

'The Lonely Sea and the Sky'
An extract

(copyright 2023)

EXT 1 : CHESIL BEACH - DAY

The sea pounds in on the pebbles of Chesil Beach, Portland, Dorset.

EXT 2 : ROW OF PEBBLE-DASHED COTTAGES HIGH ABOVE THE SEA (1958) - DAY

Long-shot of a line of pebble-dashed cottages high above the sea

FADE TO:

Close up on a rear upstairs window in the end house

Chrissie, an 11 year old girl opens her bedroom window and climbs out onto the roof of an outhouse in the back yard. We hear the voice of her mother call from inside the house.

VIOLET

(Voice off) Chrissie? Where are you?

Chrissie ignores her mother's call, smiles and settles down to read her book on the roof of the outhouse.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

(Voice off) Chrissie! Your Gran needs you! I won't tell you again. Chrissie? Chrissie!

The sound of a chapel congregation singing a funeral hymn. 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' floats into and over this scene as it fades to...

EXT 3 : THE METHODIST CHAPEL CHURCHYARD (1990) - DAY

A long-shot of the chapel across the churchyard as we hear the mourners sing the hymn inside the chapel.

FADE TO:

INT 4 : INSIDE THE METHODIST CHAPEL (1990) - DAY

Christine, a woman in her early 40s, sits in the front pew of the chapel. Behind her, a sparse congregation. Her father's coffin sits at the front of the chapel as the small congregation sing.

Singing fades as...

CUT TO:

EXT 5 : OUTSIDE THE METHODIST CHAPEL (1990) - DAY

Christine is seen shaking hands with the minister outside the chapel.

MINISTER

Your father was a character. He'll be missed.

Christine smiles graciously, but says nothing. She turns and crosses to her car, gets in and drives away from the chapel without speaking to anyone else in the congregation.

EXT 6 : OUTSIDE THE TERRACED COTTAGES. (1958) - DAY

The front door opens and Chrissie exits, calling back into the house as she leaves. She is carrying a cloth bag containing her swimming costume and a towel.

CHRISSIE

Just off down Church Ope!

She slams the front door shut and runs off down the hill towards Church Ope Cove. She doesn't look back.

EXT 7 : THE ROAD TO CHURCH 'OPE COVE (1990) - DAY

Christine's car is seen in an aerial shot driving down towards Wakeham and Church Ope Cove.

EXT 8 : CHURCH OPE COVE BEACH (1958) - DAY

Chrissie runs onto the beach at the cove. As she does so she begins to sing 'Dream' by The Everly Brothers

CHRISSIE

Dream, dream, dream. Dream, dream, dream.

Chrissie runs freely and exuberantly then sits on a rock by a pool in the cove

INT 9 : INTERIOR OF CHRISTINE'S CAR (1990) - DAY

Christine continues on her drive down the road to Wakeham. Softly, under her breath she hums the tune to 'Dream, dream, dream.'

EXT 10 : BY THE FOOTPATH DOWN TO CHURCH OPE COVE (1990) - DAY

The car pulls up and parks by the footpath down to the cove. Christine gets out of the car and begins to walk down the path towards the beach.

EXT 11 : THE BEACH AT CHURCH OPE COVE (1990) - DAY

A young woman - Julie - in her early 20s, dressed in a parka and jeans, walks down onto the beach and towards the sea. Under her arm she carries a large photograph album. She sits down on a rock near the sea and begins to look at the photos thoughtfully.

Christine, who has walked down from the road, leans over a wall and calls down to Julie.

CHRISTINE

Hello.

Julie looks up, closes the photograph album, slips it into the messenger bag over her shoulder and stands.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

I used to like to sit there.

Christine continues down the path and steps onto the beach

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

It's been a few years ago now, but seeing you there...

Julie pulls her parka around her and moves past Christine and sets off towards the path off the beach.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

Please, don't go. I ...

Julie leaves the beach without looking back. Christine watches her go.

EXT 12 : THE SAME BEACH AT CHURCH OPE COVE (1958) - DAY

Chrissie sits on the same rock that Julie has sat on in the previous scene. She sings 'Dream, Dream, Dream' to herself quietly. Mary Jane, also about 11 years old, runs onto the beach. She calls to Chrissie.

MARY-JANE

Chrissie?

She slows down to a walk and approaches her purposefully.

MARY-JANE (CONT'D)

Chrissie Carter! I've been all the way down Easton looking for you! What you doin'?

CHRISSIE

Just thinkin'. You brought your bathers?

MARY-JANE

Mum says it's too early; reckons it's still too cold.

CHRISSIE

My mum says that too, but I still sneaked mine out.

