



Car one

1 the driver

Mr Tahsin Cilekbileckli

Outward appearance

Like Antonio Banderas in *Interview with the Vampire*, down to the long black hair. Neatly pressed London Underground uniform, except for the jacket, which is slung over the back of his chair. Unshaven, baggy-eyed. His Hush Puppy shoes are worn along one edge.

Inside information

A qualified [[136]] [Turkish](#) political scientist living in Britain with a British wife. He walks splay footedly because his feet were beaten while he was in prison. His name means Perfection With Steel Wrists. Turkish surnames are new this century, added under the rule of Ataturk -- Father Turk. Such names sound beautiful to them.

What he is doing or thinking

The train pulls out, Tahsin sighs with despair and exhaustion. Last night he argued with his two best friends about Islamic fundamentalism. Tunc teaches at the [[fnt1]] [School of Oriental and African Studies](#) and is from an old Ottoman family. "There are only a million modern Turks, but we have all the power," Tunc said, heavy lidded with superiority. Tahsin's other friend Umut is a failed actor, drinking himself to death. "There would be no more wine," Umut complained. "Umut" means Hope. Tahsin lost his temper with both of them.

Tahsin is from Marash, a town famous only for its rubbery ice cream. His mother and father are illiterate and faithful. "My modern son," sighs his father on the phone with pride when told Tahsin is writing a book on a computer. After all the other isms, Islam at least feels native.

His jacket is being crushed. Sleepily, Tahsin hangs it on an available peg -- [[end1]] [the Dead Man's Handle](#).



Car one

2

Mrs Valerie Tuck

Outward appearance

Neat page-boy hair cut, green wool poncho over layers of olive and brown. An old-fashioned reporter's notebook on her lap. She chews her pencil.

Inside information

Edits the in-house journal of [[124]] [Otto Beetlehide Ltd](#), an international shipping company. Valerie's job usually involves buying in freelance journalists to work for branch offices in Cyprus, Denmark, Ipswich.

What he is doing or thinking

Writing an article herself. After a [[63]] [second theft of computer chips](#), employees in the London office were issued with photo passes. They were sat in front of a camera operated by postroom staff. The results were unflattering blue photographs on badges held by choice of clip or chain.

The article is called *What the Well Dressed Beetlehide Employee is Wearing*. Val advises how to wear the badge stylishly. "Try hanging it down your back from its chain. This is simple, elegant, and less nerdish than clipping it to your front pocket."

She captions the article's only photograph. "Bruce Clipping, staff designer, models the mixed approach." Her raffish assistant wears it clipped to his belt while still held by its chain from a waistcoat pocket. Val recommends spraying the badges lightly with gold nail polish, "to neutralise the ice-blue, just-arrested look. Younger staff members into punk may wish to clip badges to ears or run the chains through nasal piercings."

Val sketches elongated people holding the badges like handbags or fans. Like the drawings she did in school, back when she thought she was going to work in fashion.

She smiles as if at her younger self. The article will be fun.

[[1]] [The driver](#)



3

Mrs Deborah Payne

Outward appearance

Young, effective [[36]] [businesswoman](#). Red crepe blouse peeking out of heavy black coat. Simple but expensive gold earrings. A new leather briefcase crouches like a pet panther at her feet. In job interviews, her face always fits. It is now slightly fragile, lost in thought.

Inside information

Unattached publicity executive for [[25]] [Mosstains](#), the construction company. Inspired by the suicide of her younger brother, she works nights for the Samaritans.

What she is doing or thinking

She has done a terrible thing: last night her [[123]] [boss](#) rang Samaritans. They were short staffed, and she took the call. She has never had much respect for her boss. He is capricious, limelight hogging, sometimes generous, disorganized. He apparently thinks the same thing. "I want to get out, but I can't get out, I'm too old. And there's this woman. She's nice enough, but she disagrees with everything I say, and I just don't seem to be able to get through to her."

Deborah has never thought of herself as a powerful person. She appears to be driving her boss to suicide. That is not her chosen role in life. The whole tumult of his character rolls over her, and she feels horror for him.

At Waterloo, she steps out onto the platform and recognizes him from behind. There are rules against this, but rules are for when you do not know what to do. "John!" she calls out and runs after him. She takes his arm. "John, you can leave Mosstains, you don't need to die!" His mouth hangs open in fear, loathing, surprise, rage.



4

Mr Donald Varda

Outward appearance

Ebullient, 30, blond, plump, in a tight grey suit fashionable a decade ago. He sits in the last empty seat and [the man next to him](#) shifts. Donald grins, fixedly.

Inside information

A financial advisor at the [Kennington Building Society](#). Its deposit accounts offer the highest interest rates in Britain.

What he is doing or thinking

Donald is re-imagining the ending to [An American Werewolf in London](#). The hero, Harold, realizes only Jenny Agutter can kill him and set him free. He tries to make her take the gun, singing "It Has to be You". She weeps for him. Then, he begins to change. The werewolf chases her through her flat, just as the white haired expert arrives...

Cut to a children's cartoon on television. It features Wile E Coyote and is followed by a commercial for the American Lycanthropy Society. It shows Harold at work, in a bank. "We are pleased and proud to have Harold as part of our clerical team," says the manager. Drugged up to the eyeballs, Harold shakes his hand. His grin is fixed, desperate. "Werewolves can lead normal, productive lives," says the expert. "I should know. I am a werewolf."

The camera pulls back from the TV. Harold is being made to eat breakfast by his wife. She is not Jenny Agutter. The soundtrack plays "It Had to Be You." All Harold's victims surround him, and in their midst is Jenny Agutter. He killed her too. She looks on and weeps.

Where did I get that from? Donald wonders. Then he remembers. He works in a bank.



5

Mr Brian Latham

Outward appearance

Pretty and old -- blonde hair, cornflower blue eyes. Sits bunched up and turned away from everyone until Donald Varda sits next to him. He then twists back around and segues through a series of extraordinary postures -- from Rodin's The Thinker, to simply shielding his eyes. Upper lip is sucked into a thin frown, lower lip thrust forward. Wears a blue corduroy suit. No winter coat or briefcase.

Inside information

A broadcaster and cookery correspondent out of work since LBC folded. He now caters for and guests at dinner parties for a fee. Returning to his expensively mortgaged Georgian home near [\[\[7\]\] Elephant and Castle](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Last night he cooked dinner for a bullying ex-colleague who has always terrified him. As a "friend" he was paid to stay overnight and clean up in the morning after they left. Brian knows nothing about cleaning. The poodle left a turd on the carpet. He tried to Hoover it up. The vacuum cleaner jammed. He tried washing the Hoover in the sink. The vacuum cleaner shorted when he tried to use it again. The kitchen sink was still muddy with shit. He experienced a blinding rage, and walked out, sink, carpet, cleaner all thick with proliferating turd. He is now appreciating how that will look to his client.

Brian perceives himself to be an essentially tragic figure. You don't like being a servant, he tells himself, but you are a servant. That's what you've become. He pushes himself to his feet at Waterloo, and gets out, to return to [\[\[ftnt5\]\] Kensington](#) and duty.



Car one

6

Mrs Maria Reventos

Outward appearance

25, heavy black coat, [black ski pants](#) strapped under her instep, generous grey scarf. Obviously partnered to the [next passenger](#). She is reading aloud in Spanish from *The London Underground Handbook*.

Inside information

A train fan from Guadalajara, Mexico. Her husband became enamoured of the old rolling stock in Guadalajara. She became enamoured of him. In the early days of their marriage, she was winsome, naughty, headstrong. He was good, pained, slow. To make up for it, she has come with him on a train-lover's holiday.

What she is doing or thinking

She is fully occupied translating this passage:

"A unique feature of the D78 stock is that it has tube stock sized wheels. Traditionally, surface stock has always had 1067 mm wheels, whereas tube stock has 790 mm wheels. In an attempt to reduce the number of different types of wheels sets in use on the system, the D78 stock has the same type of wheels as the 1973 tube stock.

"The D78 stock also saw the introduction of new kind of bogie..."

Maria is conscious of a low, dark, sinking feeling in her breast. She is an intelligent woman, a school teacher. She wants to see the history of England. Harrods, she wants to go shopping in Harrods and buy tweeds, though they are a bit hot for Guadalajara. Instead, she is travelling on every line of the [London Underground](#). She hates the air, she hates the noise, she hates the blackness through the windows, perpetual night.

Then, as the train slows, her husband taps her arm to leave. She looks up in surprise.



Car one

7

Mr Victor Reventos

Outward appearance

He looks like Geronimo -- high cheekbones, long nose, short mouth. He wears a blue-grey jacket of a kind not available in England, a blue and brown checked shirt, jeans, and thick-soled, unbranded, immaculately white trainers. He sits with an arm behind [\[\[6\]\] his neighbour's](#) head, his hand separating strands of her hair. He keeps looking up as if nervous.

Inside information

A train fan and civil engineer from Guadalajara. Two days ago, he bought every book in the London Transport Museum Book Shop. Making a daytrip to [\[\[17\]\] Elephant and Castle station](#) (1907) to see its famous Leslie-Green style tiles.

What he is doing or thinking

He finds English women dangerously attractive. His eyes keep flicking up at a girl with a mirror [\[\[35\]\] \(Passenger 35\)](#), and a more mature secretary-type [\[\[34\]\] \(Passenger 34\)](#). Then there is the trendy student with devastating skin [\[\[33\]\] \(Passenger 33\)](#).

He was inspired to come to England not only because of London Underground but because of a display of Synchronized Swimming he saw televised during the last Olympics. Two huge English gals with shoulders like walruses and smiles like Rita Hayworth's breasted the waves in perfect unison.

Suddenly he has heard enough about D78 stock. Suddenly, he wants to see English girls swimming. Suddenly he wants to be swimming. He suffers a moment of fannish conversion -- a pang of loss, a giddy reversal and a burst of yearning as sudden and delicious as biting into fresh pineapple. He is now a fan of Synchronized Swimming. He taps his wife on the arm. They get out early at Waterloo Station in search of a swimming pool.



Car one

8

Ms Lisa Jabokowski

Outward appearance

Mid thirties, long hennaed hair . A strained but carefully made up face. Boy's black leather jacket with quilted shoulders probably from the 1970s -- lots of unnecessary zips. Black jeans, heavy unmarked tan boots. [[30]] [Unusual black leather shirt](#) , low cut to reveal a bony freckled chest. Enters with a dog wearing a spotless new blue body jacket. She sits at end of row next to large bag.

Inside information

Runs [[204]] [a market stall](#) that sells very light,thin silver jewelry -- bracelets, rings.

What she is doing or thinking

She is catching a Network Southeast train to stay with her mother, which she does when she runs out of money. She smokes a lot of dope, listens to a lot of music, but still does not seem to have a good time. The dog is her only real friend. She has it sit up on her lap, and gently strokes it. The beast pants with an air of patient forbearance. It is black, but its greying muzzle matches the old jacket.

Lisa catches her reflection in the window. She has always considered herself to be attractive. That is why selling jewelry was an appropriate occupation, why the black leather jacket is a daring fashion statement. What she sees in the pane of glass is an angular woman with a bitter, thwarted air. She sees her mother. Lisa became wild in order to avoid becoming her mother. Fate and genes seem to close in around her. Is this what happens to us, Mum? She begins to feel some extra sympathy. She gets off at Waterloo.



Car one

9

Mr Keith Olewaio

Outward appearance

Jovial, mature black man sharing a series of jokes with [\[\[10\]\] a friend](#). Probably African from the accent. Expensive herringbone trousers slightly mismatch with blue outdoor coat and soft shoes.

Inside information

Staying with his brother, who has a British passport. Jointly owns a minicab with Passenger 10. They are going to collect the car from [\[\[153\]\] a body shop located in arches under the railway](#). [\[\[ad2\]\] Mr Olewaio](#) loves being a driver in Britain. Takes Polaroid photographs of his customers. Hopes in this way to make lasting friends.

What he is doing or thinking

He is relating to his partner what happened with last night's fare, a severely drunken woman who wanted to get to Potter's Bar and was unable to suggest a route. Potter's Bar is just outside the range of *London A- Z*. Mr Olewaio knows nothing of London geography, and did not have a compass. London boroughs usually street-sign cross roads, [\[\[178\]\] not main streets](#). The signs can be posted anywhere on the sides of buildings, and Mr Olewaio needs glasses. He drove concertedly along a main road, finally glimpsing what it was called -- "High Street".

"North, north," the woman kept saying. He kept looking for the Thames. Realized he was heading south. Left the woman on a train platform. "But this isn't Potter's Bar," she protested. He shows a Polaroid photo of her. She is slumped on a bench, looking very confused. He gave her money for the train. He laughs, but is laughing at himself. Under the laughter, he is becoming coldly determined. I am fool, he thinks, until I learn.



Car one

10

Mr Toby Swiswe

Outward appearance

Thoughtful, mature black man, nodding and smiling as [[9]] [his neighbour](#) tells jokes. They both wear nearly identical herringbone trousers. From time to time nervously gnaws this thumbnail.

Inside information

Swaps day and night shifts driving the same minicab as his cousin, Passenger 9. Mr Swiswe arrived in Britain before him, and is already having to be careful not to draw attention to himself for fear of deportation.

What he is doing or thinking

He is preserving the innocence of Passenger 9. His friend thinks the car was damaged in accident. It was in fact the target of a gang. Mr Swiswe dropped off a fare at [[ftnt10]] [Hammersmith](#) tube station. There were many cars and people gathered in the glare and darkness of the forecourt. He drove alone up Shepherd's Bush road, to the traffic lights at the Bush. Suddenly, the car was surrounded [[122]] [by white youths](#). They shouted at him; he did not understand. They gestured at him to come out. The lights were red, he could not escape. They started kicking his car, and wrenching off the antennae. "Stay out of it, you black bastard!"

Mr Swiswe feels he cannot call the police. His cousin with the British passport advised, "Stay out of Hammersmith. The gangs there think they've got a right to all the cab trade. And the Hammersmith police are the most unpredictable in London." Mr Swiswe remembers how Britain first looked to him, calm and orderly if slightly deadened. That's a lie, he thinks, it's still all there, all the shit. He is badly frightened, and wants to go home.



Car one

11

Mr Douglas Higbee

Outward appearance

Blandly British, about thirty, plump, moustache, no chin. Black trousers, huge winter coat, blue shirt collar. A large overnight case. Appears to be asleep, except that one eye is open.

Inside information

Mr Higbee is the bar piano player on a cross-Channel ferry. His bag contains a change of underwear, a top hat, and home-produced cassettes which he offers for sale on the top of his piano. No one ever buys them. Like Superman, his costume, a tuxedo, is under the ordinary coat.

What he is doing or thinking

He is trying to avoid having to talk to the ship's magician, [\[\[18\]\] Passenger 18](#), who is also in the same carriage. Douglas has nothing against the magician. They just have to spend a lot of time in the same bar and cabin being professionally pleasant to each other. You hardly want to be pleasant all the way from Waterloo to Dover as well. Douglas finds it difficult to be pleasant.

It's all right for the magician. *He's* pretending to be riveted by a newspaper. Douglas has no such luxury. He left in a terrible rush this morning. Forgot his book, sponge bag, sheet music. He could always have pretended to read his underpants or his own cassette covers, like he forgot the running order of the tracks.

Instead Douglas is pretending to be asleep, but only with the right hand side of his face, the one turned towards his colleague. His left eye is reading the ads in safety.

The underwear in the bag are in fact a pair of his girlfriend's frilly knickers.



Car one

12

Ms Gina Horst

Outward appearance

Virulently pink and orange coat, blue slacks, brown shoes. Arms folded like a boxer around a cloth briefcase. Short disordered blonde hair, clear bronze skin. Looks either fed up or not quite awake.

Inside information

Owns and manages a gym near Waterloo Station. Has a degree in Leisure Management.

What she is doing or thinking

She is contemplating the oiks who work for her. They are rotund with muscle, so big they have to wear Hawaiian sportswear all the time -- nothing else is loose enough.

It's not so much that they want to play dance music instead of George Michael. It's not that they won't repair the exercycles because they think exercycles are girly.

It's their friends. They want the place to stay a club for weightlifting Neanderthals. She dreams of aerobics and sunbeds, customers from St Thomas's, Dun and Old, Pall Mall Oil, [[206]] [BT](#).

One of the thugs works for Railtrack. Yesterday he boasted how he'd seen off a [[98]] [pooftah in the Waterloo toilets](#) by pouring bleach over his genitals. They all roared with laughter. How can she explain that she wants a few pooftahs? They're polite and they pay the bills.

She sees suddenly that it's not her fault. It's not a question of her making the case to them. It's that they don't want the place to change.

She thinks again of the Health Centre on [[16]] [Lower Marsh](#). It went bankrupt, but none of its members came to her. [[footnote12]] [I could always sell the old one](#) and buy that. Yes, she thinks with growing excitement, yes. I can.



Car one

13

Mrs May Hanmore

Outward appearance

Painstakingly turned out older woman. Flawless makeup; jet black, bee-hive hair. A spotless waterproof neatly belted. Sits unmoving and small. Her eyes dart, flicker.

Inside information

Lives near Bow Road, works at Boots near Waterloo, mostly in the photo section.

What she is doing or thinking

May lives in [\[\[145\]\] terror](#). She is convinced that older women are the main target of hoodlums. Chains and locks are no use, they just kick doors down.

[\[\[67\]\] Her housing estate](#) is strangely laid out with long balconies on the upper floors. May has to walk through clusters of local children and teenagers to get to her front door. They are beginning to make fun of her.

She is already aware with gratitude that it is getting dark at 5 pm rather than 4.30. All the way home she is in a state, clutching her bag.

She feels unsafe even at Boots. A shop for violent perverts has opened nearby. You see [\[\[50\]\] horrible people all in black with rings](#). Some of them give her film to develop.

May is unable to concentrate at work. She gets terribly muddled with all those red envelopes. Yesterday a gentleman who had ordered two complete sets of 300 photos of his holiday in New Guinea found instead a range of other people's Christmas parties. May burst into tears. She now fears for her job.

[\[\[14\]\] Someone shouts nearby](#), men move suddenly. Unnoticed under the neat coat, May begins to shiver as if freezing cold. She cannot take this journey any more. She decides to quit her job.



14

Mr Phil Barker

Outward appearance

Tiny, nervous about 19. Longish straight brown hair, brown sports jacket, yellow shirt, green floral tie. A blue sleeping-bag coat balloons around his shoulders. Sits slumped into the aisle with his left foot resting on his right knee.

Inside information

Works in the post office near Waterloo Station. Actually 22 years old. Lives with his family in [\[\[ftnt14\]\] Hackney](#).

Phil's problem is his father. His father is 38 and still wants to be 22. His father works as a bouncer and furniture reposessor, and is big, blonde, spotty. His knuckles are tattooed. It's like living with the head of a rival gang. "How much you bringing home each week?" his father said this morning. "You need to get yourself a sideline. Women love villains. I should know."

Money, women, respect, power to terrorize -- Phil has none of these and his father makes sure he knows it.

What he is doing or thinking

As the doors close, a blue blur sits next to him. A kind of tremor passes through Phil, and the sole of his left foot sweeps down the blur's trousers. His neighbour immediately slams back with his knee. Phil's leg is pushed into the dividing panel. His knee nerves buzz like a funny bone.

Phil explodes. "You do that again and you'll get [\[\[24\]\] a fucking knife in the ribs.](#)" The man stares back at him -- he is blonde and huge and his mouth hangs open.

Then he hurls Phil back against the dividing panel. [\[\[25\]\] Phil crumples](#), withdraws swiftly. He stands hunched in the door area, burning with shame as the train pulls into Waterloo.



Car one

15

Mr Harry Wade

Outward appearance

A swollen cherub. Blonde, pink cheeked, far too big for the train. His huge shoulders push the [\[\[16\]\] woman next to him](#) to one side. Conventional dark blue suit, blue-grey trench coat. Battered briefcase has papers scrunched into side pockets. Shifts and fidgets as he sits. His stare is blank and he is chewing the inside of his cheek.

Inside information

A [\[\[43\]\] rugby player](#). On the field he is swift, calculating, fierce. Almost everywhere else -- passive and put upon. Works as a tracker for repair calls made by [\[\[19\]\] British Telecom](#). Hopeless at it and about to be made redundant. His mother bought the flat in Pimlico for him.

What he is doing or thinking

Nothing -- until [\[\[14\]\] no 14](#) smudges dirt from his shoe down Harry's stale suit. Harry still thinks nothing as his body knee-jerks.

"You do that again, you'll get a fucking knife in the ribs." Harry stares the boy, temporarily unmanned. Why would someone swear at him? He was the one who was kicked!

Then the rugby field takes over. Harry is fed up being confused, alarmed and he finds he has seized the little weasel, the little spiv and ground him like pretzel against the dividing panel. He sees fear in the little spiv's eyes. He sees him scuttle away, suddenly small. Confused again, Harry feels he has done a wrong.

He thinks about his mother, his childhood. Nothing since then has really made sense. From somewhere deep inside him comes the thought: I want to be a farmer. He sees himself windblown on a green slope, looking for lambs.



Car one

16

Mrs Minerva Nicholas

Outward appearance

An older woman, face creased by continual despair. She is too short for the seats -- the tips of her thick soft blue shoes only just reach the floor. She is an odd combination of the academic and the prosperous. A Silver eagle brooch is pinned to her cloth coat, a Hermes scarf splashes pink and black across the collar. She looks as if she were hypnotized, concentric circles of flesh around her eyes.

Inside information

Lives in Marlow. Husband is a Head Teacher in High Wycombe. He takes the car; she has the commute, getting up at 6.00 every morning. The cushioned shoes help with the walk to the station. Works for a mental health charity in [[28]] [Lower Marsh](#).

