

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

"TWO OLD LOVERS: THE LAND AND THE SEA"
by Kevin Fegan

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Website: www.kevinfegan.co.uk

Email: kev@kevinfegan.co.uk

Tel: 07904111671

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SCENE ONE.

MUSIC. A MAN (THE LAND) AND A WOMAN (THE SEA) ARE DANCING.

TOGETHER

Two old lovers.

LAND

The Land.

SEA

And the Sea.

TOGETHER

Two old lovers: the Land and the Sea.

THEY KISS AND SEPARATE.

SEA

The Earth belongs to me.

I shall have it all my own way.

LAND

I am waiting patiently

for the next ice-age.

SEA

His wavewalls and fancy stepwork

cannot halt my advance.

I can melt rock.

LAND

She will outswell herself and,

when she does, I will colonise

her with a line of descendants

to defend my frontiers.

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SEA

I shape the curve in his back

and round his shoulders.

I caress the nape of his neck

while engulfing his peninsulars.

LAND

She thinks I do not notice the erosion.

She is the other side of the equation,

I know, but I am calculating my time.

TOGETHER

There are always correlative lines.

There is always talk of separation.

THEY DANCE. MUSIC ENDS.

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SCENE TWO.

LORELEI IS IN HER FLAT. SHE IS READING THE SMALL ADS IN A MAGAZINE.

STERN IS ELSEWHERE, AS IF HE IS DROWNING.

STERN

Women!

Who needs them?

There's plenty more fish in the sea.

You only have to walk down the street

and you're drowning in females.

I could set sail again tomorrow, if I like,

on the old H.M.S. Relation-Ship.

HE STRUGGLES.

So I fell overboard? Again. I slipped.

It happens all the time,

to everyone. I'll see the boat

in a minute, climb back in.

Meanwhile, must concentrate on staying afloat.

STRUGGLES AGAIN.

I've launched a message-in-a-bottle

with a fashionable magazine.

I'm told it's the place to be seen.

There's nothing sad-bastard

about placing an ad

in the Personal Column.

It can't fail.

LORELEI

(READING)

"Attractive male,
the right side of forty"

- which side? Starboard or Port?

"Sense of humour"

- better.

"Successful businessman, self-taught"

- is that supposed to be funny?

"Sensitive, charming, lots of fun"

- modest.

"Romantic, passionate, nice bum"

- sold!

"Looking for friendship or what-have-you"

- sod it. why not?

STERN

I'm not bad for nearly forty:

wearing well, keeping fit,

good head of hair,

live by my wits.

Fucking women,

they have the gall

to call me a failure.

Just because I've not entertained marriage

and I brag a long list of conquests -

I've scored more times than most blokes my age -

first names only, I can't remember the rest.

I've tasted success.

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I've been with younger chicks -
looks great on the cv, but
they don't really understand a man's needs;
you have to teach them everything
and they're scared of anything slightly perverse.
No, I'd sooner a full purse than a tight one.
You see, I'm reaching an age -
I won't mention forty again,
I don't believe in the mid-life crisis,
that's just a money-making invention,
women's magazine's taking the piss -
well, I want kids of my own, you know?
It's selfish not to pass on good genes:
survival of the species.

LORELEI

Trouble is, they're a different species, men.
I'm not sending a photo.
I know, I'll play on his imagination,
if he has one. I'll send him a cd
and arrange a meeting at a secret location.

STERN EJECTS A CD FROM A PLAYER.

STERN

The seaside?

HE PUTS THE CD BACK IN THE PLAYER TO LISTEN AGAIN.

LORELEI

(AS THE VOICE ON THE CD)

"Hello, my name is Lorelei
and I am not looking for Mr. Right.

I'm thirty-something,
tawny hair, sea-green eyes.
What I desire is not simply pleasure
or money, but something deeper.
I suppose I am looking for treasure.
So why don't we meet by the sea
where it all started."

STERN

Where what started exactly?

LORELEI

"I have enclosed a map
with date, time, location.
How is your navigation?
Worried this might be a trap?
There is a pub on the quay
called "The Friendship" - that word is lovely,
don't you think? "Ship-of-friends".
Oh, and my "what-have-you"
will have to remain a mystery."

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SCENE THREE.

AT THE SEADSIDE, OUTSIDE "THE FRIENDSHIP". THEY TOAST.

TOGETHER

Cheers!

LORELEI

Why do you think people come to the sea?

STERN

I'm sorry, I never told you my name.

LORELEI

It has always fascinated me.

