

When the Night has No Right to be King

Sophocles

By John Lynch

Sound of waves of water rushing and heaving like a man in restless sleep. Voices, men thumping at the door of cries. A dog barking, the water the rush of sound in the inner ear.

CHRIS V/O:

I thought that I could find you

There in the half light

In the water

I was sure that I saw you

That I heard you

There amongst the fern

In the bent and twisted light

Moving in the song of your beauty

Crying for the shape of my arms your

Hair a storm of reed and shadow

Your eyes shining with the dreams

That you had promised would be mine

And mine alone. But I was wrong and my heaviness

Is returning, a weight across the frontiers of my heart like an

Army pressing home its advantage, the weight that death claims as its own.

Ext Riverbank

CHRIS: I'm done. I'm finished.

Chris coughs his lungs straining.

JOSHUA: We're going to get you to the hospital

The dog barks and then growls an long burring snarl

RUTH: Is that your dog?

JOSHUA:

The dog barks, the ambulance doors shut. The radio bleats and spews out information, a drum beats slowly like a cry to war, we are in his heart in the red meat

CHRIS V/O: I think of us as we were only months before when your heart beat in time with mine and your eyes had never seemed so alive your smile so full.

Ext night a boat less than a year before

New Eve. A Boat. The Thames. The hubbub of people momentarily free of the greyness of their lives. Glasses raised and clinked, a spasm of memory, as sure as a thrown spear. Chris and Sarah kiss.

SARAH: I'm proud of you

CHRIS: Why?

SARAH: For many reasons

CHRIS: Name one

SARAH: Stop fishing...

CHRIS: Why are you proud of me?

SARAH: Because you have great taste in women

CHRIS: That's cheating...Even if it's true...

She kisses him

SARAH: Of course it's true...Look at me...

CHRIS: Can we go home?

SARAH: What?

CHRIS: I'd like to go...

SARAH: Now?

CHRIS: Now

SARAH: Oh I see...

CHRIS: Yes... There's a woman I want to tend to

SARAH: Tend to..? I'm not a plot of land...

CHRIS: Depends how you look at it

SARAH: Don't look at it that way please...Makes me think of allotments and...wellington boots...

CHRIS: No I meant daffodils and blossom and...

SARAH: Cabbages...

CHRIS: Stop it

and explosion of sound as the sky above them lights up in a streaming cascade of colour. The collective shouts of Happy New Year and the rising cheers of voices braying with delight.

SARAH: Happy New Year

CHRIS; Happy New Year my Love

SARAH: 2013

CHRIS: Our year

SARAH: Yes...We're lucky...

*A pause a snatch of
between them.*

SARAH: Come here...Hold me....Dance with me...Let's forget the world for a moment...

CHRIS V/O: We moved as if fused together and never once thought of asking the question that haunts us all, because you see there was time, there was an ocean of time.

Six months later you were dead.

Int JOSHUA

A clock ticks. Outside a dog whimpers its claws scratching at the door and tree branches thrash against is waking.

JOSHUA: Here drink this

CHRIS: What is it?

JOSHUA: Water

CHRIS: Have you anything stronger

JOSHUA: No...All that stopped a long time ago

CHRIS: I know you

JOSHUA: Yes you know me...Well you knew me...

CHRIS: Where?

JOSHUA: At College

CHRIS: All Souls?

JOSHUA: Yes...We were fri

didn't want you to leave...You were a liability...A danger to yourself...But you were insistent...You told them that they had no right to hold you...Eventually I gave them my word that I would be your guardian...So to speak...Look after you...Until you felt better. I just want you to know that I'm a good listener.

CHRIS: I'm not the talking kind.

JOSHUA: It might do you good

Ext JOSHUA

admitted more forceful more present, and footsteps are heard running, a woman in distress.

SARAH V/O: It is damp and there are fumes...Petrol fumes... I am on the other side of love and it is cold and my heart is lost... Chris can you hear me... I am falling... Into the dark well where dreams go to die?

Flashback

CHRIS V/O: He couldn't look at me; his eyes moved and flickered like a man waking from a bad dream. I stared at him this young man, this policeman who bulged from his ill fitting uniform. Mr Burns, he said, there's been an accident a terrible mishap. That's what he said, a mishap, as if a bank

SARAH V/O: It is night my Love...And dark waves of forgetting are swamping my mind...

