

BBC Radio 4 and Open University Afternoon Play

Call Waiting

by **Katie Hims**

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BBC Broadcasting House, Studio 2, Whiteladies Road, Bristol, BS8 2LR

Producer- Sara Davies

Studio Manager- Iain Hunter

Broadcast Assistant- Tamsin Barber

Runner- James Harrison

Programme number- 05WT0193WH0

Carole Reece- Lisa Coleman

Phil Reece- Chris Donnelly

Azimbek- Akbar Polatov

Patrick- Robert Gwilym

Lynette- Alison Reid

Kevin Herronvolk- Paul Humpoletz

Richard Gordon- Mark Meadows

Giles Ward- Christian Rodska

Uzbek policeman- Rustam Qobil

Ruslan- Uzbek policeman- Siroj Tolibov

Scene 1

All of the action takes place in Carol's house.

Interior Acoustic.

We hear the Uzbek ring tone ringing and ringing ...

Cut to typing

Phil Dear Carol. Here are some interesting things I've read in my guide book which I think you need to know. Number 1) They have a Russian washing powder here called Lemon barf. Number 2) When they shake hands with you they put their left hand on their hearts. Number 3) If your eyebrows grow together over the bridge of your nose you are considered very attractive. I think that's just the men but could be the girls too.

Cut back to Uzbek ring tone ringing and ringing ...

Azimbek Madam there's no answer. Call back. Call back later.

Carol No! No. See. Erm. The thing is that my husband hasn't been answering my calls now. For two days. We said we'd speak on Thursday and now it's Sunday - have I spoken to you before?

- Azimbek** I don't think so.
- Carol** Would it be possible - could you just go up to his room and knock on the door?
- Azimbek** I'm not allowed to leave the desk.
- Carol** Well could you send someone else?
- Azimbek** Your husband is probably sleeping.
- Carol** For two days?
- Azimbek** I have an uncle who once slept for a year Madam.
- Carol** Please could you just go and ask someone to go and check on him?
- Azimbek** We don't disturb our guests Madam. If they don't pick up the telephone.
- Carol** I'm worried that something has happened. You know like a car accident or I don't know what.
- Azimbek** His key is not here. This means he's in his room.
- Carol** Well what if he's had a heart attack? Or what if he's lying on his bed in a coma?
- Azimbek** sighs.
- Azimbek** One moment Madam.
- At the other end of the telephone we hear Azimbek instructing someone in Uzbek to go to the room.*
- Azimbek** Call back in fifteen minutes. Call back and we'll have an answer for you.
- Carol** Thankyou. Thankyou very much.
- Azimbek** No problem.
- Carol** What's your name?
- Azimbek** Azimbek .
- Carol** Azimbek. I'm Carol .
- Azimbek** Okay Madam.
- Carol** Erm. Will you be on the desk later?
- Azimbek** (resigned) For the next twelve hours.

Cut to typing

Phil Number 4) The old Slav women sit on the streets trying not to look like beggars but they're basically penniless. Because the Russian state pensions means nothing now. Number 5) Despite being Muslim most Uzbeks drink a lot of booze and listen to gale force techno music. Number 6) If you eat too slowly someone may ask you if you are ill or unhappy. Number 7) There are scorpions and venomous snakes in the red desert. Number 8) A pumpkin is called buglama.

Cut to Uzbek ringing tone.

Azimbek Hello this is the Intercontinental Hotel.

Carol Azimbek?

Azimbek Yes Madam. There's no one in the room.

Carol Oh.

Azimbek Maybe he went out and he forgot to leave his key at the desk. It's a beautiful day here. Perhaps he went out into the sun. Don't worry. I'm sure he's okay.

Carol Then why hasn't he called me?

Cut to typing.

Phil Number 9) Russian newly weds come to have their photos taken by The Earthquake Memorial which is three blocks long. Number 10) Everything shuts down at Midnight by Presidential decree. Number 11) The Lucky Strike nightclub in Tashkent has a light up floor. Number 12) President Karimov got 500 million dollars for allowing the United States Government to have a military base here. Number 13) Strip clubs are not allowed but there are a couple of places that will flout this rule. Number 14) Asalom alaykhum means peace be with you.

The typing stops and then begins again as Carol writes.

Carol Dear Phil. Just read your email again.

Carol sighs.

Carol Dear Phil. Just read your email again. Wanted to write to you cos I can't speak to you. Erm. Dear Phil. Just read your email. Wondering how you are. Where are you Phil?

Scene 2

Cut to Carol on the telephone.

Patrick I see. I see. Right. Yes.

Carol I'm sorry to bother you on a Sunday. I just didn't know who else to call. I mean who else I was supposed to call. You're the only one from his work who I've actually met. I mean we went to the Christmas party you know but we didn't stay long. Cos **Phil** wanted to get back for Match of the Day.

We hear a woman's voice distantly in the background of Patrick's house.

Patrick Sorry Carol — hang on, with you in a minute! Listen Carol I'm absolutely certain that there's nothing to worry about. The company would not place Phil's life in any danger. Let me make some phone calls and I'll call you back. I'll call you right back.

Scene 3

Cut to Carol typing

Carol Dear Phil. It's Sunday morning and I just thought I would write you a short note to say hi.... . Dear Phil. It's Sunday and I haven't heard from you for a while. Dear Phil. Dearest Phil.

Cut to an English ringing tone.

Lyn picks up. There is music in the background.

Lyn Hello.

Carol I'm scared something's happened to Phil.

Lyn What?

Carol It's me. Carol.

Lyn I know it's Carol.

Carol You know Phil is away don't you.

Lyn Where'd he go?

Carol Uzbekistan.

Lyn Oh.

Carol I just rang his boss. Just now. Patrick his name is. I didn't know who else to call. And he said a funny thing. I mean it only occurs to me now that it was a bit weird. But he said I can assure you that the company would not put Phil in any danger.