STERN

Stern. Self-employed. Sole trader -

"Wet dreams".

LORELEI

One of life's great mysteries.

STERN

That's the name of the firm -

I'm a plumber.

LORELEI

Stern? As in "behind"?

"Nice bum", you said?

STERN

As good as they come.

LORELEI

You've a long way to go -

If you're ever to make it to the bow.

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STERN LOOKS PUZZLED.

STERN

People come here to retire
by the look of them.

LORELEI

You mean die?
Doctor's orders: cleaner air, live longer.

STERN

No one could ever accuse you of being
sentimental, could they, Lorelei?
What about you and me? Why are we here?

LORELEI

Salt and sea-water are very similar.

STERN

I can't keep up with your riddles.

LORELEI

I apologise, it's my fault.

STERN

What did you mean when you said
"where it all started"?

LORELEI

You know, Homo? Millions of years ago.

STERN

Yes?

LORELEI

Crawled out of the sea and onto the land.

STERN

I'm not having it said that I'm related to a fish.

LORELEI FISHES A SLICE OF LEMON OUT OF HER DRINK AND SUCKS ON IT.

LORELEI

The human foetus still has gills.

We spend our first nine months in fluids.

STERN

I take it you're vegetarian?

LORELEI

We have to start somewhere.

STERN

Of course, you wouldn't want to eat
any of your relations.

LORELEI

Let's just say, there's less chance
of driving ourselves into extinction.

STERN

Who's to say extinction isn't natural?
It's happened plenty of times before?

LORELEI

It's not natural.

STERN

Human beings are natural, aren't they?

LORELEI

One of thirty million different species.

STERN

So what we do must be natural?

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LORELEI

Even destruction?

STERN

It could be evolution.

You're like a child clutching at its teddy bear.

We're hunter-gatherers, that's what we are.

LORELEI

Listen to you:

I bet you've never hunter-gathered further than Asda.

STERN

Let's not get personal.

LORELEI

We're more like foxes:

killing an entire roost even when

we don't intend to eat all the chickens .

STERN

Let's not talk politics, it's boring.

LORELEI

Why, what's on your mind? Sole trading?

STERN

Sex?

LORELEI

Is that a reflex reaction?

I thought you didn't want to get personal?

STERN

You're doing it again, tricking me with education.

I bet you're a teacher?

LORELEI

I found a sole once - on the beach.

STERN

One of those flat fish with lemon?

Or are we on to religion?

LORELEI

A human sole: no toes. Or religion.

I thought it was off an old boot,

but it was an actual foot.

STERN

Urgh, that's disgusting. What did you do?

LORELEI

I threw it back into the sea.

STERN

Shouldn't you have reported it to the police?

LORELEI

I don't think they have laws about soles, do they?

STERN

Are you making fun of me?

LORELEI

I'm playing with your uncertainty -

you're so scientific.

STERN

I know what's what.

But you're a bit of a mystery.

LORELEI

And do you have any time for mysteries?

STERN

I'm here, aren't I?

MUSIC. SHE MOVES OUT OF THE SCENE AND BECKONS HIM TO JOIN HER. THEY DANCE, KISS AND SEPARATE.

SEA

Can we tell them a story within the story?

LAND

We're the Land and the Sea,
we can do anything you say.

SEA

I'll need you to help me.

THEY PREPARE THEIR STORY.

LAND

(TO AUDIENCE)

This is the true story of the H.M.S. Affray.

SEA

I am Mary, the wife of a Rear Admiral, based with the Royal Navy at Portsmouth. It is the evening of 17th April 1951 and I am alone, listening to the wireless.

LAND

(AS A B.B.C. NEWS REPORTER)

A military submarine, the H.M.S. Affray, went missing last night whilst diving off the Isle of Wight. Aboard are 75 men, including officers and ratings. The Affray set sail on a training exercise yesterday morning. She was last heard of at 21.16 hours. Her Commander was ordered to report daily between 08.00 and 09.00. At 10am this morning, having heard nothing, the radio room at Fort Blockhouse alerted the authorities with the executive "sub sunk" code. An hour later, a search was underway, involving the Royal Navy, the U.S. Navy, Belgian and French craft and the R.A.F. It is thought there is enough oxygen on board to support the crew for two days. There is also a suit of Davis escape gear for each man on board.

