

John Russell
FROZEN TEARS

DEATH FLOWERS ERUPTING WITH PUTRID PETALS OF EXCRESCENCE. O BABY. O BABY. YOU FUCKING BASTARD. YOU LOVED ME SO MUCH YOU BLOCKED UP MY AIR PIPE. THE SEWAGE WORKS HAVE ... HAVE ERUPTED AND SHIT IS FLOWING DOWN THE STREET IN A RIVER OF PISS. OH MUMMY! MUMMY! POO. POOOOOO. AND A CLOUD OF BUTTERFLIES AND INSECT-HUMANS STAND UP AND SCREAM. SCREAM AT THE SKY. GIRAFFE-MANTISSES RE-MATERIALISING IN SHIT AND BLOOD. AND A DRAGONFLY DRINKING DROPS OF DEW OFF A LEAF, TASTING LIKE LIQUID HEROIN. O BABY. O BABY. I LOVE YOU BUT IT ENDED IMMEDIATELY. IMMEDIATELY. NO ... NO SUN PLAYING ON THE OILY SURFACE. BUT THEY ARE NOT LAUGHING ... THEY ARE NOT LAUGHING. BUT THE SICK AND THE SCUM ... THAT ... THAT ... THAT IS OUR NON-SALVATION. THIS IS OUR NON-SALVATION. SHIT. SHIT. SHIT. AND THEY WILL COME. IN SHIT. AND SCUM THEY WILL COME. SHIT ... SHIT ... OK. FOCUS. FOCUS. OK. OK. OK. FOCUS. FOCUS. FOCUS. YES. YES. YES. FOCUS. FOCUS. OK. OK. OK. BREATHE IN ... BREATHE IN ... OK ... OK ... BREATHE IN ... AND BREATHE OUT ... BREATHE OUT. OK. OK. BREATHE IN ... BREATHE IN ... BREATHE IN ... RELAX ... RELAX ... AND BREATHE OUT ... FOCUS ... FOCUS ... FOCUS ... YES ... YES ... BREATHE IN ... BREATHE IN. OK. OK. RELAX ... AND BREATHE OUT ... OK. OK. BREATHE IN ... BREATHE IN ... RELAX ... AND BREATHE OUT ... NICE ... NICE ... OK ... OK ... FOCUS. FOCUS. FOCUS. OK. OK. OK. Focus. Focus. OK. OK. OK. Nice. Nice. OK. Focus. Focus. Testing. Testing. One. Two. Three. OK. OK. OK. One. Two. Three. One. Two. Three ... One. Two. Three. One. Two. Three. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. Nice.

OK. OK. OK. OK. Looking down the hallway ... looking down a hallway ... dirty carpet ... stairs in front. Looking down the hall you can see a staircase. OK. OK. OK. Focus. Focus ... mirror on the wall and below the mirror, a hall table with a metal plate for front door keys and loose change and a ceramic ornament in the shape of a book, which says: "My Favourite Gran". Next to this are a few coats hanging from hooks; and straight ahead, through a door at the end of the hall, you can see a cooker and kitchen units. And there is a funny smell, a sweet smell but unpleasant. Not nice. Not nice. Not nice. Not nice.

You walk ... you walk down the corridor, towards the kitchen but turn in through the door on the left and you are now in a living room with yellowed wallpaper. And above the gas fire is a painting of a landscape with a lake in the foreground. In the corner is a glass display case with ornaments like ceramic animals and ballerinas and on the other side of the room there is a television. On top of the television is a carved wooden horse.

Koffff! Kafff! Koff! There is a sound. The sound of someone coughing. You turn in this direction and you catch sight of a figure sitting at a table, in front of the window – but you don't get a clear sight of this figure, because the figure turns away. You can see that the figure is smoking a cigar and blowing out smoke. This figure is me and I say:

"Hello. Nice to make your acquaintance."

OK.OK. Kofffff! Kafff! OK. right. Lets get started. Yes. Yes. We have started. Started. I have a bottle of piss-sweet sherry in front of me. Kofffff! I don't as a rule drink sherry but it's all I could find ... and a cigar ... so ... whatever! Lets get started. OK. OK. ... Five years ago.

Before he became a psychotic Zarvyn Mitchell had been a successful businessman. He ran a business with his brother, manufacturing and retailing caravans and mobile homes. Then five years ago he started thinking the media were talking to him. He thought adverts on television and billboards on the street were addressed to him personally. This is normal for psychotics.

He thought there were little creatures all around him. Little insect creatures who were trying to control him – a cross between insects and rats and dogs. There was an advert on the trains where fare dodgers were compared to various parasites such as rats and lice and cockroaches. The rats were OK; it was the lice and cockroaches that bothered him. There was a cartoon of lice and cockroaches pick-pocketing a rail-user. The advert said: “They are parasites. They want to steal your money.” Zarvyn took this personally. He interpreted this as meaning the lice and cockroaches wanted to steal his money.

There were other adverts in magazines and on TV that he was worried about as well – either the words would read like a threat or a prophesy or he would see insects somewhere in the images.

Maybe the psychosis was linked to his Mother’s death, a few years earlier because his mother had the strange hobby of keeping spiders and large Madagascan cockroaches as pets, or maybe it was connected to an infestation of cockroaches at his offices in Brighton. On this occasion, they had called in *Pest-o-Cutors Ltd*. But, even after the infestation had been dealt with, Zarvyn continued to think he could “see” insects out of the corner of his eye.

Then he told his brother, Tony, that beetles were climbing into his head through his ears when he was asleep. Tony thought Zarvyn must be suffering from stress. They talked about it. They both agreed he had

been working too hard – and it was true, *he had been working too hard*, he hadn't had a holiday for five years. And so it was decided he should go on a five-week break to the West Indies.

Sun and sea and relaxation. But unfortunately he came back even worse. While he was out there he was drinking heavily and taking a variety of drugs to calm his nerves and to help him sleep. Tony got a phone call from someone at the hotel where Zarvyn had been staying saying he was flying back to the UK. Zarvyn had smashed up his hotel room. He was flying back to England.

Tony went to meet his brother at the airport. When Zarvyn walked through Arrivals he was talking to himself. He had dark rings around his eyes and seemed distressed. Tony didn't know what to do. They sat down at a coffee franchise and Tony went up to the counter to get two coffees. When he came back Zarvyn was crouched over the table, talking to himself.

Tony looked at his younger brother. He was thirty-one. He was tall and thin, with blond hair. He looked in a bad way.

"It got worse," said Zarvyn. "There was different bugs out there. They're worse. And they followed me in through Customs. They are everywhere. They are waiting. They ... they are everywhere !" He was talking loudly and making strange gestures.

A middle-aged couple sitting on the table next to them, looked over.

Tony said to his brother:

"Calm down Zarvyn. What's the matter with you?"

They decided that it was time to get professional psychiatric help. Zarvyn admitted himself into a psychiatric hospital and he was prescribed drugs.

After two or three weeks, it seemed that he had recovered and he returned home. He seemed to be back to his normal self.

... OK. OK. OK. Nice. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. Nice. Focus. Focus. FOCUS. FOCUSSSSS. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. Yes. Yes. One. Two. Three. One. Two. Three. Testing. Testing. OK. OK. It's difficult. It's difficult. OK. OK. I don't really understand this. I don't really understand this. I don't really understand. No. OK. I mean ... OK. OK. OK. I mean, I don't understand. I don't understand. OK. OK. I guess, I am sort of part of this ... but ... but ... OK. OK. ... but I don't understand it. You see it? You see it? Yes. Yes. Yes. OK. OK. OK.

OK. OK. While he was taking his medication. While he was taking his medication he seemed to be back to normal and he was allowed to go home. It seemed he had completely recovered. He was even planning to go back to work. But then, for some reason he stopped taking the drugs, without telling anyone, and things got bad again, or even worse. Very quickly. On the second night after he stopped taking his medication he was lying in bed and he felt there were beetles crawling all over him. He thought he could see a big beetle sitting on the end of his bed. He started screaming but, before anyone could get to him, he had run out of the house and driven off in his car. At first he thought he had escaped but, in a sudden flash, he saw that the black interior of the car was black because it was covered in beetles and then he saw there was a big cockroach sitting in the back. He screamed and veered off the road and the next

thing he knew he was trapped in a burning car and his flesh was melting. And the pain ... oh shit! The pain! The pain. Shit. Shit. He was very lucky not to die in the accident. A passing motorist pulled him from the car. But he sustained multiple injuries, including multiple fractures to both legs, a broken back and severe burns to his face hands and legs. There was another car involved in the crash but no major injuries.

But, worst of all, he seemed to suffer a complete mental breakdown.

And now, two or three years after the crash, he doesn't even seem to know what his name is. He sits in a wheel chair and pisses and shits into a nappy. I mean, basically there is no medical reason why he can't walk. It's psychological.

He sits in his wheel chair looking straight ahead of himself, thinking:

Who am I?

Who am I? Who am I? Hoo am I? Shit. Shit. Shit. No. NO. NO. Please. Please. Please. Oh shit. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Fuck. Fuck. OK. OK. Who am I? Who am I? Who am I? OK. OK. OK. OK. Kofff. OK. Focus. Focus. OK. right, as I said, I have a bottle of sherry in front of me – to help me through this ... through this ... it's all I could find in this house ... so whatever. And anyway, this isn't where the story is. No. No, the story is not here – the story is somewhere else. Anyway this is OUR story. This is our story. OK. OK. OK. HA. HA. OUR. OUR. OK. OK. The

story sort of happens by itself. Do you know what I mean? Yes. Yes. OK. Where am I? Where am I? Here. Now. This is a small, 1950s town house in Brighton. OK. OK. And so that's where I am ... here! But this isn't where the story is – it smells bad here – VERY BAD. Very bad ... Oh shit! OK. OK.

OK. OK. OK. OK. OK ... OK. Right, let's relax. OK. ... shit y! Focus. Focus. Focus. Focus.

Toneeeee Mitchell walks out of a restaurant. By the look of the clothes it must be about 1995.

The man is Tony Mitchell. You remember him? Tony Mitchell. The brother of Zarvyn Mitchell, who was the guy who kept seeing beetles and who was in the car crash? But it's a few years later. This is his brother.

He walks out of a restaurant – which is in fact *his* restaurant. The restaurant is on the sea front in Brighton. It is an Italian restaurant. It is called *Italiano*. He stands by the edge of the road waiting for a gap in the traffic. He tosses his car keys absent-mindedly in his hand. A car slows and he walks across the road to the opposite pavement, which is adjacent to the beach. He walks slowly along the sea wall, his hair blown back off his forehead. He looks out to sea – at the slate-grey waves. He feels himself relax. Relax. Relax. Relax. After a couple of minutes, he turns around and sees three more people come out of the restaurant – two men and a tall woman. The woman is his wife Jane. She used to be a model. She is wearing a trouser suit and a red shirt. She is saying good-bye. Tony has said good-bye already, inside the restaurant and he can't be bothered to say good-bye again. Anyway his wife is the one they are interested in.

Tony Mitchell is taller than average height and

heavily built. He does regular weight training. He used to enter body-building competitions and took steroids and muscle-building supplements, which meant he was susceptible to mood swings, but he gave that up a few years ago. He has square-rimmed gold glasses and is wearing a very expensive, slightly out of fashion grey suit. At first glance, he looks like a handsome man – something about the cut of his hair, his upright stance and the general set of his features, but on closer inspection he is ugly – very ugly – he has strange teeth, bug-eyes and a shapeless nose. And he sweats a lot. At the moment he has a line of sweat on his forehead.

He is watching the silhouette of a ferry in the distance. Jane comes up beside him. She touches his arm. Jane is a beautiful woman with dark hair, dark eyes and olive-coloured skin. She wears a lot of jewellery but it suits her.

Tony speaks first, he says:

“That seemed to go well!”

Jane replies.

“Yes ... yes. It did go well.”

Later on. It is the same day. Tony and Jane are lying beside their swimming pool. It is a very hot day. Jane is lying face down on an inflatable mattress wearing green bikini bottoms. Beside her on the concrete is a vodka and orange. Tony lies a few yards away, on his back, on a sun lounger, with a magazine over his face. He wears a pair of black swimming shorts and there are a pair of sunglasses balanced on his upper thigh.

For ten minutes the two of them lie in the sun, motionless except for the odd twitch or flick of a hand, then Tony reaches up, moves the magazine off his face and sits up and says:

“Wow! It’s hot!”

Jane doesn’t say anything.

Tony reaches beside him and picks up his spectacles. He puts them on and stands up. As he does so, his sunglasses fall off his legs onto the concrete. He looks down at them on the paving stones, then yawns and walks forward a few steps. The sun is hot. He looks down into the swimming pool, focusing first on the tiles at the bottom and then on a small, dead beetle that is floating across the surface. He yawns again.

Then, mainly for the sake of something to do, he decides to go into the house to fix himself another drink. He asks Jane:

“Do you want something to drink?” She mumbles “No”.

Focusing for a few seconds on his wife’s body, specifically on the side view of her breasts squashed on the mattress, he experiences a sudden stirring of desire.

He walks around the swimming pool, across the crazy paving, through the French windows and into the living room.

A few seconds later he is standing, beside the drinks cabinet, flexing and un-flexing his toes in the pile of the carpet. He pours himself a gin and tonic. As he tests the drink, he catches sight of himself in the mirror on the wall. He spends a few seconds looking at his body. He stretches to his full height and flexes and un-flexes his pectorals while watching himself in the mirror. Again he feels stirrings of desire. A thought takes root in his mind: he is in the mood for sex. He feels he would like Jane to give him a blow-job and then he would like to fuck her, preferably from behind, in the swimming pool. To facilitate this he flips out his penis – semi soft/hard – pulls back his foreskin and cleans himself with the aid of the soda siphon. He rubs the spilt soda into the carpet with his foot.

Then Tony picks up his drink, turns and walks towards the French windows; beyond him, in the middle distance, we can see the swimming pool and his wife who is still sunbathing. He walks out of the room.

We stay in the living room. We don't follow Tony out. It is almost exclusively white in here: white walls, white carpet, white leather sofas, white coffee table, white lamps.

Out of a window – in the distance – we can see a man. He is playing golf. His name is Geoff Mitchell. There is also another figure – as we get closer we can see it is an *attractive older woman*. She is wearing a blue tracksuit and training shoes. She is jogging along on the far side of the golf course. Geoff is nearer to us.

Geoff looks down at the golf ball below him. He is wearing a tracksuit and he has a mobile phone attached to his waist. There is a plastic carrier bag full of golf balls on the grass next to him and a bag of golf clubs.

Geoff Mitchell's head looks like a sheep's skull, with two bright blue eyes in the sockets, lustrous thick grey hair shaped into a quiff and strange purple cheeks. He was handsome when he was young but now he looks like a shrink-wrapped chicken.

Geoff lifts the golf club above his head – swings – thwack! The golf ball fires down the fairway.

Geoff is thinking:

“OK. OK. Not bad! Not bad! Better. Better. ... but same problem ... But not bad! OK. OK. OK. OK.”

He hooks another golf ball out of the bag with his club, bends down and puts it on a tee. He looks down at the ball ... concentrating ... concentrating ... standing over the ball. He starts his wind up. He is standing poised over the ball. A drop of sweat runs down his nose

and falls through the air.

He twists his body ... the club head moves back ... one ... two ... three ... Fwack! The ball slices away into the trees. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK.

A few minutes ago, Tony and Jane were having sex in the swimming pool but now they have stopped. Tony lost his hard-on. Now, they have resumed their former positions on the li-lo and sun-lounger.

Jane is thinking:

“Why does Tony find it difficult to keep a hard-on? Why does he find it difficult to keep a hard-on? Sometimes he can only keep it up for a few minutes. He didn’t used to have this problem. I wonder if there’s something wrong? But it would be difficult to talk to him about it ... he would just get angry. But something must be wrong. I mean over the last six months we have only had sex ... maybe twice. He seems to have lost his sex drive recently. But not today, which was nice. Not at first. I was enjoying it ... but ... but he lost interest. I wonder if it’s just a phase he’s going through. Maybe we should try harder. Maybe we should try some different things. Or maybe he doesn’t find me sexually attractive anymore. Or maybe he’s having an affair or I wonder if he’s gay. Imagine him being gay ... that would be funny ... HA. HA. ... that would be funny. HA. HA. HA. HA. HA. HA. HA. Well not really.

A fly lands on Jane’s left buttock – it walks across her tanned skin down the cleft between her arse cheeks. Jane reaches behind her back and flicks at the fly with her hand.

But ... But then you know this don't you? You know about this fly – don't you? You know about it. You know about it. Yes. Yes. You know about it. Yes. Yes. Yes. Right. Because ... because ... because that fly is not my fly. THAT IS NOT MY FLY. Do you know what I mean? Yes. THAT IS NOT MY FLY. OK. OK. That was not my fly, so it has to be your fly OK? That was your fly. Your fly. Yeah. Yeah. You know what I mean? Your fly. Your fucking fly! I think you do. I think you do. I think you do because I don't know where that fly came from. OK. OK. OK. OK. I'm not describing that fly. It just happened. It just happened. OK. OK. OK. Do you know what I mean? Yes. Yes. Yes. It's true. OK. HA. HA. It's true. It's true. OK. OK. You're thinking and I'm thinking and it's happening. That fly just happened. Just happened. Anyway ... it just happened. OK. OK. OK. It just happened. Whatever ...

The fly walks across Jane's skin and down the cleft between her cheeks. Jane reaches behind her back and flicks at the fly with her hand.

She is thinking. She is thinking how lucky she is. How lucky she is to have this life-style – to be lying here, by this swimming pool in the sun. And she is thinking about how lucky she is that she became a model. Very lucky.

She thinks back to that day thirteen years ago when she got her big break – *the most important day in her life*. Thirteen years ago. The most important day of her life. Thirteen years ago a girl was sitting in a launderette in South London. She was wearing blue tracksuit bottoms, white training shoes and her hair tied back with a black band.

She was sitting staring at her rotating washing but her mind was elsewhere, lost in banal fantasy; she was

imagining a parallel universe where another woman – another Jane – was watching the same washing spin around in the opposite direction, watching the same socks and shirts and trousers flipping and rotating, maybe in the opposite colours.