- Lyn** Why's that funny?
- Carol** Well I mean - that hadn't even crossed my mind. That Phil'd be in danger 'cos of the company.
- Lyn** Well he was just saying what he'd say. I mean what you'd say if you were Phil's boss.
- Carol** Do you know where it is?
- Lyn** Where what is?
- Carol** Uzbekistan.
- Lyn** Erm.
- Carol** It's next to Afghanistan.
- Lyn** Is it?
- Carol** I didn't know that. Til just now. Just now I thought. I don't even know where this bloody country is. So I looked at a map. And it's right next to Afghanistan. I called this Patrick bloke three hours ago and he said he'd make enquiries and he's not called me back.
- Lyn** Well he's probably still making his enquiries.
- Carol** Do you think I should call him again?
- Lyn** Have you told Mum yet?
- Carol** No.
- Lyn** Don't tell her.
- Carol** I'm not going to.
- Lyn** She'll just get hysterical.
- Carol** I'm not going to tell her.
- Lyn** Good.
- Carol** Do you think I should call this Patrick bloke again?
- Lyn** Well if he had anything to tell you he'd have rung you wouldn't he?
- Carol** I just want to do something. Call people. Call anyone.

Scene 4

Cut to Carol typing.

Carol Dear Phil. It's Sunday afternoon and you're all I can really think about it and it reminds me of when we first started going out and in my head all day long and all night it was just Phil. Phil. Phil. Your name. Sort of driving me mad. And I couldn't do anything without thinking of you. It was like you were by my side the whole time or something like that. I'd be washing my hair or I'd be on the phone to the bank or I'd be crossing the road or whatever it was and you'd just be there. In my head. Like a default position.

Cut to English Ringing Tone.

Machine Your call is being diverted. Please wait.

Phil Hi. This is Phil. Please leave me a message

Carol Phil it's me. Phil. Erm. It's Sunday night. Just ringing to speak to you. Hoping you're okay. I'm fine. Everything's fine here. Erm I love you. Okay. Okay. Take care of yourself. I love you. I said that already. Okay. Yep. I love you. Bye bye. . .Bye Phil.

Cut to the Uzbek ringing tone. And then a recorded message.

Embassy You're through to the British Embassy in Tashkent. No one is here to take your call. Please call back between the hours of eight am and six thirty pm. Monday to Saturday. Alternatively you can leave a message.

Carol Hello. My name is Carol Reece and I don't know where my husband is. His name is Phillip Reece. He works for a British company called CamCom Europ. He's a software engineer. He arrived in Tashkent last Monday. So it'll be a week tomorrow. He was due to fly home this coming Tuesday. He's six foot two. He looks a bit like Ian Botham. You know the cricketer. I'd be very grateful if someone could call me back as soon as possible.

Scene 5

Cut to Carol typing.

Carol Dear Phil. You're **better** looking than Ian Botham but you do remind me of him. I mean there's something about you. The shape of your face. And there's the moustache. Obviously. But even without the moustache I still think there'd be something of Ian Botham about you. Or something of you about Ian Botham.

Cut to the Uzbek ringing tone.

The Uzbek words are highlighted in italics.

Police Hello.

Carol Is that the police? Am I talking to the police in Tashkent?

- Police** I can't understand you.
- Carol** Have you got anyone who speaks English?
- Police** I can't understand a word you're saying.
- Carol** English. I'm English.
- Police** English?
- Carol** Yes!
- Police** Wait one minute. Wait just one minute. (Go and get Ruslan will you.)
- Carol** I'm sorry I don't speak Uzbek or Uzbekistani. I thought someone would speak English. I just thought. I can say one thing. There's one thing I do know. Asalom alaykhum. Is that how you say it?
- Carol does not pronounce the phrase correctly.*
- But of course the policeman does.*
- Police** Asalom alaykhum?
- Carol** Asalom Alaykhum?
- Police** Asalom alaykhum. Very good. Ruslan. Speak to this woman will you.
- Ruslan** Hello?
- Carol** Hello! You speak English!
- Ruslan** Yes.
- Carol** Are you a policeman? Is this the main police station in Tashkent?
- Ruslan** Policeman. Yes Madam.
- Carol** I think my husband is missing in your country.
- Ruslan** Missing?
- Carol** Disappeared.
- Ruslan** Dis- appeared. Spelling please?
- Carol** D. I. S.
- Ruslan** Wait. D. I. S
- Carol** A. P. P. E.

Ruslan Wait. A. P. P. E.

Carol Oh God.

Scene 6

Cut to Carol typing.

Carol Are you alright? And if you're alright where are you? And if you're not alright where are you? And what can I do? That's what I want to know. No one call tell me what to do.

Scene 7

Cut to telephone ringing.

Carol (*tense*) Hello?

Patrick Carol it's Patrick.

Carol Hi.

Patrick So sorry I haven't got back to you til now.

Carol Have you got any news?

Patrick I've made a few calls and I can't seem to get hold of anyone who has spoken to him in the last two days but I don't think that's any reason to panic just yet.

Carol (*disappointed*) Right.

Patrick I realise that you're horribly worried but I'm sure there's a perfectly reasonable explanation for his silence. He's probably just working flat out to get the job done.

Carol What exactly is the job?

Patrick Sorry?

Carol What exactly is it that he's gone out there to do?

Patrick He's installing a new software programme.

Carol Who for?

Patrick For the Uzbek Government.

Carol The Government?

Patrick So he'll be very well protected.

Carol Protected from what? What does he need protecting from?