What she is doing or thinking

She is remembering a dream from this morning. She dreamt that her house was in [[109]] [Bosnia](#). She was serving supper, carrying in a dish of Brussels sprouts, her husband sitting at the table.

Something was thrown through the window. In her dream she knew it was a bomb full of ball bearings. She flung herself back into the kitchen, there was a crackling of fireworks.

She can still hear the noises her husband made -- like cricket balls dropped into custard, and a horrible dog like yelp that rose to a squeal. The sudden silence afterwards told her that her unattractive but decent husband was dead.

That is what Bosnia is like. It is real. And now [[14]] [someone](#) has threatened to knife the man sitting next to her. She feels delicate, shivery and wants to get off the train.



Car one

17

Mrs Harriet Dawe

Outward appearance

Extremely tired woman in her 30s. Bumfreezer black jacket over a bright red dress with white polka dots. Red shoes. Dead blonde hair.

Inside information

Works as a fully qualified masseuse in a Soho basement. Her boss is an older woman with a smoky voice... "We have a lovely girl here..."

Fat, unshaven Mediterranean men walk in, see two older women and walk out again. Police come for payoffs. Tricks get threatening. Harriet likes doing old gents best; she feels kindness for them and nothing else.

Last night her 16 year old son came in . She heard his voice and her heart stopped. He doesn't know about her job.

She stayed hidden in a curtained room with a handsome, brutish Aussie. She was toweling her hand when she heard Charlotte call, "You still busy, love?"

"Mmm hmmm," Harriet said, disguising her voice. She heard curtains close. The trick growled at her; she let him go and stayed hidden. Afterwards she peered between the curtains and saw only her son's back. Tall, skinny, alone. She wished he had a nice girlfriend instead.

"Fancied the Aussie, did you?" was all Charlotte said, over their usual morning cup of coffee. Harriet stared at her and thought: you've had my son.

What she is doing or thinking

What does she do now? She can't go back. There is a [\[\[49\]\] Sauna Centre](#) near Lambeth North. That's a bit too close to home -- her son would never go there. Harriet decides very suddenly to change venue. Maybe they're still open. She gets off at Waterloo, instead of the [\[\[27\]\] Elephant](#).



18

Mr Tony Colley

Outward appearance

Worn, but otherwise well turned out. Coiffed, and tinted hair. Dark coat over black pressed trousers. Large case at his feet. Reading [\[\[152\]\] *The Daily Express*](#). A playing card peeks out from his cuffs, and the bag stirs uneasily, all by itself.

Inside information

A magician on a cross channel ferry. There is a live rabbit in the bag.

What he is doing or thinking

Pretending not to notice the ship's piano player, [\[\[11\]\] *Passenger 11*](#), who also sits in the carriage. He tries to absorb himself in news of [\[\[173\]\] *Camilla Parker-Bowles's*](#) divorce. He vaguely identifies with her; he suffers a similar sense of exposure, of aging, of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Nothing beats getting a card trick wrong in front of a bored seven year old. Nothing beats a set of hardened eyes which plainly say: did we ask you to come to our table and do tricks with coloured scarves?

If it were possible to live in complete good faith, he would tell management that it doesn't work, people don't want a magician. But he needs the money. He has a beautiful little daughter. He never sees her, bounding back and forth from France in a French boat. He hates the fatty food, the iced prawns, the language.

He is suddenly aware of scuffle further up the row of seats: [\[\[15\]\] *some bully*](#) picking on a little fellow. Life is too short, he thinks.

Then he knows: today he will get off at Waterloo, and turn around, and go home to his daughter. Then he knows that he won't.



Car one

19

Ms Eveleen Doyce

Outward appearance

Large black woman over whom gravity has no power. She appears to have been pasted on the seat by computer imaging. Her face beams in steady contentment. She wears all black, except for a cap edged in gold braid.

Inside information

Made redundant by [\[\[54\]\] British Telecom](#) two years ago. Pregnant with her second child. Going to [\[\[end1\]\] Elephant and Castle](#) Shopping Centre to collect a stereo. She bought it on credit by claiming she was still on pregnancy leave. They asked for references and she gave her old BT boss, a batty female accountant. The woman must have taken a shine to Eveleen. She told a fib.

Eveleen has a [\[\[73\]\] mad, one-armed step father who wants to kill her](#). He phones her day and night to threaten her. The idea of him, one-armed, trying to do her in makes her laugh. She roars at him down the telephone, even at one in the morning.

What she is doing or thinking

A scuffle breaks out. Eveleen frowns in amusement and delicately scratches her head. These white people, she thinks. They are so selfish and it just makes them crazy. The whole world is crazy, spinning round and round. She thinks of her brother who tried to slash the seats at McDonalds. The seats at McDonalds are so hard that people won't sit for long. The seats don't slash, but her brother always keeps on with whatever he's doing. He was still slashing when the police arrived.

This mad world pleases Eveleen, leaves her content. If she were to die right now, she wouldn't mind.



Car one

20

Mrs Joy Harvey

Outward appearance

Polished black woman. Huge coils of hair, like someone out of *Dynasty*. Burgundy business jacket, yellow sweater. She looks enraged and keeps pulling down on her sweater.

Inside information

Works in [a one-stop shop for the Council](#). Today her mobile surgery will be held at the [Wasteco Superstore](#) in the [Elephant and Castle](#). The surgery was set up to provide information about local events and the Council's activities. But people want services instead of information. Joy has become a one-stop advocate for the illiterate who have received a final Council Tax demand, the aged who aren't claiming benefit, the young men who can't get a council flat, people who can't get their garbage collected. Etc.

What she is doing or thinking

She is looking at the obviously [homeless man](#) next to her. She deliberately sat next to him in case no one else would. She takes in his stained, rumpled trousers; the tiny woman's coat; the thin shirt; the shoes with white water marks. Poor man, look, he's shaved and washed. He's spent money to clean himself up and he probably could have used it for food. And look at people, wrinkling their noses at him. Aren't they horrible.

"Are you all right?" she asks. He looks around at her in misery. "Are you all right?" she asks again, touching her new purse.

"No, no," he pleads, holding up his hands. "I don't need anything."

Good, she thinks, that's good. Pride. She receives an energizing jolt of anger that will see her through another day. She pulls down again on her sweater.



Car one

21

Mr Justin Holmes

Outward appearance

Homeless person -- ill fitting, flimsy clothes. His coat is orange with black fur trim, and is too small for him. The shirt is thin summer cotton and is missing a button, showing his pale tummy. His hair is curious -- it is disordered but layered.

Inside information

Freelance journalist posing as a homeless person. He has spent the last week in the concourse under Waterloo Bridge roundabout. Slept two nights in a cardboard box with [\[\[151\]\] an older longhair who made a pass at him](#) but was easily deflected. Moved to a doorway in the Strand. Last night spent some of the money hidden in his shoe to shower in Waterloo Station. Went home. His flat was dark and locked. The porter came with spare keys. The locks had been changed.

Justin is now homeless for real. He will wash again at Waterloo and go to [\[\[55\]\] Lambeth North police station](#).

What he is doing or thinking

He remembers his girlfriend's face. "You can borrow my old coat, but don't expect me here when you get back," she told him. He has no i.d., no keys, no plastic and only five pounds left. When has he ever been fingerprinted? How can you prove who you are?

The woman next to him is talking. He looks around. "Are you all right?" she asks, about to give him money. A terrible sense of fraudulence comes over him, and he pleads with her to put away the money, the sympathy.

He remembers his girl friend's face, and understands. He wants to go home.

He thinks of his article.



Car one

22

Mr Tony Mannocchi

Outward appearance

Worn, sallow, a bit beaky with deeply sunken eyes and thin lips held in a permanent smile. Thick blue coat still zipped up, maroon sweater showing under cuffs. Bald, hair combed across. He plays with a heavy set of keys.

Inside information

Proprietor of [Roma Fine Wines](#) near Waterloo. It has recently gone bankrupt. His son and his new wife were to inherit the business in a few months' time.

What he is doing or thinking

He is meditating on how everything is replaced, most especially people. There was a time when he would make this same journey and know half the faces -- customers, vendors from the market on Lower Marsh or the train station, or just people on the train. He can close his eyes and see 1964. The Brylcreemed hair, the haze of tobacco, a certain kind of hatchet English face that has gone. The jokes, people used to joke all the time in London, it was what kept you going. Replacement people, a bit like pets. One dies, another is comes in.

They've torn the heart out of this area. The GLC used to be full of customers, now it was vast and empty, soon to be Japanese. That big office block next to Lambeth North, it was full of [very well spoken people](#) who always bought wine. Even the [OPP](#), that was much smaller now, and not what it was. Dark, dark, we all go into the dark.

My son says "What am I going to do?" I'm going to tell him. Get yourself a gimmick. And replace someone.



Car one

23

Miss Yoshi Kamimura

Outward appearance

White bulky jacket, lime green trousers, white trainers, pink hair grip. Balances on her lap a glossy pink bag with green polka dots and a plastic shopping bag in which books and papers are jammed.

Inside information

Studying English at [\[\[58\]\] Bruenwalt International College](#). Yoshi is now pregnant and addicted to heroin and moving into her new boyfriend's flat near [\[\[end1\]\] Elephant and Castle](#).

What she is doing or thinking

Yoshi lives in a dream. For her nothing in Britain is real -- it is outside Japan. There are Italian fascists in the dorm. They hold pissing competitions in their rooms. She made friends with Swiss students. They stayed out late -- until 11 pm -- and sang in raucous voices on Waterloo Bridge. "London is a wild town," announced a goggle-eyed Swiss girl. Oh, thought Yoshi. One is wild in London.

In all innocence, she tried everything. She is going to have an Italian fascist's baby. She cannot pronounce his first name and does not know his last. Her new boyfriend has many flats, and she has already turned her first trick for him. But he loves her.

She told all this to the College counselor who stared at Yoshi for a moment with wide blue eyes and then passed her a pink business card with Japanese lettering. It offered a Japanese counseling service. "This happens a lot," said the counselor.

The touch of Japan was like a hot hand on a frosted window. Everything melted for a moment and Yoshi could suddenly see clearly. Now she wants frost everywhere, on the dark windows of London Underground.



Car one

24

Mr Clive Kelton

Outward appearance

Middle aged man. Grey, short hair. Sharp pale face, no jowls. Wears new, all-black, casual clothes. Fast asleep.

Inside information

Works in Bathroom Paradise, a massive showroom of fixtures and fittings located in railway arches near Waterloo. Was once a hippy, living in Devon. Clive started fitting kitchens to make money. There was not enough of it in rural Devon. He moved to London, and ended up in Paradise.

What he is doing or thinking

He is meditating. Over and over he mentally repeats a mantra -- "I-ying-I-ying-I-ying". This develops concentration and releases tension. It needs releasing: pain and anger coil in his breast. His wife feels trapped and lonely and bored and doesn't understand why they moved back to the Smoke. His two children miss horses and downs. They don't admit it, but they are afraid of some of the children in their school.

His boss has it in for him. Clive does not live the Bathroom Paradise Promise -- A Perfect Fitting Every Time. The stuff is too cheap, is never in stock. Most people buy their taps or their shower heads and pay someone they know to install them. Clive worries how long there will be a job for him.

Only here, on the tube, does he have any time to for himself, time to rest. Then across from him someone growls [[14]] [...you'll get a fucking knife in the ribs."](#)

The mantra is broken. He opens his eyes to see two men staring at each other. One of them flees.

What am I doing here, he thinks. Could we go back?



Car one

25

Mr Alfred Cushway

Outward appearance

Aging male model. Every hair in place, immaculate long coat thrown open, brown and black Italian jacket, loosely hanging trousers. The face is handsome, dead in the water, baggy-eyed.

Inside information

An executive at [\[\[39\]\] Mosstains](#). Has not worked on a building site since his 20s. Moved into sales, then account management, dealing with customers. Has a family, a house near Ely, Cambridgeshire. Collects art and antiques. Beats his children uncontrollably.

What he is doing or thinking

Alf has started drinking again and is battling the cloud of hangover across his forehead. He knows he shouted at the kids last night, but is sure, sure that he did not hit them. At least, he can't remember it.

Why does he lose his temper with them? He never does with anyone else. He loves them, gets frustrated by them. They can't hit back.

It's the one flaw in his perfect life, he can feel it like a crack across his face.

There is a bit of argy-bargy. Alf chuckles to himself, [\[\[14\]\] some poor kid](#) has bitten off a bit more than he can chew. He looks at the boy's brown jacket, green tie. No dress sense.

Then the chuckle dies. That's me, Alf recognizes, that's me at the same age. He remembers his wedding photograph: transparent mauve shirt, long hair like a truck driver in drag. The embarrassed, grateful eyes.

It's Vauxhall, he thinks. All my life I've been trying to get away from Vauxhall, but it follows me. Hard, sad Vauxhall. Alf looks at the kid and knows: he'll hit his children too.



Car one

26

Mr Paul Hennessey

Outward appearance

Near retirement. Impish face with folds of pale flesh. Watery eyes, a head of snow white hair. Reading The Guardian, folded down to a column's width to keep it in control.

Inside information

Runs the purchasing department of [\[\[42\]\] Dun and Old](#). Member of the Institute of Professional Purchasers. Author of *Tightening the Screws: Purchasing Secrets of Japanese Business*. Commutes from Haywards Heath and writes his books on British Rail.

What he is doing or thinking

He is not reading the paper, but thinking of his wife, Elisabeth. She is 55 and has gradually given up all her interests. Instead of working with the Sunday School, she says, "They don't want some old lady." She no longer goes to her art classes -- "I've stopped getting any better." She only half finishes books and ducks out of bridge evenings.

Their daughter now lives in Cork. She came over for Christmas with their first [\[\[68\]\] grandchild](#). Oh, he is a bouncy babe, blue eyes, face like an apple. A light of recognition came into his eyes whenever he saw his Gran. He needed to be burped, talked to, petted, tucked in, changed. He kicked and shrieked with laughter. She played for hours with his chewable blue train. Choo choo Choo choo.

Now they've gone back to [\[\[35\]\] Ireland](#) and his wife is bereft. It's two weeks since they went home. Paul saw her this morning. She sat at the kitchen table in her dressing gown, cradling empty air.

A crazy idea comes to him. Could they adopt? The train slows. He puts the newspaper away.



Car one

27

Ms Danni Jarret

Outward appearance

Alarming. Bright red pantsuit, workman's donkey jacket. Black T shirt on which Pooh appears to be buggering Piglet. Danni is carefully writing in a notebook, and giggling to herself.

Inside information

Works for the [\[\[128\]\] Department of Health](#), [\[\[30\]\] Elephant and Castle](#). By night she is a [\[\[99\]\] stand up comic](#), billed as The Stand Up Civil Servant. She is writing a new routine. She writes each routine only once, in very clear block capitals, in pencil so she can erase and rework.

What she is doing or thinking

She is aware that [\[\[28\]\] the woman next to her](#) is reading over her shoulder and is stiffening with shock.

This is providing Danni with a great deal of inspiration. Sammy the Sperm Cell has just discovered that he's been shot up someone's arse and has been making love to a turd. Danni then asks the audience: have you ever been up someone's arsehole? Tastes terrible, doesn't it? First time I did it, I went home and stuck my face in a bucket of Flash. Whenever I do it now, I get a Flashback. Ho ho.

At that point, her pencil breaks. Sammy will have to wait. It has been great fun shocking someone, but she really needs to write in pencil. Danni stands up to get off at Waterloo and buy a pencil at W H Smiths. She passes her neighbour, who looks about 50 and is almost certainly a virgin. In a moment of inspiration, Danni pushes her neighbour's nose like a button. "You keep sticking that in funny places, it'll get bitten off," she promises.



Car one

28

Miss Flora McCardie

Outward appearance

Looks like an athletic boy with bags under his eyes, pale skin, reddish hair. In fact, a 50 year old woman in sensible clothes.

Inside information

Works for Christian Aid on [[67]] [Lower Marsh Street](#). The happiest period of her life was spent in Gabon with an American evangelical mission. Heartbroken when she learned that its charismatic leader was siphoning off funds. Returned to the UK middle-aged and at a loss.

Is currently mourning the loss of her good friend, Lavender. Lavender was 75 years old, and produced vowel sounds that have disappeared everywhere else. Lavender was a friend of Flora's guardian, and saw Flora through childhood and adolescence, giving her the nickname Poppet.

Lavender died old, cold, alone. Flora has begun to see a kind of tribe; a chain of steadfast, upright, noble, unloved women.

What she is doing or thinking

She thinks of Lavender as she reads what [[27]] [the girl next to her](#) writes. Poor Lavender, with her faith in decency, progress. Here is an apparently intelligent young woman writing in such a tidy, careful hand such terrible things. I'm worthless, it seems to say, you're worthless, here, eat this.

The girl gets up, and in the the thickness of her body Flora sees part of the chain. Then the girl pushes Flora's nose, and insults her. Flora tuts and tosses her head, then remembers that she gets out here too.

On the platform Flora reaches forward and stops the girl and demands: "Why did you do that to me?" The girl's face is blank for a moment.

Then they begin to speak.



Car one

29

Mrs Helen Bale

Outward appearance

Faded English rose. Unmade up, merry face, rather rural looking with pink cheeks, long nose, tiny mouth. Beige and black woolly scarf, thick sweater, gloves held to her wrists by cords. Home-knitted. She looks upward at something, smiling as if having seen the Light.

Inside information

A mature [nursing](#) student doing a study at [St Thomas' Hospital](#) into aspects of alternative medicine.

What she is doing or thinking

She is trying to decipher an Oranjboom ad. Along with *Poetry on the Tube*, they are the only objects of interest among the usual January package holiday ads. The joke is that the slogan looks Dutch, until you work it out.

*Druifes u tooi
dis traag schone
dous ent et?*

In the back of her mind, her study seems similarly disjointed. Helen has not been able to identify enough patients with similar conditions to be separated into control groups -- let alone to discount variables such as age and general health. She is in touch with an American hospital doing similar work, but they are suddenly being difficult about releasing their data. Perhaps they think she is a crank. Or just a nurse.

She tries sounding out the Oranjboom slogan without looking for meaning. It suddenly swims into focus.

*Drives you to
distraction
doesn't it?*

Helen smiles. Part of the joke is working so hard for an answer that means nothing. She is beginning to accept that her study may not work. Still smiling, she waits for others to pass before standing up to exit at Waterloo.

Not everyone will get it, says the punchline.



Car one

30

Bob "The Knob" Hall

Outward appearance

Skinny, pale 17 year old in black satin jacket with the Nintendo grinning face logo. Jeans, boots. He sits slung across the seat, open legged, listening to nervously rattling drum and bass on his Walkman.

Inside information

Studying print technology at the [\[\[127\]\] London College of Printing](#), [\[\[36\]\] Elephant and Castle](#). On his way to his first class. No books or papers.

What he is doing or thinking

The Walkman plays *Dub Culture*. Bob is gazing at the crossed ski pants of [\[\[6\]\] Passenger 6](#). Latin pussy, yum. He can see the perfect brown flesh, the slit, the hair; he can almost taste it. Shame she's got her boyfriend with her. [\[\[8\]\] Number 8's](#) a bit past it and has no tits, but a woman in leather must be a bit pervy. Though. The dog would probably get in the way. So it's all the way back to [\[\[12\]\] Passenger 12](#). Blonde. She looks like a bloke, but she's got nice skin. I bet she's brown all the way down. Sunlamps and oil. He can feel her skin under his fingertips, smooth with a layer of fat just underneath the surface.

His cock is wet. He has a shift of affections towards himself. Wanking when you want a fuck is boring, but when you want a wank, there's nothing better. He calculates. Can he stand going through the morning before having a wank? He hates doing it at school, he always thinks people can hear under the partitions.

Suddenly he decides: the clean marble loos at Waterloo. The train slows and he stands up. You're only young once, he thinks.



Car one

31

Mr Maurice Hazlett

Outward appearance

A distinguished businessman on holiday. Double chinned, grey haired, but in anorak and blue jeans mismatched with heavy brown brogues.

Inside information

A retired intelligence agent who worked for MI5 when its offices were in Lambeth North. Has come up from the country without his wife to help their daughter move. On a sentimental journey to see his old haunts. In the 1940s, he was a lover of Donald Maclean. Many other secrets. He would be very pleased to see [\[\[22\]\] Passenger 22](#) from whom he used to buy wine.

What he is doing or thinking

Remembering the old days. The Russian "export shop" across the road. Spooks would wave to each other in the mornings. [\[\[125\]\] The church tower](#) nearby had a pair of nesting kestrels that returned to it every year. All of MI5 birdwatched through their mirrored windows. It was a dull life in a way.

Why I am doing this? he thinks. Everything's closed, the bookshop, the Turkish grocers. Nothing left.

Maurice also remembers the smell of underarms, cigarettes, white linen. Embracing one of the great traitors of the century in a blackout. You gave no sign in those days, it was secret, you were never sure until the very moment you kissed male stubble.

There is a cottage in the toilets at Elephant and Castle. He is after all off his leash today, Jenny need never know. He has an image of young well spoken man, rather like himself, or Don.

He heads on for the [\[\[end1\]\] cottage at the end of the line](#), unaware that it too has been closed.



Car one

32

Mr William Dynham

Outward appearance

A more mischievous Tony Blair. Impeccable blue suit, grey goat, burnished black shoes. New brief case. He sprawls relaxed and hides a grin behind a hand.

Inside information

A Tory Euro MP for a far Northern constituency which he had never visited before becoming a candidate. Lives in the Chilterns, has a flat in London. His parents are decent middle class people from Herefordshire.

William became a Euro MP to make money. He has. Previous career moves include being a bicycle messenger, a teacher of English in the Phillipines and a professional lobbyist for the Small Bosses Syndicate. Has an appointment at 9.15 with [\[\[106\]\] the new Director of the SBS, Passenger 106](#).

