

# Triangles

by Marsali Taylor

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Characters:

The boat: athletic, moving sinuously round the boat, like a mermaid

Simon. Late 40s, handsome, a salesman's self-assurance yet at heart rather naive.

Jo, his wife late 40s, elegant, yet with a down-to-earth air

Harry Fifties, a shrewd operator whose financial ruthlessness is concealed by his hearty manner

Patricia, his wife late 40s, twinset and pearls county, playing the perfect supportive wife

## Triangles

*Set: up centre, the stage block and V of material representing the boat. Stage L, the yacht club – maybe a couple of strings of bunting, a table which will also be Pat and Harry’s house and the supermarket. Stage R, Jo and Simon’s house – a settee and coffee table. Down centre, Harry’s retirement, the street. The boat is moored to her pontoon at the start of the play, and lighting / sound can make her ‘at sea’ thereafter.*

### **1. PRESENT DAY: AUGUST YEAR 2 10.30AM.**

#### **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

The boat: I look where the water touches the sky, and I want to sail on.

Simon (preparing for a race; head up to wind): The genoa car needs to be further aft.

Jo: Obsessive. If today goes well, maybe -

Simon: Two notches back.

The boat: On to beaches overhung with palm trees. Coral islands. I want

Jo: Together. Not him afloat and me ashore, watching.

Simon (*he is busy, absorbed. Another glance at the wind*): I’ll need to flatten the main. [*Sailing glossary de-power*]

The boat: I was built for crossing oceans.

Jo: Racing. Fight the other boats at the start line. Course: triangle, sausage, triangle. Finish.

The boat: Triangles.

#### **Enter EXTRAS, in sailing gear, afloat or ashore – general bustle around.**

Jo: *trying hard* So, all set then?

Simon: Just the sails to go up.

Jo: Good luck.

Simon: Thanks. Have fun watching. See you at the bar afterwards.

Jo: *reluctantly* Yes.

Simon: You’ll enjoy seeing Patricia again.

Jo: Yeah. Of course.

Simon: After that, let’s go for a meal somewhere.

Jo: Maybe.

Simon: Well – better get going.

*She turns away; turns back, suddenly noticing.*

Jo: That jib.

[*front sail*]

The boat: Sails matter.

Simon: Jo, honey –

Jo: I don’t believe this.

Simon: I had spare credit on my Mastercard, so I decided -

Jo: *cold fury* That's new. *looking at the boom.* They're both new.

Simon: I needed new sails. Remember how worn the old ones were.

Jo: Wanted. Needed is electricity and mortgage. Needed is *food*.

The boat: Wings. [A sail is an aerofoil – it lifts

Simon: I needed them to win. All the other boats -

Jo: That's it. That's *it*.

Simon: You're leaving me over a new sail.

Jo: I'm leaving you.

The boat: You used to understand -  
*Jo turns on her heel, strides off; past Harry without a look.*

Harry: Now then, Simon. Good day for it.

Simon: Harry. *He makes an effort.* Yes, good day. Some interesting gusts.

The boat: Force six, maybe even touching seven.

Harry: Favours the larger boats.

The boat: *dismissive Humph.*

Harry: Maybe a bit challenging for a novice.

Simon: I've had her out in these conditions.

Harry: Well, must get going. See you on the start line.

*He exits.*

Simon: He won't be able to fly the kite today. We'll take him on the reach, with the chute. [kite= spinnaker chute=cruising chute. Both large coloured sails – risky in strong wind, particularly spinnaker  
*Jo has walked straight into Patricia, Harry's wife. A pause as they look uncertainly at each other.*

Patricia: *exaggeratedly county* Darling, so nice to see you here again. Mustn't stop –I'm on the committee for the charity night. Sailability. Ellen's coming herself.

Jo: *at a loss- following Pat's lead* Dame Ellen? Ellen MacArthur?

Patricia: Sssh, it's the most tremendous surprise. She's terribly nice. Agreed right away.

Jo: *tentative; the beginnings of an apology* Pat -

Patricia: It's always such fun, the charity night. A chance to dust off the family rocks and see if your husband's DJ still fits. Harry will be lucky to get into his this year. Too much corporate wining and dining. I thought he'd finished with all that when he retired, but no. Consulting Director, they call it. He still gets four days a week for sailing, and I still get my Chanel number 5.

Jo: *angry now* Some things are important.

Patricia: Simon all set for the big race, then? The Club Cup. Harry or him.

Jo: He's all set.

Patricia: Those new sails make all the difference.

Jo: Yes.

Patricia: Nice to find a couple of thousand to spare on the yacht mid-season, just to get that winning edge.

*Jo is silent.*

Patricia: Sure you won't come up for a g-and-t? Must fly – see you later.  
*She exits, leaving Jo alone. Jo looks over at Simon, doubtful, then her chin goes up; she exits, determined.*

### **LIGHTING STATE 2: THE RACE**

Simon: Twenty seconds.  
Harry: Starboard! [*Harry is demanding his right-of-way*]  
Simon: Hold your course. Fifteen, fourteen - *he pulls the jib in. The boat heels.*  
The boat: Nice timing.  
Harry: *Starboard!*  
Simon: Hold your course! Come on – come on - *He watches intently behind him; the boat picks up speed just in time. Harry passes at speed behind him with a vicious swirl of water. Bang of starting gun.*  
Simon: Good. Good start.  
The boat: Clear air now, ahead of the fleet.  
Simon: He'll have to tack to get clear air.  
The boat: He's got more wind.  
Simon: He's got a touch more wind, though. We'll have to work these gusts.  
*They sail on.*

### **LIGHTING STATE 3: SIMON AND JO'S HOUSE**

*Jo storms in, hauls out a large bag from a cupboard, brings through an armful of clothes and begins piling them into it.*

Jo: It was Harry that got Simon into sailing.

## **2. MARCH YEAR 1**

### **LIGHTING STATE 4: THE OFFICE**

*Flashback: Simon's office.*

*Harry enters.*

Harry: Simon, isn't it?  
Simon: Yes, sir.  
Harry: Good set of figures this month.  
Simon: Thank you, sir.  
Harry: D'you sail?  
Simon: Sale?  
Harry: Got a little yacht down on the Forth. Forty footer. Room for an extra pair of hands.  
Simon: Thank you, sir. I'd like that very much.  
Harry: Bit of wind forecast.  
Simon: Won't worry me, sir.  
Harry: Good man. 10am at the club, know where it is? Good show.

