



PERVERT

MR IF

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Author's Note

Welcome to the third part in what I've decided to call *The Entertainment Trilogy*.

Publishing a set of three ebooks was never my intention. It just so happens that *Entertainment*, *Violence is the Answer* and *Pervert* cover three specific periods in my life, each written shortly after the actual events.

This one rounds things off nicely because, as I'll go on to explain, *Pervert* is the last book I'll ever write.

Everything you're about to read happened in real life. That includes the particularly unbelievable bits, occurring in chapters 10 and 15.

I'm not too bothered if you're unconvinced – I just thought I'd point out that this is a work of non-fiction. I've changed a few names and sexed-up the dialogue a little, just to make it a little more presentable.

For reasons that will become clear, this book is dedicated to my mother.

1.

This account begins with me having sex with a Nazi. In the interests of honesty, it only seems fair to mention it.

Don't get me wrong – I wasn't having sex with her *because* she was a Nazi. For the purposes of our brief, meaningless exchange, the lady's belief system didn't matter.

Maybe I would've thought twice if she hadn't been so attractive. Despite my utterly indiscriminate taste in human flesh, I had to admit, this woman was truly exceptional.

Shortly after meeting in the hotel bar, she casually slipped into the conversation that the Government ought to combat overpopulation by killing all homosexuals. She said it with such sweetness, and with lips of such perfection that even as a bisexual man, I began to wonder if she had a point. Accordingly, I nicknamed her The Fit Bigot.

Fit – there's a disgusting British colloquialism for you. It's a label designed to prevent us from expressing an interest in anyone other than the young, the skinny and the pretty. Still, it seemed the most appropriate term. The Fit Bigot was both attractive and athletic – equipped with a full set of pert body parts.

Pert. There's another word I actively despise. The word sickens me. It's the language of perverts.

I don't like the word *pervert* either – but only because it's so often misapplied.

As far as I'm concerned, perverts are the fuckwits who worship conventional beauty.

Sex with the Nazi ground on until it became rather boring.

The fun would've finished sooner, but – gentleman that I am – I was holding out until she climaxed.

She needed to enjoy the experience far more than I did. She was married, by her own admission. She was going to have an orgasm if it fucking killed her.

I've been doing this long enough to appreciate what goes on in the mind of a cheater. If you're playing away from home, it's vitally important that you enjoy it, otherwise you've risked everything for nothing. Your marriage could be destroyed for the sake of a crap shag.

This is part of the appeal of fucking married people. They go about it with such enthusiasm and determination.

Despite this benefit, and in spite of The Fit Bigot's simplistic sexiness, it occurred to me that I needed to stop. Not then and there, of course – that would've been impolite.

I didn't need to stop having sex with bad people – I can't be expected to conduct a morality check on every scumbag I sleep with. I needed to stop having sex with *married* people. It really wasn't doing me any good.

2.

The Fit Bigot got up for breakfast the following morning taking her belongings with her. I was left alone in the hotel room she'd paid for, feeling rather grateful.

I snoozed for a while, allowing her enough time to finish her muesli and fuck off before heading down for a Full English.

I'm rather appalled by my habit of eating meat at every available opportunity. An animal was murdered simply because real sausages taste slightly better than Linda McCartney's. This hasn't stopped me eating meat because as I hope I've established by this point, I'm a cunt.

It was 11 o'clock. Breakfast was closing and the bar was opening. I ordered an orange juice and sat up at the bar.

I considered my actions the previous evening, and how easy it had been to persuade that beautiful woman to climb out of her pants.

I've always found conventionally attractive women much easier to seduce. I'm not bragging. In fact, I've never even said it out loud.

It may sound difficult to believe, but frankly, if you don't believe me you're an ignorant misogynist bigot and a perfect reflection of the dark ages in which we reside. Do you really think ugly women are easier to pull? Why? Because they're sad and desperate and no one will fuck them so they'll take whatever they can get? Fuck you and your contempt for humanity. Stop reading this, you disgusting, foul, depraved idiot. You're not worthy of my words. What are you doing reading a book anyway, you illiterate fucking wanker?

OK. So, for those of you who remain, I'm not saying conventionally attractive women are easier to get into bed. That would imply they're all as sluttish as I am, and that's clearly not the case. From my own limited experience, conventionally attractive women have more sexual confidence. They feel less awkward getting naked with a stranger. That's all I'm saying.

I'm not a particularly attractive man by anyone's standards. I have the correct level of charm and the correct level of shamelessness required to do what I do.

It's my only skill. I have no sporting or intellectual ability. I've never bothered to become an expert at anything. And I'm a shit writer who starts sentences with the word "and".

All I'm good at is persuading people to sleep with me.

Are you envious, I wonder? Please don't be. You may harbour some romantic fantasy about having sex with lots of different partners with no consequences.

Trust me, it's shit. And there are always consequences.

#

The bar was empty apart from myself and the 19 year old barman. I ordered a second

orange juice.

“I need to give up married people,” I told him.

The young man smiled uneasily. “Love triangle, eh?” he said.

“Not a triangle as such,” I said. “Dodecahedron, maybe.”

His smile wavered.

“But I’ve been there,” I said. “The perfect triangle. It was equilateral at one point but it ended up isosceles in the other guy’s favour.”

“OK,” he said. “I think I know what you mean.”

“Thanks for humouring me,” I said. “She was the most perfect human being I’ve ever known. It stands to reason she should stay with her husband and make it work. I may have absolutely no morals, but she has.”

“Well,” said the barman. He looked like he was about to spout something dreadfully embarrassing like “plenty more fish in the sea,” or some other such platitude.

I stopped him in time. “Yeah,” I said. “I know, I know. Trouble is, there’s so many of them out there. Probably about 90% of the people I meet are either married or in a relationship. You got a wife?”

“Girlfriend,” he said.

“Don’t introduce her to me,” I said. “I’ll probably fuck her.”

He wandered off to clean some glasses at the end of the bar that were already clean.

When he returned, I ordered a third orange juice, downed it and ordered another.

“Do you take an interest in psychology?” I said.

“I studied it at college, actually,” said the barman.

“Then I assume you’ve realised that my obsession with pursuing married women stems from the fact that I want to fuck my mother. Pretty obvious, isn’t it?”

“You’re serious?” he said.

“Yep. As a matter of fact, I’m the complete Freudian package. I want to kill my father and sleep with my mother. I’d only ever act on 50% of these impulses. I’d never kill another human. My few remaining principles prevent me from doing so – or perhaps it’s just the fear of prison. But, trust me – if I were ever given the opportunity to stick my cock into my mother’s welcoming vagina, I’d be in there like a shot.”

The barman raised a palm obscuring his face from mine. “OK,” he said. “That’s enough. I don’t get paid to listen to this.”

“Allow me to correct you,” I said. “In your job, listening to other people’s drivel is more important than serving drinks. Bar staff and The Samaritans. That’s all people like me have to rely on.”

“I think it’s time for you to leave, sir,” he said.

“I’m only just getting started, my friend.”

“I think you’ve had enough to drink.”

“What? You think I’ve had enough *orange juice*?”

“All that acidity,” he said. “Carry on the way you’re going and you’ll have some

serious gastric problems.”

“OK,” I said, “I’ll just go and drink some orange juice in some other hotel bar.”

I clambered down from my stool and headed for the door.

I paused and looked over my shoulder. “She broke my heart,” I said. “I’ll love her forever, but I can’t think about her anymore. I can’t even say her name. She’s like fucking Voldemort.”

I stepped into daylight. I can’t even tell you how I felt. At that moment, I’d’ve been happy to machine-gun my own head off.

3.

It was a windy day. The air was freezing and it felt nice. I had a massive winter coat on but felt like taking it off and basking in the icy air.

I stood on Waterloo Bridge surveying the curious collection of landmarks lining the Thames.

I wondered if the jump into the water below would be enough to kill me. I imagined what it might feel like – maybe exhilarating, maybe terrifying, or maybe I wouldn't feel anything at all – just close my eyes, step forward and everything would disappear.

I crossed the bridge. I was too much of a coward to take the coward's way out.

It was time for decisive action. There was absolutely no point wallowing in my own self-pity, as much as I enjoyed doing that.