- Patrick** I'm just saying that he'll be looked after Carol.
- Carol** Yes. Sorry. Sorry. It's just that. I realised I didn't even know what he was doing. I mean he could be scaling great heights to install something at the top of a mountain for all I know. He could be lying at the bottom of a frozen fjord. Even though you probably only get them in Norway but there could be an Uzbek equivalent couldn't there?
- Patrick** I can assure you that he will have been entirely deskbound during the whole week.
- Carol** Right.
- Patrick** No mountain climbing. Nothing like that.
- Carol** Right.
- Patrick** Tomorrow it'll be easier to take some action Carol. Everyone will be back in the office and I'm sure Phil himself will give you a call. But I'll continue to make my enquiries. Let's talk again tomorrow.
- Carol** And what if he's dead by tomorrow?

Scene 8

Cut to Phil speaking on an answer machine.

- Phil** Carol it's Phil here. Alright sweetheart. Are you there? ...
- Carol? No? Must have missed you. Oh well. Erm yeh everything's fine here. You know. Hotel's very snazzy. Haven't made it to the Lucky Strike nightclub with the light up floor but hope to get there before the trip is over. Maybe I'll meet a beautiful Uzbek woman with one eyebrow and run away with her. That was a joke by the way. Anyway hope you're okay. Give us a ring when you can. Okay. Yeh. Speak soon.
- BT** To play the message again press one. To save it press 2. To delete press 3.
- Carol presses one.*
- Phil** Carol it's Phil here. Alright sweetheart. Are you there? ...
- Carol? No? Must have missed you. Oh well. Erm yeh everything's fine here. You know. Hotel's very snazzy.
- Cut to typing*
- Carol** Dear Phil. Just listened to your message again. Actually I listened to it seven times. Dear Phil. Just listened to your message again. Wanted to hear you. Sounding normal. Sounding alive.

Scene 9

The telephone rings

Carol Hello?

Lyn It's me.

Carol Hi.

Lyn Any news?

Carol No news.

Lyn Shall I come down?

Carol It's a stupid name for it - answer phone.

Lyn Erm. What you talking about?

Carol I mean they call it an answer phone but actually it doesn't answer you at all. And it doesn't give you any answers.

Lyn Do you want me to come down?

Carol I've been reading stuff.

Lyn What stuff?

Carol About Uzbekistan.

Lyn And?

Carol It's not very good.

Lyn What do you mean?

Carol I found out today. From Patrick. That Phil's gone to work for the Uzbek Government right.

Lyn Right.

Carol Well that's not good. Not at all. Like there was a massacre there last year. Loads of people were killed and the government are denying it and and there's like this big international kind of condemnation. But Phil's gone to work for them.

Lyn Carol...

Carol And I wonder if he knew that and didn't tell me. Cos I didn't know. How dodgy they were. I didn't even know where it was even. Let alone all the human rights stuff.

- Lyn** Look. I mean normal people go and work for dodgy governments all the time. It's normal. I'm not saying it's right. Course it's not right. But that's like the world isn't it.
- Carol** Yeh but I don't want it to be Phil.
- Lyn** Shall I come down?
- Carol** Where is he? I mean where can he be? And how can it be alright? I just don't see how it can turn out alright. This situation. And I want it to be a big mistake. I'm desperate that it's just something really stupid like his phone has been switched off. But I'm scared that he's dead.
- Lyn** He's not dead.
- Carol** Say that again.
- Lyn** He's not dead.
- Carol** Do you think he did know?
- Lyn** Know what?
- Carol** Who he was working for?
- Lyn** I don't know.
- Carol** Will you come down?
- Lyn** Yeh. Course.

Scene 10

Cut to Carol typing.

- Carol** Dear Phil. I feel sick. As sick as a parrot. As sick as a dog. As sick as a pig. But you have to be pig sick rather sick as a pig. I think that's right. Sick as a parrot always sounds like a joke. Like the punchline to a joke.

The telephone rings.

- Carol** Hello?
- Azimbek** Is that Mrs Reece?
- Carol** Yes.
- Azimbek** This is Azimbek from the Intercontinental Hotel.
- Carol** (*urgent*) Have you got news?
- Azimbek** Madam there's been an unfortunate incident.

- Carol** (*panic*) Have you found him?
- Azimbek** No Madam. There's been a robbery.
- Carol** What do you mean?
- Azimbek** All of your husband's things have been stolen. I'm very sorry. We don't understand how this could happen.
- Carol** But.
- Azimbek** We wanted to tell you this Madam. As soon as possible.
- Carol** Have you contacted the police?
- Azimbek** Of course.
- Carol** And what are they doing?
- Azimbek** They're doing their police work.
- Carol** But I thought it was a big hotel, a big snazzy hotel.
- Azimbek** It is Madam.
- Carol** How could you have a robbery?
- Azimbek** It is. Unfortunate. Unlucky. Regrettable. The Hotel Insurance. Will pay. We wanted to tell you Madam. As soon as possible.
- Carol** ...Thankyou.
- Azimbek** If I can be any further assistance.
- Carol** Azimbek?
- Azimbek** Yes.
- Carol** Do you know the cricketer Ian Botham?
- Azimbek** Yes Madam.
- Carol** Do you? Do you know what he looks like?
- Azimbek** I think so.
- Carol** What does he look like?
- Azimbek** He's got a moustache.
- Carol** That's him! My husband looks like him. A lot like him. But he's more handsome. He's a handsome version of Ian Botham.

- Azimbek** I think Ian Botham is very handsome.
- Carol** Oh. Well Erm. Anyway if you see a man who looks like Ian Botham walking in to the hotel that's my husband. And I want you to keep him there with you. No matter what he says to you. Keep him with you.
- Azimbek** Yes Madam.

Scene 11

Cut to Lyn on the phone, on the train.

