

(Protected Living) – Independence Has Its Price?

Scene – The living area in their apartment (impression given by table with cloth, flowers, ornaments etc on the table

Martha and Joe are sitting looking at their back wall

on which is projected (large) a half-done crossword or sudoku puzzle.

Time is shown also on screen.

They are completely absorbed in doing this together. Exchange one or two suggestions. (Dialogue at this point to be inserted in rehearsal with projection.)

A brief advertisement comes on screen, perhaps with a jingle?

JOE For goodness sake! That's not supposed to happen!

MARTHA Don't say we have to get a stronger Spam filter!

Voiceover

'Reminder ! Your bath is now full. The water is turned off. The temperature at 41C as required by Martha

MARTHA Oh my goodness! I'd completely forgotten!
I'll go for my bath now, Joe. We can finish this later.

Martha touches a remote control

JOE What's that?

MARTHA *(louder)* I said, I'll go and have my bath!

JOE I think I'll pop down the golf club. Fred said he might go down this morning.

MARTHA Look, you must only do a few holes! I don't want you to be taken ill again.

JOE Stop fussing, Martha. It happened over a year ago.

MARTHA You know what the doctor said!

JOE The doctor said gentle exercise was good for me!
Anyway, if Fred's not there, I'll probably just practice my putting.

The WAREDEN AVATAR appears on screen

WARDAV Good morning, Martha and Joe! How are you today? I cannot see you. Please switch on Vision.

Joe is slightly startled

Martha reaches for a remote control and presses

ARDAV I see you now. You are feeling well?

MARTHA We are fine, thank you.

WARDAV What are your plans for today?

MARTHA Joe is going out to the golf club. I am about to have a nice hot bath.
Good for my arthritis.

WARDAV Joe- Please remember your HMD.

JOE Don't you start nagging as well.

MARTHA Joe!

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WARDAV Do you need assistance in the bathroom?

MARTHA No, no. My electronic chair makes it easy.

WARDAV Please ensure you have your Emergency Alarm with you.

MARTHA I always do!

**WARDAV Call me if required.
Remember to switch off 'Vision' if required video
privacy required.
Goodbye!**

WARDAV disappears

JOE Damn thing. Makes me jump.

MARTHA I preferred it when we had a real live warden, didn't you?.
You could have a proper chat with her.

JOE No, I'd rather have this '*thing*'. It's not so intrusive
The real warden was a nosy old woman.

MARTHA No she wasn't, she was just sociable.

JOE Hrrmph.

MARTHA I want my bath. What time is your bus?

JOE Er..(*Loudly*) Bus timetable!

MARTHA Number 22!

Message on screen

<p>The next number 22 bus arrives at your stop in ten minutes at 10.25am</p>

Joe picks up a coat or jacket

JOE Right, where's my keys?

He looks in his pockets then around then pauses.

JOE KEYS!

We hear a bleep,

Joe locates his keys.

JOE There they are. I'm off then, dear.

MARTHA You haven't got your HMD on, Joe.

JOE For goodness sake!

Martha finds HND, picks it up and puts it on Joe

MARTHA You're should wear it all the time. Your blood pressure could go up,
and your blood sugar – not to mention your heart!

JOE (*grumpy*) I hate this thing.

MARTHA It's just to keep you safe, you stubborn man!

JOE Hrrmph!

MARTHA Are you staying at the club for lunch?

JOE Probably.

MARTHA Have a nice time dear. Don't overdo it.

Martha and Joe exchange pecks on cheeks.

Exit Joe

Voiceover

Your bath is ready. Water temperature (is being)maintained at 41C

MARTHA Oh, my bath . I'm looking forward to this.

She takes a few steps 'towards bathroom', taking off her blouse/ dressing gown.

A ring-tone sounds Voiceover – Erica calling.

MARTHA Come in!

Daughter Erica appears on screen.

ERICA Mum! What are you doing only half dressed?

MARTHA Oh, can you see me?
I must have forgotten to turn the vision off after the Warden.

ERICA What are you doing half dressed?

MARTHA I'm going to have a long, warm bath.
Undisturbed while your father goes to the golf club.
It's wonderful, this new bath system. It keeps the water the right
temperature as long as you like.
I nearly forgot about it this morning!

ERICA Sounds good.
But you must be careful about whether the videophone is on when the
phone rings!

MARTHA I realise that dear!
I mean, we could be having an orgy when the... bank manager calls!

EERICA Very funny.
I take it you are both fine.