SEA

(AS MARY)

I am trying to imagine what it must be like to be a sailor trapped on the seabed in a metal coffin, eyes raised in silence to the curved ceiling, in hourly expectation of the

first sounds of rescue. A level-voiced Captain informs the men to remain as still as possible. Oxygen candles are used at intervals to release fresh quantities of the life-sustaining gas. What these candles really give off is time: extra minutes for men lying side by side in their bunks in the dim glow of emergency lighting. A couple of inches of steel hold back the press of black water outside. Some men are writing letters home. Everyone is in good spirits, patient. No one wants to be the first to say it feels like prison.

LAND

(AS NEWS REPORTER)

A searching submarine reports hearing faint, distorted signals, which may have been made by someone tapping on the hull. No one has managed to obtain a reliable bearing. Some 34 ships are taking part in the search, which is becoming increasingly desperate.

SEA

(AS MARY)

Somewhere in the hidden black and icy depths, the Captain hands to every man on board a little black capsule. The emergency lighting fades and finally winks out. The crew lie in orderly fashion in their bunks as darkness engulfs them.

LAND

(AS NEWS REPORTER)

After 69 hours searching, the H.M.S. Affray is officially given up for lost. As an "A" Class submarine, it is vital the reason for her sinking be ascertained. The search for the wreck continues.

SEA

(AS MARY)

Quite suddenly, I realise that I am not alone in my room. In the half-light I recognise my visitor. He had been a serving officer on my husband's ship. We had occasionally entertained him at our home. He approaches me and I see that he is dressed in a submariner's uniform. "Tell your husband we are at the North End of the Hurd Deep, 70 miles from the lighthouse at St. Catherine's Point." At which, he vanishes. I am frightened and telephone my husband immediately. He runs a check on the officer and discovers that he is aboard the Affray. He contacts the Captain in charge of the rescue attempt.

LAND

(AS NEWS REPORTER)

News of the H.M.S. Affray: using the latest technology, an underwater camera aboard the H.M.S. Reclaim has found the wreck. At first sight, she appeared

undamaged. All hatches were shut and her hydroplates set to rise. On closer inspection, it was found that her snort tube must have fractured on the way down. At a depth of only 40 feet, water would have poured through the open valve at a rate of three-quarters of a ton per second. It would have been impossible to close the valve. The water would have flooded the engine room and caused electrical short-circuits, followed by explosions and fires and the release of noxious fumes. The first powerful inrush of water would have caused extensive injuries, including rupture of the eardrums. Bodies would have been stripped by marine animals within hours. It is generally the lips, eyes and fingers which go first, being most easily seized by creatures with small mouths or pincers. Cod are especially voracious. As soon as the seawater softens the flesh, the remainder would be torn off quite rapidly. The exact position of the Affray has been established as 70 miles from St. Catherine's Lighthouse, lying with a slight list to port in 43 fathoms of water on the edge of the Hurd Deep.

MUSIC ENDS.

SCENE FOUR.

LORELEI IS AT WORK AT A GARDEN CENTRE. SHE WHEELS A BARROW FULL OF SOIL TO HER WORKBENCH, WHERE SHE IS SEEDING BABY PLANTS IN TRAYS OF SOIL. ELSEWHERE STERN IS AT WORK AS A PLUMBER, INSTALLING A SHOWER.

LORELEI

I love the Spring:
so much optimism.
It's a busy time for bedding plants.
The soil plays havoc with my hands -
my nails are a bit of a give-away;
not that Stern would notice.
The fool thinks I'm a teacher -
"P.E.," he says, 'cause of my muscles.
I've worked in this garden centre
since leaving school -
these plants have more brains than me.
"You must do a daily workout," he says,
groping my biceps.
I should have said, "No;
but I do a mean wheelbarrow."
He is so far up his own bum.
"Pricking out", they call this -
you know, the seeding.
Doesn't half make your fingers numb.
Should be called "pricking in" really;
we only bed them properly
once they've matured.
Unfortunately, some of them never do.
Like men: hunter-gatherers, Stern calls them.

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Poor things, still waiting to discover
the joys of agriculture.

STERN

I've caught a right bloody mermaid this time:
not sure whether to be impressed or afraid.
Going on about the sea like some love-sick sailor,
I felt a right imbecile.
If the sea is so bloody great,
how come no insects live there?
I loathe it, me, the bugger won't keep still;
does my head in.
I get seasick on a waterbed.
I like my water in pipes,
circulating through the arteries of my house:
Summer and Winter, day and night,
instant on/off, hot/cold;
taps, boilers, radiators -
salvation via a single valve;
reliable, under control.
Take this new power-shower:
you can set the temperature/pressure
to your own requirements
with this cut-out switch on the thermostat,
so it's perfectly safe and secure.