Anyway, while she was sitting there a woman called Chelsea Delaunay walked past. This woman, as it turned out, worked for a modelling agency. By chance she saw Jane through the window and recognised, instantly, a certain potential in her face and figure. She went into the launderette and handed Jane a card on which was printed the name of her agency and a telephone number. The card was printed on silver plastic. She said:

“Give me a ring. We’ll see what we can do.”

Jane took the card, smiled at Chelsea and said “Thank-you”; and when Jane smiled at Chelsea, Chelsea thought: “Yes, maybe ... maybe!” But then she walked out of the door and away down the road and she soon forgot about Jane and the launderette – after all, she handed out a lot of cards – it was a percentage thing! It was nothing out of the ordinary for her.

But for Jane it was an exceptional thing. She was excited as she looked at the words on the card. She felt that this was an important moment in her life! She thought: “This card could change my life!”

And it did. Two days later she rang up the agency and, over the next few years, she became a successful fashion model. Not as famous as Naomi or Kate or any of that lot but successful enough. She got her face into magazines, she walked down catwalks, she appeared on billboards and she made a lot of money. But even at the beginning – even in the first few years of her modelling career, she was determined to make the most of her chance. She was ambitious. She wanted to make something of herself. And, in her late twenties, towards the end of her career, Jane started up her own business.

She teamed up with a fashion designer and produced her own range of clothes. She used the name 'SILVER'. The 'SILVER' range was promoted in full-page advertisements in women's magazines.

And then six years ago she met Tony at a charity function in Brighton – and they got married.

And recently Tarrard & Jessop, the national franchise – you probably know: “T&J. Make your Day!” – have approached her about designing an exclusive 'SILVER' capsule collection to be sold in all their stores throughout the UK. They are hoping the clothes will appeal to fashion-conscious working women. Working women. Working women. Working women. Yes. Yes. Yes. OK. OK. OK.

OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK.

Who am I?

Who am I?

Who am I?

Hoooooooooooo emmmmmmmmm Iiiiiiiiiiii?

Zarvyn is sitting in his wheelchair looking ahead of him.

It is a small room – newly carpeted. Magnolia walls, bed, table, chair, cupboard, ensuite bathroom/toilet. His face looks like a rotten orange because of the burns. As he sits there looking ahead, he dribbles out of his burnt lips. One of his eyes got burnt out in the crash and now he's got a false one. His face is pink and his skin is bubbled. He is trying to remember who he is.

He is thinking:

Who am I?

Who am I?

Who am I? Who am I? Hoo amm I? Hooo aaamm
eyyye?

He isn't paralysed. He can still walk. It's inside his head he's fucked up. Fucked. He can't ... he can't move it on. Things. Things. Things. Something is almost slipping into his head. Head. Head. OK. OK. OK. Focus. Focus.

"Who am I? Who am I? Hoooo emm iiiiiiiiiyyeee?"

He is looking down at the carpet beneath his feet. His mind focuses a bit. He is thinking:

"Who am I?

Who am I?

Who am I?

Who am I? Testing! One, two! One, two! Yes, yes, no, yes ... one, two! Testing! Testing! One hundred, ninety-nine, ninety-eight, ninety-seven, ninety-six, ninety-five. Who am I? Who am I? Who am I? Focus. Focus ... "

Magnolia walls, bed, carpet, cupboard, table, table, carpet, bed, chair, door, walls, walls, walls. He holds his head and looks down at the carpet. He looks closely at the fibre of the carpet. He looks up. He turns his head. Freshly painted walls – freshly painted walls – magnolia. White door. Bed. Chair. Chair, chair, chair. All the usual sort of things. He thinks:

"Where am I? Where am I? Where am I?"

Stands up – hobbles across the floor – to the door – twists the door handle – can't open it – can't open it – door is locked. Can't open it. Next, he presses first one cheek then the other against the door, rocking back and forth – it feels cool on his skin – and he puts his hand on top of his head. Now he hobbles back from the door and stops in the middle of the room and shakes his head; then he walks over to the chair, where he sits down again, hunched forward, his right hand scrabbling over his scalp.

He is wearing jeans and a sweatshirt. His left arm is paralysed – below the cuff of his sweatshirt you can see his left hand – it is twisted and covered in pink burn tissue. His right hand is also burnt and twisted, although not paralysed. He is using it to scratch his scalp. He is looking downward and we can see the top of his head – thick, white ridges of scar tissue on his scalp, clearly visible through his sparse, greasy, tufty hair. He is running his fingers over these scars.

He is thinking:

“Who am I? Who am I? Hoooooooo emmmmmmm
Iiiiiiiii? Hoooooooooooo emmmmmmmmmmm I?”

He holds his hand in front of his face. He looks at his hand. He brings it up close to his face and looks at the skin but he doesn't recognise it. He doesn't recognise that hand.

Then he leans forward and clasps his head with the hand he has just been looking at and he feels the pressure of his fingers on his skull. He can feel this pressure and knows it is the pressure of his fingers on his head. He knows it is his head. He knows it is his head. He knows it is his fingers. He knows what fingers are.

He increases the pressure of the grip and for a split-second he remembers something: he remembers walking in the snow, a main road, a park, trees, a pond, a yellow ball, a piece of red plastic, swimming – and then he can't remember it anymore – he feels it all slip – and he can't remember. It's not anything significant anyway. It's just random memories – the same shit we all have in our heads. Same shit. Same shit. Same shit. Same shit. And after a few seconds, he leaps up and lurches across the room, switching his head to and fro – looking at the room around him – he hobbles over to the bed and sits down – bed, carpet, walls, cupboard, door. Door, carpet, bed – bed, carpet, wall, cupboard, door – the room starts to spin. Door. Door. Carpet. Bed. Bed. Carpet. Wall. Cupboard. Shit. Shit. OK. OK. OK.

Later on. It's dark, we are standing by the swimming pool. There is no one here. Tony and Jane packed up their sun-beds hours ago. The only thing left is Tony's sunglasses which are still lying on the paving stones, near to the edge of the swimming pool.

There is just a slight ripple on the surface.

In the background we can see the house. The front of the house is illuminated by spotlights. It has three storeys, a pitched roof, white pebble-dashed façade and black-framed, wooden windows. From the gravel drive, a massive stone staircase turns up to the front of the house. Built on high ground, in over 2,000 acres of garden and forest including two tennis courts, a swimming pool, a row of converted sheds and a picturesque nine hole golf course.

Immediately in front of the house there is a circular pond surrounded by a short brick wall. In this pond there are four or five slabs of limestone – these slabs are each the size of an estate car and lie in a disordered, picturesque stack. During the day, water pours from a fissure at the top of the stack and runs down and across the surface of the stones into the pond.

And all this from one pop song. One pop song



The glow of love has gone away

It flowed away like ... like the waves

Away from me. To another place

FROOOO-ZEN TEARS. Running down my cheek

FROOOO-ZEN TEARS. You've left me baby.

... cos you're my Sunshine Boy.



♪
OK. OK. Remember? ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ Yes, of course you do.
Yes. Yes. *Frozen Tears* by Josey Mitchell – Number One
in 1965 for three weeks – and then used again in the
1980's in a car advert. Well that record paid for this
house to be built – every brick ... every brick, every tile
on the roof and more besides. This house used to be
Josey Mitchell's home. ♪ ♪ ♪ FROOOO-ZEN TEARS ...
FROOOO-ZEN TEARS. You see this house was the home
of the Cockney Cilla as she was known in the sixties.
She was married to Geoff. She died of cancer five
years ago. Died of cancerrrrrrrrrrrr ... OK. OK.
CANCER. CANCER. OK. OK.

♪
♪
♪
♪
FROOOO-ZEN TEARS. Running down my cheek.
FROOOO-ZEN TEARS. My heart is breaking.
♪

Yeah, you know Josey Mitchell. Or maybe you know her from TV in the 1990s. She made a come back as a presenter on *Drive In*. You remember. You remember: “The Nissan Altima is an excellent choice for family people who want a safe car with good performance, sexy styling and fair gas mileage. Acceleration is excellent with a 5-speed manual, and the car is smooth on well-maintained roads. While there is a fair amount of road hum on rougher surfaces, the 4-wheel independent suspension soaks up harsher bumps and potholes with aplomb. The Altima has good road manners, corners and stops well. Driving it is a dream but ... ”

At the end of the private road there is a stone with two words cut in it: 'FROZEN TEARS' – the name of the house. About a month after Josey died, during the night, someone smashed the little shrine of photos and flowers which had accumulated next to this stone (from fans) and wrote: CANCERWHORE on the stone in spray paint. It was very upsetting for the family. Very upsetting. It's strange the things some people will do.

OK. OK. FOC-CUSSSSSS. FOCUS. YES. YES. NICE. OK. OK. Calm. Calm. Focus. Calm. Calm. Focus. Focus. FOCUSSS. Do you understand? OK. OK. We need to focus. OK. OK Shit. Oh Shit! OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. FOCUS. FOCUS. There's a dead woman upstairs. There's a dead woman upstairs and she is stinking the house out but what can I do about it ... nothing ... nothing. I met her in a park about two weeks ago. She asked me if I would like to come back to her house for something to eat. I accepted her offer ... but then, later, she had a heart attack. And she died. And now she's lying upstairs in her bed looking at the ceiling with her mouth open. She feels like cold wax. Cold wax. And there's about ten messages for her on the answer machine:

"Beeeeeeep! Hello Jenny ... Jenny? Are you there? It's June Charlton. Ring back when you have time ..."; and *"Beeeeeeep!* Hello ... Hello ... Jenny? I'll call around later on"; and *"Beeeeeeep!* Jen ... Jenny ... Jenny are you there ... la la la la la ... I'll wait Jenny ... are you there? ... la la la ... maybe you've gone to your Daughter's. Oh well ... are you there Darling? ... Hello? Oh well ... it's Viv. Give me a ring when you get this. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK."

Next morning.

Billy the dog is lying on the top step of the concrete staircase. At the front of the house. The sun hits the front of the house in the morning.

It's six o'clock and there's a hissing sound as the timer switches the fountain on.

Billy looks up at the fountain, then down at his paw – it looks like he is looking down at a wrist watch. He spends maybe thirty seconds licking his paw, then he lifts his head – it seems that he has heard something. He trots down the concrete stairs, along the front of the house, around to the back and in through the open kitchen door.

The door is open because Tony unlocked it. It's the first thing he does when he gets up – open the kitchen door for Billy. Billy trots in through the kitchen and out through the opposite door into the hall. The kitchen is very simply decorated. There is a work surface stretching along one wall and a row of kitchen appliances. Everything is very clean and tidy. There's a faint smell of disinfectant. On the fridge there are some magnetic animal shapes – from here I can see a crocodile and a gorilla. On the wall beside the fridge is a large cork pin-board with a selection of photos of the family. There's one of Josey and Geoff from the sixties; one of Zarvyn and Tony standing by a river with fishing rods (before the accident); Geoff holding a golf club; and one of Jane and Tony at their wedding, standing outside the church.

It is very quiet. We walk out of the kitchen into the hallway – there is a clanking sound (not very loud). Down the hallway and into a large entrance hall. The hallway is paved in white marble, with a staircase which splits and curves up to the first floor. Across the marble floor, past a marble sculpture of a woman holding a vase and down another hallway, to the right of the front door. At the end of this hall there is a blue door. Billy the dog is lying on the floor. The clanking sound is louder now.

Inside the room. Tony is lying on his back on an exercise bench, below the chest bar on his mini-gymnasium. His face is red with exertion. He is breathing in and out heavily. The veins are standing out on his neck. He is breathing in and out deeply. He hangs his arms out on either side of the bench. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.

After maybe a minute, he lifts his hands up to the bar – INHALE – EXHALE – and pushes up – pushes the bar above him ... above him ... until his arms lock ... holds it above him for two or three seconds then brings it down slowly to its resting position – clank! Then up again. Then down again. Clank! Then up again. He is not wearing his glasses; they are on the floor under the bench. He shouts out to encourage himself and jerks the bar up the final two inches. Then down. Then up. Then down. Then up. We can see the veins sticking out on his biceps.

He is wearing track suit bottoms and a yellow vest. He does eight reps and then, letting go of the bar, stretches his arms out beside him. He is still breathing in and out deeply. After a minute, he sits up and reaches for a white towel, which is hanging from the top of the exercise

machine. He wipes his face and chest with the towel, throws it back onto the top of the exercise machine and then picks up a bottle of water from the floor beside the bench; he takes a couple of mouthfuls then puts it back under the bench and moves the peg down another couple of weights.

Lying back down on the bench, he moves his hands back up to the bar, rotating them on the bar a few times. For a few seconds he remains in this position, then, breathing in and out vigorously, he slowly pushes the weights up. AAAAAAAAAA! UP. DOWN. UP. AAAAAAAAAA! DOWN. UP. DOWN.

Twenty minutes later. He picks up his towel. He pushes it into his face, then puts on his glasses. He walks out of the room. Billy jumps up as Tony emerges. Tony says: "Good boy" and rubs his head. "Good boy-o-boyo-boy-o-boyo-boy-oboyo-boy!" Tony ruffles his head. Billy licks him.

Then Tony stands up. Walks down the hall. Then he walks upstairs slowly. He has one of those weight lifting belts on to protect his back. He wipes some sweat off his face. He turns in the curve of the stairs and we lose sight of him. The time is now six-thirty.

He twissssssssst the shower on and he feels the water hit his head and run down his body. He massages some shampoo into his scalp.

Tony likes to get up early. He feels calm, he can think about things, he can arrange things in his head. Get focused. Get focused. The warm water runs down his back. "Aaaaaaaah!" Nice. Nice.

Jane wakes up slowly. Slowly becomes aware of the sssssound of the sssshower. Nice. Nice. She looks to her left. Get focussed. Focussed. OK. OK. OK. OK. The alarm clock says: 6:37 6:37 6:37. Sssssshe listens to Tony moving around in the ensuite bathroom. She thinks how Tony always wakes her up when he has his shower; and then she thinks how it is strange that this was how she was woken up when she was a little girl, by her father – by the sound of him tarting around in the bathroom. Strange that both her father and her husband wake her up in the same way. Her Dad used to wake her up at five-thirty every morning because he used to get up, wash himself and do his hair before going off to do his job driving a truck. Her bedroom was opposite the bathroom and the light used to shine in and wake her up. Her mother, who always got up to make him breakfast, used to try and make sure the door was shut. But there was always noise – bashing, banging, talking and arguments. He used to talk into the mirror – either to himself or to her mother who was in the kitchen or standing in the doorway. He did it on purpose – talking loudly. He used to spend an hour every morning standing in front of the mirror, doing his hair – scraping his hair over his bald head from his hair-line which was about one inch above his ear. He used hair-spray to keep it all together. He used to send her out to buy his hair-spray; he wouldn't go and buy it himself because he was too embarrassed. She had to buy unperfumed, strong-hold, from Boots. He used at least one can a week. After a while the wall at the side of the mirror would be thick with it. It used to build up. It was disgusting. The whole bathroom used to stink of it.

And she remembers her Mother's funeral – it was raining – there were only a few people there and she remembers standing inside the church door, sheltering from the rain – and she remembers seeing her Dad

standing outside in the wind and rain – he was crying uncontrollably. He was the only person crying – standing by the grave, in the pouring rain, with his comb-over blown up above his head like shark fin. It was tragic.

Then Jane starts thinking about Zarvyn. Someone asked her about Zarvyn a couple of weeks ago. They asked her how he was. She had been forced to evade the question because she'd been embarrassed. I mean, she could have said he was OK but then of course they might have asked "Where is he?" And she didn't want to answer that question. Or she could have said "He is getting medical attention" but for some reason she didn't like the idea of saying that either. She was embarrassed about him being at the house, locked up in that room because it was weird. He ought to be in some hospital.

She is thinking:

"I mean, I'm not worried what people think ... although it is important in some ways. It's just that ... it worries me. I don't like it. I don't like him being there. Downstairs. Downstairs. Downstairs ... in this house. I mean, I think it's wrong him being here ... it's weird! I mean, I know he has to be cared for ... but it's three years now ... and he's not getting better. And the thing is, if things don't change, me and Tony are going to have to move out of the house ... if things don't change. I mean I don't want to bring up kids in this sort of environment. With Zarvyn like a zombie. That's not good. That's not a good environment! I'm sorry, I know it sounds bad but ... I've already mentioned it to Tony and I know he doesn't like the idea ... but I don't care I'm not having kids brought up in this environment."

The door between the bathroom and the bedroom opens and Tony comes into the room. He has a towel around his waist. Jane watches him through half-closed eyes. She watches as he gets dressed. She watches him looking at himself in the mirror. Holding up items of clothing in front of his body. Jane doesn't make any movement to suggest she is awake but she is looking at him from between half-closed eyes. Tony finishes getting dressed. He hangs a tie over his shoulder, picks up his jacket and leaves the room.

A few minutes after Tony has left, Jane gets out of bed and goes into the bathroom. It still smells of Tony. It still smells of Tony. It still smells of Tony.

One of the first things Geoff wanted to do after Josey died was to kill her pet cockroaches. Big Madagaskan cockroaches – they made a hissing sound – kill them. She kept them in a heated tank in a room upstairs. After she died, he boiled a kettle and went upstairs with the boiling water and a bottle of bleach – his face streaked with tears – but when he opened the door, Billy was there. The tank was knocked to the floor – glass broken – and Billy was snapping at the cockroaches on the floor. Snapping them up and crunching them in his mouth.

Lillian Dallings is sitting in front of the dressing table mirror. She is wearing a white bra and knickers. She is putting make-up on her face. She's the woman we saw jogging earlier. She is over fifty years old but she has kept her body in good shape – the result of regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle. She is putting powder on her face. She looks up and sees Geoff Mitchell standing

behind her in the mirror. He has red blotches on his face. He is quite sensitive about it and he wears a light foundation cream to tone the colour down. He is already dressed.

Lillian says: "Are you alright baby?"

Geoff says: "Yeah. Fine. Why?"

Then Geoff walks out of the room.

Lillian steps into a skirt and pulls a blouse over her head. She brushes her clothes down.

Tony moves the glass of orange juice between his fingers.

Jane says:

"Someone asked about Zarvyn a couple of days ago."

"So?"

"Well it felt a bit weird."

"Why?"

"I don't know, because I had to lie."

"Why did you do that?"