### **LIGHTING STATE 3: SIMON AND JO'S HOUSE**

*Simon and Jo's house; Simon comes in.*

Jo: Well, how'd it go?  
Simon: It was amazing, Jo. On deck, there were bits of engineering everywhere. Multi-coloured rope running through pulleys to stainless steel winches. I

got put in charge of this winch, and told just to wind the rope in when the boat turned, then get up to the top side quick.

Harry hadn't said we were racing.

Jo: Racing?

Simon: A dozen boats, all thundering along with the spray flying around them. I hadn't a clue what was happening with the start, there were boats all around us, and an imaginary line on the water for us to cross, and then when the gun went, we hauled the sails in as tight as they could go, and the boat tipped. I was scared, Jo, I thought we were capsizing. But everyone else was laughing, and the boat was forging ahead, and I could see the others were showing their keels too, so it had to be normal. We won our race.

Jo: Good!

Simon: It was amazing, flying along without an engine noise. So quiet you could hear all the other noises. The boat's prow crashing down into each wave, and the rattle of water along the hull. It was – it was -

Jo: You'll be going again, then.

Simon: Harry seemed to think I'd got a feel for it. Invited me along to the club.

Jo: The yacht club?

Simon: Come along on Friday, he said. He'll sign us in.

Jo: I don't know anything about sailing.

Simon: Oh – well – I didn't see any women actually out sailing. I think they're more involved in the social side. Harry's wife, Patricia.

*Jo makes a face.*

Jo: Natural organiser of us peasants.

Simon: Come on, Jo. Slum it among the rich for once.

## **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

*At the yacht club. Harry, Patricia, Jo, Simon.*

Patricia: Have a good race, then.

Jo: Have fun, Simon. Don't wear out the winches.

*Simon and Harry go off; Jo and Patricia relax.*

Patricia: Half an hour to put our feet up before we need to start making canapes. Did Harry tell you to bring something?

Jo: No.

Patricia: God, he's hopeless. Can run a dozen companies in his sleep, but ask him to do anything domestic - Never mind, there's always plenty. Done much sailing?

Jo: *rather defiantly* I went out twice in a dinghy with my dad, when I was seven. Off Troon.

Patricia: Troon?

Jo: We were on holiday there. Staying in a B&B that smelt of kippers. The landlady was so fat I used to worry she'd get stuck on the stairs.

*Pause.*

Jo: Where did you go on holiday when you were a child?

Patricia *smiles suddenly.*

Patricia: Southend. Our landlady was so thin I wondered if she would disappear down the plughole. And the B&B smelt of fried eggs.

Jo: And did you go sailing?

Patricia: Only the rich people did that.

Jo: Did Harry have holidays in Southend too?

Patricia: Oh, no, Harry's the real thing. He got hauled through the heather on Uncle Fred's estates in the Highlands. Put him off the country for life.

Jo: No midges at sea.

Patricia: No flies on Harry. None on you either. G-and-t? Or a pint of Bellhaven?

Jo: Oh, can't let Simon down in public.

Patricia: Can't let Harry down. Two g-and-ts, Tom.

### **LIGHTING STATE 5: HARRY AND PAT'S HOUSE**

*Harry and Patricia's house. Patricia is brushing her hair, ready to go to bed.*

Harry: What d'you think, then?

Patricia: Put them up for membership.

Harry: Old Simon's sound.

Patricia: He's a dreamer.

Harry: One of our best men. Excellent sales figures.

Patricia: Maybe you have to believe in dreams to be able to sell them.

Harry: That's shrewd. What about Jo? An asset, d'you think?

Patricia: I liked her.

Harry: She doesn't conform, though.

Patricia: No.

Harry: Not going to set the place by the ears?

Patricia: You'll get around her if she does.

Harry: Insist on helming, that sort of thing.

Patricia: Easily fixed. Offer a ladies' trophy.

Harry: That's encouraging the girl.

Patricia: She wouldn't want to win it for being the only one.

Harry: Clever girl. Knew I'd a reason for marrying you.

Patricia: Brains, beauty and catering ability.

Harry: I'll sponsor them, then.

Patricia: I'll donate the ladies' trophy.

### **3. PRESENT DAY: AUGUST YEAR 2**

#### **LIGHTING STATE 2: THE RACE**

*Simon is intent on Harry, on squeezing the last ounce of speed out of the boat. It's making him sail too close to the wind.*

The boat: Free off.

Simon: Concentrate.

The boat: You're too anxious.

Simon: Come on, a touch higher.

The boat: You're strangling me.

*The front of the jib flutters.*

Simon: Pinching. Hang on -

The boat: Give me my head. I'll go faster.  
 Simon: Free up a touch.  
 The boat: More.  
*The jib fills again.*  
 Simon/the boat: That's better.  
 Simon: I'm holding him. We'll be first at the mark – a nice, clean tack – [turn  
 The boat: Don't tack. Keep going.  
 Simon: - have to make sure he doesn't blanket us on the reach.  
 The boat: Look at the open sea. Oceans.  
 Simon: Keep ahead for the gybe mark. [riskier turn, requiring space  
 The boat: The mark. Triangles. I want – I want –

#### 4. JULY YEAR 1

##### LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB

Patricia: So what's today's sacrifice on the alter of spousely conformity?  
 Jo: Guacamole and tomato vol-au-vents.  
 Patricia: Good girl.  
 Jo: Easy.  
 Patricia: Eleven yachts. Good turnout. *Hands them to Jo.* Better lay on a few extra rounds of sandwiches.  
 Jo: Many white horses. That's a force five.  
 Patricia: Darling, don't tell me you're getting keen too.  
 Jo: I'm helping Simon revise for his Day Skipper course.  
 Patricia: The things we do for our men.  
 Jo: It's really interesting. Chartwork, and navigation. Compass courses.  
 Patricia: Too technical for my poor brain.  
 Jo: All the men are on the water.  
 Patricia: So they are.  
 Jo: So?  
 Patricia: Admission 1: I can read a map, so I don't see why I couldn't manage a chart.  
 Jo: Good girl. Admission 2.  
 Patricia: What came next, navigation? No, I really don't know anything about that.  
 Jo: Try.  
 Patricia: Okay. It gets you from one place to another. Eyeball or chart.  
 Jo: Compass courses.  
 Patricia: Admission 3: I know that a compass has 360 degrees. True north and magnetic north are different. The variation here is ... no, don't prompt me, I know it. Ten degrees west.  
 Jo: How about a half of Bellhaven?  
 Patricia: Pushing your luck, darling. How's the start going?  
 Jo: Flag's up. Harry's in a good position, on starboard.  
 Patricia: I'm allowed to do that bit. "That was a good start, darling. Clever of you to go on starboard." Just enough to let him keep on talking. Not enough to threaten him.  
 Jo: And you now know which tack is which.

