

PILTDOWN MAN

by

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Scene 1

FADE IN:

EXT. DAY. CAFÉ BY THE SEA.

SEA WASH on a pebble beach. Sunny. Wind is flapping the flags. Seagulls overhead. Two men are sitting at a café table. On the table is a SKULL loosely wrapped in a Burberry scarf. BAILEY is in his early twenties. Studying anthropology he is animated, intense and excited. STEPHEN is an osteopath in his mid-twenties. Successful, well dressed, single.

BAILEY

It's got to be the one. Nothing else has this scar feature or . . .

STEPHEN

How on earth do you know? Why would it be here anyway?

BAILEY

When they buried it at Piltdown they didn't think it was good enough. But it's better. It's the real thing.

STEPHEN

I'm not certain. We would look complete idiots. What if they took DNA and found it was from the twenties. You prove it is prehistoric. You can't. You've been duped.

BAILEY

I've done some forensic stuff. It stands up. And I've done some reading. Piltdown was a centre of power.

Scene 2

EXT. THE PROMENADE. DAY

CLAIRE is roller blading along the sea front with her dog on a lead. Tall, athletic early twenties. Ambitious. Freelance journalist.

CLAIRE arrives at the café table with a rush. She almost falls into STEPHEN's coffee.

CLAIRE

So that's where my scarf is. I've been looking for that all day - you stole it.

She picks up the scarf. The skull skids across the table and falls off.

BAILEY dives for it. He catches it as it slides off the table. He almost falls over. The dog barks.

CLAIRE

What the hell is that?... Yuck! That's gross.
Are you into devil worship?

STEPHEN

Don't invoke ancient spirits

CLAIRE

What's so cool about this relic? It's grotesque - you can't fool me that's Neanderthal man.

BAILEY

That's a million dollars - that's what that is. And you nearly lost the lot.

Scene 3

EXTERIOR. NIGHT. WOODED AREA. AN OLD QUARRY.

BAILEY is working with a futuristic detector device. There is a bleeping. He gets out a large digger tool and prises something out of the rock crevice.

STEPHEN is crouched over scientific instruments. Bailey uncovers a medallion-like object.

BAILEY

Check this out Steve. It's got ferrous. It's also got a sort of bronze . . . It's prehistoric all right.

CLAIRE

We must have evidence or the paper won't print the story. Wow! The instruments are going crazy.

The Instruments are seen to be complex, linked to a laptop. The screen shows animated graphs and scientific displays. They jump about in a frenzy.

STEPHEN

Now Claire do you believe in the power of the ancients . . . this was a burial site. There must have been burial rites.

BAILEY

She still thinks it's superstitious rubbish. She's hung up on being an investigative journalist. If you can't interview it, it's not real.

CLAIRE

Yea OK something's got to be here. I'll believe it when I see . . .

Suddenly the instruments flash. The laptop crashes. There is a mysterious cracking noise from the rock face. The rocks roar and split open. A black void appears with something dark moving inside.

BAILEY

They're back. They want the skull.

This example is from *The Television Handbook*, Third Edition (2005) by Jonathan Bignell & Jeremy Orlebar