

Special Bond (short film)

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. DAY

TINA, late 40s, confident, reasonably pretty, with hair blow-dried to perfection is half-watching grim news on TV while eating a bowl of salad.

She looks through the window - a taxi just parked up outside...

EXT. APARTMENTS. CONTINUOUS.

JAYNE, late 30s, pretty but drained, emerges from the taxi.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. CONTINUOUS

Tina jumps to her feet and hastily places the bowl with salad on the coffee table.

EXT. APARTMENT. CONTINUOUS.

The TAXI DRIVER takes a massive suitcase out of the boot.

Jayne helps her daughter DAISY, 2 y.o. out of the car.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM, EVENING.

Tina and Jayne sit on the sofa, Daisy plays with building blocks.

TINA

(to Jayne)

You're going to report him, aren't you?

JAYNE

He didn't even slap me, so what are the police going to do?

TINA

He locked you in the bedroom! It's an offence - forcible confinement!

JAYNE

It's my word against his.

TINA

(urgent)

From now on, you need to report everything. You need to collect evidence to prove that he's been abusive towards you.

JAYNE

I don't want to waste my time and energy on stupidities. If he beats me black and blue then I'll report him, otherwise I can't see the point.

TINA

(urgent)

He has an anger problem. You have to report him and request that Daisy can't be left with him unsupervised. He's a danger to her.

JAYNE

God, you're professionally deformed...

Tina sighs with frustration.

TINA

This discussion is pointless... (turns to Daisy) What shall we build, Daisy? A house? A tower? A tower will be easier.

Tina gets down on her knees and starts stacking up the building blocks.

Jayne trying to compose herself.

JAYNE

I can't believe I did it. I almost chickened out, when I started packing. For a moment I had a horrible feeling, like I was looking death in the face.

TINA

I'm glad you did it. You can stay here until you sort yourself out.

JAYNE

Thanks. I don't know how I will ever repay you.

TINA

Don't be silly. It's good to have company, (looks at Daisy) isn't it, Daisy?

Daisy takes one of the wooden blocks and throws it at Tina.

EXT. ALLOTMENTS. DAY

Tina opens a little wooden gate. She's dressed smart and is a complete misfit in her chaotic allotment - piles of branches, an old bath, a couple of freaky-looking scarecrows...

She unlocks the padlock on her shed, takes out an old ratan chair and sits down under a tree. She exhales with relief.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

Tina and Jayne watching Dinner Date on TV.

Jayne is halfway through a bottle of cheap wine.

Daisy is asleep on an inflatable mattress in the middle of the room, a sweet little angel.

JAYNE

Are you sure you don't want any wine?

TINA

(uptight)

I'm sure. And you've had enough today.

JAYNE

You're right. At least I never needed any drugs. Booze always did enough for me. Kept me alive, I reckon.

Tina wants to object, when - the intercom buzzes.

TINA

Who the heck is it this late?

Jayne doesn't seem to care.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.

Tina picks up the receiver on the intercom.

TINA

Hello?

PHIL (O.S.)

Hi.

Tina freezes, doesn't dare to breathe.

TINA

Who is it?

PHIL (O.S.)
Jayne's husband.

TINA
Phil? What's up?

PHIL (O.S.)
Is Jayne with you?

TINA
Of course she's not.

Tina hangs up in a hurry and frowns.

EXT. ALLOTMENTS. DAY

Birds sing like crazy.

Daisy is playing with soil, her clothes dirty.

Jayne sitting nearby, looking lost.

Tina digs out some carrots.

TINA
Look at these babies! These are all my
children!

JAYNE
You're bonkers!

Daisy runs off, into the nearby shed, unnoticed.

JAYNE
(to Tina)
Aren't you scared here?

TINA
No.

JAYNE
You could get murdered here.

TINA
Nobody knows about this plot. It's
called Secret Garden for a reason.

All of a sudden, Daisy's frightened SQUEALING comes out of
the shed.

Jayne and Tina rush to see what's happened.

INT. SHED. CONTINUOUS

JAYNE

What's up, darling?

Tina glances over the tools hanging on the walls of the shed - spades, forks, a bow saw...

TINA

I hope nothing fell on her.

Daisy keeps crying.

JAYNE

(pointing)

Or is it the spiders that you don't like?

Daisy nods. Keeps crying.

TINA

(relieved)

Oh, don't be scared of spiders, Daisy. Spiders are harmless. It's PEOPLE you should be scared of. Not spiders.

Jayne gives Tina a stern look. She lifts Daisy and leaves the shed.

JAYNE (O.S)

Don't say such weird things in front of my child!

TINA

I meant certain kind of people... Not people in general.

