

A Photograph

You've got to see the whole picture if you really want to know what's going on.

Revelling in the delights of recently being made the youngest partner at his firm, high-octane and ambition young lawyer Charlie Sweeney accompanies his nightmare of a best friend, and would be photojournalist, Kane Geary, into inner London's midnight underworld on a misguided attempt at snapping up the urban misery and human decay.

As Charlie follows Kane deeper into the unforgiving surroundings his fear and his friend's cavalier attitude to their danger push his tolerance to the limit. Wound up in knots with frustration, Charlie is hardly aware of the vicious beating a young homeless boy is receiving in the gutter by his feet.

As Kane hungrily sucks in the violence with his amateur photographic skills Charlie chases off the boy's attackers then cradles him in his arms as he lies dying. The hard-nosed lawyer, so used to corporate crucifixions, is not prepared for the anguish of have a child die in his arms and the harrowing incident in the dirty London street comes to leave scars upon his soul in more ways than he could ever have imagined.

Charlie's grief, however, turns to a more sickening distress when he wakes the following morning to discover a gaggle of frenzied press pounding at his door. More by luck than judgment, in the split second before Charlie noticed the brutal attack, Kane had captured an image of him, business suit attire, hands thrust deep in pockets, eyes cast down, literally and figuratively looking the other way as he passes by a destitute teenager's lonely violent death.

The image is so profound and expressive of a soulless era that it goes on to seep into the country's psyche and become an iconic image of a cold and heartless age, pricking a collective subconscious like nothing before it. Charlie, now close to being the most hated man in Britain, mournfully accepts how quickly his so-called friend has made a sacrifice of him. After losing everything because of his current notoriety Charlie, broken and haunted, decides to end his own life.

The world, it seems, is not ready to let go of Charlie just yet and he is literally pulled back from the edge by enigmatic businessman Obadiah Lawson, a man with more layers than the proverbial onion. Obadiah's chauffeur carries Charlie like a broken doll to his limousine and transports him to his rambling mansion on the tiny, sparingly populated island of Small Haven.

In the cold sober light of morning, with hysteria subsided, the island takes on a hue of ethereal frightening beauty. The more Charlie sees of the place and its inhabitants, all outwardly normal, inwardly strange, and all living under Obadiah's domineering influence, the more everything about it seems slightly askew.

The one positive asset for Charlie is the residents' apparent lack of knowledge of the notorious photograph and his national infamy. Obadiah, the strangest denizen of all in Small Haven is a man with the confident tone of a monster who's calmly aware of the brutality coiled up inside

him, always leaving a lasting impression of an evil intelligence in his wake. He insists on Charlie staying on at his dark and moody mansion, imploring him to defend his only son Matthew in a bizarre self conducted island trial. Charlie takes on the role with the misguided belief that a victory will restore his dignity and self worth, especially as Lawson's beguiling young son, with his callow face and haunting stare, is a polished near replica of the dead boy from the photograph.

As Charlie throws himself into the case an undeniable air of nastiness pervades the proceedings. At his every turn his efforts are thwarted and his hopes of being able to save the boy in this 'second chance' scenario fly drastically out of control.

As Charlie desperately tries to keep news of his dire ineptness from Obadiah's ears he grows increasingly consumed by the young Matthew. Still laden with guilt, he becomes obsessed by the idea of saving the boy at this trial and his dedication to the case seems more about satisfying some deep-seated need in his own life. The situation draws man and boy together as a noose is drawn tight and during their strange and stilted relationship they begin to pity and care for one another.

Without knowing it Charlie tries to mould Matthew more and more into the dead boy from the infamous photograph – making the hope of the expectant salvation all the more pertinent. However, that salvation never comes, in its stead tragedy looms again for Charlie, but this time in an even more harrowing and unforgiving of ways.

Yet, as a traumatised Charlie prepares to flee from Small Haven, he happens upon something that puts all his anguish on the island into a dizzying perspective.

Regaining strength, and an audacious cunning that once prevailed within him, Charlie travels to London and pulls a few punches of his own before returning to the island one last time with a game-plan that will hopefully change the way the world sees him once and for all.