

MUSIC DRAMATIC 50s SCI-FI MUSIC.

NARRATOR The time. Midday. The place. The county of Suffolk , England. A young couple, deeply in love, stroll through the shingle, little knowing that the events about to unfurl would change their world - indeed would change the whole world.

RUPERT Isn't it beautiful darling? I never get tired of looking at the beauty of nature.

ELIZABETH Nor do I. It sends a shiver down my spine.

RUPERT Like I used to, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH Like you still do, Rupert.

RUPERT I love it when we're alone here on a typical Suffolk beach on a quiet day in Autumn 2084. There's just you, me and the swooshing of the waves against the shingle.

ELIZABETH I just love the way you put things, Rupert. You should have been a poet.

RUPERT Maybe, maybe. But they wouldn't have a poet in the SAS due to the high level of homosexual bullying. Anyway, let's be honest, you can't fight Johnny Foreigner with a lot of sentimental words. You have to use the garrot and the stick.

ELIZABETH Shouldn't that be the 'Carrot and the stick'

RUPERT You'll never understand foreign affairs, darling, but you do make a lovely quiche.

ELIZABETH You're right Rupert. It's no good being a poet with the world like it is today. If we were all poets, who'd fight the evil ones and the forces of tair?

RUPERT Forces of what?

ELIZABETH Forces of tair

RUPERT That's terror ter...ror

ELIZABETH Oh Rupert. You know I don't understand these things. I'm just a simple Suffolk girl. All I know is milkmaiding and spinning wool and stuff like that. (SHE WALKS FRONTSTAGE) Oh look the sun's glinting on the water creating a cascade of incandescent slivers of light. It almost seems to be on fire. It's a pity they had to build all those nuclear power stations over there.

RUPERT We had to face facts, Elizabeth. The world was running out of oil. Imagine, if you will, a day when you turned on your heated hair-straighteners and nothing happened. Imagine the horror.

ELIZABETH That would be just too awful, too cruel.

RUPERT Exactly, you see the oil is in the hands of the Arabs. The Russians have all the gas and the coal is controlled by Arthur Scargill and his left-wing cronies. All we've got left is peat bogs.

ELIZABETH Pete who?

RUPERT It doesn't matter. Nuclear Power was the only answer. It's clean, cheap and carbon neutral.

ELIZABETH Oh stop, stop. Rupert, you're filling my head with too many facts. I feel quite dizzy.

RUPERT If we hadn't built those seventeen Fast Breeder reactors here in the early 21st Century, Britain wouldn't be the world economic leader it is today.

ELIZABETH Fast breeder. Is that like on the farm when the sheep are playing piggyback in the field?

RUPERT In some ways Elizabeth, yes. You see, it's like if you take two sheep in the spring, pretty soon you end up with 4 sheep, then sixteen, and before you know it, you have a field full of sheeps.

ELIZABETH Daddy says all the lambs get in the lorry and go to live at the Abbey where they can gambol all day long.

RUPERT The Abbey?

ELIZABETH Yes. It's sort of French, I think: The Abbey Twar.

RUPERT Yes. Right. Anyway. All these power stations allowed us to turn Norfolk into Scooby Do and Scrappy Do World, which employs hundreds of socio-economic group five individuals who might otherwise be left unemployed following the migration of manufacturing to China and, with the growth of the service sector, we have been able to restrict unemployment to those too lazy to put on an apron and serve a Macdonalds.

ELIZABETH Oh Rupert, you know everything don't you. I don't think about these things. I'm just a Suffolk girl. I just want to have babies and look after the house for you. I'll let you men deal with that silly boring political nonsense I know nothing about.

RUPERT You're so sweet. Don't ever change, Elizabeth. Don't ever turn into one of those fat, ugly girls with brains. Just be my sweet Elizabeth. Oh look darling, the sun's lighting up that waste pipe as if it was made of gold.

ELIZABETH So it is, Darling. (BEAT) Darling should all that green gungy stuff be gushing coming out of the pipe. Won't it hurt the little fishies?

RUPERT No, no, you see it's only low-level radioactive green gungey stuff and fortuitously enough we've destroyed all marine life in the North Sea through overfishing, so now it's the perfect place for nuclear waste. It must be all part of God's plan for us.