What happened next came as much of a surprise to me as it would to anyone else. I must've been subconsciously planning the whole thing without telling myself about it.

I'd been holidaying in London for eight days now. A different partner and a different hotel room every night. All I'd actually paid for was the orange juice and the occasional packet of crisps. (Trust me, I'm not bragging or trying to paint myself as superhuman. What I haven't mentioned yet are the scores of women who turned me down. I even had a couple of glasses of wine splashed in my face in classic motion picture style. I'm far from the super pulling machine I sometimes make myself out to be. I'm a pathetic cunt who succeeds due to sheer persistence.)

I felt like I didn't have a home anymore. The thought of returning to my dingy little room depressed me more than war.

The solution was simple: I just wouldn't go back. There was nothing of any real value in there. I ticked off a list of items I would happily leave behind – clothes, TV, toaster. Even my stack of notebooks with my poetry and doodles could easily be disposed of. They were no use to me or anyone else.

I called into the closest branch of my bank. My rent was due in a couple of days' time. I had £450 in my account, £350 of which was destined to disappear. I cancelled the direct debit and withdrew £450 cash.

Could I survive on £450 for the rest of my life? Judging by my success over the last week, I'd say yes.

But I couldn't keep crawling from hotel to hotel. I'd had a good run of eight nights on the trot – impressive by anyone's standards, I suppose – but my luck was sure to run out if I kept it going too long.

I needed a proper lover – someone to take care of me, pay for everything, and give me lots of sex. That was the dream, and in that place and time, the dream seemed possible.

Call me naive if you like. It works for some people.

4.

London was an illness. I needed to leave before it turned terminal.

I wandered aimlessly, lonely as the last daffodil of the spring.

I was tempted to get some lunch, but that massive hotel breakfast was supposed to have filled me up for the rest of the day. It was acidity rather than hunger. That kid behind the bar was right – I really needed to cut down on the orange juice.

I found a train station. I decided to get on the next available train, wherever it happened to be going. Anywhere other than London was fine with me.

Considering that the contents of my wallet were supposed to last me the rest of my life, I wasn't going to waste any of it on travel. There were a couple of guards at the ticket barriers, but they were being continually distracted by other passers-by.

I saw my opportunity and took it. There was a lady in a wheelchair propelling herself through the disability gate. I shuffled up behind her so it appeared to onlookers that I was assisting her.

I shot off to board my randomly-selected train before anyone spotted my moment of harmless exploitation.

I jumped onto the train and took a seat.

A woman came to sit next to me. I knew immediately that I wouldn't speak to her. She was well outside of my target zone. It wasn't that she was too conventionally attractive (as I say, it's hideous people who are out of my league) – she was just *happy*. Even as she sat down she let out a little sigh of contentment. I wanted to rip her clothes off and fuck her against the seat.

But no – I'll only ever attract people who have something missing from their lives. I find unhappy people and swoop in to make their lives more miserable.

It's happened again and again and again. The only reason I got with She Who Must Not Be Named was because her husband was away and she missed him. I was just a fucking fluffer.

I watched the woman beside me through the corner of my eye. I didn't get chance to look at her face when she sat down but I knew she was beautiful. I examined the outline of her body. From where I was sitting her arse looked amazing. I couldn't see it visually, of course, but the arse of the mind is sexier than its physical form.

The thought had given me an instant hard on. I climbed out of my winter coat and laid it over my lap. The coat was substantial enough to disguise me unfastening my trousers and reaching into my boxers.

I resumed my mental scenario of ripping off this woman's knickers and fucking her against the seat.

She had the arse of an angel. It was the kind of arse that made you glad to be alive. It was the kind of arse that made you want to commit suicide because you couldn't have it.

I pumped my fist gently with soft narrow strokes. I was ready to burst straight

away. I held it back, not wanting to splatter my underwear and the inside of my coat.

There was a paper napkin in my pocket, which I'd absent-mindedly picked up at breakfast. I retrieved it with my spare hand and slowly wrapped it around my cock.

I was just about to climax when the words "Tickets and passes please" were announced casually from several rows behind.

My reaction was instinctual, like a cat hastily burying its own shit. I shot to my feet, with the coat still over my crotch. I tied the sleeves round the back of my waist. I squeezed past the lady beside me who offered an apologetic smile, just as perfect as I'd imagined.

"That's alright," she said softly.

My cock grew even stiffer. It was a strain to stand up straight.

I hobbled to the disabled toilet and finished myself off, no longer thinking about the woman's arse. It was her face that had really got me going. Or maybe it was her spirit. In my mind, we were disembodied – two souls bumping gently against one another. "*It's alright,*" her spirit whispered. "*It's alright.*"

"*Mummy,*" I whispered. "*Mummy, Mummy, Mummy.*"

I dropped the drenched napkin into the water and closed the toilet lid, giving myself a few minutes to ensure the train guard had passed by to the next carriage.

5.

To protect the identity of the people involved, I won't reveal where the following events took place. Instead, I'll use the old trick from pre-20th Century novels.

I exited the train in the town of _____ in the county of _____, specifically because the station was small enough to have no ticket barriers.

Where would I head from here? If only I could jump into a taxi and say, "Take me to the nearest emotional wreck." There were plenty of emotional wrecks passing in and out of the station but they all appeared to be in a moderate hurry and were unlikely to be interested.

I didn't want an emotional wreck, anyway. Dangerous women still had their appeal but I knew there'd be too much baggage. Much more advisable to capture the heart of the sweet naïve girl-next-door who'd be less likely to betray me.

I wasn't looking for sex. I could get that anywhere. What I needed was simpler and more cynical than that – I wanted food and shelter and someone to take care of me. I wanted another mother.

I thought about the line they always use to justify arranged marriages: *love will come later*. It's easy when you make a point of loving everyone anyway.

Looks didn't matter either. She just needed to be *nice*. Preferably single as well, but I'd have to take what I could get.

I went to the library. It seemed like the obvious choice.

There was a student reading a book on the chair between the history and religion sections.

I asked her what she was reading and she mumbled something in reply. She was polite enough but her tone implied "Don't talk to me, it's a library," with an undertone of "Fuck off."

It was fair enough. "What are you reading?" will never be a great conversation opener, even if it's an interesting book. Even when the cover is clearly visible it's still a personal question. It's like asking someone the colour of their underwear.

The librarian caught my eye. She was quite a bit older than me, but that didn't matter. The ultimate object of my desire was older than me too.

I pretended I wanted to join the library. She'd have no choice but to talk to me then. I examined her up close – no rings on her fingers. In a way, even though I was hoping for someone single, I hoped she didn't conform to that bullshit librarian stereotype – the cardigan-wearing 50 year old virgin. She was indeed wearing a cardigan but I'm sure she'd seen some action in her time. (I'm aware that last line could be mistaken for sexism. Don't worry – it isn't. All I'm saying is, she looked like she'd had plenty of sex. What else do you want me to say? Seriously, how else could I possibly put it? Fuckers.)

All she had to do was say, "Good afternoon" and further signs of the stereotype emerged. She spoke like a 19th Century aristocrat. Sexy in a peculiar way.

I needed to see more of her body, but I'd have to wait until she turned round so I could have a proper gawp. (Again, how else am I supposed to put this? I could dress it up in flowery fucking language it it'd make you feel any better, you hypocritical fuckwits. Are you telling me you've never checked anyone out? Fuck off.)

She told me I needed a form of ID and a utility bill.

"Trouble is," I said with my cheeky smile, which I'm reliably informed is my most charming feature, "I'm travelling at the moment. I'm just staying in _____ temporarily. I don't suppose there's any kind of temporary pass you could give me while I'm here? You can be assured that I'll bring the books back when they're done."

She returned the smile. "Perhaps," she said, "if you have any friends in the local area they could lend you their card..."

I said, "I don't know anyone in the local area, but I'm working on it."

I didn't need a library card to use the internet so I purchased one of the tokens and logged onto one of the computers at the opposite end of the room.

Every now and again I'd catch sight of the librarian walking past and continued my subtle observations.

I checked my emails. I'd had a message back from the guy who helps me edit my ebooks responding to my question about what kind of reaction my second ebook, *Violence is the Answer*, had received.

