



# SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN

by Simon Beaufoy  
adapted from Paul Torday's novel.

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1 EXT. RIVERBANK. EVENING.

1

The last of the evening sunlight dapples through the leaves of a wooded riverbank. Mist curls off the water. It could be a dream. Moving through the undergrowth we come to an extraordinary sight. A Sheikh in full ceremonial dress standing in the river, smoking a large cigar. The water is above his knees and his gold and white robes swirl gently in the current. He is fly-fishing. Pulls the rod back and casts perfectly over to the other side of the river. Over the pictures, a woman's voice is dictating a letter.

HARRIET V/O

To Doctor Alfred Jones, National  
Centre for Fisheries Excellence,  
Department for Environment, Food and  
Rural Affairs, Smith Square, London.  
Dear Doctor Jones....

Almost imperceptibly, the Sheikh smiles to himself. Pulls back the rod and casts again.

2 INT. FITZHARRIS AND PRICE. OFFICE. EVENING.

2

Elegantly manicured hands type onto a keyboard.

HARRIET

...We act on behalf of a client with access to very substantial funds, who has indicated his wish to sponsor a project to introduce salmon and the sport of salmon fishing into the Yemen. We would like to seek a meeting with you to identify how this challenging project might be initiated and resourced. We might add that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office supports the project as a symbol of Anglo-Yemeni cooperation. Yours sincerely, Harriet Chetwode-Talbot. Ms. Fitzharris and Price, Investment Consultants.

We see the owner of the hands. Harriet. Mid-thirties, a very English kind of beauty. Gentle and curvaceous. She raises her eyes, more in hope than expectation and presses send. Picking up her bag she walks, almost runs out of her office. Waves at a couple of Assistants still left in the sleek, modern office.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Night! Have a good week-end!

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

Ashley, one of the Assistants looks up, laden with double-entendre.

ASHLEY

You too. Say hi to Soldier Boy...

HARRIET

Ash, I've met him twice. Honestly, he's just a friend.

ASHLEY

Tell me that on Monday.

HARRIET

Shut up.

And she is gone in a giggle and a flurry of smart coat.

3 INT. FITZHARRIS AND PRICE. ATRIUM. NIGHT.

3

Harriet runs across the impressive atrium of Fitzharris and Price, skids to a halt just before the doors. Adjusts her dress, puts her hand to her mouth, does a quick breath-check. Takes a deep breath and attempts to saunter out of the front doors.

4 EXT. FITZHARRIS AND PRICE. LONDON. EVENING.

4

She walks out and looks around.

HARRIET

Robert?

A handsome man turns from perusing a shop window and gives the happiest of smiles.

ROBERT

Hello.

HARRIET

Hello to you too.

She walks up to him. They kiss.

ROBERT

How wonderful to see you.

HARRIET

Yes.

ROBERT

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

He disengages, looks at her at arms' length.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

*Yes?*

HARRIET

Look, Captain. I'm trying to be cool about this. Sophisticated Woman-of-the-world. Grown up.

ROBERT

Grown up. Absolutely. You're right.

He nods maturely.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Last one to the restaurant pays.

And he's off down the street, dodging the commuters with abandon.

HARRIET

Oh, you bastard. Right.

She takes off her heels and charges after him- no girly trot this- but a sprint, genuinely determined to win.

The tidiest of cottages- bordering on twee- with immaculate garden, pond and a small but manicured lawn. Through one of the windows, we can see Dr Alfred Jones composing an e-mail on his computer.

FRED

Dear Harriet Chetwode-Talbot. *Ms.* Thank you for your e-mail. As a fisheries specialist, permit me a word or two about salmon.

FRED

Migratory salmonids require cool, well-oxygenated water in which to spawn. In addition, in the early stages of the salmon life-cycle, a good supply of fly life indigenous to the northern European rivers is necessary for the juvenile salmon parr to survive.

(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)

Once the salmon parr evolves into its smolt form, it heads downriver and enters saltwater, then making its way to feeding grounds off Iceland, the Faroes or Greenland. Some considerable distance from the Indian Ocean or indeed the Red Sea, as I'm sure you are aware, though apparently the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are not.

Fred chuckles quietly at his own extraordinary wit. For the first time, we get a good look at his face. Mid-forties, a good bone-structure, battered a bit by life.

FRED (CONT'D)

We conclude that conditions in the Yemen make this project unfeasible-

MARY

- fundamentally unfeasible.

Through the open door into the kitchen, Fred's wife, Mary, can be seen in the kitchen making a sandwich. Late thirties. Attractive, if a touch severe.

FRED

Yes, yes. *Fundamentally* unfeasible on almost every level. We therefore regret we will be unable to help you any further in this matter. Yours sincerely, Alfred Jones. *Doctor*.

Fred presses send, sits back in his chair.

FRED (CONT'D)

That should put the kibosh on that.

MARY

I should jolly well think so. What nonsense. Is Short-arse Sugden at the bottom of this?

FRED

Wouldn't be surprised. One of his humiliating little cost-cutting exercises.

MARY

I've put duck liver paté in your sandwich.

FRED

Lovely.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Okay, I'm off to bed.

FRED

Oh. I'll be right up.

MARY

Don't wake me. Airport car's coming at 7.00.

FRED

(fractional  
readjustment)

Righto. Perhaps I'll give the Caddis Fly paper another proof. You can read it on the plane.

MARY

Up to my ear in reports, darling. I'll read it when I'm back.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek. He watches her leave. There is a sadness in him.

FRED

Night then.

Fumbling at the door as keys go into the lock. They stumble up the stairs, happy and a bit drunk. There is a very passionate kiss. She breaks it off.

HARRIET

Look, I don't do this, alright?

ROBERT

I can tell.

She bats him off as he advances on her again. There is an underlying seriousness to her that he hasn't quite caught up with yet.

HARRIET

Really. Robert, I need you to understand. I pretend to be this confident, outgoing person, but I'm not. I'm private. I haven't had a boyfriend in three years. I'm quiet-

ROBERT

- I'll sleep on the sofa-

HARRIET

- I'm shy-

ROBERT

- Harriet-

She puts a hand over his mouth.

HARRIET

- shut up for a minute, will you?

It comes out more seriously than intended. Takes her hand away.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Sorry.

ROBERT

Fine. You were saying. Quiet. Shy.

HARRIET

I *am* quiet. I *am* shy. Like Hitler.

Robert nods, scared to say a word.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Which is why you have to shut up and listen. Just for a minute. Difficult for men, I know. But you might be different from other men. I think you are. I really hope you are. Because I'm going to trust you. I haven't had a boyfriend in three years. It ended badly. Trust is- is a hard thing for me. And, Jesus, if you've not been sexually turned to stone by that little speech, then you're definitely the man for me.

Robert leans forward and kisses her. Disengages.

ROBERT

Really. I'll sleep on the-

HARRIET

- if you say you'll sleep on the sofa one more time, you'll- you'll- bloody well sleep on the sofa.

He puts up both hands in surrender.

ROBERT

Captain Robert Myers. Three six four seven seven two nine.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

She points.

HARRIET  
The bedroom. Quick march.

8 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT. 8

Darkness in a very smart bedroom. A phone rings. A woman in her forties snaps on the light and answers the phone.

BRIDGET  
Maxwell. Better be good...*What?*

Her husband, Peter, raises his head with a questioning yawn. She dismisses him without even looking.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)  
Go to sleep.

Still on the phone, Bridget grabs the remote, switches on the tv. Sky News. Television pictures of smoke billowing from a burning mosque.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)  
Tell me that's not a mosque...

In response to the obvious answer down the phone.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)  
Ofcourseit'sabloodymosque!

Peter raises himself again.

PETER  
What's up?

BRIDGET  
Go to sleep.

PETER  
Well I would if the tv wasn't-

BRIDGET  
- there's the spare room, the sofa or the bottom bunk in your daughter's room. Stay here, you shut up.

Peter's head falls back on the pillow with a thunk.

PETER  
(mumbling)  
Not *your* daughter, then?

(CONTINUED)

BRIDGET

Last warning, Peter...well if an American fired the naffing thing, an American can naffing well put his hand up and say sorry, can't he?....Joint operations. *Joint operations?* Wait, wait, wait. I see the American diplomatic pooper scooper on the horizon and we are not going to be left with the doggy shit-bag on this one, you hear?

On the screen, viciously chanting Afghanis. A burning Stars and Stripes. A burning Union Jack. A burning flag with the face of the President of the United States on. Another flag burns with a face that is definitely recognisable from somewhere. Bridget frowns. Then a jolt of recognition.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

That's Cliff Richard. Get me the Prime Minister.

DELETED

INT. WHITEHALL. DAY.

Bridget is stalking through a Government office, phone clamped to her ear.

BRIDGET

...I think I may have misunderstood, Colonel. Just to recap: you get some New Jersey grunt in camouflage nappies to send a missile the wrong way into a Kabul mosque- fulsome applause for that, by the way- and it's the little old folks in London, England who take the rap....?

She listens only briefly to the reply.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

You and I know that missile was whistling the Star Spangled Banner when it ploughed into the genuflecting faithful...Oh, so because your President's Jesus of Nazareth smile is drooping like an alcoholic's dick, we get blame, do we...?

13 INT. WHITEHALL OFFICE. DAY.

13

Still on the mobile, she walks through into an internal office where six or seven frightened interns look up.

BRIDGET

My God, I didn't think we could make the war in Afghanistan any less popular, but hey, even I can be wrong! We'll have Vera Lynn strapping on her suicide belt in sympathy, next... Bravo the fucking Marines.

Switches off her mobile, lights a cigarette. Stares the interns down.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

You are mistaken. It is illegal to smoke. I am not smoking.

That settled, breathes out a plume of smoke.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

We need a good-news story out of the Middle East. A big one. And we need it now. Mail me.

And she stalks out again. Frightened Intern faces.

15 EXT. WHITEHALL. STREET. DAY.

15

Bridget strides out of the building. A couple of journalists try to collar her.

YOUNG JOURNALIST

Any comment to make on the mosque bombing, Mrs Maxwell?

BRIDGET

Run along, you'll be late for school.

Elbows past her and is away down the street.

Hundreds of tv and computer images crash onto the screen, one after another, way too fast to process. Under the screen runs the word: "searching". Then, an email types: "British Council Contemporary Art Exhibition in Karachi?".

A flash of a puzzled looking group of Pakistani women staring at a huge lump of sculpture.

(CONTINUED)

10.  
15 CONTINUED: 15

Bridget's stops on the street. Her face a mask of impatience. She types. "Art bollocks".

16 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S OFFICE. DAY. 16

Bridget at her desk.

Another e-mail types onto the screen: "youth football tournament in Riyadh?

A flash of lager-fuelled lads chanting "Eng-er-land" at camera and spraying beer over the lens.

An email pings back. "Are you out of your naffing mind?"

17 INT. MINISTERIAL CAR. DAY. 17

Bridget in the back.

Another email flashes onto the screen: "*Project to introduce Salmon Fishing in the Yemen?*".

An email pings back, the expletives deleted by some electronic Ministry censor: "(deleted) Salmon (deleted) fishing in the (deleted) Yemen? Is that the (deleted) best your (deleted) Oxbridge-educated (deleted) mind can come up with? You utter (deleted deleted deleted).

18 EXT. WHITEHALL. DAY. 18

Bridget striding down the street again.

An SMS beeps onto Bridget's Blackberry: "Lady Gaga Middle East tour".

A flash of a basically naked, Lady Gaga gyrating lasciviously in front of a shocked-looking audience of robed Saudis.

An SMS beeps back; "Clear ur fckuing desk. U R fired".

19 EXT. NUMBER TEN DOWNING STREET. 19

Bridget goes through the gates to the Prime Minister's house.

Another email: "for Gods sake, any other ideas out there?"

The cursor flashes and flashes and flashes. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

Bridget walks past the Policeman on the door to Number Ten, gives him a wink on the way past.

The previous email concerning Salmon Fishing in the Yemen fills the screen again.

The door to Ten Downing Street slams shut.

One by one, the extraneous words and deletions are removed until all that is left is the sentence and our title:

**"Salmon Fishing in the Yemen".**

20 EXT. LONDON BRIDGE. MORNING.

20

In a smart suit, Fred is walking to work. The camera pulls back and back until we see that he is one of hundreds and hundreds of people in suits all pouring in the same direction across London Bridge. One drone amongst many.

21 INT. NATIONAL CENTRE FOR FISHERIES EXCELLENCE. DAY.

21

We have been transported to Civil Service Land. Fred walks past a dozen glass-walled cubicles where men and women are all typing away at computers. As Fred passes each cubicle a 'morning' is intoned by the occupant without even a turn of the head.

FRED

Morning...Morning...Morning...

All the way down the line until Fred gets to his office.

22 INT. NATIONAL CENTRE FOR FISHERIES EXCELLENCE. DAY.

22

Fred shuts the door carefully, sits down at an empty desk. Takes a sheaf of papers out of his briefcase and places them to one side. Opens his drawer and pulls out a slender box.

Inside is a telescopic fishing rod. He arms it with practiced speed, dips the rubber lure into an ink pad on his desk, pushes his chair back and casts. The line spins out heads towards the door and hits a photograph of a man-pinned to the back of the door- right on the face. Fred grunts with satisfaction. Footsteps approach the door. He reels in the line and folds the rod, just in time.

A woman in her fifties comes in with a large envelope and a cup of tea and places it on Fred's desk.

IRENE

Morning, Mister Jones.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Morning Irene. Pleasant week-end, I trust?

IRENE

Yes, thank you, Mister Jones. Mister Sugden would like a word.

FRED

Would he indeed? Would he...?

No eye-contact from either source. Fred is too busy looking at the contents of the large envelope Irene has brought in.

FRED (CONT'D)

What do you think, Irene?

On the table, he places glossy photographs of the massively-magnified head of a fly on the table. The eyes bulge appallingly.

IRENE

Oh.

FRED

It's for my Caddis Fly report. I need something a little racy for the cover. Something to rev up the Youtube generation. Not what one expects from a scientific paper, but got to move with the times, Irene...

IRENE

Mister Sugden asked to...

FRED

(totally absorbed)  
Hmm? Not sure. I've got one of a Caddis being eaten alive by a spider somewhere.

Irene hurries out of the room as Fred reaches for his filing cabinet. Takes out a terrifying close-up of a fly being devoured, puts it on the desk with the others for comparison. A man opens the door. David Sugden. His is the photograph on the back of the door that Fred has just hit with his lure. Short, sly, forties displaying false bonhomie like a badge.

DAVID SUGDEN

Good God.

Fred barely looks up.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Bit much, you think?

DAVID SUGDEN

Not if you're making a horror film.

Fred looks hurt.

DAVID SUGDEN (CONT'D)

I say, Alfred. This e-mail about the salmon thing.

FRED

Oh yes. Did I miss April Fool's Day or something? What about my swipe at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office wonks?

DAVID SUGDEN

I've just had another e-mail from the FCO, actually.

FRED

Rattled their cage, did I?

DAVID SUGDEN

Look, you couldn't just meet her, could you? This Chetwode-Talbot woman?

FRED

Why on earth would I want to waste my time trekking across London to discuss that nonsense? I've got important work to do here, as you can see.

He indicates the photographs.

DAVID SUGDEN

The FCO, in their infinite W, feel that taking a meeting on this would be important work too, Fred. Just a meeting, old chap.

FRED

Since when did the FCO have jurisdiction over DEFRA's business? Lord, the tendrils of this busy-body government. You know, it's probably a hoax of some sort- isn't Yemen this week's favourite terrorist destination, or something?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (3)

DAVID SUGDEN  
Alfred, as a favour to me.

Fred looks coldly at David for the first time.

FRED  
Do I owe you a favour?

An awkward pause. Clearly not.

DAVID SUGDEN  
Doctor Jones, as your Operational  
Line Manager I am asking you with  
extreme prejudice to take a meeting  
with Harriet Chetwode-Talbot.

FRED  
(bristling)  
I take it that's an order?

DAVID SUGDEN  
Take it how you wish.

David slams out of the door.

FRED  
(under his breath)  
Nazi.

23 INT. NATIONAL CENTRE FOR FISHERIES EXCELLENCE. CORRIDOR. 23  
DAY.

Sugden marches down the corridor.

DAVID SUGDEN  
Wanker.

24 INT. OFFICE. ATRIUM. DAY. 24

Fred wanders into the uber-modern atrium. Looks around  
irritably at the whole nonsense. Introduces himself to the  
young Model at reception, refuses a chair and stands  
impatiently, flicking uninterestedly through a magazine.

25 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S OFFICE/ SUGDEN'S OFFICE. SPLIT 25  
SCREEN. DAY.

Sugden is tucking into his packed lunch with relish. His  
intercom goes.

IRENE V/O  
Mrs Maxwell on line one, Sir.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID SUGDEN

Busy.

IRENE V/O

She says it's urgent, Sir.

DAVID SUGDEN

It's lunch time! Maxwell who?

IRENE V/O

Press Officer to the Prime Minister,  
Sir.

Sugden scrambles to the phone.

DAVID SUGDEN

Bridget!

MAXWELL

Haven't pensioned you off, yet,  
then? Listen, the FCO have given me  
a heads up on this salmon thing in  
the Yemen.

DAVID SUGDEN

(wary)  
Yes?

MAXWELL

Fancy it?

DAVID SUGDEN

Well, I...