Most people think William went to Oxford and was a businessman. He has one O level. Everyone believes everything William says. For a while.

What he is doing or thinking

He is savouring the uncommon experience of traveling on public transport. He enjoys looking at the people.

For example, he thinks [\[\[11\]\] Passenger 11](#), the cross-Channel pianist, is an off-duty policeman. This is because of the man's black trousers and blue shirt. [\[\[4\]\] Passenger 4, the grinning werewolf](#), is plainly a recipient of Care in the Community, and will be discovered to be a serial killer. William fears that [\[\[5\]\] Passenger 5](#), the broadcaster, may be a constituent. The face is familiar. William has a tendency to forget their names.

Suddenly, down the carriage there is some unpleasantness. [\[\[15\]\] A fight!](#) Entranced by the richness of life around him, William reluctantly stands up to go. He has an appointment. Why does he find such things [\[\[ftnt32\]\] so boring these days?](#)



Car one

33

Deirdre Hilderley

Outward appearance

Black crushed-velvet jacket under an open coat with a ring of fake fur round the hood. Wiry red hair pulled fiercely back. Round, pouting face like Shirley Temple. Headphones, a whisper of classical music. She opens her eyes, closes them, opens them.

Inside information

Arts/music student at [\[\[52\]\] Merley College](#). Lives with her parents in Stratford.

What she is doing or thinking

She is mourning the gradual loss of her synaesthesia. Synaesthesia is a medical condition in which one sense triggers a response in another. Until a month ago, Deirdre could see sound.

The opening of the tube doors used to send delicately coloured soap bubbles wafting through the carriage. The rattling smear outside the windows would trail floating oranges and melted-wax bobbles of purple. The sound of people talking evoked bright, jagged, jerking shapes of yellow, blue, green.

Deirdre's fear is that all of [\[\[52\]\] modern art](#) has been derived from synaesthesia. Kandinsky was synaesthetic, she is sure, Auerbach, Bacon. She felt like a member of a secret society. Deirdre was never good at school (she is also mildly [\[\[126\]\] dyslexic](#)). But she could sing and paint. She now fears that her talent will go, along with the thing that made her special. It is as though part of her had died.

Even music no longer works. She snaps off the Walkman. She begins to hum a tune. She becomes aware of it, something sad, graceful, expressing loss. Whose is it? It's modern, but it's not Part or Tavener or Glass.

It's hers. Emotion has been converted into music. She fumbles for a pen.



Car one

34

Mrs Adele Driscoll

Outward appearance

Professional woman in crisp blouse, pleated grey skirt, open brown coat. Glasses as big as windows with transparent frames. Longish, curved, tinted hair.

Inside information

Works at the Foreign Exchange Desk in [[117]] [Lloyds Bank, York Road](#). Originally from Melbourne, [[174]] [Australia](#). Today she is returning to work after two weeks' jury service.

What she is doing or thinking

"Interesting case?" people ask her brightly. It was rape. She remembers the man's heavy, thuggish face and the prickle in the air when the charge was announced. The victim, a fourteen year old black girl, stood straight, proud, small-voiced. She had been terrorized into going into his flat, too afraid to fight or cry out. Adele felt hatred.

Then the psychiatrist testified. The thug is simple minded, with verbal skills that disguise that he cannot understand the most basic social signals. Afterwards, he had asked the girl if he could see her next Sunday. He was a virgin too. Something he denied in a stumbling voice as tiny and uncertain as the girl's.

But in police tapes, he was a different man: sly, ugly, playing games with the interviewers. "Yeah, I get around a bit. She didn't look fourteen, know what I mean?"

What was true? Who to believe? To be guilty of rape, he must be in a condition to know what he was doing: when did the girl say no?

God help them, the verdict was not guilty. There was a woman in the court every day. Was she his mother? When the verdict was read, the woman nodded once, yes.

Yes what?



Car one

35

Miss Marie Breatnach

Outward appearance

Pale, about 22, black hair pulled behind her ears. A sprinkling of spots on her chin. Everything she wears is blue, like a school uniform. She stares at herself in small hand mirror.

Inside information

Marie is from [\[\[74\]\] Northern Ireland](#) and lives with her brother and his wife. She has a steel plate in her head. She was hit by a van when she was 12, cycling in a country lane.

She starts work today in the pay department of Railtrack, Waterloo Station. She forgot until reminded by her brother.

What she is doing or thinking

Marie has headaches and gets confused. She has a headache now. That means she's nervous. And she was such a brave child. She was cycling much faster than her friend Fee, and didn't see the van because she was looking back over her shoulder. She won the race.

She looks at her chin in the mirror and thinks: you'd never believe I used to have a beautiful complexion. Marie is unsure if she is pretty. She would really like to be told one way or the other. The face in the mirror bears so little resemblance to the one she remembers.

She is sure they will not mind her being late in the new job. She will explain that she forgot today was the first day. Then she'll ask for a nice cup of tea.

The doors open and close. Through the window, the sign says Lambeth North. How many more stops to Waterloo? Marie gets out her map as the train gathers speed toward [\[\[end1\]\] Elephant and Castle](#).



Car one

36

Mr Jason Luveridge

Outward appearance

Late teens, black male. Slumped in green baggy track suit, American sports jacket and baseball cap. Looks resentful, staring ahead.

Inside information

Jason's mother saved enough money to send one of her children to [St Paul's School](#). This is resented by her other children who make fun of him when he wants to hear classical music or watch *Panorama*.. He still thinks his mother made the right decision. Jason is academically gifted. He wants to write a thesis on Charles Dickens.

His clothes are camouflage. He expects to wear camouflage all his life.

What he is doing or thinking

Jason has been struck with love for [Passenger 3, Deborah Payne](#). He does not know that he will always be attracted to older women. All he knows is that she looks pretty, clever, concerned. He is already dreaming of marriage to her.

A wife like that would show what he was -- smart, caught between worlds. She's not some daft Sharon, or prejudiced. She'd be too business-like for that. She's what I want, he realizes. A business woman with soul.

He was going home, to [Elephant and Castle](#). Instead, he follows Deborah out into Waterloo station. He is heartsick, hands jammed into his pockets, knowing he probably won't talk to her, knowing she would find this creepy.

Then she stops [a man on the platform](#) and cries. "You don't need to die!" Wow. That does it, this woman is special.

"Excuse me," says Jason. " I don't normally do this, I'm shy. But. Can I ask you out?" The man and woman stare at him, open-mouthed.



Car one

37

Mr Richard Tomlinson

Outward appearance

Stocky, middle aged man, athletic build. Rumpled face, very pink, with pure white hair. Blue jeans, anorak, woolly red hat. He seems lost in thought.

Inside information

He is returning from hospital having failed to convince them to let him die. This is his second bout of pneumonia and he has survived three suicide attempts. One left him in a wrecked car, sick but alive, in the pouring rain at one in the morning. None of his friends know he is ill -- except one, [\[\[235\]\]](#) [Passenger 235](#), who withdrew from him in fear and disgust. Richard lost heart after that.

What he is doing or thinking

Dying is a full time job. Politics never let up. Richard had the support of one doctor, but after a battery of interviews, they decided that to offer him two more years of declining life.

Richard's anger at the hospital is cold, shaped by logic. It is not for them to tell him he must live. They have not had anal herpes that feels like a lighted match on an open wound. They have not had the giddy spells, the eye infections, the thrush. As far as possible he wanted a normal life. That is no longer is possible.

The best they could do is let him go home. Despite his size, he is very weak and cannot breathe. He has just enough strength left to walk from the tube, and draw the curtains and listen to Mozart and let the pneumonia blossom. An answer machine will take all his calls.

He goes on to [\[\[end1\]\] Elephant and Castle](#).



Car two

38

Mr Andre Stanley

Outward appearance

Aging football coach? [[94]] [American letterman's jacket](#) with beige sleeves, black trunk. OSHKOSH INDIANS it announces, NUMBER 22 . White Levis jeans, white socks, black shoes, salt and pepper hair, healthy pink complexion. A young person into retro fashion would kill to know where Andre finds his clothes.

Inside information

A minister from a Episcopalian diocese in Wisconsin. He's on a fact finding mission on changes to theology. Andre is particularly bemused by the debate about gay priests. Why the fuss? [[85]] [There are none.](#)

Andre served in Vietnam. He is baffled by all the talk of post-traumatic stress disorder. He piloted helicopters and saw the worst the war had to offer -- the blasted bodies of young men -- but he has no trouble accounting for the deaths, the destruction. God leaves everyone free, everyone responsible, even Nazis. We are free to wage mistaken wars, mistranslate the Bible, commit rapes. And we are free to fight back.

Andre wants to write screenplays for Jesus... and reclaim the media from barnstorming fundamentalists. He is working on a screen treatment now, about helicopter pilots in Vietnam.

What he is doing or thinking

Trying not to breathe. [[39]] [The man next to him](#) stinks beyond belief. It is an inhuman smell, very pungent, like scorched hops. It reminds Andre of his one visit to the Annhauser-Busch brewery in Los Angeles, which was like a sewer. Do all English people smell like this? Don't they wash? Maybe they just don't know how about dry cleaning.

Then [[40]] [a woman](#) says in exasperated, fruity tones: "This is unbearable! Can't you use a deodorant?"



Car two

39

Mr Kevin Potter

Outward appearance

John Carradine? Elongated, raffish, middle aged man. An ill-fitting black overcoat. Its velvet collar arches up to his hair line. Bone-thin, hairy wrists. Young person's black, thick-soled shoes.

Inside information

Purchaser for [[81]] [Mosstains](#) and closet novelist. Sits alone in his office and continually rewrites *Pastel Images*, a novel based on a love affair he had in 1967.

Kevin would not recognize himself under the lank gray hair. Being a kind of handsome and full of promise was part of his identify for so long that it comes a shock to realize he is near retirement, without a published novel or even a chain of mistresses. As if his life were not complicated enough, under the black suit, he is wearing women's underwear.

What he is doing or thinking

Kevin wonders with hurt bafflement why his career has stalled. Colleagues avoid him; salesmen cancel appointments. His PA keeps her window always wide open. The office is freezing. "Do you have to keep the window open all the time?" he once asked. Her face was hard, strange. "We need the air," she replied. His nickname around the office is Rotten Fish. All of this is very hurtful. He is a sensitive, creative person.

To his horror [[40]] [the woman sitting next to him](#) erupts, jowls quivering. "This is unbearable," she announces. "Can't you use a deodorant? You smell like a bonfire of old rubber tyres!"

What is she talking about? Kevin can't help sniffing; he smells nothing. Insulted, hypnotized by shock, he stands to get off one stop early at Waterloo.



Car two

40

Mrs Georgina Bullen

Outward appearance

Rugged old type. Heavily made up face seems about to smile grimly. Green jersey, grey skirt, large clean sensible greenish coat. It is a surprise to see town shoes instead of green wellies.

Inside information

Her husband was a Captain in the Royal Navy, and turned around his destroyer to propose marriage. It was war time. She now does work for charities and the church. She is a very caring, conservative woman, whose heart sings at the thought of [Mrs Thatcher](#), whom she regards as a great force for good brought down by the petty jealousy of those around her. Georgina devotes herself to church work, her decent romantic husband, and the memory of her one true love -- [an Indian lawyer](#) she met in Queta in 1941. She has no photograph of him.

Georgina is visiting [Archibishop's Palace](#) for a briefing on the issue of gays in the priesthood, and will have an embarrassing meeting in 20 minutes' time with [Passenger 38](#). She will assume throughout that he is gay and will address him sympathetically on the subject.

What she is doing or thinking

Feels pity and horror for [the man next to her](#) -- he may not even know that he stinks. She has stood it since Baker Street and now has a terrible headache. She explodes and says perhaps too much ... something about burnt tyres.

The poor man flees and she feels terrible. Billows waft from the folds of his coat like a gas leak. Georgina feels the stench in the roots of her teeth.

She has to get off at Waterloo. With him.



Car two

41

Mr Chris Green

Outward appearance

Shaved temples, dyed blonde hair. Earring. White jacket and slacks, bovver boots. Broad-shouldered, slim waisted. Very fit looking except for old tobacco-stained hands. Sits reading *Clive Barker's Books of Blood*.

Inside information

A qualified psychologist going for a job interview as a karate instructor at the [\[\[62\]\] Multi-Use Resource Centre, Lambeth North](#). Also rock-climbs and plays in a band.

Chris's last full time job was in the Personnel Department of [\[\[ftnt14\]\] Hackney Council](#). His boss was another idiot. He thought staff were depressed for psychological reasons. In Hackney? "They're only depressed because they have to work for peanuts for you," Chris told his boss and walked out. Then he sent the Council a letter detailing why staff hated working for the elected officials of both parties.

He now offers aromatherapy to clients he terrifies; classes in communication to computer geeks at whom he shouts. Saturdays he arranges flowers and delivers them to restaurants. He makes flowers look angry. His clients try to like them, but the exclamations die in their throats. They are too frightened to complain.

At least people who learn karate will be more durable. He thinks.

What he is doing or thinking

The stench of passenger 39 is like what Chris feels most of the time. Nothing works, and he is 34 years old. At college people clustered around him, in clubs everybody used to know him. He knows he's smart, strong, fast, clever. He knows he has something, but it always escapes him, and the world is run by [\[\[68\]\] fools whom he frightens](#).

It should be the other way around.



Car two

42

Ms Anne Warrington

Outward appearance

Fuzzy black jacket, a sweater that is a work of art-- blue, green, yellow angular patterns in different thicknesses of yarn. Red hair in a Beatle cut, green eye make up, lipstick that matches her hair, tooled cowboy boots.

Inside information

Works as an administrator for the [Florence Nightingale Museum](#), [St Thomas' Hospital](#). Considers her skills to be in style and marketing. Member of the Health Museum Network, which has just proved to be counterproductive.

What she is doing or thinking

She is fuming. [Dun and Old](#), the giant accounting firm, are just across the street. For months Anne has been building a case for [sponsorship](#): a venue for D&O visitors, exposure to the health market. Instead, the Museum of Dental Prosthetics has got the money. It's infuriating. It was Anne who told the dentists that D&O's Public Sector Manager had false teeth. They sent him a giant grinning set as part of their SMILE campaign and promised exposure on every leaflet.

When she first visited the Museum, Anne fell in love with the story of Florence Nightingale. Sad, alone, battling depression, Nightingale exposed a truth that no one else wanted to face: the British Army took everything it could from its men, and then discarded their wounded bodies like burnt bacon. Florence proved beyond doubt that the Army did not care, and that she did. She invented a profession.

Anne wanted to help that story, that process. Rivalry and conniving were not what she meant. What next?

You could always, a voice says within her, become a nurse yourself.



Car two

43

Mr Keith Snow

Outward appearance

Big, blond, soft-faced man in wire rimmed spectacles and clean casual clothing -- brown slacks, tan jacket. Carries a shoulder bag hugged by a grubby, grinning Garfield cat.

Inside information

Keith was meant for the priesthood until faced with a choice between A levels and the school [\[\[190\]\] rugby team](#). Chose the later. Went to Hull Polytechnic instead of University, where he met and married his similarly religious, gentle wife. Now father of six tidy children.

At 26, he was surprised to write a series of funny pornographic stories about an ancient Greek satyr lose in modern Britain. He ruttet people's trouser cuffs. On the strength of the stories, Keith was offered the assistant editorship of *Exposed for Men* . Needed the money. Hated it. The walls were covered in fanny. He lied about his job. They offered him editor and he left. He couldn't face telling people he was fully responsible for Britain's leading dirty magazine.

What he is doing or thinking

Trying to feel the full happiness of his new job.

Keith is now the proud Editor of *Zinc and Lead* , companion periodical to *Bibliographical Supplement on Mining* . It has modern offices on [\[\[67\]\] Lower Marsh](#): the walls are covered with mineral crystals. It is an ambition fulfilled: he studied mineralogy at Hull and consulted the Bibliography.

So he's happy, right? So why can he still see the satyr and his grin? Worse than that, Keith is sure suddenly that he can smell him, the goatish, ruttish musk.

He looks around, paranoia in his eyes. He is of course smelling [\[\[39\]\] passenger 39](#).



Car two

44

Ms Amanda Stinton

Outward appearance

About 22, short, in black leather jacket and ski pants. Long hair tinged with henna. Her Walkman plays music loudly identifiable as *Simply Red*.

Inside information

Works in the Pay Unit of the [[108]] [Metropolitan Police HQ](#). Lives with her parents. Both she and her parents think of her as a wild hoyden. "Fancy Amanda, working for the police," says her mother, who dreams of her daughter doing all sorts of things she never did.

What she is doing or thinking

Amanda is thinking about her affair with a married man in Maintenance. [[119]] [Gary](#) is everything a man should be: masculine, a bit hard. She has to confess that the attraction is mostly sexual.

It was exciting in the beginning. You see this married man and you begin to think: I could have him. But much longer and she'll just be a little mistress, waiting for him to call.

Sunday was the worst. They were supposed to meet up at Gary's mate's. It was so humiliating. She showed up and Gary's friend opened the door and just said. "Gary rang. He can't make it." Then he said, "I'm free as it happens." Oh please. He's a horrible little wanker as well.

Mick Hucknall sings ...*Maybe some day, someone will come*. Amanda decides. It's going nowhere. She'll end it.

[[66]] [The woman across from her](#) stands up. Oh wow, she's wearing one of those antique slippers. People make a big thing about it, but it's just nice lacey material. Amanda salutes her for fashion bravery: more power to you, girl. She decides to do the same.



Car two

45

Mrs Doreen Goodman

Outward appearance

Tiny, elf-like black lady. Sits smiling in conservative blue clothes, teased up straightened brown hair, and padded shoes. On her lap, there is a parcel wrapped in purple with a lavender ribbon.

Inside information

Works in the [Corporate Development Unit](#) of the [London Emergency Service](#) off Morley street. The Unit was set up to market the Service after a series of management disasters, particularly a new computer system. A new logo, a Management Accounting System and stringent financial targets were put in place by the new manager, a failed banker. Doreen types his memos and drafts the letters to employees who have been made redundant.

Doreen has always been a quiet soul. She has a sweet slow husband, whose moustache is white and who has retired from his job as a security guard in a bank. They both miss the island they left as children. Doreen will retire soon and then they will go back home.

What she is doing or thinking

She is thinking of the present she has bought for her boss that sits so prettily on her lap. There is a card signed by the entire Unit. They all banded together to buy it, but it was Doreen's idea.

The boss is old, white haired, and knows only money. She has bought him for his birthday a fossilized turd.

It is probably from a bison or other bovine mammal, large, round in sections and petrified a beautiful smooth blue. He'll have to open it up in front of everyone. She can't wait until she sees his face. Birthday boy.



Car two

46

Mr Martin Park

Outward appearance

Thrusts his way into the carriage as if having beaten his way through bushes. Grey-green trousers crumpled where bicycle clips usually go. Heavy Arran sweater under a duffel coat. Ill-advised greying beard. Carries a bundle of books in plastic bag and a bicycle seat. Accidentally hits [passenger 47](#) with it as he passes.

Inside information

Runs a bookstall along [the embankment](#) in front of the [National Film Theatre](#). Last night found that his bicycle, ringed round with chains like tinsel on a Xmas tree, had had its seat stolen. He is bringing in its replacement. The books in the bag are stock. Twenty years ago running a bookstall seemed romantic. In January, in biting winds with few customers, it is a fate that closes in. Last March he developed large purple welts across his face. The doctor said it was the ozone layer: standing outside in winter sunlight has become dangerous.

What he is doing or thinking

He cannot believe the pure hell that is London Underground. Due to the genius of British design, the way out and the way in to the platform at Embankment are the same tunnel. A thicket of blocked, bored people had taken root in it. His bicycle seat caught one woman's bag. She plainly thought he was a thief. Spinning around he trod heavily on a gentleman's foot. The man erupted: "You people are ruining my shoes!"

"Hey man," rumbles passenger 47. He's big. "Sorry," says Martin, like a curse. "Didn't mean it."

He will arrive to find that, chained to the railings, only the bicycle wheels remain.



Car two

47

Mr Ashley Watkins

Outward appearance

Heavily set black man in woolly hat, army jacket and baggy blue jeans. Hair in braids down behind his head, tied in a pigtail. This looks slightly out of place with his age and bulk and general air of gravitas. Deeply lined hands rest on each knee. [\[\[46\]\] Passenger 46](#) bumps him with a bicycle seat and apologizes. "Tch" says Mr Watkins, sucking on his teeth in disgust.

Inside information

Runs [\[\[249\]\] a stall in the bleak, windswept trench](#) around [\[\[ftnt47\]\] the Elephant and Castle shopping centre](#). Everything Mr Watkins sells is black-themed: Egyptian papyrus, towels with leaders' portraits, books by Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan, and tapes of lectures.

The stall really makes its money from soul, rap and dance cassettes, which he buys in bulk from a supplier who seems to have a limitless supply of deleted albums.

What he is doing or thinking

Mr Watkin's dignity is affronted. [\[\[204\]\] His white supplier](#) must have made a mistake or he's taking the piss. He is yet to have words.

The last shipment of cassettes consisted almost entirely of the Tammy Wynette back catalogue. There were some George Reeves and Slim Whitman cassettes, nine copies of the *Ray Coniff Christmas Album* and two copies of *The James Last Sound Honours ABBA*. There was a single bargain basement collection of the worst of Teddy Pendergrast. Mr Watkins does not drink or smoke; he does not pursue women. Women do not pursue him. He labours in the fields of pride, but there is not much harvest from the concrete plains of [\[\[end2\]\] Elephant and Castle](#). And even fewer laughs.



Car two

48

Ms Olivia Parsons

Outward appearance

Huge red rimmed spectacles, a hearty plump face, mauve sweatshirt over stretch trousers and a quilted coat. Long, careless hair. Stares ahead of herself chewing abstractly on one strand of it.

