

DONNA AND DOG - FOREVER

by

John Gale

A grieving young war widow, who dreams of reunion with her husband, puts her own life on the line when she accepts a lift from a sinister stranger.

VISUAL CORTEX  
28c Baron's Court Road  
London W14 9DT

1 EXT. AN ANCIENT BRIDGE ACROSS A WOODLAND STREAM - MORNING 1

Refracted by the eddying surface of the stream, a fish eye view, from under the water, of the bridge's stone arch and the trees overhanging the bank, frames a sequence of photographs taken from an album, each one dissolving in and out of the flow of the stream, -

A wedding photo of a happy young couple beneath a banner that reads - "DONNA AND DOG - FOREVER" ...

The same couple sitting at the front of a Romany caravan, holding the reins of an unseen horse, leaning into each other, kissing...

The young woman, DONNA, not much more than a girl, smiling, one arm draped over the shoulder of a white horse...

A formal passing out photograph of the young man, DOG, in the uniform of the Welsh Guards...

A row of soldiers present arms in front of a coffin draped in the union jack

The pale face of the young woman as Ophelia, submerged in the stream, hair flowing like silkweed in the current...

The aspect of a large dog looms over the stream, looking into camera, its face broken up in the ripples on the surface

CUT TO:

2 EXT. THE BANK OF A WOODLAND STREAM 2

A large long haired dog, a deerhound or a wolfhound is up to its haunches in the water. Something in the stream has got the animal's attention and it is trying to get at it.

A bare chested man wades urgently into the stream and throws himself into the water next to the dog.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. THE BANK OF A WOODLAND STREAM - MOMENTS LATER 3

The man lays out the cold wet body of a young woman on the grassy bank, a shredded cotton dress clings to her wet lifeless flesh and she is covered with river silt and silkweed. It is the young woman from the photographs, DONNA, and we see that it is also the same man, but his hair is longer and he has a beard. We see his fear as he pulls the weeds away from her face, and prizes open her mouth - putting fingers in to pull out more weeds and also a coin.

He clenches the coin tightly in one hand, and holding her mouth open with his other, he breathes in deeply and put his mouth on hers.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. THE SEVERN CROSSING ROAD BRIDGE - MORNING 4

Rising above the forgotten former resort village of Severn Beach, the Severn Crossing toll bridge spans the estuary like a great finned serpent, linking England to Wales. Even at this early hour the motorway is busy and we can make out the low pulsing drone of the traffic. In the foreground, atop a box mounted on a poll, a meteorological radar turns, sweeping its weather eye across the Bristol Channel.

(the sound of a telephone ring merges with the drone of the traffic on the bridge)

CUT TO:

5 EXT. ST ANDREW'S ROAD RAILWAY STATION - MORNING 5

(the muted sound of the telephone continues)

In a phone box in the empty carpark of a station serving the industrial hinterland of Avonmouth docks, DONNA mutters into the receiver

DONNA

C'mon c'mon... I know you can hear me, I know you are there...

CUT TO:

6 INT. A CRAMPED MOBILE HOME - CONTINUOUS 6

(the sound of the telephone ringing clearly)

In the galley kitchenette a kettle is whistling away on the stove. The camera pans across the cramped interior and zooms slowly on to a small round table in a corner. A photograph album is open, showing the photographs from the title sequence, around are scattered a military campaign medal, a rosary and a dried out wreath of purple-blue flowers, a mounted newspaper cutting- missing soldiers declared dead, and a mobile phone, lit up and ringing

CUT TO:

7 EXT. ST ANDREW'S ROAD RAILWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS 7

DONNA is still in the phone box, but someone is watching her. We see her from the point of a man in a van, some way off in a corner of the station car park.

There is a radio on...

RADIO NEWSREADER

The body of a second young woman  
has been found in woodland near  
Maid's Causeway. The woman, yet to  
be identified, appears to have...

A hand reaches over and tunes in a new station. We continue to watch DONNA through the cab window

DIFFERENT RADIO ANNOUNCER

Have you heard the Hum, thousands  
say they have, but no one has ever  
located the source...

DONNA slams down the receiver and comes out of the booth, looking around at the industrial silos, mill towers and tanks and sets off down the road on foot.