MAXWELL

We do. Chasing a good-news story out  
of the Middle-East. Anglo-Yemeni  
relations back on track, Arab-West  
cultural detente through the ancient  
sport of yanking poor sodding fish  
out of rivers etcetera. Is it a  
goer?

DAVID SUGDEN

Bit of a long shot, if I'm honest.

MAXWELL

Don't be honest. Look, this  
lunatic's an oil sheikh, money  
pouring out of his arse, a good  
friend of the West. Might be a good  
friend to the Party, too....give it  
a go, my dear?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID SUGDEN

We'll certainly bend every sinew to the job, Bridget. I'll set up a working party immediately.

MAXWELL

Don't you *working party* me, you short-arsed little pen pusher. I didn't say kick it into the long grass, I said *do it*.

DAVID SUGDEN

Yes, Bridget. Right away.

But the line has already gone dead.

Fred is now on the floor of offices that contains Fitzharris and Price, his knee jiggling with impatience. Harriet comes through to the waiting area.

HARRIET

Doctor Jones?

FRED

Ah, yes. Ms Chetwode-Talbot's expecting me.

HARRIET

It's a mouthful. Do call me Harriet.

She puts her hand out. Fred readjusts. Sniffs.

FRED

Ah. Pleased to meet you.

They go into Harriet's office.

HARRIET

Do sit down. Can I get you some tea, coffee?

Fred hmphs at this. Sits down. Not sure if this was an answer, Harriet decides to continue.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Fitzharris and Price represent the Sheikh's assets in this country, including a number of estates in Scotland. He is a keen fisherman, you see, and has asked us to-

FRED

- water.

HARRIET

I'm sorry?

FRED

Water, Ms Chetwode-Talbot. H2O.

HARRIET

Sparkling or still?

FRED

(exploding)

Not me! The fish!

They are both rather taken aback by the outburst. As are the people in the outer office. Harriet carefully puts down the bottle of water. Fred controls himself, but the acid is still there.

FRED (CONT'D)

Fish need water. You're familiar with the concept?

HARRIET

I believe so.

Fred gets up, strides over to the map on the wall. Jabs a finger to Scotland.

FRED

To save us both a lot of time, let me keep this brief and simple. Here, it's cold. It rains a lot.

He jabs his finger in the Middle-East.

FRED (CONT'D)

Here, it's hot. It doesn't rain a lot. See the problem?

HARRIET

You're pointing to Saudi Arabia, Dr Jones. Not the Yemen.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

You seem to be deliberately missing the point.

HARRIET

With respect, not really. Unlike Saudi Arabia, parts of the Yemen have up to 250 milimetres rainfall a month in the wet season. It gets the edge of the monsoon, you see.

FRED

The dry season?

HARRIET

Interestingly, recent oil exploration has uncovered a number of very large aquifers which could recharge the wadi in the dry season using a dam.

FRED

I'm sure they could. So, why don't you get back to me when he's built his dam, hmm?

Fred gets to his feet. Harriet places a number of large photographs in front of Fred. A large dam.

HARRIET

Completed a couple of years ago. The long-term plan is to irrigate thousands of acres of desert. There are plans for watermelons, maize, cotton...

Fred glances at the photographs, fails to conceal a certain surprise.

FRED

And now you're going to tell me it isn't hot in Yemen, are you?

HARRIET

In the mountainous areas, between two and three thousand metres above sea level- where the highest rainfall is, incidently - the night-time temperatures go down to well below twenty Celsius- even in the summer. Of course, I defer to your expert knowledge, Dr Jones, but I believe Pacific Salmon get as far south as California....?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Well, that's Americans for you,  
isn't it? Even their fish show off.

HARRIET

I beg your pardon?

Rather unexpectedly, Fred seems to be losing the argument.  
He sits back down. Sighs.

FRED

Water.

HARRIET

For the fish?

FRED

For me.

Harriet can't seem to get this right. She pours him a glass  
of water and watches in slight alarm as he gulps it all  
down. Places the glass on the table carefully.

FRED (CONT'D)

Ms Chetwode-Talbot, why on earth  
does your client want to do this in  
the first place? It's- it's plainly  
ridiculous. A *folie grandeur*. It's  
just not possible for salmon to live  
in this environment.

He waves at the photographs.

FRED (CONT'D)

If he wants to pour his money down  
the drain, can't he just buy a  
football club or something?

HARRIET

I don't really think it's my place  
to explain the Sheikh's motivations.  
All I can say is that he is- well,  
different from a lot of our wealthy  
clients. I would go so far as to  
describe him as a visionary man.

FRED

*Visionary?*

HARRIET

Not a very fashionable word, I know.  
But if you decide to help us with  
the project, you will be able to  
judge for yourself when you meet  
him.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

A highly unlikely scenario, I am afraid. My Line Manager requested that we meet to discuss the project. That we have done. Thank you for your time, Ms Chetwode-Talbot. I'll see myself out. Goodbye.

Fred stalks out of Bridget's office...

....and stalks straight into Sugden's office in one impatient stride. Sugden barely looks up from his computer.

FRED

Had the meeting. Waste of time, as predicted. Now if you don't mind, I'll get back to my work.

He leaves.

SUGDEN

Doctor Jones?

Fred comes back in. Sugden hands him a piece of paper with a worryingly bland smile.

FRED

What's this?

SUGDEN

(mildly)  
A P45.

FRED

Sorry, I don't understand.

SUGDEN

(as if to a five year-old)  
Oh. Well, a P45 is the official document an employee is given when his services are no longer required by his- or her- employer.

FRED

Yes, but, David-

SUGDEN

- goodbye, Doctor Jones. It's been a pleasure working with you.

FRED

You can't just-

SUGDEN

- or you can sign this letter stating that you are delighted to assign yourself exclusively to the Yemeni salmon fishing project with immediate effect. Up to you.

He puts another piece of paper on the desk, goes assiduously back to his computer.

FRED

But you know as well as I do the whole thing's a bloody joke. There's no way you can get salmon-

SUGDEN

(pointing to the paper)  
- just there.

FRED

This is blackmail, Sugden. This is a bloody outrage.

SUGDEN

Fitzharris and Price will be paying your salary while on secondment. Almost double what it currently is. If there are outrages afoot, I'd say that was one.

FRED

Can I think about this?

SUGDEN

Nope.

Fred's eyes bore into Sugden, but Sugden is examining his computer screen with exaggerated interest.

FRED

Can I borrow your pen?

SUGDEN

Nope. It's my special one. *Italic nib.*

Fred snatches it off Sugden's desk. Signs the paper with a scratchy scrawl that pretends to horrify Sugden. Slams the pen down and stomps out. Sugden grins to himself, puts up his middle finger to Fred's disappearing back.

29 INT. WIGMORE HALL. EVENING.

29

A Quintet of musicians takes to the stage. They are carrying Early Music instruments. Polite applause from the audience amongst whom sit Fred and Mary. He leans over and says into her ear.

FRED

I should have resigned.

MARY

You can't afford to resign.

FRED

It's a matter of principle.

The audience settles. The conductor on stage taps his baton. But Fred is still going.

FRED (CONT'D)

I have a standing in the scientific community, Mary, a reputation.

MARY

You have a mortgage.

Fred opens his mouth to reply, but Mary shushes him loudly. The Quintet strike up that peculiar strain of slightly out of tune original-instrument medieval music. Only just bearable.

30 INT. ARMY BARRACKS. OFFICER'S QUARTERS. NIGHT.

30

Army bedsit. Fanatically neat. Locker, equipment neatly stacked. Robert is sitting on his bed, on the phone.

ROBERT

...I'm sorry if she is in a meeting,  
but I need to speak to her  
urgently....look, tell her that  
Sheikh Muhammad bin Zaida needs to  
talk to her...Yes, immediately.

31 INT. FITZHARRIS PRICE. EVENING.

31

Harriet is in a post-work strategy meeting with a dozen or so suited members of the company including Mr Fitzharris himself. Ties are off, and a couple of bottles of wine are on the table.

FITZHARRIS

So, how's the week been? Harriet?

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

I'm afraid my initial meeting with Doctor Jones didn't go terribly well. I admit it does take rather a leap of imagination...

FITZHARRIS

Keep at it, Harriet. I don't need to tell you how valuable the Sheikh is to us.

An assistant comes in and whispers in Harriet's ear.

HARRIET

No, sir- excuse me, this is the Sheikh now, says it's urgent.

FITZHARRIS

Carry on, carry on.

Suddenly has an idea.

FITZHARRIS (CONT'D)

Let's patch him in on the star ship! Jenny.

He gestures at the conference call hub in the middle of the table. Jenny pushes some buttons on it.

EXT. ARMY BARRACKS. IRAQ/ INT. FITZHARRIS AND PRICE. DAY32

ROBERT

H! What you doing still at work, gorgeous?

HARRIET

End of week round-up. Your Excellency. With the Partners.

ROBERT

Bollocks. In with the gargoyles, are you? Was hoping for a bit of dirty phone sex-

HARRIET

(brightly)  
- on speaker phone.

A long pause.

ROBERT

Ah. Well, Ms Chetwode-Talbot, I just wanted to let you know that I've been err- called away suddenly.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Out of the blue. Middle Eastern business. Wanted to ensure that you don't- don't worry if you didn't hear from me for a while.

HARRIET

Oh. Right. When are you going- your Excellency?

ROBERT

Now, actually. Tonight.

HARRIET

Gosh. That's- that's very sudden.

ROBERT

I'm very sorry. Unavoidable, I'm afraid. You will still go to dinner with the family at the weekend? It would please his Excellency no end for Ms Chetwode-Talbot to meet the old folks.

HARRIET

I- yes. Of course.

There is a knock at Robert's door. A soldier indicates that they have to leave.

ROBERT

Look, I know we've only been at it for a bit and I know it's ridiculous but to hell with it. I love you to bits, Harriet Chetwode-Talbot. And I don't care who hears it. Goodbye for now, sweetheart.

The line goes dead in the office leaving a stunned silence.

FITZHARRIS

Extraordinary fellows, these Sheikhs.

Harriet attempts a smile.

HARRIET

Yes.

The excruciating Early Music comes to an end. Applause.

MARY

A little slow, the last movement.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

FRED

I mean, Sugden himself told me that I had said everything that was worth saying about the Caddis Fly. His very words.

MARY

You might want to examine that statement for irony.

Fred stops clapping.

FRED

Oh. The little shit.

34 OMITTED 34

35 EXT. WIGMORE HALL. EVENING. 35

Lashing, Old Testament rain. Fred and Mary are sheltering outside the concert hall. Mary examines her Blackberry while Fred tries vainly to wave at cabs that whoosh by in the deluge.

FRED

Maybe I *should* resign! We could have a baby. Taxi! I'll stay at home- don't you bloody dare-

Sheltering under his umbrella, he charges past another couple who are trying to flag down a cab, reaches it and opens the door triumphantly. Shouts at the cabbie.

FRED (CONT'D)

I'll be back with reinforcements.

Fred splashes back down the street and shepherds Mary under his umbrella back to the cab.

FRED (CONT'D)

You work, I'll bring up the nipper: take him to the park, to school, take him fishing...

They pile in the cab, a mass of wet clothes.

36 INT. CAB. EVENING. 36

FRED

London Bridge Station. What do you think?

(CONTINUED)

Mary is scrolling through her Blackberry

MARY

Hmm? They're really losing the plot in Geneva. One minute they're buying Euros, the next minute they can't ditch them fast enough for dollars. They're panicking...and guess who they want to bail them out?

Fred stares out at the rain.

FRED

(grimly)  
I can't imagine.

MARY

I've got them. They're going to have to pay me the big money this time.

FRED

I'm getting a raise, too, as it happens.

MARY

Oh, the old three percent shut-up?

FRED

Actually, they're doubling my salary.

MARY

Six percent?

FRED

Fifty percent.

Mary looks up.

MARY

*Fifty?* Jesus, what happened to government fiscal responsibility? Whatever, it's nothing like what I'll be getting in Geneva.

She goes back to her Blackberry.

MARY (CONT'D)

What were you shouting about back there?

FRED

Oh. Nothing.

37 INT. FRED'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT. 37

Fred and Mary are making love. It is a restrained affair that finishes with a grunt from Fred. He rolls off Mary who doesn't seem to have noticed much about it.

MARY

That should keep you going for a while.

FRED

I- Thank you.

He kisses her briefly.

FRED (CONT'D)

Well. Happy anniversary.

MARY

Yes. Happy anniversary.

And Mary rolls over and shuts her eyes. Fred stares at a shaft of moonlight cutting across the ceiling.

38 EXT. RIVER. NIGHT. 38

Moonlight on the river. We go under the water and join the salmon forcing their way upstream, powerful slivers of silver, glinting off the cold light, pushing against the flow.

39 INT. FRED'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT. 39

Fred wakes up. Says quietly to the ceiling.

FRED

I'd like a baby.

40 INT. HARRIET'S FLAT. KITCHEN. DAY. 40

Harriet is buttering a piece of toast. She is humming to herself, alone and content. The radio is on in the background.

RADIO V/O

...reports of a British soldier killed while on duty in Helmand Province. An improvised explosive device exploded while-

Harriet gets up and tunes the radio quickly to some cheery music. Sits back down. Puts down her toast. Stares.

41 EXT. LONDON BRIDGE STATION. MORNING. 41

A train comes into the station. Hundreds of commuters pour from it and flow towards the barriers. We spot Fred in the crowd.

42 INT. FITZHARRIS AND PRICE. HARRIET'S OFFICE. DAY. 42

Pen in hand, Fred is standing next to a white-pad. With a few deft strokes, he scrawls a surprisingly good cartoon of a leaping salmon. Writes the figure 10,000. Harriet is watching, occasionally making notes in a pad.

FRED

You'd need to trap say ten thousand salmon- from the North Sea for the sake of argument- get them to the Yemen alive, don't ask me how, and deposit them in oxygen and temperature controlled holding tanks built into a Wadi...

Draws wings on the cartoon of the salmon. Harriet suppresses a smile. He draws a bucket of water with a door in it.

FRED (CONT'D)

...that will then, halleluja, open during the rainy season to allow the salmon to migrate upstream for, I don't know, ten kilometres- ten kilometres, mark you-

He draws a single line weaving top-to-toe of the paper up and down ten times. It's getting a bit manic.

FRED (CONT'D)

- of engineered salmon-run, free of obstacles where your Sheikh can hoik them out to his heart's content until the dry season when they'll all die.

Fred has drawn a head-dressed Sheikh, fishing. He puts a headstone and the letters RIP around the cartoon salmon. Looks rather pleased with himself, though a little out of breath.

HARRIET

Unless we feed the wadi all year round using the dam.

Fred sketches a massive tap.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Of course. Idiot man! Why not use scarce water resources for one man's sport fishing! So, now we've got year-round water, why not construct some gravel spawning grounds, breed the world's first Arabian Salmon and get the clever fellows to migrate to the Indian Ocean-

He makes some fast, elegant cartoon additions to the plan.

HARRIET

- what a wonderful idea.

FRED

- singing the Toreador Song from Carmen as they go, why not.

HARRIET

Rough cost?

FRED

Cost? *Cost?*

A burst of manic laughter at this preposterous question.

FRED (CONT'D)

Let's say ten million, no fifteen million. Twenty.

HARRIET

Dollars?

FRED

Dollars.

Scrawls a dirty great dollar sign. Harriet writes that down.

HARRIET

Dollars.

There is a slight flicker of panic as Fred realises she is taking him utterly seriously.

FRED

Pounds.

Harriet looks up from her pad at the dollars sign on the white-board. Irritably, he scribbles it out.

HARRIET

Pounds.

Harriet writes all this down.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

At least.

Fred waits, arms folded.

HARRIET

So, it is theoretically possible.

FRED

In the same way that a manned mission to Mars is theoretically possible.

She finishes writing, looks up from her pad.

HARRIET

That's very impressive, Doctor Jones.

FRED

No it's not, it's nonsense. I just made it up.

HARRIET

No, the drawing. A real talent if I may say so.

She snaps her book shut.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

An excellent start. The Sheikh will be pleased.

Fred is now genuinely worried.

FRED

You can't hold me to this. It's just random ideas. Back of an envelope stuff. A sort of joke.

HARRIET

I'm sure you wouldn't joke about a twenty million pound project, Dr Jones. Not when you're in charge of it. Though I won't hold you to the Toreador Song, music clearance rights being what they are.

FRED

Ms Chetwode-Talbot....

HARRIET

The Sheikh will be in the country in a week or two.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (3)

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Would love to meet you. In the  
meantime, is there anything I can do  
for you?

A narrowing of Fred's eyes. Two can play at this game.

FRED

As a matter of fact, there is. I  
need you to find the Hydro  
Engineering team from the Three  
Gorges Dam and set up a meeting.

HARRIET

The one in China?

FRED

Is there another? If this scheme is  
going to work, we need the best in  
the world. British Oxygen Company.  
Meeting with them as well. And  
what's the name of those bloody  
great transport aeroplanes...  
Russian military things. Antonovs,  
that's it. Find out about renting  
one- no, two..One for the fish and  
one to carry all the money we're  
going to need. When that's done,  
I'll be delighted to start work.  
Goodbye Ms Chetwode-Talbot.

He stalks out of the room.

HARRIET

Goodbye, Doctor Jones.

43 EXT. FRED'S HOUSE. DAY.

43

A happy Fred walks down the path to his house doing his best  
Toreador impression.