ELIZABETH Rupert, I don't like this beach anymore. It's quiet. Too quiet. Why do all the rocks glow in that funny way? They say if you make a lampshade from shells from this beach, you don't need to put a bulb in it.

RUPERT Don't worry darling. It's perfectly safe. Why there's more radiation in an ordinary household robo-hoover than there is in this entire area. Anyway, no one comes to the beach anymore. Not when there's all those water parks in Scooby Doo and Scrappy Doo World just a hover car drive away. No one comes here except you and me, Darling. Come here and kiss me, my little fluffy ball.

ELIZABETH Oh yes, yes, yes,

(THEY EMBRACE AND KISS)

FX DISGUSTING SLURPING NOISES

(ELIZABETH SUDDENLY PULLS BACK WITH A LOOK OF HORROR ON HER FACE)

ELIZABETH Oh Rupert, it's huge.

RUPERT No, it's just these trousers.

ELIZABETH No, no look, coming out of the sea. It's horrible. Horrible.

RUPERT I see it. Don't worry it's only a cockle. But wait. There's something wrong. It's not an ordinary cockle at all. It's a cockle as big as a jumbo-jet. And its shell is opening and shutting like a pair of huge jaws.

(ELIZABETH SCREAMS UNCONTROLLABLY. RUPERT SLAPS HER AND SHE STOPS IMMEDIATELY)

ELIZABETH Rupert. You hit me.

RUPERT Yes I did Elizabeth. Slapping women is of course unacceptable in this modern day and age but it is permissible if they become hysterical and immune to rationality.

ELIZABETH Isn't that rather a subjective criterion?

RUPERT No it isn't, although some say it's political correctness gone mad. Come on let's get out of here while there's still time.

NARRATOR Incredibly, Rupert and Elizabeth have chanced upon the dread secret of that apparently innocent coastline. Within seconds they are speeding away in Rupert's high-powered Ford Murdoch - the vehicle with the ability to push other hover cars off the road. In a trice, they pull up at a typical friendly British roadside inn.

(RUPERT AND ELIZABETH ENTER THE BAR)

RUPERT Landlord. Landlord. Where's the telephone.

LANDLORD (WHO THROWS A TEA-CLOTH OVER THE TELEPHONE ON THE BAR) Telephone you say. What be this telephone of which you speak?

RUPERT Telephone. You know. It sends messages, Using electricity.

LANDLORD Lucricity. Ah, what be this lucricity, then? Sounds to me like a device of the devil.

ELIZABETH Surely you must have electricity. This is the year 2084 - surely you didn't miss the Pope's wedding on the television last week - she looked so beautiful.

RUPERT Listen to me, there's a cockle the size of St Paul's Cathedral attacking the coast. We must get word to the Prime Minister – George Galloway is sure to know what to do.

LANDLORD Nay, nay, don't 'e worry. That be one of them rides from Scooby Doo and Scrappy Doo World, broke off 'is moorings, like as not.

ELIZABETH It was alive. We saw it biting bits off the pier and spitting them out.

LANDLORD No, no, my dear you be seeing things. I reckon it be them hallucineragenic drugs what them green campaigners keep putting in the yoghurt in order to subvert society.

FX DISGUSTING SLURPING NOISES ARE HEARD NEARBY.

(ELIZABETH RUSHES TO THE WINDOW)

ELIZABETH It's here, it's caught up. It's eating the post office.

LANDLORD It don' matter. I's bein' shut down due to the Royal Mail rationalisationin' anyhow.

RUPERT You can't have mutant sea creatures devouring public buildings. Where's it all going to end? That's no hallucination out there, landlord. There's no time to lose. Kindly direct me to the nearest telephone.

LANDLORD Now, now, calm down. There's no need to get all flubbergasted by all this. People knows you 'ave to be careful when consumin' seafood...

RUPERT We're not talking about people eating seafood, we're talking about seafood eating people.

LANDLORD Oh no, no, no, don't worry none 'bout that there cockle. He'll be back in that sea, afore 'e know it. We don't want to go worryin' people and causin' a kerfuffle about it see. Business is bad enough, 'e knows. If this 'm gets out it'll be curtains for 'e tourist trade. It's bad enough what with everyone goin' to Scooby Doo and Scrappy Doo World. But if they gets wind of this - well, let's be honest, who wants to go on holiday and get slurped up by a giant cockle.