- Lyn** What? ...What? Sorry. I can't hear you very well.
- Carol** Don't you think it's weird that there was a robbery?
- Lyn** Yeh. Course it's weird.
- Carol** He kept saying. The hotel receptionist kept saying. I thought you should know as soon as possible.
- Lyn** Well of course.
- Carol** No but I felt like there was hidden message.
- Lyn** *(reproving)* Carol.
- Carol** What?
- Lyn** What sort of hidden message?
- Carol** I don't know. Like he was warning me that there was more to it. That there was something he couldn't say. I mean. Why not? All the phones are bugged in Uzbekistan. That's what it said in the papers.
- Lyn** Don't you think you're getting a bit.
- Carol** What?
- Lyn** Paranoid.
- Carol** I don't know.
- Lyn** I'll be with you in an hour. An hour and a bit. Trains nearly at Kings's Cross. Then I've just got to change.
- Carol** I know the route Lyn. I know how you get to Reading from King's Cross. I mean you don't have to explain it to me.
- Lyn** Have you rung Mum?
- Carol** No.

Lyn Don't.

Carol I won't.

Scene 12

Cut to Patrick on the telephone. We can hear his office at the end of the phone.

Patrick I don't think we should jump to conclusions Carol.

Carol Of course you don't.

Patrick We don't even know that anything has happened to Phil.

Carol Oh Patrick come on. Something's wrong. Something's absolutely, definitely wrong and now all his stuff has been stolen from his hotel room and you think there's no connection? I don't believe you. I don't actually believe that you think that.

Patrick It's quite late now. It's Sunday night and I think we're all overtired.

Carol (*amazed*) Overtired?

Patrick Yes. So I suggest we speak again tomorrow?

Carol Don't you think it's a bit dodgy that you sent him to Uzbekistan?

Patrick Well I didn't send him personally.

Carol But did you know? Do you know what Uzbekistan is like? I mean I didn't know anything before. I didn't know even know where it was before. 'Til I looked at a map. Did you know that it's right next to Afghanistan? Did you know that? ...Because I didn't. And it makes you think doesn't it. It makes you think that you should look at a bloody map when your husband goes away, so when you're waving him off you know, you actually have some idea of where it is that he's going.

Patrick Erm.

Carol I started reading things today. And I thought bloody hell. What's **Phil** doing somewhere like that? And did he know before what he was going into? I mean did anyone warn him?

Patrick Carol I can assure you that Phil will not have been placed in any danger whatsoever. It just isn't company policy.

Carol All I want is. I want something to happen.

Scene 13

Cut to typing.

Carol Dear Phil. In the words of Crystal Gayle. It's three o'clock in the morning. Lyn's here. She arrived at midnight. She's asleep now. I'm wide awake. More awake than I've ever been in my life. I wish we could think to each other. I keep thinking that we could. If I made more effort. That if I just concentrate and try and get a picture of you in my head I can hear you. But all the pictures I get are. All the pictures of you that come into my head. Well they aren't good. And I keep trying to tell myself that you'll turn up tomorrow. I feel sick. Cos something bad's happening isn't it. Something really bad. I'm not actually going to send this to you. Obviously. As it wouldn't be very encouraging.

Scene 14

Cut to breakfast radio. Kitchen sounds. The radio is playing something cheerful and inappropriate.

Lyn What time is it?

Carol Six thirty.

Lyn Did you sleep?

Carol No.

Lyn Not at all?

Carol No.

Lyn You've got to sleep Carol. You can't do this on no sleep.

Carol I can't sleep. I close my eyes and I just see Phil staring at me like a dead person in a film. You know all glassy eyed. And bloody. I keep thinking about things on television. All those programmes with dead people in them, people on slabs, people being cut up, people being cut open, detectives and forensics and all that blood that you get on a Saturday night with maybe a follow up on Sunday or Monday. And all that stuff is for people to relax over on a Saturday night, can you believe it? All that blood for people to eat their dinner, their fish fingers and oven chips over.

Lyn Tea. We need tea.

Carol Do I sound demented?

Lyn Yes.

Carol I think I am. Slightly.

Text message sound.

Carol (*urgent*) What was that? Where's my phone? Where's my phone?

- Lyn** Erm.
Frantically they look for phone.
- Carol** That was a text. Wasn't that a text? Where is it?
- Lyn** Don't get too excited Carol. It could be anything.
- Carol** Where is it?
- Lyn** Here. Found it. Here.
- Carol** (*urgent*) Give it to me. Give it to me.
- Lyn** hands Carol the phone.
- Carol** It's from Phil! It's.
- Lyn** What?
- Carol** It's a text from Phil. It's.
- Lyn** What's it say?
- Carol** (*reading*) Help me. I'm in trouble.
- Lyn** Let me see. Let me see. Let me see.
- Carol** I think I'm going to be sick. I think I'm actually going to be sick.
- Lyn** Use the sink.
- Carol** throws up.
- Carol** Oh God. Oh God. Oh God.
- Lyn** I'll turn the radio off.
- Lyn** turns radio off.
- Carol** Oh God. Oh God.
- Lyn** (*urgent*) Carol look it's good we heard something. Think of it like that. Now we've got something to work on. We've got proof or something. Let's text him back. We'll text him back and then we'll get on the phone. We'll call his boss. We'll call the foreign office. We'll do everything we can.
Carol is struggling to breathe.
- Carol** Yes. Right. God. God. Oh God.
- Lyn** What shall we say to him? What do you want to say?