"Sadly we don't get as much reader feedback as we'd like," he wrote, "and reviews are still pending – but everyone who's read it said they loved it."

Shit, I thought. I must've been doing something wrong.

I concluded a while ago that there are two reasons why I write. The first is to entertain myself, and the second is to piss people off. Seriously – I get off on the idea that people are either going to thoroughly misunderstand my work, or be deeply offended by it. The notion that no one was actually offended worried me. Maybe I wasn't being rude enough. Maybe I'd decided to make myself homeless so that I could give myself something new and depraved to write about.

As the afternoon came to a close, I approached my librarian again. I said, "I hope you don't find this an impertinent question, but as I was saying earlier, I don't know anyone in _____ so I was wondering the two of us could go for dinner or a drink after you finish? It would mean a lot to me."

"Of course," she said. "I'm happy to help."

#

A couple of hours later we were back at her place humping like chimps. That's the best comparison I can think of. I've seen chimp sex on the wildlife documentaries. Chimp sex is briefer but equally frantic as my fuck with the librarian, whose name by the way, was Agnes.

She was the first person I'd ever fucked who had full-on grey hair. Sometimes I'd

suck off my friend Giles while his wife was out, and the floor certainly didn't match the ceiling (or however the analogy goes). Agnes, on the other hand, was silver and proud. Her pubes were almost entirely white, and it turned me on. Everything about her turned me on. Now that I come to think of it, everything about everyone turns me on.

Best thing was, she started calling me "darling".

"Oh darling! Oh darling! Oh my good god, darling!"

It was ever so sweet.

#

"You're a beautiful woman," I said, cuddling under the sheets between fucks.

Agnes sighed contentedly. I wasn't particularly impressed with myself for giving her an orgasm, but I was overjoyed to hear her make that sound.

"You're a beautiful man," she said.

"I know," I said.

She laughed.

"So, how long have you been a librarian?" I said.

"22 years this April," she said.

"What did you do before that?"

Agnes let out a different kind of sigh. "Housewife, darling," she said. "Long since divorced, thankfully. What do you do?"

I hesitated, not wanting to say "Nothing."

"I'm a writer," I said.

It's rare that I meet anyone who doesn't pretend to be pleased when I say I'm a writer. The usual reaction is "Oh!" or "Great!" Agnes didn't appear impressed in any way.

"Oh right," she said.

"Aren't you going to ask me what I write? That's what people usually do."

"I thought I'd spare you the trouble of trotting out your stock reply," she said.

It's not that I was trying to impress her, but it was a shame she wasn't interested in the only exceptional thing about me. Perhaps it was because she'd spent the last 22 years surrounded by books. A writer was just one among thousands.

Still, I wanted to tell her. "I write under a pseudonym," I said. "People read my work on their Kindles and no one in the world knows it's me. No one I've ever met has seen my writing has access to my identity and no one ever will. It's my own private world."

"So why are you telling me about it, darling?" she said.

"I don't know," I said. "I thought you might find it attractive."

She grabbed my arse. "I find *this* attractive," she said.

My cock expanded and nestled itself within the folds of her belly.

Something told me I was about to fall deeply and disastrously in love.

6.

Agnes went off to work the next day, leaving me alone with her pet – a scruffy, docile Dulux dog.

I washed my clothes in her machine and wandered around stark naked for a while.

Far from being the aristocratic manor I'd envisaged, Agnes lived in an old Victorian terraced house with damp walls. It suited her.

At lunchtime I met her at the library. She took a break and we fucked in the storeroom out the back.

I hung around in town for the afternoon, then walked her home.

She cooked me shepherd's pie. We took the dog for a walk in the empty moonlit streets.

Later, as we were lying in bed, I said, "I hope you don't mind me asking, but when was the last time you had sex?"

She laughed. "About ten minutes ago, darling," she said.

"No, I mean before me."

"Last week, actually." She looked me in the eyes. "Does that surprise you?"

"Nothing surprises me," I said.

She ran her hand across my chest. I ran mine across her back.

"So, who was he?" I said.

She chuckled again. "Which one, darling? There were three of them."

"Really? You're serious?"

"Of course."

"You're a *swinger*?" I said.

"Rather old-fashioned term," she said, "but yes."

"Sorry. So what do they call swingers nowadays?"

"I don't think they call them anything, darling. We're just people, aren't we?"

"Sure."

"So, you're a multi-partner person too?" she said. "If you don't mind me saying, darling, you seem like the sort of person who enjoys a good fuck."

In a schoolboyish way, I liked hearing her swear. It sounded so much naughtier coming from a posh person.

"I'm not exactly a swinger," I said. "The people I have sex with tend to be in monogamous relationships with people other than myself."

"So you're more of a *love rat*?" she said playfully.

"I suppose so – although I think "cunt" is nearer the mark."

"That's a little harsh," she said. "Everyone knows what they're doing. It's fun, it's exciting, as long as you don't get caught."

"Suppose so," I said. "Hopefully I'm past those days now. Sex with married

people is way too complicated. I'd much rather be with someone like you."

"A swinger?"

"Yeah. I don't know any swingers. All my former friends are committed to their partners, as much as they like to screw around behind their backs. There's no openness – no real joy in what they're doing – just desperation."

"Really? Isn't it fun?"

"Yeah," I said, "yeah, it's fun I suppose."

"You know," she said, "I can organise a party, darling. A good one."

"Hmmm. Not sure."

"Why not?"

"Well," I said, "I like what we're doing now – the two of us together – no interference from the outside world."

I stopped myself saying any more. I'd only met her the previous day, and there I was on the verge of declaring my undying love.

She held me closer.

"I understand," she said.

#

The following few days were perfect in every way. Each was a carbon copy. She'd go to the library, I'd meet her at lunchtime and we'd fuck in the store cupboard. I'd walk her home in the evening and she'd cook me dinner. We'd take the dog for a walk then head home for an early night.

On Saturday we went to the park and had a picnic on the freezing cold lawn. We huddled together for warmth, eating our egg and cress sandwiches.

We stayed at home on Sunday. She cleaned the house and I read one of her Tolstoys. It was the first book I'd read in a long time.

I could've lived that life forever but common sense told me that was never going to happen. I wanted to tell her I loved her. I was happy for her to sleep with other people but as for me, that lifestyle was over. All I needed was my sweet, perfect Agnes.

I had no real way of knowing if she felt the same way. Maybe I was just another fling.

I tried to picture her swinging but couldn't quite imagine it. All that "keys in a bowl" shit. Did that stuff really happen?

#

Agnes was on a rotating shift. On that particular week, she had the day off on Monday and then worked Tuesday to Saturday. Our routine continued as before.

I enjoyed the comfort the most. There was no awkwardness or embarrassment. In

any other circumstances I'd've been very uncomfortable being waited on hand and foot by a woman. But she loved doing it – she loved cooking dinner and changing the sheets and providing for me financially. I hadn't paid a penny the whole time, despite having a wad of cash in my wallet.

I don't quite understand why. Maybe she loved me after all.

7.

The following Sunday we were woken by a knock at the door. It was 11am. She answered the door in her dressing gown while I hastily climbed into my clothes.

There were many people at the door – enough to fill the living room and the kitchen. Their ages ranged from 20 to 60. They brought various bottles of wine and a crate of upmarket lager. Someone else had brought a bag of crisps.

Some of the guests walked right past me. Others introduced themselves with some enthusiasm.

It wasn't long before clothing began to disappear.

"I've never seen you around," said the lady next to me as she whipped off her bra. "You're on the scene?"

"What scene?"

"Swingers."

"No one calls it swinging anymore," I said.

"Let's take a look at your cock," she said. "You look like you've got a big one."

"Sorry to disappoint you," I said. "It's not that big, and I don't feel like getting it out."

"There's no need to be shy," she said.

"Believe me," I said, "nothing could be further from the truth."

I ate the crisps.

Someone offered me a drink but I turned it down. I made a cup of tea and sat watching this huddle of strangers have sex.

The Dulux dog was curled in her basket in the corner, observing the unfolding action. I wondered what she was thinking. Doggy seemed to be a popular position.

I suppose you could say my thought processes were somewhat erratic by this point on.

I squeezed past a copulating couple and climbed the stairs.

