AFTER THE TIDE

written by

Mooiev Sample Production

Coastal drama

Before her father's boat workshop is demolished, a sound recordist returns to finish his last harbour recording—and must decide which memories to keep when the tide comes in.

Production draft · 6 scenes · 10 minutes

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Original sample production for the Mooiev product walkthrough

EXT. WHITBY HARBOUR - LATE AFTERNOON

A harbour at low tide. Fishing boats rest against dark stone. Ropes knock softly against their masts. Across the water, a weathered boat workshop carries a red demolition notice.

MARA ELLIS, 32, pauses at the quay. Dark curly hair tied loosely back. A faded sea-green waxed jacket. A small field recorder hangs from her wrist. She listens before she looks.

She records thirty seconds of water under the landing steps. The red light blinks. A ferry horn swallows the sound.

Mara stops the recorder. Deletes the take. Starts again.

At the workshop door, ISAAC REED, 61, waits with a ring of brass keys. Grey beard. Navy fisherman’s sweater. He has carried a heavy toolbox too far without putting it down.

ISAAC
I left the kettle where it was.

MARA
You didn’t have to wait.

ISAAC
I wasn’t waiting. I was finding the right key.

He finds it immediately.

Mara studies the demolition notice: SITE HANDOVER, MONDAY, 09:00. She turns it face down against the door.

ISAAC
It still says the same thing.

MARA
I know.

He unlocks the workshop. The door sticks. Without thinking, they lift the handle together. It opens.

INT. BOAT WORKSHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

An unfinished wooden dinghy occupies the middle of the workshop. Oak ribs, curled shavings, salt-stained windows. An amber task lamp remains on above a workbench. Everything else has been unplugged.

Mara lays her recorder beside a dented enamel mug. Her hand leaves a clean mark in the dust.

Isaac puts his toolbox down. On the bench, beneath a folded tide chart, he finds an old cassette recorder.

ISAAC
He said this was for you.

MARA
When?

ISAAC
The last Thursday.

Mara takes the cassette. A handwritten label: HARBOUR / FINISH THIS. Beneath it, her childhood handwriting: DON’T TALK OVER THE SEAGULLS.

She presses PLAY.

Hiss. Gulls. Her FATHER’S VOICE, distant, smiling.

FATHER (V.O.)
Twenty seconds without touching it. That’s all. Let the place finish its sentence.

A much younger Mara laughs on the recording. Then wind clips the microphone. The cassette catches, warbles, stops.

Mara presses PLAY again. Nothing. She shakes it. Isaac gently covers her hand.

ISAAC
It needs winding back by hand.

He gives her a pencil. She turns the cassette spool. Too quickly.

ISAAC
Slowly.

She stops.

MARA
I make my living doing this.

ISAAC
I know.

The task lamp hums. Outside, a loose shutter bangs. Mara turns the spool one careful revolution.

INT. BOAT WORKSHOP - BLUE HOUR

The windows have turned blue. Mara’s laptop shows a sound waveform with a sharp tear through its centre. Headphones isolate her from the room.

Isaac removes tools from the wall, leaving pale outlines behind. He keeps a blunt chisel in his hand for a long moment.

ELLIE REED, 24, enters carrying two paper cups and a waterproof torch. Short auburn hair, rust-coloured waterproof coat. She sets a cup beside Mara. No response.

Ellie taps the workbench twice. Mara removes one headphone.

ELLIE
My dad says you can make it sound like it used to.

MARA
I can take out the damage.

Ellie listens through the offered headphones.

ELLIE
Is that your dad?

Mara nods.

ELLIE
Don’t take out all of it.

MARA
What?

ELLIE
The damage. It sounds like someone was there.

Isaac tries to lower a heavy boat rib from its rack. His grip slips. Mara catches the far end. They hold it between them.

ISAAC
That one was the wrong shape. He kept it anyway.

MARA
It was mine.

ISAAC
I know.

They lower it to the floor. Mara looks at the waveform again. She undoes the last edit. A breath returns before her father’s voice.

Rain begins to tick against the glass.

EXT. EAST PIER - NIGHT

Rain drifts across the harbour lights. The three move along the sheltered inner side of the pier. Ellie holds the torch low. Isaac carries a microphone stand. Mara watches the recorder’s levels.

She positions a stereo microphone behind the stone parapet. Wind fills the headphones. She moves it. A rope hits a mast. She moves it again.

MARA
There was a bell. Every few seconds.

ISAAC
Old ferry. They changed it.

MARA
And the winch from the yard.

ISAAC
They took that down in June.

Mara checks the tide chart. Checks the levels. Checks the time.

ELLIE
What are we waiting for?

MARA
The same sound.

A long silence. The new ferry sounds its horn. Mara flinches and reaches for STOP.

Isaac rests his hand beside hers, without touching the recorder.

ISAAC
It isn’t the same harbour.

MARA
I know.

ISAAC
You keep saying that.

Mara looks at the workshop across the water. Its single amber window. She lowers her hand.

The recorder keeps running. Rain. Rope. Breath. A new horn receding. Twenty seconds pass.

ELLIE
Was that it?

Mara listens.

MARA
That was here.

INT. BOAT WORKSHOP - BEFORE DAWN

The room is nearly empty. The dinghy remains. Mara works at the bench with the amber lamp turned low. Isaac sleeps in a wooden chair. Ellie labels archive boxes by hand.

On the laptop, the old and new recordings sit on separate tracks. Mara leaves a space between them. She doesn’t hide the join.

She records her own voice.

MARA
Whitby Harbour. October eighteenth. Five forty-two in the morning. Wind north-east. Three people listening.

She stops. Deletes the take.

She records again.

MARA
Dad. The ferry sounds different now.

She leaves the microphone running. Her breathing settles. A gull wakes outside.

Isaac opens his eyes.

ISAAC
You got it?

Mara removes her headphones.

MARA
Not all of it.

He nods. It is enough.

Ellie closes the last archive box. Mara places the cassette in it, beside the bent boat rib’s photograph. She keeps the pencil.

They switch off the lamp. For a moment, the dawn is enough to see by.

EXT. WHITBY HARBOUR - DAWN

Mara locks the workshop. This time, the handle lifts easily. She gives Isaac the brass keys. He puts them in his pocket without looking.

Ellie walks ahead along the quay. Isaac follows. Mara stays a moment at the landing steps.

She lowers her microphone towards the water. Presses RECORD.

A ferry horn rises across the harbour. Mara lets it finish. The water returns beneath it.

She walks after the others. The recorder is still running.

FADE OUT.