1.- Daniel, who left his wife Rachel for Isabel, is plagued by recurring dreams of being back with Rachel and of missing keys to a “phantom” flat. He confides one dream; tensions surface. Subsequent dreams feature flooded rooms and Rachel’s sardonic “permission.” A real keyring (old canoe-club keys) surfaces, triggering memory of a failed marital repair. He invites Isabel canoeing, discards the keys, but keeps the leather loop.

2.- Ambivalence and compartmentalization in love; the past’s persistence and unreliability; dreams as carriers of disowned desire and fear. Objects (keys, phone, water) mediate between memory and choice. The story probes fidelity, midlife identity, guilt, and the labor of recommitment—turning residue of a long marriage into a conscious choice for the present.

3.- 5

4.- The keys/phantom flat allegorize Daniel’s fantasy of partitioned selves—husband, lover, solitary—kept in separate rooms. The unresponsive phone signals blocked communication; water/floods embody seepage of repressed feeling. Rachel’s voice is his internal tribunal. The canoe keys literalize the unconscious surfacing, enabling enactment (canoeing with Isabel). Discarding keys yet keeping the loop enacts partial renunciation: choosing the present while acknowledging unerasable nostalgia.