"I don't know ... because it's weird him being here. It would be different if I could have said: 'Oh he's improving. He's in such-and-such hospital' ... but it's weird him being here. It's weird him being here. I mean, the other week I went into his room. I was trying to talk to him ... at first it was like usual, he sat there looking like a zombie, mumbling and so on, but ... just when I was leaving ... as I was on my way out of the door he suddenly said: 'Jane', in a normal voice. And when I turned around and looked at him ... his expression was like the old Zarvyn ... and he was looking at me ... and I swear, for a couple of seconds he knew who I was ... and in his eyes I could see the old Zarvyn. It was strange. And then he lost it."

Tony says:

“If ... If he was in some sort of institution or hospital ... it would be worse. He'd be with strangers and God knows how he'd be treated ... at least when he's here ... I mean it may be a bit weird but at least he gets close attention, I mean he's got his own doctor ... and also more important than that he gets ... love and ... you know ... attention!”

Jane and Tony look at each other across the table for a few seconds, then Jane reaches across the table and touches Tony's cheek.

She smiles at him.

Zarvyn is sitting on his bed.

Zarvyn is sitting on his bed.

Zarvyn is sitting on his bed.

There is a noise at the door – a turn of a key in the lock. He looks in the direction of the sound. The door opens and a man with a face like a shrink-wrapped chicken walks in, followed by two women dressed in white. The man says:

“Hello Zarvyn!”

Zarvyn starts rocking on his bed and making loud noises. He has no trousers on.

As he looks at Zarvyn, Geoff's features seem to transform – they seem to soften – as he fusses around with his son his eyes are transformed. The hardness and distance melt away and you can see his love for Zarvyn. He speaks to Zarvyn. He says:

“Alright Zarvyn, Alright son. Alright Zarvvvvv. Zaaaarvvvvvvvvv.” and combs back his hair with his fingers.

After maybe thirty seconds he turns his head and talks to one of the women behind him called Monica (she is the home help). He says:

“It smells in here. Check the toilet.”

Monica walks into the small adjoining room, from where a few seconds later we hear the sound of a toilet flushing. She reappears and says:

“He didn’t flush the toilet.”

Geoff does not acknowledge this comment. He is helping Zarvyn into a pair of corduroy trousers. Then he bends forward, fussing over his son.

“Zarvyn. Zarrrrv. Zarrrrv. Zaaarvvvvvvvv” Geoff runs his fingers across the scars on Zarvyn’s scalp. He bends forward, kisses him and whispers something in his ear. The two women in white are standing silently behind him.

Geoff looks up and nods to Lillian. A few seconds later she places a tray on the bedside table.

Zarvyn hears the clink of the tray as it is placed on the table beside him. He opens his eyes. Then he feels someone rub something on his arm – he smells disinfectant – he smiles when he smells the disinfectant. He smiles because this has all happened to him before and he knows what is going to happen next. He knows that when he smells disinfectant, the next thing that happens to him is going to be nice and so he feels happy. He smiles but his face creases up and looks like he is going to cry. Geoff is looking down at him and says:

“Don’t worry Zarv ... don’t worry Zaaarvvvvv. Zaaaaaaaaaarv”

Zarvyn feels happy. He feels happy. He smiles

He feels the needle point first push against and then pierce the surface of his skin. He is given an injection of Monoacetyl Morphine, Thebaine, Papaaaaaverine, Heroin Hydrooooochloride, Noscapine and Diazipaaan. After a few seconds he feels dizzy and then he feels he

Lillian pours herself a cup of coffee from the coffee maker and puts two pieces of bread in the toaster. She picks up a paper that is lying on the kitchen counter and while she is looking at the front page she says:

“Jane, were those pictures of your new designs on the table in the hall?”

“Pictures? ... oh those ... jackets and skirts ... they were last year’s. But the new designs are similar. Slightly different cut ... especially the jacket.”

“Very smart. I liked the jackets ... the suede jackets.”

“Yes. I’m doing something similar ... slightly larger collars.”

Lillian is standing waiting for her toast, leaning on the kitchen surface. She looks at the paper and says:

“Well let’s see what the bad news is today.”

She lifts the cup of coffee to her lips. As she is reading, a cockroach emerges from a gap between the tiles and the kitchen cabinet. It walks across the work surface. It disappears behind the toaster. Lillian doesn’t see it. She doesn’t see it. She doesn’t see it.

Jane coughs and then says:

“Lillian, There’s something I’ve been meaning to ask you ... or tell you about ... about Zarvyn.”

Lillian turns to face Jane.

“ ... the other day, I was in Zarvyn’s room ... I was just telling Tony ... I was talking to him and saying names he might recognise and ... and I was about to leave the room when suddenly he said my name – he said ‘Jane’ and he looked straight at me and I would swear on my Mother’s grave that he knew exactly who I was. It only lasted a few seconds but it was very strange.”

Jane remembers him looking at her. She remembers watching his mouth. He said: “Jaaaane. Jaane.”

Lillian says:

“Really ... It’s strange because I’ve been noticing slight improvements myself. I think the modifications I’ve made recently in his medication are beginning to have an effect. I’m hoping there will be further improvements. I’ve been sending up samples to London for analysis and I think we’re beginning to see the benefits. With someone in Zarvyn’s condition it’s very complicated because some of his problems are neurological – that is, to do with the brain physically ... physically ... and these require medication and others are of a more psychological nature ... that is, not a result of actual physical damage to the brain but rather the result of trauma and so on ... and these ... require different treatment. I’m going up to London today ... to the lab. To try and speed things up a bit.”

“So do you think he could ever recover?”

“Well that depends on what you mean by recover ... but, yes ... of course ... he could recover.”

And then we see an eye. An eye. Light blue. And we move out. And we can see it is Geoff’s eye. Geoff. Geoff. Geoff can feel the sun on his neck. It is only 8.30 am but it is already hot. He can feel the sun baking on his neck.

He is wearing a pair of blue shorts, a light blue polo sports shirt and a pair of aviator-style sun-glasses.

He is looking down at a fluorescent orange golf ball. The golf ball is on a mat which has a series of lines drawn on it in blue and red. It is a practice aid. Geoff’s coach recommended it as a way of improving his stance and club follow through.

Geoff finds golf very relaxing. A few years ago he decided he needed some way of relaxing – and golf seems to do it for him.

He looks down at the golf ball – the ball has markings on it which he has to line up with markings on the mat – the idea is to improve his head position. The idea is, he lines his head up with two dots on the mat and then lines them up with markings on the ball and swings the club through the ball.

He lines up a ball and takes a swing. The ball fades away into the trees to the left. Geoff looks at the point where the ball crashed into the foliage and smiles.

He thinks:

“I’m never going to be Nick Faldo”

Nick Faldo. Nick Faldo. Nick Faldo. Lillian has been a great support to him since they met three years ago. She was there when he was at his lowest ebb – when he was close to losing it completely. But golf is the way he relaxes.

And an hour later.

Tony is sitting in his office in Brighton. This office is situated on the first floor, in a converted industrial unit. He is looking out of the window at the sea and eating a sandwich.

After a few minutes he turns and looks through the glass partition of his office into the main office area. Everyone is on lunch break, except for a tall, young woman who is sitting on a desk reading a magazine.

Tony is not thinking about anything in particular. He looks back at the sea. He finishes his sandwich and picks up a cup of coffee from the table.

He turns and looks across at the young woman on the other side of the office. She is standing up now. She is

tall. She has blond hair. She has broad shoulders. She is putting something on a shelf – the window is behind her and it makes her blouse semi-transparent. Tony can see her breasts. He can see her breasts.

She turns and looks at Tony and smiles. Tony smiles back. This young woman is Angelina and she is the woman Tony is having an affair with.

Angelina glances around the office theatrically and then looks at Tony as if to say:

“Oh look. We are on our own!”

She comes over, opens Tony’s door and says:

“Do you need anything?” She smiles and leans forward so Tony can see her cleavage.

Tony is thinking:

“O shit. O shit. O shit! O shit! There’s no one in the office. There is no one in the office. This is tacky. This is dumb. I am dumb. O shit! O shit! This is dumb. This is exciting. O shit! O shit. No. No. No. I love Jane. Jane. I love Jane. And Jane is beautiful and sexy. I am not going to have sex with Angelina. I am not. I am not. I am not.”

Tony reaches out and puts his hand on the top of Angelina’s leg. Angelina says:

“Oh Mr Mitchell.” She says it in a porn star voice. And then she licks her lips in a porn star-style. Partly as a joke. And then they have anal sex, with her leaning forward, holding onto the filing cabinet. As they are having sex he looks at Angelina’s hand which is holding the filing cabinet – he is looking at her immaculately manicured red fingernails. And he looks to the side and he can see her breasts bobbing up and down. O Jesus. O Jesus. O Jesus. Good Boy. Bad Boy. Good Boy. Bad Boy. OH. OH. OH. OH. OH. OH. UH. UH. UH. UH. FUCK. FUCK. FUCK. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. No. No. No. Yes. Yes. YESSSS.

And then ... we are back in the real world again. And Angelina is pressed up against the filing cabinet, with

her breasts exposed, and Tony behind, pressed against her, with his boxer shorts and trousers around his ankles. They stay in this position for a few seconds then Tony pushes himself backwards and pulls up his trousers. Angelina pulls her bra back over her breasts and pulls her top back down. She steps out from the filing cabinet and pulls her skirt back down. Tony sits back at his desk. Angelina opens the door. She turns and looks at Tony, then goes out of his office and over to the water machine where she pours herself a cup of water.

Just as Angelina is taking a sip of water a woman with long brown hair comes into the room. She looks over at Angelina and then over towards Tony's office. This is Val. She is also one of Tony's employees.

Tony thinks that, although Val didn't see anything, the way she looked around when she came into the room seemed to indicate that she knew what was going on. It even occurs to Tony that she seems to be embarrassed, and that maybe she had heard them and had been waiting outside until they finished. This is the terrible thing about affairs. People find out. People find out. Oh shit! Oh shit!

Tony is thinking:

"This is bad. This is bad. I mean, I know I think this every time we do it but this is bad. THIS IS BAD. THIS IS BAD. OH SHIT. OH SHIT. OH SHIT. SHIT. SHIT. SHIT."

He shakes his head.

"This is bad. This is bad. This is bad. This is bad. This is bad."

Val is looking over at him. What's she looking over at him for? What's she looking over at him for? He looks down at his phone. A light is flashing. He has got a call. He answers it. It is a business call. He talks to the

person on the other end of the line and says: “Yes. Yes. Yes. No. Yes. No. No.” And then he says: “Goodbye”.

Then he presses a button on his phone and says:

“Angelina. Can you come in here for a second.”

He looks through the glass in her direction and Angelina looks over and smiles. Then she stands up and walks across to his office.

Twenty seconds later she is standing in front of Tony’s desk. She says:

“Yes?”

Tony says:

“This has got to stop.”

Angelina smiles and says:

“I’ve heard that before.”

Tony says:

“I know I’ve said it before but this time it has ... it’s getting out of hand. It has got to stop. I mean it ... this time it’s got to stop.”

Angelina shrugs and says:

“Is that all?”

Tony says:

“Yes.”

Angelina walks out of the room.

Billy the dog is lying outside on the front drive – in the shade of a car. As he lies there, TC the cat walks past. As soon as the cat sees Billy it hisses and runs off in the direction of the house.

The dog watches the cat then looks back at us. It seems to be watching us. And as we watch, a cockroach pushes it’s way out from in-between Billy’s eyelid and eyeball – or that’s what it looks like – and walks down the dog’s cheek and into his fur.

Billy stays where he is, idly flapping his tail back and

forth, lolling his tongue out of his mouth and opening his eyes occasionally and looking around.

An hour later. Jane is sitting on the edge of the sofa. She is watching TV. She is wearing a swimming costume. And she has a towel draped over her shoulders. She is drinking a glass of orange juice. She is watching a breakfast chat programme, on the subject 'I can't control myself!' It features a succession of people who find it difficult to control their tempers and who find themselves becoming involved in violence. A man is speaking, as a silhouette (to preserve his anonymity). He used to frequently become involved in fights in bars and ten years ago, he killed two people because he thought they were laughing at him in a pub. He says:

"At the time, I couldn't help it. I was an angry person. I couldn't deal with certain situations. I ... couldn't deal with it. I couldn't deal with it."

Jane finishes her orange juice, stands up, points the remote control at the TV and switches it off. Then she walks out of the French windows. She walks over the paving to the swimming pool. She drops her towel and stands at the side of the pool.

It is not a big swimming pool. She looks into the water. Turquoise. Turquoise. She dives in.

Splash! Splosh!

Splash! Splosh!

Splash! Splosh!

Splash! Splosh!

Splash! Splosh!

Splash! Splosh!

Splash! ... thirteen strokes is all it takes to reach the end, then Jane flicks her legs over her shoulders, pushes off underwater and starts another length.

Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish!

Not bad! Not a bad life, huh? Not a bad life. Not a bad lifestyle.

The swimming pool is heated all the year around; because of this during the winter it creates a localised perma-climate, and the house is sometimes shrouded in mist.

Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!

Jane is thinking how she likes this lifestyle. And she would like it to continue. She likes it. She likes it. A nice and easy lifestyle – very comfortable. Sounds good doesn't it. It sounds good to her. She wants luxury. She wants a life-style. She wants nice living conditions, good food and expensive holidays – doesn't everyone – these are not exceptional dreams. Nice life. Nice life. Nice lifestyle. She wants it. And other stuff. Love. Happiness.

Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish! Splosh!
Splish!

And she loves Tony and she wants their marriage to work.

After fifty-eight lengths Jane hauls her toned, tanned body from the pool (she is wearing a blue Speedo

swimming-hat) and stands for a few moments pushing the soft texture of a large white towel into her ear, rubbing it over her body. Then she walks back to the house.

The pool is left to resume its normal activity of shifting and rippling and reflecting the sky. The roses on the far side of the lawn sway in the breeze. A few birds fly over.

OK. OK. OK. And then we hear music. We hear some music. Nice. Nice.



Baby love ... My baby love.



Ooooooh how you give me love



Oooo ... oooooooh! Bay-bee love. My bay-bee love ...

A pink feather-duster flicks back and forward. Then there is the sound of a Hoover.

A youngish woman with short brown hair is pushing a Hoover back and forth across the carpet in the living room. She is fat and is wearing an apron. She has put a CD on – *The Sound of the Sixties: Compilation*.

She turns the volume up and pushes the Hoover back and forward in time to the music.

Then she stops the Hoover and flicks the duster across a series of shelves. She knocks a little ceramic cat off one of the shelves. No. No. Noooo. But catches it before it hits the floor. The Diana Ross record finishes – silence –

then there are the familiar discordant opening notes:



Dang! Dang! Dang!



There's a place ... there's a place in my heart.

A place where we shall meet.

In a land far away. In my heart.

A place where our love is complete.

FROOO-ZEN TEARS. FROOO-ZEN TEARS.



Monica dances as she hovers. She has been working here for about six months. FROOOOO-ZEN TEARS.



The sun of your love has gone.

The sun of love in your smiiiiiiile.

The sun of love in your kiss.

Sunshine girl ... I was your sunshine girl.

FROOOOOO-ZEN TEARS. Is what I'm crying!

FROOOZEN TEARS ... because our love is dying ...

As she is hovering Monica moves sideways across the carpet with the same steps Josey used on the classic sixties TV footage. She sings: "Frooooo-zen tears. Frooo-zen tears." She lets go of the hoover and waves the duster above her head.

"FROOOOOOOOOO-ZEN TEARS. FROOOOOO-ZEN TEARS."

FROOOO-ZEN TEARS. FROOOOOO-ZEN TEARS. In his wheelchair by his bed. By his bed. He is sitting motionless. He is wearing a pair of jeans, a yellow sweat-shirt and white training shoes. He has just recently had his hair cut.

He is sitting very still with his head in his hands.

He is gripping his head and he is trying to focus. Focus. Focus. "FOCUS. OK FOCUS. FOOOO-KUSS. OK OK. OK. OK. OK. Focus. Focus. Focus. Focus". Then. Then ... then ... Then something flicks into his head:

A pair of feet. A pair of feet. A pair of feet ... walking feet ... slow motion. Then ... OK. OK. OK. Something chasing. OK. OK. Slamming car door. Ignition. Ignition. Ignition. Engine. Wheels. Wheels spinning ... and ... whooosh! ... we're out of here! Out of here! Nought to fifty in five ... six ... seven ... eight ... nine seconds. Acceleration! ... acceleration ... OK. Oh yeah. OK. fifty ... sixty ... seventy ... eighty. And now he's feeling happy! HAPPY. HAPPY. HAPPY. HAPPY. HAPPY. OK. OK. OK. Laughter. Speed. Nice! Nice! Nice! Oh yeah nice! And then ... and then ... and then ... shit! SHIT. What was that? Shit! He screams. Turns his head away from road. Shit. Shit. Shit. No. No. Turns eyes back to road. Tries to put on brakes ... no brakes – the car is already in the air. Slow-motion. SCREAMING – somewhere else, somewhere else, somewhere ... impact! Then again a still, calm, frozen night sky. Slow motion. Looking up ... flames ... slow ... frozen ... flames ... pain ... oh wow! Pain – in front of the night sky ... then darkness. Wow. Pain. Pain. PIIIIIN! PAYYYNE. NO. NO. NO. Carpet. Carpet. Carpet. Wall. Ceiling. Table. TAYY-BULL. TAYY-BULL. SEEEEEELING. Yes. Yes. Yees. No. NO. NO. NO.

And now it's night. Now it's night. And we seem to have established something here ... we seem to have established something ... but I am still confused ... I still don't understand. I don't understand. I was sick earlier in the kitchen. I mean I'm confused. And I don't think you understand. IT'S NOT NICE BEING ME. NO. NO. NO. and things are getting worse – much worse. MUCH FUCKING WORSE. And you don't know anything about me – it's not nice being like me. And I know many other things. IT'S GOING TO GET WORSE. It's not nice being me. I mean we are friends ... in a way ... or acquaintances ... but the thing is for me ... the thing is ... it's not nice. IT'S NOT NICE. NO. It's bad. And outside it's bright. But unfortunately I can't go out. I CAN'T GO OUT. Not at the moment. It's not nice. I don't think it would be a good idea. And there's a dead woman upstairs. Lying on the bed. She smells like rotting chicken. ROTTING CHICKEN. Oh Shit! Oh Shit! Please. PLEEEASE. ROTTING CHICKEN. NO. She ... she ... oh shit. Oh shit. Focus. Focus. And the problem is there's no food left in this house. No food. I've checked. There were a few cans of beans and some bread but I've eaten them. It's getting worse. IT'S NOT NICE BEING ME. NOT NICE. NOT NICE. NOT NICE. For you too. Getting worse. You just don't know it. IT'S NOT NICE. NOT NICE. NOT NICE. NICE. NICE. NICE.