FRED

Et, que'l'amour attend, Toreador,  
l'amour, l'amour attend...

44 INT. FRED'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

44

Fred conducts his way through the door in full flow.

FRED

...la, la, la-la- Mary?

MARY O/S

Up here.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

Fred runs up the stairs...

FRED

Boy, did I put a hurricane up that  
Chetwode-Talbot woman- you'd have  
laughed-

45 INT. FRED'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY.

45

...comes through the door, chuckling .

FRED

- told her I needed a meeting with  
the Three Gorges-

Sees the suitcases laid out on the bed, wardrobe and drawers  
open, Mary mid-way through packing.

FRED (CONT'D)

- where you going?

MARY

Geneva. I told you.

FRED

You didn't say today.

MARY

I did. Didn't I? Anyway, I am.

FRED

How long this time?

MARY

Six weeks. To start with.

FRED

Six weeks!

MARY

There's no need to shout.

FRED

(very quietly)  
Six weeks. Mary...

MARY

This is a big chance for me. I'll Be  
heading the whole operation. You  
could say congratulations.

But Fred turns and walks away. Mary resumes her packing.

46 EXT. POND. EVENING.

46

Fred is feeding white bread to his carp. Or more exactly throwing bread hard at them.

FRED

Enough is enough. I mean, are you committed or not? What are we, friends who share a house and a fish pond or husband and wife? Hmm? Job or marriage. You've got to make a decision. And make it now, dammit.

A carp gets a large crust square on the head. Mary comes down the garden and joins him. Fred automatically gives her half of his bread. They proceed to feed the fish together, not looking at each other.

MARY

There are planes, you know, Fred. And I get Sundays off. Mostly. You can get all your horrible old fishing stuff out again.

A pause for more fish feeding.

FRED

You didn't even ask me. You just did it.

MARY

I know. I'm sorry. It just suddenly seemed like the right decision. Maybe for both of us.

Fred nods.

MARY (CONT'D)

Fred, I don't want to leave on bad terms.

Fred gives a brave smile.

FRED

No. We should open a bottle. Something fizzy.

He walks past Mary, touching her shoulder as he goes.

46A EXT. COLONEL AND MRS MYER'S HOUSE. EVENING.

46A

Harriet's car pulls up in front of a Georgian rectory. She gets out. Looks at the neatly-raked gravel on the drive. Knocks on the door. Waits.

(CONTINUED)

46A CONTINUED:

46A

Then sees a slight woman in her late sixties. She has on her gardening gloves and has clearly been observing her from the side of the house for a while.

MRS MYERS

And you must be Harriet.

47 INT. COLONEL AND MRS MYER'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. EVENING.47

A large, formal dining table. With three people at one end. The cutlery echoes. Awkwardness is in the air.

COLONEL MYERS

...well, you have to expect this sort of thing. Especially if you're SAS. Not exactly desk-diary soldiering.

MRS MYERS

Geoffrey was away for six months at a time. Part of the job. You just have to find yourself a hobby, my dear. Do you have one?

HARRIET

Well, my work is very- it takes up a lot of my time.

COLONEL MYERS

Yes. Robert mentioned it. Selling off England to the Saudis, isn't it?

HARRIET

More managing the assets of clients. A lot of them are from the Middle East, though.

COLONEL MYERS

Yes, the Middle East. Spent a lot of time out there myself. Nothing but trouble, if you ask me. Nothing but trouble.

Harriet tries a bright smile. It dies.

48 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S HOUSE. DAY.

48

On her cell phone, Bridget Maxwell is standing in the hall of her Islington house while her family are paraded in front of her by husband Peter. Edward, six, Abby, 8 and Joshua, 13. As her discussion continues, each child in turn has his tie tugged, cap twitched, shirt straightened. Joshua is the only one to reach rebellion stage.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

...naked or clothed?...boy or girl...how old...? Jesus. Well, at least she's legal. Press statement from us saying we're a party of policy not personality; concentrating on the real issues, not tabloid sensationalism etcetera.

She straightens Joshua's cap. He sucks his teeth in gangsta annoyance.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Meanwhile get the useless arse on the front page of every paper apologising for being born, big spread in *Hello*, with forgiving blonde wife and cute kids. If they're not cute find a horse or something....

The family troop out of the door. Immediately outside, Joshua pulls his cap down on one side again. She bellows after him.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Joshua! Cap! And don't you suck your teeth at me, young man, I'm not one of yo' bitches from the Baltimore low-rises, you feel me? I'm your fucking Mother.

Back to the phone.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Got to go. Meeting.

She cuts the call, scrolls down her emails. Her eyes widen as she reads one of them.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Well, Bollocks the Musical...

A rare smile.

Fred opens his sandwich packet- neatly wrapped in brown paper. He picks up the unimpressive white bread sandwich, peers at the filling. Drops it in the bin with a sigh. The intercom goes.

(CONTINUED)

IRENE V/O

Mr Sugden would like to see you,  
Sir.

FRED

Up his arse with a metre ruler.

Fred presses the buzzer.

FRED (CONT'D)

Thank you, Irene.

Fred walks into Sugden's office, ready for a fight.

FRED

Can I help you?

He finds himself facing a rather smug Sugden and Bridget Maxwell, flicking through a large wodge of paperwork.

SUGDEN

Fred! Can I introduce you to Bridget Maxwell, Press Officer to the Prime Minister.

Without looking up, Bridget raises a hand in greeting.

MAXWELL

Fred.

SUGDEN

It's more a case of how we can help you.

He points at the paperwork.

SUGDEN (CONT'D)

Five million. From Sheikh Muhammad Thingummy. Released as a first stage payment on development research for the salmon fishing project.

FRED

Dollars or pounds?

SUGDEN

Who's counting? Doesn't waste his time, does he?

Bridget slings the paperwork on Sugden's desk. Looks keenly at Fred for the first time.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

Pounds sterling. He must think you can do it. Can you?

SUGDEN

Course we can.

MAXWELL

I'm asking Fred.

FRED

It's not completely impossible, I suppose, though almost completely impossible-

SUGDEN

- Fred's a glass-half-empty man.

MAXWELL

The PM is keeping a close eye on this one. Just what we need right now. A bit of Anglo-Arab news that has nothing to do with exploding things. What I want to know from you, is: is it a goer?

FRED

A goer? The complexities...I hardly know where to begin. I mean just to start with we need ten thousand live salmon.

MAXWELL

Is ten thousand salmon a lot?

FRED

If they are to come from British waters- and I don't see where else they're going to come from- then we need the permission of the Environment Agency.

MAXWELL

Of course they should be British. Red white and blue salmon with George Crosses on their bloody tails. That's the whole point. The EA, won't be a problem, will it, David?

SUGDEN

Err, shouldn't think so. Not with the PM's blessing.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

Bit early for blessings. Let's see how we go, hmm?

FRED

Miss, Ms-

MAXWELL

- Mrs. Happily married. Details in Who's Who.

FRED

Mrs Maxwell, there are two million fishermen and women in the UK. They are, I would say, unusually protective of-

Bridget is suddenly interested.

MAXWELL

- how many?

FRED

Two million.

MAXWELL

Two million? Out there waving their little rods around? They the sort that vote our way?

FRED

They vote for the people who best look after their fish in my experience.

MAXWELL

I bet they do, I bet they do. Bloody hell. So the Prime Minister on the front cover of Fishy Weekly or whatever, friend to the British fisher folk, spearing a leaping salmon...yes, yes, I like it.

Bridget jots some notes on her Blackberry.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

They have magazines, I take it? These people can read?

FRED

The Angling Times, Trout and Salmon, Coarse Fishing Monthly, Coarse Angler, Bassmania-

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

- Bassmania! Marvellous, marvellous.  
Sugden, get onto the Environment  
Agency. You've just got the PM's  
blessing.

SUGDEN

Right away, Bridget.

MAXWELL

Carry on, Fred, your salmon are in  
the bag. Anything else I can do,  
call me.

Maxwell gets up, goes to the door. Stops, delighted.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Two million...!

She makes an extraordinary flicking motion with her hand- an  
attempt at casting a line.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Men. My God. What a species.

She walks out. Sugden looks concerned.

SUGDEN

I'm not sure she got the right end  
of the stick, there.

FRED

Your call, I think, David. Ten  
thousand native Atlantic Salmon. On  
my desk by Friday, please. Ta, ta.

Fred walks out, barely able to conceal his smug glee. Sugden  
calls after him.

SUGDEN

You'd better come through on this,  
Jones.

A series of e-mails flash onto the screen.

"Prime Minister, can you fish?"

"It depends."

"Yes or no?"

"Potentially."

"For (deleted) sake, there are two million (deleted) voters  
with (deleted) fishing rods."

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED: (4)

50

"In that case, I can fish."

46A INT. GENEVA OFFICE. DAY.

46A

Mary is in front of a bank of computer screens. Columns of figures pile onto the screens, flowing up and down like water. She writes down the occasional figure, deep in thought. Underneath the screen, another text pops up.

*Hope all going well in Geneva. Fred x*

Mary types and sends:

*Busy all day. Will ring 2nite. Mary x*

51 INT. ANTONOV. DAY.

51

A massive Antonov Air Transporter, the largest plane in the world. Fred and Harriet are inside the cavernous hold, measuring with a tape measure. A series of texts run along the bottom of the screen.

*Try mobile. Will be in Scotland. Fx*

*Scotland?*

*Visiting the Crazy Sheikh's Estate.*

HARRIET

Dr Jones, I have all the measurements written down in the specs they sent us.

FRED

Nevertheless.

HARRIET

To the millimetre.

Reads off the measure.

FRED

Three three four six. Never hurts to check, Miss Chetwode-Talbot. We're dealing with Russians, here.

Harriet smiles blandly and very deliberately releases the end of the tape measure. It retracts at speed and snaps back into its holder, stinging Fred's fingers as it goes. He gives her a sharp glance, but she is assiduously writing down the measurement. There is the ghost of a smile on his face.

52 INT. HELICOPTER PAD. TOP OF TOWERBLOCK. DAY. 52

Fred and Harriet are sitting in a tiny helicopter. The city falls away from them alarmingly as they gain height. Fred looks wide-eyed at the view. A final text comes through:

*What a waste of time. Poor you. Mx*

HARRIET

It's a bit noisy. And terrifying.

FRED

It's..it's...wonderful!

And, possibly for the first time, Fred grins. Harriet looks at him. Also for the first time, he looks like quite a nice man. She smiles back.

53 EXT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. DAY. 53

The helicopter lands in front of an impressive country house. Fred and Harriet run under the blades and into the shelter of the front hall where they are greeted by a troop of tall Yemeni soldiers in Yemeni national dress. Next to them stands a man in a smart suit.

54 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. DAY. 54

HARRIET

Can I present-

FRED

- yes, yes.

Still on an adrenaline high, Fred ignores Harriet and shakes the man's hand.

FRED (CONT'D)

What a machine! How do you do, your Excellency.

HARRIET

Malcolm the butler.

FRED

Ah.

MALCOLM

Welcome to Glen Tulloch, Sir. His Excellency regrets that he is currently occupied. He has asked me to welcome you and show you to your room.

55 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. FRED'S ROOM. DAY. 55

Fred's bedroom is wood-panelled and huge, with a four-poster bed on which is laid out fishing clothes and waders.

MALCOLM

His Excellency thought that you might wish to avail yourself of the fishing while you are waiting.

FRED

Thank you.

Malcolm leaves. By the side of the bed sits a rod and tackle box. Fred picks up the rod, weighs it in his hand with approval. Opens the box of tackle and looks at a row of exquisite flies. Picks one up and admires it with a smile.

56 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. CORRIDOR. DAY. 56

Stag's heads and giant, embalmed salmon line the walls from decades long past. Fred wanders the corridor, gazing at the artefacts. Suddenly, he is surrounded by the Muslim call to prayer, echoing around the walls. He turns around but can't see where the sound is coming from. He hastens back to his room.

57 EXT. RIVER. DAY. 57

Fred is wading slowly downstream, casting as he goes. He is being watched by a man in full robes standing on a tiny, pack-horse bridge across the river drinking an incongruous cup of tea. Finally Fred looks up, sees the Sheikh. The Sheikh smiles and raises one slow hand in greeting.

58 EXT. PACKHORSE BRIDGE. DAY. 58

A camping table and chairs are set up on the bridge. Malcolm is preparing tea on a camping stove and Harriet, in Barbour jacket and Stalker, has her lap-top set up on the collapsible table. The Sheikh extends his arm in greeting.

SHEIKH

A lovely side-cast, if I may say so, Dr Alfred.

HARRIET

May I present Sheikh Muhammad bin Zaidi bani Tihama.

Fred shakes the Sheikh's hand.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

A pleasure to meet you, your  
Excellency.

SHEIKH

To meet the creator of the Woolly  
Jones, the pleasure is all mine,  
Sir.

FRED

How kind.

SHEIKH

Miss Chetwode-Talbot, do you realise  
that for more than ten years I have  
fished with a Woolly Jones?

HARRIET

A- I'm sorry?

SHEIKH

Dr Jones invented a famous fly. The  
Woolly Jones.

HARRIET

Oh.

The Sheikh produces a fly from his pocket and hands it to  
Harriet. She attempts to look impressed.

FRED

There is lamentable habit of  
sentimental names in the world of  
fly-tying, I'm afraid.

HARRIET

It's a- a sweet name.

SHEIKH

Bloody good fly, that is for sure.

Fred looks around himself.

FRED

Beautiful, beautiful. It's easy to  
forget. This morning I was on a  
crowded train into London Bridge...

SHEIKH

Please. Allow me to show you a  
delightful lie just around the  
corner.

Malcolm hands the Sheikh a rod and he proceeds to wander  
down and into the water, his robes swirling around him.

59

EXT. RIVER. DAY.

59

FRED

Wouldn't you like waders, your- err- Excellency?

SHEIKH

When I can no longer feel my legs, then I have to stop fishing. It is the only way. If I wore waders, I would spend the whole day here and nothing else would get done.

Fred wades in to catch the Sheikh up.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

You think I am mad.

Fred opens his mouth, but nothing comes out.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED (CONT'D)

Of course you do. I would question your judgement if you did not. You are an eminent scientist, sent here by your masters on this flight of fancy to keep a mad, rich, old towel-head happy.

FRED

No, no.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

Yes, yes.

The Sheikh laughs.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED (CONT'D)

Governments are not helpful without reason. There are wheels within wheels that are already whirring, Dr Alfred, electronic messages flying invisibly hither and thither from office to office. I am clever enough to know that.

He stops and points to the opposite bank.

SHEIKH

But under there lies a fish much cleverer than me.

He prepares to cast.

(CONTINUED)

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

I have spent a long time on your island, Dr Alfred. I was educated here and I am a great admirer of the British for many reasons. But there are many mysteries to me. Even now. The rich are frightened of the poor, the poor are frightened of the rich. And even your Prime Minister tries to sound like the people on the East Enders. A wonderful programme, but still...

FRED

Ah, the class system.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

Indeed. But fishermen. I have noticed they do not care whether I am brown or white, rich or poor, wearing robes or waders. All they care about is the river, the fish and the game we play. For fishermen, the only virtues are patience and tolerance and humility.

He casts again to the other side of the river.

SHEIKH

In my homeland, our tribes fight fiercely over empty desert, the lack of water. So I build a dam. And now we fight over fertile soil, an abundance of water. What do I learn, Dr Alfred?

FRED

Human nature, I'm afraid.

SHEIKH

Indeed, but not the *fisherman's* nature. I have a dream that one day the salmon will run in Wadi Aley, inshallah, and my countrymen will learn the fisherman's ways. So when the talk turns to what this tribe did to that tribe, what the Israelis did to the Palestinians, the Afghans to the British, my tribe to their tribe, when voices grow heated and war is in the air, then someone will say, "let us arise and go fishing."

The Sheikh looks at Dr Jones who is staring at the river.

(CONTINUED)

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

You are struck dumb at my naivety,  
Dr Alfred.

FRED

No, your Excellency, it's  
just...Strike!

SHEIKH

What?

A second's pause and then the Sheikh suddenly bursts into action, flicking his rod. The reel runs out fast as the fish bolts for deep water. The Sheikh struggles with the weight of the fish as it tries to free itself. He would topple over, but for Fred grabbing him.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

It is surely a sign!

FRED

A sign?

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

A sign that I should stop talking  
bollocks and fish!

The fish leaps clear out of the water in a final attempt to escape.

FRED

A beauty!

And the Sheikh reels it in. Fred hastens to the bank to get the keep net that Malcolm is holding in readiness. They manhandle the trout into the net and collapse on the bank. The Sheikh bursts out laughing.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

Thank you, thank you, my friend. I  
am all mouth and you are all eyes!  
Together, we will do great things.

Fred comes back into his room to find a dinner jacket,  
trousers, shirt and paraphenalia all laid out on the bed.

FRED

Hello?

60 CONTINUED:

60

He stares at the clothes. Picks up the dinner jacket. Holds it up in front of himself in the cheval mirror. A perfect fit. Stands up a little straighter.

61 INT. HELICOPTER. DAY.

61

Robert's face is disguised with streaks of camouflage make-up. Crouched by the door, he counts in six soldiers- all painted-up- into the helicopter. Jumps in last and slams the door shut. The helicopter wheels away in a storm of dust.

62 INT. ARMY BARRACKS. DESERT. DAY.

62

Robert's barracks. The camera moves along the beds, moves inside a locker. On a shelf, sits an iphone. Robert's iphone. It vibrates. The phone's screen lights up with a smiling picture of Harriet.