Inside information

A contract tutor and Apple operator at the [\[\[115\]\] South Bank Technology Park](#). Olivia teaches QuarkXpress and Illustrator skills. Also works on the [\[\[ftnt48\]\] Park's](#) money-making design and publications service.

What she is doing or thinking

Olive is remembering the terror of the night before. She was working late on the University prospectus, when she heard a noise, a bit like one of the swing windows thumping against its frame. She thought no more of it. Then her door opened.

[\[\[63\]\] A very young man](#) in sweatshirt and baseball cap stood there. She had time to register that she did not know him. "Oh shit," he said, and left, quickly. She went on working for a few moments, and then realized that something was wrong. She stood up, went into the next studio. The backs of the machines were prized open. In one corner was a curl of turd. Her heart started to pound. It was 10.30 pm and she was alone. For some reason she ran back into her own studio before ringing the police. The first the security guard knew of it was when the police arrived.

For a full 15 minutes, from the questioning, it was plain that the police suspected Olivia of helping. She now fears for her job. It would be so easy for them to cancel her contract, just in case.

And she can still smell [\[\[end2\]\] the shit](#).



Car two

49

Mr Martin Belcher

Outward appearance

Stout, clear-complexioned man about 34, wearing quilted black and red motorcycle gear. Sits with his boot resting on the opposite knee, occupying a fair amount of space. Reading [\[\[169\]\] *The Independent*](#) .

Inside information

Manager of [\[\[ftnt49\]\] *Waterloo Spare Parts*](#), a motorcycle supply store. Usually he motorcycles into work, but it's too cold today. The tube gives him a chance to read the paper.

What he is doing or thinking

Seven millions been paid to Andy Cole to transfer to Manchester ... a Russian journalist has been expelled as a spy.. Tony Blair having a go at the lefties over Clause Four. And Howard has sacked the [\[\[ftnt67\]\] *Governor of Parkhurst jail*](#) after the escape and everyone says he's a scapegoat....

Martin reads with satisfaction. Yesterday a real biker came into the shop. Officer class, posh, not pretentious, he wanted a spare part for a Kawasaki ZX. Martin had to laugh. "Sorry, we just do stuff for couriers... You know little Hondas." The guy had biked all the way across Soviet Asia to Mongolia. He was planning to bike up through California and the redwoods, up into [\[\[179\]\] *Oregon*](#). Martin ached with jealousy and gave him an address for high performance parts.

Martin was just about to feel depressed, when, outside the window, the guy looked both ways up the street. Then he nipped into the [\[\[17\]\] *massage parlour*](#) next next door. Martin's jealousy burst like an ear infection. I suppose he's got performance parts, Martin thought. He grins, and goes back to his newspaper.

The Indy's got a competition for an Alfa Romeo Spider. Things could be looking up.



Car two

50

Mr Ralph Moles

Outward appearance

About 32, plaid shirt, no sweater, glossy bum-freezer in black vinyl with fake fur interior. An old-fashioned 1950s hat with earflaps. Retreating hair, thin face, a light stubble of beard, black boots.

Inside information

Works as a body-piercing specialist in *Courage*. This is not a brewery but [a rubberware and fetish shop](#). It has a black shiny awning and rubber draperies across its front window. The shop used to be the neighbourhood butcher's.

What he is doing or thinking

Ralph is still gently stoned from last night. Jamie showed off his new acquisition, yet another heavy ethnic earring hanging from his scrotum. Jamie works out at the YMCA, has shaved pubes, and a spider's web tattooed over his designer-stubble chest. The spider sits on his tit. Stanley and Jane were discussing their investment in an exercise horse, over which to bend people.

For some reason Ralph was unmoved. He excused himself and tumbled into a bed with rubber sheets. Woke up clammy with sweat. Stumbled to the loo and tripped on a leather jock strap. Dazed by the lights, he tried to brush his teeth and found he'd used KY by mistake.

He's sick of everything smelling of old shoes. He finds nothing sexy about nipple clamps, face masks, chains, diapers. Worrying about what else the kitchen grater might have been used for. Who needs any of it?

Ralph wants clean white Y fronts and Hayley Mills fully clothed. How long will this alienation continue? It puts at risk his friendships, leisure pursuits, profession.

Is there a counselor for this kind of thing?



Car two

51

Mrs Amina Khatun

Outward appearance

A red and orange sari underneath a black coat. Hair enlivened with streaks of white. Dark circles under her eyes. She coughs over and over, hand covering her mouth. The eyes flicker back and forth about the carriage.

Inside information

Her son Imran manages a newsagent opposite Lambeth North tube. She is going to nurse it for him while he renews his passport.

What she is doing or thinking

Who are all these people? Mrs Khatun cannot identify a single customer or family member. She is unused to taking the Underground. Nearly always a cousin or a son will drive her.

Imran's shop is so sad. He has to leave it half-empty because of [the insurance](#). Mrs Khatun likes a shop to be full, the racks bulging with colour. Milk, newspapers, and magazines the wholesalers force him to take are the only things left.

If only Imran would work, bring in business. Of all her sons, he does the least. If he wanted to be a computer programmer, then he should have studied. He still could study.

Instead, he is always going back to what he calls home. It may be home, but things are better here. It breaks Mrs Khatun's heart to see her boy, now fat, not handsome, dreamy, mismanaging the store and fleeing to Pakistan. Oh they make a fuss of him there, they think he is a rich businessman. She curses the insurance company, but what can she do? She coughs again. This cold will not go, it has not gone. It has been with her for years.



Car two

52

Ms Annie Jeanrenaud

Outward appearance

Frizzle-haired, large lady of about 45 in a long batik dress, oatmeal jumper nearly to her knees, and mauve, quilted coat. Rifles through a Hessian bag. Pulls out a final warning in red, various tube passes, and a crumpled envelope.

Inside information

Teaches life [[207]] [drawing](#) at [[86]] [Merely College](#). Loves it, economizes, eats little, remains large, and has many middle-aged boyfriends, which on the whole seems enough. Her large cheekbones, her narrow eyes (shortsighted) and ironic grin make her most natural expression one of merriment. Has recently had tests for a lump in her womb. This evening she's meeting the art class for drinks .

What she is doing or thinking

The letter is xeroxed. The salutation and ending are handwritten.

"Dearest, Dearest Annie

If you should hear that something has happened, I would like you to have this letter. It thanks you for the years of friendship and support you have given to me and my work. Sometimes life is strange rather than wonderful. Sometimes it is wonderful.

"Don't believe any rumours you may hear about me. There are people who will stop at nothing to discredit the author of work that does not express what they themselves see or feel.

"Thanks for all the evenings at the Rose and Crown!!!

"Love, June."

June is a sculptress of Annie's age. Annie sees her thick mop of grey hair, the strange mask of the face after plastic surgery.

Annie knows then: June has killed herself. She leaps up, as if to prevent it. Then she remembers: the letter has been in her bag for weeks.



Car two

53

Mrs Eva Simmonds

Outward appearance

Middle-aged woman, small, pinched, hairy chinned, a face pulled into itself. Her clothes are brown and beige, clean. Clunky shoes. Chews on her lower lip, arms folded.

Inside information

Eva married her cousin, who is Professor of Jurisprudence at UCL. Everything she has done since has been done equally blindly. What she was blind to was her husband's ugliness. His eyes bulge, his tiny nose is hooked, his chin juts out to meet it, his teeth splay like clumsy feet, he has to suck in spit all the time. He works with his books, mostly at home. He insists Eva stay with him and forbids her to work.

Eva asks questions of herself vaguely, as if about someone else: did she marry him out of pity? Did such supreme ugliness carry a kind of sexual jolt?

Eva once was very pretty. She is dimly aware that somehow, over the years, she has become ugly too.

What she is doing or thinking

In her own way, Eva has rebelled. She is going to the [Royal Festival Hall](#) to buy two concert tickets, not for David, of course, who never goes to such things, but for herself and her daughter Harriet.

Three days ago, on Sunday, Eva looked out of their apartment window and saw David and Harriet walking. Harriet slouched until she was almost hunchbacked, wearing boy's clothes, unironed and grubby. David followed her with little pestering steps, eyes glaring at her face. Harriet is fifteen.

Eva is vague about this point too, but something in her said: not Harriet; not her too.



Car two

54

Miss Billie Holiday

Outward appearance

Girl with short hair, black trousers and a fluffy fake fur coat. Pink-cheeked, freckles, clear-framed spectacles, AIDS ribbon. Keeps smiling and shaking her head.

Inside information

Her mother was a singer and named her daughter after a jazz great. Billie works in accounts at [\[\[139\]\] British Telecom](#).

What she is doing or thinking

She imagines herself in the pub, telling the following true story.

The computer tells us we have this telephone number and no one has ever paid a bill on it? So I have to go over all the records, back to when we kept things in writing. There's no record of payment at all.

So I ring the number to check that it still works. I hear a dialing tone. It rings and rings, but no one answers. I try ringing at 6 pm, I stay for the late shift and ring at 10 pm. Never any answer.

So I look up the address: 172 Tottenham Court Road. We send out the first threatening letter. " Payment must be received in 7 days or legal proceedings will be taken." No answer. We cut off the connection.

We send out a court summons. And another. We send a notice of conviction. They don't pay the fine. Finally, we send in the bailiffs.

The bailiffs can't find 172 Tottenham Court Road.

Then we get an angry call from Camden Council about causing a traffic hazard.

We were billing a traffic signal box. It has a telephone number so they can modem timing instructions. I was trying to talk to a traffic light.

Can you imagine if it answered?



Car two

55

Lt. Harry Freer

Outward appearance

Worn, middle-aged man with a blunt but pleasant face: round cheeks, round nose, slight overbite, small and inwardly turning mouth. Thinning salt and pepper hair combed in strands over bald top. Black overcoat, black shoes, blue shirt collar.

Inside information

On his way to work at [\[\[21\]\] Lambeth Police station](#).

What he is doing or thinking

For four years Lt. Freer pursued a local graffiti sprayer. He'd defaced walls all over Lambeth and Vauxhall -- the [\[\[82\]\] primary school on Baylis](#), the ambulance building, [\[\[165\]\] St Michael's School...](#) Nowhere was safe. People felt threatened, intimidated. Finally cameras videoed the culprit and he was identified on Crimewatch by a local schoolteacher.

As soon as he saw the young man in court (22, unemployed) Lt. Freer had a strange reaction. He felt personally threatened, shaken by the sentence. He hated the thought of the lad going to prison. How different really were his bright sprayed swirls from most hoardings? Lt. Freer had no words for his feelings. He kept a report on the case with a photograph of the young man paper-clipped to its cover. The lad's name was Tom Gleadal. No previous convictions, no qualifications.

Last night his wife picked up the photograph from the floor and asked. "When was this taken?"

"Just before the trial," Lt. Freer replied.

His wife looked confused. "Was it before you met me? I don't remember it that's all." She passed it to him, and he saw.

He and Tom Gleadal have nearly the same face: the round nose, the round cheeks, the overbite.

"It's me in my artist days," he answered.



Car two

56

Mr Savi Gupta

Outward appearance

Large, fleshy Indian man in loose brown shirt and camel-coloured long coat. Slightly bouffant hair with waves. Holds a rolled, unread newspaper. Sits sprawled and relaxed, like a laundry basket of expensive clothes.

Inside information

Manager of [\[\[84\]\] Emil's Window Displays](#), a shop selling mannequins. Its front window is crammed with sexless, bald effigies, mostly of children.

What he is doing or thinking

Savi is amusing himself by imagining what the other passengers would look like if they had been born as the opposite sex.

[\[\[50\]\] Passenger 50](#) transforms into a much prettier person, petite with a retrouse nose, the kind of bad girl that produces a naughty tickle. [\[\[51\]\] Passenger 51](#) becomes a very nasty customer, the kind of male relative Mr Gupta most hates dealing with: obdurate, religious. [\[\[52\]\] Passenger 52](#) turns into a heavy-cheeked labourer, with broad features and bigger hands wearing two layers of clothes and reading *The Sun* instead of a letter. [\[\[53\]\] Passenger 53](#) turns into a neat, prim, disappointed man with a pale lined face. [\[\[54\]\] Passenger 54](#) is much improved for being male. Her pink-cheeked jollity, would suit an athletic if boyish frame. She would still wear an AIDS ribbon. And the policeman, well, he becomes a frumpy housewife in pastel clothes that are meant to make her look more feminine.

Savi's family were turfed out of Uganda so long ago that he cannot remember, and he runs an unlikely business by accident of inheritance located for no discernible reason on Waterloo Road in London. For him, all fate is arbitrary. His white-faced, sexless dummies await him. He gets off as always at Lambeth North.



Car two

57

Ms Maggie Rolt

Outward appearance

Short slightly ringleted hair, strong features, bright red lipstick, burgundy suit, crepe blouse, sexy shoes. Soft and voluminous black coat. Hugs a copy of *The Big Issue* to her breast. Rubs her forehead.

Inside information

Investment analyst for [[101]] [Adventure Capital](#) just opposite Waterloo Station. Richmond homeowner, ambitious daughter, worthy aunt, gurglesome babysitter and MBA.

What she is doing or thinking

Thinking of Pascal, the *Big Issue* salesman. Pascal is large, bronze, dignified and a few years older than she. How did he end up in a doorway at Waterloo Station?

One morning, in exchange for thin coin, Maggie asked him. His answers at first were distant. He was from Switzerland. For years, he took Europeans on tours of Florida, which is why he speaks with an American accent.

He began to ask her about her work and recommend particular articles. Finally she said, "This is silly. Let's meet for lunch and talk." He insisted on going to the cheap Indian across the road, and paying. That moved her. He was still distant. "I paint landscapes," he said, making direct eye contact with his Tandoori. "When I have the money for canvases." Where does he live? "I have no family here," was his only answer. Something came loose inside her, and she wanted to say then, [[79]] ["You can come and live with me."](#)

That is what she intends to say to him this morning. But something in the large black coat, the Adventure prospectus, the red jacket is rearing up. Even in rehearsal, the words skitter sideways as if avoiding a gaze.



Car two

58

Mr. Richard Mayo

Outward appearance

Frizzy haired, graying man in tweed jacket, corduroy trousers, tie and jumper. Sits focussing on something on the other side of the dark windows.

Inside information

An EFL teacher at [[90]] [Bruenwalt International College](#). He joined the staff in the early 80s when the campus was located outside London and still taught humanities. Now located in an old hospital, Bruenwalt sells three month diplomas in textile marketing, accounts computing, business English et al.

What he is doing or thinking

He's scared. His face no longer fits; he is a 70s left-over in a school full of young, bouncy Filipinos, Brazilians, and Americans who do not identify with him.

He recently sat on an interview board for a new post. George, a contract teacher he likes, was up against the Head of Department's favorite, an MBA with rodent's cute, sharp face.

His Head lied. He said George had been fired from his last job. Last night, Richard rang George's old employer. Far from being fired, he had been asked to stay, but moved to London to be with his wife.

So how does Richard say to his boss: you libeled someone? Does he say, smiling carefully, uh, you were wrong about George? Only to be told, that would have made no difference to the board's final choice? Does he tell George and violate confidentially? Rocking the boat loses jobs.

Richard thinks of his divorce, the children grown up. He snatches up his battered brown briefcase to get off at Waterloo and thinks: fuck it.

He'll take it to the Director if he has to.



Car two

59

Mr Igor Klimov

Outward appearance

Huge, moustached, middle aged, pink cheeked. Dusty jeans, tartan shirt under short leather jacket, work boots. Sits holding a large plastic bottle of Diet Tonic. Smiles dimly.

Inside information

Russian visitor working illegally in Britain. Until yesterday worked with [\[\[60\]\] his mate Dimi](#) for an Lebanese builder. The Lebanese worries constantly, keeps checking, keeps changing his mind. This leads to fights. Igor speaks English, badly, so does the Lebanese. There was shouting. Poor Dimi, who Igor will admit has all the brains, was left out of the conversation. Dimi started drawing on plywood to communicate, which made the Lebanese even more angry. He said he would be happy to have Dimi but not Igor.

What he is doing or thinking

Igor is drinking gin and tonic. He takes a swig of tonic and trades it with Dimi for the bottle of gin. In his current state makes this him feel sophisticated. It is several steps up from potato-derived fermentations.

[\[\[end2\]\] They have been drinking all night](#). What else is there to do? Igor has a wife whom he loves dearly, and does not want any of the women in the clubs. But he can speak English and chat them up. Dimi is athletic, tiny with a prick as long as his forearm, hates his bitch of wife but can talk to no one, which leaves him in clubs hopping up and down in frustration.

Igor loves Dimi. Dimi is his only friend, his partner. The gin and the tonic mingle sizzling in his mouth. As long as Dimi can't speak English, he'll need Igor.



Car two

60

Mr Dimitri Belinkov

Outward appearance

Small, slim but muscular. Short brown hair, jeans, duffel coat, missing teeth. Trades with his neighbour a bottle of gin for a bottle of tonic.

Inside information

A Russian visitor working illegally as a laborer with [\[\[59\]\] Igor Klimov](#). Mr Belinkov is a qualified engineer who once worked for the Army. In Russia, Igor merely supplies the brawn. Here, he has another role to play. He speaks the English and sticks to Dimi. Dimi understands enough English to know their last employer, Mr Haviri, would have kept him on without Igor.

The two of them once drove to Afghanistan to buy shirts. They drank all the way. You could sell the shirts back home at half the normal price and still pay for the trip. And the drink.

What he is doing or thinking

That Igor is a leech. Dimi laughs to see the huge stupid peasant who has succeeded in sticking to him and taking half his money. It is Dimi who solves the problems, works out dimensions, thinks of new ways to do the same job more simply.

He laughs because what else can you do? At the factory back home, the orders dried up. The Bosses gave the partnership a six-month holiday -- with no pay.

Dimi once played football, he had ambitions to be a professional sportsman. He studied engineering. He had hopes. Now he is a spectacle, without respect, drunk on an early morning train. The faces of the other passengers pass him in a swirl and Dimi has no idea what to do, [\[\[end2\]\] which way Out might be](#).



Car two

61

Mr Michael Jerome

Outward appearance

Tall black man in dark grey clothes and thick soled shoes. He slumps against the partition, glaring at the drunks next to him.

Inside information

Works as a bus driver at Waterloo depot. Suffering from severe sleep deprivation.

What he is doing or thinking

Michael has lived in the same flat in Camden town for 14 years. It is right on Camden road on a corner over a shoe shop. Everything should be fine. But what happens? The shoe shop puts in a burglar alarm, doesn't it, they have so many thieves. Right outside his bedroom window. So Michael and his wife wake up night after night with the bloody alarm ringing. And nobody comes. They just leave it.

So it's four in the morning. The thing has gone off once before already. He rings up the police who say they can't do anything if the person with the key won't wake up and come around. Finally they get the owner in but he slips away before there can be words. Everything settles down, it's all quiet and Michael just about gets to sleep when the alarm goes off again.

Something snapped. Michael went to his tool box and leaned out of his window and hit the bloody thing with a hammer. He banged and banged and finally the thing falls right off the wall. They'll know it's him, but they should have fixed it.

Michael snuggles down into himself and dreams of caressing the smooth flesh of his wife, ample like clouds in heaven. [He sinks down into deep and cushioned sleep.](#)



Car two

62

Mrs Mary al-Masudi

Outward appearance

Mid-fifties, old-fashioned East Ender viewed through a lens of money. Cream-coloured coiffed hair, pleated skirt, beige waterproof, and sky blue shoes. Wide watery eyes and a child's sigh.

Inside information

A bigamist. Her husband is a Kuwaiti businessman who simply has a second wife. They met at a [\[\[107\]\] Star Trek](#) convention. He was dressed as Spock. She kept the ears as souvenir.

Her neighbours firebombed her house. She now lives in Bayswater with the other wife, whom she quite likes if only she spoke English. Mary brought with her [\[\[80\]\] eight cats](#) and her dog, Muffin.

She fills her days. She takes opera singing lessons. The other wife listens politely as Mary performs "Baubles Bangles and Beads" and "Don't Cry for Me Argentina". Now going to the [\[\[41\]\] Multi-Use Resource Centre](#) near Lambeth North where she does work for the Asian Women's Group who seem not entirely sure why she is there.

Mary walks through life as if on water. Her husband, who loves magic and fantasy, finds this delightful.

What she is doing or thinking

Mary is terribly worried because her dog thinks he's a cat. Nobody else seems to care. Muffin's hair is starting to fall out . He doesn't bark but tries to miaow. This results in kind of extended coughing fit.

Her husband's relatives seem to think there is something amusing about it. She's tried talking to the ladies in the Asian Women's Group, but couldn't quite make herself understood. She is most concerned Muffin should fall in love with a cat, and ... you know.

Someone might firebomb the house again.



Car two

63

Oliver Maskey

Outward appearance

Small 16 year old. The usual backwards baseball cap and baggy trousers, but instead of trainers he wears tiny, tight climbing shoes.

Inside information

Oliver is a thief. Oliver's Mum is a thief. She has special big knickers. She gets past detectors by switching bags or lining them with foil. A friend of the family, Jake, organises teams of underage lads who break into offices, force open computers and [\[\[2\]\] leave with the chips](#). If they're caught, the lads are too young to convict. Oliver helps out. He's on his way to the Elephant to spend some cash on games.

What he is doing or thinking

He's just realised that [\[\[48\]\] the woman sitting opposite](#) saw him on last night's job. Slowly Oliver slips off the baseball cap: he was wearing it then. The woman chews on her hair, stares ahead, and he realizes she's out of it.

Poor cow, she's still scared. Don't you think we're scared too? Why do think we shit all over the floor? Oliver wonders if she found it, what she thought. She could be his sister. Come on, come on, come on, he tells the train.