RUPERT Only the worst kind of pervert. (BEAT) Well, Elizabeth it's just as I thought. It's an unholy alliance local businessmen involved in a devilish conspiracy to protect their own economic self-interest. You knew about the cockle all along didn't you landlord, admit it.

LANDLORD Oh ok, fair 'nough, the game be up. We be rumbled right enough. But look, 'e don't eat that many. And it's only the old folk what can't run away. 'us nature's way.

RUPERT Listen to me landlord, It may be that we have a problem with the amount of people living into old age due to improvement in living standards and medical techniques, but we can't solve the problem by feeding our dear old grannies to giant cockles - not without a referendum at least. Now, for the last time, where's the telephone.

LANDLORD Oh telephone. Why didn't you say? Here he be. I must've put the tea cloth over 'im by mistakeness.

RUPERT (PICKS UP RECEIVER AND DIALS) Get me Prime Minister. I need to speak to him immediately. Look I simple don't have time to go through all these options. Just get me the Prime Minister now. Oh very well, (PAUSE) Option 3. (PAUSE) Option 2. (PAUSE) Option 7. (PAUSE) Option 3. No I mean Option 4. Bugger. Now I've got Rabies helpline.

(SLAMS DOWN THE RECEIVER)

LANDLORD (WHO IS BROWSING THROUGH YELLOW PAGES). Le's see. Muckspreaders, Musicians, Muppets, Mutants, Mutant Squad. Try them.

RUPERT (DIALS THE NUMBER) Come on. Pick up, Pick up. Hello. Yes. Is that the Mutant Squad? Good. Now there's a giant mutant cockle attacking the coastline... What? Oh, I see, right, well thank you. No not today thank you. Goodbye

LANDLORD No Good?

RUPERT He said they don't deal with mutants. They *are* mutants. They said did we want a fourteen legged octopus. I said no.

LANDLORD Fourteen' legged. Mmm. Tasty.

RUPERT It's no good Elizabeth we'll have to tell the Prime Minister in person.
Landlord what is the fastest way to get to London

LANDLORD Well 'em the motorway be clogged up with traffic, the trains can't get by the leaves on the line and the monorail's come off its track. You could go Ryanair but the nearest airport to London is Bristol, which is further away then we are now. The airship's got a puncture. Probably your best bet is pony and trap. Take about three day and you'll need to carbon offset the pony farts by stoppin an plantin' eight walnut trees in Billericay.

ELIZABETH Oh no we're trapped. There's no way we can get through to the Prime Minister now. Our country's under attack and there's nothing we can do. Nothing. Nothing.

(RUPERT SLAPS HER)

ELIZABETH Ouch you hit me again. What did you do that for?

RUPERT You were getting hysterical.

ELIZABETH No I wasn't. I was reiterating our current predicament by using emphasized repetition.

RUPERT Sounded like hysteria to me.

LANDLORD There's no denyin' it, miss. You was goin' mardy.

ELIZABETH It's only hysteria when I wave my hands about like this and start screaming like this.

(ELIZABETH SCREAMS. RUPERT SLAPS HER)

ELIZABETH You hit me again?

RUPERT You were waving your hands about and screaming.

ELIZABETH No I wasn't. I was *demonstrating* waving my hands about and screaming.

RUPERT Well how am I supposed to tell the difference? (BEAT) I'll never understand women, Landlord.

LANDLORD Me neither. My wife don' unnerstan' me at all.

RUPERT Is she difficult?

LANDLORD No she be Lithuanian. Don' speak a word of English. I got 'er off the Net

RUPERT What the World Wide Web?

LANDLORD No off the Net. She were attemptin illegal entry when the trawlers netted ‘er

NARRATOR Just as Rupert and Elizabeth felt that the whole narrative drive of the scene might be lost completely, they remembered they had arrived on the coast by hover car. This meant that they could travel to London across the fields and warn the authorities of the terrifying scenario currently unfolding in Suffolk.

FX DOOR KNOCKER

SM Come in.

RUPERT Ah, Sargent Major, is this the headquarters of the British Armed Forces in London.

SM Yes Sah.

ELIZABETH We need to send some soldiers to Suffolk immediately.

SM What’d she say sah?

RUPERT We need to send soldiers to Suffolk immediately

SM Why’zat Sah?