Morning. Morning. OK. OK. Morning. It's a beautiful morning. A light sunlight is already lying on the gravel on the drive. That sort of hazy, dusty light that means it is going to be a very hot day.

Billy the dog is sitting outside the back door. In the distance we can see Lillian Dallings. She is jogging around the perimeter of the golf course. She is wearing

a black track suit and has a green towel hanging around her neck. Her face is covered in sweat. She looks down at her watch. She puts the towel over her head and pads her face. Then she looks towards the house – breathing in and out deeply – and smiles.

She walks towards the house.

She walks past Billy the dog. His tongue is lolling out of his mouth. He looks up as Lillian walks by.

Josey Mitchell loved this dog. She loved it. At the end of her life, as her condition worsened, she became more and more devoted to the dog and he became her constant companion and she loved him. SHE LOVED HIM. He used to lie on the end of her bed, and she'd talk to him for hours. He used to growl if anyone approached.

Just before Josey died, when she was really losing it – near the end – as her perception of those around her became increasingly blurred, so her diseased brain hatched up fantastical plots against her life and crimes against her person by members of her family. She took to screaming at her husband, calling him the most obscene names, threatening to disinherit him and to leave all her money to her dog and her cockroaches. And her yellow anaconda.

After she died, Geoff had the anaconda taken away by members of the National Anaconda Society who had the specialist knowledge and facilities to look after it. It's heated tank is still in a room upstairs.

One day, after Josey died, Geoff was visiting Josey's grave and he found Billy sitting there, beside the grave.

Jane is in a room upstairs. The radio is on. She looks at her watch. It is seven eighteen. She picks up a glass of grapefruit juice from the bedside table and drinks it.

Then she reaches down and picks up a black briefcase and puts it on the bed. She pads her coat pockets with her hands. She feels her mobile telephone. Then she switches the radio off. She takes a mirror out of her bag and quickly looks at herself. Then she drops it back in the bag and walks out of the room.

TC the cat is sitting on the step. Half-closed eyes, purring. Purrrrrrring. Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrrrr. What a life – being a cat. Especially on a day like this ... warm ... relaxed ... feeling lazy, Nice. Nice. Yeah, nice. OK. Relaxed. Half asleep ... lying on warm concrete ... content, blissful, serene, luxurious ... warm sun on your fur ... half closed eyes. OK. OK. OK. OK. Sun on your fur. Warm. Warm. Nice. Nothing to worry about. OK. OK. Purrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr. Imagine. Imagine that. Imagine. Shut your eyes ... shut your eyes. Relax. Relax. Slow it down. Sloooooow ... and then ... and then ... imagine ... inside a cat. Nice. OK. OK. OK. Reeaaa-lax. Oh yeah. Warm. Warm. Inside the cat. Inside TC the cat. OK. OK. OK. Nice. Nice. Relax. Warm. Inside his brain. In the red of his brain. Oh yeah. It is warm and soothing. You are relaxed. OK. OK. We are inside the cat and the cat is lying on the step in the sun, looking out at the landscape. On the step. We are inside. Niiiiiiiiiiiiice ...

And TC's eyes present us with a high resolution, black and white view of the countryside in front of us – distant fields – distant fields broken down into single blades of grass, with dots of insects and even single specks of pollen. We can even see a bluebottle sitting on a branch nearly a quarter of a mile away. Iridescent blue

Yes. Yes. Yes. And it is thick and heavy – very heavy – over rich! Too heavy! Too much detail. Too intense – the smells – grass, chlorine, manure, fertiliser, exhaust fumes, roses, soil, urine, coffee ... Oh Man! It is too much! It's too much – too much. It is difficult to tune out of all this stuff. Oh shit. Oh yeah.

OK. Calm down. Calm down. Calm down! Wow! Nice! Calm down! Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr! OK. Better! Better Calm down! Calm down! Relax. Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr! Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr! Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr! Relax! Relax! Purrrrrrrrrrrrrr!

OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. Relax. Relax. Relax. We can see ... we can see someone ... Yes ... Jane. Jane walks out of the front door. She shuts the door and walks doooooown the stairs. Yes. Very nice. She looks at her watch. She has a cab coming in ten minutes. She turns around and comes back up the steps. She sits on the top step. She takes a pair of sunglasses out of her bag and then reaches down and strooooookes our head ... head ... head. Nice. Nice. The fountain is tinkling in front of us.

We feel her hand running down our back, over the ridges of our vertebrae. O Nice niiiiice! And we look up at her through TC's eyes. Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr. Purr. Purr. Purr. Purr. OK. Nice! Nice! Ha ha! Nice! Very nice! Oh yeah! Yes. Nice. NICE. NICE. OK. OK. And then we flip over onto our back and let her tickle our tummy. Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr! Oh yeah! Oh yeah! Oh Maaan! Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr! Purrrrrrrr. Purrrrrrrr Purrrrrrrr. Nice! Purr! This is so nice. Soooooo intense. Purrrrrrrr! Purrrrrrrr! Purrrrrrrr! Purrrrrrrr! OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. yes. yes. NICE. OK. OK. Maybe ... just a while longer. Yes this is good. Relax.

Relax. Oh yeah! Lie back and relax ... float ... relax ... take it easy ... easy ... chill out! Shut those eyes! Chill out! Relax! Relax! Purr! Purr! Purrrrr! Relax! Purr! Oh this is soooo good! Purr! Cool! Purr! Purr! Yeah this is nice! This is good! OK. OK. OK. Oh God. Oh God.

Jane lights herself a cigarette. She brings her hand up to her mouth and sucks on the cigarette. As she does this she sees that there is a cockroach sitting on her jacket near her wrist. She jumps up and shouts:

“Shit! Shit!”

She shakes her arm. She drops her cigarette. The cockroach falls on its back on the floor. TC runs off. It is a big insect. For a few seconds its legs flicker in the air – then it rights itself. It remains like a black shape on the concrete

Then it moves. It runs over in the direction of the door and disappears under the gap.

“Fuck!” says Jane. “Shit. Shit. Shit.” She picks up her cigarette and takes a drag. We need to get the Pest-o-Cutors in. She thinks:

A few minutes later her minicab arrives.

Tony is sitting in his office. He is sitting in his chair. He has his legs crossed. He is not happy. He is thinking about the affair he is having with Angelina. He is thinking:

“THIS IS BAD. THIS IS BAD. THIS ISN’T SERIOUS. It is CASUAL. BUT IT IS BAD. But now IT HAS GOT TO STOP. Now it has GOT TO STOP. Things have GOT TO CHANGE. It isn’t anything. IT’S NOTHING. IT’S NOTHING BUT ... I LOVE JANE. It is JUST SEX. I mean, I don’t love Angelina, I like her and sex with her is ... good ... but I love Jane. I LOVE JANE. OH THIS IS BAD. O FUCK. O FUCK. IT MUST STOP. IT IS NOT GOOD. NO

THIS IS BAD. IT MUST CHANGE. IT IS NOT GOOD. IT IS NOT GOOD. OH SHIT. OH SHIT. OH SHIT. THIS HAS GOT TO STOP”.

The phone rings. Tony looks to his left – the phone light is on. He picks up the phone. A voice says:

“Hi babe,” It is Jane.

“Hi babe.”

She says: “How’s it going?”

“Busy. I’ve got to get something off to London by courier by Five.”

“Oh right. I’m on the train. I’m running a bit late ... but we need to get the pest control people in. I’ve seen two cockroaches now. Could you organise that?”

“Yeah sure.”

“And could you tell the new home help ... I’ve forgotten her name ...”

“Monica.”

“ ... could you ring Monica and tell her that the shopping list is stuck on the inside of the cupboard – next to the fridge?”

“Yes.”

Something moves up the wall. Zarvyn’s eye moves with it. It moves up onto the ceiling. Zarvyn looks up. Something small is moving across the ceiling. Something small and black moves across the ceiling. Zarvyn follows it with his eye ... across ... across ... and then there is a face. A face is looking down at him. Geoff is sitting by his bed. He is looking down at Zarvyn.

Zarvyn is looking up at a face. The face is smiling and even though we are bombed out of our head we recognise the face. We recognise the face as a face we have seen before. It is smiling down at us and we can feel our forehead being stroked. And it makes us feel good ...

good. The face is looking down. Smiling. It is a nice face.
NICE. NICE. NICE. OK. OK.

Looking down at us. The warm manly smell. Safe.
Safe. We can all remember that. DADDY. DADDY. DADDY.
DADDY. NICE. NICE. NICE. NICE. NICE. NICE. NICE. NICE.
NICE. NICE. Daddy looks down at us. We can all
remember that.

Geoff says:

“Hello, Zarvyn! Hello! Hello-oooo!”

Zarvyn feels Geoff’s hand ruffling his hair – and then
he hears a voice say:

“Hello, son.”

And Zarvyn almost knows what he means. Son. Son.
Son. Zarvyn can smell Geoff’s aftershave. He smiles

“How are you, Zarvvvvvvv?” says Geoff

Zarvyn feels someone take hold of his hand and stroke
it. Geoff says:

“Zarv ... Zarv ...”

And then Zarvyn feels a hand on his head. Zarvyn can
hear a voice:

“Zarv-yn. Zarv-yn. Hell-llo Zarvyn. Arr yew Oh kay?”

The voice is nice. Zarvyn likes it. It is familiar.
Although he can’t place it exactly. Familiar. He drags in
another lung-full of aftershave. The voice says:

“Zarvvvvvvvvv!”

Zarvyn looks up. He looks up at the face and smiles.
Happy. Happy.

Geoff says:

“Zarvvvvvvv. Zarrrrrrrrr-vyn.”

Zarvyn watches his lips and listens to his voice. He
finds it calming. He shuts his eyes. It is like a purring
sound in his ear.

“Zarvyn. Zaaaaaaaaarvyn. Zarrrrrrrrvvvvvvv
ZAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVV.”

Geoff looks down at Zarvyn. Down at Zarvyn. Zarvyn's eyes are closed now but and he seems to be smiling.

Geoff remembers a day when he and Josey had taken Zarvyn and Tony for a day trip down to Dungeness. It was a nice day and he remembers them sitting outside a pub – Josey wearing sunglasses so no one would recognise her – with the nuclear power station in the distance. He remembers them all eating chips, looking out to sea and talking – making jokes about the power station and about how all the local people were mutants. HA. HA. HA. It had been nice. Nice. It was a long time ago. They had been a family then – a happy family. Things had changed but he can still remember that being a happy time. A family time

A tear wells up in his eye, runs down his cheek and drips onto Zarvyn's creased skin.

Zarvyn opens his eyes and looks at him. His eyes are blank. He can't even keep his eyes open – his eyelid slips slowly back across his eyeball. He makes a mumbling sound, and spits a line of flem onto his chin.

Geoff wipes Zarvyn's chin with a tissue and reaches to his eye and with his thumb and carefully lifts his eyelid. Zarvyn's eyeball rolls vacantly in his socket, like a billiard ball. Like a billiard ball. He lets go of Zarvyn's eyelid.

Geoff says: "Zarrrrrrrvyn. Zarv-eeeeeeeeen. Zaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa-vvvvvvvvvvvvvvin. Zaaaaaaar-vinnnn."

Later on, Lillian is talking to Geoff. She says:

“Come on ... come on Geoff ... don't ... I mean, don't torture yourself like this ... I mean don't be sad baby! Look, I think things are improving. I mean, Jane was saying the same thing. There are definite improvements in his condition ... not great at the moment ... but definite improvements nonetheless and if this continues then I'm very optimistic. It's all to do with balance. I mean, I'm going up to a la la la la la la la London today to do more tests. These particular tests are very important and I want to supervise them personally because they are crucial ... crucial to his continued improvement.”

She comes up behind Geoff and puts her hands on his shoulders. OK. OK. OK. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. YES. YES. YES. And Geoff is looking down at the floor. He has tears in his eyes again.

“He doesn't recognise me anymore. He doesn't know who I am.”

Lillian says:

“Geoff ... he does ... he DOES and ... you've got to have faith ... and he will improve. I am hopeful – even by tomorrow, if I can get the results of the tests I need, we might know more clearly the way things might develop.”

Lillian Dallings puts her hands gently on the back of his head. She moves around him until she is standing in front of him – and then, looking straight into his eyes, she says:

“Geoff Mitchell ... you are a strong man. Do you understand? You are an amazing person. You are a strong man. And you are going to make this work. Do you hear me? DO YOU UNDERSTAAAAAAND?”

And Geoff says:

“I ... I ... I don't know ... I'm not strong. Not any more ... not anymore!”

Lillian Dallings says:

“Yes you are. Now come on. Wipe your eyes.”

She takes a folded handkerchief from her pocket and hands it to Geoff.

Lillian Dallings is an attractive woman. She is tall and thin and her flesh is still firm. She jogs a lot – and swims. She goes to the gym and she watches what she eats – unlike Geoff who we can see, is out of condition. Out of condition. Beer gut. Purple face. PURRRRRR-PLE.

There are five shop mannequins: regular features and painted-on eyebrows. They are looking straight ahead. They are wearing clothes in olive green and black, with bright pink trim and they are all wearing wigs.

There are five other people in the room. Two women are bending down in front of one of the mannequins. They are pinning up a hem on one of the dresses. One of them is Jane. She is holding a small piece of fabric and pointing at one of the mannequins. Sitting behind her is one of the men we saw earlier, at the restaurant. He is called Peter. He is medium height and is wearing a suit. He has a fat face, with very regular features and shiny eyes. His hair is gelled backwards.

He is smiling at Jane.

Jane turns around and sees him smiling and throws the bit of cloth at him in a good natured way. Peter laughs. A woman who is sitting next to them stands up and walks over to one of the mannequins and folds back the collar on the jacket. She makes a point about the length of the collar and then sits back down. Jane says something. One woman has a pad of paper on her lap and she makes notes.

Peter stands up and walks over to the same mannequin and folds the collar in a different way and then turns the mannequin’s wig around so that it covers

the face. Everyone laughs. And the other woman stands up, playfully pulls Peter away and turns the mannequin's wig back around to its correct position. Peter then makes a joke of pretending to jump up in an attempt to turn the wig again.

Later on. Jane and Peter are sitting in a bar. There were three of them but Laura has just left. They are in a new bar in London – designed by a famous architect. The bar has large backlit photographs of animals on the wall and the ceiling: lions, tigers, gazelles. The colours are intense. The bar is made from a transparent material and lit from below. There is a long row of spirits on the shelf behind. Peter and Jane are talking. They are laughing. Jane is laughing. Peter says something to Jane and touches her sleeve. Jane laughs and spills a some of her drink. They seem to be getting on.

Then Peter says:

“Will you have sex with me?”.

Jane looks at him to see if he is joking but it is obvious he is serious. She seems shocked. She looks at him and says:

“No. I ... I've got to go.” She stands up.

Peter raises his hands apologetically. She picks up her bag. Peter tries to stop her at first but then watches her walk out of the bar.

Tak!

Tak!

Tak!

Monica watches a tall blond woman in high heels walk past.

Then she looks down at the shopping list

- 1 × tea bags
- 1 × coffee
- 4 × semi-skimmed milk
- 4 × whole-cream milk

Monica pushes the trolley down the aisles. The supermarket is relatively empty because it is the middle of the day. It is cool and relaxing. Monica is tired. She thinks:

“I could do all this on the internet. Maybe I should mention it to Mrs Mitchell – but then again – maybe not I like these trips to the supermarket.”

- 12 × grapefruit juice
- 12 × freshly squeezed orange juice
- 24 × bio-active yoghurt
- 3 × deluxe muesli – low sugar.
- 4 × *Be careful with yourself!* – chilli con carne
- 4 × *Be careful with yourself!* – chicken with lemon
- 2 × *B.C.W.Y* – salmon and dill
- 12 × Greek style – low-fat yoghurt
- 2 × seeded loaves

Then Monica goes up to the till. And she pays for the food. She uses her own supermarket card to get the points. She is saving up air miles to go to Portugal.

Later on, Monica has a mocha coffee in the coffee shop and sits in a comfortable armchair looking out of the windows at the people walking past.

Two long, thin, well-manicured fingers sprinkle flakes of fish food into the fish tank. The surface of the water bubbles with fish mouths. Red Wag Rasbora, Kissing Gourami, and Gold Tiger Scales – we can see the coloured mouths and bubbles and red of nail varnish on the fingers.

The coloured fish turn between the pond weed and semi-precious stones and then sprint the expanse of

clear water, across a bed of blue and green stones, in front of the blue, backlit, plexiglass backdrop – turn – and then sprint back. The kitchen is reflected in the glass.

Then the two fingers that sprinkled the fish food take out a cigarette from a pack. They put the cigarette between two lips. An older person's lips – there are little lines around the lips. And light the cigarette.

Inhale – and then exhale. The smoke billows up to the ceiling from the lips and then back down again. We watch the smoke spiralling from the end of the cigarette – intricate twirling patterns. Then follow the smoke back down to the lips. They are Lillian Dalling's lips. She is sitting in the kitchen. She has no make-up on. She looks different. She looks different. There is a small glass of wine in front of her on the table.

Lillian can't sleep, so she has come downstairs for a cigarette. And a glass of wine. She seems to have something on her mind. She scowles. Then she breaths in and out. There is a sound. Lillian looks up. A car. Outside.

Zarvyn is sitting on his bed. He is looking down at his knees. He is wearing jeans and a blue Fred Perry t-shirt. He is looking at the material of his trousers. He is opening and shutting his mouth. Opening it as wide as he can. He is not shouting or screaming. He isn't making any noise. Just opening and shutting. Opening and shutting his mouth. We watch as he continues. He touches his tongue with his finger.

The taxi drives away. Jane opens the front door. The hall is dark. She can see light coming from the kitchen. She walks into the hall, puts her bag down, takes off her coat and lays it over the bannister.

There are footsteps and then we see Jane walk into the kitchen

“Hi there,” says Lillian. “ ... you’re late.”

Jane looks at herself in the mirror and says:

“Tell me about it. I was delayed in London. And then the train was cancelled.”