At Lambeth North, the doors are on her side. Oliver waits until the last moment before darting through them. On the platform, he's safe. The woman sits with her back to him and runs a shivery hand across her face.

It's nothing personal, Oliver wants to tell her. It's what we do. He knows then he'll do this all his life, and that she will always be on the other side of the glass.



Car two

64

Mr Michael Lipkin

Outward appearance

Well dressed, long faced man about 35 in grey suit, beige coat, small round hat. Reading a sumptuously printed book of Hebrew scripture with gold-tooled lettering. He nods slightly in agreement, prodding a protruding upper lip thoughtfully.

Inside information

Works in the accounts section of [Pall Mall Oil](#) as a specialist in VAT. [The undertaking](#) is vast: tributaries of information about every transaction from catering to cleaning, the staff newsletter or computer maintenance flow into his section. He clarifies policy on each kind of transaction and monitors adherence. It is a sideline.

What he is doing or thinking

The central facts of Michael's life are God and loneliness. He is a naturally solemn man who does everything properly. His work for the company is technically superb and largely unappreciated. He jogs, one might say religiously, every day for the sake of his rangy figure. He thinks a lot.

Michael's father is prominent in London Jewish affairs. Through him, Michael's views on the scriptures are gradually gaining a reputation. Michael's reading is thorough and his arguments, rehearsed in open debate, are authoritative.

Nevertheless Michael feels continually, completely out of his time. Sage, thoughtful Jews like himself allowed themselves to be herded into [camps](#). New Jews are big, bronzed, crew-cutted soldiers who enjoy cunnilingus -- and those are just the women. Michael is not a virgin except in his soul, which only flowers when he reads scripture -- or imagines that he has a wife.

The train stops and he gets out at Waterloo. He bounds long-legged up the steps as if to leap out of himself.



Car two

65

Ms Corrine Tracy

Outward appearance

Stylish black woman, late 20s. Long one-piece dress in a brown herringbone pattern, brown overcoat with hood, matching flat-heeled boots. Hair short, combed forward, simple gold earrings. Handbag on floor.

Inside information

Works for Winona [[246]] [Hairdressers](#) just behind the [[66]] [Elephant and Castle](#). She is now the only hairdresser left in the shop, which is seeing hard times.

What she is doing or thinking

Why does everyone assume a black hairdresser can only do black hair? Corrine has photographs of white ladies in her window as well. She's grateful to her black customers, but there aren't enough of them. She spends the better part of most working days staring into space. She is so bored.

She's taken to designing toys, with some success. Leap Frog was a spring-driven wooden toy that jumped. Her brother managed to sell the patent for that. She has been trying to design Scissors Crab, a plastic crab with goofy eyes on springs and pincers that can cut paper. The problem has been safety.

Corrine muses on other useful things the pincers could do -- like knit. Very suddenly something moves inside her head. She sees the pincers weaving hair, spinning strands, making braids.

People buy cornrows, they spend hours braiding them, it costs a fortune.... Corrine covers her mouth. A patented hair-braider! Inexpensive, do it yourself at home. She reaches into her hand bag to pull out her notebook. It isn't there. She pauses, then decides. Sod the job, she's getting back to her design pad. She stands up to get off at Lambeth North instead of the Elephant.



Car two

66

Mrs Julie Tildsley

Outward appearance

The last to get on at Embankment, as the doors close. She's youngish, about thirty, but rumpled hair and baggy eyes make her look older and a bit grumpy. She drops down into an empty seat and stares. She wears a shiny white dress.

Inside information

Works for FSD Courier Service near the [\[\[112\]\] Elephant](#). Takes bookings, fills in forms, contacts couriers, gives customers instructions. She lives near Aldgate East -- a long way to come, but a job is a job, even one you could do in your sleep.

What she is doing or thinking

Julie actually is asleep. Her morning routine is so established that she dressed herself sleepwalking. She walked on automatic pilot to the tube and changed trains at Embankment without waking up. She is conscious of nothing until [\[\[46\]\] Passenger 46](#) clumps [\[\[47\]\] Passenger 47](#) with a bicycle seat. She thinks: I'm dreaming that I'm sitting on the tube and a man comes in with a bicycle seat and hits a large black man with it. [\[\[45\]\] A spooky black lady](#) smiles, nursing something terrible in a parcel. Sitting next to her, [\[\[44\]\] Mick Hucknall](#) seems to be singing.

Gradually Julie realises it is not a dream. She really is sitting on the tube fingering her white dress. The FSD uniform is a grey skirt.

She's only wearing a slip. Oh my God! she thinks and sits up as the train slows into Waterloo. I'm not dressed, I've got to go home!

All the way to Aldgate East and then walking up Commercial Road, wearing only a slip. But this time she won't be asleep.



Car two

67

Miss Samantha Allers

Outward appearance

Young, carefully groomed. Black trousers, black sweatshirt with Paperchase logo. Pink, puffy overcoat. Burnished bronze hair pulled up into a kind of curly nest on top of her head. Her earrings are the same colour.

Inside information

Sam is late for her job in a sandwich bar on [[138]] [Lower Marsh](#).

What she is doing or thinking

She's had a bad night. Sam recently moved with her boyfriend into a new flat. She was thinking about wallpaper, carpets, and damp around the windows -- until the police called on her neighbour next door. It turns out he's a bit of villain -- and a friend of the three who have just escaped from [[49]] [Parkhurst prison](#) on the [[ftnt67]] [Isle of Wight](#).

They might have turned up just one door along. That's what the police said. They showed her photographs. They didn't look hard, but then villains don't always. They looked squishy and fat -- horrible.

As far as Sam is concerned, she and Terry her boyfriend are moving on and up, away from London's past, out into the suburbs, into the future. The whole thing is like finding yourself living next door to the Krays. It's depressing. It's old.

Sam is pregnant. The job is to pay for wallpaper for the nursery, a cot. In her mind the new flat and the coming baby are intertwined. She doesn't want to bring her baby up next to criminals. After months of looking for somewhere to live, Sam becomes determined to move.

Milton Keynes? she wonders.

As they come into Waterloo, there is a waft of a [[39]] [terrible stench](#).



Car two

68

Mrs Griselda Stewart

Outward appearance

A television granny. She holds a [\[\[69\]\] little girl's hand](#) and helps her step up into the carriage. Mrs Stewart is short, round and comfy, grey jacket, tartan skirt, and a tartan shawl perfectly draped and pinned over her shoulders. Carries a picture book.

Inside information

Down from Scotland to see [\[\[203\]\] her granddaughter](#) and make sure the little darling is getting enough attention. Her daughter works all hours in local radio, she's split up with her boyfriend, and who can trust childminders these days?

Amy is a picture, in her pert wee bonnet and a lovely blue dress. She's only four and half but good at her reading. They're going to spend a lovely day out at [\[\[223\]\] the motion picture museum](#).

What she is doing or thinking

Trying to get Amy settled while holding onto her book. There is a real horror sitting on the train, [\[\[41\]\] one of those punks](#). Poor Amy pulls away and no wonder. "Come on Amy," coaxes Mrs Stewart. "Up you go, onto the seat." Mrs Stewart opens the book to distract her. "Read me something, Amy. What's that?" She points, and Amy says, definitely. "Train." She's still staring at that frightful creature.

Mrs Stewart thinks: how can you bring up a child in a place like this? Someone sleeps in the doorway to Angie's flat. She's getting nowhere in that radio station, and I know she's feeling a bit lost. I'm going to put my foot down. She can come back home. There's Stirling nearby, and Gran to help, and we've got such a lovely school in Dunblane.



Car two

69

Amy Stewart

Outward appearance

A little girl, preschool, neatly turned out in a blue dress, and polished black shoes. So pale that there are blue veins in her cheeks.

Inside information

Mum works and Daddy visits on Sunday and takes her out which is nice because she can get away from Mum who needs her rest. They go to the park or to the movies, and Daddy always drives her in a car. Her most favorite place is under her bed where the carpet ends. Everyone tells her that [\[\[68\]\] Granny Stewart's](#) house is full of nice things, so that is her favorite place too.

What she is doing or thinking

There are all these people with big feet who are in a hurry. Amy doesn't like the tube, and pulls back because she wants to get off. Her Gran tells her to get onto the seat. It's high and if it's dirty it will get her dress dirty, but she wants to do it herself, so she climbs up and there is this [\[\[41\]\] man with white clothes](#) and a funny haircut who looks like something from the telly.

Gran wants Amy to read the book to show how much she's learned, but she looks at the picture instead. It shows boxes with rows of faces. "Train," Amy says, but it looks nothing like this train. No one looks out of the window in this train. No one waves and smiles. But Amy likes the man who looks like something from the telly, even if he is a bit scary. Television has taught her: everything real is scary.



Car two

71

Mr Allan Marjoram

Outward appearance

Large bearded man in a suit and waterproof bunched around his burgeoning body. Oversize head, spectacles, white hands, scuffed shoes. Hunched over [Time Out](#), with two different coloured markers. Holds both tops in his mouth.

Inside information

Allan works in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library on Stamford Street. Lives in [Harrow](#) with his parents. He is 32 years old.

What he is doing or thinking

He is going through the *Time Out* personal ads with methodical diligence. His priorities are written on a envelope held underneath each ad.

Short term, pref exotic. Red. Partner, first time advertiser. Green

He circles an ad in red.

[Attractive Black Woman, 33](#) graduate professional mature seeks gallant gentleman 33-45, professional, warm hearted...

He havers. It would not be fair to pretend he was looking for a permanent relationship with a black woman. Besides, he is one year too young. He puts a question mark.

Green Eyes, Red Hair Lady 30 trendy (ish) creative job WLTM sexy man with GSOH for warm nights in. Photo please.

He promptly circles this in green. It meets all his requirements. He's not sexy, though. On second thought, he changes the colour to red.

Allan wishes someone would tell him what a GSOH was. And why did so many people want someone who spoke Chinese or Arabic?

Woman, 32, part-Jewish, sharp tongued seeks someone understanding...

That sounded a bit fierce.

Cute half-Italian lady, 35, seeks affectionate, understanding, trustworthy guy....

Green. That's all there are. He ranks all the greens from 1 to 3 in order. The train slows and he takes the pen tops out of his mouth.



Car two

72

Miss Hilary Vials

Outward appearance

A businesswoman in a TV commercial. Slim in a sharp grey suit. Legs elegantly crossed in sheer charcoal nylons. Small gold hoop earrings, which she fingers nervously. New blue bag, new black shoes.

Inside information

Hilary never thought that she would make 35 without being married. She is cripplingly shy. Works as an administrator at [[196]] [the London Television Centre](#). Studied the newsreader Gargy Patel, who looked half starved and scraggly at first but became stylish through grooming.

What she is doing or thinking

There is a terrible smell, which she thinks is coming from [[71]] [the man next to her](#). It makes her feel giddy, [[39]] [this stench of male](#). She doesn't quite hate it. It's like a sexual call for help. It fits with what he is doing.

She can't help staring. How can he be so brazen, circling sex ads in public? And those criteria! And the way he changes his mind!

It's also moving in way. The need is moving. So is the air of hard work. There's nothing lewd about it. He's treating it like an engineering problem.

That is irredeemably male, as are his clumsy baggy body, the fat pale hairy fingers.

She dresses to attract... who? She can't even picture him anymore. Someone handsome, but what is handsome, without a picture? Just a word. This man would need her. She might need him, even if he did treat her like an engineering problem. The train slows at Waterloo and both prepare to go their separate ways.

But she does not fancy the kind of man she thought she did.



Car two

73

Mr Milton Richards

Outward appearance

Small, neat man in blue trousers, blue padded anorak, cloth cap. One of the sleeves, jammed into a pocket, is empty. Has a fiercely trimmed moustache and a general air of rectitude.

Inside information

Milton lost his arm in an accident at a textile factory in Hackney. The factory went bankrupt soon afterwards: there was no compensation. Lives on benefit. The stepfather of [[19]] [Eveleen Doyce](#).

What he is doing or thinking

[[end2]] [He is sitting with Jesus](#). Jesus stands in the aisle between the rows of seats, holding out both whole arms in mercy. Milton can see the heart of Jesus through the robes of his gown. Jesus is telling Milton that he must kill his stepdaughter.

She is spawn. Milton has seen her through the connecting doors between cars, sitting on the same train. By leaning back, he knows that she cannot see him. Soon, he will kill for Jesus.

Milton loves Jesus. His evil children tell him that he loves white people more than black people. They do not understand that he is comparing their own fallen behavior with that of bank managers, politicians, the Royal Family, and [[94]] [Andrew Lloyd Weber](#). These are the people to emulate, they just happen to be white. Does he not also instruct them to follow the example of Frank Bruno? Nat King Cole?

Bruno fights for Britain, and so will Milton. In the empty sleeve, the knife is hidden. That is why the Lord took away Milton's arm, to hide the knife, so that he could be His Scourge.

Milton awaits his duty with patience.



Car three

74

Ms Christine Marre

Outward appearance

Small freckled woman, flaming red hair, Lucille Ball lipstick, black ski pants, tiny Chinese flat shoes, floral print shirt, floral jumper. Keeps looking urgently over her shoulder, as if pursued.

Inside information

Typesetter for [[126]] [Epik Publications](#), specialists in gardening and military subjects. She has been telling everyone her husband is an undercover agent who infiltrated the IRA ten years ago. Now, [[136]] [in the ceasefire](#), they do not know how to safely get him out.

None of this is true. Whenever her phone rings, Christine runs to it as if expecting news. She pastiches fear, tension, drama. Ten local women worked part time at Epik, sorting post, packing books. They started asking things like "how are you able to tell us this?" When they caught her out with inconsistencies, she apologized "I have to mislead you, slightly."

She's shopped them to the Benefits Agency, anonymously. They've all lost their jobs. She is safe, for a while.

What she is doing or thinking

Christine is acting out several dramas at once, the pursued woman, the citizen against fraud. She fumes against her boss. He was using benefit to subsidize underpaying his workers. It's not her fault he fired them all rather than pay them properly.

There is something empty and gnawing that won't go away. Chris lives alone, in terror of being invisible. She lives in terror of being found out. She lives for the moments clinging in panic to the telephone with other people listening. She looks over her shoulder again. Can people see she is [[152]] [a woman with a desperate story?](#)



Car three

75

Mr Stefan Braun

Outward appearance

Polished forehead, tiny nose, craggy cheeks, floppy hair. Broad shouldered in an immaculate white overcoat and Gucci suit in patterned olive and brown. Reading the March 1995 issue of *Jacqueline*.

Inside information

A professional model being photographed by [[109]] [Passenger 109](#). Research shows that men do read this women's magazine, but in private. The original campaign *Out of the Closets and into the Streets* was ditched as sounding too gay. Now it's *A Movable Feast ... food, fun, the arts, great suits and pages of beautiful women ... what more could a man on the move want?*

What he is doing or thinking

Looking at a feature called *The Prom..* It features grown women in the 90s dressed up like teenagers in the 50s, driving in a pink Cadillac in the American desert. Two guys in tuxedos squint into the sun, or jump up and down. So far so obvious.

They want teenagers, babyfaces, thinks Stefan. He's old for a model. It's hard to look like a sleek, powerful businessman when you're shaky inside and trying to think of the next scam. He owes the bank money.

When he was a teenager, Stefan made a working model of a hover craft out of a vacuum cleaner. He had an instinct for computers: he loved programming. But he grew up beautiful, and everything was knocked off course by parties, dope, women, and finally modeling. Deep inside, he's a nerd with a yearning for a steady job in an IT unit. He can't get back.

Maybe he could teach a modeling course?

[[end3]] ["Stefan?" asks the photographer. "Look up."](#)



Car three

76

Mr James Mair

Outward appearance

Nichol Williamson playing a farmer. Pale, aging face, red hair, red beard. Clean jeans, rubber-soled boots, green anorak. Tank-like briefcase at his feet.

Inside information

A consultant veterinarian returning home after an early morning call. James has not committed suicide. Many vets do.

What he is doing or thinking

This morning James attended London Zoo to examine an old sick gorilla. To examine gorillas he has to fire tranquilizer darts at them.

The gorillas have learned what the darts are. The animals have taken to flinging them back at their handlers. Even more cunning, some of the gorillas pretend to be tranquilized. When the keepers get close, the animals stab them with the needles and send them to sleep as well. All in good fun.

Now the vets call at 5 am to take the gorillas by surprise. A team of three fire at once from different angles to ensure a hit.

This morning Beefy, an old cancerous male, woke up and saw the team and the darts. Instead of fighting, Beefy slumped depressed onto his haunches. It was strange: he stared at the ground, at his feet. They needed to fire only one dart. It plunged into his arm, and Beefy stayed sitting upright, as tranquilized gorillas do.

When James got near, Beefy suddenly reached up and pulled the dart out of its arm. James scurried back in fear. Then the gorilla, eyes full into his, passed James the dart, handle first. He can still see the old creature's eyes, accusing, ill, angry and sad.

It's that sadness the vets can't take.



Car three

77

Mr Spider Spenser

Outward appearance

A diffident librarian coming home from a fancy dress? Skinny, all in black, with traces of white makeup and mascara. Bald on top, with long wispy hair at the back and sides. His shoulders are covered with stray strands. He rifles repeatedly through a black shoulder bag.

Inside information

Spider works Tuesday nights at the bar in Etoile, when it gets called Tombstone Blues. Going home to Lambeth North. Officially unemployed and on benefit. A Jobseeker, in another words.

Spider is a Bauhaus fan. He used to know people who knew Pete Murphy. He also knows a woman who does publicity for the Cure. Last night she gave him a cassette for free

What he is doing or thinking

Where's my bloody tape?

It was a copy of *Concert the cure live* from 84. Back then, [[41]] [Spider was new on the scene](#). His hair was a kind of black fountain off the top of his head. He sat at the bar with his girlfriend Lizzie, who looked like a virgin being buried in her wedding dress. Everyone knew them. They were all ex-punks or near-Romantics or hard core Goths or something in between and more interesting.

Some live in Australia now teaching scuba diving. Lizzie married an indulgent businessman and went dykey. Now she dresses like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* and is a mother. She looks big. He feels small. They all thought that somehow being fashionable, knowing people, being in the arts would make them rich. Then very suddenly they all were gone.

Like that tape. He keeps scrabbling in the bag.



Car three

78

Mr George Aristidou

Outward appearance

Heavy subcutaneous beard. Hair still in streaks from the comb. Big blue duffel coat with horn barrel buttons, very thick trousers: possibly another pair underneath. Stares fixedly at the empty seat opposite him.

Inside information

Mechanic. Used to repair milk floats for a milk delivery company. It was bought by a rival and then closed down. George now works for [[173]] [Lambeth Council's](#) own vehicle repair establishment near Lambeth North tube.

What he is doing or thinking

George is reading an ad for London Transport , one of the latest in a campaign to stop fare-dodging.

A few weeks ago a milkman doing his rounds in Acton was confronted by a pregnant woman. She explained that she was feeling completely exhausted and would appreciate a lift down the street. He helped her into his milk float and took her all the way home. After waving him goodbye, she gave birth to an 8 lb Sainsbury's bag....

The text is framed by a surround of white milk bottles. The point of it is that some people will have to try other dodges now that LT is getting so strict about fares.

George wants to kill someone at London Transport. Don't they realise what happened to the milk floats? Don't they realise how many men lost their jobs, how many men still don't have work, how long it took him to find a job? He pictures some berk in a linen suit in an advertising agency thinking he's clever.

As the train pulls into Waterloo he stands up and [[106]] [tears the cardboard poster out of its frame](#).



Car three

79

Mdm. Marge Matisse

Outward appearance

String bag, multicolour flimsy dress, some kind of ethnic wool number down to her knees. Fiercely proud, much made-up face, with a swathe of coarse long hair in many shades of blonde.

Inside information

[[ftnt79]] [Heiress and descendant of Henri Matisse](#). Many times divorced. Marge continues to use her famous maiden name. She lives in terror of being forced to spend capital. Complains constantly of poverty and lives on cauliflower cheese.

What she is doing or thinking

Women of a certain age and temperament need love. Marge believes in simplicity, independence and good taste, and lately has been very moved by a boy, a young boy, homeless, selling that magazine, *The Big Issue*.

He looks so handsome, so sad. An uneducated Albanian seaman. Lived for years illegally in America, speaks perfect English. "Everyone learns English in Albania. But it is American English." There is something so elegant in his distant reserve, his enduring dignity.

She's going to do something that all her friends will tell her is very silly, but the heart has its own reasons, its mysteries. [[140]] [She has decided to ask him to live with her](#). She can introduce him to books, music, cafes, the spiritual life.

A poor man stands, deformed, and she cannot help but notice certain other attributes. Again, you see, she has imagination, so many people would feel mere pity, but she, she can see [[105]] [the man has a vibrant sexual quality](#). He perches on two artificial legs, and she yearns to support him, hold him.

She'll get his name, just in case the Albanian falls through.



Car three

80

Mrs. Maureen Stuart

Outward appearance

Beige winter coat, very slightly grubby. Her cheeks and chin are round. Her chamois skin no longer holds make up. She is unvarnished except for her artificially tawny hair. Holds shut a battered copy of *Duncton Wood*, a novel about moles. She is not reading it, but her lips move silently.

Inside information

Recently made redundant from a privatized public utility. She still catches the morning train because she cannot stand the silence of the house or being cooped up with her husband. She is going to the [\[\[95\]\] German Romanticism exhibition](#). Her ex-boss thought she was stupid. That will show him.

What she is doing or thinking

Composing a letter to the Council about her proposed [\[\[95\]\] cattery](#). A neighbour has complained. She savours each phrase. "As for noise and odours, Mr Peeling knows nothing about well run catteries. Cats that are warm, fed, cared for and cleaned are quiet and do not smell. Mr Peeling allows his dog to foul the pavements and to bark. Cats do not at least bark."

