. We promised them.

CELESTE
Signor, give me Bethany's internet
history, past 24 hours.

The iPad fills up with a LIST. Stephen can't resist a look.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
Well there we are. I said so.

The list contains: *Trans helpline. Your questions about
trans issues. A Trans Life. Trans Hope. Trans for teens.*

They're okay, as they take it in. Both emotional, but not
surprised. They'll cope. He moves closer, holds her.

STEPHEN
Bless her.

CELESTE
It's okay. She'll be fine. He'll
be fine. They'll be fine?

STEPHEN
Oh God.

And both laugh a little, as she hugs him back.

CUT TO:

54 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - DAY 19. 11.30 (2024) 54

Saturday. The appointment. Strangely formal for mother, father and daughter. CELESTE and STEPHEN sit opposite BETHANY. The house empty, clean, silent, bright with light.

Bethany scared. Brave. Her parents so dying to help, they're ready with all the right words, to do whatever she wants. But first, they've got to let her do this herself.

BETHANY

I just want you to know...

Pause.

But she's scared, flicks her ear, the near-invisible GRAPHENE FILTER-VISOR covers her face, and she's a DOE-EYED DEER.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

I wuv you mummee an daddee.

CELESTE

I know you do, sweetheart. And I'm going to ask you to take the Filter off. Will you do that for me?

And Bethany does. It clatters to the table - more visible, when off, or you'd never find it. Bethany, deep breath.

BETHANY

I think. I've been uncomfortable.
For a very long time.

CELESTE

We know.

Stephen makes a tiny gesture. Ssh. Let her talk.

BETHANY

I've been thinking. Ever since I was born. I don't belong in this body.

(she said it!)

Oh my God.

STEPHEN

It's okay.

CELESTE

It's really okay, darling.

BETHANY

I've been reading up on it. And...
I think I'm trans.

CELESTE

Oh sweetheart.

And she goes to her, gives her a kiss, a hug.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
It's all right, darling. I swear.

STEPHEN
It really is. Look at us! We're fine. We're completely fine. Aren't we? And I know we might be a bit slow and a bit old, and this is going to be confusing for us, and we'll make a mess of it sometimes. But we love you.

CELESTE
We love you, darling, we absolutely love you, we always will.

Celeste goes back to her seat, tearful, happy. But also, subtly, trying to get Bethany to step back from this.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
I mean. We don't need to rush. We've got lots of time, all of us together, to... talk about this.

STEPHEN
And if it turns out we've got a lovely son instead of a lovely daughter, we'll be happy.

BETHANY
No I'm not transexual.

Bethany's fear is going, now. A glint of the zealot.

STEPHEN
Oh.

CELESTE
Is that not the word now?

STEPHEN
But... you said trans.

CELESTE
What do we call you then?

BETHANY
I'm not transexual. I'm transhuman.

STEPHEN
...okay.

CELESTE
I'm sorry, they keep changing the words, I don't know the difference.

BETHANY

I don't want to change sex.

STEPHEN

Well, no, sure, we say gender now,
don't we? Sorry!

BETHANY

I said, I'm not comfortable with my
body. So I want to get rid of it.
This... thing. All the arms and
legs and every single bit of it. I
don't want to be flesh. I'm really
sorry, but I'm going to escape this
thing. And become digital.

STEPHEN

...what d'you mean?

BETHANY

They say. One day. Soon. They'll
have clinics. In Switzerland.
Where you can go and sign a form,
and they'll take your brain and
download it. Into the cloud.

STEPHEN

And your body..?

BETHANY

Recycled. Into the earth.

CELESTE

So you want to kill yourself?

BETHANY

I want to live forever. As
information. Because that's what
transhumans are, mum. Not male.
Or female. But better. Where I'm
going, there's no life or death,
there's only data. I will be data.

Celeste and Stephen. The silence.

And then...

JUMP CUT, FIVE MINUTES LATER, Bethany - streaming with tears,
hysterical, SLAMMING THE DOOR, running upstairs -

BETHANY (CONT'D)

You PROMISED me! You LIARS!

Celeste heaving the door open to follow and SHOUT UP:

CELESTE

And if you think you're going
online, I'm turning it OFF!

(MORE)

CELESTE (CONT'D)
I will go ANALOGUE if I have to!
So you can't read any more of that
SHIT!

She's despairing. Looks at Stephen. But he's lost too.

CUT TO:

55

EXT. CONTAINER ESTATE - NIGHT 19. 21.00 (2024)

55

FRAN BAXTER in firelight.

FRAN
...then the old woman clung to her
daughter, because she was so
afraid. She said, my daughter, I
can't go home! Waiting on the
road, out there in the night, are
three terrible creatures. There is
a tiger, there is a bear, and there
is a wolf. And they will eat me!

WIDER, she's in electric light too, strings of lightbulbs
around a central area. DANIEL invited her; she's giving her
show in the middle of the CONTAINER ESTATE. 60-70 CHAIRS, 2
thirds FULL, AUDIENCE enraptured, some residents, some staff.
Behind Fran, her regular TROUPE of MUSICIANS.

And DANIEL and VIKTOR sit together, at the edge. Loving it.

Fran tells her story in a light Jamaican accent. For some
lines, she's already drilled them in audience participation.

FRAN (CONT'D)
But the daughter said, look! What
about the pumpkin? Because she
still had the pumpkin shell from
making the pumpkin soup. And the
pumpkin shell was huge! She said,
mother, get inside the pumpkin. So
the old woman did, and as she bent
over and curled up tight, all the
bones in her back went crick!

AUDIENCE
Crack!

FRAN
Crick!

AUDIENCE
Crack!

FRAN
Crick!

AUDIENCE

Crack!

FRAN

Oh those old bones! But the old woman got inside, and her daughter sealed up the pumpkin with candle wax, and rolled it to the door...

And in the middle of the story...

Discreetly, unseen, Daniel and Viktor hold hands.

CUT TO:

56 EXT. CONTAINER ESTATE - NIGHT 19. 22.00 (2024)

56

AN HOUR LATER. A quiet area, away from the main activity. No one else around. This feels secret, even illegal. DANIEL and VIKTOR; Viktor wanting to go one way, Daniel the other.

DANIEL

I'd better go home.

VIKTOR

Stay.

Pause.