Patricia: God, darling, not in male company.  
Jo: Don't you ever wonder if Harry'd prefer you to the dumb blonde?  
Patricia: If Harry wants intelligence he turns to his secretaries. You're the one who prefers me.

*SFX Bang, on the water.*

Jo: Nice start. They were over the line three boat lengths ahead.  
Patricia: Yachting's traditional. We're here to supply the food.  
Keep this first line in to set the food sense? Then go on to Jo's next line. Patricia just ignores the mutton bit.  
Jo: There's not anything to stop women crewing, though.  
Patricia: They say we're not strong enough.  
Jo: Isn't that what all the winches are for?  
Patricia: We'd get cold, and then we'd complain.  
Jo: Musto. Helly Hansen.  
Patricia: Darling, that boat's Harry's shed. A keep-out zone for girls.  
Jo: Simon's not a shed man.  
Patricia: Harry said he was talking about getting a boat of his own.  
Jo: Our own. Not as big as Harry's. Something we could handle with just the two of us.  
Patricia: And Simon would let you.  
Jo: Yes, Simon'll let me.  
Patricia: Maybe I could sail with you.  
Jo: You'd have to admit to brain-cells.  
Patricia: I'm not ready to come out yet.  
Jo: I'll wave at your binoculars.  
Patricia: Maybe next year.  
Jo: By then we'll be half way to France. Too far to wave.  
Patricia: I'll ask Harry for super-powered bins.

#### **LIGHTING STATE 4: THE OFFICE**

*Harry's retirement do: Harry, Patricia, Simon, Jo, and EXTRAS.*

Extra: ... and in conclusion, Harry's hand on the helm has been rock steady, and he's steered this ship towards the prosperity it now enjoys.

*Polite applause. Harry goes up for presentation; general back-slapping.*

Harry: Evening, Jo. You're looking ravishing. Simon, your wife's far too elegant to be let loose with these rough sailors.  
Jo: All the nice girls.  
Patricia: Very nice. Harvey Nick's?  
Jo: Debenham's.  
Patricia: But you'd rather have spent the money on a decent set of oilies.  
Jo: Musto.  
Patricia: Helly Hansen.  
Harry: Simon. Been wanting a word with you. Found just the boat for you – nice little yacht.  
Simon: Oh?  
Harry: Van de Stadt design, 9m. Actually belongs to a friend of mine.



Simon: Why's he selling?  
Harry: Oh, he's living abroad. Asked me to put her on the market. Thought of you straight away.  
Simon: What d'you say, Jo? Shall we take her for a spin?  
Jo: Oh, yes. Yes please.  
Harry: Her berth's at Cramond. Half two give you time to digest the roast?  
Jo: Plenty of time.  
Simon: Sounds good.

### **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

*Harry enters with Simon and Jo.*

Harry: Tidy little yacht.  
The boat: Waiting.  
Harry: Jim's kept her in good order.  
The boat: At the pontoon, days, weeks, years.  
Harry: New sail covers, all that.  
The boat: Cocktails on board on regatta day.  
*The boat rises, comes to look Jo in the face.*  
The boat: You feel it.  
Harry: Clamber aboard.  
*Simon follows him; Jo touches the boat tentatively.*  
The boat: You're hungry too.  
Jo: When I was working in the office, I wanted to see these places the computer gives you as screen savers. The beaches overhung with palm trees.  
The boat: My sisters have been there. The Azores, the Caribbean.  
Jo: The tropical forests where ferns grow up the tree trunks.  
The boat: The Indian Ocean.  
Jo / the boat: I want to see I want  
Harry: The wind-vane's a boon. Jim went right over to Kirkaldy with it. Didn't touch the helm once.  
The boat: Trapped in the Forth. I want to go on and on –  
Jo: Could we really handle a boat this size, Simon?  
Simon: Yes.  
The boat: I was built for crossing oceans.  
Jo: But isn't she a bit small for rough seas?  
Harry: She's got a stability curve of 182 degrees.  
The boat: Size doesn't matter. I can do it.  
Simon: Subject to a survey, of course.  
Jo: We could start with going across to France.  
Simon: I'll study for my Yachtmaster.  
Jo: Then, when you retire, we can take off around the world.  
The boat: Oceans.  
Simon *laughing* Better brush up on my astro-navigation.

### **5. NOVEMBER YEAR 1**

### **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

*At the club. Patricia, Jo, Harry and Simon are sharing a drink post-race. EXTRAS.*

Patricia: Fourth. You're going to have to look to your laurels, darling.  
Simon: Jo's good crewing.  
Jo: Simon's good helming.  
Harry: Nice little boat. Keep going like this and I'll be sorry I found her for you.  
Jo: I love the sailing, but I'm not sure about racing.  
Simon: The start is the worst.  
Jo: Yeah, the start! You're caught in the middle of all these boats thundering down on you and shouting 'Starboard'.  
Patricia: Starboard?  
Harry: Nauti-speak for 'get the hell out of my way.'  
Patricia: And did you?  
Simon: Of course not.  
Jo: But when that's over, it's fun. Except that you have to turn back at the mark, just when the boat's getting going.  
Simon: Jo dreams of crossing oceans.  
Jo: Especially at this time of year. I haven't even started on Christmas yet, the shops are so awful.  
Patricia: Oh, God, aren't they! Gift vouchers all round. At least Simon's easy now.  
Simon: I'm always easy.  
Jo: Anything for the boat. A clock, a barometer –  
Simon: A new winch handle.  
Jo: I didn't know it would fall out and go overboard.  
Harry: Ah, these lady sailors. Glad you don't risk it, my dear.  
Patricia: Jo's intrepid. When you learn, Jo, will you take me out?  
Harry: You'll get cold.  
Patricia: Musto. Helly Hansen.  
Harry: And you're not strong enough.  
Patricia: Isn't that what all those winches are for?  
Jo: Can you wait till after Christmas?  
Simon: New sails are at the top of the list.  
Jo: A mere two thousand.  
Harry: Hey, he doesn't want a cheap set.  
Jo: That was just the jib. He's taking this racing seriously.  
Simon: Have to keep Harry on his toes. I had him worried on the second reach, Pat – I was ahead of him at one point, but he got his lead back on the beat.  
Harry: Experience tells, boy. Listen, why don't you come and join us on the Wednesday points races? Another boat's always good.  
Jo: Wednesday? But –  
Simon: It's Jo's Yoga night.  
Harry: Always get a crew hanging around the pier.  
Jo: You go without me, Simon. Silly not to get the use of the boat since you're leaving her in over winter.  
Harry: Absolutely. I'll find you a good, reliable man without a boat of his own, Simon, who's not been snapped up yet.  
Simon: I fancy having a go at single-handing.