She realizes that this is her stop, and leaps to her feet. She meant to read her beloved book, but has spent the last half hour, the last six months in a rage. This is getting silly, Mo, she tells herself. She has a vision of her cattery, its concrete floors burnished like metal. She sees herself in the Hayward Gallery with glasses, reading the catalogue. I really am not stupid. I can decide, she realizes, to have some fun. She gets out at Waterloo.

Her book has been left behind.



Car three

81

Mr Don Disney

Outward appearance

Man about 50, very tanned, short grey hair, black trousers, heavy soled shoes, black jacket peeking out from the sleeves of a waterproof.

Inside information

A security guard on his way to work at [\[\[123\]\] Mosstains](#). He has just returned from Christmas holidays in Spain. He always wanted to be in [\[\[98\]\] the Army](#), but only ever made the TA. At 15, his parents would not sign the necessary papers to let him join, so he ended up working in old Billingsgate fish market.

What he is doing or thinking

He remembers the old market, with its arches, its noise, its humour. He remembers the heavy leather boots with the copper toes, and the thick leather hats on which he would balance boxes of fish, or trays of eels.

Don once chained his boss to the barrow all day. He had come back having skived off on his birthday, so the lads had made sure he'd stay there. Once a Jap tourist came early to take photographs. He stood up on the barrow which Don pulled, so Don pulled just a bit too hard - he fell backwards into a mass of fish.

Life was smart, hard and funny. Now it's grey and corporate. Don wants to live in Spain, and thaw out.

They used to have big metal chests full of frozen eels. The eels would come back to life. The foundations of the old market were frozen solid from the cold store. When they moved the market the foundations thawed, and the building began to fall down. Like Britain really.



Car three

82

Mr Thomas West

Outward appearance

Short, pale young man in corduroys. Red hair, red jacket under a blue overcoat. Soft brown shoes. Going over papers covered with children's handwriting. Suddenly he stops.

Inside information

A teacher at Lower Marsh primary on Baylis Road. At 24, the youngest in the school.

Tom became a primary school teacher for two reasons. First, he was good at taking care of his younger brothers after his father disappeared. Second, he wants a girlfriend and primary schools are full of women teachers. He is already on [[189]] [his second potential wife](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Coming to terms with the sudden return of his father. He showed up at his wife's new address with no explanation of where he had been for 14 years.

Thomas's father had always been odd. He would bring strangers home for supper and put them up. The lawn was never mown; grass grew high around the front door steps. But he sewed wildflower seed, poppies and foxgloves.

He was constantly tearing up floorboards and pipes and then losing interest. Woodworm became an obsession. He took the roof off the house in winter, wrapped it in plastic, and then deserted his family. Effectively a ruin, the house was sold at half price, and they moved into a flat over an Italian restaurant by the [[ftnt82]] [Hangar Lane Gyrotory System](#).

Thomas has always feared that he was like his father in any way. He can't be: he notices children and loves them, and he is charming to women. But last night he saw his father: small, red, round, determined, like himself.



Car three

83

Mrs Gwen Utlay

Outward appearance

Big boned, with slightly frizzy hair. Red jacket, pink blouse with gold broach, rust coloured dress and shoes, large camel coloured coat and brief case. Reading a copy of *Management Excess*. She underlines key passages.

Inside information

Gwen works for the NHS Tabulation and Processing Agency in Leeds. She's in charge of their Total Quality Management programme. She is visiting the London office, which shares the same building as the London Emergency Service. Gwen plans to write a report on the success of this related body in establishing procedures and targets. She has been invited by the boss of [[45]] [passenger 45](#). He wants Gwen to see his birthday party, the level of commitment he has from his staff.

What she is doing or thinking

Gwen firmly believes that the entire NHS should have an ISO standard quality accreditation. She was particularly inspired by the example of a ball bearing factory which held a joint Quality conference with their suppliers. She envisions a national conference of quality stewards from all the NHS agencies and suppliers, to agree industry-wide quality targets.

Gwen is armed with a [[173]] [draft questionnaire](#) for the Emergency Service. It asks ambulance customers if the vehicle was comfortable, the driving of a safe but speedy quality, the staff polite and informative. Did patients have to sit on a trolley for a long time? If they had a complaint, did they receive an acknowledgement? Was the decor of the waiting room clean and give a friendly impression?

Gwen prides herself on thoroughness. What else might people using ambulances possibly want to comment on?



Car three

84

Mrs Jasmine McGowan

Outward appearance

Professional shoplifter? Flat tennis shoes, grubby pink trousers, puffy lime-green coat, straw-like untended broom of hair. Plump, smiling slightly, surrounded by shopping bags full of bits of metal.

Inside information

Runs a shop next to [[56]] [Emil's Window Displays](#). It sells bedsteads, radios, lamps, refrigerators in need of repair, hubcaps from a range of automobiles, old magazines, clothes. It would be easy to mistake it for a junk shop. It is in fact a clinic that cures old jukeboxes and 1960s psychedelic lamps.

What she is doing or thinking

Jasmine left a lamp on all night to warm. The red wax has settled into a sluggish clump at the bottom amid the oil. Sometimes prolonged heating restores its youth. The red bobbles churn once more as livid as a Yes album cover.

Jasmine is also nursing a sick Rock-ola. It's an early 70s model, called *Rhapsody in Colour* because lights flicker within different coloured panels. Jasmine is buddies with the dealer who bought up the whole warehouse of Rock-ola spare parts when Mr Rock-ola retired.

She'll be able to keep the Rock-olas and lamps going for years yet. Like the record in the jukebox says: *Won't Hang Up These Rock and Roll Shoes*.

Jasmine grew up in a trailer in [[89]] [Canada](#), drifting across another continent with her hippy parents. She remembers pine trees, huge lakes surrounded with rock, flaming autumn colours and winters that left her cold six months of the year. Her Dad's still in Canada, near Vancouver, fishing. Her Mum's in a home.

[[ftnt84]] [She hopes the wax will have warmed.](#)



Car three

85

Mr Rafael da Cunha

Outward appearance

Middle aged man, black moustache and hair, yellow and green slacks, jacket. Throws himself back in his seat, stomps his feet with laughter. Tobacco stained teeth.

Inside information

A baker at Blands Patisserie, wholesale suppliers of pies and cakes. Blands staff are a mix of regional Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. Rafael lives alone in a hotel in Seven Sisters.

What he is doing or thinking

[[96]] [A fool peers at the London Underground map](#) over Rafael's head. He doesn't notice when an old lady sits down in his seat. The idiot sits down on top of her. Some dumb American by the look of him. Rafael doubles up.

The idiot looks like the men in [[122]] [the park](#). Rafael knows no one, speaks little English. He started strolling around [[ftnt40]] [Archbishop's Park](#) in the evenings after work and men started to make suggestions. Young folks. He told them, he only did that for money, and they paid him. The young office workers, the boys from the flats, even once a priest, they pay him, old as he is, and become women for him. He tells them he is Arab, they seem to like that.

If he was home, he would never do anything like that. But working around cakes all day makes him feel sick. He never eats. He used to haul concrete blocks up ramps and play football. He has a big man's body, shrunk back to muscle and bone. He gives them cream, like cakes, and that also makes him sick, but now, now he can laugh.

Laugh at all of them.



Car three

86

Miss Beryl Barber

Outward appearance

Round faced black woman. Spectacles perched on end of her nose. Both feet in a contained parallel. Reading a course text, *World Peace and Social Change*.

Inside information

At 27 Beryl is many years younger than she looks. Running the family for her mother has left her matronly. Still living with her mother and father, unmarried, a devoted Aunty. Works for her overbearing cousin in a theatrical costumiers off Bayliss.

What she is doing or thinking

The book is for her evening course at [[104]] [Merely College](#). It is divided into units not chapters. Beryl hopes that the course, about the history of modern Britain, will help her to understand the people better, why they are as they are. She hopes for that even though the course, and particularly this book, deeply bore her.

Roused by a squall of laughter from [[85]] [the man next](#) to her, she looks in time to see some poor man [[96]] [who has sat on an old lady](#), stand up, hit his head, and sit on someone else. [[95]] [The old lady](#) just laughs, shaking her head. [[87]] [The man he sits on](#) scuttles away, so timid to be sat on first thing in the morning. [[92]] [A pretty girl](#) opens her mouth wide. They all laugh.

Beryl lets the book settle down and laughs too. The man next to her doubles up, like he's done himself a damage.

She wishes she understood. They are all mad. They all enjoy themselves. Underneath everything, the place has as much life in it as home.

Who needs history? She prepares to get off at Waterloo.



Car three

87

Mr Ben Bevis

Outward appearance

An advertising executive from some 1950s sitcom. Squiggly, pockmarked, in a grey suit, pork pie hat, pipe, specs.

Inside information

A professional comedian, organizer and star of [[124]] [Mind the Gap](#), a troupe that stages comedy skits on the Underground for a fee-paying audience. Trying out [[96]] [Geoff](#), a promising amateur who might fill in when Ben has a better paying gig.

What he is doing or thinking

Ben is jealous. To go ahead and sit on [[95]] [a real passenger](#) instead of the plant was brilliant! And then to sit down on Ben anyway and make it look convincing!

Ben spends two hours, three days a week in protracted ritual humiliations up and down the Tube. He gets in a fight with his tie, and [[96]] [eventually cuts off the ends with a pair of scissors](#). He gets gum stuck to the soles of his shoe, and from there all over his suit. People roar with laughter. Even for one routine, he misses it.

Then [[88]] [the woman next to him](#) growls, "This is a put up job, isn't it?" The newcomer hasn't been believed! Ben pretends that he doesn't understand the woman, but a kind of satisfaction settles over him.

It's a brief respite. [[91]] [Police](#) get on. Ben has left the letter of permission from London Transport at home. In any case, it's a forgery. He'll have to pay a fine. He has no money. Geoff has a job. Let him pay the fine. Ben decides to make a break for it, first chance he gets. It's every man for himself.

The comedy never stops.



Car three

88

Dame Vitrola Feldmoue

Outward appearance

Huge mauve spectacles, henna-red hair, pink shirt, blue denim jacket, multi-coloured ski coat. Leans back, and growls at [\[\[87\]\] her neighbour](#).

Inside information

Famous actress, currently rehearsing *The Way of the World* at the National. Long acquaintance with her own profession makes her impatient with fantasists and phonies.

She is carrying [\[\[ftnt88\]\] small arms in her handbag](#).

What she is doing or thinking

From the moment she got on, Vitrola thought she was watching a show. It was quite fascinating. Either they were very good or something had gone wrong. The way [\[\[96\]\] the actor](#) sat down on two people. You couldn't, *couldn't* time a double mistake like that.

But when his second victim, the fake City gent, scuttled across to the seat next to hers, it all began to look rehearsed. She smelled it: failed actor, poncing about for free.

"This is a put on, isn't it?" she growls at him. He pretends to look blank. In case there is a hidden camera, Vitrola calculates how to raise a laugh and insult him at the same time. She smiles tigerishly. "You know one of these days they'll stop giving actors benefit, and you'll have to work for a living."

[\[\[98\]\] Two policemen](#) get on at her stop, and she looks back over her spectacles at the actor. She asks with her eyebrows: Are these part of the show too? He's too alarmed to notice.

That tells her: the policemen are real. As real as anything gets. She stands up to go. Her guns clank.

God, she thinks, if only we had a real Conservative government.



Car three

89

Mrs Bunny Tait

Outward appearance

Perhaps Italian? Calm, beautiful, in a Virgin Mary way, perhaps 35. Tan slacks, shoes that appear to be made of varnished straw. Stares unmoving as *Mind the Gap* unfolds around her.

Inside information

[[112]] [Canadian](#) stage manager, part Amerindian. Works in MtG for pin money (if that). Introduced [[96]] [Passenger 96](#) to the troupe. Her husband Julian is an actor at [[214]] [the National](#), but only gets walk-on parts. His biggest role was masked in a production of the Oresteia which was known to use actors normally too ugly to take lead roles. Julian is a lovely man, kind, wise, but now increasingly depressed, haunting their flat, tending the allotment.

What she is doing or thinking

She watches distracted as the routine goes wrong. Geoff's inexperience somehow covers for it. Bunny is more concerned with trying to think of some way to make money. Her friend Judith takes people on London walks, but then Judith has been studying London for years. The Japanese had a new plan to start exporting their art and culture. Maybe she could bone up on their theatre or something, start an agency.

[[88]] [The woman next to her](#) is saying "... they'll stop giving actors benefit, and you'll have to work for a living."

It's like the entire country is shrinking. When Bunny arrived in 1978, London's theatres roared, and there were punks and subsidy and yes, the DHSS.

As an Indian, Bunny has the right to live in either America or [Canada](#). She thinks of Julian, whose rich voice would be perfect for radio, the thousands of American radio stations.

She decides. They'll move.



Car three

90

Miss Miguela Pallares

Outward appearance

Large, amused woman in her early twenties, dressed in jeans, white trainers, and black leather jacket with patterned shoulder inserts.

Inside information

Studying hotel management at [[92]] [Bruenwalt International College](#). Companion for the day of passenger 92. They are watching a performance of a troupe that performs comedy routines on the tube.

Miguela comes from a large Catalonian family which shouts its mind, which refuses to budge, which prides itself on never putting on a false face.

What she is doing or thinking

Miguela is studying Americans. It is good for her English. It is good for her understanding. They are funny, these Americans. They never stop performing, like [[92]] [Sara](#) now, perky, sitting up, playing pretty Miss. If she needs to, Sara plays tough business professional, or tell-me-your-troubles counselor, or street smart clubgoer in her clean blue jeans.

So who is acting now? The poor guy on show isn't acting: he sits on the old lady for real. The [[94]] [nice American couple](#), they wear the same clothes. They want look like bookends. Why?

Police get on and they are all arrested, and the Americans think that is a show too. Sara gleams at Miguela, her mouth wide open in delight. As if we really were friends, thinks Miguela, who smiles back at the effrontery of it.

They have to get off, and Miguela knows that Sara's ego means she will have to do the talking. So she starts being all flirty with the [[98]] [old cop](#), gets him all itchy, and Miguela wonders. You throw on different people, Sara, like clothes. Is there anyone underneath?



Car three

91

Mr James Bartlett

Outward appearance

Young Transport Policeman, skinny, red-cheeked. Gets on at Waterloo. Blocks one doorway as [\[\[98\]\] his colleague](#) blocks the other.

Inside information

Still in his first month. James's whole family are in the police, even [\[\[145\]\] his mother](#), who monitors surveillance videos. James's first job was with a merchant bank. It bored him. The computers, the columns of figures. It was also a trade for wide boys. He believed he could help people through police work. But he wanted out from under his family, so went into transport security.

What he is doing or thinking

Has he made a mistake? James's partner seems to have come out of an episode of *On the Buses*. Prejudiced, unschooled. He leers at the people, who are obviously a group of tourists. What is the point of trying to scare them?

They get out. Bert glowers at the leader. "I wasn't aware that London Underground is a theatre. Are you charging money for this?" [\[\[92\]\] The American girl](#) tries to explain. Bert fancies her, so he keeps her talking.

It goes on and on. The radio squawks, Bert eyebrows James to answer it.

Did he hear that right? A train has just gone through the barriers at the Elephant. James hunches over the radio and asks, "Which train, repeat, which train?"

James knows how to stop Bert now. "Excuse me everyone, sorry. We've all been very lucky." James looks at them all. "The train we were on has just [\[\[end3\]\] crashed](#)."

Even Bert falls silent. They stare down the long black tunnel, curving into darkness. A mouse flees along the track.



Car three

92

Ms Sara Ivanovic

Outward appearance

Pretty American student. Blonde hair, spotless casual clothes. Eyes glisten with amusement, as a man sits on an old lady, and then on her neighbour.

Inside information

Studying hotel management at [[198]] [Bruenwalt International College](#). It's important to have experience of other cultures if you want to run a good hotel. European management styles are really weird, but kinda interesting too.

Today was an optional visit to the Radish Edwardian Hotel at Heathrow which is where Sara stayed when she first arrived, so it seemed kinda a waste, so she's watching *Mind the Gap* instead with a girl from her class, [[90]] [Miguela](#).

What she is doing or thinking

It's really neat. These actors do routines on the tube. They're in some kinda trouble with the fuzz. At the next station, they all have to get out. Sara bounces out onto the platform with Miguela. And the Director just runs away up the stairs, looking like an ostrich. [[96]] [The poor actor](#) is left explaining to the police, "We're a theatre company." Sara thinks this is the funniest of all.

"Its true... it's true," Sara tells [[98]] [the cop](#), helplessly giggling, "Everything this guy told you is true!" She lets the cop have it, full blast, the eyes, the smile, the blaze of being a young American.

The old cop narrows his eyes, like a horny old elephant. Sara thinks: I'm young, I'm sexy, I'll just do this until you get bored and let us go. The radio squawks, [[91]] [his young partner](#) takes it.

"Which train, repeat, which train ?" The young cop asks. He sounds worried.



Car three

93

Mrs Helen Timmins

Outward appearance

Woman in her fifties, specs, checked shirt, cream slacks, new white sneakers, sky-blue fisherman's hat. Grins in Cheshire-cat fashion, holding the hand of the [\[\[94\]\] passenger next to her](#).

Inside information

On holiday in London with her academic husband. They married in 1960, just before he went to college. From 1965 on, she was an Army wife. Has one grown up daughter. She does charity work, reads, writes a little. She's a housewife.

What she is doing or thinking

Present laughter eases her heart. It keeps what is coming at bay. When they get back to Irvine, Helen is going to ask Larry for a divorce.

There's a professor of Hebrew literature, a Russian emigre called Sasha Gnessin. They met at her writing group. She surprised herself that first night; she was a bit drunk; she went to bed with him. As he opened the door to his apartment, she found her knees were shaking. Sasha is small, bespectacled, slightly hunched, her own age (thank heavens), but there's something about him. Lust. It breaks her heart, but she doesn't lust after Larry. Larry is distant from her. He always has been. Despite his size and his masculine image, there is something frail and unsexed about Larry. He is affectionate, but there is nothing exciting in his touch; nothing excited in it either. Sasha awaits, with his sly grin, his books, and his cock that he pulls out of his trousers, and that she kneels to swallow. She never did that before. The image, even now, startles her, shakes her with its power.

So she laughs.



Car three

94

Professor Lawrence Timmins

Outward appearance

A big man, broad-shouldered, approaching retirement. Wears a checked shirt, cream slacks, new white sneakers, sky-blue fisherman's hat. Grins in Cheshire-cat fashion, holding the hand of [\[\[93\]\] the passenger next to him](#).

Inside information

Professor of business studies at the University of California at Irvine. To keep his hand in, Larry produced an interactive multimedia training package on producing multimedia training packages. It was a perceived niche market. Treating himself and his wife to a trip abroad on the proceeds. Played high school football in the jacket worn by [\[\[38\]\] Passenger 38](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Feeling proud that he spotted *Mind the Gap* in *Time Out* .

It's fun. One of the actors whispers to you the next destination and herds you all into the same carriage. Then they start doing their routines. Like asking everybody else directions to Edgeware or borrowing someone's newspaper and cutting out the pictures without asking them first.

Larry gets over to the UK when he can. But it's strange. Things are obviously better since [\[\[143\]\] Thatcher](#) took over, but it seems there's less and less reason to come over. Everything's so American, or, like the BBC, the best of it's in America anyway. They can see [\[\[ftnt94\]\] Andrew Lloyd Weber](#) at home.

Things like this will have to go. Figure they got only four people paying £5.00 each. Twenty pounds for a morning's work? That's only about 30 bucks. There's three of them, so do some of them volunteer or something?

[\[\[98\]\] Now there's cops](#). Are the cops part of the deal too? Larry looks at his wife and roars with laughter.



Car three

95

Mrs Doris McPherson

Outward appearance

Brown waterproof, brown bow legs, flat shoes, transparent hood tied over a helmet of tightly woven white hair.

Inside information

Winner of the *St Hags Evening Gazette's* London Winter Getaway Prize. It's all laid on. A week at [the Savoy](#). Very nice. Doris is down with her friend Cynthia, who's poorly this morning. Doris is off to see an exhibition at the Hayward Gallery: *German Romanticism*. Not too sure what it is. Doris is a [catlover](#), and has left her seven cats in a cattery back home.

What she is doing or thinking

She gets on at the Embankment, only to be [sat on by a very tall young man](#). Well, it was an honest mistake. He gets up straightaway and hits his head, and sits down on someone else. Must be terribly embarrassing for him, poor lad. Everyone laughs. They're ever so cheerful in London, not at all like what everyone says.

Her stop comes up and Doris stands and nods and smiles. "Any time you want to sit on my knee, feel free," she says to the young man. As she gets off, [a policemen](#) gets on and says hello, so she grins back.

On the platform, amid the gush of people who know where they are going, she is lost. She sees a woman near her own age, [Passenger 80](#). "Excuse me," Doris asks, "do you know the way to the Hayward Gallery?"

"I'm going there myself," says the woman. By the time they help each other to the top of the stairs, they've got onto the subject of cats.



Car three

96

Mr Geoff Ryman

Outward appearance

Tall, ravaged, nervous-looking middle aged man in tourist dress. Stands up to peer at the Tube map opposite his seat. At Embankment the doors rumble shut and he sits back down on top of an elderly passenger.

Inside information

An amateur actor on holiday from his day job, taking part in a performance of *Mind the Gap*. Paying customers follow the comedians from station to station as they perform. In this routine, he is supposed to stand up from his seat, while another member of *MtG* takes it. The art is to sit without looking backwards.