ELIZABETH The coast is being attacked by a giant mollusc.

SM What’d she say sah?

RUPERT The coast is being attacked by a giant mollusc.

SM A’right les ‘ave a look in the book. No ‘sno good. ‘es in Tasmania fighting the Maoris.

RUPERT Can’t you send somebody else.

SM Only got the one Sah

RUPERT One soldier

SM Yes sah and ‘es in Tasmania fighting the Maoris.

RUPERT What happened to the rest?

SM Got killed sir, most of them. Went into battle and the laptops wouldn’t boot up. It was a blood barf.

RUPERT What about the rest?

SM Yanks killed ‘em, sir.

RUPERT But the Americans are our *allies*.

SM Yes sah. They don't mean to. That's why they call it friendly fire?

RUPERT Friendly fire?

SM Yes sah. I's similar to normal fire only they shoot you in the back.

RUPERT Why do they do it?

SM Don't rightly know sah

ELIZABETH Couldn't you recruit some new soldiers?

SM What'd she say sah?

RUPERT She said "Couldn't you recruit some new ones"?

SM No sah, new computer system cost too much. Couldn't afford any more soldiers. Just laptops.

RUPERT So who's defending our country?

SM The Americans sah. They'll sort it out for you.

RUPERT But aren't they a bit trigger happy?

SM Oh yes sah.

RUPERT And don't they tend to shoot at their allies

SM Oh yes sah. That's why 'es in Tasmania sah. It's the only place where they can't get at him. They're alright the Yanks. Just don't put on a uniform and turn yer back on them.

ELIZABETH Surely they wouldn't hurt women and children?

SM What'd she say sah?

RUPERT 'Surely...' Oh never mind. Just forget it. There's no time to waste. Let's go.

NARRATOR Within minutes Rupert and Elizabeth were back in the hovercar and on the way to the American Air Force who, at that moment were attacking a Scout Jamboree in Cumbria. They had mistaken Arkela for El Queda. Realising their error, they turned back to base dropping their spare munitions over Walsall where are damage wouldn't be noticed. Back at base a four star general was about to address his men. They would have gone for the three star general but they wanted a Jacuzzi and a mini-bar.

GENERAL Men, this a map of England.

CORPORAL Actually, that's a map of Tasmania sit.

GENERAL Really? Did we kill him yet?

CORPORAL Not yet.

GENERAL Right, bring up the map of England. Now I'm not going to hide the gravity of the situation from you. This is a dangerous mission. This giant slurping cockle - codename Clinton - has already eaten several large towns in the area. Nor-Wych, Eyeps-Wych, Har-Wych and Fellatio..

CORPORAL That would be 'Felixstowe', sir.

GENERAL My God these Brits are weird. Why can't they speak American like the rest of the world. (BEAT) Now, hundreds of innocent women and children have been slurped up. Many guilty men have been guzzled up too, but then sex is for making babies, and as it says in the great book 'They that indulge in unnatural practices shall themselves have unnatural practices practiced upon they themselves, verily' - and the President knew what he was talking about when he had that ghost-written for him. Now where was I?

CORPORAL A very dangerous mission, sir.

GENERAL Did I say dangerous? I don't mean dangerous, men. I mean suicidal. You'll go out there and that cockle will reach out with its tentacles and, one by one, it'll smash you out of the sky.

CORPORAL Couldn't we send the British instead, Sir.

GENERAL We're here to protect the British and only to kill in the event of the Liberal Democrats taking power. Now men, you know what they say, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get running.'

CORPORAL That would be 'going' sir, not 'running'.

GENERAL Good point.. Now men I would never ask you to do anything I wouldn't do myself.

CORPORAL Will you be leading the mission then, sir?

GENERAL No. I will be in the heavily fortified bunker here watching it all through high-powered binoculars. It's going to be tough because the waiting is the hardest thing.

CORPORAL Worse than getting battered a by giant mutant and exploding in a giant fireball, sir?

GENERAL Far far worse. If I may paraphrase the immortal words of Rupert Bear... there'll be some corner of an English field that is forever American.

CORPORAL That would be Brooke, sir.

GENERAL Brooke Bear? What was he - some sort of injun?