“I was just having a glass of wine – I couldn’t sleep. Do you want one?”

“Err. OK. Yes I will ... and then I had trouble getting a taxi.”

Jane sits down.

As Lillian is pouring Jane a glass of wine, she says:

“Sounds terrible. Those trains are very unreliable.”

Outside. Four spotlights illuminate the front of the house.

OK. OK. OK. FROOOO-ZEN TEARS. FROOO-ZEN TEARS. OK. OK. OK. IF OWN-LEEE WEEE COULD HAVE LASTED FOREVVVV-ER. YEAH. YEAH. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. Ahead ... stairs ... threadbare brownish patterned carpet. Oh Jesus ... that smell catches in your throat. You can see the kitchen ahead. An old 1960s cooker. To the left ... a door. Looking in through the door, it’s a living room. Brownish floral wallpaper, net

curtains, a big old TV, gas fire with ceramic horse on top. Ceramic horse. Ceramic horse. We've been here before. We've been here before. Yes we've been in here before. This is familiar. Table. Coff! Caff! Coughing. Some scissors. A pile of newspapers. Some of them have been cut up. Some sellotape. A glue stick. A pile of envelopes. Oh shit – that smell. Some of the papers have fallen on to the floor. SOMEONE JUMPS BACKWARDS. FUCK. FUCK. SHIT. SHIT. SHIT. SHIT. SHIT. WHAT IS THIS? FUCK.

“Hey! What's this. What's going on? What's going on?”

A figure jumps back from the table. A strange figure. You can't see many details. Out of focus. Hold on a minute – it's me! It's me. That figure is me. SHIT. SHIT. Oh shit. That figure is me. “What's going on here! What the fuck ... !” It's me. IT'S ME. That's me Shit! It's me. What are you doing here? How did you get in? Shit! Well shit! Wow! It's me. Shit! Shit. OK. Shit. Shit. Shit. The figure grabs up the papers. And moves over to the other side of the room. WHAT? WHAT? FUCK. You only see a blurry outline of a figure – nothing distinct. A few random cut out letters fall from the bundle of papers, an 'S' and an 'E'. I am holding the papers to my chest. “Don't creep up on me like that! OK. OK. OK. SHIT. DON'T DO THAT. OK. OK. OK. DON'T DO THAT.” Wow shit. I'm not having a good time. I have just spilt baked beans down my leg. I found a can of beans yesterday. But It's difficult for me to eat. It just mixes with the vomit in my throat. And the sherry makes me feel sick. I'm confused. IT'S NOT NICE BEING ME and things are getting worse. Do you realise that? Yes. Yes. OK. HA. HA. HA. I mean, I know it seems funny. Yeah. Yeah. But then soon it won't be nice for you. Yeah. Ha ha. DO YOU REALISE THAT? IT'S GOING TO BE VERY UN-NICE. Yes. OK. Ha Ha. Very nice. UN-NICE. UN-NICE. UN-NICE. And I know a lot of things about you, I know for

instance what your father looks like and I know what your mother looks like. MUMMY. MUMMY. MUMMY ... I KNOW. and I know a lot of other things ... I know ... but whatever ... whatever ... I don't want to get into this. It's miserable in here but we seem to have made a connection. At least there's that. A connection. BUT IT WILL CHANGE. IT WILL BE UN-NICE. But then it will be JOYFUL. JOY. JOY. JOY. JOY. JOY.

Upstairs the ollllld woman is turning into flesh soup. First the blue bottle flies arrived. AND THEY LAID THEIR EGGS IN HER EYES AND MOUTH. There are a lot of flies around now. Big fat ones. Big fat juicy ones. And her eyes are closed. Her eyelids are black. Her body is swollen – the flesh has a creamy consistency and the wound on her forehead is black. She fell onto her face. Green and purple stains of putrefaction over her abdomen. The body is swollen. Her veins are marbling on her face. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK.

A pink rose stands in the foreground. Itzzzzzz petals delicately curled and speckled with dew. It is backlit by the early morning sun. In the background we can hear the tinkling of the fountain. We can see the sun reflected in the waxy body-work of a blue Fiat Uno. Behind is, a honeysuckle which twists on a trellis, up the side of the house. The leaves of the honey-suckle move in a slight wind and, above, a clear pastel blue sky.

There is a ladder leaning against the side of the house. And a man at the top of the ladder is cutting the honeysuckle with clippers. He is disentangling the honeysuckle from the guttering. He shouts something

down to another man who is bent over one of the flower beds, and they both laugh. HA. HA. HA. HA. HA. Elsewhere, the tennis court net has been taken down, presumably so that the grass can be mown. And another man is fishing leaves out of the swimming pool with a net on a long pole.

And we can see the house reflected upside down in the swimming pool.

It is early morning – it’s maybe 8 o’clock – Jane and Tony are sitting outside at the back of the house. There is a circular wooden table with a large jug of orange juice and a chrome toast rack. Tony is eating a piece of toast. Jane has a bowl of cereal in front of her.

They are talking, although at first we can’t hear what they are saying. Tony is showing Jane something. As we get closer we can see that he has placed six or seven pieces of paper on the table. Words are spelt out by letters cut out from newspapers, in the style of a black-mail note.

The letters say: FUK U. U WILL PAY; NNON-SALVAYYYSHON IS CUMMMING; UBERMENSCH IZZZZ NOW; EEET YR BRAYNES YEW SKUM; YOO WILL PAY IN NON-REPENTAAAAANCE.

“Who ... who would send them?”, says Jane.

Tony says:

“I don’t know. I don’t know. But we were sent similar messages about two years ago ... for about two or three months ... and then they stopped. I think it might be someone called Les Sealey.”

“Who?”

“He was involved in the crash with Zarvyn. He was in another car. Zarvyn collided with him. He was hurt. Not badly. We gaaaaave him some money as compensation.”

“Well, we should tell the police.”

“Yes ... maybe. But the police won't do anything ... anyway, Les Sealey won't do anything. He's a loser.”
Loser. Loser. Loser.

Billy the dog is sitting on the top step. At the front of the house. The front door opens. Tony walks out. As he goes past he bends down and pats Billy's head. Billy looks up and makes a noise. Tony says: “OK Billy. OK Billy. OK Billy.” Tony walks down the stairs. Billy licks his lips and watches Tony go. Then he turns his head and he is looking in our direction. And, as he is looking at us, his face seems to change. It seems like his face changes into something else. That's what it looks like. But it must be just a trick of the light but his face seems to change into a human face. A twisted face. A human-dog-face. And then it changes back into a dog face. Or it looks like a dog face again.

We watch Tony walk off across the gravel towards his car.

Tony bleeps the car open from a distance.

He throws his briefcayyyse onto the back seat and gets in the front.

Billy watches the car drive forwards across the gravel. A van is coming up the drive in the other direction. Tony waits for it to pass. It is bright orange. Bright orange. Tony looks at the van then steers the car down the drive. We watch as it disappears from sight.

The van parks at the side of the house. It has 'PEST-O-CUTOR' written on the side. We can hear rock music from the van's radio.



Straight-jacket.
Straight to hell.
STRAIGHT JACKET.
A love straight jacket.
It sent me straight to hell!



As we are waiting, a man with an orange jacket with 'PEST-O-CUTOR' written on the back gets out of the van. He opens the back of the van and pulls a bag out. The record finishes. Someone is talking on the radio. Then another song starts.

The man opens the bag and takes out a couple of boxes and a PVC pouch. He turns off the radio and goes into the house.

They met in a hotel bar – Geoff and Lillian, three or four years ago, in Brighton just after his wife died. He was close to an emotional breakdown. The whole thing was too much. Too much. Too much for anyone. Watching his wife die ... watching the person you love deteriorate in front of your eyes. And then his son smashed up in a serious car crash. It was too much. Too much. OK. OK. OK.

OK. He can't remember why he went into the bar. He can remember that he became aware of an attractive woman. He remembers catching sight of her in the mirror. A tall woman. He can't remember how they started talking. But he remembers thinking she was tall.

Maybe he asked her if she wanted a drink – or maybe she asked him for a cigarette – a cigarette – he can't remember – or maybe he just started talking to her. He remembers she told him she was up in Brighton visiting a friend. Geoff told her about his wife. And then it all came flooding out. He told her how, when Josey was dying, she was delirious with all the pain and drugs and how she was abusive towards him. Swearing at him. Shouting at him. Calling him names. He started crying:

“I mean ... I ... it wasn't the real Josey ... and I still love her. It wasn't the real Josey.”

Lillian tried to comfort him. She said:

“I know it's difficult but you've got to be strong. And you've got to ... remember the good times. They don't go away. I have been through the same thing ... two years ago ... my husband ... Jonathon died in a similar way and ... it was horrible ... but the thirty years we shared together ... are precious ... very precious to me ... and the years ... you shared ... with Josey ... you've got to hold onto the memories.”

Lillian helped Geoff deal with the whole situation. She moved up from London. She was a doctor. She was a doctorrrrrrrr.

Jane is sitting in the kitchen. The man from PEST-O-CUTOR comes into the room and says:

“All finished! I've put the bait down. Just a matter of time now ... for the poison to take effect. I didn't see any but ... that doesn't necessarily mean anything ... Either me or someone else will call back in about a week.”

Jane says:

“Thanks.”

The man walks out of the room. Jane follows him to the front door and says goodbye. She watches him walk in the direction of an orange van, then she shuts the door. Shuts the door. Jane stands behind the door for a few minutes.

Tony izzzzz on his way out of the office. He is holding a file. The phone rings. He goes back into his office to answer the phone. He says:

“Hello.”

Jane says:

“Hello babe. I love you.”

Tony says:

“I love you.”

“When will you be home?”

“Not late. Not late.”

“Love you.”

“Love you.”

Tony puts the phone down and walks out of the office. On his desk there is a letter from his financial adviser.

Billy the dog is lying on the front drive, outside the house – in the shade of a car. Up above him a kestrel is wheeling around in the sky. He is lying with his jaw on the floor. Josey Mitchell really loved this dog – she really loved this dog – and when she was dying, he was the only one who was loyal to her. And as the pain of her condition grew worse and worse. She grew closer to the dog. She loved him. And Billy loved her. He used to guard her. He’d sleep on her bed. And they used to talk to each other.

And as Josey went mad she thought up fantastical

plots against her life and crimes against her person by members of her family. In the last few months she used to scream at Geoff, calling him the most obscene names: “You fucking scum. You fucking scum. You bitch! No ... no ... you scum. YOU SCUM. YOU SCUM! BITCH!” and threatening to disinherit him and leave all his money to her dog. She loved Billy the dog.

Did I already tell you this? Shit OK. OK. OK.

There is a stationary car on the road. It is dark. It is dark. There is a man inside the car. In front of us is a deserted cross-roads and some traffic lights. The traffic lights. The traffic lights are going through their sequence: red, green, amber ... red. Inside the car is Ralph Bailey. Ralph is a mini-cab driver.

Red, green, amber, red, green. Red, green, amber. He has just had a shock. He holds his hand in front of him. His hand is shaking. He can hear his heart beat: dum, dum, dum, dum, but slowly he calms down. He regains control of his nerves, he reaches in front of him, opens the glove compartment and takes out a quarter-bottle of whisky. He is sitting in a blue Ford Cortina. The taste of the alcohol calms his nerves.

“God-All-Fucking-Mighty!” he says to himself. “God-All-Fucking-Mighty.” Then he thinks: “Maybe I drink too much. ... maybe I drink too much ... maybe that’s what it is. I mean maybe my wife is right, maybe I do drink too much. I mean, she is right, I *do* drink too much.”

He says out loud: “Jesus Christ!” And then he laughs. He takes another swig and then looks at the road ahead of him, which is deserted. He aimlessly knocks the top of the whisky bottle against the the tree-shaped air-freshener, hanging from the rear-view mirror. His heart

is still beating fast but he's calming down. He is calming down. Shit. Shit. Shit.

Ralph Bailey has a bald head and is wearing a shirt and light-weight trousers.

Maybe the drink is a problem.

He takes another swig from his bottle. It is two o'clock in the morning – black countryside on one side, a hedge row on the other. No other cars: ... AMBER. GREEN ... RED. AMBER. GREEN. He is calming down. OK. OK. OK.

Finally, he decides to move the car forward – slowly at first, then accelerating until the speedometer touches thirty. He switches the radio on – someone is talking on a local chat show with an opinion about the day's topic. "I think that if you treat children that way, it proves you are not responsible enough to have children and ..."

Ralph is feeling better. As he drives he thinks about what happened five minutes earlier: he had just dropped off a woman at the popstar's house. He had come out of the drive and was making his way to the main road to Brighton. He had stopped at a red light and was waiting for a green light when a van drew up beside him. He didn't pay it any attention at first and continued looking idly ahead of him.

Then there was a noise. He turned his head. The van had 'PEST-O-CUTOR' written on the side. For a split second he couldn't make out a face in the window. Just dark ... Then he saw it. It was someone wearing one of those joke shop masks: a wolf, or an alien. It must have been someone having a laugh but anyway, at the time it had scared the living daylights out of him.

The person in the mask revved the van, and leaned out of the window and shouted:

"Race you shithead! Ha ha ha" and then screeched off, zigzagging over the cross-roads and on up the road and disappeared in the dark.

He has another swig of whisky.

He looks up at the mirror – nothing behind him. Strange, he feels quite exhilarated. HA. HA. HA. HA! Winds the window down. Puts his foot down on the accelerator. Shouts out of the window into the night and the empty fields: HA. HA. HA. AIEEEEEEE!

AAAAAAAAA. SHE AIN'T A DOCTOR. SHE AIN'T A DOCTOR. SHE AIN'T A DOCTOR. SHE AIN'T A DOCTOR. That Lillian she isn't a doctor. I can tell you SHE ISN'T A DOCTOR. She's a fake. She's a fucking liar. SHE'S A FUCKING LIAR. She met Geoff and said whatever was necessary. And everyone believed her. WHATEVER WORKED. She isn't a doctor. WHATEVER WORKED. WHATEVER ...

Tony walks out of the front door into the bright ssssssunlight. OYES. OYEAH. NICE. NICE. BEAUTIFUL DAY. He walks across the gravel to his car. He puts his briefcase on the roof while he opens the car door. Then he throws his briefcase into the car and climbs in. The car moves slowly off and accelerates slowly down the drive.

Jane is thinking:

“It was that night. IT WAS THAT NIGHT. When he said to me: Do you want to have sex with me?” and I said “No” and walked out of the bar. I walked out of the bar ... that night with Peter ... I walked out of the bar ... I walked out of the bar but then, a few minutes later, I walked back in. What the fuck was I doing? What the

fuck was I doing? I went out in the street and was about to get into a taxi but then I suddenly thought: “Why not?” It doesn’t make sense now – and it didn’t make sense then. I never usually do that sort of thing – but I just thought: “Why not?” What an idiot. I went back into the bar. Then we went to a hotel. And we spent three hours in a hotel room and then I got the last train back to Brighton. Why not? Why not?

No protection. Her period was late and she felt sick, so she bought a predictor kit which detected the presence of the human hormone Chorionic Gonadotrophin in her urine. She tested herself twice. It was positive and so she had a test at the Doctor’s and now it is definite. She is pregnant. She only got the final confirmation this morning. She hasn’t told Tony yet. She is pregnant. She is excited. She is very excited but she is also worried.

And now she is pregnant. She is thinking: “I love Tony. I had SEX with Peter. I LOVE Tony ... that’s the bottom line. I had SEX with Peter once. ... and NOW I’m pregnant. I’m not having an affair. I’m not having an abortion. Tony need never know. I love Tony. He need never know because it was a one-off thing. I love Tony but ... it just HAPPENED. Peter was there. I love Tony. I don’t love Peter – it was just sex. I was feeling lonely. I LOVE TONY. Me and Tony are good. And this can be a good thing. I KNOW IT WAS PETER but this is Tony’s child. This is Tony’s CHILD. This is Tony’s child. This is our child. Definitely I am keeping it but – it is mine and Tony’s – our baby – and this baby will bring us back

together. THIS IS OUR CHILD. This is our child. This is Tony's child. Tony's child. I'm pregnant. I'm pregnant".

Zarvyn is lying on his bed. Lillian is also in the room. She looks down at him. Zarvyn opens his eyes. He almost seems to smile. Lillian smiles down at him.

Then she upturns a bottle of Dettol onto a piece of cotton wool and dabs it onto his arm. Zarvyn is smiling and holding his arm up to her. Lillian ties a rubber armband around his arm. She inflates it. It tightens around his arm. She smiles. She puts down the cotton wool and picks up the syringe. She says quietly: "You're my little junky, aren't you?" She injects him. "You're my little baby junky. Baby Junky."

Zarvyn lies back on the bed. There is a slow flush of pleasure spreading over his body; he rubs his neck in an expression of pure joy. The sensation grows until it feels like he is having an orgasm in every pore ... and in his head ... it is like orange and yellow fire ... like a sunset.

BAY-BEEE JUN-KEEE. BAY-BEEE-JUN-KEEE.

Tony is sitting in his office. There are three pieces of paper on the table in front of him. They are financial papers – to do with his business. His business is in big trouble now. His accountant is very worried. Tony is worried too. His business might be finished. Things are out of control.

And Jane just rang up and told him she is pregnant. He is worried. He feels a little light-headed. He feels a little hysterical. He feels as if his life is out of control. Out of control. Out of control.

He picks up the papers and walks out of the room.

Geoff is looking out across the countryside. He watches a car move along the Brighton Road, in the distance, past the *Pick Yer Own* Farm, on the way to Three Kendles. He looks down at Josey's grave. He has brought some ffffffflowers. He looks at them and smells them but they don't really smell of anything. He looks out across the landscape again and thinks of Josey. There is a tear in his eye.

He says: "I'm sorry baby. I love you baby. I love you babe. Love you."

He is thinking: "We met in a dancehall in Clapham ... in 1958. And you were beautiful. You were beautiful. I can remember the first time I saw you. You were only eighteen years old ... but you were ... stunning. Beautiful. I have never seen anyone so beautiful. You ... you weren't famous then ... I can remember ... even now ... the first time I saw you. I can remember exactly how you looked."

And Geoff starts crying.

Then he bends down and places the flowers by the grave. He looks out across the landscape. There is a car in the distanzzzz and he can see something black moving across a field – about the size of a dog – it must be a dog – it doesn't look like a dog – moving quickly – it disappears from sight. Must have been a dog.