Jo: You can work on your feathering downwind.  
 Simon: Listen to the expert! One competent crew certificate and she thinks she's Ellen MacArthur.  
 Jo: My heroine. She crosses oceans ...  
 Simon: We can start by crossing the Forth. I don't want to miss next weekend's racing, now I've got Harry on the run, but maybe the weekend after. A day out, across to Kinghorn, pub lunch, sail back in time for a sudowner. How's that?  
 Patricia: Sounds good to me. I'll go, Jo, if you don't want to.  
 Jo: Of course I want to. I'll look sideways at the real sea as we cross.

## 6. PRESENT DAY: AUGUST YEAR 2

### LIGHTING STATE 2: THE RACE

*Back to the race. The gybe mark. Harry is close on the boat's stern.*

Simon: Come on. *adjusts jib*  
 The boat: Back to where we came from.  
 Harry: Water at the mark. [*demanding passage*]  
 Simon: No overlap. [*refusing, on the grounds that Harry's boat's nose is not actually overlapping his stern*]  
 The boat: Don't let him through.  
 Simon: Gybing.  
*The boom crashes over. Simon comes forward to unroll the cruising chute, a great coloured half-balloon of a sail which pulls the boat's nose upward.*  
 The boat *smiling* The chute.  
 Simon: Now let's see if he dares fly his kite.  
 The boat: Just enjoy it –  
 Harry: What the hell are you doing? Get it down, now!  
 Simon: It's twisted! We've got him now. *He's too busy watching, the boat stalls, staggers.*  
 The boat: Focus on us.  
 Simon: Sorry. Keep our speed up.  
 The boat: Back towards the pontoon.  
 Simon: Jo's not there.  
 The boat: She said she was going.  
 Simon: Yeah, but – she came specially to watch. Today.  
 The boat: Going. Leaving.  
 Simon: She didn't mean it. She's just – she'll be at home.  
 The boat: She wanted –  
 Simon: Things to do on Saturday. The washing.  
 The boat: Oceans.  
 Simon: Housework. Look, I'll make it up to her.  
 The boat: In front of us.  
 Simon: She'll be there when I get back.  
*He pulls down the snuffer; the coloured sail vanishes. Ready for the beat.*

## 7. APRIL YEAR 2

### **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

*At the yacht club. Simon is dressed for actual sailing, Jo in nautical shore gear.*

Jo: Have a good race.  
Simon: Thanks.  
Jo: When can we take her out together again?  
Simon: Next weekend. I promise.  
*Jo watches him go to the boat. Patricia comes up.*  
Jo: It's always next weekend.  
Patricia: What's the excuse for not taking you?  
Jo: Light wind day. Better off on his own.  
Patricia: Unconvincing.  
Jo: He's needing the space just now. Work's a bit dicey.  
Patricia: I haven't heard anything.  
Jo: There's nothing concrete. Just rumours. I wondered if Harry –  
Patricia: He's not said anything to me.  
Jo: I know I shouldn't ask.  
Patricia: Dear Jo, I'd tell you if I knew.  
Jo: He's looking so tired and worried, I can't bear it. Still, he'll come in wet and happy. That's worth me missing the sail for.  
He'll take me next weekend.

*Pause; they both look around, wryly.*

Jo: April. A chilly Saturday morning at the Yacht Club.  
Patricia: We're the keen ones.  
Jo: Or the ones who haven't given up hope.  
Patricia: I'll find out if Harry knows anything. Give you a ring.  
Jo: Thanks. *suddenly curious* Why are you here?  
Patricia: Like I said, we're the keen ones.  
Jo: You're not keen. Except on the catering side.  
Patricia: Darling, if I didn't organise that we'd all starve as well as freeze.  
Jo: Why, then?  
Patricia: I'm like you. I haven't given up hope. *suddenly* Guess where I went to school.  
Jo: I don't know. Um – Gordonstoun, somewhere like that?  
Patricia: East end high. I grew up in a tiny flat with my two sisters and me squeezed into one room. I was determined to get out. Away from the the piss-stains on the door-jamb, and the shouts from the pub outside. I met Harry at Uni and that was that. But now I'm on my own in this luxurious bedroom, and when I try to reach him Harry just retreats behind this bluff persona. So here I am, being a part of his life. Waiting on this bloody freezing pier for something to change.  
Jo: Maybe someday it will.  
Patricia: I hear anything, I'll tell you.