Int JOSHUA

CHRIS: I need to go

JOSHUA: It's the middle of the night

CHRIS: I don't care

JOSHUA: I don't think that's a good idea...Remember I'm responsible for you...I gave them my word...

CHRIS: Joshua I'm fine...I'm not going to do anything stupid I just want to go home

JOSHUA: It'll take you an age...We're on the far side of the river

CHRIS: I want to walk

JOSHUA: I'll come with you

CHRIS: No you've done enough...Thank you...But I can't stay here...It's impossible...I've got to go....

JOSHUA: No Chris wait...

Ext JOSHUA

Outside JOSHUA *darkness the sound of branches*
moving restlessly in the night wind and the driving rush of a river not too far off in the
heels like a perverted thought in a bad

CHRIS

CHRIS: Go on go away leave me be...

The dogs circles hi ~~BT m~~ ~~BT J012~~

SARAH V/O: Chris

CHRIS: Sarah?

SARAH V/O: where are you?

Her voice flits around the outer field of his hearing; he turns this way and that moving blindly in the darkness.

CHRIS: Sarah....Sarah.....Sarah...Sarah

Chris begins to run his breath falling in deep heavy rasps, the sound of his body careering into fern and undergrowth an owl calls in the distance, and the dog is in pursuit, its bullish body crashing through the tangle of weeds and forest, its barks sawing through the stillness of the night. After a while Chris stops winded, his breath rising and falling quickly, his mind unravelling.

CHRIS: Where am I?

The sound of the dog arriving, its breath more even than his, its aggression abated. It sniffs at Chris and whimpers.

CHRIS: Oh you're my friend now are you? I don't suppose you have any idea where we are?

A movement bare feet on undergrowth, the cracking of twigs the dog wheels and spits out a bark. A man is there.

MAN: He probably does, I speak dog if it helps any....

CHRIS: I don't understand

MAN: I speak cat, snake and kookaburra too...Although there's not much call for that round here

CHRIS: You're wearing pyjamas

MAN: Yes

CHRIS: Why?

MAN: Comfy...Lot of give in a pyjama...

I am here

CHRIS: Help me Sarah. Sarah answer me.....Please answer....

MAN: What is it?

MAN: You're scaring me

CHRIS: Sarah?

MAN: Please whoever you are can you leave...And take that dog with you...woof...woof...

*The old man begins to whimper and softly bark it grows in intensity. The dog growls and the point of sound returns the piercing hum digging its way into the centre of
torn his heart*

two spooked men...slowly the chimes begin again...

CHRIS: Hello? Are you there? I heard you cry out...

MAN: Don't hurt me again

CHRIS: What do you mean?

MAN: You just grabbed me...By the throat...

CHRIS: What are you talking about? I've no wish to...I'm sorry I frightened you...

MAN: Go away...This is my place I was safe here..Let go of me...Help...Help me...

The sound of a body falling heavily followed by the panicked yelps of the dog and

Ext Elm tree Present time Night

JOSHUA: (close) Chris...Look at me...what are you doing?...Get up...come on...We must go...

The sound of Chris being lifted the dog barks and the wind gathers in force rasping through the pleading hands of the tree branches

CHRIS: Where is he? Where are you...?

JOSHUA: Who..?

CHRIS: the old man...

JOSHUA: What are you talking about?

CHRIS: The man who was here?

JOSHUA: What man..? Chris we're alone...

CHRIS: I saw him he was here...I think I hurt him

JOSHUA: Your mind is busted...Torn... You're exhausted Come on I'll get you home...But we must leave now...Right now

surrounding night. JOSHUA and Chris leave.

SARAH V/O: My one true love...I am yours...

Ext night forest. Present time.

Darkness as deep and black as the ink on an old bible the lifting of the wind stirring in the branches the rooting of the dog as it forages along the forest floor.

CHRIS: Is he yours...The dog..?

JOSHUA: No...He sort of adopted me earlier when I pulled you from the lake. He was sitting on my porch when we got back from the hospital.

CHRIS: It's strange...I felt he was protecting me earlier...

The sound of sniffing harsh and intrusive

The wind stirs once more whispering faintly heard laments through the branches of the trees around them. The keening of men and women separated from their dreams, yearning for a time gone, for loves lost.

CHRIS: Do you hear it? The sound. Sarah's here...She spoke to me...Earlier she called to me....