- Carol** What do I want to say? Erm.
- Lyn** Just think. Think for a minute.
- Carol** (*trying to be calm*) Erm. I don't know. I've no idea.
- Lyn** Help on it's way.
- Carol** But it isn't on it's way.
- Lyn** But it will be.
- Carol** Okay. Okay. Help on It's Way. I love you. Tell us more if you can. Kisses. Carol
- Lyn** Yep. Okay.
- Carol** Okay. Does that sound alright?
- Lyn** Yep that's fine. Help on it's way...
- Carol** Where is he? I mean what can possibly be happening?
- Lyn** I'm doing it. I'm doing it right now.
- Carol** Do you think he's just lost? Could he just be lost in the desert? They do have a desert. He mentioned the desert once. It doesn't have to be...Have you sent it?
- Lyn** I'm sending it. Right now.
- Carol** Has it gone?
- Lyn** I'm just doing it.
- Carol** What do I do? What do I do? What do I do now?
- Lyn** Put something warm on.
- Carol** What?
- Lyn** Put a jumper on.
- Carol** I'm alright.
- Lyn** Your teeth are chattering.
- Carol** It's not cos I'm cold. It's cos I'm terrified.
- Lyn** I've sent it. It's gone.

Scene 15

Cut to ringing tone.

Patrick Hello?

Carol **Patrick** I've just had a text from Phil. He says he's in trouble. He says Help me. That's what he says.

Patrick I've had the same text.

Carol And you didn't call me?

Patrick I didn't want to alarm you. Look Carol I'm heading into the office right now. Don't panic. I suggest you call the foreign office.

Scene 16

Cut to ringing tone.

FO Hello you're through to the foreign office.

Carol Hello I'd like to report my husband missing please. I mean if I can. Have I come through to the right place?

Scene 17

Cut to Kitchen. Kettle boiling. Lyn making tea.

Lyn Were they nice?

Carol Who?

Lyn The foreign office.

Carol How do you mean?

Lyn Were they friendly? Did they make you feel reassured?

Carol Not really. Not particularly. I mean they weren't unsympathetic. They were fine. Very professional.

Lyn So what happens now?

Carol We wait.

Lyn For what?

Carol I don't know. The phone to ring. Someone to find something out. I've no idea. I've never been in this situation before.

Lyn Tea. Strong tea with sugar. That's what we need. That's how the British got through the war.

Carol There wasn't any sugar during the war.

Lyn Well the tea part.

- Carol** Don't panic. Don't panic he says. God he's an idiot.
- Lyn** Who?
- Carol** Patrick. Phil said he was pedantic. The pedantic type. He reminds me of Basil Fawlty. I mean physically that's what he looks like. I've only met him once but I went away with the distinct impression of Basil Fawlty.
- Lyn** How long is it since you ate anything?
- Carol** I don't know.
- Lyn** I could do you scrambled eggs.
- Carol** I'm not hungry.
- Lyn** You can't stop eating and stop sleeping Carol.
- Carol** Yes I can.
- Lyn** You don't know how long this is going to go on for.
- Carol** You know what's awful. What occurred to me.
- Lyn** What?
- Carol** We don't even know for sure that the text is from Phil. I mean it could be from anyone. Anyone at all who's using his phone.
- Lyn** Who would want to send a message like that except for Phil?
- Carol** Well I don't know do I. I mean it could be someone who wants us to think he's alive but actually he's already dead.
- Lyn** Carol.
- Carol** Do you think he's dead?
- Lyn** No.
- Carol** Neither do I.
- Lyn** What about an omelette?
- Carol** Can we text him again?
- Lyn** What do you want to say?
- The doorbell rings.*
- Lyn** Do you want me to get it?

Carol It's alright.

Scene 18

Carol goes to the door. Opens the door.

Kevin Mrs Reece?

Carol Yes.

Kevin My name's Kevin Herronvolk. I work with your husband at Cam Com Europ.

Carol Oh. Erm. Come in. Come in.

Kevin Thanks.

Scene 19

Kevin follows Carol into the house.

Carol Erm. This is my sister Lynette. She's just staying with me for a bit. Lyn this Kevin. He works with Phil. Are you an engineer?

Kevin Er no. No I'm not.

Carol Oh. Erm but you do know Phil?

Kevin A little.

Carol Erm (*unsure*) would you like a cup of tea?

Kevin No thankyou.

Carol Erm. So why are you here Kevin?

Kevin Do you have a PC in the house?

Carol Yes. Yes we do.

Kevin Did Phil use the PC for work?

Carol Erm yes. He did. Yes. Why?

Kevin I need to take it away.

Carol Sorry?

Kevin I need to take the computer and have a look at it.

Carol (*amazed*) Erm. Sorry but I just need a bit more of explanation than that.

Kevin Well I don't really have the clearance to explain anymore than that.

- Carol** I thought you came here to help.
- Kevin** Well there could be information on that computer that could help Phil.
- Carol** I don't believe you.
- Kevin** Why would I lie to you Mrs Reece?
- Carol** I don't know - Mr Herronvolk is it?
- Kevin** Please allow me to take the computer away. I'll bring it right back.
- Carol** What exactly was Phil doing for the government of Uzbekistan?
- Kevin** doesn't reply.
- Carol** Tell me.
- Kevin** I don't know.
- Carol** Liar.
- Kevin** Mrs Reece be reasonable.
- Carol** I'd like you to leave now.
- Kevin** I don't know why you're being so obstructive.
- Carol** I don't know why you're being so mysterious.
- Kevin** I need the computer for Phil's own good. I could help Phil.
- Carol** I just don't believe you.
- Kevin** Is the computer upstairs? Perhaps I could take a look.
- Carol** Where do you think you're going? What you doing? You can't just walk in here and demand stuff you know.
- Kevin** I'm sorry. I just need to. I just need to take a look.
- Carol** You better leave. You better leave right now.
- Carol** Get out of my house or I'll call the police.
- Kevin** Don't be ridiculous.
- Carol** Lyn call them.
- Lyn** (*uncertain*) What — really?
- Kevin** That isn't necessary.

Carol Lyn just do it.

Lyn Okay. Okay.

Kevin Mrs Reece you're taking all of this the wrong way. Er Lynette — please don't call the police. I'm leaving. I'm leaving right now.