### **LIGHTING STATE 3: SIMON AND JO'S HOUSE**

*Simon and Jo's house. Jo is curled up on the sofa, reading a magazine. A ring at the door. Jo goes to answer it.*

Jo: Harry?  
Harry: Hello, Jo. Not calling too late, am I?  
Jo: Em – no - come in. Coffee?  
Harry: Not at this hour – keep me going all night. Pat’ll be after you. Old Simon not about?  
Jo: He’s working late. Was it anything special?  
Harry: Seriously late.  
Jo: He’s showing he’s valuable. Those rumours. Harry –  
Harry: Now, Jo, you’ve got plenty of sense.  
Jo: The take-over.  
Harry: Ah. Wasn’t sure if they’d told the workforce yet.  
Jo: The directors called them all together. Monday. Introduced them to the new bosses.  
Harry: Now, you don’t need to worry about them. Bunch of good chaps.  
Jo: Suits, Simon said. We’ll need to wait and see.  
Harry: What did they actually say?  
Jo: The usual. Thanked them for their work. A number of changes ahead.  
Harry: Standard thing to say. Doesn’t mean anything.  
Jo: A bit of reorganisation.  
Harry: Well, all that’s quite natural in a take-over. New blood, new ideas, eh.  
Jo: Have to move with the times.  
Jo: Rationalisation.  
Harry: No need to worry your pretty head, Jo.  
Jo: What have you heard, Harry?  
Harry: Ah – well, confidential. *Rises to leave.*  
Jo: Won’t you tell me, if you were going to tell Simon?  
Harry: Listen, mustn’t stop.  
Jo: What do you know?  
Harry: Tell Simon I called in, will you?  
Jo: Tell me!  
Harry: It’s not women’s business.  
Jo: What century are you living in?  
Harry: I’ll talk to Simon later. Bye, Jo.  
Jo: You can’t just -

*He exits.*

*Jo: disbelieving* Bastard. *She runs to the door.* Harry! Harry!

*Sound of his car going away.*

Jo: Bastard.

### **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

*At the club. Simon is looking at the set of his jib. Harry comes on.*

Harry: All set again, then?

Simon: Yes.

Harry: Fine day for it. *Pause* Sorry to hear they had to let you go. Still, new firm, clean sweep, that’s the way they do it.

Simon: Common practice.

Harry: That’s business.

Simon: Unless the selling firm puts agreements in place.  
 Harry: If we'd done that, old boy, we'd never have got the firm sold.  
 Simon: I've had a number of interviews.  
 Harry: Good. Good.  
 Simon: Nothing I really fancied.  
 Harry: No hurry. More time on the water, eh?  
 Simon: I'd been thinking about downsizing for some time.  
 Harry: Good move. Money isn't everything.  
 Simon: I'll maybe take a coaching qualification.  
 Harry: Speak to Robert. He'll get you on the next course.  
 Simon: I want to help youngsters to get as much out of it as I do.  
 Harry: Good man. Well, see you on the water.  
*Harry goes off.*  
 Simon: Judas.

## 8. PRESENT DAY: AUGUST YEAR 2

### LIGHTING STATE 3: SIMON AND JO'S HOUSE

*Back to present. Jo continues packing into bag.*

Jo: Once we'd spent the redundancy pay, that was it. At first he was optimistic. 'I'm the best sales representative they've got. I'll soon get another job.' But the jobs were going to brash young men. So I had to start looking.

### JUNE YEAR 2

*Telling Pat about it.*

Jo: I went to the job centre.  
 Patricia: Ghastly?  
 Jo: It took an hour and a half just to get to the counter.  
 "I'm looking for an office job," I told the teenager behind the desk.  
 Patricia: Don't tell me. *Mimicking assistant.* What was your last job?  
 Jo: In a big office. Conveyancy work.  
 Patricia: Bet she asked what that was.  
 Jo: A lawyers' office, I said. House sales.  
 Patricia: And then she asked when.  
 Jo: Eight years ago.  
 Patricia: How are your computer skills, Mrs Er?  
 Jo: I use it a lot at home – e-mails, that sort of thing.  
 Patricia: Different skills now. Excel, Entourage, Power Point, all that.  
 Jo: How do you know?  
 Patricia: I vet Harry's secretaries.  
 Jo: She offered me a a vacancy for a part-time till operator in Tesco. £8.50 an hour. I couldn't believe it. I used to earn –  
 Patricia: I vet their salaries too. That was it?  
 Jo: Take it or leave it. So I took it.  
 Patricia: Working in Tesco?  
 Jo: On a till. Five days, eight hours a day. Two fifteen minute breaks, paid,

one unpaid hour for lunch.  
Patricia: Jo. Dear Jo. You don't have to do this. Look, I have more money than I know what to do with – let me give you a loan, till better times.  
Jo: I can't see when they're going to come.  
Patricia: Then let me –  
Jo: No, Pat. No. I'm doing it for us. For Simon and me. I know it's been dodgy recently, but we're still an us.  
Patricia: You're lucky.  
Jo: Harry knew, didn't he? That night he came round.  
Patricia: I didn't know.  
Jo: No. He'd have told Simon, but not you. Or me. He didn't want us to worry our pretty little heads.  
Patricia: I'd give –  
Jo: I know. I know.

#### PRESENT DAY

*Back to packing – hand stills on clothes.*

Jo: I was doing it for him. I was going down so that he didn't have to. *angrily* He wasn't desperate enough. He believed in his own salesman's world, where dreams come true.

#### JUNE YEAR 2

*Simon and Jo's house. Simon enters, in office clothes.*

Jo: How did it go?  
Simon: The interview went well, I could tell they liked me, but I didn't really like the look of the place. Run-down, and the Chief Exec had that bullying air. Don't we have any more whisky?  
Jo: Oh – sorry – I forgot.  
Simon: Really, Jo.  
Jo: Sorry. So – what do you think? About the job?  
Simon: I didn't think it was a good prospect, at the current time.  
Jo: It would tide you over.  
Simon: It could harm my prospects for the next interview, an outfit like that.  
Jo: Wouldn't it look better, that you were willing to take work beneath you, rather than be unemployed?  
Simon: Not at the salary they were talking about. In fact, I'd be worse off, by the time I'd paid petrol, and parking fees.  
Jo: But at least they offered you the job.  
Simon: Well, they're thinking it over, but I was obviously the front-runner.  
Jo *eagerly* So if they did come up with an offer –  
Simon: Jo, honey, if you could see the place you'd agree with me.  
Jo: - as a stop gap -  
Simon: It's just not right for me.  
*Jo makes a frustrated gesture.*  
Jo: Tesco wants check-out operators.  
Simon: I wouldn't want to do that.  
Jo: I meant for me.  
Simon: It's way below your qualifications.