DANIEL

Sorry.

And they go their separate ways.

CUT TO:

57 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT 19. 23.00 (2024)

57

RALPH sitting up in bed, playing a NEW GAME on his MOBILE, as DANIEL slides into bed.

RALPH

Hey. Two ticks.

DANIEL

S'okay.

And Daniel just rolls over, turns away.

His phone goes *ping!*

MESSAGE: Edith called.

Daniel lies there. His husband playing with his phone on one side. The sister he hardly knows on the other. To hell with them all, he just hunkers down to sleep, miserable.

CUT TO:

58 EXT. PRIMARY SCHOOL - DAY 20. 08.40 (2024)

58

School run. ROSIE at the wheel of her car, LEE getting out, LINCOLN strapped into the back seat. (RADIO burbling in b/g, talking about Hong Sha. INTERVIEWER: 'How can the Chinese build an island?' EXPERT: 'With a lot of sand, and rocks, they just do! It's been underway since 2014, they've built a string of islands, in the South China Sea, and populated them. The problem is, who says this new land is part of China? America certainly disagrees. And now a flyover has seen evidence of nuclear missile silos on Hong Sha Dao...')

But as Lee scarpers into the school, Rosie's waiting for...

TONY WATTS, a nice, big, chunky, smiling Welsh man, standing outside his car to let out his daughter, 10 year old MILLY.

He gives Rosie a smile.

ROSIE

Hiya. It's Tony, isn't it?

TONY

That's right.

ROSIE

I'm Rosie. Rosie Lyons. There's no Mr Lyons. In case you were wondering.

CUT TO:

58A EXT. STREET NEAR SCHOOL - DAY 20. 09.00 (2024)

58A *

20 MINUTES LATER, ROSIE & LINCOLN with TONY WATTS getting a coffee from a KOFFEE KART. Both smiling, flirting, happy. *

TONY *

...so she ran off. Overnight! *
Literally packed her bags and went. *
Milly was only four, and I had to *
cope, all on my own. *

ROSIE *

I hope you're not expecting a *
medal. Single dad. *

TONY *

No, I'm just saying. God, you're *
hard work. *

ROSIE
Yes I am. Get used to it.

TONY
So who've you got, Lincoln and Lee?

ROSIE
(of Lincoln)
Yup. His dad's called Gau, he was nice enough but he went back home to Beijing when his mum died. She fell off a roof, it was terrible. Although. I knew he'd go back in the end, he was never going to stay. And Lee's dad was a man called Terry Malone, he's living in Slough with a wife and three daughters, but he stays in touch, he sends money. We first got together at school. I don't mean childhood sweethearts, I mean school disco, sort of thing.

TONY
So d'you work? Or are those two full time?

ROSIE
Oh God, no, I've got a job, I'd go crackers, stuck at home with two boys all day.

TONY
So what d'you do?

ROSIE
I'm a championship wrestler.

They both laugh!

ROSIE (CONT'D)
No, I'm the Chef Manager, on a job share, at the big school. 1,200 pupils, it's hard work. So! Mr Tony Watts. Now you know everything, you can ask me out!

TONY
Oh, right, can I?!

ROSIE
Yes you can. Hurry up!

TONY
All right. What d'you fancy? This Saturday, does that work? We could go out for dinner.

ROSIE
No way, have you seen that new Food
Tax? D'you cook? I can cook.

TONY
No, but you spend all day in a
canteen, I'll cook, I'll do it.

ROSIE
Are you any good?

TONY
You tell me. Chef Manager.

ROSIE
Give me your address, then.

TONY
Okay. Eight o'clock, Saturday?

ROSIE
Eight o'clock it is.

They hold out their MOBILES, to swap addresses. The phones
touch, mid-air. *Ping!* Swapped.

And that's romantic. Both grinning.

CUT TO:

58B INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, A ROOM - DAY 21. 11.00 (2024) 58B

MURIEL walks in with two MUGS OF TEA, for...

DANIEL and RALPH. They're decorating the room. (Any room,
upstairs.) The walls have been stripped. They've got a
stepladder, and have laid big sheets on the floor. Both
dressed in paint-dirty dungarees, both wearing beanies, like
they've dressed up a bit, to have a laugh.

MURIEL
Here we are. My Beanie Boys. I'll
make a bacon sandwich later on.

RALPH
Beautiful, that'll do me.

DANIEL
I looked in that back bedroom,
Gran, we can't paint it, it's too
damp, on the outer wall, you need
proper work done in there.

MURIEL
Zinc! You just cover it up with
zinc paint.

DANIEL
I know, but that's not a proper
solution. This house needs money,
it's held together by cobwebs.

MURIEL
We'll manage. All will be well.
Don't let me interrupt.
(going, but pauses)
You look very nice in dungarees,
Ralph. Sexy.

RALPH
You cheeky thing.

With a wink, she goes. They get busy, but...

DANIEL
You do actually look quite hot in
dungarees.

RALPH
We could try them at home. Later.

DANIEL
That'd be nice.
(pause)
It's about time.

Instantly, the flirting crushed. Both niggling:

RALPH
You're the one who works late.

DANIEL
Okay.

RALPH
Well.

DANIEL
Forget I said anything.
(pause, but can't stop:)
And you're the one who's never off
his phone.

RALPH
Had to have the last word.

DANIEL
Well it's true.

RALPH
Did you read that link I sent you?

DANIEL
No, not yet.

RALPH	*
You see? I'm sharing stuff, I'm	*
trying, you could join in more.	*
DANIEL	*
Okay, what did it say?	*
Ralph genuinely excited:	*
RALPH	*
It's amazing. It's this site. It	*
proves that germs don't exist.	*
DANIEL	*
...right.	*
RALPH	*
That's what it says. No such thing	*
as germs. Whole thing, faked by	*
the pharmaceutical industry.	*
DANIEL	*
But that's bollocks. Don't do	*
that. You'll be joining the Flat	*
Earth Society next.	*
RALPH	*
Now that stuff is fascinating.	*
DANIEL	*
Ohhh no way.	*
RALPH	*
Have you read it?	*
DANIEL	*
No, and I never will.	*
RALPH	*
Well that's a bit ignorant, don't	*
you think? How's that gonna help?	*
Not-reading something?	*
DANIEL	*
You're not saying the world is	*
flat? For God's sake, Ralph, you	*
teach children, please don't say	*
the world is flat.	*
RALPH	*
No, I'm not saying it is, I'm just	*
keeping an open mind. It's an	*
option.	*

DANIEL
How? How is it an option? We've
been to India, we've travelled
halfway round the Earth, we've seen
it. How d'you think the horizon
curves? We've seen it from a
plane. There's a curve.