(We can still hear the low pitched drone that seemed to be coming from the bridge, but its source is unclear)

CUT TO:

8 EXT. SEVERN BEACH ROAD - MOMENTS LATER 8

DONNA continues on down the desolate road, in the shadow of a giant chemical plant. She passes in front of the Seabank power station, crosses and leaves the main road

CUT TO:

9 EXT. A WOODED VALLEY - MORNING 9

Dressed like the former soldier turned poacher that he is, DOG, stands on an ancient stone bridge, looking down into the waters of a swift flowing stream. He takes a coin from a pouch, rubs it and drops it into the pool. The coin sinks and disappears.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. A WOODED VALLEY - MORNING 10

DOG is now under the old stone bridge, wading up stream with great care.

(An echo of sea gulls'  
squawking reverberates  
under the bridge.)

He emerges at the other end of the bridge, arriving at a deeper pool and sinks both arms into the water, concentrating hard. With a sudden burst of movement he whips a sizeable fish out of the stream, thwacks its head on a stone, and drops it onto the riverbank, where, out of the water, it gasps and flails, suffocating in the air

CUT TO:

11 EXT. SEVERN BEACH - MORNING 11

A flock of gulls takes flight as a keen wind whips through the salt grass on the Severn Estuary. In the shadow of the great toll bridge, on the foreshore at Severn Beach, DONNA sits on her coat, hugging her knees, muddy sand clinging to her bare feet. Beautiful, bedraggled, spaced out, she stares out across the mud flats, back down the estuary towards industrial Avonmouth and the Seabank power station. The wind stings her eyes, making them run, or perhaps she has been crying - the gulls cry with her. She wipes her eyes, smearing mud on her nose and cheek

DONNA  
( to herself)  
Oh Dog, you fucking asshole, how  
could you just leave me here.

She sits back against the sea wall and closes her eyes, tears pushing themselves out from between the lids

CUT TO:

12 EXT. THE WOODED VALLEY - MORNING 12

DONNA is lying by the river bank, in a summery cotton dress, her eyes closed, DOG kneels by her side, he is without the beard - these are their younger selves in happier times, looking down at her. He strokes her face, forehead, cheeks, nose, lips with a bluish purple flower, a stem of wolf's bane, she tries to stay absolutely still, but he tickles her nose and she laughs and sits up. They embrace and roll over on the bank, kissing.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. SEVERN BEACH - MOMENTS LATER 13

DONNA is sitting back against the sea wall, eyes shut. She wakes with a start when a coin falls out of the sky, hitting her on the shoulder and landing right next her.

She sits up and looks around, brushes away at the mud on her feet, puts on her shiny silver-grey trainers and stands up. She sees the coin, looks around again, she is quite alone. She picks up the coin, examines it, slips it into her pocket and puts on her shiny, dirty, silver grey puffa coat. She walks towards the coastal defense wall, and the scruffy former resort village that is Severn Beach.

She climbs the stepped sea wall and walks on past a small, shabby and firmly shut amusement park, towards the town.

CUT TO:

14 INT. A FISH AND CHIP SHOP - CONTINUOUS 14

DONNA comes in and goes straight to a fruit machine, she inserts the penny from heaven. She hits the play button and the wheels spin. They come up all cherries. The machine chunders out coins.

CUT TO:

15 I/E. A CHALET PARK NEAR SEVERN BEACH - LATER 15

Carrying a small newspaper wrapped bundle, the YOUNG WOMAN walks into the 'Rustic Chalet Park', a forlorn congregation of permanently sited mobile homes and lets herself into one of the chalets.

In the galley kitchenette a kettle is whistling away on the stove. On a small round table in a corner, sits DOG, in full military dress uniform, looking out from a formal photograph. Draped across the frame hang a military campaign medal, a rosary and a dried out wreath of purple-blue flowers. Completing the tableau is a wedding photo of the two of them, and a mounted newspaper cuttings telling of the death of two more British soldiers in Afghanistan.