LORELEI

They're mostly a good crowd here:
some of us go out together
once a week after work -

"Women's Night": swim-fit first,
keep in trim, I prefer it to the multi-gym;
then hit the town for a proper workout
and some serious training.
Don't ask me how, but
they've found out about the ad and everything.
They keep asking me about my date.
I says, "It's early days yet."
"You're a bit late in the day to be coy,"
they says, "What you waiting for?
We want to know if he's a man or a boy?"

STERN

I love being my own boss -
I can't possibly imagine it any other way.
You see, people will pay for the best -
that's why I use copper;
none of this cheap plastic mess.
I don't care if solder is out of fashion,
quality isn't; neither is hard cash.
I'm not greedy
as long as I can have my own "Wet Dreams",
a fat wad at the end of the week,
a bathroom big enough for a jakuzzi
and a smart jag parked outside;
I'm easily satisfied.

LORELEI

Of course, most of the girls are married;
but that doesn't stop you craving spices

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with your main meal, does it?

Their husbands are such traditional dishes,

I know how they feel.

Trouble is, I've been here before;

truth is, I find it all boring.

STERN

I'm going to catch this Lorelei,

as sure as mermaids have tails.

You see, the only way for two pipes

to join together is for one to slip inside

the other -

(HE DEMONSTRATES)

male and female.

I've invited her to my party -

did I say I was going to be forty?

I've hired a canal barge for the day

so I can have a proper piss-up

without the worry of ending up in a police cell.

I'm hoping she might have a special little present

lined up for me as well.

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SCENE FIVE.

STERN'S FORTIETH BIRTHDAY PARTY ON A CANAL BARGE. STERN AND LORELEI ARE BACK-TO-BACK, TALKING TO EVERYONE BUT EACH OTHER.

LORELEI

Yes, great party.

STERN

Doesn't bother me being forty.

LORELEI

No, I'm with someone.

STERN

I'm not pissed enough yet, sunshine.

LORELEI

That's not on.

STERN

Give me time.

LORELEI

I'm not supposed to be alone.

STERN

I happen to like this beer.

LORELEI

Maybe I am on my own.

STERN

(TO LORELEI)

Sorry, I'm not ignoring you, am I?

LORELEI

(TO STERN)

There aren't many women here.

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STERN

(TO LORELEI)

You should have brought some girlfriends.

LORELEI

Where did we meet? Erm, on a beach.

STERN

Yes, very romantic.

(TO LORELEI)

Thanks, I don't want my mates to think -

LORELEI

Yes, I've been on a barge before.

STERN

No, really, I'm not bothered about birthday cards.

LORELEI

I was a fisherman actually.

STERN

(TO LORELEI)

You never told me?

LORELEI

Yes, fishing boats.

Until that fateful night off the coast of Whitby.

STERN

I don't care about presents -

you have? Where?

MUSIC. WHILE STERN UNWRAPS A VERY LARGE PRESENT, LORELEI TELLS HER MERMAID STORY TO THE AUDIENCE AS PARTY GUESTS.

LORELEI

We were hauling up the net one night, as usual. The codend swung into the arc lights ready for the count when everyone froze at the terrible sight before us. Crushed into

the meshes was the face of a young woman, her mouth open in a scream, her eyes wide, her twisted limbs hidden among the whiting and dogfish. Hermit crabs spilled out of every orifice. When the catch was released, nobody wanted to wade into the bin to dig her out. Eventually I could stand the sight no more and waded in to pull her out from beneath the heaving monkfish. It wasn't a girl at all: it was a torn and partially deflated life-sized sex doll, made from various by-products of North Sea oil; a 21st century mermaid.

MUSIC ENDS. THE END OF THE STORY COINCIDES WITH STERN REVEALING HIS PRESENT: AN INFLATABLE DOLL. WHEN LORELEI LOOKS AT HIM, HE HIDES IT BEHIND HIS BACK.

LORELEI

(TO STERN)

Give us a kiss.

SHE APPROACHES HIM BUT KISSES THE DOLL INSTEAD.

STERN

It was a present.

LORELEI

Are you really that desperate?

STERN

I think I'm pissed.

LORELEI

Do you want sex with me?

STERN

Yes, please.

LORELEI

And if we have sex, then what next?

STERN

Again?

LORELEI

And if the relationship ends there?

STERN

At least we'll have had sex.

What? I don't know what you expect?

