

Connecting...

I sit on the same bench I always do, in the same park, in the same small town where I've always lived. I put my headphones in and wait. Right on the dot, a picture of us together as children fills my screen. I swipe to answer.

'I'm sorry about last week,' Sarah says, her smiling face pixelated as she talks. Our reception is shocking. 'Take me to our sea.'

The call cuts out.

When Sarah lived here, we'd meet at this bench every Friday after work and make our way down to the waterfront. Past the pub filled with people from high school, past the tourist restaurants, we'd cover everything: whinging customers, changeable bosses, indifferent love interests. Every week, in the salty air, we'd wolf slices of greasy pizza: prosciutto for her, plain mozzarella for me. Sometimes I'd catch her staring into space, and she'd shrug when I asked what she was thinking about.

The call reconnects. I shift her view to see through the back camera. We go our old route, Sarah seeing what I see.

'Same old crowd,' she says as we pass the pub, everyone sitting out in the fading light.

At the shore, she tells me to sit down.

'Listen,' she says, 'my work needs someone new, and I think you'd be...'

The call cuts out. I try calling back, but can't connect.

I don't even need to think about it. I look around at everything I've ever known, and text her: *I'm in.*

Word count: 249