Agnes was leaning on the bedroom dresser being taken from behind by some kid who can't have been more than 21.

"Listen," I said, "I know this is your thing and everything, but I just don't want any of this shit. All I want is you. I fucking love you, Agnes. I've never met a woman like you. I'm ready to fucking marry you right here, right now. This isn't a proposal – I'm just telling you how I feel."

The noise she released from her lungs could've been mistaken for a climax. But I knew her climaxes, and this wasn't one of them. This was laughter.

"You silly, silly boy," she said. "I've only known you two weeks."

"So what?" I said. "Two weeks is long enough."

"Could I introduce you to Dave?" she said, waving her finger over her shoulder at the kid who was still slamming her from behind.

"Hello Dave," I said.

“Hello,” he said.

“So, is this guy special to you or what? More special than me?”

“I’ve only just met him,” she said.

“Listen,” I said, “I can’t live with this. I need you to commit to me and only me – none of this randomly fucking 21 year olds.”

“For your information,” said Dave, “I’m 23.”

“Whatever.” I returned my attention to Agnes. “The choice is yours. You can carry on doing what you’re doing, or you can accept my proposal. It’s not a proposal of marriage – I don’t believe in that anyway. I propose that the two of us commit to only having sex with each other and that’s it.”

That noise blasted from her lungs once again – that mocking chuckle. “Oh, *fuck off*,” she said.

So I did.

8.

I set off walking out of town, following the signs to the nearest motorway. I trekked along the hard shoulder for 17 miles. I spent the next 2 and a half weeks living in a service station.

I wormed my way into people's beds in the Travelodge in the evenings. I spent the daytimes sitting in the cafe drinking herbal tea and eating bacon sandwiches. Now and again I'd cross the bridge to the identical service station on the other side of the road.

The breakfast in the hotel filled me up for most of the day. Aside from the two or three nights on which I was obliged to pay for my own hotel room, I calculated that if I limited myself to one bacon sandwich and three cups of herbal tea per day, my daily budget would be £8.45. On the third day, I got friendly with the girl on the northbound Costa counter who allowed me to have free herbal teas whenever she was working. I told her I was an engineer working on the electrics out the back. I had spectacular sex with her in the disabled toilets, but she said she had a boyfriend so couldn't take it any further. I still got free herbal teas though. On the days she was working, my budget was reduced to the £3.50 bacon sandwich. This was reduced still further when I got friendly with the guy on the food counter.

In many ways, those 17 days were the happiest of my life. As I'd observed many times previously, I've been blessed with what can only be described as a superpower, and I'd be foolish not to use it.

Of course, it couldn't last. I'd run out of money eventually. I was bound to run out of bullshit eventually too.

This was nothing new. I've been a liar and a cheat for fucking years. I wanted to change. That's why this had to stop. Unfortunately, the only way of stopping was to fire off yet another phenomenal shot of bullshit.

#

After three days of careful people-watching in the food court, I spotted a forlorn-looking customer sitting alone on a four-seater table.

I'm just saying this because it happened. It sounds like I'm making it up, but no word of a lie, the guy had removed his wedding ring and was batting it back and forth like a coin on the surface of the table. He may as well been holding a sign saying, "EXPLOIT ME, MR IF. PLEASE EXPLOIT ME NOW."

I sat in the seat opposite.

"Is it really that bad?" I said.

"Yes," he replied. "How did you know?"

"I have a knack for these things."

"Oh."

“Where are you going?” I said.

“I don’t know.”

“Why not?”

“Because I don’t know if I’m returning home.”

“Ever again?”

“In answer to your first question: yes. Things really are that bad.”

“Is it you or her?”

“How do you know this is about a woman?”

“Is it about a man?”

“No.”

“You’ve taken your wedding ring off and you’re batting it back and forth on the table.”

“How do you know it’s a wedding ring?”

“Is it a wedding ring?”

“Yes.”

“Can I buy you a drink?”

He smiled for the first time. “Why are you being nice to me?”

“Partly altruism,” I said, “and partly ‘cos I’m hoping to hitch a lift.”

“Where to?”

“Wherever it is you’re going.”

“What’s your name?” he said.

I told him. “And you are...?”

“Raoul,” he said.

“Nice to meet you, Raoul.”

#

Half an hour later, we were speeding down the fast lane as quickly as the traffic would allow. Raoul didn’t say so, but clearly he wasn’t heading home. I wondered how much money he had.

“If you don’t mind me asking,” I said, “how long have you been with her?”

“I’m not with her,” he said, his eyes fixed firmly on the road.

“How long were you with her before?”

“Too long. I’ll apologise to her one day. You asked if it’s her or me. It’s me.”

“What have you done?”

“I was born,” he said. “I was born this way. I’m a wanderer. I didn’t want to get married, but it was the only thing to do. I wasn’t born to be with people. I was born to be alone. That’s all I want. I want to be alone.”

There was an awkward pause.

“It’s OK,” he said. “I wasn’t hinting. It’s good you’re here. It’s nice to talk.”

“How long have you been on the road?”

“Seven days,” he said. “Just driving aimlessly. I’ve spent so much money on petrol. The engine’s probably going to explode eventually. And I’ll run out of money.”

I couldn’t resist it. “How much money have you got?”

Luckily he took the question at face value. “About three and a half grand,” he said. “I withdrew it from the savings account. It was supposed to be for the kids’ futures. I didn’t mention that, did I? I’ve got kids. Three of ‘em.”

I wasn’t sure what to say. The best I could come up with was: “Congratulations.”

“Yeah. Sure.” He scrunched up his face.

“You alright?”

“I love my kids more than life,” he said. “It’s a horrible thing to say, but they shouldn’t have been born. I shouldn’t have married their mother. I shouldn’t have impregnated her. Life would’ve been so much simpler.”

He leant forward. Tears dripped onto the steering wheel. Raoul made no attempt to wipe them away.

“It’s all my fault,” he said. “It’s all my fault.”

“We should stop,” I said.

“I can’t stop now. It’s too late.”

“Seriously mate, you should pull over. You can’t see where you’re going.”

Raoul pulled into the hard shoulder.

He was ready to slump. I thought he was heading towards the wheel, but his head landed softly on my shoulder.

“What shall I do?” he said. “Tell me what to do.”

“Get in the back,” I said.

Raoul did as he was asked.

We reclined the seats and tossed the parcel shelf onto the side of the road.

I brushed the tears from his face.

9.

We arrived at a bed and breakfast in the town of _____. Raoul was more comfortable booking a twin room.

We started on one bed and moved onto the other. We pushed them together and fell contentedly to sleep.

I've always found sex with straight men to be a frantic, five minute affair. I get the impression they just want to get it over with before they become completely at odds with the creature they've been pretending to be since birth.

This wasn't the case with Raoul. We savoured every second. We hungered for more.

I was no longer a cunt. This wasn't just a fuck. I'd fallen in love with Raoul the moment I lay eyes on him. I hadn't just hitched a ride because I had nowhere else to go. I was meant to join him on his journey.

The following morning we ate breakfast in silence and returned to the car.

"What shall I do?" said Raoul. "Tell me what to do."

"Drive," I said.

#

Next morning. We missed breakfast this time.

I thought of his wife and kids as I fucked him.

I liked to think I'd broken the chain of deliberately choosing lovers with partners and children. Raoul had left his wife already. As far as I was concerned, his arse was up for grabs. This, of course, was bullshit.

"I'm sorry," I said, rolling onto the mattress beside him.

"What are you sorry about?"

"Confusing you."

"I'm the opposite of confused."

"You're having a midlife crisis."

"This isn't a crisis. And I'm nowhere near the middle of my life."

"You need to go back to your wife and kids. They need you."

"I don't love them."

"Yes you do. You can't live without them."

"Maybe that's true."

"So, go home."

"I can't."

"Go home before it's too late."

"I love you."

"I love you too. Go home."

"I'm going nowhere."

#

We hit the road again. We slept in the back of the car for a couple of nights.

We arrived in the city of _____. I sat in a cafe while Raoul went off for a walk. He was gone for a good few hours.

