

SHARKS ARE TERRORISTS

Tamara von Werthern

Cast:

Emma

Paul

They are a couple, but could be of any age or ethnicity.

Setting: Their garden, July

Paul is sawing planks of wood with a hand-held saw. The wood is resting on two garden chairs. Birdsong. It's a beautiful day, quite hot. He takes his shirt off and wipes his face with it. Emma arrives, in a summer dress and knee-length leggings, carrying a cycle pannier and with a strappy shoulder bag in a funky colour. She kisses him.

EMMA. How's it going? Looking good.

PAUL. Yeah. Nearly done now.

EMMA. Let's have a look then.

She goes to the back of the garden, and peers into a massive hole.

EMMA. Wow. You got it all in?

PAUL. Yep. Just making the roof now. Then we're done.

EMMA. Oh, what do you think of this? Tadaaah.

She rummages in her pannier and brings out a piece of flowery material.

EMMA. I found it in Shepherd's Bush.

PAUL. Yeah, it's nice. What did you want it for?

EMMA. Curtains!

PAUL. Curtains?

EMMA. Yes, for the windows.

PAUL. Really? Do we need curtains?

EMMA. Of course we need, what do you mean? Of course we need curtains.

PAUL. You do know there's no light coming in, don't you?

EMMA. Curtains aren't just about blocking the light. I want it to look nice. I love this. Don't you love this?

PAUL. Yeah, I said, it's nice. Have curtains, if you want them.

EMMA. Thank you. I don't want to see worms wriggling outside my window. Feels like you're buried alive.

PAUL. Did you manage to get the food?

EMMA. Yes I got plenty.

PAUL. I put shelves up, you can start sorting it in later.

EMMA. Look, I even found peaches, for afters. Custard.

She starts pulling two Tesco carrier bags full of tins and packages out of the pannier and looking through her haul.

PAUL. Hang on, why didn't you go to the Co-op? We always shop at Co-op.

EMMA. They had already closed. What was I meant to do? Break in?

PAUL. That's just typical of Tesco's though, isn't it? Keeping it open until the very last minute, they don't care about how their employees get home, do they?

EMMA. Look, I'm sorry. It was an emergency. I normally always go to Co-op, of course I do, you know that. I don't think anybody saw me, if you're worried about that.

PAUL. And plastic bags?

EMMA. They were giving them away! And anyway, I thought they might be useful. We don't know how long it's going to be, do we?

PAUL. What else did you get?

EMMA. Spaghetti Hoops. Baked Beans. Pasta. Tomato sauce. Cheese. Bread is just going to go off, so I didn't bother. Oh, and I got a few soups.

PAUL. Okay, great. Thanks for doing that.

She carries the bags to the big hole and dumps them next to it. She gets a pair of scissors out of her shoulder bag and cuts/rips through the material, dividing it into curtain-sized chunks. She starts pinning the edges back with a few pins she gets out

of the bag as well, and sits down with legs crossed a little distance from Paul sawing to do so.

EMMA. So, you had a productive day? Looks like it.

PAUL. Yes, I'm so glad I bunked off work. Got so much done.

EMMA. Last day anyway. Nobody cares, do they? Only three people in the office. Had a two-hour lunch break. Great day. Busy on the streets though. Everybody's soaking up the sun, having lunch outside, living it up.

PAUL. Yeah, it's been a lovely day. Proper summer.

EMMA. Oh, and this morning, I shot a pedestrian.

PAUL. You did? Well done.

EMMA. Thanks. Yes, I'm really pleased. One less of them to worry about.

PAUL. How did you do it?

EMMA. Well, the cheeky sod had it coming, I tell you. It was on the canal path and he clearly wasn't looking where he was going, so I had to swerve to avoid him. He started getting all mouthy, effing and blinding, and shouted he would push me into the canal.

PAUL. What an arse.

EMMA. Yeah, he was really unpleasant. Really provoking me, you know. I had already gone up that ramp, you know by where the hospital is.

PAUL. Central St Martin's Hospital? By King's Cross?

EMMA. Yeah, exactly. So anyway, there's this overhang, where the path crosses underneath. I just waited there for him, and then bam! Straight between the eyes. Oh man, I felt like Sylvester Stallone.

PAUL. Wow, I wish I could have seen it.

EMMA. And then I got the dog too!

PAUL. The dog?

EMMA. Yeah, he had a nasty Staffie with him, that started howling and whining and drawing attention. I got him in one, even though he was jumping about.

PAUL. Why did you shoot the dog? We're pro-animal, aren't we?

EMMA. Hang on. I never said I was pro-animal. I'm not anti-animal, I'm just – I'm very differentiated in my thinking actually, on animals. I don't think you can use broad brush strokes like that for such a wide area.

PAUL. We're vegetarians! Of course we are pro-animal. How can you even think about that?