Tina opens her mouth to say something more in her defence but no sound comes out.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

Tina, wearing her dressing gown, enters the room and stops in her tracks.

Jayne and Daisy are lying on an inflatable double mattress on the floor, under a duvet. The TV still blares.

TINA
 (uncomfortable)
 You want to hit the sack already?

JAYNE
 I'm knackered.

TINA
 I guess I'll go and read my book in my
 bedroom...

JAYNE
 Thanks.

TINA
 Shall I turn off the TV?

JAYNE
 No, it's fine. I need some background
 noise to fall asleep.

TINA
 (bossily)
 But I'll turn the lamp off...

Tina makes her way to the lamp in the corner, by the window,
 and turns it off. She pulls at the edge of the curtain and
 peeps out.

TINA
 He's gone now.

JAYNE
 I know.

TINA
 How long was he sitting there today?

JAYNE
 Do you think he knows I'm here?

TINA
 (confident)
 No. He doesn't know. He just displays
 typical threatening behaviour. Log it
 in your journal. (beat) He will move
 on.

JAYNE
 I think I am the one who's going to
 move on...

TINA
What do you mean?

JAYNE
To a friend's house.

Tina taken by surprise.

TINA
Do I know her?

JAYNE
You've met him. His name is Gavin.

TINA
Oh. Isn't he Phil's friend?

JAYNE
Phil doesn't have friends... Gavin
lives on his own, so...

TINA
You've gone mad!

JAYNE
Thanks.

TINA
Come on, Jayne... You don't want to
move in with a bloke just because he
has empty house! You should settle
down with Daisy, concentrate on being
a mother...

JAYNE
I can't live alone. I don't know how
you do it. It just seems such a
nightmare!

Jayne smirks to make her feelings obvious.

TINA
What do you mean, nightmare? Does it
really look like I'm the one whose
life is a nightmare?

JAYNE
You talk to the vegetables in your
allotment!

TINA
(uptight)
This conversation is pointless. I'm
going to bed. Good night.

Tina leaves the room.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Tina lying in her bed with an open book but staring into
nowhere. The TV blaring through the wall...

TINA
(under her breath)
Bitch!

She shuts the book and turns the bedside lamp off.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. DAY

Tina frantically looking for something in the kitchen
draws...

She grabs her phone and punches some buttons.

TINA
(into the phone)
Hi Jayne. How are you doing? I can't
find my allotment keys. You haven't
seen them somewhere before you left,
did you? (A beat). Okay, don't worry,
they will turn up when I'm not looking
for them. And how's things with you?

TINA
Good. Has Phil given you the child
maintenance yet? (Beat) Why not? Have
you applied for that collection
action? (Beat) You can apply for
emergency loan if you don't have money
for food, electricity and other basic
things. But booze is not a basic
thing, Jayne, and I can hear that
you've been drinking. (Beat). Can you
hear me? Are you still there?

Jayne sighs, puts her phone down and shakes her head in
disbelief.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Tina sits at the coffee table, the dinner on the plate in front of her. She pours some white sauce over the fish and vegetables. The presentation is immaculate. She grabs her phone and takes a photo of her meal.

Just as she grabs her cutlery, ready to dig in, her phone rings.

TINA
(muttering)
Oh for God's sake.

She takes a second or two before reaching for the phone.

TINA
Hello?

Said in a cold, apprehensive way.

POLICE (O.S.)
I am from Redhill police station. I'm
afraid I need to talk to you in
regards to a missing child.

TINA
What missing child?

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
Daisy Brown. We believe her mother and
you are very good friends.

Tina's mouth opens in shock. She wants to say something but no sound comes out.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. LATER.

Tina and two police officers, a POLICEMAN and a POLICEWOMAN, sit on the settee in the living room.

TINA
Since when has Daisy been missing?

POLICEMAN
Since yesterday, around 1pm, which is
a long time for a 2-year-old.

TINA
How?

POLICEWOMAN

She disappeared from the back garden.

TINA

Did she just wander off?

POLICEMAN

We don't know. That's why we are here.

TINA

I don't think I can help you.

POLICEWOMAN

We need to collect information from as many people as possible, and we understand that Mrs Brown and her daughter stayed at your home for a period of time.

INT. TINA'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING

Tina on the sofa, phone at her ear, a bottle of wine and empty wine glass on the coffee table.

TINA

They didn't even arrest him, did they?

JAYNE

(drunken laugh)

Not yet.

TINA

Are you drunk again?

JAYNE

Oh fuck of. I'm distressed, that's what I am!

TINA

Did you tell them everything? How he smeared his shit all over the walls of that company's new toilets when he didn't get promoted?

Again, Jayne's drunken laugh in the phone.

TINA

(cross)

You have to stop drinking and

laughing. You child is missing and you are laughing!