JOSHUA: Chris we have to go

CHRIS: You're not listening to me.

JOSHUA: You're the one who is not listening...We're not safe here ...This area is notorious... Every thief and lowlife every scumbag with a hole in his pocket is on the lookout for someone exactly like you to come along...Now for the last time let's move.

We hear the wind catch the branches and the hushed violence of the voices rise, men women, children their dreams dying like fallen fruit.

CHRIS V/O:

I remember the first time I saw you

You shone in the darkness of my life

Like a new sun rising to claim the sky

I loved you

I wanted you and nothing less would do.

The wind once more, reeds thin piping beauty as the voices fall away, to be replaced by the sound of water moving, waves rolling towards a distant shore, and then a deeper thunder, of deep hidden water stirring.

CHRIS: What happened to you?

JOSHUA: What do you mean?

CHRIS: That night...

JOSHUA: When?

CHRIS: I drove you to the hospital

JOSHUA: That's a long time ago.

CHRIS: Yes but there's something else... You were sick.

JOSHUA: Yes you're right you're right, I was sick... And now I'm not.

CHRIS: It won't come

JOSHUA: What?

CHRIS: The memory of that night ...

JOSHUA: Let's just concentrate on getting you home... That's what you want isn't it?

CHRIS: Yes.

Ext Riverbank night present time.

A cry. A shout beating its way into the deep hold of (8:32h) (6:21) 2 time.

JOSHUA: It's a long story...The most important thing is to get you to the other side...

KEITH: The storms have taken everything, there's no way across. You'll have to go back.

CHRIS: What about the bridge...You said there was a bridge

CARL: Bugged. And so are you it seems.

KEITH: Snapped in two like she was made of balsa wood...No more bridge.

CHRIS: I need to get home.

CARL: That's what they all say. I have a small craft at my disposal...I could take you across if the conditions were suitable.

CHRIS: I have money

CARL: That's fortunate

CHRIS: Who are they?

CARL: Who

CHRIS: those people...There along the edge of the river

CARL: Just people...Lost and lonely...Penniless useless sorts...

RACHEL: How much longer Carl? How much longer must I wait?

KEITH: Turn around and go back the way you came young lady before I take my hands to you

RACHEL: I can't stand it anymore...I want to leave

KEITH:

CARL: I don't decide darling...Not my remit...The anything part intrigues me
though

CHRIS: I know you

CHRIS: My wife.

RACHEL: Sarah?

CHRIS: You're Rachel...Sarah's friend

RACHEL: You're mistaken. I don't know anybody anymore. Sometimes I wonder if I ever did.

CHRIS: I don't understand

KEITH: This is not the time Sir Galahad...A waste of bloody breath...

JOSHUA: Chris...Carl is waiting

CHRIS: Just a minute.

CHRIS: You were ill...Cancer...

RACHEL: Who told you that?

CHRIS: Sarah

RACHEL: Sarah?

CHRIS: Yes.

RACHEL: She's gone

CHRIS: You are Rachel.

JOSHUA: Chris...Chris...

RACHEL: Take me with you....Please help me ...You see I can't forget no matter how much I drink...I can't forget...

CHRIS: Forget?

RACHEL; Yes what I did...To myself.

KEITH: Come on...You've been told...Leave this guy alone

CHRIS: I want to bring her with us

CARL: Impossible

CHRIS: why?

CARL: Because no matter how much you offer you'll never be able to afford it

RACHEL: Goodbye Chris...

CHRIS: No.

JOSHUA: Chris let her go

CHRIS: She comes with us

CARL: Don't test me Chris.

RACHEL leaves

CHRIS: How did she end up here?

CARL: Who knows? Who cares? Booze...Pills...Needle...Take your pick...

CHRIS: She needs help she's sick she's got cancer...

KEITH: She's no sicker than the rest of us...

CARL: Put her from your mind...She's one of us...we'll look out for her...Now I have as I said I have a skiff I can take you across. How much is it worth? Everyone pays

CHRIS: How much?

PEG: Is that mutt yours?

JOSHUA: No

CARL: Dog's extra.

CHRIS:

SARAH: Right

CHRIS: I assure you

SARAH: I must warn you that I am a very difficult person to live with

CHRIS: I was hoping that would be the case

SARAH: No I mean it

CHRIS: So do I

SARAH: I don't like duplicity. And I abhor neediness, I need to know I'm with a man and not a child... I've cared for too many lost boys...I'm sorry I don't mean to frighten you.

