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SCENE 13: BEFORE WE GO

Richmond Park, beautiful August day. LOUISA is lying on a picnic rug, propped on her elbows, reading a novel. Enter TOM with two Magnums ice-creams.

TOM Magnum.

LOUISA Best ice-cream in the world.

TOM Milk chocolate or caramel?

LOUISA Caramel. (They unwrap their ice creams and enjoy them for

moment.) I love this park.

TOM Me too.

LOUISA I love coming here with you.

TOM Me too.

LOUISA Exams seem a million miles away.

TOM I can’t even remember what subjects I studied.

LOUISA What was the point of it all?

TOM No idea. Tick the right boxes, I suppose.

LOUISA That what you want to do? Tick boxes?

TOM I don’t know, Louisa. I’m not like you.

LOUISA Did I offend you?

TOM No. I wish I could see things the way you do, that’s all.

LOUISA You think I’m irresponsible?

TOM What’s the first word you think of when you look at the sky?

LOUISA Sunshine.

TOM And then?

LOUISA The big open blue.

TOM That’s not a word.

LOUISA Blue!

TOM I think of cloud, overcast, rain, storm.

LOUISA Where are you seeing that? Because I see blue.

TOM It’s what I anticipate. It’s what I expect to happen. To happen to me.

Beat. She plays with his hand, distractedly.

LOUISA There’s so much pressure to achieve. To be a ‘somebody’. To fulfil

someone else’s idea of a successful life. Isla having a nervous

breakdown about getting to Oxford, Danni falling apart, Mark long

since fallen apart. Alice dealing with … and Molly. There’s a girl at

work, Sandy, and the only way she can deal with the stress is to cut

herself. And she’s a beautiful girl. How is that worth it?

TOM It’s hard out there. You’ve got to do well.

LOUISA And yet here we are, together, under the sunshine and I feel

completely and utterly happy and alive. Isn’t that what we’re

supposed to be, in the end?

TOM You see! The way you … I wish … I could … words and feelings.

You know?

LOUISA Yeah. I think so. (Beat.) This Magnum is incredible.

Beat.

LOUISA You speak to your parents about travelling?

TOM They’re not keen.

LOUISA Doesn’t sound like a no.

TOM They don’t say no. It’s not the middle class way. They just ‘strongly

encourage’.

LOUISA What do you want to do?

TOM I want to. But it’s complicated.

LOUISA Why?

TOM Because of Manchester.

LOUISA Defer.

TOM And mum and dad, you know, it’s their money.

LOUISA You’re their son. I’m sure that’s more important.

TOM I’m worried, if I go off the rails –

LOUISA Who talked about going off the rails? (She kisses him.)

TOM You taste like caramel.

LOUISA How about we go away for the weekend? My uncle has this cottage

in Suffolk. Down by the sea. The tide goes out and the light shines

off the mudflats like they’re made of polished silver. And there are

wild roses in the garden and a four-poster bed in the spare room.

TOM A four-poster bed?

LOUISA We don’t have to. I don’t want to put any pressure – (He kisses her.

She smiles, radiant.) I love who you are, Tom, not who you think

you’re meant to be. And I want my youth to be about the now. I don’t

know what’s going to happen in the future, but when I’m with you it

feels like there’s nothing in the world I couldn’t handle. You make me

happy. You make me look up and see the sunshine.