

1 EXT. PUB. DAY

Greenery and flowers surround an attractive public house. Titles read "Wallace. Based on a true story. Of sorts."

2 INT. PUB. DAY

Lyell, a well presented 40-something-year-old man sits behind a nearly-full glass of wine. He squints and sheepishly smiles as he leans towards an unseen character.

LYELL

He'll be here any minute. Are you going to be OK...? Are you sure you're ready to meet him?

A caption reads "Charles Lyell".

Sitting next to Lyell is Hooker, a smart, spindly 30-something-year-old wearing a daisy chain around his neck. He similarly leans forward towards the off-screen character.

HOOKER

We're really sorry, for what it's worth... for the way it all turned out...

A caption reads "Joesph Dalton Hooker".

The unseen focus of Lyell and Hooker's humble attentions is Wallace, a shabby man in his early twenties sitting uncomfortably in front of a half-drunk pint of bitter. He wears a t-shirt with "My ship sank and all I salvaged was this t-shirt" printed on it.

WALLACE

I'll be fine. I'm fine. Really. I'm fine... fine.

A caption reads "Alfred Russel Wallace".

3 EXT. STREET. DAY. FLASHBACK

A healthier-looking, brighter Wallace walks down a street and suddenly spots someone, or something, off-screen.

WALLACE (V.O.)

You know, I've almost forgotten about it already.

Wallace slows, transfixed by the object of his fascination, and walks towards it.

(CONTINUED)

WALLACE (V.O.)

It was just a chance encounter. I barely noticed her at first.

The object is gradually revealed to be... a green balloon, tied to a post, bobbing in the wind. It is love at first sight - Wallace can not hide a look of utter adoration on his wide-eyed, almost drooling, face.

WALLACE (V.O.)

I could have taken or left it.

Wallace bashfully waves hello.

4 EXT. PARK. DAY. FLASHBACK

Wallace and the balloon walk, hand in string, through a park, broad smiles on their faces. Wallace finds it hard to take his eyes off his partner.

WALLACE (V.O.)

But we got together, you know, just casually. It's not like I loved her or anything.

Wallace mouths "I love you" to the balloon.

5 INT. MUSEUM. DAY. FLASHBACK

An awe-struck Wallace casually walks through the Natural History Museum with the balloon.

WALLACE (V.O.)

She insisted on taking me to the places she was interested in...

They stop and look at a pickled coelacanth. Wallace is clearly fascinated.

WALLACE (V.O.)

...her idea of "fascinating" and "wonderful".

They look at the skeleton of a giant sloth, Wallace even more visibly fascinated than before.

WALLACE (V.O.)

I wasn't that interested.

Standing in front of a stuffed platypus, Wallace remains fascinated but at the same time looks a tad puzzled by the piecemeal creature in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

WALLACE (V.O.)
She didn't even make much sense
half of the time.

6 EXT. GARDEN. DAY. FLASHBACK

Wallace and his beloved sit in a garden observing insects and enjoying a picnic made up of a handful of value foods spilling from a plastic bag.

WALLACE (V.O.)
But we still had some exciting
days out, I suppose. And we got
on really well, I guess.

Wallace holds out a plastic cup of juice to the balloon and then withdraws it as the balloon refuses his offer.

WALLACE (V.O.)
But I think I... I think she
liked me more than I liked her.

7 INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT. FLASHBACK

Wallace appears at the open door of a bedroom in which the balloon lies in bed. He looks on her and smiles.

WALLACE (V.O.)
She was very affectionate...

Wallace mouths "good night" and blows her a kiss before departing.

8 INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT. FLASHBACK

Wallace enters the bathroom and looks at himself in the mirror, unhappy with what he sees.

WALLACE (V.O.)
...but at the end of the day...
maybe... maybe she felt... she
wasn't good enough for me.

9 INT. PUB. DAY

Returning to the pub, the trio of Lyell, Hooker and Wallace sit around a table, as before. Wallace takes a swig of his pint, trying and failing to hold back his true emotions.

As he does, Darwin, a 30-something year-old man approaches the tables and takes off his jacket to reveal a t-shirt emblazoned with "I [heart] Barnacles".

DARWIN

Hi guys! Sorry I'm late.

A caption reads "Charles Darwin".

DARWIN

I've just got to pop for a tinkle
and I'll be right back.

Darwin walks off. Wallace fidgets uncomfortably and takes another swig from his drink.