CHRIS: You're not frightening me...Far from it...

SARAH: Good so when are we going to see each other again?

CHRIS: How about now?

SARAH: What do you mean?

CHRIS: How well do you know the host?

SARAH: Not very well...Hardly at all in fact.

CHRIS: I have a very passing acquaintance with him

SARAH: And?

CHRIS: Well let's go out and find some food that isn't on sticks and...

SARAH: And what?

CHRIS: And see

SARAH: I couldn't have put it better myself.

CHRIS V/O:

I didn't try and kiss you

Even though my heart demanded it

You were waiting for me

to be brave. I remember how the noise around

us fell away and the world stilled and my desire

for you rose within me like a bird claiming the sky

for the first time. Not yet my heart whispered, no not yet.

Ext night Present time Marshland by the river.

Night Joshua and Chris walk through undergrowth, the dog close by

JOSHUA: You shouldn't have asked for the wallet

CHRIS:

CHRIS: I thought that there was

JOSHUA: But there wasn't you see there wasn't and that's what made it dangerous

CHRIS: Maybe...I don't know...In a strange way I'm pleased that there

CHRIS: Fear...It was heroin...He'd shot up a batch of new stuff...And she was frightened...I don't know....

SARAH: what happened?

CHRIS: He was blue...his eyelids half closed his lips cracked his body emaciated...It was terrible...I tried to find a pulse...I put my ear to his mouth and I was sure I could feel the faintest kick of breath...And I knew...

SARAH: What?

CHRIS: That we had to move that there was no time for ambulances or doctors...That he was almost gone...we found my car and I must have broken four red lights to get him to the hospital.

SARAH: And?

CHRIS: We were too late... ..The doctor treating him said it was strange there was no fight in him...No will...That it was as if he had decided to go...That it had been deliberate...I got angry with him when he said that...Told him that was arrant crap...

SARAH: My baby I'm so sorry

CHRIS: He's dead.

SARAH: Come here

CHRIS: Joshua's dead.

Ext. Present night. Abbingdon Fields

Wet grass against shoe and the harsh breathing of men pressing onwards into the dark the boisterous yelps of the dog as it forages ahead deep into the blackness

CHRIS: Let's turn around....

JOSHUA: We can't

CHRIS: Why not?

JOSHUA: There's no way back...It's impossible

CHRIS: Nonsense...

JOSHUA: it's too late you've crossed the river...

(The sound of breath easing, the two men stand silently together, the wind abating and the night as quiet as a tomb)

CHRIS: Who are you?

JOSHUA: What...?

CHRIS: I said who are you?

JOSHUA: I'm Joshua

CHRIS: Joshua is dead

JOSHUA: What are you saying?

CHRIS: I remember I remember... I was there...I was with Abby you were with
us we were ^â AT ^ý e w

CHRIS: What's that supposed to mean?

JOSHUA: Nothing

CHRIS: Joshua...I've had enough of this...I have a memory it is clear...It is vivid...And it is of

SARAH: Someone...Well...In love with Death...

CHRIS: Is that how you saw him?

SARAH: He looked for it...It sat in his eyes...You know...

CHRIS: No I don't

SARAH: The brokenness...He couldn't live...He didn't know how...

CHRIS: Do you...Do any of us?

Ext.Present night .Abbingdon fields

the sound of people moving listlessly as if far from love rising voices ring out in the air the heavy tread of feet through undergrowth and the rasped breathing of two men moving tufted grass. Suddenly JOSHUA stops and waits after a moment Chris stops and looks back at him. The dog begins to yap excitedly in anticipation.

JOSHUA: We're het e het enness...` et

CHRIS: What?

JOSHUA:

CHRIS: Please...I beg you...

JOSHUA: Call her

CHRIS: What?

JOSHUA: Call her...Call Sarah...It is your only hope...I must go now. Carl is waiting for me...He will take me back across the river...

CHRIS: I tried to save you...

JOSHUA: Yes you did and I am too... Believe me...Goodbye Chris...Call her...She is waiting...

The dog barks Joshua

Chris, shadows plucked from the night and given limbs and mouths and dark beating dog yelps and wheels as the threats get closer.