LORELEI

Right, get your kit off.

SHE TRIES TO STRIP HIM.

STERN

Shit, not in front of my mates.

LORELEI

What's the matter?

Don't you want to fornicate?

STERN

There's more to it than that.

LORELEI

My point exactly - I rest my case.

Oh well, if you won't...

SHE STARTS TO STRIP.

STERN

What are you doing?

HE TRIES TO COVER HER MODESTY WITH HIS INFLATABLE DOLL.

LORELEI

Care to join me?

STERN

People are looking.

SHE HAS HER SWIMSUIT UNDERNEATH.

LORELEI

I'm going for a swim.

Last one in...

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STERN

Damn! If only I could swim,
I could be in her knickers by now.

HE CALLS TO HER WHILE SHE IS SWIMMING.

How come you were a fisherman?

LORELEI

I wasn't.

STERN

Fisherwoman, then, whatever?

LORELEI

I've never even been fishing.

STERN

But your story?

LORELEI

You obviously needed me to impress your mates.

STERN

That's put me in my place.

Why the concern?

LORELEI

How come you never learned to swim?

My kids -

STERN

You've got kids?

LORELEI

Two.

STERN

I want kids.

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LORELEI

You didn't say you wanted kids?

STERN

You didn't say you had kids.

You lied.

LORELEI

I lied? You lied.

STERN

It's natural for men.

LORELEI

Well, excuse my femininity.

STERN

We do it all the time.

LORELEI

I've got news for you:

women don't find that attractive.

SHE GETS OUT OF THE WATER AND HE HANDS HER A TOWEL.

STERN

And the father?

LORELEI

Fathers: two children, two fathers, two divorces.

STERN

Of course. I had no idea:

serious families.

LORELEI

Do you think you'll meet many women

my age without children?

We can't wait till we're forty, like men.

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STERN

You never said, I've been taken for a ride.

LORELEI

And I wouldn't have replied to your ad.,
if I knew you couldn't swim.

SHE COLLECTS HER CLOTHES TO LEAVE.

STERN

Don't go.

LORELEI

I think you two need to be alone.

SHE HANDS HIM THE DOLL AND LEAVES.

STERN

(TO DOLL)

Fuck. Do you reckon I've blown it?

HE TAKES TO THE BOTTLE.

Why is it, women always leave in a rage?

And why are they always dragging

behind them trolleys full

of children and emotional baggage?

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SCENE 6.

LORELEI IS SAT ON A ROCK, THROWING PEBBLES INTO THE WATER.

STERN IS STANDING NEXT TO THE WATER. HE IS STILL DRINKING.

LORELEI

No one tells you when you're a girl
to expect infidelity from relationships.
My husband couldn't see a problem with this.
He said, "It's the way of the world,"
looking me straight in the eye,
telling me he still loved me
and that fucking someone else didn't change anything.
He thought women should accept it.
At first I wept, then became hell-bent on revenge.
I went to see her at work, his slag,
my so-called mate, the traitor.
I dragged her out
from behind the chocolate counter
and battered her with a box of After-Eights.
I still hate her,
but I should have done him as well.
He left me - "the shame of it," he says.
Can you believe that?
As if I was the one to blame?
I don't let my lad near him at all;
I'm not having him turn out like his Neanderthal dad.
Husband number two, well,
I was better prepared.
I made sure I didn't really care about him.

I had an affair first
before he could reject me.
When he found out -
he never suspected -
I had to tell him.
He said it wasn't important,
like I'd been playing badminton
or some other sport.
So I did a runner with our daughter.
I wouldn't mind him seeing her,
but he's not inclined to.
Perverse, isn't it?
Arse-over-tit.
Why is it so difficult when all women
want is to love and be loved?
Sounds simple enough,
so where are the men for us?
I let love pass through me now,
like sound through running water.

STERN

I am four years old.
I have no words for blue, let alone deep.
This is not a reservoir below me,
it's an ocean, a boundless ocean
and I'm one tiny drop.
I am my dad's child
and I am his sport for the day:
upside down, caught by the ankles,

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squirming like live bait from our small boat;
hanging helpless over the water,
the deep, blue water.

My mum is watching.

I see the laughter in her face
balanced between joy and suffering.

I expect her to save me,
to throw me a cord,
a line of safety.

I feel like a baby held at the moment
between birth and his first slap,
about to be cut loose,
set adrift without a destiny.

Suddenly I'm a splash
and while my dad makes a dash
to rescue me, there are dark elastic seconds
stretching my emotions.