MARTHA Yes, we both are fine.

ERICA I rang to find out if you'll be at home tomorrow afternoon. Susie's going to her friend's fifth birthday party and she wants to show you her new party frock.

MARTHA How lovely!. What time will that be?

ERICA About three o'clock. Is that alright?

MARTHA Wouldn't miss it! Tell Susie we'll save the still picture and store it in our digital memory box.

ERICA OK Mum, we'll talk to you tomorrow. You'd better go and have your bath. Enjoy!

Erica's picture fades.

MARTHA Goodbye dear.

VOICEOVER Do you wish to turn off the video facility?

MARTHA Absolutely!

Martha presses the remote control.

Exit Martha, humming

Time passes.

***A few seconds pause. The time on the screen changes to
12.24pm***

Enter Martha.

MARTHA Now, the shopping.

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(MARTHA) 'Fridge!'

Image of fridge door appears on screen.

MARTHA What do I need?

FRIDGE VOICEOVER you require fridge contents?

MARTHA No! No! I don't want a full list.

Er - 'Basics!'

**FRIDGE VOICEOVER
Bacon: butter: ketchup: milk running below minimum**

MARTHA Order the usual amount, please.

We'll have some fish for dinner tonight.

**FRIDGE VOICEOVER
You ordered salmon last time, Do you wish salmon again?**

MARTHA No, we'll have4 fillets of sole, please.

**FRIDGE VOICEOVER
You require 4 fillets of sole?**

MARTHA That's right.

**FRIDGE VOICEOVER
You require 4 fillets of sole? Please confirm.**

MARTHA Yes!

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(MARTHA)

Now then, what else?

Suddenly on screen (example)

<p>WARNING! From Health Monitoring Device of Joseph Brown (YB9657) Blood pressure 200 over 94 Heart Rate 196 per minute Distress registered.</p>

MARTHA Oh no! Joe! What do I do?

Martha presses remote control

Um – ‘Telephone!’ – ‘Joe Brown’!

Hullo! Hullo! Joe, are you there?

On screen appears

<p>Emergency services have priority. Please try later</p>

MARTHA What? I can’t get hold of him? (*panics*)

The golf club! That’s where he is!

Martha presses remote

‘Southsands Golf Club’

pause

V-OVER **Hullo? Southsands golf club.**

MARTHA This is Martha Brown here. I've just received information that Joe has been taken ill.

V-OVER **I'm sorry to hear that, Martha. What's the problem?**

MARTHA But he's at the club!

V-OVER **Er – no, Martha, he's not here.**

MARTHA How long since he's left the club?

V-OVER **He's not been here this morning at all.**

**Sorry Martha. Hope he's OK.
Have you tried his GPS locator?**

MARTHA No, I'll do that. Thank you.

*Martha presses remote to cut call.
She then has to squint at remote again.*

MARTHA Now, how do you do this?

Martha has problems seeing the remote in detail

MARTHA Right, let's try that.

She presses a button

On screen

Please enter code number of GPS locator you are trying to locate
Or
Say name clearly if pre-programmed

MARTHA Is it pre-programmed? I can't remember.
 'Joe!'

On screen a map, a section of a town street map appears, with something marking where Joe is

MARTHA That's not right.
 Why would Joe go to that part of town?

Suddenly on screen

Message from ambulance service

MARTHA Come in. Oh, the video.

She presses remote

On screen - a paramedic speaking to Martha – video clip

P-MEDIC Hullo! Hullo! Is that Martha Brown?

MARTHA Yes! Where's Joe? Is he alright?

P-MEDIC He's going to be fine, madam.

He got a bit –er – overwrought – a bit excited.

**His heart was rather stressed but he's fine now,
everything's calmed down.
I think it would be best if we brought him home, if
that's OK.**

MARTHA Of course it's OK. But where are you?

P- MEDIC In the street.

MARTHA Yes, but I've located him in Dock Street. What was he doing there?

**P-MEDIC Um – I think you'd better ask your husband about
that.
We'll be there in about ten minutes.**

Signing off.

Martha turns away from the screen, acknowledging the message had ended.

***But the Paramedic is distracted and continues to talk to
someone off camera.***

**P-MEDIC He'd better think of a good story.
Got to admire the old boy, though.
Enjoying himself in a bordello!
Hope I can manage it when I'm his age!**

Oh shit!

***(P-Medic realises he hasn't switched off call and switches off.
The screen goes blank)***

Martha turns and looks at audience etc

END OF SCENE