What he is doing or thinking

To his horror, Geoff discovers that he has sat on top of [\[\[95\]\] a real passenger](#). [\[\[85\]\] The man opposite him](#) roars with laughter. Geoff's ears burn. This is the first time he has taken the lead idiot role, and he had not counted on how embarrassing it is. He stands up, hits his head on the rail, and sits on top of [\[\[87\]\] Ben](#), the leader of troupe, on whom he should have sat. More laughter.

Then the [\[\[98\]\] police](#) arrive. It must have been the [\[\[87\]\] tie and scissors routine](#), that scares people. Ben just sits there. Ben, say something!

Questions race. Is this legal? Do LT know? Geoff finds he has no answers. They all have to get off at Lambeth North, and, instead of helping, Ben flees up the steps.

Ben, don't leave me !

" We.. I'm.. I'm sure we have a letter of permission."

"Good," says the policeman. "Where is it?"

The train rolls out for Elephant and Castle.



Car three

97

Ms Karen Keown

Outward appearance

Pale woman about 29, wispy hair, fine features, all swamped by large spectacles. Her arms form a circle in front of her.

Inside information

Unemployed woman on her way to [[114]] [St Thomas' Hospital](#) to steal a newborn baby. At home, there already is a nursery with a pram and toys. The neighbours know she is pregnant.

What she is doing or thinking

She is suffocated by a sense of being cheated, of people watching her in order to thwart her. In her arms, she can feel her beautiful baby. There are people everywhere who would deny it to her.

At Waterloo, [[98]] [police](#) get onto the train. Karen refuses to look up, but sees the dark trousers, the blue shirt out of the corner of her eyes. Who betrayed her? Her mind races.

"Do you wish to make a complaint?" the policeman asks her. Yes, she answers him in her mind, yes I do, you people should be chasing real criminals. In her mind, she must also disguise her intention from him.

The train idles at Waterloo, doors open. If she gets off now, the police will know that she plans to go to St Thomas'. The doors trail shut as if cutting her baby in half.

"I can explain," [[96]] [the man next to her](#) says. She thinks he is her boyfriend who will protect her. Conspiratorially, she avoids his gaze. At Lambeth North, he lures the police away. Grateful, she decides to make him the father. Karen shifts to make the baby more comfortable. She goes on to the [[end3]] [Elephant](#).

That'll fool them.



Car three

98

Officer Bert Harris

Outward appearance

Fifty, pale, bug-eyed, pot-bellied in Transport Police uniform. Gets on at Waterloo and looms over the end row of seats. [[91]] [His colleague, passenger 91](#) blocks the other doorway.

Inside information

Joined Transport Police after a stint in [[102]] [the Army](#). The job consists of scooping up drunks from platforms, hoisting suicides off the tracks, moving buskers on.

What he is doing or thinking

He's aware that something strange is happening to his mind the longer he stays in the job. You see the worst on the Tube: beggars with hands that won't work properly who stink, whose hair is falling out because they can't wash. He's started to wash it for them, with windowlens spray. The lads caught a [[12]] [poof in the toilets at Waterloo](#). For a joke they poured bleach on his naked genitals and he ran screaming out into the main concourse with his trousers down. Bert arrested him for indecent exposure, which was the best joke of all. Animals. Even animals don't do it toilets. The skin came off.

Now we got [[96]] [some berk](#) bothering people for a bunch of fun-lovers. An [[95]] [old dear](#) is getting off. "Do you want to make a complaint?" Bert asks her. She just grins at him and gets off. She's gaga. Put her in a home.

"You ought to find yourself a seat, Sir," says Bert.

"I can explain," says the berk, easily scared. "We're a theatre company."

"I can get your autograph then. When we get out at the next stop." Officer Harris grins. God, he hates his job. God, he hates the people.



Car three

99

Ms Suze Morley

Outward appearance

Young woman pulling a bicycle into the carriage at Embankment. Short hair, a fluorescent coat, safety helmet, and beefy legs in track suit bottoms. She flips off a Viva! shoulder bag onto an empty seat and stands holding onto the bike.

Inside information

[[27]] [Danni Jarrett's sister](#). Works for the Personnel Office of [[166]] [the Department of Transport near Lambeth Bridge](#). Devoted to serial monogamy, meaning she only has sex with one man a night. Concerned about the size of her arse, so today she cycled into work.

What she is doing or thinking

Whose good idea was this? It's supposed to be downhill from Camden. A motorcyclist slapped her with his wing mirror at Seven Dials and Trafalgar Square was the most terrifying event of the week, especially when [[202]] [a taxi driver](#) decided to pretend she wasn't there. Now she's sweaty, shaken and utterly puffed. Fags n booze, that's what keeps me in good shape.

People laugh, she looks up. [[96]] [Some comedian](#) has just sat down on [[95]] [an old woman](#). He jumps up and sits down on [[87]] [someone else](#). There's no pleasing some people. As the train whines into Waterloo, the old woman gets up and says to him, "You can sit on my knee any time you like."

Just let him try it with me, thinks Suze.

[[98]] [A policeman](#) gets on. Just leaving, Officer. The policeman says to the old woman, "Would you like to make a complaint?"

The old dear just smiles back. You a native Londoner, then? thinks Suze. They both get out without saying a word to the Filth.



Car three

100

Ms Diana Diamant

Outward appearance

Woman in early middle age. Long denim coat with fake fur collar, cowboy boots, Marianne-Faithfull hair, rugged good looks. She should have a cigarette in one hand and a whisky glass in the other.

Inside information

Freelance estate valuer. Works from home which means she can devote more time to Emma, her daughter.

What she is doing or thinking

Emma loves painting up her face and going to parties in character. She lives in a provisional world. If the curtains are drawn at mid-day and it's dark, Emma asks quizzically "Is it night?" If they miss a train, Emma sits on the platform and mourns with heaving sobs. Diana is only beginning to understand how different Emma's world is and how busy she herself is destroying it.

Diana's best friend Jane died at Christmas. They met at prenatal classes, and visited each other at the births. Their children became friends; Diana and Jane would take care of them both when the other had an assignment. In the hospital, Diana sat smoking by Jane's bed, ducking the nurses and their admonitions. "You're the only one who hasn't run away," Jane said.

Christmas was wiped out. As a late treat last night, Diana took both kids to see *Peter Pan*. It did nothing to help little Bobby. "Look they're flying," Diana said to him. He did not respond. In the car going back, he said in a quiet voice, "Everybody's dead. The Lost Boys are dead. Peter Pan's dead. Tinkerbell is dead."

"No she's not," pleaded Emma. "She's not. She's going to come back."



Car three

101

Mr Paul Launcey

Outward appearance

Lanky man rising 50, sitting hunched in a rumpled suit. Creased double chin. Spectacles, pink cheeks, balding dome.

Inside information

Investment advisor for [[131]] [Adventure Capital](#). A Lloyds name and a soon-to-be bankrupt man.

What he is doing or thinking

He thinks of his wife and his only child, a morbidly shy 12 year old who is intensely vulnerable. Benjamin is hardly able to talk to anyone his own age. He has special tutors. Paul cannot imagine the boy surviving in a state school. That is where he is going.

As for Anne, she is capable, kind, deserves better. Even though his wife is not a name, her own family money will be taken to pay the debts. Lloyds can take the house, everything else. Alone, Anne would not be in any way liable. They would both be better off if he were dead.

Paul has decided to kill himself. The problem is how. He could buy a new pair of slippery soled leather shoes, and slide helplessly under a bus, scattering papers. The insurance won't pay out if looks like suicide. It must be above suspicion, and he must die. The very worst thing that could happen is that he survives as a cripple with debts still due.

He wants to die. He lets his stop rattle past, thinking, thinking, his job now irrelevant. Could he hire someone to kill him? Without anyone knowing it was him? Above all else, cold and angry, he wants the insurance to pay.

He is, after all, insured with Lloyds. The train sweeps him on towards [[end3]] [the Elephant](#).



Car three

102

Major Edwin Grives

Outward appearance

Well turned out man, trim, fit, about 35. Sits legs crossed, looking slightly miffed, trying to read [\[\[150\]\] the FT](#).

Inside information

Came out of [\[\[146\]\] the Army](#) straight into development work for [\[\[129\]\] Pall Mall Oil](#). Knows both passengers [\[\[37\]\] 37](#) and [\[\[235\]\] 235](#). Travels widely for Pall Mall, always first class. Has family connections in the Far East (as well as a mistress, but he knew her before he married). His wife teaches in the local girls' school. Commutes from a village near Aldeburgh. Lives in a 16th century farmhouse with a Japanese water garden. He takes the train to Liverpool Street, parking his white BMW at the local station.

What he is doing or thinking

Cursing his local pig farm, which he calls Pig Belsen. When they wash out the tanks late at night, the smell wakes him up. The slurry is so full of chemicals it cannot be used on the fields. It's hauled away in huge lorries marked HAZCHEM.

This morning however was beyond imagining. The damn fool lorry driver tried to drive down their lane and got stuck. The valve went and they were flooded with pig swill. Edwin had to drive through it. Sheets of slurry washed up over the windscreen. The wipers jammed. His son Jason had left the back window open. The rear seat was splattered. The stench penetrated everything.

The car is still sitting outside the station, a solid mass of drying sewage. The parking lot for several spaces round is empty. Tonight he'll have to drive through the sewage again.

Edwin gives his FT another fretful shake. No comment.



Car three

103

Mr Saif Ali Khan

Outward appearance

Beefy Asian about 25 in track suit bottoms, black trainers, baseball cap, jacket with felt lettering sewn on it, lumberjack shirt in blue and white checks. George-Michael stubble. Flicks fitfully through an issue of *Satellite TV*.

Inside information

Works in the family domestic supplies business. Married to Amrita, daughter of a business partner. Has recently branched the business out into [home electronics](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Thinking about last night. His mother was cooking, hollow eyed, and he talked about his father.

His father came first to Britain, they followed. Saif is convinced his father didn't want them. He would slam doors, slam their mother, slam the two boys. Saif remembers being pulled down the staircase of the council flats by his ankles, screaming, holding out his arms to his mother.

Saif found he could escape beating by bursting into tears whenever there was trouble. So the father beat the elder brother who blamed Saif. And strangest of all, because he wasn't beaten, Saif thought his father didn't love him.

Saif grew up disruptive, with bad grades and short attention span. He still finds reading nigglingly annoying, and hates most television. Things bore him. Women bore him, Amrita bores him.

"You still hate your father," his mother said sadly.

"Yes, yes I do," said Saif.

He did not see his father standing behind him. "But I've grown up now," his father said. It's true. Nowadays he is quiet, gentle, polite.

That is the worst of it. Saif cannot even reach the man who did it . He keeps flicking the magazine pages.



Car three

104

Mr Kendo Kawahara

Outward appearance

Japanese businessman. Tall and heavy in a grey suit, immaculate white shirt, clean tan overcoat. Briefcase. Narrow eyes, slightly pockmarked cheeks. Chews gum slowly as if laconically issuing orders. Greased hair.

Inside information

Publisher of a successful magazine for Japanese people about how to live in England during two-year business stints away from home. Also runs a thriving business supplying them with Japanese books, food, music and social opportunities. Mr Kendo is on his way to a recording session in a small studio operated by [[130]] [Merely College](#), who provide him with student musicians.

Mr Kawahara is an Elvis Presley imitator who releases records of material the King would have recorded if he had lived. His professional name is Tupelo Sushi. The cassettes sell quite well through specialist mail outlets in the United States and Great Britain.

His briefcase contains lyrics and charts for the sessions. The new set is the album Elvis would have recorded in [[169]] [1991, the year of the Gulf War](#). The songs include *Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree*, *You Take My Breath Away* from Top Gun, *Memory* from Cats, and Tom Waits' *Soldier's Things*. This a great song about war: a friend lists all a dead soldiers things at a garage sale. Waits sings the song in a dry rasp. Kendo will sing it as Elvis would have done, as a tribute, with a lovely tremolo of emotion and a soaring operatic conclusion.

What he is doing or thinking

Mr Kawahara is planning Elvis's AIDS album. It will include his unique interpretation of Springsteen's *Philadelphia*.



Car three

105

Mr Shimon Souza

Outward appearance

Small, rotund, dark skinned man in navy-blue suit. Two walking sticks and a nautical tie clip. Wiggles in place as if doing a belly dance.

Inside information

Legal advisor at the International Maritime Organization near Vauxhall Bridge. Works through implications of changes to International Shipping Law. Of Portuguese/Angolan extraction. Lost both legs when a train ran over him as a child. Won a postgrad scholarship at Harvard. His life is built around independence and dignity.

What he is doing or thinking

Shimon's testicles have caught in the leather harnesses of his artificial legs. Checking to see if anyone is looking, he eases his hand into his pocket to flip them free. The harnesses close like jaws.

He arches his groin up in the hopes of pulling free. His entire genitalia are wrenched around 90 degrees. The most effective thing to do would be drop his trousers and start again. Instead, he gives two hard pelvic thrusts.

This makes him erect. Shimon has always felt that his generous pudenda were a just reward for those with the imagination to sleep with him. Now that very generosity increases his embarrassment. He stands, but putting on his coat reveals the extent of his problem. He whimpers towards the doorway in pain. [[79]] [A woman](#) looks at him in heartfelt sympathy.

Shimon thinks of International Law, safety regulations, important shipping lanes. Rather worryingly, this makes the erection worse.

Shimon waits by the doorway, sweating smearing his brow. It is plainly going to be one of those days.

Until the lady follows him out of the carriage.



Car three

106

Mrs Camilla Burke-Harris

Outward appearance

Julie Andrews gone British. Short hair, forceful face, pleated grey dress, vermilion jacket, pearl earrings. Holds up wire-rimmed glasses to the light, cleans them, and goes back to documents spread out on her briefcase.

Inside information

Director of the [[245]] [Small Bosses Syndicate](#).

What she is doing or thinking

Redrafting a paper on the SBS's case against charity shops.

A review of retailers in [[248]] [Wimbledon](#) has confirmed the effect on small businesses of the five charity shops in the main shopping area. Margerete Tweed, manager of Dropsilla Fashions has recorded a 5% fall in trade since the Aged and Infirm Cancer Benefit Shop has opened next door. David Tooth has similar statistics to back up his case against the Wounded Children's Healing Fund.

Camilla writes a note "This is all too anecdotal". Charity shops are of course a scandal, undercutting local businesses, but this paper is not good enough. She sighs.

She has a nine o'clock appointment with that wide boy [[32]] [Willie Dynham](#). It was quite clever what he did to French wine, but Camilla remembers him of old. He simply never tells the truth. Some people seem to find this charming, but as far as she is concerned, he is the sort of person who gives Small Business a bad name.

The train slows into Waterloo. Suddenly [[78]] [a foreign workman of some kind](#) attacks an advertisement. Camilla is outraged. She stands up to him. "How could you do that to a perfectly good advertisement?" He simply looks blank, resentful. "That poster creates jobs!" .

He's lost for an answer. Such people always are.



Car three

107

Mrs Emma Christie

Outward appearance

Blue trousers, thick-soled shoes, white shirt, anorak, page boy cut, no make up. Reads a thick, stapled mimeographed publication, gone feathery around the edges.

Inside information

Clandestine author of slash fiction, for which she publishes a monthly fanzine. Slash fiction is written almost exclusively by women. It describes in vivid physical and romantic detail, love affairs between male television characters. Brady and Doyle from *The Professionals*, or Sulu and Chekhov from [\[\[180.htm#star trek\]\] *Star Trek*](#).

Emma's province is *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*. The ruined beauty of Richard Basehart, the slightly aging delicacy of David Hedison, make her heart grow faint. She writes of hidden moments of intimacy snatched between the giant squid or intelligent sea aliens.

What she is doing or thinking

Like a priest caught in a cottage, she is reading her bible for comfort.

The newly released tape of episode 57 has a VERY slashable moment in which the Admiral clasps the Captain's shoulder to give him fatherly advice. Hedison goes all dewy-eyed.

Her husband has found out. He cleaned out the garage, and found a box of 'zines: the scenes of incestuous buggery between *Steptoe and Son*, a passionate affair among all four of *The Monkees*.

"I understand," he said. "You do this because you want to get closer to men. You want to be in love with a man, but as a man, an equal."

Something in her tremored as he said it, with brown eyes that looked suddenly feminine.

Now, two day's later, she understands. Her husband is a cross-dresser. So in a sense is she.



Car three

108

Chief Inspector Anthony Curniffe

Outward appearance

Blue pinstripe suit, long blue coat. A broken, disorderly face with heavy nose, lips that curl into a natural sneer, a crown of almost femininely upswept and completely silver hair. Sits still, with a Mona Lisa smile.

Inside information

Chief Inspector for [[119]] [the Metropolitan Police](#). On his way to his daily work in the bureaucracy of enforcement.

What he is doing or thinking

Remembering yesterday's memorial service for Sir Terence Hobbin, at St Paul church, WC2. Sir Terence had been retired for years, but was remembered for a series of administrative reforms in the late 1970s. He was a solid, respected man, notable to the readers of the *Journal of the Police College*.

So even the family were surprised and delighted when Sir John Gielgud climbed into the pulpit to read a poem of John Donne's. It showed a surprising, but altogether apt appreciation of a life spent in public service. The rich actorly tones resonated around the roof of the church.

It was even less likely then, that Sir Ian McKellan also entered and smiling somewhat embarrassed, began to wave at Sir John. Sir John waved benignly back, and finished his reading. He had been expected in St Paul church, SW1.

Every day walking to the tube from his apartment in Bloomsbury, Chief Inspector Curniffe stops to talk to [[ftnt108]] [the statue of Gandhi](#). This morning the Inspector asked: why did it apply? It was all wrong and all right at the same time. Does God play jokes to tell the truth?

Gandhi just smiled. The answer was a wonderful yes.



Car three

109

Ms Anya Ruderian

Outward appearance

Mass of curly black hair, black duffel coat, baggy black turtleneck. She is taking photographs of [\[\[75\]\] Passenger 75](#). Like her, the camera is neat and unobtrusive. She squints, clicks and checks the reading all without anyone seeming to notice.

Inside information

Freelance photographer famed for her location work. Lebanese-Armenian extraction, married to a handsome, quiet barrister. This job is for a campaign to convince men it is all right to be seen in public reading *Jacqueline*, the fashion magazine.

What she is doing or thinking

If she is not careful, the photographs will look green and horrible and express everything she feels about the Tube: claustrophobia, a taste of something black and gritty between the teeth. The model is wrong too: he looks sulky, not dynamic, not the kind of guy you would want to be.

Yesterday she photographed the inside of the unfinished [\[\[228\]\] British Library](#). It was huge, bare, labyrinthian. The architect wandered off to deal with a wiring problem. Anya was left alone in one of the subterranean chambers.

[\[\[ftnt109\]\] She got hopelessly lost](#). There were no windows, or signage. She wandered for an hour and a half, calling "Paul?". Anya doesn't flap (she was able to film in [\[\[149\]\] Bosnia](#)). In fact, she found the idea amusing. I could die in here and become its first ghost, she thought. The unfinished corridors went on and on, and everything was coated in white dust. Even now the white dust follows her as ghostly footprints.

Anya says to the model: [\[\[end3\]\] "Stefan? Look up."](#) She decides to take another roll using her handsome husband instead.



Car four

110

Mr Andy de Vendeuse

Outward appearance

18-19, very tall, wearing blue jeans, black trainers, blue corduroy coat lined with sheepskin with sheepskin collar. Long pale hands and fingers. Coils of silver bangles around his wrists. Under his coat are layers of green, then red. He has a striking, long, pale face made even more so by thick-stemmed midnight sunglasses and retro-punk spiky black hair.

He pats the seat next to him and [\[\[111\]\] an older woman](#) crosses the aisle to sit next to him. He snuggles up to her and puts his head on her shoulder.

Inside information

A musician without a band at the moment. He and his mum have decided to chuck everything in and go to France for a few months. His father is French and the hope is that they will get some of the money he owes them. Andy doesn't want to spend too long with his father: he works for some kind of bank, and puts waves in his hair.

What he is doing or thinking

He yearns to put his feet on the vacated chair opposite him. His long skinny legs stretch across the aisle. His mum says "Andy, don't, come on, darling," in an East End voice. He has an inspiration. He puts his feet on the arm rest instead. His mum nips the baggy knees of his trousers and lifts his leg. At that moment [\[\[145\]\] an old geezer](#) comes to sit down, so he moves anyway. Andy smiles. His mum is great. France, whatever happens, will be fun. He looks over her shoulder at a magazine.



Car four

111

Mrs Marianne de Vendeuse

Outward appearance

Brown coat to the floor, delicate scarf in different shades of brown, long soft boots in fake alligator-pattern cloth. Her hair is highlighted but is naturally light brown. Her face, though deeply lined, is somehow also young in attitude: forthright, impatient, open, defensive all at once. She moves next to [her son](#) and thumbs through a magazine.

Inside information

Works in a friend's plant shop. She speaks impeccable French. Worked in France for many years as a ski instructor, where she met her rich, French husband. Now impoverished, she often [nips across the Channel](#) in order to buy cigarettes in bulk to sell in the UK. She would take a van if she could afford the rental and buy wine. Cigarettes are light enough for the train. She worries about finance, but only for the sake of her son. Otherwise she would live anywhere, anyhow.

What she is doing or thinking

She is looking through two free women's magazines that are mainly job ads within a shell of second-hand articles. She hopes to find something that will use her skills in French. "They all want something I don't have," she sighs. "I can speak the language probably better than someone who's been to university, but they all want qualifications."

"You could get one of these [teaching English qualifications](#)," her son says. He thumbs back to the course ads.

Indeed, she could. She smiles and kisses him. Her reward for being brave is Andy. She looks at his black rucksack, with the logo "Mon Viso 3."

"My face," she muses.