RALPH
That's what a disc would look like.

DANIEL
You've got GPS in your car.

RALPH
With a flat screen.

DANIEL
The G stands for Global.

RALPH
So? Apple computers aren't made
from apples.

DANIEL
But...! That's not even...!

RALPH
Look. I'm not saying I'm
absolutely right, which means you
can't say I'm absolutely wrong.
Except you're never gonna stop, are
you? God help anyone trying to
contradict you, Dan. If I do go
online all the time, it's so I can
hear different voices, instead of
the one insistent voice I get at
home, over and over again. So the
only problem here. Is you.

CUT TO:

58C EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 21. 15.00 (2024)

58C *

DANIEL at an outdoor TAP. Washing out his TRAY OF PAINT.
But on his mobile to Stephen, livid.

DANIEL
I swear to God, it's like
intelligence is going backwards.
We're in reverse. If it's not the
moon landings, or 9/11, it's... I
don't know, the Loch Ness Monster!
The human race is becoming more
stupid. Right in front of our
eyes. I mean, what do you do?
When your husband is too thick?

CONT. INTERCUT with Sc.58D.

CUT TO:

58D INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY 21. 15.01 (2024)

58D

LONDON, artisan coffee shop. STEPHEN works here for a few hours every day, with his LAPTOP. Right now, he's on his MOBILE to Daniel, INTERCUT with Sc.58C.

STEPHEN

You could ask Celeste, she's got a few theories about that.

DANIEL

But it's driving me mad. It's not just Ralph, it's everywhere.

STEPHEN

I know. Sometimes I think we went too far. Like we imagined too much. We sent those probes out into space, we went all the way to the edge of the solar system, and we built the Hadron Collider, and the internet, we painted all those paintings and wrote all those great songs and then... pop! Whatever we had, we punctured it. Now it's all collapsing. Nothing we can do.

DANIEL

Our brains are devolving. Seriously, what if they are?

STEPHEN

Some species don't survive. Actually, all species don't survive. In the end.

DANIEL

How can you say that, with kids?

STEPHEN

I've got a bun.

And he has, a nice sticky BUN.

DANIEL

Ooh, what sort?

STEPHEN

It's this new thing, where they put broccoli on top, but they extract the natural sugars, and burn them, so it's like toffee, broccoli toffee. It's amazing.

DANIEL
And what's it cost?

STEPHEN
Fifteen quid.

DANIEL
Oh my God. That's ridiculous. I
don't know how you do it, living in
London, it would drive me mad.

STEPHEN
It's got broccoli toffee.
(grim again, of his screen)
And on the downside. I've got a
daughter who wants to digitise
herself. And chuck her body away.

On his screen: Transhuman website.

DANIEL
So what's she saying now?

STEPHEN
Nothing, cos we made a fuss, so now
she doesn't mention it at all.
Which is worse. But I don't know.
Downloading your brain. Which one
is she, then, is she being stupid,
or is she being clever?

DANIEL
It can't actually be done though,
can it? It's not real.

STEPHEN
You're denying everything.

DANIEL
Oh God. Is that who I am now?
What's real? What isn't? How do
we know?

Daniel sighs. Pause.

STEPHEN
You okay?

DANIEL
Yeah.

STEPHEN
Are you, though? I dunno.
Recently. You've been a bit...

DANIEL
Just work.

STEPHEN

Is it those Ukrainians, driving you
mad?

Daniel laughs, bitter, thinking of Viktor.

DANIEL

Oh. Yeah. Exactly that. Hah!
Yes, that's exactly what it is.

CUT TO:

58E INT. ROSIE'S FLAT - NIGHT 21. 20.00 (2024)

58E

ROSIE, excited, all dressed up for her night with Tony Watts.

ROSIE

Ta-daa, what d'you think? Am I
gorgeous? Don't all clap at once,
thank you, fans.

And facing her, LINCOLN, LEE and babysitter LESLEY, a big
lass, late-20s, smiling.

LESLEY

Stop faffing about and head off,
you'll be late.

As Rosie gives the boys a kiss:

ROSIE

Now behave for Lesley, you two,
she's only on three quid an hour.

LESLEY

I've got popcorn and Mike's
universal password, we'll be fine.

ROSIE

And if mummy... Has a nice time
with her friend, and talks too much
and falls asleep, on his settee,
then I'll see you in the morning.

LESLEY

Go Rosie! Good luck!

ROSIE

Bye bye!

Lesley starts clapping, the boys WHOOP, CHEER, and Rosie
laughs, waving, thank you thank you, to claps and cheers and
NOISE, as she heads off, out of the flat.

CUT TO:

59 OMITTED 59 *

60 OMITTED 60

60A INT. TONY'S FLAT, KITCHEN - NIGHT 21. 20.20 (2024) 60A

TONY WATTS's flat is nice and untidy, in a block near ROSIE's, same sort of layout. He's put on a date night for ROSIE in his own kitchen. Check tablecloth and a candle, as a joke. Takeaway pizza. Rosie delighted.

TONY

There wasn't even a custody battle.
She was too drunk. I spent five
hundred quid on a lawyer, she
didn't even turn up.

ROSIE
But your little Milly's all right
though? She looks happy enough.

TONY
Oh she's amazing. Full of beans.
I've got to be honest, we're like
best mates now, the two of us.
Well, me and her and Keith.

ROSIE
Who's Keith?

CUT TO:

61 INT. TONY'S FLAT - NIGHT 21. 20.23 (2024)

61

TONY opens a cupboard door. There's KEITH, a Japanese Robot.
Like those ones on the news, white plastic, cheaper, but kind
of cute. Keith is about three foot tall.

ROSIE
Oh my God. There he is.

TONY
Keith! Forward two feet.

Keith trundles forward, buzzzz.

ROSIE
Ahh, he's brilliant, does he talk?

TONY
Only simple things. Hello Keith.

KEITH
Hello Tony.