63 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. HARRIET'S ROOM. DAY.

63

Harriet is talking on her mobile.

HARRIET

I know you can't get your messages until you're back, but I just wanted to say that I'm up in Glen Tulloch with a very strange man called Dr Jones- don't worry, I don't fancy him and the weird Sheikh and it's all quite funny really....

Suddenly the jaunty tone is too much.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Robert, I know we're new at this, and we're supposed to make a big joke out of it all, like you're on bloody holiday or something, but I can't. I'm just not made like that.

Another long pause.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Sorry, that was my extremely selfish twin sister on the other line. You haven't met her. But you will....Robert, what I meant to say is what I should have said the other night and on the phone in the office- if only I'd had the guts.

She takes a deep breath.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

HARRIET (CONT'D)

I love you, too, Robert. Even though we hardly know each other. It doesn't matter. It's what I feel now. Right now. I love you. Please take care of yourself, my beautiful man. Goodbye.

She cuts the call.

64 INT. ARMY BARRACKS. DAY. 64

The iphone flashes to "1 message" and then the photo of Harriet goes dark.

65 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. LANDING. EVENING. 65

Clad in his dinner jacket, Fred comes out into the corridor. As he reaches the top of the baronial stairs, he sees Harriet in evening dress. Her hair is up and she looks transformed from the Barbour-jacketed woman of before. She is staring out of the window at the top of the stairs, miles away from the present. For a second longer than necessary, Fred watches this beautiful woman, sees the worry on her face. Then she turns. Smiles.

HARRIET

Dr Jones.

FRED

Is that- is that yours? The dress.

Harriet laughs at this odd question.

HARRIET

Yes.

FRED

Ah. It's just that- well, this isn't mine.

HARRIET

It suits you very well, Dr Jones.

FRED

Thank you.

He looks furtively around as if being overheard.

FRED (CONT'D)

They seem to know my size. Don't you think that's just the tiniest bit sinister?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

FRED (CONT'D)

The Sheikh's tailor, tracking me across London with some satellite measuring device?

Harriet giggles.

FRED (CONT'D)

No?

HARRIET

They asked me. Your size.

FRED

Oh.

He sniffs. He might be annoyed, it's hard for her to tell.

FRED (CONT'D)

For future reference, I'll have you know that I'm a 32 waist not a 34. No pies for me, Miss Chetwode-Talbot.

Fred pats his stomach then sticks his arm out. With equal certainty, Harriet takes it.

HARRIET

Note taken, Doctor Jones.

And with a formality that pleases them both, they walk down the stairs arm in arm.

66 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

66

An unfeasibly long dining table, set with the finest silver. The Sheikh, Fred and Harriet are all down one end, being waited on by two servants. The fish that the Sheikh caught is paraded in by another servant on a huge silver platter. The servant puts it down on the table and the Sheikh says a quick arabic prayer.

SHEIKH

Why is it that I feel more pride in today's labours, in this little fish, Doctor Alfred, than in all my business endeavours put together?

He starts serving out the salmon.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

So, Sir, Miss Harriet Chetwode-Talbot has told me of the marvellous plan you have already made to bring my outlandish proposal to fruition.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Plan? Not exactly a plan, as such.  
More a feasibility study.

HARRIET

Theoretically possible, you said, Dr  
Jones?

FRED

Theoretically.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

Indeed. It will be a miracle of God  
if it were to happen. Your expertise  
and my money are not alone enough, I  
know. But just as Moses found water  
in the wilderness, if God wills it,  
fish will swim in the Wadi Aleyn.

FRED

I'm more of a facts and figures man,  
I'm afraid.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

You are not a religious man?

FRED

No. No, I'm not.

SHEIKH

(puzzled)  
But you are a fisherman.

FRED

I don't quite follow.

SHEIKH

How many hours do you fish before  
you catch something. Dozens?

FRED

Gosh, hundreds, sometimes.

SHEIKH

Is that not a bad use of your time?  
For a facts and figures man? When  
your Tesco's fresh fish is just down  
the road? But you persist in the  
wind and the rain and the cold with  
such poor odds of success. Why?  
Because you are a man of *faith*, Dr  
Alfred. And in the end you are  
rewarded for your faith and  
constancy. With a fish!

(CONTINUED)

FRED

With respect, fishing and religion  
are hardly the same, your  
Excellency.

SHEIKH

With equal respect, I cannot agree.  
I have spoken to many scholars and  
imams about my dream of salmon  
fishing, about how the long struggle  
of this magical creature through the  
oceans is so like our own journey  
towards God. I have also been warned  
by the jihadis that with this  
fishing, I am bringing the ways of  
the crusader to the land of Islam.  
You know, if we succeed, they will  
certainly try to kill me.

FRED

Surely not. Because of fish?

SHEIKH MUHAMMED

But that is exactly it, Dr Alfred.  
We are not really talking about fish  
at all.

67

EXT. SAUDI ARABIAN DESERT VALLEY. NIGHT.

67

Moonlight shadows the huge dunes of the desert. Out of the  
sky, one, two, six parachutes float down, are swallowed by  
the sand.

68

INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. LIBRARY. NIGHT.

68

Malcolm is serving coffee to Fred, Harriet and the Sheikh in  
the library.

SHEIKH

You are unhappy tonight, Miss  
Harriet Chetwode-Talbot.

HARRIET

I'm fine, your Excellency. Really.

SHEIKH

I have too many wives not to know  
when a woman is unhappy. Though mine  
are not so quiet about it.

HARRIET

Robert. My...boyfriend. He's been  
posted to Afghanistan. Or somewhere.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET (CONT'D)

We'd only just got together, really,  
and then he's just- gone.

SHEIKH

Ah. I am sorry.

FRED

And when will he be back?

HARRIET

They don't tell us things like that.

FRED

How worrying.

HARRIET

I try not to think about it.

The Sheikh spots the beginnings of tears in Harriet's eyes  
and turns smoothly to Fred.

SHEIKH

And you are married, Dr Alfred?

FRED

Indeed.

SHEIKH

It is kind of her to spare you.

FRED

Actually, she's working abroad at  
the moment.

SHEIKH

Ah. So you two have more in common  
than might be supposed.

A slight pause with polite, embarrassed smiles.

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

I have put my feet in it. Please  
forgive me. British tact is a  
mystery, I fear, that will never be  
revealed to me. A perfect moment to  
retire to bed, I think. Dr Alfred, I  
know you have been- how shall I say-  
*persuaded* to help us with this  
extraordinary venture. But unless  
you do so with an open heart, I  
think nothing will come of it. So,  
please consider. If you decide  
against it, your government position  
will not be affected. You have my  
word on that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

68

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

I will be gone in the morning, so  
good night, sleep well and I hope we  
meet again.

With a small bow, the Sheikh leaves.

69 EXT. JORDANIAN DESERT VALLEY. NIGHT.

69

The eery green glow of night vision goggles illuminate a  
desert landscape. Mountains and moon dust. A troop of  
soldiers run past. They fan out and disappear like wraiths  
into the dark.

70 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. LANDING. NIGHT.

70

Harriet and Fred reach the top of the stairs. They are about  
to go their separate ways when Harriet stops.

FRED

Yes, Ms Chetwode-Talbot?

HARRIET

I was just wondering...well, what  
you thought?

FRED

I am not entirely sure what the  
Sheikh means by an 'open heart'- his  
English has a certain tendency to  
the mystical, don't you think? But-  
well, doolally though this entire  
scheme clearly is- I've had the most  
pleasant day I can remember in a  
long time. So, if he's paying, as it  
were, on we go. Good night, Ms  
Chetwode-Talbot. It's been a  
pleasure.

He shakes Harriet's hand, turns and walks off, leaving  
Harriet with a bemused smile on her face.

71 INT. JORDANIAN DESERT. NIGHT.

71

Black night. A man's voice, metallised by radio and static.  
Only just in control.

ROBERT V/O

Control this is Watcher. Abort  
strike, come in. We got wounded.  
Abort-

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

Silence. Explosions on the horizon. Silent puffs of red, orange, white magnesium flares, hanging in the air. Strangely beautiful.

72 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. HARRIET'S ROOM. DAWN

72

...another red and orange sky. From her bedroom window, Harriet is staring at the earliest rays of the sunrise.

73 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S OFFICE. DAY.

73

Bridget's phone goes. Her face is suddenly serious.

BRIDGET  
Maxwell...Christ...

She swivels in her chair, grabs a remote and switches her tv on. A reporter is doing a piece to camera.

REPORTER V/O  
...a series of explosions on the Jordanian border. Ministry of Defence sources in London deny any involvement saying that they have no operational troops stationed in Jordan.

Bridget's desk phone starts ringing again. Then her mobile. Then her Blackberry buzzes. Emails are beginning to ping in. She sits back in her chair, calmly surveys the electronic panic in front of her and smiles.

BRIDGET  
Okay, cock-up, come to Mummy...

74 INT. NCFE FRED'S OFFICE. DAY.

74

Harriet walks through the door. She has lost her usual sang-froid.

HARRIET  
Dr Jones.

FRED  
Ms Chetwode-Talbot. How nice. Did we book a meeting?

HARRIET  
I'm awfully sorry about this, but...you know you said you wanted to meet the Hydro Engineers from the Three Gorges Dam?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Did I really? That was perhaps a little hasty of me. Flippant, even.

HARRIET

They're outside.

FRED

Who?

HARRIET

The Chief Hydro-Engineering Team of the Three Gorges Dam. Some of them, anyway.

FRED

Here?

She nods.

FRED (CONT'D)

Now?

She nods again.

HARRIET

I emailed them about the flow rate calculus...There must have been- my Mandarin's a bit rusty.

He goes to the window of his office. Lifts up the blinds. Four earnest Chinese Engineers sit outside, waiting.

FRED

Bloody hell...

HARRIET

Mr Zhu and his team were in Stuttgart for the European Renewable Energy Conference and they just- well, flew over.

She shrugs.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

I'm very sorry.

FRED

This is all very irregular.

HARRIET

I know. But you did say....

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (2)

74

FRED

Yes, but I didn't think you'd actually-

He stops. Stares hard at her.

FRED (CONT'D)

That'll teach me.

Is it a compliment, is it a criticism? She can't read him. Then, Fred raises his hands in a huge shrug.

FRED (CONT'D)

Well, bring them in, Ms Chetwode-Talbot. Bring them in.

75 INT. CORRIDOR. DAY.

75

David Sugden is leaning up against Irene's desk, trying to get a surreptitious look through the blinds into Fred's office. Fred is standing by his white-board, sketching madly while Harriet translates into Chinese. The four engineers gaze hard, occasionally nod. One of them takes notes.

DAVID SUGDEN

Who on earth are that lot?

IRENE

I couldn't say, Mr Sugden.

DAVID SUGDEN

Well, they must have signed in, Irene.

With the buried aggression of many years suffering in this building, she shoves the Visitor's Log towards him. Chinese hieroglyphics run down the page. He snorts and tries to get another look into the room.

DAVID SUGDEN (CONT'D)

Wife's gone to Geneva. He's making his own sandwiches. Might never come back, I hear.

76 INT. NCFE. FRED'S OFFICE. DAY.

76

The Chinese engineers are filing out of the door. Lots of bowing from them, Fred and Harriet. When the Engineers are gone, they turn and look at each other a little stunned.

HARRIET

Do you think we got away with it?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Do you know, I think we did.

HARRIET

I'm so sorry, Dr Jones.

FRED

Nothing to be sorry about. We've just found our engineers. Should we ever get that far. Your Mandarin is better than I expected.

Harriet is still trying to work out whether this is a compliment when Sugden puts his head around the door, faux-casual.

SUGDEN

David Sugden, Head of Department. Old Fred not bothering you too much, I hope?

HARRIET

Not in the least.

FRED

This is Ms Chetwode-Talbot from Fitzharris and Price.

Sugden and Harriet shake hands.

SUGDEN

Bet he doesn't even know your first name, does he? Who the hell were those little fellas?

FRED

Oh, just the engineers from the Three Gorges Dam.

SUGDEN

The Chinese one?

FRED AND HARRIET

Is there another?

They both repress a smile.

SUGDEN

Would have appreciated an introduction.

FRED

David's the man in charge of getting us ten thousand North Atlantic salmon. How's that going, by the way, David?

DAVID SUGDEN

Don't you worry about that, Fred. All in hand.

FRED

Well don't hang about, our end is going extremely well. Bang on schedule, I'd say.

Fred ushers Harriet out of the room.

SUGDEN

Fancy a debrief in the canteen? Or has Fred brought in the famous sandwiches....?

He laughs a little too pointedly.

FRED

Actually, Ms Chetwode-Talbot and I are going out for lunch. A lot to discuss. Do you know anywhere good?

HARRIET

The Ivy's nice at lunch time.

SUGDEN

Just try getting *that* receipt past Compliance.

FRED

Fitzharris and Price expense account. The Ivy it is. Toodle-oo.

And with a little wave, Fred and Harriet leave. Sugden watches them go.

SUGDEN

(to himself)

Private sector. Always get the lookers.

Irene glowers. Sugden retreats in a panic.

77 INT. THE IVY. DAY.

77

Fred and Harriet are sitting at a table, Harriet flushed with her recent success. A waiter is pouring champagne into Harriet's glass.

HARRIET

You're sure you won't have one?

FRED

At lunch time?

HARRIET

Doctor Jones, I haven't spoken a word of Mandarin for at least four years. I'm celebrating even if you're not.

FRED

Alcohol only at weekends for me. After seven.

HARRIET

No exceptions?

He seems utterly unaware that he is being gently teased and thinks seriously for a moment.

FRED

None that I can think of. My wedding was on a Friday. But I recall it was a Bank Holiday in Northern Ireland so I think I allowed myself a glass on a technicality.

She gazes at his utterly straight face.

FRED (CONT'D)

That was an attempt at a joke, Ms Chetwode-Talbot.

HARRIET

Oh! Right. I'm sorry. Is it really going 'extremely well'?

FRED

Is what?

HARRIET

The project.

FRED

Well, it's all utter nonsense, naturally, the bagatelle of a man with more money than sense.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FRED (CONT'D)

But so far, I haven't found anything to say that it couldn't actually happen. In theory, of course.

HARRIET

Of course. In theory.

Fred plonks his briefcase on his knee and pulls out a stack of paperwork.

FRED

In fact, these are the companies that wish to bid for the contract to build the holding tanks at the downstream end of the wadi. Should this scheme actually become a reality. Can we go through them?

HARRIET

Now?

FRED

We can work and eat can't we?

HARRIET

(hiding her  
disappointment)

Yes. Yes we can. But before that, cheers.

And she tips her head back and takes a huge gulp of champagne, followed by another. But suddenly, things are happening at lightning speed.

*A finger dials on a phone.*

*We fly along subterranean wires, faster than is humanly possible.*

*Shoot out of a building and along a telegraph wire.*

*Speed up a phone mast.*

*Fire up and away from earth faster than a rocket. Power through the upper atmosphere into space.*

*Penetrate the insides of a satellite, cannonball around the circuitry.*

*Fire out again, through the clouds and down to earth.*

*Into the roof of a London restaurant.*

*Into Harriet's bag. Her phone rings.*

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

All this in the time it takes her to have three impressive gulps of champagne, bang down her glass and laugh at the astonished look on Fred's face.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

She reaches into her bag, gets the phone, glances at the id.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

It's the barracks! Robert. Sorry.

FRED

No, no, please.

Halfway out of her chair, she answers the phone, excitedly.

HARRIET

Hello?

Her face falls.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Yes...Yes...what?

She gets up, walks towards the exit. Knocks over a drink on another table as she goes but doesn't even notice the remonstrations from the diners. Fred watches her, concerned. Through the window, he sees her shut her mobile and crouch down on the pavement. He hurries out.

78 EXT. THE IVY. DAY.

78

Finds her sitting on the pavement.

FRED

Ms Chetwode-Talbot?

HARRIET

It's Robert. They say he's missing in action. "Missing in action". I don't even know what that means.

79 INT. HARRIET'S FLAT. DAY.

79

Jump cuts. Harriet pacing her flat. Sitting at the kitchen table. On the mobile.

HARRIET

...concerning Captain Robert Myers?...I'm his girlfriend for Christ's sake....well, what can you tell me?....no. Yes. Yes. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

She puts the phone down. Bites her lip. A dot of blood appears.

80 INT. BRITISH OXYGEN COMPANY TEST SHEDS. DAY. 80

In the Test sheds, BOC engineers are showing Fred various water tanks fitted with systems for oxygenating water. They indicate valves, pipes. He nods approvingly. Looks at his watch.

81 EXT. BRITISH OXYGEN COMPANY. DAY. 81

Fred stands by his car, on the phone.

FRED

...to contact Miss Harriet Chetwode-Talbot...do you know when she might be coming in?

82 INT. HARRIET'S FLAT. DAY. 82

Harriet is on the phone.

HARRIET

...I was just wondering if you'd heard anything else, Mrs Myers...no, I understand the protocol, but couldn't Colonel Myers find out from the inside- no, I'm not suggesting that, no...No, Mrs Myers, of course I won't talk to the press, I'm not-

She stops herself.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

- it's a very difficult time for you. For all of us....I'll wait to hear from you, then. Goodbye.

She puts the phone down.

