

SUMMER OF '76

Written by

Margaret Turnbull

When 17-year-old Daisy's absent father comes back into her life, she organises a road trip to France in the hopes of reconnecting with him and rekindling her parents' relationship. Turns out gay couples are just as horribly dysfunctional as straight couples.

This may have been a terrible idea.

EXT. CAR- MOVING- DAY.

DAISY (17. Energetic teenager, entering a stage of independence. Well-meaning but quite naive) gazes out the window of the backseat. The hot sun washes over her face, along with reflections of the sprawling British countryside.

It's a beautiful day. Too beautiful. So hot it's bordering on suffocating. Her hair floats from the breeze through the open window. Soft. Dreamlike.

SECONDHAND NEWS by FLEETWOOD MAC plays from the car speaker.

She looks anxiously over at the drivers seat where MATTHIAS (47. Quiet. Stoic. Serious. Trying to hide how uncomfortable he is.) comes into focus, hands tapping the steering wheel to the beat. His face is out of frame but his expensive watch glints in the sun.

She wants to say something but the question catches on the tip of her tongue.

JAMES

Pineapple, darling?

JAMES (45. Intelligent academic. A diligent and compassionate father), offers a box of pineapple over his shoulder.

His other hand holds a philosophy book, which rests on his lap, on top of a jumper and open road map.

The car is similarly packed with miscellaneous items. It's cozy.

His glasses sit precariously on the edge of his nose, sweat moving delicately down his brow.

Daisy leans over to grab the pineapple piece, flopping back into her seat. Her summer dress isn't enough to keep her cool so she fans herself with a magazine.

Matthias changes the radio station.

RADIO HOST

-with temperatures rising it's shaping up to be the hottest summer on record in the UK. Enjoy the sunshine while it lasts! But remember to stay in indoors while you can to avoid heat stroke-

He changes the station again.

JAMES

Hold on, I was listening.

MATTHIAS

It's hot. It's going to get hotter.
That's all she was going to say.

Cycles through some songs that he dislikes and settles back on Fleetwood mac.

JAMES

You don't know that. She might've mentioned a storm-

MATTHIAS

-In the middle of a heatwave-

JAMES

Or that it would've been quicker if we hadn't missed the turning back at-

MATTHIAS

You're not still going on about that are you?

Daisy darts her eyes between them.

JAMES

I don't know how you missed it.

MATTHIAS

You were going on about Mendel's tulip studies-

JAMES

Sweet peas. They were sweet peas. It's interesting.

MATTHIAS

It was distracting.

The tension holds. Both go back to driving and reading respectively.

Daisy's gaze drifts back over to Matthias, her eyebrows furrowing. He's focussed on the road. The music drifts. It feels like a memory.

Matthias' eyes catch hers in the rearview mirror. They flick away and back to her.

JAMES

Matt, stop!

The car slams to a halt.

MATTHIAS

SHIT!

The car stops centimetres from 3 sheep who mill about the road, unbothered.

Pineapple drops all over the floor as everyone is jolted. Daisy bumps into James' seat, who frantically tries to save his book and map. They're soaked.

JAMES

God my book- what on earth are you doing?

MATTHIAS

I didn't see.

JAMES

Didn't see the entire bloody farm parked in the middle of the road?

DAISY

Are those sheep?

Daisy climbs into the middle seat to peer between them.

MATTHIAS

It's the sun glare it's distracting.

DAISY

Can I go say hi?

JAMES

(to Daisy)
No-

He reaches into his bag and drops a pair of sunglasses into Matthias's lap.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Put those on so we make it there in one piece.

Matthias does as he's told.

MATTHIAS

You're the one who said we should go through Amisfield.

JAMES

Susanna said there would be traffic.

MATTHIAS

Susanna drives her grandfathers car from the war, bloody thing wouldn't make it to Manchester, let alone Dover. We would've been fine.

Another sheep comes up to stand in front of them.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

Jesus.

Daisy suppresses a laugh.

JAMES

I can drive if you want.

MATTHIAS

No I'm quite happy thank you.

The air is tense and overly polite.

DAISY

The sheep aren't moving.

Matthias revs the engine but the sheep just look back at him, chewing grass leisurely.

MATTHIAS

Tough bastards.

JAMES

Language.

MATTHIAS

She knows what it means.

DAISY

I do.

She climbs out the car. James whips around him his seat.

JAMES

Be careful darling, they're wild anima-

MATTHIAS

Oh she'll be fine James.

Daisy moves around to shoo the sheep away from the road.

They don't seem too intimidated but they do start to move into the grass. She uses a piece of pineapple to lead them away.

Matthias chuckles.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

She's bright.

JAMES

She is.

Pause.

MATTHIAS

Sorry about your book.

JAMES

You were sorry about the wrong turn.

MATTHIAS

For god's sake! Bushes had grown over the sign, it was not that visible.

JAMES

If someone who knew the area were driving we wouldn't have had a problem.

MATTHIAS

It's my car!

Outside Daisy is leading the sheep around, the yelling is muffled to her.

JAMES

That you can't even drive in the right direction-

Matthias hits him with a hard look.

MATTHIAS

Is this really still about me missing the turning?

James pauses, startled. He glares back.

Daisy thumps the car bonnet, oblivious to the tension.

DAISY

Oi! Let's go!

They look at each other and decide to put their argument
aside. For now.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE CAR DRIVING OFF.