

<WAVES AND WINDS>

by

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WAVES AND WINDS

EFFECT: SOUNDS OF THE SEA, WAVES
BREAKING, GALES

SURFER:

My feet fizz. I rise up with a wave, pulled to clouds that bulge and obscure the street so completely that I can barely see the shops and cafes nestled in behind the promenade. From here, they're muted, background noise to the hypnotic allure of the sea which inches further, further with each push of the tide. Its currents enchant me in, wheels of motion beneath the board and I see, towards the shore, waves crumbling, whitening, buzzing. A flash of lightning shows them swallowed by the sand. Everything is.

I look back at the horizon; they're building, 4ft, 5ft, Toblerone pyramids careering at me along the surface -- opaque but warm, more comforting than the gales that hiss at me to leave. I grip the board tighter.

EFFECT: MORE STORM SOUNDS

I've drifted four huts down from where I started -- the current must be picking up. On land, in the dampened daylight, flashing bulbs of businesses glow, customers evacuated inside by olfactory hooks of vinegar and coffee. Closer, on the promenade, only one chalet shimmers, its light a shadow cast on the sand like tar. Someone is in there.

WE NOW MOVE TO ANOTHER PERSON SAT IN
THE AFOREMENTIONED BEACH CHALET.

THEY ARE ALONE. WE HEAR STORM SOUND
EFFECTS, BUT THEY'RE SLIGHTLY DULLED,
NOT AS EXPOSED. ALSO, METAL OBJECTS
TAP AGAINST EACH OTHER: GOLF CLUBS.

SPECTATOR:

I should move my golf clubs. They knock together in distorted applause at the surfer, who slides down the salty conveyor belt ahead of me, blissfully enveloped by the storm. Does he hear it too? Is he also hypnotised by the rustle, the creak, the delicate thuds of our caravans behind the beach, promising warmth and escapability and home?

Soon, I'll walk back. Soon, I'll break the need to look periodically at Trusthorpe outfall to my left, check the beacon still stands, check the waves haven't stolen it, check its distance from the surfer.

Oh, look. After a jolt of readjustment, he paddles, arms swinging like propellers and then thrusting down on his board so hard I think it'll snap. Instead, he pops --or is thrown-- upwards, feet finding the board and toes holding on to the surface that shines like ivory. He crouches and rotates, just as an avalanche approaches. As he proceeds to ride along the wall, it steepens, sharpens, is bleached white. By the time he turns towards the shore and slides back down onto his stomach, I almost lose sight of him in the rain.

EFFECT: RAIN, THE SOUND OF SOMEONE OUT
OF BREATH.

SURFER:

Ok. One more.

EFFECT: THE SURFER PADDLES OUT.

A seal breaks the surface up ahead, its eyes unblinking and calm. When it momentarily ducks and then pops up closer, I can tell it's confused. It seems to advise me to head for the lights, for the dry land.

"A long way from Donna Nook," I say, to no reply. Instead, we both sink into the water for shelter, and when its stare still shows no sign of comprehension, still betrays its bemusement, all I can think to say is that "It's the sea. I belong here, just like you." It ducks under and disappears.

EFFECT: SOUND OF WIND AND RAIN SLOWLY GIVES WAY TO ARCADE SOUNDS: JINGLES, COINS.

Slightly north: donuts and melodies, buckets and spades. I can almost taste the sugar. The Mablethorpe seafront's glow is inviting, defiant against the storm – an image of British Summertime. I imagine poised visitors ready to emerge after the last drop or the last gust, resolved to return in shorts to sun, or coats to clouds.

More waves approach with the sun. One more. One more.

EFFECT: A GRADUAL STOPPING OF THE STORM SOUNDS. BACKGROUND NOISE OF PEOPLE -- PEDESTRIANS RETURNING

SPECTATOR: It feels warmer and, for a moment, watching him surf in on his final wave, I mistake the arriving sun for a spotlight. Everything brightens and awakens; everyone unfolds and appears. Then, as the kiosks slide open and ice creams appear, as laughs replace thunder and smiles replace rain, it becomes obvious:"This is Sutton-on-Sea. We all belong here, just like you."

END