83 INT. NCFE. SUGDEN'S OFFICE. DAY. 83

Sugden is on the phone while also filling out his profile on a Dating Website.

SUGDEN

Yes, I'll hold.

To himself.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

SUGDEN (CONT'D)

David Sugden. Height: five foot six, seven. Five foot eight. Looking for: long-term commitment, a relationship, a drink and see what happens.

He grins at the thought and types.

SUGDEN (CONT'D)

A drink and see what happens.  
Smoker?

Grabs the packet of cigarettes that is sitting on his desk, slams them in a drawer and types.

SUGDEN (CONT'D)

Definitely not.

The caller finally comes through.

SUGDEN (CONT'D)

A dozen? I'm going to need more than a ruddy dozen, young lady...I was thinking of ten thousand, give or take...no, I am not joking....

84 INT. HARRIET'S FLAT. DAY.

84

The phone is ringing. With a towel wrapped hastily around her, Harriet runs into the room, straight out of the shower. Snatches up the phone.

HARRIET

Yes?...No, no. I don't want a fucking Carribean holiday, no.

She slams down the phone. Sinks to the ground and holds her head in her hands.

85 INT. FITZHARRIS AND PRICE. ATRIUM. DAY.

85

Fred is standing outside Harriet's office talking to Ashley, Harriet's friend and one of the Assistants in the open plan office. He writes something down on a piece of paper.

86 EXT. OLD PEOPLE'S HOME. DAY.

86

In the garden of a large country house, Harriet is walking a very old man around the gardens. Despite his age, he is still upright, medals on his jacket.

(CONTINUED)

From a distance, it's the most reassuring of sights, Father and Daughter, arm in arm. But closer too, there is a faraway look in the old man's eye.

HARRIET

I've met this man, Daddy. He's from the Rifles, too. Your regiment.

The Colonel looks at her.

COLONEL CHETWODE-TALBOT

The Rifles.

HARRIET

(encouraged)

Well, he's attached to the SAS at the moment, but that's his regiment. He's called Robert and-

COLONEL CHETWODE-TALBOT

- the Rifles.

HARRIET

Yes, Daddy. The Rifles. But something's happened. You see- he went to Afghanistan- you know, the war in Afghanistan- and he's missing. Missing in action. I- I don't know what to do, Daddy.

He stops. Looks at her for the first time. She might get *something* from him.

COLONEL CHETWODE-TALBOT

Missing in action.

HARRIET

Yes.

COLONEL CHETWODE-TALBOT

Harry James, Smuts Patterson, Chopper Jones, Billy Hurlingham, Bobby Caputo and his pet monkey. Little Bobby Caputo...

And the Colonel has tears coming down his cheeks.

COLONEL CHETWODE-TALBOT (CONT'D)

All missing in action.

HARRIET

Let's go indoors, Daddy

87 INT. NCFE. FRED'S OFFICE. DAY.

87

Fred is surrounded by paperwork. He is trying to find a document on the neat piles on every surface. Finally loses his patience and grabs the phone. Dials.

FRED

Ms Chetwode-Talbot, it's Doctor Jones here. I'm sorry to ring on your home number, but I am at something of a loss and the work is really accumulating here. I realise that it's not been an easy week for you; nevertheless, I was wondering when you might be coming into the office.

88 INT. HARRIET'S FLAT/ FRED'S OFFICE. DAY.

88

Harriet stares at the phone, her eyes widening with outrage as the message continues.

FRED

...your colleagues at Fitzharris and Price seem unable to furnish me with an answer. I had a very productive meeting with the British Oxygen Company engineers and I have a lot of data coming in. Really, a considerable amount. I am sure I don't need to remind you that we are on a deadline here. Time and the tide- as I'm sure you're aware- waits for no man. Or woman. Aha.

Harriet coughs in disbelief.

FRED V/O

So, I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Goodbye.

She picks up the nearest thing she can find- a large book and flings it at the phone.

HARRIET

Fuck off!

Fred puts the phone down. Frowns. He might have misjudged that a little. Shakes off the feeling by squaring his paperwork.

89 EXT. LONDON BRIDGE STATION. EVENING. 89

Fred is swimming with the mass of humanity heading towards a home train. But then he stops, turns and fights his way in the opposite direction, the only person fighting the tide.

FRED

Sorry. Excuse me. Sorry.

90 INT. DELICATESSAN. NIGHT. 90

Fred is gesticulating at various hams, cheese, patés and rolls, apparently buying up half the shop.

91 INT. RAILWAY STATION CAFÉ. NIGHT. 91

While the rush hour teems around him, Fred lays out his meats and cheeses and begins to create various sandwiches, battling with the plastic cutlery, but winning.

92 INT. HARRIET'S FLAT. NIGHT. 92

Harriet opens the door to find Fred standing there. Still in her pyjamas, it is clear, she has been crying recently.

HARRIET

Oh. Yes?

FRED

Can I come in?

HARRIET

Why?

FRED

You might get cold-

He waves awkwardly at her pyjama-clad figure. She shakes her head at Fred's seeming lack of awareness. Walks back into her flat leaving the door ajar. Fred follows in.

93 INT. HARRIET'S FLAT. NIGHT. 93

Fred sits down. Harriet has lost all pretence at politeness. Doesn't really care that he's here at all. Silence.

FRED

Very nice.

HARRIET

What?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

The flat. Pleasant.

Silence. Fred starts undoing his briefcase, galvanising Harriet.

HARRIET

Look, I'm not coming in to work. I- I just can't. I need to be here in case. In case there's news. And anybody who had the faintest shred of understanding or humanity or simple feeling, who wasn't frankly autistic might have guessed that the last thing I need right now is bullying phone calls ordering me into the office. But no, you don't get it, do you- Ms Chetwode-Talbot not at work, most irregular- so you just turn up at my door to- to what? Update me on fish? *Drag* me to the bloody office? Well, you know what, Dr Jones, you can take your work and shove it up your unfeeling arse.

Fred blinks a bit.

FRED

I'm not here about work.

HARRIET

Well, what the hell are you here for?

FRED

I made you a sandwich.

Staring might help her get inside this man's head.

HARRIET

What?

FRED

I made you a sandwich.

HARRIET

Why?

FRED

You're probably not eating. Are you?

HARRIET

I- no.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

You have to eat. It's important.

He holds out the sandwiches, beautifully wrapped in grease-proof paper and sealed with a small string bow. Harriet begins to cry. Fred isn't sure what to do next. After a brief bit of staring, he puts the sandwich packet down, gets up, goes over to her and gives her an awkward hug. He looks over Harriet's shoulder in bemused concern as she wails.

HARRIET

I don't know what to do...They won't tell me anything...I'm going round and round in circles...there's nothing on the news...and...There's nobody...I'm so sorry, Dr Jones.

FRED

Fred, my dear. It's Fred.

Which seems to unleash more tears. They eventually subside.

FRED (CONT'D)

I'll get a plate, shall I? Do you mind?

HARRIET

No, I'll-

Harriet sniffs herself back together and goes into the kitchen. The sound of crockery. Fred looks around, fixes on the red and gold Indian throw on the sofa. He picks up the edge, examines one of the frayed threads. Produces a tiny penknife from his pocket and cuts the length of thread, deftly wraps it into a ball and puts the whole lot back in his pocket. Harriet comes back in with plates.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. What I said. Unforgiveable.

FRED

The great thing about people with autism is they don't really get hurt feelings. So, it's quite alright. Say whatever you want.

HARRIET

You haven't got- I was- upset.

FRED

With good reason. Now. I took the liberty of buying a half bottle of wine. I hope you don't mind.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (3)

FRED (CONT'D)

I realise it's not the weekend, but this one's particularly good with duck.

HARRIET

I'm not really hungry.

FRED

You have to eat, Harriet. May I call you Harriet?

This produces the first exasperated half-smile of her day.

HARRIET

Of course you may.

94 INT. KITCHEN. LATER.

94

Fred and Harriet are sitting at the table eating the sandwich.

HARRIET

My mother died four years ago and Dad's in a home. He's- oh, he's not brilliant, really.

FRED

You must have many friends.

HARRIET

Must I? Not many, to be honest.

FRED

But...you still have a boyfriend.

She looks at him sharply.

FRED (CONT'D)

I don't know much about these things, but Robert has not been listed as dead, has he?

HARRIET

No. But "Missing in Action"...it could be army-speak for-

She can't say the word.

FRED

Dead? As a civil servant, I happen to know the Ministry of Defence absolutely hate uncertainty of any kind. If he was dead, they would most definitely say dead.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

Can you stop using that word?

He looks puzzled, but complies.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

They say they'll ring when they have news. But- there isn't, they don't...

FRED

Come to Yemen.

HARRIET

What?

FRED

We leave in a week. Just for a few days. Geological surveys, engineering surveys, we've even got a team of archeologists checking we're not about to submerge the Arc of the Covenant. Which would be unfortunate.

HARRIET

I can't just leave. What if there's news? Come on...

FRED

Then you will fly back on the Sheikh's private jet immediately.

HARRIET

(snorting)

Why would he do that?

FRED

Because I asked him to. It's six and a half hours, Sana'a to Luton.

Harriet looks at him.

FRED (CONT'D)

Your services are highly valued by the Sheikh. And by me. In fact, the project really can't do without you.

HARRIET

Who really cares? You know? I mean it's *fishing*. Who the hell cares?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Well, strangely enough, I do. I mean, the whole thing's probably a terrible folly, but still. On occasions, I catch myself thinking this ridiculous enterprise might just come off. With luck and the right people. And you are most definitely one of the most right people I have had the privilege to have come across. If you'll forgive the grammatical inadequacies of that sentence.

She looks at him. That *must* have been a compliment. Smiles.

FRED (CONT'D)

Besides, whatever the merits of the project, keeping busy is, I find, a most effective antidote for worry.

HARRIET

I really don't know.

He gets to his feet, back to his old buttoned up self.

FRED

Excellent. I'll get your visa sorted out. I'll let myself out. Good night Ms Chet- good night, Harriet.

And he is gone.

HARRIET

Good night.

A long pause.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Fred.

Fred walks up the path, stripping off his tie as he goes. There is a spring in his step. He goes in the house. We wait and then see the lights go on in the main room. Fred opens the windows wide. Disappears again. Then comes the boom of Bizet's Toreador Song at full volume. We see Fred move from room to room, up the stairs, switching lights on as he goes, conducting the music all the way.

96

INT. FRED'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

96

Still singing along, Fred blows the dust off the top of an old wooden box, opens it. Inside, serried ranks of hooks, feathers, tiny bits of wool, fur and cotton, reel upon reel of nylon, all neatly stacked in sections. He takes out the thread he took from Harriet's sofa, unwraps it. Inspects it. Finds a hook. Leans low over a magnifying glass. After a while, his mobile rings.

FRED

Mary! How nice to- oh, it's the stereo. Hang on.

Goes over to the stereo, turns the music off. He is visibly deflating, but keeps trying.

FRED (CONT'D)

...it's Bizet...I wouldn't be playing it if I didn't like it. So. How are you?...no, I've just got in...I was with a colleague...Harriet Chetwode-Talbot...yes, the Salmon Woman...well, I- it's a long story...

A sudden change in tone.

FRED (CONT'D)

Mary, what a strange thing to say...perhaps we should try again in the morning...oh, well, you might find it hard to reach me as I'm going to the Yemen tomorrow... I don't see what's so ridiculous about that...well, good night to you too.

He rings off. Goes back to the stereo, switches the music on again and then after a second, switches it off again.

97

INT. SUGDEN'S OFFICE. DAY.

97

Lounging at his desk, Sugden is skyping Tom Price-Williams of the Environment Agency. On the screen, Tom's face contorts.

TOM

How many?!

SUGDEN

Ten thousand.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Are you out of your bloody mind?

Sugden hurries over to the door and closes it. Comes back.

SUGDEN

Calm down.

TOM

You don't fish, do you? No way.

SUGDEN

No, actually.

TOM

Course not. You wouldn't have suggested it otherwise. Have you any idea what an outcry there would be if the Environment Agency stripped British rivers of ten thousand salmon- and shipped them off to the effing Yemen?

DAVID SUGDEN

How many could you spare?

TOM

None! Christ, David. Anglers, they're obsessive crazies. You think Al Quaeda are a threat? Think again, mate. I've seen a fly-fisherman wade into a river and try to drown a canoeist just for floating past in a day-glo jacket.

DAVID SUGDEN

This comes from the top, Tom. The very top.

TOM

I don't care if God's taken up fly fishing-

DAVID SUGDEN

I suggest you make it work, Tom.

TOM

Is that a threat, Sugden?

DAVID SUGDEN

These are very difficult days. Cuts, cuts. A sea of cuts. I don't know, Tom. Is the Environment Agency a *Frontline Service*?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2)

He taps his teeth thoughtfully.

TOM  
That is a threat.

DAVID SUGDEN  
Think of it as an *opportunity*, Tom.

He flicks his screen off.

98 INT. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY. DAY. 98

Tom stares at the blank screen. Ponders.

99 INT. PRIVATE JET. DAY. 99

From thousands of feet up, we see jagged, dusty mountains. Harriet is staring out of the plane window. She wipes away a tear. Across the aisle, Fred glances up, notices, and then goes back to his paperwork.

100 EXT. YEMENI AIRSTRIP. DAY. 100

Shimmering heat. The Sheikh's private jet taxis to a stop. Fred, Harriet and two of the Chinese Engineers step off the plane. Look around them at the desert. Not much else. They look immediately bombarded by heat.

HARRIET  
Wow.

Fred doubtfully fingers the top of the fly-fishing rod that is poking out of his rucsac.

FRED  
Do you sometimes think that we might be the victims of a lavish practical joke?

HARRIET  
What, you mean salmon? Here?

FRED  
Yes.

HARRIET  
It's crossing my mind.

A convoy of jeeps is driving towards them and they are ushered in.

101 EXT. YEMEN. DESERT. DAY. 101

The fleet of jeeps speeds past Bedouin tribesmen who are standing motionless at the side of the road. Harriet and Fred stare after them.

102 EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE. DUSK. 102

Fred and Harriet wander through the village. Ancient high-rise buildings tower above them.

They sit by a roadside stall drinking tea. The call to prayer comes from a mosque. The streets clear of people. Fred turns to see the stall-holder on his knees on a mat behind the stall, praying.

FRED

I don't know anybody who goes to church anymore.

They gaze at the empty streets.

FRED (CONT'D)

On Sundays we go to Tesco's.

103 EXT. YEMEN. MORNING. 103

A tiny trail of dust turns into the convoy of jeeps travelling through a vast mountain range. They travel endlessly up, up, up.

104 EXT. YEMENI DESERT. JUNCTION. MORNING. 104

The cavalcade of jeeps comes to a junction. A group of Bedouin with tethered horses and camels are waiting for them. The jeeps come to a stop. Harriet and Fred get out. They are in the middle of nowhere. Bedouin unload equipment from the jeeps and start stacking crates onto the camels. The Bedouin guide approaches Fred.

BEDOUIN GUIDE

One hour, okay?

Fred nods. He and Harriet wander away and sit on a rock, beaten by the fierce sun. Fred tips the last drops from his water bottle into the sand.

FRED

That's it, I'm afraid.

HARRIET

This is no place for salmon.

(CONTINUED)

Fred's hand is idly picking at the gravel on the wadi bottom. He picks up a handful.

FRED

Actually, it is, you know. If some poor salmon ever got this far, this is ideal for laying eggs in. It's perfect. Who would have thought it?

HARRIET

Fred, look.

He turns. Shimmering in the heat, a girl is walking towards them. She is almost a mirage in bright-coloured robes, carrying a pitcher on her head. She gets closer. Stops. Smiles. Hands them each a metal cup and pours water from the pitcher. They both drink. The girl gets up and shimmers down the wadi. Nothing is said, it might be a dream. They watch her go until she is fragments in the heat haze.

FRED

Did you notice the water?

HARRIET

It was beautiful.

FRED

It was cold. The well is cold.

Harriet suddenly looks up and sees the jeeps pulling away.

HARRIET

Fred!

He gets to his feet, panicked. Then the Bedouin Guide appears.

BEDOUIN GUIDE

Jeeps and equipment by road: two days. You and me, on horses, four hours.

The sun is higher in the sky. They are walking now, leading the horses on the uneven ground. Sweat is running down Fred's face. He sees a figure with a gun standing on top of the cliffs. Fred wipes his face, shields his eyes with his hand to get a better look, but the figure has vanished.

The horse train continues up the sun-blasted mountains, twisting and turning around treacherous drops. They pass an ancient woman who is just sitting, staring outside the remains of a house.

106

EXT. YEMEN. PLATEAU. DAY.

106

The horse train reaches a plateau. They are near the edge of huge drop. Galvanised by something, Fred jumps off his horse, runs to the edge and stops dead. Harriet joins him.

Far below, teams of Yemenis are constructing the lower dam that will house the holding tanks. Concrete is being poured into the wooden formers. Surveyors are lining up sights along the wadi bottom. The place is alive with men, diggers, tents....

Harriet wipes the sweat from her forehead. Stares down at all this activity in the middle of nowhere and nothing.

HARRIET

Oh my God, it's really happening.

FRED

Yes. It really is. I mean, I knew.  
On paper....

He gestures vaguely at the enormity of it all.

HARRIET

But Fred, we don't have any bloody salmon.

FRED

I know.

And suddenly the bubble of a giggle escapes from Fred. Harriet looks at him.