CORPORAL Don't we already have Macdonalds, Starbucks, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Ford Motors and several air bases in England already, sir

GENERAL Make that ;several corners that will be forever America;. But listen to me men. You can be sure if y' all die horribly you won't be dying in vain. You're sacrifice won't be futile. Pointless, maybe, but definitely not futile. Now boys take those jets aloft and make me proud to be an Armenian.

CORPORAL That would be 'an American' sir.

NARRATOR So while the Pilots of the USAF prepared for the first wave of attack. Rupert and Elizabeth jumped into the hovercar and made their way East. They were unprepared for the appalling devastation that awaited them: Burned out cars, buildings razed to the ground and people aimlessly wandering about, dazed and confused, with only rags on their backs (BEAT) So they just had the one coffee at South Mimms services and continued on with their journey to the coast. They sought a hill where there could watch the battle unfold. Unfortunately this being East Anglia, they were no hills so they had to make do with standing on a beer crate. But even from this height they could still see Cromer Pier in the distance.

(RUPERT AND ELIZABETH ARE BALANCING PRECARIOUSLY ON A MILK CRATE)

FX THE SOUND OF JETS FLYING OVERHEAD. JET ATTACK SOUNDS WILL CONTINUE THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SCENE.

RUPERT There they go, Elizabeth, those brave young men, risking their lives for the sake of old England. Our hopes and prayers go with them.

ELIZABETH Those brave boys - some of them as young as seventeen, not even old enough to be practising homosexuals.

RUPERT Well thank goodness for that, darling. Let's just hope that the casualty figures are not too high - say 55 to 60% maximum. Look the first wave are going in for the kill.

ELIZABETH Oh no, no, no. The cockle knocked them out of the sky to their certain deaths, like plankton before a blue whale

RUPERT What's a blue whale, darling?

ELIZABETH Oh just this huge mammal that used to swim in the oceans. If only the Japanese hadn't needed them all for scientific research into conservation.

RUPERT Don't worry dear, the second wave'll destroy that fiendish creature from hell.

ELIZABETH Oh no. It opened it's shell and swallowed them whole.

RUPERT It's spitting out the heat-seeking missiles as if they were chicken bones. Look, there goes the third wave.

ELIZABETH They didn't stand a chance. Poor young boys. Rupert, why is the fourth wave heading in that direction? The cockle's over there

RUPERT They're probably pretending to run away to draw it out of its lair.

ELIZABETH But it isn't in a lair.

RUPERT It's a tactical thing. You wouldn't understand.

ELIZABETH It hasn't worked (BECOMING HYSTERICAL) We've failed. The cockle's going to destroy our whole country We're all going to die...die, I tell you, die (RUPERT SLAPS HER) You know, Rupert, the whole slapping thing. I mean, is that absolutely necessary?

RUPERT It seems to do the trick my darling.

ELIZABETH Yes, but you do seem to be doing it rather a lot lately. You see, on the one hand you have the hysteria-resolution process, but on the other hand you have the politically-correct anti wife-beating issue. Do you see where I'm going with this?

RUPERT I hear what you're saying, dear, but surely, violence, in certain clearly defined situations can be a cathartic and even beneficial, albeit, as I have said, only in extremis. To give you an example. If your hysterical screaming draws the cockle's attention to our whereabouts and the cockles then slurps us up to an appalling death, surely the slapping, purely in this context, could, and I emphasize the word 'could' (RUPERT INDICATES QUOTATION MARKS WITH HIS HANDS), be regarded, if you will, as a lesser evil.

FX SLURPING NOISES

ELIZABETH Rupert I think he's seen us.

ROBERT Who?

ELIZABETH The cockle.

ROBERT Elizabeth I'm sorry but I have to say this, but I notice you have this habit of, rather than accepting my arguments are in the ascendant, diverting the conversation to some other entirely unrelated topic.

ELIZABETH It's coming this way.

ROBERT There you see, you're doing it again.

ELIZABETH The cockle's seen us. He's coming.

ROBERT (FINALLY SEES IT) Bloody hell, you're right. What are we going to do?

ELIZABETH I know, we'll go and see my uncle Dr Heidelberg. He'll know what to do. He's a scientist.

RUPERT How do you know?

ELIZABETH He wears this white coat and talks with a German accent and he stands by a table with all these glass bottles.

RUPERT You're right, he must be a scientist. He may be our last chance. Let's go and see him right away.