EMMA. Well, yeah, we don't eat them, but what about the ones that eat us?

PAUL. Animals are our friends!

EMMA. I like cats, I'm pro-cat. Birds. Love birds. And bees are of course hugely important, but certain kinds of dogs, dangerous dogs that are just there to big up their owner and that bite children in the face? Surely you can see I did a good thing in getting rid there.

PAUL. I just feel a bit uneasy about it. You making these kinds of judgments. I would not shoot an animal. Ever. Full stop.

EMMA. Okay. Imagine, we're swimming in the sea. Sardinia, remember? Imagine a shark heading straight for us. Great white. Really hungry. Now, if you had a weapon that could kill it, wouldn't you use it?

PAUL. Well... are there sharks in Sardinia?

EMMA. Yes of course! Sea's warm enough, and they're breeding like rabbits. They have shark vigilante groups and everything there. Don't you listen to the news?

PAUL. Well, I might not go swimming then, if there's sharks, I still don't think it's right to cull them.

EMMA. You are such a bleeding-heart liberal. Sharks are terrorists. Get with the programme.

PAUL. Sharks are just sharks.

EMMA. Sharks probably gave the terrorists all their ideas on how to operate. Stealth. Hide in plain sight. Spread as much panic on a beach as you can with as little effort as possible. Blood frenzy. The whole shebang. Sharks are the original terrorists.

PAUL. So, okay, maybe sharks are, under certain circumstances, maybe I could imagine going up against a shark. Okay.

EMMA. See – you're starting to differentiate – that's good. It's not all black and white. You have to use your brain a bit, don't just swallow everything they tell you.

PAUL. The whole point of this war, of our struggle, surely, is to protect the animals, the natural world. We can't pick and choose which animals we think are useful or cute or

'unthreatening' and just protect them. It's a delicate network, the animal kingdom. It's all balanced. Take one brick out and it will collapse.

EMMA. Crocodiles eat their young. Do you think that's okay?

PAUL. Are we going to go through all the animals now, one by one?

EMMA. No. I'm just making a point.

PAUL. Yes, I think you've made it. I still don't think you should have shot that dog.

EMMA. Okay, fine, forget about it. Let's just stop talking about that effing dog.

PAUL. Sorry. I didn't mean to bring the mood down.

Beat.

I'm really proud of you.

EMMA. Are you though?

PAUL. You shot a pedestrian, that's great, you might even get a mention.

EMMA. Do they still do that?

PAUL. Course they do. Well. I don't know how it works, once everyone's gone under.

EMMA. Well, not everyone.

PAUL. Yeah, good we're with the home-owners.

EMMA. Exactly.

PAUL. I think if we're careful, we can even get to the veg patch at night.

EMMA. Do you think it'll be safe to eat?

PAUL. Ah. Good point. Better not risk it.

EMMA. It's just impossible to tell what they're spraying from above, I think we best stick to tins. I got the oldest ones I could find, just to be on the safe side.

PAUL. Good thinking.

EMMA. I love the bunker, you made it really cosy. It'll be a doddle, going into hiding.

PAUL. And look, what else I found!

He pulls out a wind-up radio, which he proceeds to wind up with a handle. He switches it on. It crackles.

EMMA. Ah that is brilliant. We won't need batteries. Perfect.

PAUL. We got that for camping, remember? Found it under the stairs.

He tunes it, the crackle subsides.

RADIO. The latest developments indicate that there has been a sharp downturn in public relations between the sexes. After the recent twitter storm between the US president and our prime minister, two clear camps have emerged. It is now very much men versus women. 'You're either with us, or against us.' The president declared to a huge, no, a simply enormous crowd of mostly men and some boys outside the Capitol Building last night. The prime minister in stark contrast declared everyone in possession of a penis a traitor. 'We need strong borders, and we need to know what's coming in through those borders. We need control, and we need it now. Not two years from now, straight away. That's a sign of strong leadership.' These developments will of course have consequences for the lives of many citizens in the US as well as on the British Isles. It is unavoidable that this will lead to two deeply divided nations. The US has indicated that all men will be granted visas, regardless of their nationality, whereas women will no longer enjoy the privilege of citizenship. The UK in turn is to open its borders to women from all over the world, and will welcome them with open arms. Men, however, will be extradited with immediate effect. Challenging times ahead, but it looks as if progress is being made. Remember: Who you are is where you are is what you are. Loyalty will pay its own dividends. And now, the weather.

PAUL switches off the radio. They look at each other.

A beat.

PAUL. I just built us a fucking bunker!

EMMA. I know.

I know you have.

PAUL. What are we going to do?

EMMA. We're fucked, aren't we?

We're so fucked.

She casually picks up the pistol, then hugs PAUL, still holding the pistol. They hold each other.

Blackout.

The end