It is an accident,
he didn't mean to let go;
I have slipped from his grip,
but with me slips all sense of security.

Where is the boat?
On the horizon, tidal waves
are rising up like nightmares.

LORELEI

I know Stern has buried a lot of suffering;
I can't argue with stone.
He values its silence,

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he models its independence.

I run my fingers over these stones

like a blind woman relying on

touch alone for understanding.

How can I know them when all I

ever do is throw them into the water?

Stones are of little consequence;

yet they are at one with the stars.

I must reconcile myself to rock,

not wait for it to reach me.

The lines on the stones

give them grace and beauty.

I have never built on stone before;

maybe it's time to restore my faith in it?

MUSIC. THEY DANCE, KISS AND SEPARATE.

THE SEA TIES THE LAND UPRIGHT TO CONDUCT AN EXPERIMENT ON HIM. SHE ROCKS HIM FROM SIDE TO SIDE. HE STARTS TO FEEL ILL.

LAND

Tell me again why it has to be me?

SEA

It's my experiment.

LAND

But I'm supposed to be the scientific one?

SEA

Says who? Besides, I don't get seasick.

Please try to keep your balance.

SHE ROCKS HIM AGAIN.

If seasickness is merely a clash of information

between the eyes and the ears,

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what about the blind?

SHE TIES HIS EYES WITH A SCARF AND ROCKS HIM VIOLENTLY.

Still feeling seasick?

HE RETCHES.

Let's take that as a 'yes', shall we?

SHE REMOVES THE SCARF.

Don't worry, a degree of immunity
can be achieved with practice;
it gets easier.

LAND

The only way to stop me feeling seasick
is to get rid of all the bloody water.

SEA

Of course, that's it:
there has to be a psychological cause;
it's an attitude problem.

LAND

(RELEASING HIMSELF)

Bloody right it is - there's too much water.

SEA

How can you say that?
The concessions I've made.

LAND

What bloody concessions?

SEA

All this land was underwater once.
And I want it back.

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LAND

No it wasn't.

SEA

It's a fact.

LAND

I think the salt is affecting your brain.

SEA

Then how do you explain the fossils?

LAND

They're not fossils, they're character lines.

SEA

There was a time,
before India bumped into Asia,
that even the Himalayas were underwater.

LAND

And there are mountain ranges
under the oceans waiting to rise up:
a few tectonic rumbles and they'll be high and dry.

SEA

You can't compress water.

LAND

So you're dense. So what?

SEA

Not like air or rock.

LAND

Please, you're not making out you're the stronger?
It's the moon, you know, P.M.T.;
affects her moods terribly.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

SEA

He is so ignorant.
The earth's surface rises and falls
twice a day with the tides.

LAND

Bollocks.

SEA

Those too. Large and small.
Sound travels faster in water.

LAND

But not light. You're dark and damp.
And can't smell sod all underwater.

SEA

Right; but fish can hear each other
thousands of miles away.
You're so flaky like rotting flesh.

LAND

And you're evaporating at the edges.

SEA

He loves me really.

LAND

Crap.

SEA

He doesn't like to admit it, in public.

LAND

That's sick. I'm in touch with my feelings.

SEA

Tell me then, if it's not too much.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

LAND

Tell you what?

SEA

That you love me.

LAND

We're supposed to deliver our ballad.

MUSIC. THEY DANCE, KISS AND SEPARATE.

LAND & SEA

"The Ballad of the Man Overboard:"

The ship set sail from Salford Quays,
The crew were glad to go;
They'd had their fill of Boddies Beer
But little did they know

Their journey was to be their last,
For one of them was doomed
To listen to his mortal soul
And hear its fearful tune.

Of the three and twenty sailors
Setting sail that day,
Only one, name of Sailor John,
Confessed he was running away:

"I've searched for love across the world,
It's nowhere to be found;
Lovers sail an empty vessel

Destined to run aground."

No sooner were they out to sea
Beyond the watershed,
Than solemn clouds turned silhouette
And a storm brewed overhead.

Sheets of lightning lit up the sky,
The wind whipped up the waves,
Thunder cracked across the deck,
The sailors worked like slaves.

The rain poured down relentlessly,
The like they'd never seen
And water all around them rose
Above, below and in between.

The engines failed, the sailors feared
The ship might soon be wrecked,
When a tidal wave like a giant's hand
Swept Sailor John off deck.

"Man overboard!" The cry went out,
but nothing could be done;
There was no power on this Earth
could save poor Sailor John.