LYELL

Are you sure you're OK?

WALLACE

Fine! Fine. Fine. Dandy.

10 EXT. STREET. DAY. FLASHBACK

The balloon bobs in the wind, tied to a post, as it did with Wallace's first memory, earlier.

WALLACE (V.O.)

He was there first, right?

Darwin kisses the balloon before waving at her and walking off.

WALLACE (V.O.)

It was just my bad luck... I mean, if I did want it to go anywhere... that she was with him when we met.

Wallace approaches the balloon as he had previously, having not seen Darwin.

11 EXT. PARK. DAY. FLASHBACK

Wallace sits in a park engrossed by a copy of "Voyage of the Beagle."

WALLACE (V.O.)

He's someone I have the utmost respect for. When you told me about them I was happy for her... really!

Darwin walks, together with the balloon, beaming, past Wallace, neither seeing each other.

12 EXT. MUSEUM. DAY. FLASHBACK

Wallace looks up at the skeleton of a giant sloth in the Natural History Museum.

WALLACE (V.O.)

I know she's in good hands. And I know he really understands her.

An oblivious Darwin and balloon enter the room behind Wallace and walk away from him.

13 EXT. GARDEN. DAY. FLASHBACK

Darwin and the balloon sit in a garden observing insects and enjoying a picnic made up of luxury cheeses drawn from a picnic basket.

WALLACE (V.O.)

You know, heh, he can probably give her more than I ever could.

The couple visibly enjoying each others' company, Darwin holds out a glass of wine to the balloon and smiles.

14 INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT. FLASHBACK

Wallace mouths "good night" and blows a kiss to the tucked-up balloon, as before.

WALLACE (V.O.)

I know he knew how I felt. And I'm sure he did everything he could to spare my feelings.

As he leaves, the door swings shut to reveal a half-naked Darwin skulking behind it.

15 INT. PUB. DAY

Lyell and Hooker awkwardly look at each other, both sad and guilty. Wallace's depressed mind in overdrive, he stares into his pint and looks like he could be on the verge of a complete breakdown before he snaps himself out of his funk.

WALLACE

I'm sorry... sorry. I've told you all of this before, haven't I? Just, please, don't tell anyone, OK?

Lyell and Hooker's eyebrows simultaneously raise as the guilty men grin sheepishly.

16 INT. ROOM. DAY. FLASHBACK

Frenetic flashbacks switch back-and-forth between Lyell and Hooker excitedly talking to people on the phone.

LYELL
Omigod. Have you heard?

HOOKER
Have you heard?

LYELL
Gossip!

HOOKER
I've got something to tell you!

LYELL
Have you heard?

HOOKER
Wallace! Darwin!

LYELL
Omigod.

HOOKER
Don't tell anyone, 'kay?

LYELL
Keep it to yourself.

HOOKER
You'll never believe it...

LYELL
Have you heard?

17 INT. PUB. DAY

Returning to Hooker and Lyell, as we left them, looking guilty.

LYELL
Of course not!

HOOKER
No! We wouldn't say a thing.

Wallace looks at them, slightly suspicious.

WALLACE
I just want him to take good care of her.

(CONTINUED)

LYELL

He will. I've no doubt about that.

HOOKER

You can still see her, you know.

Wallace looks down into his empty pint, holding back tears.

WALLACE

Sure. Sure. I know. Maybe.

Darwin returns to the table, slightly embarrassed, holding the balloon, unsure of Wallace's reaction.

DARWIN

Look who I bumped in to!

Wallace looks up and forces the most fake smile since the invention of Mr. Potato Head plastic smiles. He stands and after a brief pause he holds out his hand towards Darwin. Darwin reaches out and shakes Wallace's hand.

WALLACE

Great to meet you, Charles. And thanks for the invite. Congratulations on the... happy occasion.

He looks over to the balloon and smiles.

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END TITLES

An epilogue reads:

"Wallace and Darwin independently conceived the idea that would come to be known as Natural Selection. [...] Their grand theory of evolution was revealed to the world by Lyell and Hooker on 1st July 1858."

"Forever in Darwin's shadow, Wallace nonetheless found pride in prompting the publication of one of the most earth-shattering books ever written: [...] On The Origin of Species."

"150 years later, evolution by natural selection is widely accepted as a literal fact of life. [...] Few would argue it is full of hot air. [...] Or helium."