There are many advantages to not having a phone, and it's a rare occasion on which I wish I had one. This was one of those occasions. I don't have a watch either, so I can't tell you how long I waited for him to come back. Maybe it was only ten minutes. During that time, my wandering mind surveyed the entire course of my sad, pathetic, hypocritical fucking life. The waiting staff kindly supplied me with a pen and paper so that I could begin writing what was supposed to be the account you're reading now. I got as far as "This account begins with me having sex with a Nazi." I screwed up the paper and left it on the neighbouring seat.

Once upon a time, I used to think of my work as literature. It's clear to me now that my work is utter shit at best. At worst it's just pure entertainment. And that's me in a fucking nutshell. Every single action in my adult life has served no other purpose. Love, sex, writing. Entertainment, entertainment, enter-fucking-tainment.

Maybe what happened with Agnes, or with She Who Must Not Be Named had hardened me in some way.

Raoul arrived, blundering breathlessly towards my table.

"Where the fuck have you been?" I said.

"We're sorted," he said.

"Where have you been?"

"To an estate agent. I put a deposit down on a flat."

"Oh, for fuck's sake."

#

For a bedsit, it wasn't a bad place. There was plasticine on the walls. I wasn't sure if it had been left there by children.

"We'll need to get some furniture," said Raoul.

"We could always sleep on the floor," I said. "Save on money."

"I don't fancy getting carpet burns," he said.

"It's OK," I said, "we can fuck in the bathroom."

We tried doing it in the shower. It was kind of awkward, so we tumbled onto the floor, soaking wet and coated in soap.

#

"I can't do this," I said later, lying on the carpet.

“Why not?”

“Raoul, you’ve spent a thousand quid’s deposit on this place. Get it back. Go to your family.”

“I can get a job,” he said. “So can you. We can provide for each other.”

“Do I look like the kind of person who wants to work for a living?”

“You could sign on, at least. What else are you going to do?”

“I don’t know. Don’t worry about me. Go back to your family.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too. Go back to your family.”

He rolled over onto his back and stared at the ceiling.

“You can’t trust me,” I said. “Trust me on that. What the fuck did you think I approached you in the cafe in the first place? I needed someone to take advantage of. You were conspicuously unhappy. Easy fucking prey. It worked as well. In just a few days, I’ve got you renting me a flat and offering to support me.”

“I don’t believe you,” he said. “You’re saying this because you want me to do the honourable thing. It makes me love you even more.”

“Let me tell you something,” I said. “I’ll tell you who the object of my desire is. It isn’t you. It’s my mother.”

“Everyone loves their mother.”

“I want to have sex with mine. Not in some theoretical sense – I actually want to fuck her. I can’t stop thinking about it. Sometimes I think about her when I’m fucking other people. I thought of her just now when we were in the shower. In my fantasy, my mother and I were making joyful love, while my father watched us, bound and gagged.”

“Why are you telling me this?”

“I want you to understand the kind of person I am. Everything I do is in some way geared towards re-enacting that fantasy. I’ve lost count of the number of times I’ve betrayed friends by having sex with their partners. Seriously, I’ve actually lost count. I’m good at making friends, and I’m very, very good at betraying them. I can’t stay in a person’s life for too long – I have to move onto the next one. The only meaningful relationship I’ve had in my life was with the wife of an old friend. A *true* friend, not just some sucker. I loved them both with an equal passion. I had to drag myself away. Maybe we could’ve continued our whole lives – me fucking her behind his back until we were too old to move. But it wouldn’t have worked. Underneath it all there was no escaping the fact that in my mind, she was my mother and he was my father. That’s why this isn’t going to work, Raoul. I’m not just betraying my father, I’m betraying a whole family. I’m keeping you from your kids. I have to draw the line somewhere.”

Raoul continued staring at the ceiling. “Let’s not talk,” he said.

We bunched our clothes into balls and used them as pillows. We held each other and drifted off to sleep.

#

At three o'clock in the morning, I got up and changed into a fresh pair of jeans and t-shirt from Raoul's suitcase. My remaining wad was sitting in my jacket pocket. It had remained untouched for days. I grabbed the jacket and left.

I wandered around the city until five o'clock, when I jumped on the next available train to wherever.

10.

After several days of paying for cheap hotels, I found myself a cosy little town, and visited a pub for an orange juice.

I felt like talking, so I struck up a conversation with yet another bored-looking barman. I bored him still further with the story of my life.

“Tell me where I went wrong,” I said. “You’re a young man – you know what it’s like to fuck around and get into trouble. Maybe you’ve learnt some lessons.”

The kid smirked. “Not sure what to tell you, mate. Sounds like you’ve had a whale of a time.”

“This isn’t a joke,” I said.

“Anything I can help with?” said another voice.

I turned to face the man in the crumpled suit standing next to me. “I hope you can,” I said. “As I was explaining to our young friend here, I want to kill my father and have sex with my mother. If you can offer an explanation, I’d be more than grateful.”

It was a pleasant surprise when, rather than ignoring me, the man in the crumpled suit nodded his head as though he understood.

“Can I buy you a drink?” he said.

I was on the verge of saying, “I don’t drink” when my newfound comrade gestured to the barman to pull me a pint. It seemed rude not to oblige.

The beer tasted revolting, but I began to warm to it after three or four glasses.

My new friend’s name was Derek. “OK,” he said. “I understand where your desire for your mum comes from. But your father...”

“Do you?” I said. “You understand why I want to fuck my mother?” (I was conscious I was speaking quite loudly in a small country pub with no music, but didn’t think to lower my tone. No one had yet raised an objection.)

“Of course I understand,” said Derek. “Ever read any Freud?”

“A bit,” I said. “To be honest, I think he’s a dick. That is to say, I don’t really understand the guy’s reasoning.”

“It makes sense to a certain extent. Everyone is basically bisexual...”

“No question about that.”

“But we’re conditioned to be attracted to women. To have sex with women, and to love women. We love our mums. We want to have sex with our mums. One logically follows the other. Or at least, I think that’s how it works.”

“So you’re telling me...?”

“No,” he said. “I don’t actually want to have sex with my mum. But that’s probably down to the fact that we’ve never seen eye to eye. Were you close to your mother?”

“Not exactly,” I said. “I worshipped her as a child, and continue to worship her to this day - but always from afar. I never received much in the way of physical affection. Is it a case of wanting something you can’t have?”

“Maybe,” he said. “I think your dad might have something to do with it. How do you feel about your dad?”

“Wanker,” I said.

“There you go then,” he said. “Jealousy.”

I raised my glass, almost spilling half my drink in the process. “Here’s to jealousy,” I said.

Derek raised his empty pint glass and mimed taking a sip. “To jealousy,” he said.

#

I’m not quite sure what happened after we left the pub.

I woke up in a strange room. Well, strictly speaking it was a perfectly normal room. Waking up in an entirely unfamiliar location was becoming perfectly normal too.

My assumption was that Derek had invited me back to his place. I wondered for a moment if we’d had sex, but surely I hadn’t been pissed enough to forget such a significant detail. I was stark bollock naked beneath the sheets but that’s usually the way I sleep.

I didn’t know what possessed me to drink alcohol just because it was thrust into my hand. I should’ve poured it over his presumptuous fucking head, I thought.

I was being harsh, of course. This may have been the following morning, but these were booze-induced musings. Just one of a multitude of reasons why I never touch alcohol.

There was a knock on the bedroom door.

“Hello?” I said.

A woman popped her head around the door.

“Hello,” she said. “You must be...” (she said my name). “Sorry, I should’ve asked if you were decent before barging in.”

“I’m a lot of things,” I said, “but decent isn’t one of them.”

The woman hooted with playful laughter, looking me right in the eye. I knew at that moment that the two of us were destined to have sex very, very soon.

“I’m Janine,” said the woman.

“I’m guessing you’re Derek’s wife?”

“That’s right.”

“So, where’s Derek?”

“He’s at work.”

“Work?” I said. “Fucking hell – I hope he’s not as hung over as I am.”

Janine laughed again. “He seemed OK this morning.”

“So, what are you doing?” I said.

“Nothing,” she said.

I’d like to say I had nothing to lose apart from my dignity, but clearly my dignity was long gone.

There's something appealing about having absolutely fuck all to lose. I guess that's why I ended up in this stupid mess in the first place.

I whipped off the sheets. My cock had already popped its head up like an over-attentive waiter.