HARRIET

Are you laughing?

FRED

Certainly not.

Another repressed snort.

HARRIET

It's not funny, Fred. We're spending millions. *Millions.*

FRED

I know.

And this time he just bursts out laughing. And Harriet starts laughing too.

FRED (CONT'D)

I'll never work again. Never.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

HARRIET

Neither will I.

And then they are both roaring with laughter.

107 EXT. YEMEN. BOTTOM OF WADI. DAY.

107

The horse train has reached the bottom of the wadi. The Sheikh sees Fred and Harriet, holds up a greeting hand and starts to walk towards them. But a sudden flurry of shouting and a Yemeni is floundering his way across the sand towards the Sheikh, waving a rifle in the air. The Sheikh's bodyguards intercept him, disarm him. But still he continues to shout. The Sheikh instructs the bodyguards. They unhand the Yemeni man who calms.

Fred and Harriet watch as the Sheikh and the Yemeni Tribesman converse. The Sheikh is clearly trying to explain, pointing at various parts of the project. The exchange becomes heated until eventually, the Sheikh turns and walks angrily away.

SHEIKH

I give this man water, life in the desert, and he wants money for the pipes I put across his tribe's land. In dollars! Incredible. Are humans the only animals for whom enough-more than enough- is still insufficient? You see? This is why we must succeed.

He stops. Draws breath.

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

A thousand apologies, my friends. This is no way to introduce you to our great enterprise. And is it not great?

FRED

It certainly is.

SHEIKH

Bloody amazing, I say.

And he is once again all smiles.

108 INT. TENT. NIGHT.

108

Fred wakes up, hears a noise. Gets up and goes outside.

109 EXT. TENT. NIGHT.

109

Only the guards sitting, smoking by the fire and Harriet standing at some distance, silhouetted by the moonlight. She is murmuring into her mobile. The guards motion him towards the fire and walk away. He sits on a boulder and waits. She turns, sees his figure, finishes her call and walks towards him, sits down next to the fire.

HARRIET

Hope I didn't wake you.

FRED

News?

HARRIET

No. Just. Leaving a message on Robert's phone.

She shakes her head.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Ridiculous. He hasn't even got his phone with him. I know for a fact it's at Camp Alex. Army protocol. I don't know what else to do. I'm turning into a mad woman.

FRED

When things get tricky, I talk to my fish. We've got a pond. Talking to an answer machine is no madder than chatting to a coy carp.

HARRIET

Are things tricky?

FRED

I fear they've gone past tricky. Mary's in Geneva, I'm here, the coy carp are home alone in Hampshire...

He shrugs.

HARRIET

I'm sorry.

FRED

We married very young.

She stares into the fire.

HARRIET

You know I don't even remember what Robert looks like. Not exactly.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET (CONT'D)

We weren't- we'd only just met,  
really. It seems so unfair.

FRED

Yes, very.

She pauses and then it comes as a rush.

HARRIET

I sometimes think that I'd rather-  
I'd rather just know he was dead,  
than this. Is that a terrible thing  
to say, Fred? It is, isn't it? But  
I'm stuck. I can't do anything. I  
can't move on. Does that make any  
sense?

FRED

Completely. I think I've been stuck  
for years.

HARRIET

But you can move on.

FRED

Yes. I suppose I can. In theory.

HARRIET

Then you really should, shouldn't  
you?

He looks at her. Smiles sadly. Eventually, she gets up,  
rests a hand briefly on his shoulder.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Good night, Fred.

FRED

Good night.

Harriet makes her way back to the tent. Fred continues to  
stare at the fire. Puts his hand to the shoulder where  
Harriet touched it.

A pleasant-looking man in his forties is sitting on the  
parapet of the balcony outside his office. From five stories  
up, he is fishing in the Thames. Fred walks through the  
office and joins him.

GARETH

Muddy tide. Nothing's biting.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

I've got just the thing for that.

Fred rummages in his briefcase.

GARETH

You trying again? That's good to hear.

Fred hands him a small display box which when opened reveals Harriet's red and gold thread, now transformed into the wings of an intricate fly. Gareth examines it appreciatively.

GARETH (CONT'D)

Fred's back, alright. Nice.

FRED

Just tinkering.

Gareth smiles. Fred gets a telescopic rod out of his briefcase. Expertly puts it together. They sit in companionable silence, fishing from the balcony of an office block.

GARETH

Fred, it's not my business, but can I ask? What's your involvement, here?

FRED

What do you mean?

GARETH

You're asking about some seriously white hot information.

FRED

You can keep the fly.

Gareth grunts a laugh, considering the offer.

FRED (CONT'D)

I just want to help a- a friend. If I can. This man's girlfriend. She's not getting any joy out of the MOD.

GARETH

No surprise there.

Gareth ponders a bit longer.

FRED

I can take it, Gareth. I'm a fisheries scientist.

(CONTINUED)

GARETH

You remember those unattributed explosions in Jordan, last week?

FRED

Vaguely. But this chap was in Afghanistan.

Gareth raises his eyes.

FRED (CONT'D)

Oh.

GARETH

Sent in to deal with an Al Qaeda training camp. An unauthorised attack on friendly soil. Rather sensitive soil to send missiles into as you can imagine. We were all on stand-by to look puzzled and innocent, offer our support to the Jordanian Kingdom in these troubled times etcetera, etcetera, but. Didn't bank on an AFU of these proportions.

FRED

AFU?

GARETH

Almighty Fuck-up. Something went badly wrong. The smell leads rather too easily to our boys in Hereford. We're denying the hell out of it, obviously, but everybody knows...the Jordanians have gone absolutely ape.

FRED

They're saying Missing In Action.

GARETH

Well, they would. Haven't got a body, have they? Still in the desert and nobody's going back for it, that's for sure.

FRED

There's no chance, I suppose, that he might be alive?

GARETH

Doubt it. We'd have heard some chatter in here.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

So, what should she do? I mean, her boyfriend has just disappeared. Vanished. What next?

GARETH

Well, if she wants to know what actually happened, the only way to flush out the MOD is to kick up a fuss in Parliament.

FRED

Parliament?

GARETH

Only place you can actually demand an answer from the military. And everybody who's anybody is watching, so they have to tell the truth. Well, mostly.

FRED

I see. Thank you, Gareth.

He gets up and disengages his rod.

GARETH

Thanks for the fly. Got a name?

FRED

Not yet.

Gareth watches Fred leave.

111 INT. DAILY TELEGRAPH. DAY.

111

A busy open-plan office. A rotund newspaper editor is talking to Tom Price-Williams on skype.

EDITOR

You're a hundred percent, this isn't a joke?

TOM

Deadly serious. Foreign and Commonwealth.

On the screen he holds up a letter for the Editor to see.

TOM (CONT'D)

Ten thousand native salmon.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

EDITOR

They've gone mad. This is front  
page. My God, the good folk of the  
Shires will rise as one.

He rubs his hand with glee.

TOM

You didn't get it from me.

The screen goes dead.

112 EXT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT. DAY.

112

Fred and Harriet walk up to the entrance to Parliament. They  
are met by a Member of Parliament, a respectable man in his  
60's. Hands are shaken and he ushers them inside.

113 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY.

113

Bridget's family is sitting around the kitchen table waiting  
for lunch. Bridget rips off the lids of four Pot Noodles and  
bangs them down hard on the table to the rhythm of her  
grace.

BRIDGET

Thank you for the food we eat,  
Thank you for the world so sweet,  
Thank you for the birds that sing,  
Thank you God for everything.

The television is on in the background. She looks up, sees  
the a Tory Grandee being interviewed.

TORY GRANDEE

...to contemplate the rape and  
pillage of our national rivers on  
behalf of some Middle-Eastern  
adventure is utterly unacceptable...

BRIDGET

I'll rape and pillage you, you fat  
old-

Bridget's mobile rings. She answers while rummaging in a  
kitchen drawer. Chucks some spoons on the table.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Bon appetit.

Answers the phone.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Yes, Prime Minister, seems they're more attached to their bloody salmon than we thought... ridiculous...well, it's simple, we'll get the fish from somewhere else. I'm meeting the Sheikh next week...He can bloody well find them. Yes, Prime Minister. Ta, ta.

Shuts her phone. A doorbell rings. Her family stare balefully at her.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

What, I have to do everything around here?

She exits.

114 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S HOUSE. DAY.

114

Bridget opens the door to the Postman who is holding a box a little larger than a shoe-box.

MAXWELL

Didn't you people used to wear ties?

POSTMAN

That was in the days before you closed all the Post Offices. Madam.

She eyes him for a second, then signs for it and puts it on the hall table while she sorts through the other letters. Stops. Stares at the box. A noise is coming from it. She picks it up. Puts it to her ear. Freezes.

MAXWELL

Peter? Code yellow!

115 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

115

Peter and the children are eating their Pot Noodles. At the sound of their Mother's voice, the children raise their eyebrows. Peter sighs.

MAXWELL O/S

Code yellow!

PETER

Josh?

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

115

JOSHUA  
 (gangsta shrug)  
 Give a shit, man, y'kna?

ABBY  
 Yellow means it's- it's- it's- it's-  
 it's....

They lose interest and go back to their 'food'. Then she remembers.

ABBY (CONT'D)  
 (brightly)  
 A bomb.

116 EXT. LONDON STREET. MORNING.

116

Police tape cordons off the area around Bridget Maxwell's house. Residents are being escorted from residential houses by other police teams. A crowd of onlookers and news teams has gathered. While her family stand to one side looking variously worried and pissed off, Bridget is next to a couple of Senior Police Officers and an Army Bomb Disposal Team. They watch on a monitor as the Bomb Disposal robot bumbles around the hall. Bumps into a large Chinese pot.

MAXWELL  
 Mind out! That's Tang Dynasty.  
 Jesus.

POLICE MAN  
 Any obvious enemies, Madam?

Bridget looks at him as if he's from outer space.

MAXWELL  
 Enemies. Let me think. Two sacked  
 Chief Inspectors of Police, the  
 current Minister for Northern  
 Ireland, the editors of the  
 Telegraph and The Guardian-  
 amazingly- Al Quaeda probably, the  
 Mayor of London certainly, my  
 brother, sister, thirteen year-old  
 son, my husband if he had the balls  
 and three quarters of the  
 electorate. Utter fuckers the lot of  
 them.

She waves at one of the news teams which is shouting at him, switches on a professional smile and walks over.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Gerry, of course, of course. Here alright?

BOMB DISPOSAL OFFICER

We're ready here.

Joshua wanders over and looks at the monitor. Sucks his teeth at the Bomb Disposal Officer's attempts with the keyboard.

JOSHUA

Right, right, up. I havago?

BOMB DISPOSAL OFFICER

No.

117 EXT. STREET. EDGE OF CORDON. MORNING.

117

Bridget is giving an interview to the waiting cameras.

MAXWELL

...these are difficult times. We have to have to shoulder responsibility, take tough decisions, face our enemies, whatever-

A muffled explosion. The windows of Bridget's front door blow out.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

-whatever the cost.

A noble nod towards the damaged front door.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

The burden of office is one we have to carry. For the sake of our families, for the sake of our country, for the sake of freedom.

The Bomb Disposal Officer comes and stands by his side.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Maxwell turns from the camera to the Bomb Disposal Officer who is holding something in his hand. It looks a lot like a claw.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

BOMB DISPOSAL OFFICER

Planning a dinner party, by any  
chance, Madam?

The Bomb Disposal Officer puts the thing in his mouth and  
tears a bit off. Chews.

BOMB DISPOSAL OFFICER (CONT'D)

Lobster.

MAXWELL

*Lobster?*

BOMB DISPOSAL OFFICER

Needs mayonnaise.

MAXWELL

But it was ticking. The parcel was  
ticking.

BOMB DISPOSAL OFFICER

Tapping not ticking. Trying to get  
out of the box, poor little chap.  
The rest of him's all over your  
hall. Sorry about the vase.

The Officer wanders off.

MAXWELL

Fishermen. Those bastard  
fishermen....

118 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. LIBRARY. DAY.

118

The library has become the Operations Room for the project.  
Maps and photographs on all the walls, papers on all the  
desks. A couple of Accountants are bashing away on  
calculators. Fred and Harriet hear the sound of a  
helicopter. They go to the french windows and out onto the  
veranda.

119 EXT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. DAY.

119

In front of them is a line of Yemeni Guards standing to  
attention on the veranda of the house. They are, somewhat  
surprisingly dressed in full Scottish dress, right down to  
the kilt. Sheikh spots Fred's surprised face. Smiles.

SHEIKH

Such an important member of your  
esteemed government deserves a  
special welcome, no?

(CONTINUED)

There might be irony, there might not. It is impossible to tell. The Sheikh's helicopter lands. Bridget Maxwell runs from the chopper as if landing in enemy territory: clutching her hair and dodging from side to side. She ends up in front of the Sheikh, breathless, her hair blown into an extraordinary sculpture.

MAXWELL

Sheikh, good to meet you.

SHEIKH

An honour, Mrs Maxwell. Please.

And he points her in the direction of the Guard. Bridget's eyes widen at the muscled six-foot specimens in front of her.

MAXWELL

Oh. Happy Birthday, Bridget.

She walks down the line of guards, enjoying herself. She pats the lapel of the final Guardsman.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Could do with a few like you in Cabinet. Very good, your Excellency.

SHEIKH

Would you like to refresh yourself before dinner?

But Bridget is already frowning at her Blackberry.

MAXWELL

No reception. I'd have brought the sat phone if I thought we were going to the dark side of the moon. Need to be in permanent touch with Number Ten. Reception?

SHEIKH

Ah. I believe the kitchen garden is your best bet.

MAXWELL

Priceless. The kitchen garden it is. Lead on.

She looks around for a flunky. The Sheikh nods to Malcolm who guides Bridget along the veranda.

120 EXT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. DAY.

120

Silhouetted against the sunset, Bridget is standing on the high wall of the kitchen garden. She is stalking up and down it on the phone.

MAXWELL

...of course an increase in crime figures doesn't mean crime is getting worse, you idiot. On the effing contrary, it means we're arresting more criminals, therefore getting tough on Law and Order. We're proud the figures have gone up-

Suddenly, with a yelp, she wobbles, almost falls off.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

- no, no, nearly fell off a fucking wall.

121 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

121

We can hear her voice coming through the french windows. The Sheikh, Bridget and Fred sit awkwardly at the dining table. An empty place is laid for Bridget.

SHEIKH

Perhaps I should have directed her towards our landlines.

He raises his eyes with a hint of mischief. Harriet giggles.

MAXWELL V/O

I'll be back tomorrow. Keep breathing, don't touch anything and don't say anything to anybody.

Bridget stalks into the room. Plumps herself down.

MAXWELL

Oh. Should have started without me.

SHEIKH

The weighty affairs of state. I am grateful indeed that you could spare the time for our little project.

MAXWELL

Yes, well, we have gone out on a bit of a limb for you, your Excellency. Prime Minister loves his fishing.

(CONTINUED)

SHEIKH

Really?

MAXWELL

Oh, yes. Rod's never out of his hand. But look. Down to business. The fish. Salmon. Can't get them out of British rivers. Bloody big fuss, as you've no doubt heard. Tried to blow up my entire family. Don't know what it is about fish, but it's absolutely no go.

SHEIKH

Yes, I-

MAXWELL

(trampling on)  
- however, I'm pleased to say that I've solved your problem.

FRED

You have?

MAXWELL

Oh, yes. And funnily enough, the answer is only twenty miles away from here. Don't know what you lot have been playing at.

FRED

I don't think I understand.

MAXWELL

You will, Freddy, you will.

And Bridget downs her glass of wine in one.

Salmon cages on the edge of the loch. Bridget leads Fred, the Sheikh and Harriet along the metal walkways between the salmon pens. Each pen is heaving with slow moving fish. The Sheikh turns to Fred.

SHEIKH

This place is an abomination.

HARRIET

They don't even move like fish. They seem drugged.

FRED

They are drugged.

(CONTINUED)

He points to one of the men throwing feed from a bucket into the pens. Maxwell, however, is delighted.

MAXWELL

There must be a couple of thousand in that one alone! This guy's got four farms along the coast. Stocks of all Sainsburys! Right under your nose.

SHEIKH

I believe the use of farmed salmon had actually occurred to Dr Alfred and his team, Mrs Maxwell.

MAXWELL

Well, I wish it had occurred a damned sight earlier, Sheikh- could have saved me a lot of grief.

Fred can contain himself no longer.

FRED

These fish have never run in their lives. Nor have their forebears for two generations. Why should they for us? His Excellency the Sheikh has spent millions and millions on this project and we could easily open the sluices and watch the whole lot drift down-river with the current, never to be seen again.

MAXWELL

Oh. Well, as long you get a few days fishing out of it, eh? Then you can restock or whatever the word is. There's not exactly a shortage of them, is there?

HARRIET

What, like soldiers?

MAXWELL

Sorry?

HARRIET

Lose a few in combat, who cares? There's not exactly a shortage.

A change comes over Bridget. A cool.

MAXWELL

Ah. You are referring, I take it, to Captain Robert Myers?

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

I am.

MAXWELL

I'm very sorry to hear of your loss.

HARRIET

Is it a loss? Nobody will have the decency to tell me. Not yet, anyway.

MAXWELL

You're the one getting renegade MPs to table questions in the House, are you?

HARRIET

Yes.

Bridget eyes her for a moment, gauging. Nods.

MAXWELL

I can't say I blame you, my dear.