There is a tear in his eye. He says:

"I'm sorry, Josey. I ... I'm so sorry."

A squirrel jumps down from a tree and skips quickly over the grass. It stops twenty feet away. It is still for a few seconds, then moves quickly towards the house. It

stops as a figure emerges from the side door. Monica walks out of the house, carrying two rubbish bags. She walks to one of the outhouses and throws them in the bin.

Then she walks back into he kitchen.

Lillian is watching a nature programme on the TV. On the screen there is a pack of wolves running across the grass. Long legs and yellow eyes. A voice over is talking about how far wolves can travel in a day.

“Wolves have incredible stamina, if needs be, they can run forty or fifty miles in a day ... ”

Tony leans forward. He feels the cool air from the deepfreeze on his face. He feels a little light headed and for a second he sees white flashes in front of his eyes. He grabs the edge of the refridgerator unit and looks down at the bags of frozen prawns below him. There is a line of sweat on his forehead

He feels a hand on his shoulder and someone says “Are you alright?” Tony turns around. He sees a man. He sees a man. He says “yes, I’m OK”

“Are you sure you’re alright?” says the man.

“Yes, thankzzzz,” says Tony. The man walks away down the aisle of the supermarket.

Tony watches a teenager who is stacking bread onto shelves. He is wearing a uniform and a name badge. Tony looks away. He breathes in deeply. Breathes in deeply.

OK. OK. OK. Calm. Calm down. Calm. OK. OK. SLOW. SLOW ... What am I DOING? FOCUS. FOCUS. What the fuck am I doing with my life?

He shuts his eyes. And breathes in and out deeply.

He tries to get his head together. FOCUS. FOCUS. FOCUS. For some reason he has come to the supermarket. It's light in here and cool. And it smells fresh. And it's organised. He wants to think things through. OK. OK. OK. Think things through. Think things through.

He is standing in one of the aisles. He brings his hands up and massages his temples. He looks at the rows of tins. Tuna fish in brine. Tuna fish in oil. Mackerel fillets.

A woman pushes by him with her trolley.

Tony breathes in deeply and looks down at his feet. He is thinking OK. OK. OK. OK. Calm. Calm. OK. OK. Calm. Calm. Calm.

He thinks:

“OK. OK. I AM GOING TO MAKE THIS THING WORK. I AM GOING TO FUCKING MAKE THIS WORK. I want to make things work. I want all the usual things: children, a family ... a happy life. A happy life. I want to be happy. Something ... something about the present moment has emphasised this to me and I FEEL QUITE STRONGLY that I have been BEHAVING LIKE A FOOL. I have got to take control of my life I have been behaving like a fool and I might have wrecked everything. I WANT TO BE HAPPY. But if I am given a second chance, then this time I am not going to make any mistake! I swear to God! I swear on my Mother's grave! ON MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.”

He takes his mobile phone out of his pocket and rings Jane. And when she answers he says:

“Jane I love you.”

And Jane says:

“I know baby. I love you.”

Tony says:
“We’re going to make this work.”
Jane says:
“Yes. Yes. Yes.”

Ten minutes later, Lillian is eating a salad in the living room. Jane walks in. Jane is smiling.

Lillian says: “What is it?”
Jane says: “What do you mean?”
“You. You’re smiling from ear to ear.”
“Am I?” says Jane.
She is smiling.
“Yes.”

“Oh nothing. Nothing ... I’m just happy.”

Lillian smiles back at Jane. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK.
Jane’s phone rings. She presses the answer button. It’s Tony again. He says:

“I love you.”
Jane says:
“I know baby. I love you.”
“I love you”.

OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. Calm. Calm. OK. BREATHE IN ... in ... hold it ... Hold it ... breathe out. Nice. Nice. FOCUS. FOCUS. OK. OK. Breathe in ... breathe in ... and relax. And breathe out ... and hold it ... and breathe out. OK. OK. OK. Relax. OK. OK. THIS IS YOUR WORLD ... Your World. BREATHE ... in ... AND FOCUS ... OK. OK. OK. breathe out. OK. OK. OK. Oh Shit! SHIT! OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. I want to slow this down. OK. OK. Shit!! OK. Calm down. Calm down. OK. Relax. Relax. OK. I want us to relax. I want this to be a relaxed situation.

Relax. Relax. Yes. Yes. OK. I want this to be a good situation – a relaxed situation. I want us to be relaxed. Calm. Calm. FOCUS. FOCUS. OK. OK. OK ... Nice! Slow down. Relax. Lay back and relax. OK. OK.

OK. OK. OK. Nice NICE. You are happy. You are focused. You are sitting out on the balcony overlooking a lake ... the sun is setting ... and your favourite, relaxing piece of music is playing inside ... NICE. Yeah and you are relaxed and ... OK. OK. OK. OK. OK ... REEEEEELAX ... you are watching the sun slowly sink into the horizon ... As it does so the music fades gently away ... And there is a silence ... Nothing moves ... and the world is still ... Frozen in a moment in time ... The moment is eternal ... Your whole being is wrapped in stillness ... stillness. Pure peace is inside you ... OK. OK. OK. Calm. Keep it calm. And ... And then you are walking down the beach to the seashore. The sun is shining, it is another place, it is warm, with a gentle breeze. And as you walk slowly along the water's edge, looking around you ... you see the seagulls soaring above, in the clear blue sky. In the distance, you see the sails of a yacht. And you are beginning to feel tired, so you walk up the beach a little way, and lie down in the soft sand – you are looking up at the sky, with the occasional wispy white cloud floating calmly by – you feel the sand beneath you – it is soft and warm. You can hear the sounds around you – the seagulls calling and waves breaking gently onto the sand. The sound of the sand and pebbles as the waves go back out again. You can feel the gentle warm breeze on your face and in your hair. You listen to the waves. IT IS BEAUTIFUL. BEAUTIFUL. BEAUTIFUL.

Shhhhhhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhh

Shhhhhhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhh

OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. Nice. Nice. But Focus. And in the distance you can hear a sort of screaming. Can you hear it? Can you hear it? it's screaming. But it is beautiful. beautiful. YES. YES. YES. OK. OK. OK. OK. YESSSS. NO. NO. Screaming. Screaming. Happy. Happy. Crucified ... Dark sky. Screaming. But it wasn't him. It wasn't him. There was crying. There was screaming. But it wasn't him. It wasn't him. NOT SCREAMING ... LAUGHING. It was the cockroaches. The cockroaches on the cross. On the base of the cross. They were on the cross. Screaming. It was them. Not him. Not him. At the bottom of the cross. In the blood. Reversed. Twisted up. Oh Christ! Oh Christ! O Shit! O Shit!

UP. UP. UP. And DOWN. DOWN. He is wearing track suit bottoms and a yellow vest. He is lying on the exercise bench in his mini-gym. He does eight reps and then, letting go of the bar, stretches his arms out beside him. He is still breathing in and out deeply. After a minute, he sits up and reaches for the white towel, hanging from the top of the exercise machine. He wipes his face and chest with the towel, throws it back onto the top of the exercise machine and then picks up a bottle of water from the floor beside the bench; he takes a couple of mouthfuls then puts it back under the bench and moves the peg down another couple of weights.

Lying back down on the bench, he moves his hands back up to the bar rotating them on the bar a few times.

Geoff. Geoff hooks another golf ball from behind him and bends down and sets it up on a tee. He twists his head until his neck clicks and then looks down at the ball again. Then when he is ready, he lifts the club back,

and swings down, through the ball and – *Snaak!*

He shields his eyes with his hand and watches as the ball flies away.

“OK. OK. OK. Not Bad. Not bad. OK. OK.”. It seems as if his lessons are paying off. He hooks out another ball. Hooks out another ball.

An hour later. At the front of the house. The door opens and Tony walks out. He has his jacket slung over his shoulder and he is carrying a briefcase.

He bleeps his car door from a distance and then flips it open.

Before he gets in he leans forwards on the car, bending forward until his forehead touches the car roof. He can feel the car roof, cool on his forehead. He stays in this position for maybe a minute. Then he looks up and breathes in and out deeply. He throws his briefcase into the car and climbs in himself.

He puts a cassette into the cassette player and drives off to Bruce Springsteen singing: “Boooooornnnn in the USAyyyyyyyyyya”.

Monica is cleaning Zarvyn’s room. Zarvyn is sitting in his wheelchair by the bed.

“I’ve got to move you Smarvyn,” Monica says. She always calls him Smarvyn. She moves his wheelchair and hovers under the bed.

Zarvyn is moving his mouth. Moving his jaw from side to side. Monica looks at him. There is spit on his chin. Monica takes a handkerchief out of her apron and wipes his face.

Lillian says:
“It’s your first scan today isn’t it? You must be excited.”
Jane says:
“Yes. I am.”
Lillian sits down. She seems tense
“Three months now, isn’t it?”
“Yes ... yes”
“O wow! ... very exciting. Very exciting.”
She walks out of the room.

The washing machine hits the sssspin cycle and for a few seconds makes a banging sound. Monica is in the room next to Tony’s weights room. She is sorting washing into different piles of white and coloured clothes. OK. OK. OK.

There is the sound of a car horn. A taxi cab is drawing up at the front of the house.

The front door openzz and Jane appears. She is carrying two bags and a dress on a hanger. She walks across the drive towards the car. Ralph the taxi driver gets out of the driver’s door and walks across to carry Jane’s bags for her.

Jane sits in the back seat. Her bump is just visible now. The driver is telling her something about someone playing a trick on him with a wolf mask. A wolf mask. A wolf mask. WHAT? WHAT?

And later on, Jane is sitting on a bench, which is covered in a big paper towel. She is wearing a thin white paper robe. Tony is sitting beside her holding her hand. He is rubbing her fingers. A nurse is talking to Jane and rubbing jelly over her stomach.

Then the nurse starts to run an object, which feels, like an anti-perspirent bottle over Jane's belly and images start to appear on a screen. The nurse moves the instrument in different directions and the image changes slightly.

On the screen, there is a shape like a kidney bean. There is a little glow, which pulses on and off – which is the heart.

Geoff and Lillian are lying on the bed. Geoff is wearing his trousers and a shirt ... Lillian is wearing only a bra and knickers. Geoff's face is in shadow. Lillian is lying against Geoff's shoulder and she is stroking his hair. She says:

“Listen Baby ... Listen ... I don't want to get your hopes up ... but I am very optimistic about Zarvyn. The tests seem to suggest ... that none of the major areas of the brain have been damaged seriously. There is evidence of minor damage to certain, less important areas of the brain but there seems to be no reason why he shouldn't talk or why his mental capabilities should be impaired in the long-term. There is also very little damage to the vocal chords. And ... and this all proves ... or will prove, if I am correct, that his problems are mental, or of a psychiatric nature ... and these can be treated ... or we can at least expect improvement.”

Jane is in Tony's office. She has propped up a small circular mirror on top of the filing cabinet and she is applying make-up. She and Tony are going to a function in town. She is getting changed in Tony's office rather than driving back to the house.

She is wearing a black dress and her hair is pulled back from her face. She is applying bright red lipstick. Tony is sitting at his desk watching her.

TANGO. TANGO. TANGO. TANGO. TANGO. OK. OK. Two figures twirl across the floor.



TANGO. TANGO. TANGO. The woman has black hair and black eyes and a red dress. The man flings her backwards and holds her frozen for one maybe two seconds. He stands motionless, bent over the woman, with his hand cocked above his head.

They stand like statues for a few seconds.

Then, they're off again. TANGO. TANGO. TANGO ... twirling and twisting, bending and ducking – whirling across the dance floor – then stop again! Then the woman is bent over again with the man looking in the opposite direction.



They stand still for a few seconds then ... off again. TANGO. TANGO. TANGO.

As the spotlight follows the two dancers around the darkened room, we see the silhouettes of the audience sitting at the tables around the dance floor. We can see their heads. Then the spotlight illuminates two or three tables at the front and we see Jane and Tony.

They are sitting with a group of other people. Tony is sitting to the right. We are looking from behind. He is slouching in his chair with his legs spread out in front of him. He is wearing a grey suit and has got a *Sea Breeze* on the table beside him. Tony is watching the dancers. Jane is sitting beside him and she is talking to an old man next to her. The old man she is talking to is Mr O'Connell, Managing Director of T&J.

The lawyers have drawn up the final contracts – there are only a few legal details outstanding. This evening is a kind of celebration,

Mr O'Connell is enjoying himself. He obviously likes Jane. This evening's entertainment was his idea. Jane has just said something to him and he has his head thrown back in laughter. Tony is bored but he gets involved every now and then, by either leaning across to say something or replying to a question, or laughing to a joke.

Sitting next to Mr O'Connell are a few people from T&J – some of them we've seen before: Peter, for instance. He's wearing a green suit and at the moment he is laughing at a joke.

Mr O'Connell is talking to Jane and Tony:

“Peter has been very impressed ... and Natalie. They both talk very highly of you Jane. And ... well ... I am a big fan ... and I think the T&J / SILVER partnership is going to be a big success.”

“Ha Ha ... well ... I hope so,” says Jane.

At this point Peter comes across, holding two bottles of wine – one red one white.

“Blood or piss?” he says

There is a silence,

Mr O’Connel smiles and says: “So sophisticated! Was he a problem to work with Jane? Shall I fire him?”

Peter smiles at Jane and says:

“Well ... with a man like Tony behind you, Jane, you can’t go wrong.” And he slaps Tony on the back.

Everyone laughs. Tony smiles. Tony doesn’t care. This is about money. He amuses himself by imagining himself twisting Peter’s head off and shoving it up his arse. Fat little cunt.

Later on. Later on. Jane, Tony and Mr O’Connel are sitting at a table.

The band is playing a variety of Latin American numbers.

Mr O’Connel has appeared on TV to advertise his stores. You might recognise him. He has a sun-tanned, wrinkled face that radiates strength and reliability ... and frequent Mediterranean holidays ... and a life of unbroken affluence and success. He looks like a man you could trust. In his adverts, he used say: “T&J Makes your Day!”

He sits in his chair crossing and uncrossing his legs; turning a brandy glass between his fingers and watching the reflections. He says:

“Well, you really must be congratulated. Both of you. Because this is a team game. Marriage and business ... both of them team games.”

Tony smiles. He looks at Jane. She is smiling. Mr O’Connel says to Tony:

“You should be very proud of your wife. She’s a genius!”

Then he turns to Jane and says:

“In business you either have it or you don’t. These are early stages ... but I think you’ve got a great future.”

Mr O’Connel reaches across and grasps Tony’s shoulder. Tony is pretending to laugh.

Mr O’Connel leans back and says:

“In life the trick is always to live up to your potential. And ... and I’m not just talking about business, I mean ... I’m drunk ... but I know what I’m talking about. You two are a partnership. You’ve had to deal with a lot of things ... death ... tragedy ... the whole lot ... but you’re still here. You’re still here. Sitting here together. Two successful people ... a nice big house, a swimming pool, lots of money ... but ... but, what you’ve got to remember is ... all that counts for nothing, what matters is you ... both of *you*, as a partnership ... that’s the important thing ... your life together. Make sure you don’t have any regrets ... NO REGRETS.”

Jane stands up and, in a jokey way, cups Tony’s face with her hands and she kisses him on the forehead. Tony smiles.

Mr O’Connel gestures with his hands – then he says:

“No, no, I’m serious. I may be drunk but I’m talking sense. And I’m saying this as a man who has failed in this area himself. I have been a successful man in many ways ... but in the most important ways I have failed. My marriage was a failure. I was a failure as a husband and a father ... and I know now ... as an old man ... that I was a fool. ... And I’m just saying to you two, just make sure you don’t forget what is important. And all this other stuff ... the money ... the house ... that doesn’t matter.”

There is a silence

O’Connel drains his glass.

“Anyway. Come on. I’m just an old fool. I’m keeping you away from more entertaining company. Go on ... both of you ... dance ... dance.”

Jane stands up and pulls Tony onto the dance floor.
Tony doesn't like dancing.

Zarvyn can hear a noise. A quiet noise. A quiet noise.
Just outside the door. Just outside the door. He sits
perfectly still next to his bed – trying not to move.

Then the noise stops. But he is still scared. He sits
still. He sits still for one ... two ... three ... four ... five
minutes. The noise stops. No noise. No noise. No noise.
He stands up and makes his way over to the door.
Lowers his head to the keyhole. For a few seconds he
can't see anything but then, his eye focuses on
something – it is close to him – just on the other side of
the door. He's been looking too far – he's been looking
into the middle distance ... but the object he is looking
at is closer ... much closer. Just on the other side of the
door.

In a split second Zarvyn sees the eye. An eye! An eye
is looking straight back at him. Just on the other side of
the door. Looking into the room. The thickness of a
door away. And then the eye moves back and he sees a
face. A white face. Like a drowned face beneath the ice.
The face seems to have black hair but then the hair
moves and he sees it issssss a mass of beetles. The hair is
beetles. Yellow teeth. Yellow teeth. The face is laughing at
him. The mouth opens – cockroaches push their way out
of the mouth.

Zarvyn screams and falls back and scrabbles away –
backwards – away from the door – and tries to hide
himself in the corner of the room.

There is the sound of something like laughter. HA. HA.
HA. HA. HA. HA. HA.

I know I have not always been a good person. I know that there is such a thing as ... morality. I think there is. I think there is. I do think that there is good and bad in the universe. GOOD AND BAD. But it ... doesn't seem to matter anymore. It seems to be irrelevant. I have tried. I have tried ... but I have been twisted ... and people have not always been kind to me. People have done bad things to me. I have tried hard to ... well, treat people OK but ... sometimes not everything you do is correct. Sometimes you do bad things. I feel great remorse for some of my actions, for some of the people I have hurt. But it is too late now ... too late to repent. It is too late for all of us.

The bell rings. Two or three times. There is a sound of voices just outside the door. Someone shouting; "Yooo-hooo! Yoooohooo!" Through the letter box. And then someone is saying: "She must have gone to her Daughter's" and then someone else saying: "She would have told us." And it just rang again. I can see the silhouette of an old woman through the window in the door. I'm going upstairs. They rang the doorbell. They rang the doorbell and looked through the living room window. I was hiding behind the sofa. They didn't see me. I think the next door neighbour is talking to them. I was looking through the window on the second floor. Two old women and a policeman ... They are still talking – I can't hear what they are saying.

