

There you go then.

There were three of them – Joe and Annie, and Pete who owned the boat. They'd only met Pete for the first time that morning when they arrived for the trip around the island. Joe didn't take to him much, thought he was a bit rough and had a few attitudes. A bit hard to be specific but, for example, when he handed them the life jackets he'd started to help Annie tie hers up. Joe didn't like that – he thought the world had moved on a bit from the days when women were seen to be useless. Well they had in North Fitzroy anyway – not so sure about Port Fairy. And when he was explaining what they were going to do – head out to sea for twenty minutes or so, then run parallel to the coast for about an hour before reaching the island – it was Joe he was addressing, like Annie's opinion wasn't needed. Joe didn't like that kind of shit and he knew Annie hated it too. He remembered one occasion when she'd gone right off at Joe's mate Ian who'd suggested that a woman was less likely to be able to change a wheel than a man. Given him her usual serve about nurture and nature. So Joe was pretty sure that Annie had a similar reaction to this bloke Pete. They weren't in a position to talk about it of course on a small boat but Joe was pretty sure she'd have something to say about it later.

He clearly knew what he was doing with the boat though did Pete – taking them out through the river mouth and then past the light house and the views were spectacular so Joe forgot about his anti-Pete feelings and just soaked it all up for a while. And Annie seemed to be going OK too. Pete told them that there was a bit of a change coming – something about a south westerly. Joe wasn't paying that much attention. Didn't think it was anything to do with him really. But that all changed pretty soon.

It started to get a bit rough out there and after a while Joe started to feel sick, quite a bit sick really and without any warning he chucked up over the side, well almost over the side, some of it was over Pete. Joe hardly noticed and cared even less – he was far too caught up in his own misery, but Annie leapt over – not to Joe but to Pete – apologizing and wiping him down with some tissues. Annie always had tissues. She gave Joe a couple but he hardly noticed, vomiting again and again, moaning and carrying on. Pete reacted rather well for a man who'd just been puked on – mainly his pants but a little around his stomach too. And although Joe didn't see it – heaving over the side as he was – while she was wiping him down Pete pulled Annie to him and kissed her full on the lips. And Annie surprised herself by kissing him back. Tongue too. Just like that. She'd been attracted to him right from the start of course. He had something earthy, strong and capable about him. Something sort of masculine really. Something that Joe wouldn't have recognized but something which Annie found magnetic. Pete himself wasn't quite sure what it was that he had either but he knew that he had it. Sometimes he could just look at a

woman – in the pub, at a party, in a shop even – just look and he knew if he wanted them he could have them. He could hold their gaze and they were gone.

And that was that. Pete turned the boat back, Annie took Joe back to their motel room, made sure he was comfortable and then went and spent a couple of hours in Pete's bed before driving herself back to North Fitzroy, packing her bags and heading off to Northern New South Wales where she'd wanted to live for years. By the time Joe woke up the next morning, feeling better but damaged and wondering where Annie was, she was not far from Dubbo. And Pete? Well, Pete was back out on his boat thinking of fish.