



THE TELESCOPE

by Heaton Wilson

A SMITH SCRIPT

This script is protected by copyright laws.

No performance of this script – IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without payment of the appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.

For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at info@smithscripts.co.uk

THE TELESCOPE

by Heaton Wilson

CHARACTERS

CHARLES

SARAH

PETER

Copyright 2012

ACT ONE

On the beach. Loud sound effects of sea and seagulls, as the light comes up to reveal a section of the stage with a grey floor and grey walls. A few pebbles are scattered downstage. The sound continues for a few moments, then Peter enters upstage wearing outdoor gear, with a brass telescope on a tripod, which he peers through, adjusting the focus. After a short time, he admires the view and breathes in the sea air appreciatively, then exits. Charles and Sarah enter, arm in arm, very close, very happy...

Sarah He is always there, have you noticed?

Charles Who?

Sarah That nosey man.

Charles Oh him! Just admiring the view. Can't blame him.

Sarah Probably admiring us you mean...

Charles Can't blame him for that, either.

Sarah You are too nice. I have always said that.

Charles That's true. You're not so bad yourself. Oh, watch yourself on these pebbles! Hold on!

They giggle as they hang onto each other and mime wobbling across pebbles.

Sarah Oh sir, my hero - you are so strong, so gallant! Anyway, what are you going to do about this weather? We haven't had a sunny day since we moved here. It's just been, grey grey, grey ... like your hair in fact ...

Charles Watch it ... Yes, it's hard to see where the sky ends. Every single day
- exactly the same. Never mind ... You feeling OK? Not too tired?

Sarah Yes, I'm fine. Stop worrying. This is just what the doctor ordered.

And the air is so wonderful! It's so good I don't want to breathe it out.

Come on! Try it! *(As if to demonstrate, she flings her arms out and
breathes in a big noisy lungful of air, then marches round the stage
like a giant inflated doll.)*

Charles *(Turning briefly to look back at Peter's cottage, then laughing)* No,

I'm happy watching you.

Sarah Meanie! Anyway I don't want you watching me, too.

Charles What?

Sarah Never mind. Come on! Let's see who can throw the furthest stone!

*They mime picking up stones, doing a run up, and hurling them out across the
audience, with Sarah eventually claiming victory.*

Give up? *(As Charles nods sheepishly.)* Thought as much. Wimp!

(Punches the air) Champion!

Charles I do love you, you know.

Sarah Even though I humiliate you at stone throwing?

Charles Even though you humiliate me.

Sarah And at Scrabble?

Charles And Scrabble.

Sarah And at ... beach hopping! *(She sets off hopping round the stage, laughing. Charles watches her sadly, breaking into a laugh only as she hops back facing him.)* I think you like being humiliated, secretly. *(Laughing.)* It's probably because you're a librarian.

Charles What has that got to do with it?

Sarah Absolutely no idea. I just thought I'd say it.

Charles To humiliate me.

Sarah Correct, my darling. *(Holding him close.)* The truth is you're a very clever and lovely man, and I love you very much. *(They kiss.)* We are so happy together, aren't we?

Charles Yes. We are. *(He covers his emotion by reaching down to pick up a pebble.)* I wonder how long this has been here.

Sarah *(Moving close to look.)* Hundreds of years. Until you moved it.

Charles Oh yes? Millions, more like. Just think. It was part of the rock face that was about a mile out there. *(Pointing out across the sea.)* Big tall cliff. The sea battered it down, eroded it –

Sarah - and then covered it.

Charles Yes. Broke the huge mountain into little pieces. *(Sarah smiles fondly at his enthusiasm.)* Relentlessly pounding away. Imagine the weight of all that ocean crashing in ... on every wave, for millions and millions of years ... A mile away! It's awesome. Listen. But this little pebble survived. This tiny thing that no-one would ever notice, unless you were really looking. Funny how we don't see things ...

Sarah It's timeless. Everlasting... and ... depressingly, permanently grey!
(Taking his hand.) Come on, mister librarian. That's enough of the
David Attenborough. Let's take my pebble home.

Charles Your ...? - No, not that one. Let's take a bigger one – like this. *(Drops
it, and reaches down to choose a bigger one.)*

Sarah *(Picks up the one he dropped.)* Awww, I want this one. The little
survivor.

Charles It's cold. Let's go home, shall we?

Sarah The pebble feels so warm ...

Charles Well, I wish I did. *(As he turns away.)* Did you see that?

Sarah What?

Charles That flash of light from the cottage up there?

Sarah Oh, it's probably him again. The man with the telescope. He probably
lives there. *(Shouting upstage)* Mister Nosey! Though how he can see
anything interesting in this light is beyond me...*(She suddenly winces
and holds her stomach. Charles pretends not to notice.)* Come on
Charlie boy – let's take our pebbles home.

*As she leads the way off stage, Charles stops for a moment to look out to sea and we
see the anxiety in his face. As he turns away, he waves towards the cottage, and
Sarah sees him.*

What on earth are you doing?

Charles Waving.

Sarah What at? Telescope man?

Charles *(Smiling)* Yes, the one and only ... they seek him here, they seek him there ... oh no! it's ... Telescope Man!

They exit, arm in arm, laughing, and as the light fades, the sound of the sea and the gulls rises. The scene switches to Charles and Sarah's living room.

As the light comes up, Sarah is seated in a high backed chair. She looks more frail.

There is a medicine bottle on a table, with a glass and what looks like a box of pills.

She sits quietly for a moment, just staring into space. Charles enters, looking as if he is ready to go out.

Charles You're sure you don't want to come with me? We can take our time. Look at these biceps *(Strikes a body builders pose.)* ... I could carry you.

Sarah *(Distantly.)* No. You go. I'll come with you tomorrow. Won't do me any harm to have a day off.

Charles It's good for you ... the sea air ... throwing stones ...

Sarah Don't fuss. I don't have the energy.

Charles I don't like the thought of leaving you.

Sarah Charlie! I'm fine, really I am. I just feel like being quiet. Go for your walk!

Charles Are you in pain?

Sarah No! Like I said, I'm fine. Now, clear off...

Charles *(Sitting on the sofa.)* I know the real reason...

Sarah *(Waiting for him to tell her)* Well? Are you going to share this nugget of priceless information sometime in the next 12 months?