Scene 20

Cut to Carol on the phone to Patrick.

Carol Kevin Herronvolk is a right charmer isn't he?

Patrick Sorry.

Carol I thought you were sending someone from Human Resources.

Patrick We were. We are. Kevin Herronvolk has been round to see you?

Carol (*sarcastic*) Someone not keeping you in the loop Patrick?

Patrick Carol.

Carol Why did he want our PC?

Patrick Sorry?

Carol Jesus do you lot not to talk to each other about anything?

Patrick I'm sure he was only trying to help.

Carol I'm sure he's not only trying to help actually. I'm sure something's dodgy's going on. Only I can't seem figure it out because you're all so unwilling to me anything.

Patrick Well we're doing everything we can at this end. We're aware of the situation and we're doing everything we can.

Carol What exactly is that?

Patrick I'm afraid I don't have all the details but the company is concerned. There is a concern.

Carol Right. Great.

Patrick I'm very sorry that I can't tell you more Carol.

Carol I'm sorry too Patrick. I really am and if you don't make something happen soon I'll go to the press. 'Cos I can't sit here watching day time television and Hoovering the carpet. I'll go off my rocker.

Scene 21

Cut to telephone ringing.

- Lyn** Hello?
- Giles** Hello my name's Giles Ward. I'm calling from the foreign office. Is that Mrs Reece?
- Lyn** Er no. I'm her sister. My name's Lyn. She's just.... Hang on.
Lyn calls to Carol
- Lyn** Carol! It's the foreign office! *(to Giles)* Has there been any news?
- Giles** I'm afraid there has.
- Lyn** What? What? Is it bad?
- Giles** I'd rather speak to Mrs Reece personally.
- Lyn** She's just. She's not been feeling very well...
- Giles** Perhaps you could ask her to call me back.
- Carol** comes into the living room.
- Lyn** . . .Hang on. No hang on. Just wait. She's coming.
- Carol** *(anxious, hurried)* What? What's going on?
- Lyn** *(to Carol)* Giles Ward. Foreign Office.
- Carol** Hello?
- Giles** Are you sitting down Mrs Reece?
- Carol** Sorry?
- Giles** Sit down Mrs Reece.
- Carol** What's happened? Have you found him?
- Giles** I'd rather you were sitting down.
- Carol** I'm sitting down! For crying out loud just tell me!
- Giles** We believe that your husband, has in all likelihood, been kidnapped.
- Carol** Sorry?
- Giles** We've received reports that he was taken by three men into a car on Friday morning. And we have reason to believe he is being held by these men Mrs Reece.
Carol tries to breathe.

- Giles** Mrs Reece?
- Carol** Yes.
- Giles** Are you alright?
- Carol** I'm trying not to be sick.
- Lyn** What's going on? Will you tell me?
- Carol** *(to Lyn)* They think he's been kidnapped.
- Giles** We don't know a great deal more than that. I'm sorry I can't be more helpful at this stage.
- Carol** *(slowly, slowly)* So, so . . . you don't really know anything?
- Giles** We do have people in Uzbekistan trying to address the situation.
- Carol** How are they doing that?
- Giles** Well for a start we have very sophisticated diplomatic radio systems with satellite coverage.
- Carol** What does that mean?
- Giles** It means we've got all the highest technology available to try and track him down.
- Carol** *(slightly non plussed)* Right.
- Giles** We believe it's a political kidnapping rather than financially motivated.
- Carol** *(bleak)* That's good cos we're really overdrawn at the moment.
- Giles** *(unsure)* Right.
- Carol** *(bleak)* That was a joke.
- Giles** *(still unsure)* Right.
- Carol** So what now?
- Giles** We'll keep you posted. Any further information. Anything at all. We'll pass it on.
- Carol** And I just sit here do I?
- Giles** I'll call again this afternoon regardless of whether there's been any developments. I'll keep in touch.
- Carol** Okay. Okay. Thankyou. That would be good.

- Giles** I'm sorry I can't be more definite Mrs Reece.
- Carol** Do you know if it's got anything to do with the work he was doing?
- Giles** The work?
- Carol** The work he was doing. Was he doing something dodgy?
- Giles** How do you mean?
- Carol** I don't know. But no one will tell me anything.
- Giles** I'll speak to you soon Mrs Reece. Let me get back to you.
Carol hangs up.
- Carol** You don't hear much about kidnapping in Uzbekistan do you?
- Lyn** Carol sit down.
- Carol** I don't want to sit down. Why does everyone keep telling me to sit down? . . .
- Lyn** You look like you're going to pass out.
- Carol** You know on the news. Sometimes. Like when it's Iraq or somewhere. They say well the good thing about this particular group is that they're not too bad, they're not too violent. They don't behead people and make a video. And sometimes people come back safely and it's only a couple of days of being stuck in a room with a blindfold and no shower. Well Phil could be lucky couldn't he? He could be with one of those groups. I mean. It doesn't have to be a tragedy does it. Getting kidnapped. Does it?
- Lyn** (*hesitates*) No. No course not.
- Carol** It could still all work out fine couldn't it?
- Lyn** Course it could.
- Carol** I mean. I mean. Why the bloody hell did he have to go there?
- Lyn** Sweetheart.
- Carol** Do you remember when me and Phil first started going out?
- Lyn** I remember he came round to mine in a dodgy diamond golfer's jumper.
- Carol** But do you remember the story of our first date?
- Lyn** Didn't he get into a fight?