A matter of seconds later, Janine's lips were wrapped around it, sucking like an industrial fucking plunger.

I was so impressed with my own abilities, I wanted to call all of my friends and brag about how amazingly appealing I am (not that I have any fucking friends).

I'd really made an effort to stop all this nonsense. But at that moment, I no longer gave a fuck. There was no point feeling fucking guilty. If married people were willing to drop to their knees and suck me off just moments after meeting me, what fucking hope did I have?

As I came, I realised I couldn't remember the last time I'd had guilt-free sex. There'd always been some niggling worry in either the back or the front of my mind depending on how much of a cunt I was being at the time.

If I had any thoughts at that moment, it would've been to acknowledge that yes, I was a Grade A cunt – but I was the luckiest cunt on the planet.

11.

Half an hour later, I was alone again between the sheets, weeping like a new-born.

Janine was downstairs making breakfast. I could hear her humming along to the cheesy tune on the radio. I'd like to think I'd made her day.

I don't really know why I was crying, but I should've seen it coming. Whenever I'm struck by a flurry of supreme arrogance, it's usually followed by an attack of self-loathing.

As I often did during these moments, I searched for an explanation as to why I was so unable to escape this addiction. I'd never used the word "addiction" before, but that's exactly what it was. I was addicted to betraying friendships, jeopardising relationships, fucking people over.

Lying. That was it. I wasn't addicted to sex. I could give sex up tomorrow. It's the lying that turned me on. Well, not so much lying as *secrecy*. There's nothing more thrilling than the thought that no one else in the world will ever know what you're up to.

Most adulterers get a kick out of the risk they're taking. The idea that they might get caught drives them to do stupid things like fuck on the living room carpet while their partners are upstairs.

That doesn't do it for me. I may be highly prolific, but I've never been caught. You could say I'm an extraordinarily good liar.

This gives me the rare opportunity to take the moral high ground over all you other cheaters out there. That's right – I'm talking to *you*, motherfucker. I'm by no means a bestselling author, but even if my readership doesn't make it past double figures, there'd still be plenty of cheaters amongst you. This planet is crawling with Judases. I'd just like to take this opportunity to say, I'm a thousand times better than you.

If you're willing to put yourself in a situation in which there's a high probability that your partner will suffer the pain and humiliation of walking in and finding you fucking someone else, you're a sadist and you deserve everything you get. This equally applies to anyone who accidentally gets caught because they've only made a half-hearted effort to cover their tracks.

Take it from me: not getting caught is an absolute piece of piss. All you have to do is lie. The most honest people in the world can convincingly make things up. Trust me – I'm the most honest person I know.

The difficulty is finding someone to do it with who can lie just as well as you. There's plenty of those around. I'd like to think I can detect them quite easily. I can't say why, but I knew that Janine was my kind of lover. It wasn't about the risk for her either. It was about sharing a secret never to be told.

"Ready!" she called brightly from the bottom of the stairs.

I wiped the tears away.

"Coming!" I called.

I stopped off at the bathroom on the way to wash my face.

I checked my eyes in the mirror – they were still a little bloodshot. Hopefully she'd assume it was the hangover.

#

Janine had cooked a ridiculously huge Full English. My hunger levels had reached a point at which I was more grateful for the food than I was for the blow job.

This kind of hospitality was a very good sign. I needed somewhere to stay. I instinctively knew that Janine would be up for it. All I needed was Derek's approval, and as he was the one who'd invited me back, I already had a foot in the door.

"Any plans for later in the day?" I said.

Janine smiled. "If you're hoping for a follow-on fuck, you'll be disappointed," she said.

I was indeed disappointed.

"I've got shopping to do," she said. "I'm picking the kids up from school, then I'm going to work. But let's pick up where we left off tomorrow."

As one kind of disappointment evaporated, another kicked in. Kids? I know they're a bog-standard optional extra to a long-term relationship but for some reason I wasn't expecting children to be part of the picture.

I needed to know more before I committed myself to living with a full-on family.

"Kids eh?" I said. "How many have you got?"

"Three."

"Wow. Well done." It was a transparently insincere remark, even for a spectacular liar.

Pre-empting my inevitable follow-up questions, Janine said, "They're 8, 10 and 14."

I went for the predictable clichéd compliment. "Didn't realise you were old enough!"

"Thanks," she said. "I'm 46."

"Age doesn't matter, anyway."

"I agree."

"Glad we're on the same wavelength."

"I guess I've got time for a sneaky squeeze," she said.

As expected, we didn't do it on the carpet. There was a lock on the spare room door. We were safe.

She didn't have time to do the shopping in the end.

#

At 4pm, Janine dropped off the kids before heading out to work. Usually the 14 year old

would be left in charge, but seen as there was an adult in the house (albeit a total stranger), I was officially head supervisor.

I locked myself in my room and read the cringe-inducing yet entertaining Cold War thriller I found under the coffee table.

Janine worked as a nurse. It seemed like a convenient arrangement for Derek to disappear during the day while she worked evenings. Presumably, they couldn't stand the sight of each other.

"I'm not into dressing up," I told her, as we lay in our brief post-coital embrace. "But if you ever want to wear your nurse's uniform..."

"Nice idea," she said, "but unfortunately real-life nurse's uniforms are a lot less appealing than the ones you find in sex shops." She paused. "Luckily there's one in the wardrobe that I picked up in Amsterdam."

I noticed the outfit still had the price tag on it.

Derek came home around 6.30. Janine had left a note for us all to help ourselves to the microwave meals in the freezer. "Sorry," she added, "there's no milk."

"Do you fancy a pint?" said Derek.

"Sure," I said. I could hardly have said no while I was trying to butter the guy up. However unpleasant the prospect of an alcoholic beverage may have appeared, it was clear that Derek wanted a drinking buddy. The easiest means of ensuring he'd allow me to stay would be to become his fellow pisshead.

The pub was the perfect location for setting up Derek's offer of accommodation.

I started talking about my future plans – heading off in a randomly-selected direction and hoping for the best.

"It's liberating," I said, "but it's frightening. I'm homeless. I can't even believe I'm saying this with a smile on my face. I'm fucked, Derek. When the money runs out, that's it. I'll be reduced to begging in the street."

"Is there anyone who can put you up?" Derek ventured. "If worst comes to worst?"

"Not really," I said. "I'm estranged from everyone who ever cared about me – friends, family ... It's just me now."

"We've got a spare room," he said. "You know ... if worst comes to worst."

"Derek, I'll be honest with you. Worst has come to worst."

"What are you saying?" he said.

I said, "I appreciate your offer, and I accept it."

"Oh," he said. "Well ... I'd better check with Janine."

#

Over the next few days, Derek dithered over his decision to consult his wife. I imagine he was attempting to rehearse the confrontation in his mind, knocking back any potential complaints.

On paper, it was a tough sell. He wanted a homeless guy he met down the pub to move into their spare room rent-free, drinking their tea and knocking back giant portions of egg and bacon.

He told me he was waiting for an appropriate moment.

I took the initiative and picked an appropriate moment of my own.

We were locked in the spare room. I was beneath the sheets, lapping up tonguefuls of pussy-juice.

I paused between slurps.

“I should move in,” - *slurp* - “We could do this all the time,” - *slurp* - “I’ve got nowhere else to go,” - *slurp* - “Derek’s up for it,” - *slurp* - “What do you reckon?”

My ears were clamped between her thighs so I didn’t catch her reply, but it sounded something like “YES! YES! YES!”

12.

Life was sweet once again. I signed on the dole using Derek and Janine's place as my new address.

For the first time a long while, I decided to contact one of my former friends. Martin had been a good mate at one point. We'd never officially fallen out. Truth be told, I'd slept with his girlfriend and could no longer look him in the eye. Same old tale.

I just needed someone to know where I was. Maybe it was time to reconnect with the world and spark up some old platonic relationships. Martin was well-connected in the sense that he knew a lot of the other friends I no longer spoke to. At the very least, he could give them an update.

We had a good chat. He'd started up his own business, and had "popped the question" recently. I nearly asked "What question?" but now wasn't the time for sarcasm. Whatever the question was, Annabelle had said yes, so I offered my congratulations.