Jo: It's money.  
*Long pause.*  
Jo: I've applied.  
Simon: Jo, that's ridiculous! You're a trained secretary.  
Jo: That's too long ago.  
Simon: I'm not having you stoop to a job like that.  
Jo: I start on Monday.  
*Simon tips the last of the whisky into his glass.*  
Simon: We're out. I'll get some more tomorrow.  
*He rises and leaves. Violently, Jo hurls the bottle into the fireplace.*

### **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

*At the club. Simon is at the boat, looking up at his mainsail; Harry comes up behind him. Extras moving about, getting ready, greeting each other, etc.;*

Harry: Didn't realise you were here – didn't see the Merc. New car?  
Simon: Felt I needed to do my bit for the environment.  
Harry: Climate change and all that.  
Simon: I don't need to cruise motorways any more.  
Harry: Lucky hound. The M8 these days. Hell. Filled with youngsters who passed their test last week. The Rolls will cruise at 90, but do I get the chance? No.

*He looks up at Simon's sails.*

Harry: These are holding their shape not badly. You might get a good secondhand set on e-bay. You know, these racers who change their sails every season. Not quite the same as new, of course.  
Simon: I'm a salesman, remember. Gamesmanship doesn't work.  
Harry: How's the job hunt going?  
Simon: Oh, this and that.  
Harry: Not easy at your age. Well, have a good race.  
Simon: You too.

*Harry exits.*

Simon: Patronising bastard, we'll trash you.

*At the club.*

Patricia: Harry only beat him by five seconds in the last race. Came off worried, I can tell you. God, they're getting so serious about it.  
Jo: Sailing's not a matter of life and death –  
Both: It's far more important than that.  
Patricia: The Club Cup. It's not even solid silver.  
Jo: And it's hideous. I'm not sure I want it on my mantelpiece.  
Patricia: But it would do Simon good to win it.  
Jo: To beat Harry. Yes.  
Simon's on about new sails again. No way, I've told him. Pat, I can't believe how broke we are.

Patricia: It's only a race, that's what I told Harry. Win some, lose some.



Jo: I used the last tin of beans yesterday.  
 Patricia: But you know what men are.  
*Jo focuses with an effort.*  
 Patricia: He's taken to brooding. Studying the weather forecast as if his life depended on it.  
 Jo: Simon goes out during the day and practises.  
 Patricia: Damn bad form. Harry's very glad he's not stooping that low. They used to be such friends. I'm glad you and I –  
 Jo: I'm glad too.  
 Patricia: Coming up for a drink?  
 Jo: Not just now.  
 Patricia: Later. We can drink confusion to both our husbands, and success to a complete outsider.  
 Jo: But not where they can hear us.  
 Patricia: We'd be drummed out of the club, wouldn't we? Listen, for the big Charity night, are you still okay for two rounds of hors d'oeuvres? Nothing too fancy – anchovies, not prawns, there were frightful complaints last time at Jennifer's Marie Rose sauce.  
 Jo: Anchovies.  
 I'll give you a bell later, once I've got the whole menu drawn up.  
 Jo: Yes, do that.  
 Patricia: Must fly – see you over that Bellhaven once this whole ghastly business is over. Bye!  
 Jo: Anchovies.  
 I didn't want to change, just because of money. I have changed. Sharp eyed, whiskers twitching. Always alert for crumbs. Wanting, wanting.

## 9. PRESENT DAY: AUGUST YEAR 2

### LIGHTING STATE 2: THE RACE

Simon: He's made up on the beat. More crew. Maybe I should have brought Jo -  
 The boat: Run back to the pontoon.  
 Simon: Chute out. *He hauls the snuffer up and the sail billows out – now he's goose-winged, one sail each side and the wind dead astern.*  
 The boat: The clipper ships sailed like this.  
 Simon: She will be there.  
 The boat: You weren't listening.  
 Simon: It's been tough, this last year.  
 The boat: She has wings of her own. She's gone.  
 Simon: Money's been tight, I know that.  
 The boat: You're clutching the helm.  
 Simon: It was hard for me too. Suddenly, like that, losing my job.  
 The boat: Oversteering.  
 Simon: Interviewers.  
 The boat: Forcing me into the waves.  
 Simon: Sneering.  
 The boat: Let me ride them by myself.

Simon: But I've have found work, if she'd waited.  
The boat: You'll push us into a gybe.  
Simon: She wouldn't accept that I -  
The boat: This wind, we could lose the mast.  
Simon: I had it all under control.  
The boat: I have wings too.  
Simon: We could afford these sails.  
The boat: Sails for flying. Not for triangles.  
Simon: I'd have paid it back when – careful! *He adjusts the helm as the boat lurches.*  
The boat: Flying. Winning.  
Simon: Now we're flying. We'll win yet!  
The boat: They're different things.  
*The wind noise increases; the boat tilts to an alarming angle.*  
Simon: Overcanvassed -  
The boat: Trust me. I can go further yet. Let me come up to the wind.  
Simon: You see, I was planning to set up for myself. I had this idea -

## 10 LATE JULY YEAR 2

### LIGHTING STATE 3: SIMON AND JO'S HOUSE

Simon: I'm just off down to the club.  
Jo: What about the dole office?  
Simon: There isn't anything.  
Jo: You need to keep looking.  
Simon: Jo, honey, there's nothing in my line about just now.  
Jo: But if something comes up, you won't know.  
Simon: Actually, I've been thinking.  
Jo: Yes?  
Simon: What if I was to set up my own business? There are all sorts of grants I could get.  
Jo: You need to put money in to start up.  
Simon: We've still got several assets. My pension, I could cash that in. With the house as collateral –  
Jo: No.  
Simon: You haven't heard my idea yet.  
Jo: The house is in both our names.  
Simon: I really think this could be the answer.  
Jo: Don't try to salestalk me.  
*Pause*  
Jo: If you really need money, there's a simple solution. Sell the yacht.  
Simon: No.  
Jo: We'd get twelve thousand, maybe fifteen. She had that new engine just eight months ago.  
Simon: I'm not selling her.  
Jo: You knew then the firm was being taken over. You didn't tell me our life was about to implode. Just went ahead and spent three thousand on an engine.