- Carol** Yeh. He got a police caution. That was our first date.
- Lyn** laughs slightly.
- Carol** What if he's hurt? What if someone is hurting him right now? And he's in agony?
- Lyn** You're going to drive yourself mad if you start imagining every single horrific thing.
- Carol** What else am I supposed to think about?
- Lyn** Maybe we should start praying.
- Carol** Do you believe in God?
- Lyn** No.
- Carol** Neither do I.
- Lyn** But we could pray anyway. Just in case.
- Carol** I always think if there is a God he's not going to listen to people like us who only pray in times of absolute crisis.
- Lyn** Well he's not very nice is he then. God I mean.
- Carol** Does this feel real to you?
- Lyn** What?
- Carol** The whole thing.
- Lyn** Phil?
- Carol** Yeh.
- Lyn** I don't know.
- Carol** It doesn't feel at all real to me.
- Lyn** You need to eat something.

Scene 22

Cut to telephone ringing.

Carol *(anxious)* Hello?

Richard Is that Mrs Reece?

Carol Who's this?

- Richard** My name's Richard Gordon. I'm calling from a magazine called Crossing Borders.
- Carol** Why?
- Richard** Sorry?
- Carol** Why are you calling me?
- Richard** Well we're not a big publication but we're very interested in your husband's case. I believe your husband may have been kidnapped out in Uzbekistan — is that correct?
- Carol** Where did you get that from?
- Richard** Have you had any confirmation that this is the case?
- Carol** I can't talk to you about this. I don't know who you are. I mean you could be anyone. I'm sorry. I'm not talking to you. Sorry.
- Richard** Do you have any idea what Phil was doing in Uzbekistan?
- Carol** He was working for the government.
- Richard** The British government?
- Carol** No the Uzbek government.
- Richard** I think he may also have been working for the British government.
- Carol** What?
- Richard** He didn't talk about his work?
- Carol** Erm well not really. I mean it's software engineering isn't it. It's not the sort of thing you can talk about that easily. Cos no one else understands you. I mean that's what he used to say. And I'm not good with all that stuff myself. So. You know. No. Is the answer. What makes you think he was working for our government?
- Richard** Well Cam Com Europ have several government contracts and I believe this could be one of them.
- Carol** So maybe it was all above board then. Maybe it's alright then. If it's the British government who've got the contract. Well. I mean they'll do everything they can won't they. To get him out of this.
- We hear Carol's mobile phone ringing.*
- Carol** **Lyn** can you get that? Richard I've got to go.
- Richard** Why don't I leave you my number?

Carol Yeh, alright. Alright.

Lyn Carol! It's the foreign office!

Carol Richard I've got to go. I've got to go. Sorry....

Scene 23

Carol takes the mobile from Lyn.

Giles Mrs Reece I believe that we may have found your husband.

Carol Is he dead? Is he dead? Just tell me if he's dead.

Giles He's alive.

Carol He's alive. Okay. He's alive. Okay. Good. He's alive. That's good.

Giles Right now we're not sure who it is that is holding him.

Carol So how do you know he's alive?

Giles We've had several confirmations.

Carol From who?

Giles From various sources.

Carol But who?

Giles Right now I can't tell you a great deal.

Carol Why not?

Giles We don't want to put his release at risk.

Carol But why would telling me put him at risk. I mean who am I going to tell?

Giles I'm just. I don't have the authority Mrs Reece. People are negotiating as we speak. Everything is being done that can be done.

Carol So I just have to sit here and wait?

Giles Pretty much. I'm sorry I can't be more informative.

Scene 24

Cut to sound of typing.

Carol Dear Phil. I just want to talk to you. That's the thing. I just want to talk to you and I can't. It's completely insane not knowing where you are. It's like being in the pitch black. Like being in a nightmare. Like. What's it like? I don't know really. I can't believe it's actually

happening. I feel like there's not enough air in the house. I feel like the house is full of dust and my body doesn't feel like it's mine. I feel. I don't think I'm going to send this. I'm going to save it as a draft. I don't want to send this until I know you're safe. Because what if you could read it. I mean I wouldn't want you to read this right now. I suppose the chances aren't very likely are they. I mean that kidnappers would say do you want to check your emails? But you never know do you.

Scene 25

Cut to ringing phone. On the other end of the line Phil sounds very distant.

Carol Hello?

Phil Carol?

Carol Phil!

Phil Hello.

Carol Phil . . .

Phil I'm fine. I'm not hurt. I'm alright.

Carol Good. That's good.

Phil They took my phone away. I don't know what's going on but they just gave it back to me. Said to me. Call your wife. Call your wife.

Carol What happened to you? What happened? Just tell me. Are you alright? Are you really alright?

Phil I'm really alright. I've been well treated so far. Well fed. You know. They kept me in a room but it's a family home. You know. Proper food. Kids around. Nothing bad. I mean frightening. But other than that. They say they're gonna let me go.

Carol It's you.

Phil It is.

Carol laughs.

Carol It's your voice.

Phil Yes sweetheart.

Carol I love you.

The phone goes dead.

Carol Phil? Phil? He got cut off. Why did he get cut off?

Lyn See if he rings back.

Carol Why'd he get cut off.

Lyn Maybe you should ring the foreign office!

Carol Why?

Lyn I don't know.

Carol What if Phil rings back?

Lyn Call on the mobile.

Carol This is mad. This is completely mad. I heard his voice. He sounded beautiful. He sounded fine — I mean not fine. Different. But fine. You know.

Scene 26

Cut to Carol on the telephone.

Giles Are you quite sure that it was Phil you were speaking to?

Carol Of course.

Giles It couldn't have been anyone else?

Carol No.

Giles This is very good Carol. Very encouraging.

Carol How long do you think it'll be? I mean do you think he could be back by tonight?

Giles I think that's highly unlikely.

Carol But it's not that far is it. I mean if they release him this afternoon then he could be on a plane in a few hours.

Giles I think it's all going to take a little bit longer than that Mrs Reece. I'll call you back. I'll call you back as soon as I can get any details.

Scene 27

Cut to television on in the background. They are watching a soap opera.

Carol Was she always blonde?

Lyn Which one?

