

Café

Sarah stared into her coffee, seated at a table for two. The gloomy grey weather showed no sign of abating. It had been raining in London for several days and the prospects for a break in the downpours appeared bleak. Winter had set in although the hard frosts and snow had not arrived as forecast. January was hard enough to contend with after the euphoria of the festive season, but at least, snow would provide a nice contrast to the usual facade.

Placing her headphones firmly into her ears, Sarah tuned to Radio 4 and heard the newscaster say those immortal words, 'In London today...' The news bulletin was ceremoniously cut by the rapid deployment of her thumb, which then proceeded to shuffle her playlist. What would it be today?

Beethoven's Pastoral weaved its way through Sarah's entire body, like a renaissance and her imagination came alive with the master's example. Pen in hand and a final slurp of her cooling cappuccino, she set to work on her draft plan. Sarah was sure this novel would be the one. Briefly, she could see her face reflected in the glass window as a minute chink of sunlight pierced through a break in the storm clouds and rebounded from the Portland stone pathway.

'Sarah, is that you?' came a cry from behind her. Realising that Sarah could not hear her voice owing to the headphones, the enquirer got up from his table and moved to the vacant seat at Sarah's table.

'David! What on earth are you doing here? I thought you went back to Manchester yesterday?'

'May I join you?'

'Yes, of course. Well, you have anyway,' said the smiling Sarah.

'My train was cancelled, so I'm setting off later today.' David blushed, then found courage to repeat a request that had first been muted on New Year's Eve. 'Come with me Sarah?'

'David, we've been through this so many times. I can't. My life is here in London.'

There was a tap on the window. Sarah's friend, Cheryl, stood and peered in.

'Well?' shouted a hopeful Cheryl.

347 words