

David Kilner – The Climate Change Murders

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The original opening scene – subsequently deleted and not used.

‘I’m not afraid of you, Simon, so don’t threaten me.’

I say the words aloud to the sky and the seagulls but in my mind’s eye he stands before me.

‘We’re pulling your paper, Simon, we can’t alert the media to a scandal.’

‘You dare, Edwina....’ he’ll say.

‘You’re such a fool, Simon. I did warn you. At least no one else knows about it.’

I drift in the salty waters of the rockpool, bobbing with the swell from the distant ocean. I study the little statue of Buddha, floating in the water at the end of its tether. A young Buddha, halo-framed, first finger and thumb making an O, eyes downcast but face smiling sweetly. May I see an ocean of truth, oh Lord. For too long I’ve lived in this fog.

I let my mind dwell on the day ahead, planning my activities, foreseeing the challenges I’ll face.

I’m the Director and I can’t avoid this confrontation any longer: the evidence is in. I’ll brief the Board and develop a way to deal with the damage.

People are sceptical enough already. The Minister will demand an explanation and a plan to handle media coverage in case the story leaks out. And Denita God knows how Denita will respond.

I shudder. The revelation – if I let it become known – will be terminal, above all to Simon and the Institute. Therefore, it must not become known. Should things go wrong – my job will be on the line, and she will be waiting to take my place.

I see him before me again. ‘I’ve been tolerant, Simon, too tolerant. I’ve given you latitude. I hoped you’d reached the right decision yourself. But now I must act.’

‘You’ll regret it,’ he’ll say. ‘Think carefully Edwina.’

All this, and the conference starts later in the week. No fooling them.

I wriggle my legs, creating ripples and sprays in the pool that wash my nostrils with a salty tang. My Praya, I call the rockpool, savouring the wordplay.

This is what I'm paid for. I have my duty to perform. If I don't like this I can move on to somewhere less stressful. A normal job in a standard university.

Now the waters are stirring and a wave grabs me. In a few years this pool may forever be under water. 'Not if I can help it,' I say to the seagulls.

The surging water spins me round till I face the headland yonder. An object glints and catches my eye.

A person with binoculars. Whoever it is, they are too far away to make out. Perhaps a twitcher. I wave but receive no response.

I roll over and my feet find the bottom. I confront the ocean and force my way through the strengthening waves.

Let these waves crash over me.

Lord may I realise an ocean of wisdom and perform an ocean of perfect deeds.

I peer into the murky deepening waters of the rocky passageway to the ocean. What can I see? Something unfamiliar. Must be a rock.

I shrug and put my foot down hard, scream in pain and fall backwards, clutching my shrieking limb.