Carol The blonde one.

Lyn I don't know. I think so.

Carol I thought she had red hair.

Lyn I don't think so. I can't remember. To be honest. But she's the one with the brain tumour.

Carol Oh I know that.

Lyn So technically you'd think she wouldn't have any hair at all.

Carol Maybe she hasn't started her chemotherapy yet.

Lyn Maybe.

Carol Why are we watching this?

Lyn We need the distraction.

Carol I forgot.

Lyn You forgot what?

Carol That was meant to be a distraction.

Lyn Shall I switch it off?

Carol Why hasn't he called back?

Lyn Who?

Carol The foreign office bloke.

Lyn I don't know.

Carol Do you think it's a bad sign?

Lyn I don't know.

Carol What if they're not going to release him?

Lyn They'll release him.

Carol This is mad.

Lyn They'll release him Carol.

Carol What if they don't?

Lyn Do you want a cup of tea?

- Carol** I want to text Phil again.
- Lyn** Shall I do it?
- Carol** Yes please.
- Lyn** What do you want to say?
- Carol** I spoke to him Lyn. I heard his bloody beautiful voice.
- Lyn** What do you want to say to him?
- Carol** See you soon. All my love. Carol.
- Lyn** Okay.
- Carol** It's so mad that you can text someone. You can send a message round the world to your kidnapped husband. But actually it doesn't make you feel any better because if he doesn't reply you just think what's happened? What's gone wrong? I mean maybe if I couldn't text him I'd actually be less worried in the first place.
- Lyn** But do you still want to text him then?
- Carol** Yeh course I do.
- Lyn** See you soon then? All my love Carol?
- Carol** Yeh.
- Lyn** Okay.
- Carol** Do you think it's alright that I talked to that bloke?
- Lyn** What bloke?
- Carol** The one from the magazine? What if it damages Phil's situation?
- Lyn** It won't. It can't. How can it?
- Carol** I don't know.

Scene 28

Cut to typing.

- Carol** Dearest Beautiful Phil. They say you are coming home. They say it's all going to be alright. And I don't know where you are. Or what you're doing. Or if it's true. Or. Or anything.

Scene 29

Cut to Uzbek ringing tone.

- Azimbek** Hello. This is the Intercontinental Hotel.
- Carol** Is that Azimbek?
- Azimbek** Yes it is.
- Carol** This is Carol Reece here. Phil Reece's wife.
- Azimbek** Hello Madam.
- Carol** He's been kidnapped. My husband. That's what's happened to him.
- Azimbek** I'm very sorry to hear that Madam.
- Carol** And I wanted to ask you something?
- Azimbek** Yes Madam.
- Carol** He was in room number thirteen wasn't he.
- Azimbek** Yes Madam I think he was.
- Carol** Can you tell me. Is thirteen an unlucky number?
- Azimbek** Thirteen?
- Carol** It's unlucky in England see and I wanted to know is it unlucky in Uzbekistan?
- Azimbek** No Madam. It's not.
- Carol** Thanks. Thanks a lot.
- Azimbek** Is that all Madam?
- Carol** What time is it there?
- Azimbek** It's four am Madam. What time is it there?
- Carol** It's midnight.
- Azimbek** Is that all Madam?
- Carol** Yeh that's all.

Scene 30

Cut to Kitchen and breakfast Radio.

- Lyn** Did you sleep?
- Carol** No.
- Lyn** Me neither.

- Carol** Do you think he's dead?
- Lyn** No.
- Carol** Last night I dreamed that he was. I was talking to him. I was saying that we should move to Spain. And he wasn't responding. And then I touched him and he was cold. But he was wearing a pink bobble hat. And I got really angry with him. Do you think he's dead?
- Lyn** No.
- Carol** Yesterday when we spoke. For a minute. For an hour. I was high as a kite.
- Lyn** I know.
- Carol** I should have told him then.
- Lyn** Told him what?
- Carol** I should have told him but I wanted to save it til I could see him.
- Lyn** What should you have told him?
- Carol** That I was pregnant.
- Lyn** Carol . . .
- Carol** I wanted to see his face. His reaction. You know. I wanted. I mean I've spent a lot of time imagining that moment.
- Lyn** Course you have.
- Carol** Now I might not get to tell him at all.
- Lyn** Don't say that.
- Carol** But it's true isn't it.
- Lyn** We don't know what's true.
- The telephone rings.*
- Lyn** Shall I get it?
- But Carol picks up.*
- Carol** Hello...Phil?
- Giles** It's Giles Ward Carol. Calling from the.
- Carol** Yeh I know where you're calling from.

- Giles** Have you listened to the news this morning?
- Carol** No. Why? What? What's on the news?
- Giles** We don't know that this man is Phil but there are reports -
- Carol** You don't know that what man is Phil?
- Giles** There are reports.
- Carol** Of what?
- Giles** There's a video posted on the internet and there's a possibility that the man in the video is Phil. But those reports are unconfirmed. I don't want you to panic. There's nothing to panic about. As of yet. Nothing has been confirmed.
- Carol** But what's the video? What happens in the video?

Scene 31

Cut to typing

- Carol** Dear Phil. I just watched it. They told me not to. But of course I did. I mean. Of course I did. And there's a man in the video and he's on fire. And on the news. The woman who reads the news. She said the man was suspected to be British. And I just spoke to the Foreign Office and they're saying that the man could be you. And it's impossible to tell if it's you because of how bad the picture is. And how much fire there is. And I hope that it wasn't you. I hope that you're safe somewhere drinking tea with your kidnappers. Drinking tea with men who put their hands on their hearts. I don't want to tell our child that the last time I saw their father he was on fire on the internet. I want to talk about your fantastic escape. I want to describe what it was like when you came home. When you stepped off the plane. When you first caught sight of me. When you smiled.