ROSIE
Oh, it freaks me out a bit.

TONY
Naah, they keep telling us these
things are going to rule the world
but all he can do is fetch a can of
pop from the fridge. She loves him
though. Milly loves Keith, yes?

Keith nods, zzzzp, zzzzp.

ROSIE
And Milly's at your sister's, yeah?

A long look between them...

CUT TO:

62 INT. TONY'S FLAT, BEDROOM - NIGHT 21. 20.35 (2024) 62

On the bed, snogging, fumbling, ROSIE in bra & pants, TONY WATTS in his boxers, both loving it. He's nice and cautious:

TONY
Are you okay? I mean, is there
anything I should do? Or not do?

ROSIE
Yeah, just get on with it!
(both laugh)
But. Have you got a condom?

TONY
Yeah, don't worry! I'm fully
equipped. Hold on!

He opens a bedside drawer, gets out a CONDOM, closes it.

ROSIE
What was that?

TONY
What?

ROSIE
That!

And she reaches across, opens the drawer. Pulls out a blue transparent plastic HOLLOW TUBE, six inches long. OK, seven. She's suspicious, though still smiling. He's embarrassed.

TONY
It's just a... thing.

ROSIE
I know it is, but what d'you do
with it?

TONY
I get lonely, y'know.

But she's fascinated by the tip. The WHITE PLASTIC SURROUND.

ROSIE
...oh my God.

CUT TO:

63 INT. TONY'S FLAT - NIGHT 21. 20.37 (2024) 63

ROSIE, determined, now in shirt & knickers, heads for KEITH. TONY, still in his boxers, blunders after her, worried.

TONY
Don't now Rosie, come back to bed.

But she's carrying the HOLLOW TUBE. Goes up to Keith. She's recognised the WHITE PLASTIC SURROUND; it matches his JAW. Keith's original mouth slides OUT and the hollow tube slides IN. Keith, 3ft tall, now with a surprised open O-mouth.

Rosie turns to Tony. Appalled.

ROSIE
You have sex with your robot.

CUT TO:

64 DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 22. 18.10 (2024) 64
DANIEL howls with laughter.

DANIEL
Oh my God!

CUT TO:

65 INT. STEPHEN & CELESTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 22. 18.10 (2024) 65
STEPHEN laughing.

STEPHEN
No way!

CUT TO:

66 INT. ROSIE'S FLAT - NIGHT 22. 18.11 (2024) 66
ROSIE on the phone to DANIEL and STEPHEN. Pretending to be annoyed, but she's laughing really.

ROSIE
Shut up! It's not funny!

INTERCUT with sc.64 DANIEL'S HOUSE & sc.65 STEPHEN'S HOUSE.

DANIEL
But the robot's called Keith!

ROSIE
Well exactly!

CUT TO:

67 INT. TONY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 21. 20.38 (2024) 67
Sc.63 continued, ROSIE angry with poor TONY WATTS.

ROSIE

Why give it a man's name?!

CUTAWAY of KEITH'S HAND, a CURVED PALM going up and down, zzzt, zzzt, zzzt, like it's wanking.

CUT TO:

68 INT. ROSIE'S FLAT/INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE 68
NIGHT 22. 18.12 (2024)

Rosie laughing! INTERCUT with Daniel & Stephen laughing too.

As their conversation continues: being on the phone now means simply walking around, talking, no visible comms. They all have an Alexa-type unit - a basic one in Rosie's, nice one in Daniel's, smart one in Stephen's - that illuminates with a BLUE LIGHT as they enter, dims as they leave. But they're essentially talking to the air with no phone. DURING THIS:

Rosie's cooking, tidying. LEE's sitting there, lost in a VR HEADSET.

DANIEL's stirring ready-made sauce into a pan of pasta.
RALPH in b/g, texting all night long on his MOBILE.

STEPHEN's gathering WASHING, going from BEDROOM to BEDROOM.

IN B/G OF ALL THIS: Rosie's quite-old TV, with BBC NEWS.
Maps of HONG SHA DAO. American flags. Tensions with China.
Just cutaways of this, Rosie glancing across, now and then.

STEPHEN

So did you stay?

ROSIE

No I did not! I said thank you
very much, Tony Watts, and got out!

STEPHEN

You could've had Keith instead.

DANIEL

I bet Keith has got attachments.

ROSIE

Oh you'd love that, wouldn't you?

DANIEL

I'd give it a go!

Ralph looks round, he & Daniel mutter:

RALPH

What was it?

DANIEL
Robot sex thing.

Ralph just goes 'Oh,' gets back to his phone, not interested.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
So listen, what are we going to get
Gran for her birthday? Any ideas?
Cos I saw it advertised, tickets
for the Gypsy Kings, d'you think?

STEPHEN
Are they still going?

DANIEL
They are immortal. Oh she's on!

Meaning, the TV. Ralph keeps playing on his phone as Daniel
looks across: NEWS BROADCAST, 'Viv Rook Launch.'

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Have you seen the TV? She's formed
her own party. That monster.

STEPHEN
We haven't got a TV any more.

He sits on his bed, gets out his phone to watch -

- as Rosie picks up her remote, turns TV VOLUME UP -

CUT TO:

69 EXT. FOUR STAR H.Q. - DAY 22. 15.00 (2024)

69

NEWS FOOTAGE. In front of the Four Star offices, VIVIENNE
ROOK in her element, MEN IN SUITS at her side. JOURNALISTS &
CAMERAMEN foreground, watching. She presses a BUTTON on a
REMOTE and a HUGE DIGITAL DISPLAY lights up, announcing:

The **** PARTY

JUMP CUT to PHOTO OPPORTUNITY, the flash of CAMERAS, Viv
holding up a five-year-old Daily Mirror from that time she
swore, her face with the headline 'I DON'T GIVE A ****' She's
standing alongside JULIE PEASGOOD, her new celebrity pal.

JUMP CUT to Viv, being photographed, holding up FOUR FINGERS.

JUMP CUT TO Vivienne being interviewed, her ASTERISK-BADGE on
her lapel in place of a rosette. Good at interviews, now.