I think a policeman climbed over the fence to have a look around the back. They've gone now but I expect they will be back. I'm surprised they didn't notice the smell.

Someone is having a dream. There are two feet. A nail has been driven through the feet into the wood behind. Blood runs from the wound, soaking the wood and pooling on the dirt below. IN THE DIRT. AND THE SKY IS REFLECTED IN THE BLOOD. A black sky is cracked with lightning. There is crying and moaning but there is also laughter. Something like laughter. OH GOD. OH GOD. THE SEWAGE WORKS HAVE ERUPTED and SHIT IS FLOWING DOWN THE STREETS. And there is a cloud of butterflies and insect/humans standing up, WITH BURNING ARMS. Then we see that there are thousands of beetles standing on their back legs waving their antennae in the air. There is the sound of great joy and happiness. It is a dream. THE DREAM IS COMING. THE DREEM IS KUMMING. THE DREEM IZ KUMMING. GUSHING PISS-NEKTAR WITH MUROID FLOWER AND BLOOD-TUMOUR. O BABY. O BABY. IT IS COMING. DEATH-JUNKY. FURY OF THE NON-LORD. VERMIN-CHRYSALIS. SHADOW OF LOVE-VOMIT, RECON-FIGURING TORTUROUS, SPUNK-ECHO, ARACNOID, PISS-LIK, DETH-TRAP. O YES. O YES. IT IS CUMMING. IT IZ CUMMING.

It is sunny. It is sunny but there is a slight wind, which is blowing the water from the fountain into the air in a fine mist. There is a weak rainbow stretched over the fountain.

IT IZ SUNNEEE and Lillian is jogging along the grass at the perimeter of the fairway. Someone else is out in the distance, hitting golf balls. At first it seems like it is Geoff because it is someone playing golf. But It isn't ...

it's not Geoff. It's not Geoff. Itzzzzz not Geoff. It's one of the gardeners. He is wearing a blue track suit. On the ground in front of him are two or three golf balls. A fat bluebottle flies past. Buzzes around the ball. He pushes it away with his nine iron.

He lifts the golf club above his head and swings at the golf ball, clipping the ball into the air. Then he spots something lying on the grass, thirty yards away. He walks in that direction.

There is a dead cat lying in the grass. It looks as though the cat's insides have been removed with a happy-scoop. A few pieces of dried intestine lie on the floor. Flies are buzzing around the cat's head. The cat's eyes have rotted away.

The sockets are blank. A fox must have got him. The man says: "Poor bugger," then he slides the golf club under the body and flips it away into the longer grass.

The floor is wet. White marble floor. We can see the ceiling reflected in the wet floor. And there is a marble figure above us, on a plinth. The stairs are in front of us. We are standing watching a woman who is cleaning the floor. She is on her hands and knees. She is cleaning the floor with a cloth. Next to her is a bucket. As she is cleaning something black scuttles out from near the skirting board. It scuttles past her hand and heads for the door. It seems to be the size of a cup – but maybe it is smaller. It is moving quickly.

The woman catches sight of it and screams. And knocks the bucket over.

At first nothing happens then Jane appears from a doorway. She is holding a paper. She says:

"What's the matter?"

The woman says:

“A beetle. It was a cockroach. A big one.”

Jane says:

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. It went over there.”

She points over to the right of the door.

Jane looks in the direction of her finger but she can't see anything.

A big mouth with thin lips is talking. We can see the inside of the mouth as it talks. We can see the tongue moving. Moving about. And we can see the face smiling complacently. And we can see the pores on its nose. The mouth is talking to Tony. Tony is nodding his head as a fat man talks.

He is sitting in his office. This man is Tony's accountant. He doesn't think that Tony is taking the situation seriously. And this situation is very serious. Very serious. Certain creditors have already threatened legal action. Tony is in a lot of trouble. Tony is in a lot of trouble.

The phone rings. Tony picks it up. It is Jane.

Tony says: “Oh hello.”

Jane says: “Something terrible has happened. Zarvyn has got cancer.”

A column of steam shoots out of the spout of the electric kettle. The sound of the boiling kettle ... and click! A hand takes hold of the handle and lifts the kettle off its base, then pours the water onto the earth-brown granules in the cup. The hand opens the fridge and reaches in and takes out a carton of milk and pours milk into the cup.

Geoff and Lillian are in the kitchen. Geoff's face is red from crying.

Five hours ago Lillian told Geoff how some of the routine blood tests she had ordered to monitor the drug levels in Zarvyn's blood revealed an infection of the liver. Further tests revealed that Zarvyn had cancer of the bowel. This is the same condition Josey died from.

Lillian says:

"I wish I wasn't the one telling you this but time is crucial. Fortunately, we have discovered it early – and there are effective treatments, especially if we act immediately. We have to act quickly. And I have to warn you these treatments are expensive. I ... I'm sorry ... I have to give you the facts."

Geoff turns to Lillian and puts his hand behind the back of her neck and squeezes. He says:

"Thank you. I appreciate it, Lillian."

Lillian says:

"I am going to talk to Dr Samuels at the Milton Clinic and try and arrange a meeting ... as soon as possible ... as soon as possible."

Zarvyn is lying on the bed. He is wearing a blue track-suit. His head is hanging over the side of the bed. His eyes are glazed and he has been sick on the floor. His eyes seem sunken into his head. There are black rings around his eyes. He is lying motionless. The room is illuminated by a 60-watt light bulb. He looks in a bad way. There is a line of spit and sick hanging from his mouth. He is dreaming. He is dreaming. It is dark. It's dark. He can smell something. He is climbing upwards. Inside the wall. He can sense something. Above him. Above him. There is a huddle in the corner. He is going home.

Lillian says:

“Are you sure you don’t want a coffee?”

Geoff says:

“ No ... I’m OK ... I’m OK. OK.”

Geoff is sitting at the kitchen table. He is unshaven. Spread across the table are a series of papers, photographs, books and files. Lillian sits down beside him, and says: “Look at this ...”

She picks up a brown envelope from the table. She takes out a photograph. She holds it up to the light.

“This is advanced colorectal cancer ... an advanced form of the condition Zarvyn has.”

She points to a dark area on the photo.

“As you can see, the cancer has spread into surrounding tissues. In this particular case, because it was not diagnosed early enough, the cancer has also spread to other areas of the body via the lymphatic system. This patient is basically inoperable and will die. Zarvyn has been diagnosed early and he won’t die. Rectal cancer is very unpleasant, as you know only too well from your experience with Josey. The faecal occult blood tests are conclusive – So we must act quickly – it is slightly unusual for someone of his age to get a cancer of this type but that’s just the way it is. We just have to deal with it. We have to get Zarvyn into the hands of a medical oncologist as soon as possible.”

Lillian hands Geoff a photograph of what looks like a jellyfish. She points to something that looks like the end of a baby’s finger and she says:

“That is a polyp.”

“I think you will find that Zarvyn has got cancerous polyps on the rectal wall – and I think that all he will require is relatively straightforward surgery to have these removed. But we have got to get him in for tests as soon as possible. And after surgery, or whatever treatment is prescribed, he will need further diagnostic tests to

verify that the cancer is contained.”

Geoff leans forward and puts his head in his hands.

“Anyway ... we’ve got to get him to a first class clinic as soon as possible. And, in my opinion, we are going to have to go to America ... I warn you now it is not going to be cheap but America leads the world in cancer treatment. And not just the immediate treatment but also the after-care ... which is all-important.”

Lillian leans over and holds Geoff’s shoulders

“I’m sorry I have to tell you this baby. It’s the last thing I want to be saying ... but I’m ... I’m trying to speak professionally.”

Geoff reaches up and squeezes her hand.

She hands Geoff a glossy brochure. The brochure has the name: MINTON CLINIC on the front and has a picture of a man in shorts and a woman looking out over a landscape. Geoff starts to flick through the pages. There is text describing different treatments and pictures of buildings.

“This is the best cancer treatment facility in America ... and basically in the world ... *but this has got to be your decision.*”

Lillian says: “I recommend this place because it provides the most intensive and integrated treatment in the world. And integration is essential. The way to treat cancer is in an integrated multi-treatment environment. So, for instance, you have to look at bone marrow treatments, chemotherapy, brachytherapy, intra-arterial infusion, stem-cell rescue and so on, but, as well as these high-tech procedures, you also have to pursue a more holistic approach, in relation to diet and after-care. Now as I said this doesn’t come cheap but ... ”

“We’ll go with it.”

“What?”

“I said. Let’s do it. Whatever you think is the best thing. Whatever’s best. That’s all I care about. It doesn’t

matter how much it costs. The best thing ... ”

“OK ... if you’re sure?”

“Yes. I trust you totally Lillian.”

“I can organise it today. I have already spoken to Doctor Samuels who is the chief medical practitioner there. I have already explained Zarvyn’s condition and talked to him about the medications. I ... I will get back in touch today. You can talk to him if you want. We can arrange the time-scale and arrange for a money transfer as soon as possible. Get all that out of the way and get on with Zarvyn’s treatment”.

It is early evening. In front of us is the staircase and the sculpture of a woman holding an urn on her shoulder. There is one large window half way up the staircase, which throws light on the stairs higher up, but the entrance hall is dimly lit. There is the sound of a clock ticking.

Do you know that some people drink a certain amount of their own urine every day? They say it’s good for you. It has the same ph value as your body or that it re-introduces antibodies into your system. In a way it’s an interesting idea. I mean it’s not something I could have imagined myself doing – until recently – but now, it seems to make sense.

Tony and Jane are directed by the man at reception to a room on the first floor. The room is dimly lit with white/orange walls and a fawn carpet. There is a door

through to another area where there is a tea urn and plates of biscuits on a table.

There is a circle of chairs – comfortable chairs and a few tables with reading material. There are fifteen or maybe twenty people in the room.

After about ten minutes, an official from The South Downs Medical Trust comes into the room and puts down a pile of sticky labels and pens. She asks everyone to write their name on a label and stick it somewhere visible on themselves. There are about ten other couples milling around. Then they all sit down on the chairs but the chairs are too far apart so Jane can't read anyone's label. She thinks to herself that her eyesight might be deteriorating and she wonders if she should get a eye test. Tony sits next to her with a label saying "Tony" stuck on his chest.

Everyone in turn has to say their name, where they live and what they do for a living. Then the Community Midwife starts her talk. She has a flip chart and shows them pictures of the uterus.

Tony puts his hand in his pocket. There is a piece of paper in there. He pulls it out. It is a pamphlet on pest control that the man from Pest-o-Cutor left at the house. On the front, it says 'Pest Control' and there is a picture of a cockroach. As the Mid-wife is talking he opens the pamphlet. He reads:

"Cockroaches are troublesome, unpleasant insects. They are usually associated with filth and unsanitary conditions, although they can invade even the best-kept homes. They are known to carry human disease organisms, such as salmonellosis and dysentery. Recent studies have indicated that cockroaches can cause allergic and asthmatic reactions in sensitive children and adults, especially in closed, domestic conditions.

Since this insect loves to live and reproduce where there is dirt, grease, darkness and moisture, keeping

rooms clean and dry is the first line of defence. Eliminate moist areas, such as under the sink and bath. Keep plumbing in good repair. Cockroaches love darkness, so don't allow any food to remain unstored overnight or let crumbs accumulate on counters or floors.

Nocturnal, they spend the day hiding in cracks and crevices around such areas as sinks, drains, cookers, the backs of cupboards and refrigerator motor compartments. They especially favour buildings with service ducts and complex plumbing installations. Infestations may be introduced by egg cases or adults in in-coming laundry, on raw materials, or in crates and packaging. Otherwise insects can enter buildings via the drains.

Cockroaches produce 4–8 egg capsules containing up to 50 eggs at approximately 1-month intervals. The female carries the capsule until just before the eggs hatch. She conceals the capsules near a food source. A cockroach takes 3.5 months to reach maturity.

Pest-o-Cutor use specially developed insecticidal baits to control cockroaches. The cockroach baits contain a slow-acting insecticide incorporated into a food attractant. The cockroaches locate and feed on the bait, typically contained in small, plastic bait trays, and crawl away to die. Bait carried back to the nesting area also kills other roaches after being expelled in the sputum and faeces.”

He is lying on the floor moaning and he is dribbling from his mouth. He is holding his stomach. He looks in a bad way. He is feeling bad – very bad – he has been feeling bad for a few days. At first the room was spinning around above him and then his head felt tight. Normally Lillian gives Zarvyn the cheapest street heroin she can

buy usually cut with a bit of Valium. But this time her usual contact sold her something else. Zarvyn has sweat dripping from his face. The room spins around. Around the axis of the light bulb. Any thoughts he has are spinning around as well. Zarvyn is sick.

He is sick. He is clutching his stomach. Occasionally his body jerks and he makes a strange crying sound. As we look closely at him we see his skin is strangely white and covered with droplets of sweat – his whole body jerks and he makes a crying sound

Tony is lying next to Jane in bed. It is late now. They got home two hours ago. They have been in bed for thirty minutes. It is a cliché but since Jane has become pregnant Tony is very attracted to her body. He likes her breasts and the way she has put on weight. Ever since her body started to change. He feels her breast against his cheek.

Jane is lying with her arm around Tony's shoulders. With her hand she is playing with his hair. Tony is lying with his face on her breasts. His head is heavy and she moves her position. Tony puts his hand on her belly. His baby. His baby.

Jane is thinking :

“If it's a boy we've agreed on Jamie or David and if it's a girl it's a toss-up between Grace and Louise. I think simple names are best. And we've had the baby's room decorated. Geoff said we should think of the house as our own now. He said that is what Josey would have wanted. It seems much more like our own house now – like a family house.”

The launch of the T&J SILVER collection is in two days time. It will coincide with a net-cast of the event, which will flag up the internet sales. It will take place here at Frozen Tears. As it is Jane's house it will emphasise the family/working mother theme. They will build a catwalk. Put up a marquee.

I'm up here. I'm up in the attic. I had to come up here because there are people downstairs. They broke the door down. Two policemen and two old ladies. They've found the dead woman. Someone is crying.

The police broke down the door. It's alright. It's OK. It's quite comfortable up here. I've made myself a sort of bed out of loft insulation and I found a bottle of crème de menthe up here. I mean, I doubt anyone is going to look up here. I'll just lie low until they leave. I mean I'm not sure what the procedure is in these cases. I mean, I suppose they might put one of those security doors on the front of the house which would be inconvenient. Shhhh! There's someone walking around in the room just below – it's a spare bedroom I think. Step, step, step, step, step. OK. OK. OK. OK. It's fine. I found this bottle of crème de menthe anyway – in a suitcase. Amazing! There was also a book in that suitcase as well, a diary or something. It's got some photographs in. It is a diary, or it's a bit like a scrapbook. It starts off with pictures of a young woman who I think is the woman downstairs when she was young. And there are lots of animal pictures cut out from magazines – hold on a minute ... no it's alright ... I thought someone was ... coming up but ... no ... NO. NO. it's OK. OK. OK. Focus. Focus. OK. OK. OK.

OK. OK. Next day. Next day. Zarvyn is lying with his head hanging over the edge of the bed. He has been sick and there is vomit on the floor underneath his head. There are also spots of blood in the vomit. BAD SMELL OF SHIT AS WELL. BAD. BAD. OK.

Lillian lifts his head up and arranges the pillow behind him. She fetches some tissue from the toilet and cleans up his face. There is a bad smell of shit in the room.

Zarvyn is very weak. He is very ill. He has been sick several times in the night. Lillian is very worried. She is worried. She doesn't know what is wrong but she has a strong suspicion that Zarvyn might die. He needs proper medical attention now. But ... if she calls someone ... Shit – shit – shit! She thinks: shit ... shit ... shit! She needs to buy some time. Just a few more days ... until the money ... until the money transfer ... SHIT. SHIT. SHIT. OK. OK. yeah ... shit ... shit ... why now? ... shit ... shit! She needs time to think. She needs time to think. Needs time to think.

OK. OK. OK. OK. She pulls the covers up to Zarvyn's neck. He is in a bad way. He is in a bad way.

She walks out of the room and locks the door. She walks along the corridor to the entrance hall. She stands beside the white sculpture and tries to think what she should do. There are voices in the kitchen. OK. OK. OK. Lillian stands still for a few seconds she is touching her lip with her finger. Then she seems to make a decision.

Lillian walks into the kitchen. Geoff is sitting at the table. She waits a few seconds and then says to Geoff:

“I have just looked in on Zarvyn, and I've given him a sedative. I'm trying to change his medication to fit in with the medication that the doctor in America has suggested. Now this is important ... we must make sure

he doesn't get excited ... especially today and tomorrow ... with the launch and so on. He's doing very well but there will be a change-around period and a few minor side effects. Today ... and tomorrow ... it would be best if he was left to relax as much as possible. He really needs to rest. And especially with the event today I don't want him becoming excited it could be dangerous. If possible I would prefer if no one visited him today. I know this is hard ... but, including yourself ... You've got to bear with me Geoff. I have to wear two hats here. This is my professional advice. And ... the other thing is the money. Doctor Daniels and I want to get the financial side out of the way so we can concentrate on the treatment. When will the transfer go through?"

"The bank say it will be completed first thing on Monday."

"Monday ... Monday ... first thing. OK. Good! Right That's good ... Monday."

Lillian reaches across and strokes Geoff's face.

"I'm sorry babe this is making me very nervous. I feel so responsible. I have a lot of things to do today before Jane's launch so I will have to talk to you later."

Geoff takes hold of Lillian's hand and says "Lillian I appreciate what you are doing. Thankyou."

FIRST THING MONDAY. FIRST THING MONDAY. FIRST THING MONDAY. MONDAY.

Lillian walks out of the kitchen into the hall. She is thinking: "OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. TODAY AND TOMORROW. TOMMOROW. MONEY CLEARS MONDAY. SHOULD BE OK. OK. OK. SHOULD BE OK. IF I CAN JUST KEEP IT TOGETHER. OK. OK. YES. YES. YES." Then out of the front door. She walks across the paved area and

towards the trees in front of her. She walks past the tennis courts. In the distance she can see a gardener bending over. She takes out her mobile phone and punches in a few numbers. She punches 0 ... 2 ... 0 ... 7 ... 2 ...

Something smacks into her back. Slices through the middle of her. Her mobile spins out of her hand. She sees some blood splatter out in front of her onto the grass. She feels her feet give way. She feels herself hit the ground. She is pulled across the grass. She hears a strange sound then she looooooses consciousness.