Waves and waves of sound like pebbles scattered along a shore hissed surf and the deep booming thunder of deep water colliding, like thoughts being formed in the cradle of a torn mind. Chris is alone. The figures wearing the black cloth of the night are getting closer until they press against his flesh

VOICES: Chris...Chris...Chris...ssssss Christopher.

There is a man he is wearing rags and his eyes are ringed with blackness he moves with the heaviness of a man defeated. His breathing is ragged. The whispers rise and fall, a dog barks in the distance.

GRIEVING MAN: I hear her...Night and day...hour by hour she calls to me

CHRIS: Please my heart...I can't feel my heart

GRIEVING MAN: She is a whisper away from me...and I feel her...my body hungers for her touch...But she never comes.

CHRIS: I have no pulse

GRIEVING MAN: She was taken from me...Ripped from the harbour of my soul...Her body tossed to the maggots and the grubs...

CHRIS: Help me

GRIEVING MAN

HADES: Maybe. That's up to you

CHRIS: It's too dark I can't see your face, move out of the shadow into the moonlight.

HADES: I don't think that's a good idea do you?

CHRIS: Why not?

HADES: Well once you've seen my face... You're mine.

The panted welcome of the dog as it arrives recognizing its master it scurries to the side

CHRIS: He's yours?

HADES: Yes. His name is Scareb. I sent him to Joshua to watch over things. He is loyal and he is fierce.

The sounds of dawn, the faint twitch of birdsong rising. The fields are quiet the shadows of threat have receded for now

CHRIS: I heard her

HADES: Sarah?

CHRIS: I want to see her.

HADES: She lives in the palais... Is that what you want to spend your days here before the steps of the place that houses your

SARAH: Chris

CHRIS: Is it really you...

SARAH: it's alright...

CHRIS: I look terrible...Sorry

SARAH: You are beautiful...

CHRIS: I have nothing without you

SARAH: No you have all that we had together ...You must go back...

CHRIS: I want you

SARAH: That's not possible

CHRIS: Let me touch you

SARAH: No

CHRIS: I want to hold you

SARAH: You can't

(he cries, tears of frustration hot and heavy with sorrow)

CHRIS: Why? Please let me hold you one more time.

SARAH: That's impossible

CHRIS: Why? Why?

SARAH: Because I am dead my love...I am dead.

Int hospital past some months before

the squeak of orderlies plimsolls on waxed floors the brusque swish of Doctors and nurses moving to and fro the crackle of a tannoy

DOCTOR: Mr Burns?

CHRIS: Yes

DOCTOR: We need an identification of your wife's body...Do you feel up to it...I'm sorry but it is expected.

CHRIS: Yes...I understand.

DOCTOR: This way.

Int Hospital mortuary Past some months before

ORDERLY: Mr Burns

Int Water.Present time

we are in the reservoir with Chris in the wide deep hold of this brackish world sound is muted and hollow and booms in the inner ear like the drum from a distant war

SARAH: Look up Chris...Do you see the light?

CHRIS: Yes

SARAH: Move with me

CHRIS: How?

SARAH: Reach... Upwards...Reach for everything you have yet to do...For everything you have yet to be...

...Your life is waiting for you...

CHRIS: I see someone

SARAH: I love you

CHRIS: There is a man...He is swimming towards me...

SARAH: Yes...

CHRIS: I remember the flower

SARAH: The moonflower...

CHRIS: Yes

The boom of water still deep pure water echoing with silence and the even pattern of extending themselves in the deep.

CHRIS V/O:

There is a flower that can bloom in the dark
It is as white as a winter Moon and it unfurls
Itself to the darkness spreading its white petals
Like sails when the rest of the world is asleep
It is fragile and beautiful and it dares the blackness
It challenges the deep shadows that can take hold
In a man's heart. It is called the moonflower and it
Flares like a beacon of hope in a desert of grief.
We all like that flower she said a long time ago
Yes. Yes we are. We defy the dark just like that
Tiny flower. We give love in spite of loss, in spite of
Pain. We defy the night, the night that has no right
To be king.

The fury of rushing water building and building desperate for release, a rasp of coughing and the spluttered relief of someone coming to.

Ext. Dawn the bank of the reservoir present time

RUTH: We have him...

HARRY That's it... Get it all out son that's the way...

RUTH: We thought we'd lost you there...

HARRY: Thought you were history.

PASSERBY: Thank God.

HARRY: Hi my name is