VIV ROOK
We're calling it the Four Star
Party. In honour of my little faux-
pas all those years ago on live TV.
(MORE)

VIV ROOK (CONT'D)

And the censorship I have faced
ever since, in the fake news media.
But we're four stars, striving to
be five, that's what we represent.
Ambition. The ambition of the
ordinary man and woman. The people
abandoned by the parties of old.
The Tories are dead. Labour is
dead. The Liberal Democrats are
dead. And the Four Star Party is
bursting with life!

ALL OF SC.69 INTERCUT with SC.70 reactions.

CUT TO:

70

INT. ROSIE'S FLAT/DANIEL'S HOUSE/STEPHEN'S HOUSE -
NIGHT 22. 18.13 (2024)

70

DANIEL

How can she launch a political
party? She isn't even an MP.

STEPHEN

You don't have to be. We could
launch a party right now, but we
don't, cos we can't be arsed. And
then we complain at the people who
do. At least she's trying.

ROSIE

I'd vote for her.

DANIEL

Don't you dare.

SC.69 ENDS and the NEWS cuts to PRESIDENTIAL RACE in the USA,
candidates arguing over HONG SHA DAO, with STOCK FOOTAGE,
photos of ISLAND BASES, etc. They ignore it:

STEPHEN

D'you understand this thing with
China? D'you think it's real?

DANIEL

It's just America going nuts, their
elections get madder and madder.

ROSIE

So, Gypsy Kings, yeah? Tell you
what, if we get two tickets, can I
have the other one?

CUT TO:

71 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 23. 16.00 (2024)

71

STEPHEN & CELESTE in the car, BETHANY and RUBY in the back, just pulling up outside Muriel's, for her birthday. They've all come with OVERNIGHT BAGS & HOLDALLS, staying the night. Stephen keeps the ignition on at the wheel, listening to the radio; low ADR news throughout, 'America, Xi Jinping...'

CELESTE

We have breakfast tomorrow, and then we go, first thing. No Sunday lunch, got that? All of you?

She sees MURIEL coming out of the house. To Stephen:

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Hey. Here come the Dragon Lady.

STEPHEN

I'm just trying to listen. This whole thing's going a bit mad -

CELESTE

You bring us all this way. Now you can deal with her.

(getting out, big smile)

Hiii. Happy birthday!

Stephen turning the ignition off, getting out.

STEPHEN

Hello, we did it! We made it.

MURIEL

Well don't make it sound like such an effort. Not on my behalf.

Celeste, Bethany & Ruby unpack, Stephen goes to Muriel, hug.

STEPHEN

You don't look a day over 900.

CUT TO:

72 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 23. 16.02 (2024)

72

DANIEL & RALPH and ROSIE are preparing COLESLAW, putting out stacks of PLATES & CROCKERY, BREAD ROLLS, etc, on the KITCHEN TABLE. All being laid out to supplement the barbecue.

STEPHEN walks in, goes to Daniel for a hug.

STEPHEN

Hey, hey, hey.

DANIEL

How was it?

STEPHEN

Fine. Good. No problems. Are you
putting on weight?

ROSIE

Haaa, I told him that!

Ralph moves in for the next hug.

RALPH

Oh I married the wrong brother.

STEPHEN

Come here!

Big, funny hug.

Behind them, MURIEL arrives, then CELESTE and BETHANY & RUBY, Celeste carrying two CAKE TINS. Stephen hugs Rosie, and during the dialogue below, Ruby moves round to Daniel, hi, hug, Ralph, hi, hug, Rosie, hi, hug. Bethany stands back, no hugs; Celeste does the same, so that Bethany isn't isolated.

CELESTE

Hi there. Hello! Now, Stephen's been busy, he made that cake with the white frosting, and he made that one with crystallised ginger, cos everyone liked that.

ROSIE

Little Susie Homemaker.

STEPHEN

That's me.

MURIEL

I bought gluten-free rolls, Bethany. Just for you.

BETH

Okay. But...

She looks to her mum, helpless.

CELESTE

She's not gluten-free any more. It's a misdiagnosis. Turns out, it's a misdiagnosis for most of the world, what we thought was gluten intolerance turns out to be fructans intolerance, it's this sugar-chain-thing. That's what they're saying, anyway.

MURIEL

Well. I wouldn't know. Not in my little kitchen in Manchester. And perhaps if you visited more than once a year, I'd know better.

STEPHEN

Hey, I was here two months ago.

MURIEL

I was talking to your wife.

The old war between Muriel and Celeste, as Muriel takes a plate of chicken wings, exits into the house. A silent symphony of looks around the kitchen, all dying to laugh.

CUT TO:

73

INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 23. 16.05 (2024)

73

LINCOLN happy with his PHONE, LEE trying the remote on the old 2018-style TV. Click, click, click, not working.

MURIEL comes in; she's brought the plate of CHICKEN WINGS for them both. She puts it down, goes to the wall, switches the TV on at the plug. TV blinks on. Lee sits, watches.

She gives him a kiss on the head. Affectionate:

MURIEL
You little idiot.

And she heads out as Lee presses the remote, so she misses -

CUT TO:

74 INT. BBC NEWSROOM - DAY 23. 16.05 (2024) 74

On the TV: VIVIENNE ROOK. Agitated, genuinely angry.

VIV ROOK

But it *is* an emergency! We've got
four days of this Presidency left.
Four days in which he can do
anything he likes! The situation
is running out of control -

But then the screen goes BLIP, Viv replaced by a GRAPHIC:

We apologise for the interruption.

CUT TO:

75 INT. MURIEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 23. 16.05 (2024) 75

Lee clicks through channels. All say the same thing:

*Normal service will be resumed shortly/Please wait/Apologies
for the disruption/Sorry, stay tuned!*

Everything now with an undercurrent of approaching dread.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, GARDEN - NIGHT 23. 17.30 (2024) 76

NIGHT falls at 16.30 on November 2, 2024.

MEAT cooking. STEPHEN's stationed behind the barbecue,
running it, his special job, dishing out food for DANIEL.

STEPHEN

There you go. Bit burnt. That's
all part of the experience. These
ones over here are lamb!

EVERYONE in COATS, SCARVES, GLOVES, being cheerfully British. MURIEL in her empire; mis-matched GARDEN CHAIRS, some HARDBACK CHAIRS, and a PORTABLE CANVAS GAZEBO, with HEATERS dotted about. ROSIE sits with her, DANIEL. BETHANY sloping off into the house, with food. CELESTE & RUBY, vegetarians, coming to sit with RALPH. The outsiders. Muttered:

CELESTE

They eat so much meat. It's like we married Henry the Eighth.