DONNA sits down at the small fold out table, unwraps her fish and chips and starts to eat, ignoring both the whistling kettle and DOG, who watches her silently from his shrine.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. A CLEARING IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON 16

A blackened kettle is suspended over a fire of sticks. DOG is sitting on the steps to an old Romany caravan, picking the last pieces of flesh off the bones of his catch, watching The kettle come to the boil, starting to whistle. He jettisons the fish bones, licks his fingers, removes the kettle from the fire, and takes it into the caravan.

CUT TO:

17 INT. INSIDE THE CARAVAN - MOMENTS LATER 17

The inside of the caravan resembles a travelling apothecary, with dozens of jars of roots and herbs. DOG puts a selection of twigs and leaves into a jug pours in the boiling water, he lets the brew steep, before draining off the liquid into a distinctive decorated thermos flask.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. ST ANDREW'S ROAD RAILWAY STATION - EVENING 18

The van, from which DONNA was being watched starts up and pulls slowly out of the station car park

CUT TO:

19 INT. DONNA'S CHALET - LATER 19

A mess of clothes overflows from a bag on a bed where DONNA is sitting, tuning a radio. The radio picks up static, white noise, snippets of voices in different languages, a snatch of the shipping forecast - "Portishead... Falling sharply..." then a man's voice reciting poetry in Welsh. She puts the radio up to her ear, then speaks into it

DONNA

Dog? Dog, is that you? I know you  
can hear me, come and get me... I've  
got money, I've got my fare.

Outside the tiny window, the sky is turning red. She stuffs what she can into a suitcase, and leaves the caravan for good. From its vantage point in its own little shrine, the portrait of DOG looks on.

CUT TO:

20 I/E . THE FRONT OF A VAN - MOMENTS LATER 20

...heading down the same stretch of road, passing the chemical plant and the power station, heading for Severn Beach. We cannot see the driver

CUT TO:

21 EXT. A BUS STOP BY THE OLD AMUSEMENT PARK - MOMENTS LATER 21

DONNA, in her silver grey puffa coat and trainers is waiting at the stop, bag next her. The truck comes into view and pulls up, she approaches the passenger door, the DRIVER leans over and opens it.

DRIVER  
You want a ride?

DONNA  
Did Dog send you?

DRIVER  
Dog? ...Yeah, that's right... Dog  
sent me...

DONNA  
I knew he would, I can pay, you  
know, I've got my fare

DRIVER  
Don't you worry about that now, you  
can pay me when we get there.

She settles in, looking straight ahead, rubs her hands. The  
DRIVER glances sideways at her

DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Here, pour yourself a cup of this.

He passes her a thermos flask just like the POACHER'S. She  
looks at him suspiciously, but accepts the flask and pours  
out a cup of the steaming liquid.

She sits back and hesitantly sips at the drink.

DRIVER (CONT'D)  
That's right, get it down you

She closes her eyes and knocks back a good slug, almost  
gagging. The DRIVER takes the cup from and throw the remains  
of the drink out of the window

DRIVER (CONT'D)  
That'll be enough be that, you  
just settle back now. I'll take you  
where you want to go.

As DONNA slumps into unconsciousness, the driver puts the  
truck into gear and pulls away.

CUT TO:

22

EXT. THE SEVERN CROSSING ROAD BRIDGE - LATER

22

Night is falling. There is just a band of fiery red on the  
horizon as the truck speeds along the motorway and over the  
Severn Crossing . It stops at the toll booth on the far side,  
the DRIVER pays the toll and drives on, the truck's rear  
lights dwindling away into the distance and the darkness.

FADE OUT.

23 EXT. UNDER THE SEVERN CROSSING - EARLY NEXT MORNING 23

An enormous serpent suspended in the morning mist, the bridge snakes across the estuary, its concrete underbelly dripping. In the distance, to the south, a flock of sea birds takes flight. In the foreground, by the bridge's vast concrete stanchion, something glints in the cold morning light - the arm of a silver grey puffa coat protruding from the mud...

CUT TO:

24 EXT. THE BANK OF A WOODLAND STREAM 24

DOG, has been giving the DONNA the kiss of life, he raises his head from hers and pushes down on her chest.

CLOSE UP on her face - as she coughs up a lung full of river water and her eyes open with a start.