Down with the wave went Sailor John,

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

Way down into the deep,
Where life and death are mutual,
Where lovers sometimes leap.

In those seconds underwater
He heard a familiar voice,
The haunting echo of his soul
Gave him a final choice:

"You live your life in poverty
When all around is wealth,
You cannot ever love someone
Until you love yourself."

His heart missed a beat in terror,
He knew that it was true;
He was always blaming someone else
For what he couldn't do.

Just then, another wave took hold
And dragged him swiftly upward,
Then hoisted him high as the crow's nest flies
And dropped him back on board.

The storm died down and disappeared
As quickly as it came;
Sailor John took a solemn vow
Never to sail again.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

And now he walks the streets to share
The love that's in his soul
With every passing stranger,
Man and woman, young and old:

"When your love seems like the Mary Celeste,
With the crew all dead and gone,
Don't fall out of love and into the sea;
Remember the tale of Sailor John."

MUSIC. THEY DANCE, KISS AND SEPARATE.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 7.

STERN'S HEAD IS THROBBING FROM A HANGOVER. PERCUSSION PUNCTUATES HIS SPEECH.

STERN

I've got a head like a fucking submarine
too much pressure in the pipes
fucking H.M.S. Migraine
too much light
where are the candles?
emergency lighting only
too much sound
batten down the hatches
keep still
rescue is at hand
it's no good, i'm ill
my throat's like a fucking stop valve
i think my lips have been chewed by pirahnas
i need water

HE DRINKS AND MAKES A 'PHONE CALL. LORELEI PICKS UP HER PHONE.

Lorelei?

Look, I'm really sorry about last night.

LORELEI

I can't be doing with pissing about, Stern.

We lied to each other.

If you don't want to meet again, fine,

no hearts broken;

just a waste of valuable time.

STERN

I'm sorry. I was pissed.

LORELEI

And I'm sorry I done one.

Did you miss me?

STERN

I'm suffering for it this morning.

LORELEI

Good. Dehydrating?

STERN

Like a desert.

LORELEI

I've told you before:

your body's out of balance;

you'll be right once your water level's restored.

STERN

You're a good influence on me, Lorelei.

Things aren't always what they seem:

I could be good for you;

we would make a cracking team.

Will you give it another try?

LORELEI GOES TO MEET HIM.

Do you think you could like me?

LORELEI

I like the sound of your voice.

STERN

I love the colour of your eyes.

And you're in great shape.

LORELEI

Thanks. Shame I can't say the same about you.

STERN

You could lie.

LORELEI

I had a dream, about us. We were trying
to work out how to cross a river.
You took my hand and led us
and you grew in stature
until you became a huge colossus
with giant legs astride the water.

STERN

Sounds a bit horny to me.
Sorry, it's because I can't swim, isn't it?

LORELEI

Lots of sailors can't swim, even fishermen.

STERN

But they're not frightened by water.

LORELEI

At least you're finally admitting it, Stern.
You should know what you're missing.

MUSIC. THEY KISS. LORELEI LEADS HIM BEHIND A WATERFALL. IMAGES ARE PROJECTED ONTO THE WATER TO SUGGEST THEY ARE HAVING SEX. WHEN THEY HAVE FINISHED, LORELEI EMERGES FIRST, DRYING HER HAIR AND GETTING READY TO LEAVE. STERN FOLLOWS.

STERN

What are you doing?

LORELEI

I think we should leave it at that.

STERN

You're going? Please, Lorelei -

LORELEI

It's for the best.

STERN

Is this some sort of test?

I thought you wanted to give it another try?

LORELEI

You said that, not me.

We can meet again for a fuck, if you like.

STERN

I took you at your word -

there has to be more to it than sex.

LORELEI

That's as good as it gets.

STERN

I think we've really got something here.

I want you to come and live with me.

LORELEI

What? No way.

STERN

Then take me to your place.

I want to meet your children.

LORELEI

Listen to my voice:

stay away from my house.

STERN

What are you so scared of?

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

LORELEI

It's my choice:

I don't want to share my life with anyone.

MUSIC. THEY DANCE , KISS AND SEPARATE.

SEA

Among the archipelagos of South-East Asia, there are many tales of daring opportunism presenting islanders with choices.

LAND

In 1988, an overcrowded liner, the "Dona Marilyn", sailed out of Cebu heading for Manila, despite the coastguard's warning of the imminent arrival of "Typhoon Unsang". On the night of October 26th, the Dona Marilyn sank while trying to shelter from Typhoon Unsang in the lee of the Manok-Manuk islands. Fortunately, there was land nearby. However, the seas were treacherous and swimmers faced the risk of being pounded against the jagged offshore reefs.