And when she comes to she feels as if she can see her own face – it is as if she is looking in a mirror. It is as if she is looking down at her own face. She can see herself. She can see herself looking scared. She is lying on the floor – she is outside – she can see grass and leaves behind her head. She has a cut on her forehead and there is a splatter of blood on her face – and her arms are bent behind her back. She is looking straight at herself and she can see herself crying. Oh shit! Oh shit! And she is looking down at her own face. And then she can see two hands – it is as if they are her hands. Or the hands of the person whose eyes she is looking through. One of these hands moves towards her face. It moves to the side of her face and strokes her cheek. She is crying. She can see herself crying. She is saying:

“Please no ... please no”. She can see herself crying:
“Please. Please ...!”

There is the sound of laughter. Then one of the hands grabs her hair and holds her head still. The other hand moves towards her eyes. She watches herself shut her eyes. Then she watches the thumb massage her eyeball. She is watching her mouth saying:

“Please. Please. No. No.”

Then the thumb pushes. She is screaming and she can feel the pain. The thumb jams into the eye and twists and then jars against the bone of the eye socket. She watches herself screaming. And the thumb twists her eyeball out.

“Oh please no! Oh please ...!”

She can see her face – her punctured eyeball hanging down her cheek, blood dripping from her eye. Then the thumb moves to the other eye. She can feel her own panic – she knows what is going to happen – she can feel the pain and terror, she can see her own face, she can hear her own screaming. The hand touches and caresses the other eye, then twist into her socket. Then it all goes black.

Lillian feels something push into her stomach. There is a splash of blood. Lillian jerks around on the floor, screaming – there is a wheezing sound as air escapes from her throat.

One hour later. Lillian Dallings is still just about alive – only just alive – which is amazing considering the condition she is in. She is impaled through the stomach on a branch that sticks upwards about three metres above the ground – from the main bulk of a fallen tree trunk. The tree trunk looks in silhouette like some strange insect holding Mrs Dallings aloft on a spike. It looks prehistoric.

Her jaw is broken and her pubic hair has been cut out and stuck on the blood around her mouth like a beard. She is naked except for her shoes and parts of her skirt.

She is barely alive. But from her position, if she had any eyes, she would have been able to see the house. It is in the distance. She is very weak. We can see it. The roof in the distance. She is very weak now. She is nearly dead. One of her arms is broken at the shoulder and bent back behind her.

It looks as if she has been systematically tortured. TORTURED. There must have been a lot of pain.

She is beyond pain now. Her eyes are flickering. She is beyond pain. BEYOND.

If we move back from this gruesome tableau, we see the tree trunk is next to a derelict barn. To the left is a row of broken trees. As we move backwards the tree trunk is transformed into a silhouette – and we can still see the silhouette of Mrs Dalling’s figure but, as we move away, it is starting to get lost amongst the other shapes.

Back further – further – further – and – no – you can’t really pick her out any more. It could be anything. It just looks like a part of the tree trunk.

We move back further through the trees, across the golf course and then towards the house. There is a marquee in the garden and people are starting to arrive. But, if you’ve got very good eyesight like me, you can still see Lillian’s silhouette – but I mean, unless you knew exactly what you were looking at you would never pick her out.

And now it’s NOW. Do you understand what I mean? NOW IS NOW. It’s now – as I am saying this – it is now – SIMULTANEOUS – or at least it is almost now. ALMOST. ALMOST NOW. Do you know what I mean? It’s now. This is real time. It is nearly now. It’s NOW. It’s NOW. NOW. NOW. NOW. It’s coming. It’s coming. IT’S COMING.

COMING. OH. YEAH. CAN YOU FEEL IT? YES. YES. YES.
OK. OK. OK. O GOD. O GOD. O GOD. YES. YES. YES. OK.
OK. OK. OK. OK.

I FEEL VERY LOW AT THE MOMENT. I feel very low at the moment. It's difficult to explain. None of this ... none of this story makes me happy and there are other things ... the thing is ... I'm not happy. I don't like myself. I don't like the way I look ... I don't like the way I feel ... I don't understand myself anymore. It's not nice. It really isn't nice. I mean I don't quite know how to explain it. It is better when I drink ... when I drink things seem OK. It's my only comfort – alcohol and drugs are the only things that seem to help.

But the thing is you see – I've been judged. I've already been judged. I guess we all have ... and so I don't understand why I should have a problem. I don't know how to explain.

But I feel there is a connection between me and you – do you feel it? I mean I suppose it is inevitable. I feel there is a relationship between me and you. I feel like I am listening to these words with you or that, in a sense, I am ... in there, behind your eyes, reading these words. Do you feel it? I feel that there is a relationship between me and you. I feel like we are friends. I feel like we are friends. Yeah. Yeah. Yes. Yes.

Jane is standing inside the Marquee. All the tables and chairs are lined up. The tables are being laid and the flower arrangements have just arrived. Jane is wearing blue track suit bottoms and a t-shirt. There is a banner saying: 'SILVER' hanging down one side of the tent. And

various other promotional materials. There are a couple of hours to go. Earlier on, the models were rehearsing and everything looked good. Jane is excited. Someone comes up behind her and puts their hands over her eyes and says:

“Guess who?”

Jane says: “Barry Manilow” and turns around and kisses Tony.

Geoff stops and looks behind him. There is a panorama of neatly manicured, landscaped greenery. And lines of gravestones and various ornamental trees. The gravestones are uniform – one or two stick out but they are all very similar. In the distance he sees something. He looks. He looks. It’s a dog. A dog. Is it a dog? Yes. Yes. A dog. Billy. Running in this direction. Geoff shouts and Billy comes running up to him. He says:

“Billy! Billy! Billy. Billy. How did you get here? How did you get here? Billy. Billy”.

Billy licks his hand.

“How did you find the way here?”

Geoff kneels down and holds Billy around the neck and strokes his hair.

“Billy. Billy. Billy. Billy. You loved her didn’t you ... didn’t you? Have you come back to see Mummy again? Billy! Have you come to see Mummy? O yes. O yes. Yes. Yes ... yes ... You loved her ... I did too. We loved her. Didn’t we boy? Didn’t we? We loved her.”

Geoff stands up, he turns and walks up the hill, past the fountain and a row of benches. He walks to the brow of the hill and stops in front of a large gravestone. It is shiny black stone with gold letters saying ‘JOSEY MITCHELL’.

To the side of Josey’s grave there is a wheel-barrow, a

spade and other grave-digging tools and a newly dug grave.

Geoff stands in front of Josey's grave. He is lost in memories. As we look more closely we see he is crying.

He says:

“Oh Josey. Oh Josey. I'm sorry”

OH JOSEY.

Geoff feels a blow to his back. The force throws him to the left, where he crumples on the grass. He tries to turn but he feels another push in his back, which sends him flopping towards the edge of the open grave. He is left lying with his head hanging down in the hole. Then he feels something stab into the base of his back, cutting into his vertebra. He blacks out for a few seconds. When he regains consciousness he finds himself at the bottom of the grave, looking upwards. There is a sharp pain in his back. He tries to move his arms but there is pain. He can't move. His neck feels like jelly. Seconds pass, minutes pass – sky, clouds, birds pass across the oblong of sky above. And then a shadow falls on the side of the grave – lengthening and increasing in size – a head appears over the top, unrecognisable at first because of the confusion of the white points of pain flashing in front of his eyes. Slowly an image focuses. A head ... a dog ... a dog head ... a dog? Billy? It's Billy. With his tongue hanging out. Billy. Billy. Good boy. Tongue hanging out. Geoff says:

“Billy ... ?”

“And now it’s now. NOW. NOW IT’S NOW. NOW IS NOW. NOW IS NOW. NOW! It’s now! It’s me. It’s me hello. Ha ha. NOW! NOW! NOW IS NOW. YOU ARE SPECTATORS TO YOUR OWN EKSTASEEEEE! HA HA.

Its eyes are not human but I’m getting confused. It’s not looking ... IT’S ME. IT’S ME SPEEEEEKING. TO YOU. TO YOU. IT’S ME. BILLY. BILLEEEEE. JOSEEEEEEE.

And now it’s now I can feel them inside me. I ... I can feel them. Because I am not one of them. I can feel them. Walking around. Inside my head. Behind my eyes. But I am not one of them. They come out of my eyes and I shit them out, then I eat them up. I feel them squeeze out of my nose. I SHIT THEM OUT. OK. OK.

And then it is now. It is now. Do you understand. I mean before I was remembering. But this is now. IT’S HAPPENING. IT IS COMING. IT IS MORE THAN ME. IT IS NOT PAIN. IT IS JOY. JOY IS COMING. IT IS THE END AND THE BEGINNING. IT IS NEARLY THE BEGINNING. It is now. O GOD. O GOD. IT’S NOW. IT’S NOW.

There is a huge Marquee in the garden. There are a lot of people present and there are more and more people turning up in cars.

There is a marquee in front of the house. There are lots of people standing around. Waiters walk to and fro with bottles of champagne and trays of canapés.

Jane is sitting at a table on a raised platform. She is looking around her and she is thinking:

“This is VERY exciting. This is going VERY WELL. This is a BIG SUCCESS. This is VERY good.”

Jane is talking to Mr O’Connel from T&J. He is very excited. Tony is sitting next to her and he is excited. He is happy. He kisses Jane.

People keep coming up to her and saying complimentary things.

Ten minutes later. Jane stands up. She taps the microphone and says:

“Testing. Testing ... ”

The microphone makes a whistling sound. There is a pause and then Jane says:

“Hello. Thank you all very much for coming.”

There is a pause and some applause. Jane looks up at the sky. It is blue. A bird flies across.

“This may seem like a strange venue for a fashion show – but the thing is, in a sense, this isn’t a fashion show. Or at least it is not a conventional fashion show. In a conventional fashion show, very tall, very thin, very young girls parade around in beautiful tailor-made clothes and they are cheered and clapped by an audience of rich and famous people. From a distance, it all seems very elegant and glamorous. But that is because we don’t see what goes on behind the scenes, we don’t see the tape or the padding. These are fantasy clothes for fantasy women. SILVER is about real clothes for real women. And to, quote from the very first SILVER advertisement ...”

She picks up a magazine, shows it to the audience and reads from it:

“I have walked the catwalks of London, New York, Milan and Paris. I have worn the finest clothes in the world. But away from the glamorous world of fashion

I am an ordinary working woman and I realise the virtues of practical clothes. I still like beautiful clothes but I also need clothes I can wear to the supermarket and when I'm dropping the children off at school ..."

She pats her stomach and says as an aside:

"And these are things which are going to be important to me in the near future"

There is applause. Then she continues:

"... Now I feel like I'm on a catwalk wherever I am. Whether I'm a fashion model, a high-flying executive or a busy mum."

She puts the magazine down and says:

"This may sound like just more sales-speak but it was written with sincerity ... and it is sincerely meant today. And so, as a working, soon-to-be mother, who makes clothes for other working women, I feel this venue ... our house ... " She puts her hand on Tony's shoulder. " ... is the perfect place for this launch. I hope you will enjoy yourselves this afternoon. Thank you. Thank you."

There is some applause and then a pounding beat as the music starts, the stage is lit-up and models appear on the catwalk – the first wave of models dressed in a dark burgundy colour-matching coats, tops, dresses and trousers.

There are cheers – Jane waves and then sits down and disappears from view.

The vw Passat is a comfortable and understated vehicle with a modern look. Air conditioning and power steering are standard. Comfortable and relaxed. Excellent fuel economy at 38 miles to the gallon on the motorway and 30–32 miles in town.

Moving smoothly through the gears. Easy gears and

sharp breaks, the steering on corners seems tight. Past the long lines of tall Georgian houses – slow and smooth – don't want to knock down children. Change down the gears and as we turn into Brownly Street. Down towards Brighton sea front.

The music changes.

Now it is evening wear: longer dresses, long coats. Tony is talking to the man next to him. He seems very happy. As the new wave of models come onto the catwalk he stands up and claps along to the music.

Tony says to Jane:

“Well done” and he kisses her on the cheek. “Well done. Well done.”

It looks upmarket without being over the top. The inside is well maintained with all the gadgets, not to mention a modern look. You start to appreciate this car almost immediately. The ride is smooth, with an engine willing to go from 0 to 70 in seconds (very handy if you do a lot of motorway driving) gears smooth and brakes sharp. A very smooth ride with plushly upholstered seats and cruise control.

We see a man lying on his side on the pavement wearing a suit. We move on. It's quiet.

Electric windows, electric sunroof, power steering, CD player, back head-rests and front arm-rests, not to mention the excellent on-board computer that tells you your average fuel consumption, speed, miles etc.

Jane looks a bit worried. She is sitting at the table. She doesn't know what to do. She looks for Tony. She can't see him. It doesn't make sense. It feels like her waters have broken – it doesn't make sense. Where is Tony? She feels a jolt of pain go through her body and she doubles up. Jane says something to the woman in the pink dress, sitting next to her. The woman puts her hand up to Jane's face. This woman says something to the man next to her and they help Jane to stand up. At one point Jane doubles up again. The woman in the pink dress helps Jane out of the marquee and leads her towards the house. Jane is saying:

“God! It's only four months.” and she doubles up again. The woman says: “Come on. Don't panic Jane.”

As they go into the building we can hear screams. Screaming.

There is plenty of space inside the car for the whole family and dogs. The boot is large with a power socket for camping. It comes with a warning triangle fitted into the boot and a separate compartment for a first aid kit. The seats are firm and make long distances a pleasant and comfortable experience. This is the type of car that you just want to keep on driving, and you don't have to take out a second mortgage to have one. Excellent fuel economy at 38 miles to the gallon on motorway and 30–32 miles to the gallon in town.

Down into second gear as we turn into Bellsham Square. The car has a few nice extras like an automatic light when you open the vanity mirror, and interior light activation, when you unlock using the remote.

There is a woman in a blue dress lying face down on the kerb. And we notice it is very quiet, we haven't seen any cars. Strange. Very strange. And something flicks

past just out of our line of sight. We see black objects – very quick – just out of sight. And then we see another figure sprawled over a wall. His head is hanging down. He is staring straight at us – upside down – his eyes are wide open. His throat has been ripped out. And then we see two children stuck onto railings. Blood is dripping off one of their feet. And then we see more of those black shapes moving rapidly. RAPIDLY. RAPIDLY.

Tony is in the bathroom, taking a piss. He thinks: “Things should be OK. This is good. This is going well. OK. OK. OK.”

He feels something like a piece of wire pull around his neck – it cuts into his neck. He tries to get his fingers under the wire. He manages to get his fingers under the wire. With one hand he reaches back and feels for the hands holding the wire. But there are no hands. He tries to pull at the wire. It is cutting into his neck – Shit! – it is tightening – it is cutting into his fingers. He gags. What is this? Shit. SHIT. SHIT. He reaches back for the body behind him – he can bench-press 350 kilos – with a twist of the hips and a turn of the shoulders he could flip whoever it is over his shoulder but ...

But he can't find the body. He tries to move back. Something hits him in the back. He feels something push through his stomach. He looks down he can see a black point sticking out of his stomach and blood pouring onto the floor. He can see his penis flopping about – still pissing.

Tony is gasping. It is too late ... too late to beg. He feels the wire cut slowly through his fingers

And then the wire snaps through his neck.

Tony is still standing on his feet. But his head is hanging half way down his back, connected by a strip of skin and flesh.

For 3.17 seconds, as his head dangles; his brain starving of oxygen; his vision whirls around the room like an avant-garde art film he once saw on Channel Four. Upside-down: tiles, sink, taps, towels, tiles, taps ... and then ... 3.17 seconds and then ... black? Who knows?

I mean ... I mean I am partly Josey Mitchell ... it's true I AM PARTLY JOSEY MITCHELL ... but ... but this is bigger than me. This is MUCH BIGGER. This is ... This is bigger. BIGGER. This is GLOBAL. THIS IS a mixture of CANCER and COCKROACHES and DOG ... but I'm also part of something else I think. It's ... more. IT'S MORE. IT'S MORE. I can feel them inside me. BUT I AM NOT ONE OF THEM. HALF. NOT. REVERSE-CANCER-COCKROACH-DOG. HA. HA. I feel I am a shell full of verminous insects. I can feel them in my stomach. Walking around. Inside my head. Behind my eyes. They come out of my eyes and I shit them out, then I eat them up. I feel them squeeze out of my nose. They crawl down my arms and huddle under my skin. I have stolen alcohol and cigarettes. I can feel the roaches run from the alcohol as I pour it down my throat. Scuttle away. I AM NON-SAVED. I AM NON-SAVED. I AM NON-SAVED. And I can feel them running down my throat. It seems the human, the insect and the dog rot on top of each other. ROT IN THE PISS AND THE SHIT. THROUGH THE SHIT AND THE BLOOD. O GOD! AND THE CANCER. FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN. AMEN. YES. YES. YES. THE CANCER. OH YES! An abomination of JOYOUS DECOMPOSITION. and vengeance. Hah ha ha! What can I do? I am dammed to NON-HELL ... but the whole business is dirty and nasty.

And the thing is, I feel a hatred. YES. YES. I AM NON-

DAMNED. I AM THE REVERSE WEREWOLF-COCK-ROACH. I AM THE VIRUS-GOD-CANCER-WHORE. I AM. I AM.

And outside. Outside. Hell has come to earth. The cockroaches hunt in packs. THEY ARE QUICK. Their black silhouettes moving across the green countryside rounding up herds of sheep and humans and killing them. They move so quickly. The town is infested. Every now and then a human runs down the street. But not for long. Most of the rest of England must be infested. There is no traffic on the motorway and if you look off the cliff, the sea is black with them swimming to France and back. There are so many of them. It is the end of the world. But maybe it's Heaven. The sun reflects gold on a thousand carapaces. A world covered in angels.

You see ... first the small ones come, and they live in your shit and in your body and under your skin, and then the big ones come and they're bigger and stronger and quicker, bigger and stronger and quicker than you. Too quick, too strong. And you know it, you know it. That's why you are so scared of the small ones.

And it happens all of a sudden. You see one or two and then, all of a sudden, you are infested. You are dead. What are you going to do – nuke them? The vermin, the cancer, the rats, the roaches – we're all here you fuckers. HERE. HERE. HERE. THE WEAK ARE COMING. Hunting you down. Hunting in packs. You are fucking History! You are the fucking VERMIN.