I passed on Derek and Janine's phone number, and told him I'd probably be here for a while.

And why not?

I spent my afternoons having sex with Janine and the majority of my evenings down the pub with Derek.

"Are you sure the kids are OK at home on their own?" I asked one night.

"Yeah," he said. "It's handy having three of them – they look after each other. Plus there's enough stuff in the house to keep them occupied – Playstation, homework, all that. You ever thought about having kids?"

"No," I said, immediately.

Derek grinned into reflection in the glass. "You seem pretty sure of yourself."

"I had the snip very early in life," I said, "and have never regretted it. You may've noticed, I try and stay away from kids as much as is humanly possible. It's like an allergy."

"Are you going to try and psychoanalyse yourself again?"

"Oh, I've done that already. It's a repeating pattern. My father had an evasion to kids too – I'm just following in his footsteps. I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't spend half his time cheating on my mum. In fact, I'd be very surprised if he wasn't. It'd explain him "working" from morning to night."

"Remind me," said Derek, "why don't you speak to your parents anymore?"

"It's simple. I don't speak to my mother because I love her too much. I don't speak to my father because I hate him too much."

"I suppose," said Derek, "the least you can say about your life is that it's *interesting*."

Indeed it was.

I found it incredible that I could open up to Derek about anything, yet he had

absolutely no idea that he'd fallen into my obvious trap.

That's the thing about being honest – if you're honest, people will trust you. It gives you the opportunity to spout the most outrageous bullshit.

I liked Derek a lot. I felt genuinely guilty about sleeping with his wife, but I comforted myself with the fact that he would never in a trillion years find out about me and Janine.

The only problem with my new lifestyle was the constant presence of booze. I don't know why I felt duty-bound to knock back pint after pint just because Derek was doing the same. It definitely wasn't doing me any good.

Thinking about it, it was probably the alcohol that motivated me to open up so fully in front of Derek. Up until this point, not a single person in the world knew the details of my private world to the extent that Derek did. My relationship with She Who Must Not Be Named was dissected, analysed, and to a great extent expelled from my mind. If Derek ever reads this and somehow susses out that I'm the author and I've replaced his real name with "Derek", I'd like to say I'm eternally grateful.

The problem with alcohol – and this is the main reason I wouldn't ordinarily touch the stuff – is that as soon as the glass touches your lips, you're out of control. The mask slips. Sometimes a little too far.

One evening, a couple of glasses in, Derek asked if I'd had a good day.

I said, "Not bad. I spent most of it with my cock up your wife's arsehole."

Derek's laughter echoed into the street outside. "Christ," he said, "you're a funny one, aren't you?"

"Yeah," I said.

"Not everyone gets your sense of humour," he said, "but I get it. I understand."

"I'm fucking serious," I said.

"Ha! Ha! See what I mean?"

"Yeah," I said, and stopped myself continuing.

That was the last pint of beer I ever touched. From that evening on, I drank orange juice or herbal tea. Told him I was on a health kick.

Didn't seem to bother him. Curiously, it seemed to have encouraged him to drink a little more – almost as though he were trying to make up my share.

#

I wondered what had gone wrong in Derek's life. Would he have been happier without the wife and the kids? I don't know, but the more time I spend hanging round with married people, the more I hate marriage.

I hate the fact that it makes contented people miserable. I hate the way the most ardent defenders of it are most likely the biggest adulterers. I hate the way it's considered to be a moral act, even by non-religious people.

I hate the way the ceremony reduces women to the level of objects – dolled-up,

gift-wrapped possessions for a one guy to pass onto another guy, often in exchange for cash. All the while, women are taught from birth that this fucked-up exchange will be the greatest thing that ever happens to them (aside from bearing the child of the guy who purchased them). I hate the fact that even the most brilliant, intelligent women willingly lap up this daily diet of insidious propaganda.

I hate it how couple after couple choose to ignore the fact that more than half of marriages end in divorce, and a sizable proportion of the couples that stick together end up as twisted fuck-ups. People just keep on getting married, regardless of the stats. It's like betting your life's savings on a three-legged horse.

Most of all, I hate what marriage does to people's souls. It doesn't just make good people miserable. It turns good people into self-serving liars. None (or at least very few) of the people I've slept with behind their partners backs are bad people. I can't help thinking of She Who Must Not Be Named as I make these observations. She may have broken my heart, but she's the most caring person I've ever met. Leaving me wasn't an act of cruelty. It was a selfless sacrifice. She did it to save her marriage, because she believed in marriage, despite what it had done to her.

I'd like to say I do what I do in order to make a mockery of this bizarre, outdated institution – almost as though I'm screwing other people's partners in a satirical way.

That's bollocks, of course. It's not the couples themselves who benefit from marriage – it's people like me, leeching off other people's misery, sucking out every last drop of love. Without marriage, people like me would be forced to start being nice to people.

13.

The trouble with living the life of fucking Riley is, you know it'll end at some point – usually just as quickly as it started. Surely I couldn't have expected to continue living with Derek and Janine indefinitely. Neither did I want to. I'd've ditched them after I got bored, but for the time being I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. It was fun, it was interesting, and above all, it was comfortable – a component my life had been lacking for quite some time.

Sex with Janine was gloriously mindless. It was meaningless enough for me to have pulled up my boxers and walked away at any time without looking back.

Conversation with Derek was always cathartic, but there's only a certain amount you can do with conversation. No offence to Derek. Frankly, I'd happily shut my mouth and never speak to anyone again.

It's a shame things ended the way they did. On the plus side, the experience was handy for the writing of this book, which could've ended up plodding along and fizzling out were it not for the two cataclysmic events that I'm about to recount.

One afternoon as we lay, legs criss-crossed between the sheets, Janine announced: "I'm leaving him."

I don't know why I was so surprised.

"No you're not," I said.

"Why would you say that?"

"Because you haven't thought it through."

"I've been thinking it through for ages."

"Well, stop thinking. It's not happening."

"Why not?"

"Lots of reasons. You've got kids."

"Kids whose names he can barely remember. They wouldn't even notice he was gone. I wouldn't even have to tell them - I'd just say "He's down the pub.""

"He can change."

"He doesn't want to."

I took a breath, and gathered my thoughts.

I shouldn't have cared. Why was a guy who despised the institution marriage suddenly defending the whole thing?

"It's OK," I said. "If it makes you happy, you should do it. I just want to understand what you're leaving him for."

She sat up in bed. "What I'm *leaving* him for?"

"Yeah."

"I'm leaving him for *you*."

"WHAT?"

"Wasn't that fucking apparent?"

"No, it wasn't," I said.

“Don’t you want to be with me?”

“For forty-five minutes to an hour, yeah. Not a lifetime.”

“You’re lying.”

“You want to be with *me*? Seriously? You don’t know me, Janine. If you knew me, I wouldn’t even be living here.”

“I love you.”

“You’d hate me if you knew...”

“What? All the affairs you’ve had? All the friends you’ve betrayed?”

I closed my eyes, trying to cast my mind back over our previous conversations.

“It’s OK,” she said. “I know. I know everything. Derek likes to whisper these little drunken tales to me when I get in from my shift.”

“You know everything?”

“Yeah.”

“EVERYTHING?”

“Yeah.”

“Tell me then. What’s my darkest desire?”

A smile appeared on her face without warning. “Me, I hope,” she said.

“Sorry to let you down. Clearly you don’t know everything. I’m sure Derek wouldn’t share what I’ve shared. He’s a decent bloke.”

Janine reached her hand under the covers and grabbed me firmly by the balls.

“I don’t want a decent bloke,” she said. “I want someone like you. I want a *cunt*.”

She kissed me. “*Cunt*,” she said. “*Cunt*.”

“You sure you’re feeling OK?” I said.

“I’m gonna tell him,” she said. “Derek *will* know everything. He’ll know that I sucked your cock just seconds after meeting you. He’ll know that I’ve fucked you more in the last 4 weeks than I’ve fucked him in years.”

I leapt out of bed, literally backing into the corner of the room. “NO!” I yelled. “No, no, no, this can’t happen. Not to Derek. He was never supposed to know. *No one* was ever supposed to know.”

“We can’t carry on living a lie.”

“I can!” I said. “My entire existence is one big fucking sham. You can’t take that away from me.”