SEA

The Manok-Manuk islanders had heard the ship's distress calls and seen her flares. Dozens of brave villagers formed a human chain far out into the surf to pull in exhausted swimmers.

LAND

Meanwhile, other villagers launched their flimsy bangkas and sailed into the storm, looking for survivors. They hauled them aboard, one at a time, and quickly stripped them of their valuables before throwing them back into the cruel sea.

SEA

As rescuers, the villagers could not be praised enough for their courage.

LAND

Yet, as plunderers, amoral and enterprising, their bravery was actually no less.

LAND & SEA

In singular moments of opportunism, the quality of our lives becomes a matter of choice: rescuer or plunderer?

MUSIC ENDS.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 8.

LORELEI IS AT WORK WITH HER WHEELBARROW. SHE IS PLANTING OUT SEEDS.

LORELEI

I'm tired of laying out seeds,
marking each one with a cross.
This is supposed to be a nursery,
not a cemetery. I don't care
what they do to me when I die
as long as I'm not buried in the earth.
I feel like a fish out of water,
eyes bulging with too much air.
Everything here is so dry and dirty:
the soil gets in my hair,
my nose, mouth;
I can't breath for dust.

STERN TURNS UP AT HER WORKPLACE.

I trusted you not to come here?

STERN

Why did I ever think you were a teacher?

LORELEI

I never said. I work with the soil:
a sort of glorified farm-labourer.

STERN

Why won't you reply to my calls?

LORELEI TRIES TO PUSH PAST HIM WITH HER WHEELBARROW.

LORELEI

Let me by.

HE WON'T LET HER PAST.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

STERN

What's the rush?

LORELEI

I can't. Not here.

If the boss sees me, I'll get the push.

STERN

You could always work for me.

LORELEI

I don't want to work for you, I'm happy here.

STERN

That's not true.

Look, I'm sincere. I enjoyed being with you
in the water, before you ran away.

LORELEI

You don't feel wet when you're in,
only when you get out.

STERN

Why do you doubt me?

I want a proper relationship.

Why is that so terrible?

LORELEI

Because we're not capable, none of us.

That's why we have laws for living together
and separating; relationships are erroneous.

STERN

I don't want to be an island any more.

LORELEI

What am I? The channel tunnel?

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

STERN

I want us to have a child.

LORELEI

I don't think so.

You're about as balanced as a fucking iceberg -
you could roll over any minute for all I know.

SHE TRIES AGAIN TO PASS HIM WITH HER WHEELBARROW BUT HE WRESTLES WITH HER.

STERN

The waves, Lorelei, they're on top.

LORELEI

Stop looking to women to make it better.

I'm not here on this planet to save you, Stern.

STERN

Why are you so bitter?

LORELEI

Save yourself or go under.

THE WHEELBARROW TIPS OVER AND THEY STRUGGLE IN THE SOIL.

STERN

What gives you the right to insist on perfection?

So men are vulgar and selfish
and can't live up to your expectations;
you can't live that fairy-tale princess shit.

LORELEI

You're not listening, you never listen.

STERN

You don't see it, do you?

LORELEI

I don't want to be hurt no more.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

STERN

Then meet me half-way, on the shore
between the land and the sea.
You said you wanted treasure,
well, this is treasure.

THEY RUB SOIL IN EACH OTHER'S FACE AND THEY KISS. MUSIC. THEY DANCE.

THEY HOSE EACH OTHER DOWN WITH WATER AND EMERGE FROM THE MUD TOGETHER.

LAND

You can't tell the earth from the water.

SEA

We need to clean up
and create a fresh map of where we are.

LAND

Of where we're going.

SEA

Re-draw our frontiers.

LAND

Explore our boundaries.
Things have changed.

SEA

Things are always changing.
We lied to each other.

LAND

We lied to ourselves.
But we are still in a relationship.

SEA

We have to have a relationship.

"Two Old Lovers: the Land and the Sea" by Kevin Fegan

LAND

Let's go on holiday.

SEA

One of those sun-kissed naked islands.

LAND

Boat-trips and jet-skis.

SEA

We could hire a motorbike.

LAND

A wetsuit and snorkel.

SEA

Let's do it.

LAND

Just you and me.

LAND & SEA

Two old lovers: the Land and the Sea.