After this one and only moment of empathy, she turns to the Sheikh.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

It's been a pleasure, your Excellency. So glad we can help you out with the fish. Must dash. Country to run.

SHEIKH

No.

MAXWELL

Sorry?

SHEIKH

No. These fish will not run. Even if they did, they are not right.

MAXWELL

Not right? A fish is a fish is a fish. No?

SHEIKH

No. I have a vision, Mrs Maxwell. Tired, bloated pretenders are not part of that vision.

MAXWELL

We are talking about the fish, here, aren't we?

(CONTINUED)

SHEIKH

What else?

MAXWELL

I see. Unfortunately, Her Majesty's Government also has a vision. It's farmed fish or no fish.

SHEIKH

Then I must thank you for your time and decline.

MAXWELL

And no advisers either. Fred, you're back at your desk, Monday.

FRED

In which case, I resign.

Bridget stares at him.

MAXWELL

Resignation accepted.

Bridget turns and stalks down the gangway towards a waiting car. The Sheikh looks towards the setting sun.

SHEIKH

Time to fish, I think, Dr Fred. We may still catch the evening rise if we put the pedal to the metal.

The Noble Thistle is a tourist trap of tartan, whisky and bag-pipe music. Essad Anwar, a tall, dark-skinned man is examining the array of kilts. An over-helpful Shop Assistant hurries to help.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Is it a particular tartan you're looking for? Clan blood, eh?

ESSAD

I do not know.

SHOP ASSISTANT

No worries, hen. We've got this clever wee computer here. You type in your name and hey presto, out comes your tartan. Technology, eh? You can't beat it.

She guides Essad over to the computer. He stares at it unhappily.

SHOP ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
So. Your name?

ESSAD  
Essad Al-Maloof bin Salim.

SHOP ASSISTANT  
(utterly unfazed)  
Lovely.

The Shop Assistant types it in.

SHOP ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
I'll give it a hyphen, eh?

Presses the button. "no connection found" comes up on the screen. The Shop Assistant looks a little surprised.

SHOP ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Oh. Well, when that happens, we  
always suggest the Campbell tartan.  
They're a mongrel bunch.

Puffs of smoke rise from the trees. We see the Sheikh standing midstream, smoking one of his enormous cigars. A few paces upstream, Fred is fishing too. He flicks the line out again.

SHEIKH  
You are not your usual patience on a  
monument today, Doctor Alfred.

FRED  
Got a letter from UK Fisheries. Even  
if we could source our salmon from  
the Baltic, they'd slap an import  
ban on them- they're panicking about  
cross-fertilisation with native  
stocks

SHEIKH  
Ah. Which leaves us where?

FRED  
With no salmon.

SHEIKH  
We must have faith, Doctor Fred.

FRED

That's a laudable statement, Your Excellency, but we're running out of time and we can't catch faith with a fishing rod.

SHEIKH

Oh, I don't know....

Fred notices Harriet walking towards them. Then, his eye is caught by a movement in the bushes nearby. Then a man steps out. Essad Anwar. In a tartan kilt. Fred stares. The Sheikh has his back to the man and only turns when the man says.

ESSAD ANWAR

Sheikh Muhammad bin Zaidi bani Tihama...

The Sheikh turns. Essad lifts a pistol and aims at the Sheikh. Harriet screams. There is nowhere to hide. The Sheikh can do nothing.

ESSAD

God is Great.

In a second, Fred has cast his line. It whips out and strikes Essad across the face, the hook scarring across his cheek. His head snaps back with a cry and the gun goes off, the bullet hitting the trees. Essad tries to run back into the trees, but stumbles over a root. The Sheikh and Fred leap on him. Fred throws the pistol into the river. Yemeni Guards come charging towards them and a couple of them drag Essad away, while others hold their guns over the Sheikh. Fred and the Sheikh sit on the grass, stunned and breathless.

FRED

Wrong tartan.

SHEIKH

I beg your pardon?

FRED

Him. Kilt. Wearing a Campbell tartan. You don't do that round here. Wrong clan. Tribe.

SHEIKH

This I understand. Wrong tribe. Dr Fred. Thank you.

FRED

A- a pleasure. It was just a cast, really.

(CONTINUED)

SHEIKH

A very good cast. An essential cast,  
one might say.

FRED

Well, yes. I think it probably was.

Nervous laughter from them both. The Sheikh is helped to his feet. A brief, hurried conversation with one of the Guards.

SHEIKH

They say it is not safe for me to stay. I think they are wrong, but...we will see each other soon. Please continue your work as if nothing has happened. And enjoy my hospitality to the full.

The Guard is about to help Fred up, but the Sheikh barks something at him instead puts out his own hand. Fred takes it and stands up. The Sheikh holds on to the hand.

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

I owe you my life.

FRED

No, no. Please.

SHEIKH

This is not one of those British metaphors, Dr Alfred. In my tribe, when somebody says this, they mean it. Literally. The debt will be repaid, my friend.

He turns and walks away, leaving Fred standing with just Harriet.

HARRIET

Fred? Are you alright?

FRED

Yes. Yes, I think so. It was all very- quick. I-

He looks at his hands. They are shaking. Harriet takes his hands.

HARRIET

You said you'd surprise me.

FRED

I didn't quite mean it like that.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (3)

124

HARRIET

Extraordinary man.

She puts a hand to his cheek briefly.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Your hands. Come on.

Holding his hand, she leads him off towards the house.

125 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. LIBRARY. DAY.

125

Fred and Harriet are watching television. On the tv screen, the camera moves from the face of the Member of Parliament we saw meeting Fred and Harriet over to a Government Cabinet Member.

CABINET MEMBER

In response to the Right Honourable Member's question of the 7th of this month, the Ministry of Defence can now confirm that an engagement by British Special Forces against known terrorists did occur on the 13th of September. The details of the operation are classified: however, I am at liberty to say that serious casualties were incurred by the British Forces.

Harriet's face stares hard at the screen. Fred reaches out and takes her hand.

CABINET MEMBER (CONT'D)

I deeply regret to inform the House that there were no survivors. An internal investigation is being carried out.

The Cabinet Member sits down. Fred switches off the television, but Harriet continues to stare at the blank screen.

HARRIET

Well. At least I know now.

FRED

I'm so sorry.

Harriet gets up and goes out of the room.

- 126 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. FRED'S ROOM. NIGHT. 126  
Fred wakes in the darkness. He sits up in bed, looking around to see what has woken him. Then he can hear the very distant sound of sobbing. Gets out of bed.
- 127 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. CORRIDOR. NIGHT. 127  
Follows the sound of the sobbing along the corridor to Harriet's room. Stops outside. Knocks softly and goes in.
- 128 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. HARRIET'S ROOM. NIGHT. 128  
In her pyjamas, Harriet is sitting up in bed, sobbing inconsolably. Fred sits down beside her. Holds her. Strokes her hair.
- 129 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. HARRIET'S ROOM. DAWN. 129  
Fred is asleep on top of the bedspread, Harriet in the bed. Despite this arrangement, they are holding hands. She wakes, gazes at Fred for a moment. She is washed out and exhausted, but still manages a small smile for him. She then pads into the bathroom. Shuts the door. The sound of shower water. Fred wakes up, looks around. Gets stiffly to his feet. Watches the shut door to the bathroom.
- 130 INT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. HARRIET'S ROOM. LATER. 130  
A towel wrapped around her, Harriet comes out of the bathroom. Looks around for Fred.
- 131 EXT. FRED'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 131  
Fred walks up the path. The lights are on in the kitchen. Fred stops. With great sadness, he watches his wife moving around.
- 132 INT. FRED'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 132
- FRED  
Mary! I had no idea....
- MARY  
There you are.
- She comes over and kisses him a little too brightly.

(CONTINUED)

MARY (CONT'D)

Got a day off and thought why not surprise you.

She gives an uncharacteristic giggle.

MARY (CONT'D)

I've got this wonderful Swiss mountain comté from a little shop round the corner in Geneva- is everything alright, Fred? Where's your jacket? Tie? Day off?

FRED

I resigned.

MARY

Don't be ridiculous. Resigned? What about your pension, for Christ's sake? It's Final Salary.

FRED

The Government pulled out of the salmon fishing project. We've put a lot of time and energy into it. I'm not going to just walk away from it.

MARY

We?

FRED

Everyone involved. I'm still getting paid if that's what you're worried about. Fitzharris and Price have-

MARY

- I might have known she'd be involved.

FRED

If you are referring to Harriet, she's working with me on the project. Of course she's involved.

MARY

Harriet.

FRED

What exactly do you mean by that, Mary?

MARY

I've seen her photograph on the Fitzharris and Price website. You're making a fool of yourself.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Now you're being ridiculous.

MARY

Am I? I'm not the one abandoning a decent, highly respected job for a joke fishing project and a short-skirted office girl.

FRED

She is not an office girl.

MARY

Oh? What is she, Fred? Hmm? Just what is she?

FRED

She's a colleague- a very talented colleague and-

MARY

And?

FRED

(shouting)

A friend. She's just a friend.

Fred storms out of the house.

Fred is throwing bits of bread at the coy carp. Mary approaches, stands by his side for a while.

MARY

Do you love her?

FRED

I have done nothing, Mary. I have no expectations.

MARY

I didn't ask about your expectations.

A long, long, long silence.

FRED

Yes.

MARY

This is a mid-life crisis. It's textbook. It's pathetic.

FRED

I'm so sorry, Mary.

MARY

You'll wake up one morning and wonder what the hell you've done.

FRED

Yes? How do you know?

MARY

Because it isn't you, Fred, that's why. Not the Fred I know. Chucking in a perfectly good job, a functioning marriage, rushing around the world building vanity projects for billionaires, chasing some young bit of skirt. It isn't you.

FRED

Maybe that *is* me.

MARY

You'll be back, Fred. Or you'll try. Six months and you'll be begging to be taken back in. It's in your DNA. You'd think a bloody scientist would know that much.

And with that she walks off. Fred watches a piece of bread for a moment. It is moving in the water, bobbing. He watches the carp nibbling at it.

Fred is still standing, staring at the fish when he hears noises from the house. A taxi has pulled up. Mary comes out of the door with her suitcase.

FRED

Mary...

Without a backward glance, she gets into the car and it pulls away. Fred sits down on the grass, utterly defeated.

Harriet is deep in their paperwork in the library, now the Centre of Operations for the project. She looks up and sees Fred in the distance, walking along the river bank, deep in thought.

136 EXT. GLEN TULLOCH ESTATE. DAY.

136

Harriet wanders across the grass towards him. He manages a smile.

HARRIET

Good weekend?

FRED

Yes, fine. No, terrible. Mary and I-  
it's- oh, you know.

HARRIET

I'm sorry.

FRED

We persevere, but when there is no  
love left, what is there? Even  
autistic people like me know that.

He tries a laugh, but it's more like a sob. Harriet puts a hand on his arm.

FRED (CONT'D)

Your circumstances...I should be  
looking after you-

HARRIET

- you did. Very well.

He does a lot of throat-clearing. Pulls himself together.

FRED

Anyway, you will be intrigued to  
hear of an exciting bi-product of my  
rather fraught evening, Harriet.

HARRIET

Yes?

FRED

We don't need native, river fish.  
We're alright with farmed salmon.

HARRIET

Oh.

FRED

They will run. I know it.

The Sheikh is coming across the grass too.

(CONTINUED)

FRED (CONT'D)

Yes. Your Excellency, no matter our moral and philosophical objections, farmed salmon will run. I am absolutely sure of it.

SHEIKH

You are tireless, sir. You have uncovered some new research, I see. A new paper, perhaps?

FRED

No, actually.

SHEIKH

Your own experiments, then?

FRED

No, I just know it.

SHEIKH

You just know it.

The Sheikh smiles, puzzled.

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

Faith, Dr Fred?

FRED

I-

He stops.

FRED (CONT'D)

Dammit, yes, why not? Faith.

SHEIKH

In which case, how can I disagree?

137 EXT. YEMENI AIRPORT. DAY.

137

An Antonov aircraft lands on the tarmac.

138 EXT. YEMEN AIRPORT. DAY.

138

The huge metal fish transport tank is unloaded from the back of the Antonov by crane.

139 EXT. WADI ALEYN. HOLDING TANKS. DAY.

139

In the wadi, Teams of welders are at work constructing the gates to the holding tanks.

140 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAY. 140

Fred, Harriet and the Sheikh watch as a helicopter ferries in the holding tank. A team of Yemenis guide the tank into the damn.

141 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAY. 141

Fred, the Sheikh, Harriet and a group of Yememis stand on top of the transport tank. Together, they heave the metal trap open. Peer triumphantly down into the water as salmon pour into the holding tank.

FRED

Well, they're alive.

HARRIET

Now all we have to do is get them to run.

FRED

Oh, they'll run.

142 INT. BRIDGET MAXWELL'S HOUSE. GAMES ROOM. DAY. 142

Brigdet is playing Soldier of Fortune 3 on a Game Boy with one of her sons. She is exceptionally good with a machine gun. So is her son. They make a good team. Her phone rings.

BRIDGET

You're on your own, soldier.

She picks up.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Better be good.

It clearly is.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Oh. Oh. This is good this is very good....wait! Is that bloody salmon fishing thing still happening? Yemen, right? Thank you, God.

She hangs up. Blasts some grunt on screen.

Emails ping onto the screen:

*Prime Minister, can you really fish?*

*Yes.*

(CONTINUED)

106.  
142 CONTINUED: 142

*Really?*

*No.*

*Foreign Sec can. Can you spare useless t\*\*t for brief Mid-East trip?*

*Always.*

143 EXT. WADI ALEYN. UPSTREAM DAM. DAY. 143

Our first sight of the dam, curving grandly across Wadi Aleyn.

From the POV of the armed tribesman in a watchtower high above, we see the Sheikh walk along the top of the dam. The guns and the angle make us ever so slightly uncomfortable.

144 INT. DAM. PUMPING CONTROL ROOM. DAY. 144

Fred and the Chinese Engineers are in the control room. The Dam Engineers study the charts that Fred is poring over and press various buttons on a control panel.

145 EXT. DAM. DAY. 145

An alarm goes off, echoing down the wadi. Metal sluices rise.

146 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAY. 146

Groups of Bedouin who are bathing and washing clothes in the river, stop, listen to the echoing alarm. Scramble for the banks of the river.

147 EXT. DAM. DAY. 147

As the metal sluices open, the small jets of water coming from the dam turn into torrents.

148 INT. DAM. PUMPING CONTROL ROOM. DAY. 148

Fred and Harriet peer down from the Control Room windows and watch the waters flow. The Sheikh comes in, finishing his cell phone conversation.

(CONTINUED)

SHEIKH

So, my friends, we are back in the good books with the esteemed Mrs Maxwell of Her Majesty's Government. Your Foreign Secretary, no less, is coming. We are honoured.

HARRIET

They've changed their tune.

SHEIKH

Is it naive of me to hope that it is just a fish that he wants to catch?

He goes to the window, looks down.

FRED

Is everything to your satisfaction, your Excellency?

SHEIKH

I intended to create a small miracle, something to bring our tribes together, to glorify God. Sometimes I wonder if we haven't created something to glorify man. It is a very fine line. Hubris, Dr Alfred. Hubris.

Silence. The river is a strip of silver, lit by the moon. A figure is swimming languidly in the river. Fred. He turns to look up at the sky. Sees a figure standing on the rocks. Harriet in a dressing gown. She takes it off and slips into the water. She joins Fred and they float together downstream.

Fred and Harriet are sitting on a rock in the middle of the stream, moon-bathing.

FRED

You're worried.

HARRIET

Robert had this notion that he would be defending what was right in this world. That was why he became a soldier. Naive of course, but what's so bad about that?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET (CONT'D)

And then he gets involved in this stupid war that even he couldn't see any sense in. And now he's dead. But unlike poor Robert, I've had the luxury to do something I believe in—no matter how strange. Working on this has sort of saved me. So it has to work. Do you see? It has to.

Fred nods.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

So your farmed salmon had better run, Fred.

FRED

I believe they will.

HARRIET

What made you change your mind?

FRED

Something rather uncomplimentary Mary said about my DNA. But I think it applies equally to fish DNA. I mean it has to. It's in the core of their being to head upstream, even if they never have. Even if their parent fish never did.

HARRIET

Dare I ask what Mary said about your DNA?

FRED

She said I was genetically programmed to return to a dull, pedestrian life. With her.

HARRIET

Are you?

FRED

When I was a boy, my Father and I spent weeks camping out in the Highlands, eating only what we caught, on the run from the ghillies and the gamekeepers. If we didn't land a fish, shoot a pheasant, trap a rabbit, we didn't eat. Big adventures, high stakes. Never been happier. Until now. That is my DNA. It just got buried somewhere. In a safe school, a safe job, a safe marriage.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FRED (CONT'D)

But nobody can smother their DNA for ever. Not a fish, not a man.

HARRIET

So, it's the all-new, risk-taking Fred from now on, is it?

FRED

In my quiet way, yes. In fact, I'm about to take one of the greatest risks of my life.

HARRIET

Oh?

FRED

I was wondering, Harriet. About you and me. The theoretical possibility. In the same way that a manned mission to Mars is a theoretical possibility, obviously.

HARRIET

Or salmon fishing in the Yemen.

FRED

Or salmon fishing in the Yemen.

A long pause.

HARRIET

Yes.

FRED

Yes?

