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SCENE 14: LOUISA’S DEATH

LOUISA and TOM arrive back from their weekend in Suffolk. She carries a casual

rucksack. He has a slightly nerdy case with wheels. They enter laughing and full of joy.

LOUISA I had an amazing time.

TOM Me too.

LOUISA Thank you.

TOM I wish I’d asked you out years ago.

LOUISA We’d never have lasted.

TOM Why do you say that?

LOUISA We’ve grown up together. We’ve got through stuff because there

was no fear of breaking up. But really you and I have been

happening for the last twelve years.

She gives him a kiss and turns to go.

TOM Wait. I’ll talk to my parents.

LOUISA What?

TOM About travelling.

LOUISA Are you serious?!

TOM I’ll need to raise the money.

LOUISA We can do it together. I’ve got the supermarket. Maybe I could get

you a job.

TOM Great!

LOUISA And you’ll defer Manchester?

TOM Yeah.

LOUISA Say you’re not joking.

TOM I’m not joking.

LOUISA Tom, you’re – whenever I imagine – I have this map on my wall, with

pins on it –

TOM I’ve seen it.

LOUISA It’s been on my wall for the last twelve years. Each of those pins is a

place I imagined going with you.

TOM You think we can do them all in a year?

LOUISA No.

TOM So there’ll need to be other years?

LOUISA Lots of them.

TOM I could do that.

LOUISA Have I pushed you into this? Because I’m proud of you, you know,

for getting into Manchester and for being driven and –

TOM I want you.

LOUISA What if your parents say no?

TOM When I told them we were going to Suffolk my mother cried and said,

“Thank God!” and my dad shook my hand so hard –

(But she stops his mouth with a kiss. )

LOUISA Do you have to go home now?

TOM No.

LOUISA We should celebrate.

TOM Okay.

LOUISA Champagne in the park?

TOM I can’t afford – we should be saving.

LOUISA Fine, Appletiser. I don’t care. Just … Stay with me.

TOM Always.

LOUISA Let me go to the shop.

(She puts down her rucksack, kisses him and turns to the street. His phone rings. The sound of a car approaching. )

TOM (Into phone.) Hey mum.

LOUISA (Off.) Tom!

(A car horn, close.)

TOM (Into phone.) One second. (Puts his hand over the phone. Car horn

stops abruptly, time paused.) This is the last moment, the last

fraction of a second that I see you alive. You’re facing me. You’ve

barely turned. The sun’s golden and low and strands of your hair are

lit like threads of pure light. The flowers on your dress seem to dance

as you move. Your hand goes up to your mouth in a kiss and I see

the joy in your eyes, in the lines of your face. And the car, the driver

pressed against his seat, his feet hard on the brakes. Time slows. As

your head begins to turn towards the car, I’m overtaken by all of the

memories we ever shared. I see every second of our lives. Do you?

Six years old and you sit next to me for the first time. Art class. You

love to paint. Playing conkers in the playground. Listening to you

read out loud. Watching you in the Christmas play. Riding our bikes

after school. Throwing pebbles into the mill pond. Long summers.

The treehouse. Treasure maps. A building site. Climbing over fences

for a dare. Stamping in puddles. Drinking the rain that falls on our

faces. First day of secondary school. Seeking you out, hardly able to

breathe. The touch of your hand. The relief of you. An evening at

yours, you crying on my shoulder, my hand on the back of your

head. Memories coming so fast, so many, I can barely stand. Our

whole childhood. Days at school, classes and corridors and books

and libraries. Everything that’s certain. Afternoons in the park,

picnics and meandering conversations and questions and always I

wanted to kiss you. Evenings on a sofa watching films. You cried at

everything. Popcorn. The smell of your skin. Time’s running out.

Your laugh. Your smile. Don’t go. The pigment of your eyes. Your

eyes turning away from me now. Don’t go. Don’t go.

But the car crashes into LOUISA.