The phone goes dead. Tina pours herself more wine.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

Tina asleep in her bed.

Intercom BUZZES. BUZZ. BUZZ. Tina awakes, sits up in her bed. Puts the light on and rubs her eyes.

The BUZZER goes again. She checks the time on her bedside alarm clock - 2am. She sits on her bed, alarmed.

TINA
(muttering)
Fucking hell!

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Through the semi-darkness, Tina creeps to the window. She peeps out through a gap between the curtains - there's a police van outside.

She pulls a curtain open, trying to make the sense of things.

BANGING on her front door.

POLICE (O.S.)
Open the door! We are the police! We have a warrant!

Terror in Tina's face.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. POLICE STATION. LATER

Two cops hang onto Tina's every word. A good and a bad cop. She looks worn yet defiant.

TINA
I had a busy week at work. So I haven't gone to my allotment for five days. Plus, I couldn't find my allotment keys. Plus, my friend's two-

year-old daughter has gone missing,
which kept me...

COP 1
Well, she's not missing any more.
She's been found.

TINA
(surprised)
When?

Silence. Both police officers are bad cops now.

TINA
Is she okay, or...

COP 1
She's doing fine, considering what
she's been through...

TINA
(confident)
Did her father take her?

COP 2
Nothing suggests that he did.

Both officers keep looking at Tina, who is reaching boiling
point.

TINA
You seem to think that I had something
to do with her disappearance!

COP 2
Well, the fact is that your friend's
daughter was found locked up in your
shed.

Tina laughs, half outraged, half desperate.

TINA
What shed? I live in a bloody
apartment. No garden, no shed. Didn't
your colleagues who arrested me tell
you that?

COP 2
Daisy was found in the shed in your
allotment.

The disbelief in Tina's eyes.

COP 1

Is it true that you refer to your allotment as 'Secret Garden'?

TINA

(defensive)

Everybody does. Listen. You are barking at the wrong three here. You need to go an arrest Daisy's father!

COP 1

And why do you think he would lock his daughter in your shed?

TINA

To have control. To have control over his wife and child. And to frame me.

Tina convinced about her words, almost fanatical.

COP 2

How would he get hold of the key?

TINA

I need a legal advice.

INT. HOLDING CELL. DAY

Tina sits on the bed in her single holding cell. Her hair is greasy. Her eyes are lifeless.

The sound of multiple footsteps in the corridor, approaching... The flap in her door opens.

A pair of eyes peer at her through the flap.

The rattle of the key in the lock.

Cop 1 enters.

COP 1

You're being released.

Tina sighs with relief but keeps her composure.

TINA

Have you arrested Daisy's father?

TINA'S LAWYER
Your friend, the little girl's mum,
has been arrested.

TINA
Jayne? What for?

TINA'S LAWYER
Several charges. She's our main
suspect at the moment.

Tina thinks hard.

TINA
Her husband is trying to frame her.

TINA'S LAWYER
Her husband's been arrested too. He's
been charged with the murder of
Jayne's partner.

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Tina eating her microwave dinner in front of the TV. She
switches over to the news.

PRESENTER (V.O.)
The father of the toddler Daisy Brown,
who was locked up in a shed for almost
two days, has been charged with the
murder of his wife's new partner Gavin
Kelly.

Tina staring at the screen in a frozen-like state...

INT. PRISON. VISITORS HALL. DAY

Jayne sits on a chair opposite Tina... They are divided by a
little table and wall of awkwardness.

TINA
Any news about Phil, since he was
arrested?

Said in a careful tone. Jayne shakes her head.

JAYNE

When Daisy upset me, I could see him
in her, you know... Narrow-minded,
spiteful, selfish...

Tina's caring face changes into a concerned one.

TINA

(patronising)

Every child acts like that...

JAYNE

(spiteful)

How did you become an expert on
parenting?

TINA

Talking to the vegetables in my
allotment...

Jayne smirks.

Tina gets to her feet. Fights hard to keep her dignified
posture.

TINA

I'd better go.

Jayne unfazed.

JAYNE

Well, there's plenty of parenting
experts like you in this world. People
who know how special is the bond
between the mother and the child, even
though they never had a child.

TINA

I'm leaving. This conversation is
pointless...

JAYNE

Of course it's a special bond, but
when life becomes unbearable... (looks
at Tina) Would you look after Daisy?

Tina stops dead. Waits for whatever comes next.

JAYNE

I mean, would you take her into your
care, now that she has both parents

banged up?

Tina exhales and slowly sits down.

EXT. PLAYGROUND. DAY

Tina pushing Daisy on a baby swing.

TINA

Do you want to go higher, Daisy?

DAISY

(giggling)

Higher, higher!

END