Simon: Jo, you can't do that to me. The club, it's my life now. I need it.  
 Jo: I'm a middle-aged checkout lady. People don't even see me any more.  
 Simon: I never wanted you to take that job. You insisted.  
 Jo: We had no money!  
 Simon: I'd have found something, if you'd waited.  
 Jo: There wasn't time to wait.  
 Simon: I've found something now. Let me tell you about it.  
 Jo: I don't want to hear it.  
 Simon: I'm trying to help us.  
 Jo: Wild schemes won't help.  
 Simon: You won't even let me tell you what it is.  
 Jo: I'm not risking the house.  
 Simon: There's no risk. Listen, let me tell you about it.  
 Jo: I'm not listening.  
 Simon: Jo. Dear Jo. I do understand. I understand you resenting losing your nice lifestyle. Resenting me for my failure to maintain it.  
 Jo: Oh, God, not cod psychology.  
 Simon: But I need your support now.  
 Jo: So I've to be strong for your sake?  
 Simon: Exactly. Oh, I know it's a lot to ask of you – to swallow your anger and encourage my ambitions. To accept that I know the market better than you – because I do know it.  
 Jo: Let you keep the yacht and put up the house as collateral.  
 Simon: My sums say I can do it. Jo, have faith in me. If we work together, we can do it.  
 Jo: I don't have faith any more. Forget the hard sell.  
 Simon: Jo -  
 Jo: Keep your contract. I'm not signing.  
*Simon leaves the room.*

#### **LIGHTING STATE 5: HARRY AND PAT'S HOUSE**

*Harry and Patricia's house. Patricia is brushing her hair, ready to go to bed.*

Harry: Not in bed yet?  
 Patricia: Heading there.  
 Harry: Good. Just thought I'd look in.  
 Patricia: Yes?  
 Harry: Wondered if you'd seen much of Jo recently.  
 Patricia: Not very much. Why?  
 Harry: Not taking care of herself. Hair greying, circles under her eyes, all that.  
 Patricia: She's working pretty hard just now.  
 Harry: Simon's home more, she's out. Wouldn't like it if you did that.  
 Patricia: I don't have to.  
 Harry: Well, I'll leave it with you. See if you can coax her back in for extra catering, that sort of thing.  
 Patricia: Simon's too old to find a new job. Did his redundancy payment take that into account?

Harry: Too old? Nonsense! Look at all I'm doing.  
 Patricia: Never too old at your level. How about at his level?  
 Harry: Can't possibly give a redundancy payment assuming a man who's barely fifty won't work again.  
 Patricia: It was a big blow for them both. If Simon can't work Jo has to.  
*Pause.*  
 Patricia: Harry, couldn't you have a word with the new directors? Get him taken on again?  
 Harry: No can do. Not possible, Pat.  
 Patricia: You know them.  
 Harry: Just not done.  
 Patricia: Simon, Jo, they're friends.  
 Harry: Now, now, you know business and friendship don't mix.  
 Patricia: No.  
 Harry: Old Simon knows that. Besides, he's a dreamer. He's got obsessed. Unstable. Look at the way he's so determined to beat me. Of course, experience tells in the end. Your trophy's safe.  
 Patricia: I wasn't worrying about it.  
 Harry: No. Good. Good.  
 Patricia: You wouldn't recommend him?  
 Harry: Not now.  
 Patricia: But you'd give him a good reference, if he got an interview with another firm –  
 Harry: Now, Pat, that's not how things work in business.  
 Patricia: You won't help them.  
 Harry: Wish I could, of course.  
 Patricia: Of course.

#### **LIGHTING STATE 4: TESCO**

*At Tesco. Jo is checking items on the till, efficiently. It's only when she looks up to ask for payment that she realises her customer is Patricia.*

Patricia: Hi, Jo.  
 Jo: That'll be £7.20, please.  
 Patricia: I wondered how you were.  
 Jo: *brightly* I'm fine. It's nice to see you. How're you keeping?  
 Patricia: Ages since you were down at the club.  
 Jo: I'm working long hours.  
 Patricia: So Simon said. 'She's pretty busy.'  
 Jo: What's all going on down there?  
 Patricia: Oh, same old same. Waiting. You remember.  
 Jo: Waiting.  
 Patricia: Listen, is your shift nearly finished?  
 Jo: Half seven.  
 Patricia: Ten minutes. Come and eat with me.  
 Jo: *shakes head*  
 Patricia: My treat. You look like a woman who could handle a chocolate pudding

with telephone-number calories.

Jo: No. £7.20 please.

Patricia: Oh, okay. Maybe another time.

**LIGHTING STATE 6: DARK STREET, POOL OF NEON LIGHT Extras crossing to and fro behind.**

*She leaves but waits at the side of the stage as Jo gets her coat and falls in beside her as she comes out.*

Pat: I waited after all, in case you changed your mind.

Jo: Pat –

*Sound of a car being driven, rather fast, through puddles; the women react as it splashes them.*

Pat: Bastard.

Jo: Why should he care?

Pat: My legs are soaked.

Jo: He's warm and dry in his nice flash car. Just like you and Harry.

Pat: That's not fair.

Jo: Simon being thrown out of work wasn't fair. Me working here isn't fair, but that's the way it is now.

Pat: Jo –

Jo: Simon's turned into Harry. I don't have a voice any more. I have to just listen and do as I'm told.

Patricia: *gently* Maybe a sinking ship can only have one captain.

Jo: But who chooses the captain? Is it the one who's watching or the one who's doing the work?

Patricia: The one with experience. The one who knows what he's doing.

Jo: That's him. That's me. That's both of us, pulling opposite ways. And if we get it wrong we sink.

Pat: Darling –

Jo: I don't have time to play games any more. I'm here, in this dirty street. Back with the people you belonged to once. Fighting the system every step of the way. 'Help the poor,' our leaders say, eyes all sincere, with their Rolls waiting in the background. Awarding themselves huge bonuses while their firms crash and their employees head for the dole office.

Pat: The recession's been hard for a lot of people.

Jo: Not for you and Harry. You name me one thing you've had to do without.

Pat: This is ridiculous. You're projecting all your resentment on us.

Jo: I taught you to talk like that, remember? Marsali? Don't understand this bit.

Pat: Simon's the one who can't find a job.

Jo: Harry's the one who put him in that situation.

Pat: Look, I came here to sympathise. To help, if I could.

Jo: Patronise. Patronise is the word you want. Lady Bountiful taking soup to the peasants.

Pat: Jo –

Jo: I don't want it. I don't want any more of your smug, county world where the big worry is anchovies vs Jennifer's Marie Rose sauce.

*Pause*

Pat: I'm sorry you feel like this. Goodbye, Jo.

*Jo turns away.*

Pat: Good luck.