RALPH

I. Am. Freezing. It's all right for Muriel, her nerve endings died in 1976.

Stephen stays manning the barbecue, as Daniel comes to sit, giving Muriel a plate of food.

DANIEL

There you go. Birthday feast.

STEPHEN

Come on, Gran. Let's have the speech. I remember when all this was Woolworth's.

MURIEL

Well I do. I loved that shop. I used to buy 45 inch singles from there. This was back in the day when we still had butterflies, when did you last see one of them? Although. I'll tell you what we didn't have. Tsunamis.

DANIEL

Don't be daft. What d'you mean?!

MURIEL

We didn't. We had earthquakes, and that was it. The tsunami is an entirely modern invention.

ROSIE

(laughing)

Oh I love it, here's to you, Gran.

All give a little toast, to Gran.

STEPHEN

Hey, did I tell you? Dad's moved house, it looks nice, online. It's off the main road.

MURIEL

Well good for him, and that's an end to it, don't you think?

CELESTE

(stirring, to annoy Muriel)
Be fair though, he's been with
Jacqueline for what, decades, now.
And she's quite nice, maybe we
should invite them, next year.

MURIEL

I said, that's an end to it, and
anyone who disagrees is quite free
to leave. And go back to London.

The old war between Muriel & Celeste. Saved by Ralph.

RALPH

Hey, did you hear? Ruby's been telling us about her Porn Class.

DANIEL

No way. Seriously? You don't actually have Porn Class?

CELESTE

No, it's called Sexual Image Awareness and Control.

STEPHEN

They get taught pornography, from the age of 11. It's official, it's compulsory, they need it.

DANIEL

Compulsory porn, I love it.

RUBY

You're on the list. Category 15. Middle age gay male, likely to mock boundaries and force sexual references into my orbit.

CELESTE

Bang on, I'd say.

STEPHEN

Congratulations, Dan. You're on the syllabus.

Daniel's actually pissed off, because everyone agrees.

DANIEL

...you've got an orbit?!

CUT TO:

77 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 23. 17.35 (2024) 77

LEE, LINCOLN and BETHANY all on their PHONES. The kids have nothing to say to each other, they've given up on TV, but -

The TV GRAPHIC apology-card switches OFF.

The screen goes to a BLOCK OF RED, with one third BLACK at the bottom. On the line between red and black, it says:

EMERGENCY BROADCAST.

With an electronic whine.

Bethany's big doe eyes just BLINK.

CUT TO:

78 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, GARDEN - NIGHT 23. 17.40 (2024) 78

Ring! Beep! Ping! Ting! DANIEL'S phone goes off, and ROSIE'S, and STEPHEN'S, and MURIEL'S, four phones in total, from the newest (Stephen's) to the oldest (Muriel's).

STEPHEN

Oh my God, I don't believe it!

His screen says: EDITH.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

It's Edith.

DANIEL

No way.

ROSIE

Me too!

They click on. And appearing on the FOUR PHONES:

EDITH LYONS.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. HEADLAND - NIGHT 23. 02.40 (2024) 79

17.40 UK; 02.40 in Vietnam, on the coast near Ho Chi Minh City, on a cliff, facing the darkness of the South China Sea. The city glittering many miles away in the background.

EDITH LYONS looks out. She's 38, the second child, younger than Stephen, older than Daniel and Rosie. She's tough, her clothes a bit improvised and swathed, like a traveller, but also like a professor, keeping herself smart, classy, wry.

She's in front of a JEEP, an old LAPTOP open on the bonnet. Around her; one more JEEP, five fellow PROTESTORS, her team, her mates. On the laptop: the software's up to date, with a FaceTime of 4 screens simultaneously: Daniel, Rosie, Stephen, Muriel. Four faces, all hand-held, far away.

EDITH

Are you okay?

Edith is only seen ON SCREENS, within phones and laptops, from sc.79 onwards, for the moment.

CUT TO:

80 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, GARDEN/EXT. HEADLAND, VIETNAM - 80
NIGHT 23. 17.41/02.41 (2024)

DANIEL, ROSIE, STEPHEN, MURIEL on their PHONES to Edith.

MURIEL
Hello sweetheart!

STEPHEN
We're all here, we're in the garden.

EDITH
Hi. Hello. But are you all right?

DANIEL
Where are you?

EDITH (CONT'D)
Are you okay, though?

MURIEL
You remembered my birthday!

EDITH (CONT'D)
Have you heard the news?

ROSIE
We bought Gran Gypsy King tickets,
so you can pay a quarter.

DANIEL
You're missing all the fun, we're
being categorised.

MURIEL
...are you all right, darling?

Because Edith's crying.

Stephen's hauled out his laptop, puts it on a little table,
so he, Daniel, Muriel click off phones, watch on that.

(During this, RUBY puzzled by her phone. She holds it up to
show Celeste; every site now says EMERGENCY BROADCAST.)

EDITH
I'm fine. I think. I don't know.
I'm not sure it matters any more.

STEPHEN
Where are you?

EDITH
Vietnam. On the coast, just down
from Ho Chi Minh City.

ROSIE
Oh it's all right for some.

EDITH
We came here to protest. But too
late. It's only just over there,
Hong Sha Dao.

MURIEL
Is that the island-thing?

EDITH

For God's sake, Gran, don't you
watch the news? I send you a link
every day.

STEPHEN

It was on the radio, this morning,
why? What's happened?

And then it starts.

THE SIREN.

The four-minute warning.

That ancient wail. Far off.

Carrying across the night.

All, slowly, frozen, horrified. Daniel. Rosie. Stephen.
Gran. Ralph. Celeste. Ruby. The horror taking hold.

Behind Edith, too, her friends look to the city, alarmed.

EDITH

Hong Sha Dao. Is an artificial
island. Built by the Chinese.
Population 26,000. But it's more
than that. It's a military base.
With nuclear weapons. That's what
America says.

(looks back at the city)
Is that siren with you? Or us?

STEPHEN

It's here.

EDITH

It's here as well.

STEPHEN

What does it mean?

EDITH

They've launched a missile.

STEPHEN

Who has? China?

