

Picture Perfect

by

Kevin Scrantz and Peter Devonald

Five Page Extract (of a Fourteen Page Script)

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FADE IN:

EXT. SEASIDE VILLAGE - EARLY MORNING

Peaceful, picturesque. Water laps at the piers and boats.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - LOUNGE

The dull repeated thud of a football against a wall O.S.

SCOTTY, an aging terrier, wags his tail, watches Daniel shuffle to a window and look out.

Daniel, 70's, is remarkable only for the severity of his scowl. He shakes his head, looks down at Scotty.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE

KIDS play football in the street. Daniel's front door opens and he barrels out.

DANIEL
Dirty little runts, bugger off!

Kids scream and scatter. Daniel's scowl deepens.

MURIEL (O.S.)
Leave the nippers alone, Daniel.

He turns as MURIEL, 70's, approaches in her Sunday best.

MURIEL
A person'd think you were never a kid yourself.

DANIEL
I wasn't.

MURIEL
That's not the way I remember it.

Muriel fusses with his tie, straightens it.

DANIEL
(tugs his collar)
I may as well have a noose around m' neck.

MURIEL
You can't go to church without it.

DANIEL
And why am I going to church?
What's church ever done for me?

MURIEL

You're going 'cos your sister,
who never asks you for anything,
asked you to. Surely you don't
spend Sunday mornings in that
dreadful pub, too?

Daniel scowls at the retreated Kids, then at Muriel as he
fishes a key from his pocket.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Muriel smiles sweetly as she listens to the sermon.

VICAR (O.S.)

For how are we to know that we
have fallen, if we do not
remember our past? An example
occurred whilst I was cycling
through Derby -

Daniel sighs heavily, looks at his watch. Muriel elbows
him.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Daniel and Muriel step out. He pulls his red-checked cap
from his pocket, puts it on, heads in one direction, Muriel
the other. She stops, looks back at him.

MURIEL

Daniel?

DANIEL

What now?

MURIEL

Jumble sale.

DANIEL

Now see here, Muriel, I let you
drag me to church, but -

MURIEL

It's for charity.

DANIEL

What's charity ever done for me?

She takes his arm, leads him.

EXT. JUMBLE SALE - DAY

Tables laid out in the sun with a bewildering display of old tat for sale under a banner: OATS FOR ORPHANS BENEFIT.

Muriel smiles over a dainty teapot.

MURIEL

Daniel, look - rose petal jam.
You used to love this.

DANIEL

I haven't had any in over fifty
years and don't intend to now,
thank you very much.

Daniel shoves his hands into his pockets, ambles from table to table, uninterested. He passes one table, stops, backs up, looks closer, fascinated.

MURIEL

Takes her bagged purchase and looks around.

DANIEL,

A few tables away, stares intently at something.

Muriel creeps up behind, her smile twists to a frown.

MURIEL

Ew, what is that?

DANIEL

A painting.

MURIEL

I can see that, but what of?

PAINTING

Medium-sized, a dirty canvas of murky oils: A mighty oak tree shades a cottage and garden. The small figure of a woman in front with a broom.

DANIEL

Put your glasses on, it's clearly
a cottage.

MURIEL

And an ugly one at that. I fancy
flowers or a nice bowl of fruit,
myself. You ready, then?

DANIEL

Almost.

He pulls his wallet from his pocket. Muriel puts her hands on her hips, looks at him in disbelief.

DANIEL

Heh, it's for charity, isn't it?
I've always cared about the
orphans.

Muriel watches him cynically.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

Daniel hangs the portrait in several places, steps back each time, surveys it. Finally he stops, looks down at Scotty.

DANIEL

That's enough of that, Scotty.
I'd better get to the pub before
Barney drinks 'em dry.
(bends down, rubs
Scotty's head)
See you when I get back, old son.

Daniel opens the door, stops, looks back at the vague woman's figure in the painting, tips his cap to it.

DANIEL

And you, madam.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Scotty snoozes in a patch of street light from outside. He looks up as the door rattles and Daniel comes in, drunk.

Daniel turns on the light, tosses his cap on a hook as he drops in his favorite armchair, picks up a TV remote and clicks it on. His face goes from bad to worse, flipping through commercials, news reports, junk TV.

He clicks it off, looks around, bored, tapping the sides of his chair with his hands. His eyes settle on

THE PAINTING

The little garden beside the cottage glows with blooming hollyhocks. The little lady's hand is raised in greeting.

DANIEL

Blinks, rubs his eyes as he gets up, crosses to the painting, leans close to it.

The painting comes alive: A breeze rustles the oak tree and scatters hollyhock petals. Puffs of dust appear at the little woman's feet as she sweeps.

Daniel, startled, backs away, falls into his chair.

The PHONE RINGS. He jumps, stares at it with frightened eyes, slowly picks up.

DANIEL

Y-y-yes?... No. No, you have the wrong number.

He slams the phone down and looks at the painting. Nothing. He rubs his eyes, looks at it, still nothing.

He rises, walks up to it, reaches, hesitates, grasps it, takes it down from the wall, flips it over to the back.

Scrawled in pencil: "DUNLOP. CULLAM HILL."

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

The same Kids play. They see Daniel's front door open, scatter, stop down the street, wait for Daniel to yell.

Daniel, the painting under his arm, heads down the opposite direction without even looking at them.

The Kids look at each other, surprised.

EXT. CHURCH VICARAGE - DAY

Daniel shows the painting to the Vicar. Vicar shakes his head with an apologetic look... then he considers, points.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

Daniel shows the painting to a MIDDLE-AGED LADY who nods, points off in another direction, mouthing an address.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Daniel takes his glasses from his pocket to read the list of names beside buzzers. His finger finds "DUNLOP, J."