*She leaves. We can see her flaring anger in the careful control. Once she is almost gone, Jo turns back.*

Jo: Pat –

*Patricia's steps do not falter; she keeps walking.*

Jo: I've turned into an animal -

## 11. PRESENT DAY: AUGUST YEAR 2

### LIGHTING STATE 1: THE RACE

Simon: Last leg. If I tighten the backstay, we could point higher.

The boat: Tighten. Screw down.

Simon: Two tacks, 75 degrees. *He leans forward to squint into his compass.*

The boat: I'm not a maths problem. You need to feel it.

Simon: You should be able to point up to 340 degrees. *He looks across.*

The boat: Ropes tightening.

Simon: He'll never catch us now.

The boat: Why does that make you better than him?

Simon: We've beaten Harry. The fat cat with his Judas smile.

The boat: When you bought me I hoped –

Simon: I'll pay for the sails somehow. Jo'll understand it was worth it.

The boat: The horizon's out there.

Simon: I won.

The boat: Look. *Look.*

Simon: The horizon. You can't see where it is, the exact line between sea and sky. Somehow the waves become clouds.

The boat: She meant it.

Simon: We dreamed of sailing over the curve of the earth to a new life. She was going to paint, and I'd write.

The boat: Take a deep breath. Decide.

Simon: What am I doing here?

The boat: Winning.

Simon: Losing.

*A long pause.*

Simon: Losing Jo.

*Very slowly, deliberately, Simon puts the helm over.*

Simon: Tacking.

The boat: Seawards.

Simon: Let's go for a real sail.

The boat: Flying. The wind in my face.

Simon: See what you can really do.

The boat: What we can do –

Simon: The sea's a different colour out here.

The boat: The start of the ocean. The silver road.

Simon: Flying.  
The boat: Winning.  
Simon: If it's not too late ... *He takes his mobile phone out.*

### **LIGHTING STATE 3: SIMON AND JO'S HOUSE**

Jo: I should have listened to him. Sometimes dreamers get it right.  
It's not too late. If he can get over this obsession, he'll be free to move on.  
We can talk after the race.  
*Decision. She picks up the bag, marches out.*

### **LIGHTING STATE 1: THE YACHT CLUB**

*Jo arrives at the Yacht Club. Harry is talking to Patricia. Extras on, with air of concern, gossip.*

Harry: Just turned around. Headed straight out to sea.  
Jo: Simon?  
Patricia: We're concerned about him.  
Jo: Where is he?  
Patricia: He was leading the race, then he just turned.  
Harry: Sailed out to sea.  
Jo: Did you try to raise him on the radio?  
Harry: No answer.  
Jo: When he was in the lead?  
Harry: Turned a hundred yards short of the finish line.  
Jo: He was winning.  
*Her phone goes off. She reaches for it.*  
Harry: He didn't finish.  
Jo: He *won*. Simon.  
Simon: Jo, I'm sorry. I don't know how we can fix it, but I want to try.  
Jo: I'm at the club, waiting for you.  
Patricia: Waiting.  
Simon: I'm half way across the Forth. I'll turn around –  
Jo: No. No. I'll meet you on the other side. Is the wind good for Kinghorn?  
Simon: It's good.  
Jo: I'll meet you there. *She flips the mobile away.*  
Harry: He didn't cross the finish line.  
Patricia: You've got your trophy. Jo –  
Jo: I'm sorry, Pat.  
Patricia: Definitely anchovies.  
Jo: Prawns are so common.  
Patricia: *raising them* I got my super-powered bins.  
Jo: I'll wave.

*A last smile, then Jo leaves. Lights dim.*

Scene	Theme	Characters	Place	Notes
1 – p 1-3 now – August year 2	Estrangement between characters – S/H rivalry P/J coolness	1 Boat, Simon, Jo 2 Simon, Jo, <b>Extras</b> 3 Harry, Simon 4 Jo, Pat 5 Simon, Harry, Boat	YC    Race	
2 – p 4-6 March year 1	Initial friendships	1 Jo 2 Harry/Simon 3 Simon / Jo 4 Pat/Jo 5 Pat / Harry	S J house Office S J house YC P H house	
3 - p 6-7	S obsession	Simon / Boat	Race	
4 – p 7- 9 July year 1	Friendship consolidated – J encouraging P to rebel – S/J boat	1 Jo / Pat 2 S, J, H, P, <b>Extras</b> 3 Simon, Jo, Harry, Boat, ?Pat	YC Office YC	
5 - p 10 – 11 November Year 1	Start of the Harry/Simon rivalry & Simon / Jo split	1 S, P, J, H, <b>Extras</b>	YC	
6 – p11 now	Rivalry – doubt about Jo	Simon, Boat, Harry’s voice	Race	
7 – p 12- 14 April year 2	Worry about jobs – H/P relationship – S redundant	1 Pat / Jo 2 Jo / Harry 3 Simon / Harry	YC S J house YC	
8 – p 14- 17 June year 2	Job hunting – H/S relationship deteriorating, J/P under strain	1 Jo (present) 2 Pat / Jo 3 Jo / Simon 4 Pat / Jo <b>Extras</b>	S J house   YC	
9 p 18 now	Simon justifying himself	Simon, Boat	Race	
10 p 18 – 22 late July year 2	S / J falling apart – P / H ditto – P / J quarrel	1 Simon / Jo 2 Pat / Harry 3 Jo / Pat	S J house P H house Tesco / st	
11 p 22-4 now	Simon and Jo each realise what they’re losing; reconciliation	1 Simon / boat 2 Jo 3 Jo, Harry, Simon, Pat, <b>Extras</b>	Race House YC	

LS1: Yacht club: lighting focus on stage L. Doorway up in corner with Yacht Club notice, table downstage with eg clipboard – extras could be signing in scene 1.  
LS2: Race: spot up C on Simon / boat – rostra with wheel and cloth for prow.  
LS3: Simon and Jo’s house: couch and coffee table stage R  
LS4: Central area downstage of ‘boat’ with strip lighting feel – Harry’s office, retirement do, Tesco



LS5: Pat and Harry's house: warm interior feel down R. Table with white cloth and lamp.  
Pat looking in mirror, Harry behind her.  
LS6: Dark night, pool of neon streetlight down C  
LS7 dazzle of reflected sunlit water across stage