MARY-JANE

Sorry.

CHRISSIE

It's just a shame, that's all. What with you going off to the Grammar next year...

MARY-JANE

What you sayin'?

CHRISSIE

Just don't think there'll be much time for this when that happens. That's all.

MARY-JANE

We'll still do everything together; swimming and rock jumping and that.

CHRISSIE

Will we?

MARY-JANE

Course.

Mary Jane sits down on a rock close to Chrissie. Chrissie has folded her arms and is clearly in a mood.

MARY-JANE (CONT'D)

We will!

CHRISSIE

Once you're off to Weymouth everyday you won't want to be hanging around down here with me.

MARY JANE

I will.

CHRISSIE

Don't think so.

MARY JANE

If it were just up to me I'd rather stay here on the island. Go to school with you.

CHRISSIE

Don't reckon I'll get to see you much at all.

MARY JANE

Yes you will.

Chrissie turns away from Mary Jane. Her mood has deepened.

MARY-JANE

Are you tryin' to make me cry?

They sit in silence

MARY JANE

You're supposed to be nice to me.

CHRISSIE

Why?

MARY JANE

Because we're friends. That's why!

Mary Jane waits for confirmation. None comes.

MARY-JANE

We are still friends, in't we?

Chrissie doesn't answer and the two sit side by side on the rocks in silence.

INT 13 : THE VILLAGE SHOP IN WAKEHAM. (1958) - DAY

Violet Carter , Chrissie's mother, is at the counter as Brenda Warren, Mary Jane's mother, enters.

BRENDA

Violet.

VIOLET

Brenda.

The shopkeeper, Drummie, lifts the scale pan from the scales and empties some potatoes into Violet's shopping bag.

SHOPKEEPER

That'll be thruppence ha'penney altogether
thanks, Mrs Carter.

Violet smiles and counts the money out from her purse before handing over the change. As she does so she continues to speak.

VIOLET

I hear Mary Jane's off to the Grammar next
year.

BRENDA

That's right.

VIOLET

That'll be nice for 'er.

BRENDA

Your Chrissie?

VIOLET

No. 'Fraid not.

BRENDA

Shame.

Brenda considers how to continue.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

In the light of that, then maybe it's best if they
don't see so much of each other over the
summer.

VIOLET

And Mary Jane's happy with that is she?

BRENDA

I want her to be able to make new friends when she gets to the Grammar.

VIOLET

I see.

Violet turns away from Brenda and back to the shopkeeper.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Well... Good day to you Drummie. Mrs Warren.

Violet leaves the shop and closes the door behind her. The shopkeeper and Brenda exchange a look.

EXT 14 : THE BEACH AT CHURCH OPE COVE (1958) - DAY

The action moves back to the conversation between Chrissie and Mary Jane on the beach.

MARY-JANE

Seein' as how I've not got my bathers, what d'you wanna do instead?

CHRISSIE

We could do spyin', I s'pose.

MARY-JANE

What we gonna spy for?

CHRISSIE

Mermaids.

MARY-JANE

Or we could just pretend to be mermaids. I could be a mermaid with a pink tail.

CHRISSIE

What about me?

MARY-JANE

Maybe you're a mermaid already.

CHRISSIE

What you sayin'?

MARY-JANE

You could be. You're good at swimming. And you're always sat here on these rocks, fiddlin' with your hair.

CHRISSIE

I in't got a tail!

MARY-JANE

Not at the moment. But... maybe that's what our mums' is always goin' on about ... with the change. Besides...have you had a look at your legs lately?

Chrissie looks down at her legs. As she does Mary Jane bursts into laughter and points.

MARY JANE

Haha! Made you look though din't I!

CHRISSIE

Oh, you just wait!

The two girls jump up and Chrissie chases after Mary Jane who runs off across the beach. The air is full of their laughter.

**EXT 15 : THE PIRATE'S GRAVEYARD ABOVE CHURCH OPE COVE
(1990) - DAY/AFTERNOON**

Julie sits down on the wall of the Pirate's Graveyard having walked up the hill from the beach below. She takes a bottle of water from her bag and takes a short draw on it before returning the bottle. Christine approaches having climbed the same path.

CHRISTINE

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to intrude.

JULIE

You didn't.

CHRISTINE

Sometimes, I just get a bee in my bonnet...

JULIE

It's nothing. Forget it.

Christine sits down on the wall near, but not too close to Julie.

CHRISTINE

Just down for the day?

JULIE

Sorry. I've got to go.

Julie gets up from the wall and, almost apologetically, walks off up the path towards the road. Christine watches her go.

CHRISTINE

OK...