HARRIET

I just need a little time.

FRED

Of course. All the time you want.

HARRIET

Thank you.

She kisses him on the cheek, gets up and dives neatly into the river. Fred watches her swim back to the shore.

A hubbub of dust and noise as a convoy of 4 x 4 vehicles park up.

(CONTINUED)

Bridget Maxwell and the Foreign Secretary, Brian Fleet, get out. Teams of press also get out. The Sheikh greets them munificently.

SHEIKH

The great fisherman. An honour.

BRIAN

The great-? It's been a little while, to be honest. Rusty, you know.

SHEIKH

But some skills are never forgotten.

Brian smiles nervously. Turns to Bridget.

BRIAN

What have you been saying?

BRIDGET

Trust me, fishing is the last thing anyone's going to be interested in.

She looks at her watch.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Stand by for the photo-op of a lifetime, sonny jim. No salmon required.

He looks at her questioningly.

Fred and Harriet are sitting by the river. Fred is focussed on the intricacies of tying a fly.

HARRIET

Shouldn't we be- I don't know- doing something? Preparing?

FRED

I am preparing.

HARRIET

I mean for the whole thing.

He glances at her.

FRED

Relax.

Goes back to his fly.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

Dr Alfred Jones the most uptight man in the most uptight National Centre for uptight Fisheries Excellence has just told *me* to relax.

FRED

Ah, but I'm not at the National Centre for Fisheries Excellence anymore. And never will be again. That Alfred Jones is gone.

He goes back to his fly. She watches him.

HARRIET

Is that a Woolly Jones?

FRED

This? It's new. Just invented it.

HARRIET

Has it a name?

FRED

Actually, it's called the Chetwode-Talbot Beauty.

HARRIET

You're joking.

FRED

I don't have a sense of humour.

HARRIET

Can I see?

She holds out her hand. Examines the intricate fly.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

It's beautiful.

FRED

Yes. She is.

She looks at him. Smiles. Then there is the sudden ugly clatter of a helicopter. Fred and Harriet look up.

The helicopter lands in a swirl of noise and dust. Out of the chopper comes a figure. Silhouetted by the sun, it is hard to see who this person is, but he is hobbling on crutches.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

Harriet's face betrays puzzlement, then worry. The helicopter rotars down. Quiet. The dust calms. The man on crutches stops.

ROBERT

Harriet?

HARRIET

Oh God. Oh God.

159 She starts walking towards Robert, then breaks into a r159  
Fred has a fixed smile on his face and he watches them embrace. Absently, he digs the hook of the fly into his hand. A drop of blood appears.

154 EXT. CAMP. TENT. DAY.

154

Robert and Harriet emerge out of one of the tents, accompanied by Bridget and Brian the Foreign Secretary. Sudden shouting of a hundred insistent questions by a huge group of press. Flash guns go off. Noise and mayhem. Harriet and Robert look distinctly uncomfortable but are trying to play the game as Maxwell directs operations.

MAXWELL

Give them a kiss, lovers. They won't stop pestering until you do.

With a certain reluctance, they kiss. Mayhem of cheers, questions, flashes.

155 EXT. HOLDING TANKS. DAY.

155

Fred has retreated to the holding tanks and is looking down at the salmon writhing below. He glances up and sees Harriet and Robert kiss. Suddenly, the Sheikh is by his side.

SHEIKH

I am sorry, my friend.

FRED

No, no. It's- it's a miracle.

SHEIKH

Indeed. A miracle. For which we must thank God. Nevertheless. I am sorry.

He puts a hand on Fred's shoulder for a moment and then walks away.

156 EXT. CAMP. TENT. DAY.

156

MAXWELL

Shut up, hacks. Okay, no military stuff. It's classified and you're all too stupid to understand it anyway. All you need to know is he walked for five days without food and water. Man's a war hero. End of story. Human interest stuff only.

More hubbub. Bridget points to one of the Journalists.

JOURNALIST

Harriet, can you tell us what it feels like?

HARRIET

Feels like? I- I don't know. It's all...a shock. It's wonderful. Of course. Wonderful.

Spontaneously, she reaches out and takes Robert's hand. A barrage of flashes from the cameras. They love that.

JOURNALIST

Any plans for marriage?

ROBERT

Hang on a sec, will you? She thought I was dead ten minutes ago...

Laughter from the assembled press.

JOURNALIST

Can we at least have a kiss?

ROBERT

Haven't you got enough of that?

JOURNALIST

Have you?

More laughter. Robert leans over and kisses Harriet. A flurry of flashes.

JOURNALIST (CONT'D)

That's the front page.

BRIAN

Gentleman, Gentlemen, I think that's all- a little privacy for the couple, please.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED:

156

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I'd just like to add that the British Government is proud to have played a small- but significant- part in this extraordinary reunion of-

The press are all packing up their bags, filing copy on their mobiles and computers: are utterly uninterested in what Brian is saying.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

(giving up)

- Harriet and Captain Myers.

157 INT. HARRIET'S TENT. NIGHT.

157

Robert and Harriet undress. Harriet turns off the gas lamp, allowing her take the last of her clothes off. She slips into bed beside him.

HARRIET

This is strange.

ROBERT

I suppose it is. It's been a long time.

HARRIET

Yes. Do you mind if we-

ROBERT

- no, no. No hurry. We've got all the time in the world now, haven't we?

HARRIET

Yes.

She kisses him on the cheek.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Thank you.

They lie there in the dark.

ROBERT

How did you get tangled up in this escapade, H? Salmon fishing out here? Crazy idea.

HARRIET

You never know with the Sheikh.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

ROBERT

Expect there'll be a six star hotel  
and a golf course here before we  
know it.

HARRIET

I don't think that's his style,  
somehow.

ROBERT

Don't you believe it. Got to make  
his money back somehow. No fools,  
these Arabs.

Harriet frowns minutely.

HARRIET

He's certainly no fool.

158 INT. FRED'S TENT. NIGHT.

158

Fred lies in his bed, eyes open, staring at the ceiling. His phone lights up with an incoming message, showing the message sender is Mary. Fred's finger presses another button. Up comes the message: *Don't leave me*. Fred gazes sadly at the message. Types. *I'm so sorry, Mary*. His finger hovers over the button, then presses it.

159 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT.

159

We see a satellite many miles above the earth. It whooshes fast into the dark of space.

160 INT. FRED'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

160

The ping of incoming mail. Standing at the sink, we see Mary dry her hands, reach for the phone. Put it down on the counter and put her face in her hands.

161 INT. FRED'S TENT. NIGHT.

161

Fred shuts his eyes. Wipes a tear away from his cheek.

162 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAWN.

162

Fred is down by the water's edge. Robert wanders down and joins him.

ROBERT

You don't sleep either?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

No. Not these days.

ROBERT

No bloody journos around this time of day, anyway. You've been very kind to Harriet, Fred. I'm very grateful.

Fred turns to him.

FRED

I love her.

ROBERT

She's a great girl, alright-

FRED

No, I love her.

ROBERT

(understanding)

Oh.

A long pause.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Does she love you?

FRED

I've no idea, now. Yesterday, you weren't alive.

ROBERT

You want me to apologise for not being dead in a ditch?

FRED

I don't think I could accept your apology.

ROBERT

Is that a joke?

FRED

Yes. Sort of. I've never been very good at jokes. It's alright, Robert. Really. It's all alright.

Fred turns and walks back into his tent.

A crowd of TV crews and journalists, Bridget Maxwell, Brian the Foreign Secretary and his coterie of Assistants and Security stand on the bank, waiting. They are joined by interested crowds of Yemenis. The Sheikh stands before them.

SHEIKH

Before the dam, this was a dry river bed. Now, we have water. But still, there is something missing. Today, we will discover if that gap can be filled or whether I will fall flat on my face. So, thank you for coming, one and all, especially as not one of you- not even my dear self- knows if this curious experiment of mine will work.

On the shore, Brian murmurs to Bridget.

BRIAN

It better had bloody work.

MAXWELL

Doesn't matter whether it works or not, Sweetie. What matters is you. Fishing. On CNN tonight. With our war hero.

BRIAN

I haven't done this in years.

MAXWELL

There's ten thousand fish in that tank. If you can't hook one of them you really should fuck off back to Transport.

She turns and sees Robert hobbling towards them with a fishing rod.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Right on cue.

SHEIKH

Muslims, Christians and the odd Heathen I dare say...we are gathered here today in an act of faith. And why not?

The Sheikh turns and walks across the grid walkways of the holding tanks to where Fred and Harriet stand.

(CONTINUED)

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

So, my friends, after all your labours, the moment of truth.

Fred speaks into his walkie-talkie.

FRED

Okay, let the sluices go.

The sluices are raised. They stare into the water, watching, waiting. And then the first salmon cautiously noses through the gates. It is almost as if they are sniffing the current, lining up into the stream. Then the first of the fish starts flickering cautiously upstream.

HARRIET

It's going upstream!

FRED

Wait. One....two...

But then more follow until a steady stream of salmon are forcing their way against the current. Over on the bank there is a lot of pointing and lenses being refocussed as the first of the salmon starts to leap at the salmon ladder.

FRED (CONT'D)

It's working! They're running!

In delight, Harriet grabs Fred and kisses him on the cheek. Then remembers herself and disengages awkwardly.

From high above, on the rim of the Wadi comes a great cheer. They look up to see hundreds and hundreds of Yemeni tribesmen lining the edge of the cliffs.

SHEIKH

God is great. Indeed, God is great.  
My friends!

He embraces both Fred and Harriet in a huge bear hug.

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

Come, Dr Alfred. Let us go fishing.

Maxwell and a barrage of tv crews watch the Foreign Secretary and Robert who is nearer the bank, fishing. Brian is making a clumsy attempt at fishing. He stumbles in the water, makes an embarrassed face at Bridget.

MAXWELL

Turn it on, Sweetie, for God's sake.

(CONTINUED)

119.  
164 CONTINUED: 164

BRIAN  
I need to be more in the stream.  
He wades out a bit further.

165 EXT. WADI ALEYN. RIVER. DAY. 165  
The Sheikh and Fred are midstream, fishing. A cloud of smoke comes from the Sheikh's cigar as he casts again, entirely contented as the water swirls around his knees.

166 EXT. MAINTENANCE AREA. DAY. 166  
A Bedouin guard is walking along the top of the dam, gun in hand. As he turns to patrol the other way, the same Yemeni Tribesman we saw arguing with the Sheikh earlier, slips unseen into a door in the maintenance area of the dam.

167 INT. DAM. DAY. 167  
The Tribesman goes down the spiral stairs, past the huge pipes of the dam and slips into another room.

168 INT. TURBINE ROOM. DAY. 168  
The Tribesman grabs one of the wheels that manually control the sluices and start to spin it furiously open.

169 EXT. DAM TURBINES. DAY. 169  
The flow of water suddenly increases from the turbines.

170 EXT. DAM. PUMPING CONTROL ROOM. DAY. 170  
The Chinese Engineers are monitoring the flow of water with the Yemeni Engineers. They look alarmed. Run to the control panels. Suddenly, the door bursts open and another Tribesman bursts in. Shouting and waving of guns. The Engineers are herded away from the control panels.  
One of the Yemeni Engineers reaches out to press the red alarm bell, but he is spotted and shoved violently backwards.

171 EXT. DAM. DAY. 171  
A wall of water is cascading down the wadi.

172 EXT. WADI ALEYN. RIVER. DAY. 172

Mid-stream, over the noise of the water, Fred hears distant shouting. Looks up. Sees gesturing, shouting. Looks over to the Sheikh who hasn't heard.

FRED  
Your Excellency!

But the Sheikh has hooked a fish. He yells in triumph and starts playing out the line as the salmon runs for cover.

SHEIKH  
I have hooked one, Dr Alfred!

FRED  
Sheikh!

173 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAY. 173

The wave races onwards.

174 EXT. WADI ALEYN. BANK. DAY. 174

Bridget looks up to the small figures at the top of the cliffs. Concern crosses her brow, briefly. Then she is back to work.

MAXWELL  
Noisy arses, aren't they? Brian, I need you nearer Captain Myers for the two shot.

Glances at the camera man who is staring at her.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)  
Well, someone's got to direct him.

The Foreign Secretary starts wading towards the bank. Then the wave of water comes rolling around a bend in the river. Robert sees it first, is nearer the bank. He shouts a warning to Brian who turns, sees it, tries to hasten his steps but his heavy waders can't outrun the wave which takes his legs. He is sent sprawling under water.

175 EXT. WADI ALEYN. RIVER. DAY. 175

The wave rounds another bend in the river catches Fred as he has just caught up with the Sheikh. Both of them are sent tumbling, carried along with the wave.

176 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAM. DAY. 176

Brian's head pops up for a desperate gasp of air.

BRIAN

Help!

BRIDGET

Oh, typical.

Bridget chucks her cigarette away and charges into the water. With extraordinary strength, she grabs Brian by the scruff of his clothes and hauls him up the bank to safety.

177 INT. TURBINE ROOM. DAY. 177

The tribesman is spinning another set of wheels to further open the turbines....

178 EXT. DAM. DAY. 178

The concrete around the turbines cracks, fails and bursts...sending another wave- this one much larger- funnelling into the wadi.

179 EXT. WADI ALEYN. RIVER. DAY. 179

Tumbling through the water, Fred manages to grab the Sheikh, half-swims, half wades to the edge, tries to climb up to a tree that is overhanging the river. But it is too high. The second wave of water is canyoning down towards them. The Sheikh clasps his hands together, makes a step.

SHEIKH

Step up.

FRED

No-

SHEIKH

- I repay my debt. Go.

The water is nearly upon them. Fred puts his foot in the Sheikh's makeshift step and reaches the tree. Hauls himself into its branches. Reaches down to take the Sheikh's hand. But the Sheikh calmly shakes his head.

SHEIKH (CONT'D)

God is great, Doctor Alfred, God is Great.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED:

179

And the wave hits. The Sheikh is gone in an instant. Fred is deluged but hangs onto the tree which is battered but holds. The wave rides on, leaving Fred exhausted, but alive, hanging from the tree above the swirling waters. Of the Sheikh, there is no sign. Fred hangs his head in despair.

180 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAM. LATER.

180

Water trickles out of the dam sluices.

181 EXT. WADI ALEYN. DAY.

181

The water level has returned to normal. It might never have happened. Harriet, Robert and Fred stand by the river bank, draped in blankets, staring.

Beached high and dry on the foreshore, a salmon lies, flipping its tail, dying. One of the camera crews puts his lens up close to film its last, gasping moment.

Further down the bank, at the edge of the river, Bridget is sitting in the sand with an exhausted Brian. Both are soaked.

BRIAN

You saved my life.

MAXWELL

Yes, well, instincts took over.  
Won't happen again.

182 EXT. WADI ALEYN. NIGHT.

182

The Sheikh's body has been wrapped in a white shroud. Fred, Harriet and Robert are sitting by a campfire. They watch as a team of Bedouin camel herders load the body onto a camel and silently lead him away. Fred goes into the dark, comes back carrying a fishing rod and tackle.

FRED

He won't be needing these.

He puts them on the fire. All three watch as they crackle and flame. Fred takes a fly out of his pocket: the Chetwode-Talbot Beauty and adds it to the fire.

183 EXT. CAMP. DAY.

183

Harriet packs up the last of her belongings, slings them in the back of a 4 x 4 where Robert is sitting.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

I just need to say goodbye to Fred.

She walks off.

ROBERT

Are you sure?

Harriet turns.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Harriet, when I was in the desert, the thing that kept me going every day, every night, was the thought of you. I'm standing here now with the rest of my life before me, because of you. So, you really don't owe me anything, Harriet. I just want you to understand that.

She nods, turns and walks towards the edge of the wadi where the figure of Fred stands staring at the water far below him.

Harriet approaches Fred. He doesn't turn round.

HARRIET

We're- we're going. I'm so sorry, Fred.

FRED

It was an extraordinary idea. It nearly worked, too.

HARRIET

I wasn't talking about the project.

FRED

No. I'm not sure I was.

HARRIET

I never meant to hurt you like this.

FRED

Me? I'm autistic, remember? Water off a duck's back.

HARRIET

Fred...

She puts a hand on his arm.

FRED

Not your fault.

HARRIET

I don't know what to do, Fred.

FRED

Ah. Can't help you there, I'm afraid.

Harriet walks along the river bank, away from Fred. Stares at the water.

HARRIET

I wish the Sheikh was here. He would know.

FRED

Yes. He would. But would he tell you?

She smiles and shakes her head.

185

EXT. CAMP. DAY.

185

From beside the 4 x 4, Robert watches.

186

EXT. EDGE OF WADI. DAY.

186

Fred stands up.

FRED

Well. Someone's going to have to make a move. Good luck, Harriet.

He turns and begins to walk away. From behind him comes Harriet's voice, suddenly urgent.

HARRIET

Fred!

He turns back to see a salmon leaping high out of the river. In a flash of silver, it is gone, leaving the ripples circling outwards. A genuine laugh escapes from Fred. He lifts his head to sky.

FRED

Did you see that, my friend, did you see that?

He looks at Harriet who is staring at him. She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

125.  
186

HARRIET

He saw.

She holds out her hand to Fred.

187 EXT. DESERT. DAY.

187

From high above the desert, we can see endless sand, the Wadi, the Camp and three tiny figures. One gets in a 4 x 4 and drives away. The other two walk towards each other and stand gazing at the river.

THE END