EDITH

The Americans. They've fired a
nuclear missile at Hong Sha.

Now they're looking up. At each other.

DANIEL

You're kidding.

EDITH

He did it. Donald Trump did it.
His final days of office.

CELESTE

But we haven't got sirens, have we?
Where's that coming from? We don't
have sirens. We just don't.

ROSIE

We're not at war, are we?

DANIEL

(to Edith)

Are they firing at us?

STEPHEN

They can't be.

DANIEL

But... America, and China, if they
go to war, we're right in the
middle.

STEPHEN

We're not in the middle, we're not
even on the edge, they'd fire
across the Pacific, not across us -

DANIEL

But that's the four minute warning!
Don't tell me nothing's happening,
I can hear the four minute warning!

RUBY

TV.

(holds up her phone)

There's a thing on TV!

The EMERGENCY BROADCAST screen has disappeared, replaced by -

CUT TO:

81

INT. EMERGENCY NEWSROOM - NIGHT 23. 17.45 (2024)

81

A plain room, no logos. FORMAL MALE NEWSCASTER.

NEWSCASTER

This is a broadcast on behalf of his Majesty's Government. It has been announced by the Prime Minister that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been placed on an official war footing, as of 17.15 this afternoon. The United States of America has launched a nuclear missile at the disputed Chinese territory of Hong Sha Dao in the South China Sea, an artificial island 760 miles from mainland China. Unconfirmed reports say that the missile is a UGM-133A Trident II D-5 carrying a warhead containing a thermonuclear device...

Etc, speech continued to run under:

CUT TO:

82 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, GARDEN - NIGHT 23. 17.46 (2024) 82

DANIEL runs to the house. Then STEPHEN, CELESTE, RALPH, RUBY, all run. ROSIE managing as best she can. MURIEL hurrying. No one helping anyone, all blind panic.

CUT TO:

83 INT. MURIEL'S LIVING ROOM/EXT. HEADLAND, VIETNAM - NIGHT 23 17.46/02.46 (2024)

LEE clicking through channels, but the same NEWSCASTER stays on. BETHANY already scared, and LINCOLN watching the news, solemn. DANIEL arriving, grabs the remote off LEE, as STEPHEN, CELESTE & RUBY arrive. Celeste hugs Bethany, to reassure her. Ruby joins them, and Celeste hugs her too. Everyone's instinct in an emergency is to go to the big TV.

DANIEL

Well who's he?

LEE

All the channels are the same.

CELESTE

He's not an official newsreader, is he? I've never seen him before.

DANIEL

D'you think it's a hoax?

(clicking)

He's right, it's on every channel.

Stephen sets up his LAPTOP. EDITH on screen.

STEPHEN

But are we at war? Does this mean
we're at war? Great Britain?

ROSIE arriving as Sc.81 Newscaster has just said 'Trident.'

ROSIE

Did he say Trident? That's us!

RALPH

That's us, isn't it?

DANIEL

Oh my God, that's us!

STEPHEN

Edith, is that us? Trident
means us, doesn't it, are we
the only ones with Trident
missiles? Did they use us?
Is that what they've done?
Did America use us?

EDITH

I don't know.
(and again)
I don't know!
(and again)
Stephen, I don't know!

DANIEL

But they'll shoot it down, the
Chinese, it's not going to land.
They shoot these missiles down, all
the time, that's what they do.

CUT TO:

84 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT 23. 17.47 (2024) 84

MURIEL's got the kettle boiling. A woman, in her kitchen
just making tea, but over this: the SIREN.

She puts out cups and saucers. The clink of crockery. Like
everything is normal. Clinging to her routine. Click click.

CUT TO:

85 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 23. 17.48 (2024) 85

All stare at the TV, the NEWSCASTER literally repeating his
sc.81 speech over and over again. But then...

The SIREN STOPS.

Which is worse.

All wordless, look up, around.

On Daniel, now, looking round the room. His husband. His
family. His life. And he knows what's missing.

ROSIE

What does that mean? Is it over?

CELESTE

Is that it?

ROSIE

It was just a warning! Like a test! They were testing it!

STEPHEN

No, it doesn't stop cos it's over, it's like in war films, the siren doesn't keep going throughout the air raids, it just warns you and then it stops and then...

DANIEL

And then the bombs hit.

STEPHEN

Yeah.

Daniel stands, grabs his jacket, keys in hand, striding out -
Ralph automatically stands, grabs his stuff too.

ROSIE

Where are you going? Danny?
Danny, where are you going?

But he's storming off, Ralph giving the room a helpless shrug, 'Sorry,' as he exits too, following in Daniel's wake.

CUT TO:

86

EXT. FRONT OF MURIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 23. 17.50 (2024)

86

DANIEL hurrying to the CAR, RALPH a distance behind.

RALPH

Thank God. Cos if this is the end of the world, I don't want to see it with that lot. No offence.

DANIEL's getting in to his CAR, keys, ignition, fast, RALPH just catching up... but the passenger door is LOCKED.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Let me in then!

Daniel can barely look at him. Agonised. Guns the engine.

DANIEL

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

RALPH

What are you doing..? Daniel? Oy!
Don't you dare! Danny!!

But Daniel's driving off, top speed.

Ralph half-runs, but stops, furious, realising many things.

RALPH (CONT'D)

I knew it. Oh my God. *I knew it!*

Daniel at the wheel. Staring ahead. Driving fast.

CUT TO:

87 INT. MURIEL'S LIVING ROOM/EXT. HEADLAND, VIETNAM - NIGHT 23.7
17.51/02.51 (2024)

STEPHEN still on the laptop to EDITH. Behind him, MURIEL entering with a TRAY OF TEA CUPS.

STEPHEN

How long does it take? For the
missile to arrive?

EDITH

I've said. We don't know where it
was launched from. So we don't
know how long it's going to take.

MURIEL

We should be safe, in this house.
(of Lincoln)
We've got our very own little
Chinaman. They'll leave us alone.

ROSIE

For God's sake, Gran!

CELESTE

What's that supposed to mean?

MURIEL

Nothing.

CELESTE

No, what does that mean?

MURIEL

Nothing.

All politeness stripped away, now:

CELESTE

What the fuck is that supposed to mean, you stupid old woman?!

