

All The Mothers

The present.

Hampstead Heath – Early morning. Birdsong.

Freya *is sat by the pond.*

A number of male swimmers are in the ponds, swimming. They have similar swimming hats and swimming costumes. One by one they come and stand in the fresh morning air. Birds fly past, a clear blue sky.

Freya *watches them for a while.*

One of the swimmers starts to play ukulele.

Freya *starts singing along to 'Deep Water' by Portishead. The first swimmer is surprised, but interested. Three other swimmers stand in a line and act as backing singers.*

Freya *I'm drifting in deep waters
Alone with my self-doubting again
I try not to struggle this time
For I will weather the storm*

Sarah *gets to her desk, piled with papers. It's first thing, but she's exhausted – she sits down and makes a start.*

Jasmine *sits on the end of the bed, waits, upset.*

*I gotta remember
(Gotta remember)
Don't fight it
(Don't fight it)
Even if I
(Even if I
Don't like it
(Don't like it)
Somehow turn me around
(Somehow turn me around)

No matter how far I drift
Deep waters
(Deep waters)
Won't scare me tonight*

Sarah *picks up the phone. Freya's phone rings. The swimmers look annoyed with Freya.*

Tom *appears, and Jasmine goes off with him.*

The swimmers go off.

She answers.

Sarah I missed your call.
Freya I thought we could meet up?
Sarah I can hear birds.
Freya I'm on the heath.
Sarah Hampstead Heath?
Freya Yeah, by the ponds. I packed a bag, left early.
Sarah You don't live anywhere near Hampstead Heath.
Freya Very early. Apparently there's a view where you can see the whole city.
Sarah Parliament Hill.
Freya I think I'm looking for that. So are we going to meet then?
Sarah I could do Thursday?
Freya I meant today really.
Sarah I'm busy Freya.
Freya You're always busy Freya, but Steve's not here and I couldn't get hold of Jasmine, / so I thought we could –
Sarah Don't ask Jasmine, you called Jasmine?
Freya You have got time, I know you have.

A beautiful perfect woman dressed in black with black sunglasses, pushing a pram goes past.

Sarah Get here, to the department, for one o'clock. We'll have twenty minutes. Well, ten. Come to the desk and tell them who you are.

Freya Thanks.

Sarah Right.

Sarah *hangs up. The mother accidentally drops a leaflet from the pram. Freya picks it up and reads it.*

Freya A picnic, on Parliament Hill.

Perfect.

Excuse me.

Freya *follows the woman, off through the Heath*

Mr Crannock's House.

Steve *is asleep on the sofa. Mrs Andrews clatters in, open the curtains.*

Mrs Andrews Are you not awake yet?

Steve *wakes up.*

How did you sleep?

Steve How do you think?

Steve *stands up in just his boxer shorts, woozy.*

The sofa's too short, so I tried the floor, but there was a draught.

Mrs Andrews Mr Sullivan . . .

Steve What?

Mrs Andrews You're not at your best.

Steve Oh.

Steve *He puts his jeans on. Then a t-shirt.*

Isn't there a spare room?

Mrs Andrews There's my room.

Steve I'm sorry?

Mrs Andrews If you'd called ahead, we could've made arrangements.

Steve What do you mean?

Mrs Andrews When your wife visited, I stayed at my sister's.

Steve Oh – you . . . Freya called ahead?

Mrs Andrews Do you two not talk about these things? Now, Mr Crannock has got up and gone out. He starts very early, and won't be disturbed. You've never met I understand?

Steve No.

Mrs Andrews No, well if he trusts you you'll get a drink, if he likes you, he'll talk all night. He'll be back to the house later this afternoon, as will I.

Steve What am I supposed to do until then? You've got no television, I didn't bring my computer, there's no reception on my phone.

Mrs Andrews You'll have to occupy yourself I suppose.

Steve With what?

Mrs Andrews *looks at him.*

Mrs Andrews There's a radio.

Mrs Andrews *goes.*

Freya *sees an Old Woman laying flowers at a war memorial. The Old Woman wears a coat and headscarf.*

Freya Excuse me.

Old Woman Alright dear?

Freya I like your flowers.