Janine said she was going to tell Derek as soon as they were face to face. She’d tell him that even though technically she was in the wrong, she’d only cheated because he was such a useless twat. And seen as he had no idea how to relate to children, it was only fair for him to be the one to leave the family home.

I had terrible visions of Derek hauling his drunken arse out of bed, fumbling into his socks, trousers and shirt, before staggering off to stay the night in some lonely B and B.

I don’t know whether Janine seriously expected me to take his place or not, but she ought to have figured out that I’d’ve been an even worse father than Derek was.

She left me alone in the bedroom. The room was no longer mine. It was Derek and Janine's spare room – or just Janine's if her plans were anything to go by.

One thing was for sure – I wasn't going to stick around to find out.

I had a brief exit point between five and five-thirty from Janine leaving for work and Derek arriving home.

I stayed in the spare room. I listened as she returned with the kids and frantically cooked their dinner while they watched TV.

I didn't have a bag to pack. I'd been borrowing clothes from Derek since I arrived (even though he was three or four sizes larger than me). I had no idea what had happened to my own clothes. I'm sure Derek wouldn't have minded me pinching a couple of oversized shirts. It was the least of his worries, really.

By four-thirty I'd already assumed that Janine was respectfully avoiding me.

Then she walked in.

I was sitting on the bed pretending to read another of Derek's espionage thrillers.

"I don't want to argue," I said.

"Good to know," she said. "There's a phone call for you."

"A *phone call* ...?"

"For you, yes."

She handed me the cordless.

"Hello?" I said.

"Hello," said my mother, calling me by my name.

Janine left the room.

"Mum," I whispered, barely able to breathe. "How did you ...?"

"I got the number from Martin," she said. "I know his mother. Lucky, really."

"Yeah," I said. "I suppose so."

She called me by my name again. The hairs on my arms stood to attention. "I'm calling with some bad news," she said. "Your dad had a heart attack last night."

"Is he OK?" I said.

"He's dead. I'm sorry."

"That's terrible," I said. "My God. I really should've been there. I'm so sorry."

How else could I have reacted? I'd always wanted to tell the truth for once in my life, but now wasn't the time.

"Don't apologise," said my mother.

"How are you feeling?"

"Like death."

"I can imagine."

She said my name again. "Come home," she said.

"Of course," I said. "I'll be there very soon. It'll take me a few hours, but I should be able to get there for around midnight."

"That's OK," she said. "I'll be awake."

I would've liked to have left immediately, but I stuck to my original plan. As soon

as Janine left for work, I raced downstairs, stuffed a couple of Derek's shirts into a carrier bag and left.

Thus far, I haven't been in contact with Derek or Janine, and don't intend to either.

I often wonder how the conversation went down when Janine got home, and what happened when they realised I'd disappeared without warning.

Whatever happened, I'd like to think I was doing them a favour.

If only that had been my intention all along.

14.

I wrote a poem around the time that I was putting my first collection, *Entertainment*, together. It was called “All My Friends Are Arseholes.” It wasn’t included in the collection in the end. I don’t know why – maybe I thought it was too cynical.

I lost the original when I abandoned my flat, but I’ve recreated it here from memory:

My friends can be identified by their opening question:

They’ll ask you what you do.

You’ll tell them.

Before your explanation’s over, they’ll say “That’s very interesting.”

Then they’ll tell you what they do, with a self-congratulatory smirk,

As though they’ve beaten you in a pitched battle of meaningless jargon.

My friends don’t talk about how much they earn.

They talk about how much they’ve *spent*.

Cars, shoes, holidays,

Chestnut-flavoured olives.

They’re constantly surveying houses they can’t afford in the property pages:

Pornography for the income-obsessed.

My friends decorate their homes with pictures of themselves.

Their shelves are stuffed with photos of their kids, lined up like trophies.

Everything’s a status symbol,

Even their own finely-toned bodies.

Sometimes I wonder if they ever do anything that isn’t just for effect.

They’re the new breed of chattering class.

They chatter about nothing.

They buy newspapers for the Sudoku.

They watch the news for the weather.

They have no political views,

Or ideas about how to make the world better.

They barely have morals at all, although their faces say otherwise.

It’s no wonder so many of my friends are desperate for some secret excitement

To make their lives meaningful,

Or just a little less dull.

Yet their two-faced affairs don’t make them any better.

They just make them even bigger arseholes.

The question is,
If all my friends are arseholes,
What does that make me?

At the time of writing, I suppose I was growing desperate to escape the artificial world in which I'd strategically embedded myself. She Who Must Not Be Named came along and taught me about real fucking depth. Then she taught me what it feels like to get dumped back in the shallow end.

Finally, I managed to escape from the arseholes who at one time I considered friends. I almost managed to escape from the memory of She Who Must Not Be Named – oh, fuck it, I mean Marylin. I've forgotten about her to the extent that I can start using her fake name again.

Marilyn, Marilyn, Marylin. I may never see you again, but I'll never forget you.
Ever, ever, ever.

If Derek was here now, he'd ask me outright: what have you really been running away from all this time?

I'd tell him: I've been running away from two people, one of whom is now dead.

I ran away from my parents as a kid, shutting myself in my room at any opportunity. I left as soon as I was old enough, and had barely been back since.

Now, finally, I'd been dragged in the opposite direction.

What's the opposite of escaping?

15.

Truth be told, I don't know much about my dad, but one thing I do know is that he was a *man*.

He did all the things I've never done, and have no intention of doing. He put up shelves. He drove a car, and fixed it himself. He got married and started a family. He worked every hour God sent to support his wife and his son. He didn't talk about his emotions.

Let's not get into a debate about masculine identity. I've got no idea what a man is, but one thing's for certain: until very recently, I wasn't one.

I've spent my entire adult life as a toddler trapped in a man's body, with no other kids to play with. I've had to settle for grownup games, which ceased to be fun some time ago.

#

At the stroke of midnight, I arrived at the house I grew up in.

The garden was overgrown. Cobwebs lined the door frame.

My mother opened the door to let me in before disappearing into the living room.

I took off my shoes and coat.

"Come through," she called softly.

I paused at the living room door. My father's open coffin was sitting on a stand by the window.

"They say it was quick," she said quietly. "He won't have suffered."

"Do me a favour," I said.

She looked at me for the first time. "What can I do for you?" she said.

"Smile."

She hesitated.

"Just a little one," I said. "I want to see your face as it should be."

She smiled.

"Now another favour," I said.

"What's that?"

"Take off your cardigan."

"Why?"

"I want to see your body as it should be."

"My body?"

"Yeah. Your body."

She took off her cardigan.

"Now take off your trousers."

There was no hesitation this time. She unzipped herself and climbed out of her trousers.

Without further hesitation, I clutched her by the waist and stuck my tongue as far into her mouth as possible.

Her hands crept up the inside of my shirt. Her nails dug into my flesh.

I pulled my tongue out.

“I love you,” she said, breathlessly.

“I love you,” I said. “Get your knickers off.”

“Get them off for me,” she said.

I yanked the elastic so hard it snapped off in my hand. I helped her pull her feet out.

I shuffled her round so she was facing away from me.

I whipped my cock out with a theatrical flourish.

“Sorry it’s been such a long time,” I said.

She bent over, steadying herself on my father’s coffin.

She called my name out repeatedly in rhythm with my thrusts.

I caught sight of my father’s embalmed face for the first time. Same miserable fucker he’d always been.

I called her name out too – *“Mummy! Mummy! Mummy!”*

“My boy!” she cried. *“My boy! My boy! My boy!”*

“Mummy! Mummy! Mummy!”

“My boy! My boy! My boy!”

Turns out, it had all been leading to this moment. All the minds I’ve manipulated, all the bodies I’ve exploited, all the people whose lives I’ve accidentally changed for the better – it had all been a rehearsal.

I thrust and I thrust, and I knew I’d never, ever need to betray anyone again.

This was an act of pure, undiluted honesty.

Call me a pervert if you like. Doesn’t matter. You’ll never hear from me again.

Farewell, Dear Reader.

I’m no longer Mr If.

I’m myself.

Peter Pan has grown the fuck up.

The lies have evaporated.

I’ve been cleansed.

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