CUT TO:

88 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, GARDEN - NIGHT 23. 17.52 (2024) 88

BANG! RALPH kicks the BARBECUE OVER.

He's furious, ashamed, can't go back into the house and face that bloody family. So he'll do this. He watches, not caring, as the charcoal ignites the PORTABLE CANVAS GAZEBO.

CUT TO:

89 INT. MURIEL'S LIVING ROOM/EXT. HEADLAND, VIETNAM - NIGHT 23. 17.53/02.53 (2024) 89

STEPHEN on the laptop to EDITH, taking control.

STEPHEN

D'you know what? I think a false alarm will do us all good. Cos we let America get away with all this sabre-rattling, and China, they're just as much to blame -

Edith on screen, steps out of frame -

EDITH

Oh shit -

CUT TO:

90 EXT. HEADLAND - NIGHT 23. 02.53 (2024) 90

Now, for the first time, cutting to EDITH LYONS full-frame in her own right, not contained within others' screens.

She walks forward on the headland, seeing:

On the horizon, a BLOSSOM OF LIGHT.

EDITH and her friends stop and stare.

It's happened.

Far away, on the island of Hong Sha Dao, a nuclear device has exploded. It's too far away to see detail, but that flare of light is the unfurling of a mushroom cloud.

One of Edith's mates is already recording. Now all of them lift up PHONES, one with proper CAMERA, to record it.

They stand there. Recording. Witnesses to history.

CUT TO:

91 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 23. 17.53 (2024) 91

STEPHEN'S lost Edith, his screen has gone dead; the signal from Vietnam swamped. Just the hiss of static. A weird, wired brittle panic throughout the room.

STEPHEN

Edith? Can you hear me? Edith?

Then they all look up at the TV, hearing:

CUT TO:

92 INT. EMERGENCY NEWSROOM - NIGHT 23. 17.54 (2024) 92

NEWSCASTER receives information on earpiece.

NEWSCASTER

We can confirm. A nuclear device.
Has detonated. On the island of
Hong Sha Dao. At 17.53 Greenwich
Mean Time, 02.53 within the region
of the South China Sea.

CUT TO:

93 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 23. 17.55 (2024) 93

All stare. Shocked.

ROSIE

...but where's Edith?

STEPHEN

Vietnam.

ROSIE

How close is that? Stephen?
Where's Vietnam? Compared to
China? How close is she?!

ROSIE grabbing LINCOLN and LEE, pulling them in close to protect them - but raw terror is rising up in RUBY -

RUBY

But what if they fire back? *What
if they fire back??*

- then all of them, wild panic - Celeste hugging her girls -

CELESTE
What do we do? Stephen?
What the hell do we do?

ROSIE
Is she still there? Edith?
Can you hear me? Edith?

STEPHEN
I don't know! How the hell
should I know?!

LEE
Bomb them! Bomb the
Chinkies! Blow them to bits!

Celeste holds Bethany tight, has never loved her more:

CELESTE
You can be whatever you want.

CUT TO:

94 EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, GARDEN - NIGHT 23. 17.56 (2024) 94
The PORTABLE GAZEBO is ON FIRE, a tent of flames and smoke.
RALPH watches. Not giving a fuck.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. CONTAINER ESTATE - NIGHT 23. 18.10 (2024) 95
Faces, screaming, yelling.
PEOPLE dancing, wild, frenzy.
And in the middle of this, DANIEL'S car races up, screeches
to a halt, not giving a fuck where it parks. He runs out...
It's the centre of the CONTAINER ESTATE. Now like an insane,
dark CARNIVAL. Everyone TERRIFIED. Some off their heads.
Others screaming with laughter. 2024's music is Hard Guitar
Punk and that's BLASTING out of speakers. People dancing
like there's no tomorrow. KIDS on bikes, feral.
TWO DUMMIES are hoisted up. Man-sized, like Guy Fawkes
dummies, or scarecrows. Ragged, stuffed suits. One TRUMP,
with a Trump mask, one Xi Jinping, a board around its neck
saying "XI." They're lifted up, on poles, made to dance and
jiggle and jerk above the crowd.
And behind this, looking down over the entire setting, a
giant building-size 4-STAR PARTY POSTER of VIVIENNE ROOK.
Her eyes. A merciless stare.
But Daniel stops, looks around, desperate, until he sees:
VIKTOR.

And Viktor sees him. They're a huge distance apart.
Dancing, people, kids, crossing in the space between them.

And then Daniel starts to run. Not towards Viktor. But to the side.

Viktor starts to run, too.

They're heading for the CONTAINERS.

INTERCUT WITH:

CUT TO:

96 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 23. 18.10 (2024) 96

ALL yelling, the room WILD WITH NOISE.

ROSIE desperate, yelling at the TV. CELESTE hugging the girls and demanding answers. STEPHEN yelling at her, he doesn't know! RUBY crying. BETHANY hiding her face with her hands. LEE zooming round the room like a dive-bomber. Only LINCOLN is calm, watching everyone, fascinated.

And at the back of the room, MURIEL is crying. Shaken, ever since Celeste had a go. But crying for all of them, now.

CUT TO:

97 EXT. CONTAINER ESTATE - NIGHT 23. 18.11 (2024) 97

DANIEL runs, closer to the stairs, gets to the second storey -

- Viktor pushing through the dancers and the crowd, as the TRUMP and XI DUMMIES are brought down and ripped apart -

- Daniel running along to Room 15 -

- Viktor heading up the stairs -

- Daniel reaches Room 15, it's open, he pushes in -

CUT TO:

98 INT. ROOM 15, CONTAINER ESTATE - NIGHT 23. 18.12 (2024) 98

All the music and noise from outside echoing in the metal walls, as DANIEL runs in. Already pulling off his jacket.

VIKTOR arrives. Both men kiss. Eating each other.

Teeth. Rip. Anger. Fear. Lust.

All these things happening at once, now:

At Muriel's, the family rages and screams and cries.

The gazebo burns into the sky.

The face of Vivienne Rook stares down. People dancing in terror and ecstasy.

And the two men fuck.

CUT TO:

99 INT. MURIEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 23. 18.13 (2024) 99

CU ROSIE taking hold of LINCOLN, terrified, staring at the TV but almost, *almost* to camera:

ROSIE

But what happens now? What happens
now?? *What happens now?!?*

END OF EPISODE ONE