Car four

112

Mr Peter Dearlove

Outward appearance

Tall nervous black man gets on at Embankment. Brown leather jacket hangs off narrow shoulders. Green jeans, green socks, wispy moustache, butterfly-delicate ankles. Lopes apologetically to his seat then twitches in place. Charming, childlike and disjointed all at once, like an innocent Martian, or Charlie Chaplin. Keeps clearing his throat.

Inside information

Has returned from [Canada](#), where he accepted [the Toronto Blessing](#). He walked straight from Toronto airport to the church. It was small, ordinary and that seemed right. Peter had to line up for most of a day, but when he got inside, all was as promised. He talked in tongues, thrashed on the floor, and Jesus came and sat with him and held his hand. Jesus said to him that he was to love everyone and everyone would love and forgive him.

What he is doing or thinking

Peter blesses everyone he walks past. He thinks he is about to bear witness, and speak about God's love, but something holds him back. Wanting to speak is an ache inside. Why is he so silent? It feels like shame. [The man across from him](#) looks forbidding, [the girl next to him](#) is too pretty. Perhaps God will unleash his tongue when the right time comes.

He wishes there were someone here with the Blessing. The Blessing sings like the universe. People with the Blessing hum its tune. Peter may not have a job, but he knows why he is on this train: to bear witness.

So he keeps clearing his throat, and is swept on, to [Elephant and Castle](#).



Car four

113

Miss Mary Dzluni

Outward appearance

Stunningly beautiful black girl, black coat, long red dress with big red buttons up the front, left dangerously undone. She stares ahead through narrowed eyes, lips pulled down in a distracted frown. Pokes at her face, unconsciously looking for spots to squeeze. There are some, but not where she is squeezing.

Inside information

A temp, now a receptionist at [[160]] [the Peebrane Trust](#) near Lambeth North. She does not quite know she is beautiful. She feels unloved. Her father and mother split up and divided their six children. Her father took three to England, separating Mary from her twin sister.

What she is doing or thinking

She has just been dropped again. Ken seemed a big, strong, noble man. He visited her father's house, courted her father, booming all the time about his prospects, about his standing back home. Foolish girl, she got carried away, gave in to him and now of course he treats her differently.

The men Mary meets are bold egotists who are confident enough to treat her like a Bastille to be stormed. Being beautiful could be enough to ruin her life.

[[112]] [The man next her](#), strange, thin, says gently. "Do you have Jesus in your life?"

"What? No."

"If you get to know Jesus, he makes everything all right."

This is a shy man. It is like talking to a nervous deer.

"I have to get off at the next stop," she says. "You can talk to me on the way if you like."

He does and she does not worry when he gets off with her.



Car four

114

Mr Thomas Dowe

Outward appearance

Balding, rotund man, queasy with sweat in a pistachio shirt and jacket. Pressed white trousers. No briefcase, or heavy overcoat. Body language awkward, twisted, at odds with studied smartness of casual dress.

Inside information

A fireman on long-term sick leave, being treated for depression. Came to London from Northampton after a certain incident that he calls a near miss. Lives alone in a spotless flat. Only companion a female cat he ruthlessly grooms. Has kept secret, even from his doctors, a completely unacceptable sexual longing. On his way to [\[\[146\]\] St Thomas' Hospital](#) to request chemical castration.

What he is doing or thinking

The dreams are getting worse, truly terrible. His sexual fantasies shock him, leave him wanting to escape his own body, his own self. But they are there and he knows that now, at 32, they will never go away. They will keep pushing him until drunk or giddy from his other treatments, he goes under.

He remembers the face of the Northampton girl, her hollow eyes as she realized what he meant to do. He remembers the guilty rush, like a colliding train bearing down the track. He imagines real sex is like that, the rising toward a climax. He turned away that time.

He looks at [\[\[113\]\] the girl next to him](#), her long, vulnerable, fleshy legs. It would be so easy to do it now and be shut away forever. Then the girl begins to speak to [\[\[112\]\] the boy next to her](#). Thank you, Jesus.

The train comes into Waterloo, and unnoticed, he gets up to go.



Car four

115

Mr Debendrath Karan

Outward appearance

Cuddly young Asian man. Knitted ethnic hat with earflaps, knitted coat down to his knees. Frankly fat tummy. Sits with a portfolio and a briefcase. Loosely bandaged thumb.

Inside information

Talented animator who works on the *Asterix* series, and Kia-ora ads. Going to present his work to a [South Bank Technopark](#) studio. Confirmed chocoholic who is missing his fix. Bandage from a wound inflicted by a dropped scalpel.

What he is doing or thinking

Dreaming either of a Topic or a Yorkie. He normally has a cup of cocoa for breakfast, but this morning the tin was empty. The thought of [Waterloo station's confectioners](#) tugs at his heartstrings.

At the last possible moment, he grabs his briefcase and gets off. He is going up the long escalator when he realises - [his portfolio](#) is still on the train.

It is full of expensive colour reproductions of his best work and will cost perhaps a thousand quid to replace. Lack of chocolate combines with a sick panic in his tummy. He tries to run up the stairs, but runs out of breath. He leans against his knees.

It was his hand, it hurt, he didn't want to use it. At the lost property counter, an elderly lady in line in front of him has lost a clock. By the time he gets to the counter, an old scarecrow of a white man asks him the time of the train. Debendrath guesses. The scarecrow smiles with satisfaction. "You'll be lucky to get that back," he says. ["There's been a bit of a crash."](#)



Car four

116

Mr Anup Agnihotri

Outward appearance

Large man in blue overalls. Beatle haircut, double chin, razor-proof stubble. Briefcase at feet has paint splattered on it. "Doohrs," he murmurs. "Doohrs."

Inside information

Indian/Ugandan here now for many years, running a small but successful electrical contractors. Currently carrying out a small rewiring contract with the [Office of Publicity Procurement](#). Usually takes the van, but all his tools are safe inside the OPP, so he took the tube.

What he is doing or thinking

Looking at the people. It is strange to see how many of them are not English. It is as though he has been locked away in his own world. No wonder his daughter finds him so old fashioned.

Yesterday, one of the managers of the OPP came up to talk to him. What was he doing? The man looked polite, friendly, interested. Anup explained that he was fireproofing the doors to the main panels. He paints them on both sides with fire retardant.

The man nodded, smiling, friendly, and then asked again. What was he painting?

"Doors," replied Anup.

"Sorry?" replied the man.

"Doors," replied Anup. "Doors." He swung them back and forth, getting a bit of the paint on his fingers.

"Oh!" said the man. "*Doors.*"

Anup has lived in this country 19 years and still people cannot understand his accent. He looks at the fireproof paint on his fingers and the nearby faces from around the world. How do they do so well here? He is a happy, outgoing, capable man. How much further does he need to go? Can he go?



Car four

117

Mr Edward Gossart

Outward appearance

About 26, suit and overcoat rucked over huge shoulders, ruddy face, jet-black hair. Holds a teddy bear in a Tesco bag.

Inside information

A sales and service executive for [Lloyds Bank](#). Went to Rugby School where he was a star athlete. Will take the teddy bear to Christies at lunchtime to have it valued for his Aunt Ella who needs to sell it.

Teddy speaks estuary English with fluent glottal stops. His job pays shit and he lives in a tiny ground floor flat in Stoke Newington. His Aunt lives in a large house in the Cotswolds and thinks the Queen doesn't speak properly. The family made its money running wool mills. The mills and the money have gone.

What he is doing or thinking

Teddy is surprised by the level of resentment he feels. His aunt plainly imagines he drives to work in BMW. "Perhaps your girl could take it round for me," Ella said.

She can't remember where he lives. When friends from work visit, she asks them, "And how do you like our clean air?" or "Stoke Newington? We drove through there once didn't we?" When they've gone she forcefully suggests that Teddy might like to have some more local people around. Jenny Morriat, perhaps. The Morriats owned mills too. Jenny is on heroin.

Ella has no money, and can't shake the flu. Teddy doesn't mind helping her. Its just... she makes him feel like such a failure for learning how to live with a changed world.

A teddy bear. Does she really think it's worth anything?



Car four

118

Mr Anuk Dhotri

Outward appearance

Shellshocked businessman. Black hair in plastered, diving-board angles, dark stubble. Staring, bag-encircled eyes.

Inside information

Down from Solihull for a job interview with [[149]] [University of the South Bank](#). Spent the night with his bachelor cousin Vikram.

What he is doing or thinking

Anuk is drunk with lack of sleep. He imagines he smells of garbage.

At family gatherings Vik is always immaculately groomed: blazer, brogues, wavy hair-sprayed coiffure. Anuk has only ever seen Vik's London flat once before when Vik had cleaned it.

It is a hell of filth. Vik has a medical condition, and there are used bandages everywhere. The kitchen shelves are coated with dried ketchup. The fridge has mould inside. Outside pubic hairs are glued to marmalade stains. Eight full garbage bags were decaying in the front hall.

Vik offered Anuk the floor to sleep on. It was sticky and crunchy at the same time. Vikram's cats sniffed Anuk's face and padded up and down him. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a terrible smell. The cats had torn open the garbage bags and coated Anuk in orange peel and discarded curry. He fled to the bathroom to wash. It was in such a nightmarish condition he couldn't use it. He spent the rest of the night outside on the freezing balcony.

Vikram emerged in the morning, cheerful and immaculate.

Anuk can't think straight. The carriage is swimming. To turn up at any University in this state will do him more harm than good.

He decides to get off at Waterloo.



Car four

119

Mr Gary Collier

Outward appearance

Beefy man about 32, spiky black hair, pockmarked face, black jeans, leather jacket. Scowls broodingly.

Inside information

Works for the [\[\[145\]\] Met Police](#) in the Maintenance section. The lover of [\[\[44\]\] Amanda Stinton](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Last night Gary told his wife Toni that it was over, he's leaving her. As she's two months pregnant, there was a bit of a scene. She rang her Mum. Mrs Greene came over with murder on her mind. The wife is in the bedroom crying, Mrs Greene is shouting.

"What are you playing at? What's so special about this girl, then? You just get on the phone now and tell her it's over."

Gary took it for a while and then let her have it. "I don't have to answer to anybody, let alone you, you old cow. Keep out of it."

Gary smiles: he has to admit, it was all a bit strong. Mrs Greene is going to do everything she can to make his life a misery. He can't blame them really. It's like opening a jack in the box and watching the mess explode.

The train stops.

Gary gets off at Lambeth North. Two cars ahead, out comes Amanda. He saunters up behind her. "Boo," he says smiling.

"Oh. You, is it?"

"Sorry about Sunday. I got something to tell you," he says.

"So have I," she says.

They both speak at once. He says, "I told Toni. I'm leaving her." She says. "It's over Gary."

Both of them stop, and stare. They don't move as everyone else walks by.



Car four

120

Ms Elaine Clements

Outward appearance

Young woman, pale, grim mouth. Short hair, brightly coloured felt coat in jagged patterns, like a break for freedom. Reading *Sense and Sensibility* .

Inside information

Works in the [[46]] [British Film Institute](#) Bookshop. It's a gig. She hates movies. At least no one will turn [[ftnt120]] [Sense and Sensibility](#) into a film.

What she is doing or thinking

Elaine is consumed with hatred for her flatmates. Things were fine until Rita's boyfriend Sedgely more or less moved in.

They fuck like ferrets. Last night, having invited themselves to dinner, they were overcome with passion between the soup and main course. They retired to the bedroom. Elaine made polite conversation over their gladsome cries. Her friends, embarrassed, left early. Quiet descended long enough for Elaine to go to bed. They started again. Their headboard thumps. At 1 am they finally stopped and Elaine got some sleep.

In the morning they were at it again. Elaine put on the kettle, went back to shower, and found that the two of them had migrated to the bathroom and were saving water together. "Oh God, Oh God, I want you inside me!" Rita howled.

Elaine trudged into the kitchen, and drank coffee, her mouth tasting of dead cats. The coffee had its effect. Her bowels started to move. She thumped on the door. "Oh Elaine!" raged Rita. She and Sedgely stomped out angrily, towels around their midriffs. Rita's glance said: do you think you own the place?

Actually, she does. Elaine wonders: if she threw them out, would it stand up in court?

Knowing Sedgely, something probably would.



Car four

121

Who?

Outward appearance

Plump, all in grey. Restless, chooses not to stay in his seat, but walks up and down in the doorway area, head cocked sideways in a open, friendly, but somewhat vacant manner. Iridescent green collar around throat. Pigeon-chested, pigeon-toed.

Inside information

Lost on the Underground system since Baker Street, and separated from his wife whom he misses with a vague yearning. Who is hungry as always, keeping an eye out for something to eat.

What he is doing or thinking

Investigates a briefcase that smells tantalizingly of proteins, polish, and discarded skin like a corpse in the roadway. Who pecks it experimentally with his beak, but it isn't rotten or crushed enough. Shoes smell inviting too, but they keep moving, and the place where uppers meet soles looks suspiciously like smiling lips over teeth.

Who looks up and sees the lights, as bright as daylight and escape. Leaps up towards them, and pecks at the solidified light, then settles down again. He is no longer mystified by glass. Congratulates himself for being rather with-it, knowing about windows and all. The noise and motion stop, the doors open like jaws, and he scuttles backwards in fear.

[[134]] [Someone](#) tries to herd him towards them. Who panics and flies further down the aisle. Suddenly feet, like an avalanche of boulders, move all around him . He flutters up, and [[133]] [people duck](#). His wings avoid touching their entangling hair.

The doors rumble shut and he is swept on towards [[end4]] [the Elephant](#), and again, he tries to fly upward, towards the light and freedom.



Car four

122

Mr John Kennedy

Outward appearance

Gangly, spotty youth in spotless clothes staring into space.

Inside information

Works in Bloat the Bookmakers on [[136]] [Kennington Road](#). He enters into the computer results radioed in through Bloat's own system and runs reports on winnings and cashflow. Does not deal with the customers.

What he is doing or thinking

Yesterday, in broad daylight in [[201]] [Archbishops Park](#), John saw an Asian courting couple stoned by kids. At first he thought it was a game of catch. Something arched up into the air and smashed down into a girl's face.

Without thinking, John began to shout. "Oi! You! Stoppit!" To his surprise, the kids scattered, [[10]] [well-dressed lads in slacks](#). They looked like him.

The girl wept in her boyfriend's arms. "We shouldn't have been there," she sobbed. It was like she thought God was punishing her for being with a man. She had a Snoopy badge on her coat. They didn't want to call the police.

John went back to work in shock. He told the story, and as if in a nightmare, everyone began to laugh. Mike his boss, Sharon who pays out, they all laughed. Sharon ran out into the shop. "Here," she said, "you know little John who works on the computer? He's just seen some Pakis being stoned." The whole shop roared.

John is from a large family who go to church every Sunday, and he burns candles and confesses to sins of lust or bad intent. He is a virgin and thinks everyone must guess that, from the spots. Why did they laugh? Laugh at what? At him?



Car four

123

Mr John Templeton

Outward appearance

Middle aged man with goatee, pistachio jacket, collarless shirt, khaki trousers. Sits half asleep, smiling.

Inside information

Middle manager at Mosstains who fancies himself part of the company's young, creative image. Not the kind of person you'd think works there, a good front man. His staff hate him. So do his two ex-wives.

What he is doing or thinking

He's feeling good, on an upswing. Last night he got drunk and sorry for himself. He rang the Samaritans. This acted as a lightning rod for his depression. After ringing, he walked out into the cold night and looked at the stars. It was like looking at eternity. So what if the people at work bypass him, or tell him in taxicabs that they'll fight him every inch of the way and he doesn't have an idea what they want to fight him about? He doesn't want to die, he's just not suited for the job. This mood of philosophical resignation still cushions him.

He gets off at Waterloo and there is a shout. ^{[[3]]} [Deborah Payne](#) grabs hold of his arm. "John!" she says, "you don't need to die!"

He's still trying to figure out what this means when ^{[[36]]} [a black guy](#) comes up and asks Deborah out. She looks stunned. Actually, John always thought he might ask Deborah out, if they ever got along.

"Come out with me instead," John says trying to twinkle like one of the Musketeers. Deborah holds out both hands: stop. Shaking her head and muttering she walks away.

And over John, the gloom descends again.



Car four

124

Mr Tom McHugh

Outward appearance

Red thinning hair, pale face, shaving rash on neck. Puffy eyed from a hangover. Black tie with lurid broken plates of colour, grey raincoat in a swirl on his lap. Lifts up foot to rest on opposite knee. Kicks foot of [\[\[131\]\] passenger opposite](#). Recrosses legs. Pats pocket. Can't find something. Pulls out bits of paper and an opened condom packet (unused). Finds [\[\[2\]\] name badge](#). Tries to clip it onto shirt. The clip won't close. Stands up to put on raincoat. Staggeres and steps full onto the foot of the person across from him. Rain coat caught in the belt at back. Struggles with that and steps on neighbour again. Both trouser legs tucked accidentally into socks at back. Shirt untucked. Tries to tuck it in, but pushes raincoat down back of pants instead. Calvin Klein peeks up over top of belt. Picks up case as man opposite stands. Pushes man backwards with his bottom. Staggeres to car doors to get off. [\[\[127\]\] Vomits copiously](#).

Inside information

Works for [\[\[143\]\] Beetlehide](#). Tom doesn't know that he is the original inspiration for [\[\[87\]\] Ben Bevis's](#) character in *Mind the Gap*.

What he is doing or thinking

Had been congratulating himself on being so well organised. There he was, preparing early for his exit, sorting out his badge. He wishes he had not drunk so many Pimms last night, but he thought it was lemonade.

He finds vomiting very inconvenient, and a bit annoying after taking such pains. A cloud of hangover descends. He wipes his raincoat with a hanky and prepares to exit at [\[\[end4\]\] the Elephant](#).



Car four

125

Lord Anthony Lowick

Outward appearance

Genial older man, short grey hair, grey bumfreezer, polished expensive shoes. Was once perhaps athletic. Sits smiling quietly, cat-like.

Inside information

Full name Lord Lowick of Lowick. His expensive wife is going overripe in the south of France. She lives near their painter daughter who is in the throes of her own divorce. Lord Lowick used to host rock festivals in the 60s; then became a prominent ruralist and friend of Peter Blake in the 70s. Now successfully anonymous.

What he is doing or thinking

On his way back to examine the last of the building work on his new home. It is the tower of the [\[\[31\]\] old American Church](#). The pinnacle has stars and stripes carved into it. The converted bell chamber is huge, with high churchy windows. Lower down, the windows are slits as if for shooting arrows. It is the only completely burglar-proof house he has ever owned.

He will play bagpipes in it. The staircase is wooden and shoots up in one continuous swirl from the ground to the peak. It echoes like a valley. He camped out in the belltower while the work was being done and practised at midnight. He looked out later and saw people gathered below, staring up at the tower with its strange sounds.

No garden to tend, no staff to hide from, the Hockneys and the Blakes safely lining the staircase. Lord Lowick is aware of having escaped many things. The work scared off the nesting kestrels through, and he regrets that. He himself will be harder to shift.



Car four

126

Mrs Carol Noades

Outward appearance

Nearly invisible. Grey overcoat, blue trousers, stringy hair, a wedding ring.

Inside information

A stuffer at [[74]] [Epik Publications](#). The Agency found out the staff were working for cash while on benefit. David, their boss, couldn't afford to keep them all on, only some. The girls agreed they wouldn't be divided like that. They all quit.

This is a disaster for Carol. She is [[241]] [illiterate](#); she survives by deflecting attention. The other women covered for her, reading addresses, matching them to parcels. Where else will she be able to work?

Her husband has made her go into work today. Sod the others, he said, we need the money.

What she is doing or thinking

Her husband Billy works as a courier, but it's irregular. He's small and pretty, Billy, and vicious. What are we going to do now? he shouted. It's not my fault! she told him, weepy. He called her stupid, you stupid cow you can't even read. Carol gets on his nerves: he's nice enough to everyone else.

So she's sitting on the train, betraying her friends, but she's thinking: it was wrong of David not to pay us properly and tell National Insurance. He got just as much out of it as we did. Maybe if I go and tell him that, maybe he could charge more for the packing and pay us. Maybe if I told him what it means to me.

So she sits on the train, butterflies in her tummy. But she's going to see the boss and stand her ground.

It won't do any good.



Car four

127

Miss Jenny Green

Outward appearance

Red cheeked, 20, short auburn hair, brilliant red coat. Bounds in at Embankment, giggling, and peers through the door between carriages. She waves at someone and starts to laugh. The train lurches and she drops into the seat at the end of the row.

Inside information

Works in the pay office of the [\[\[30\]\] London College of Printing](#), where she met [\[\[181\]\] Kevin](#). Now they live and go to work together every day. They are both [\[\[222\]\] Beatle fans](#); the music is sensible and has nice tunes.

What she is doing or thinking

Jenny never had much time for nonsense; straight after school she got a good job, went out every Friday with the same large crowd of friends. She knew Kevin was a good thing soon as they met.

She sees his long pale face, his James Dean hair, through a screen of splattered grit and dust. She sticks her tongue out at him. He says, "You're mad, you are."

"I'm not having anything to do with do," she says, and pretends to examine her fingernails. [\[\[124\]\] A drunk](#) staggers past her to stand by the door and that sets her off again.

Then the drunk vomits over her knees. Jenny pauses, and the ludicrousness of it hits her. Kevin calls, "that'll teach you!"

She'll have to go home and change. "I'm getting off here," she shouts through the glass. Kevin holds a hand up to his ear. She leaves the train at Lambeth North, giddy with laughter. The drunk looks confused. Kevin waves, chuckling, as the train pulls him away to [\[\[128\]\] the Elephant](#).



Car four

128

Dr Agatha Beffont

Outward appearance

A large, round-featured woman with long hair parted in the middle. Everything about her is simple and tidy from the dark green skirt and jacket to her black coat, all of which a trained eye could see is bespoke fashion. She looks, however, somewhat dazed, her mouth awry in a mixture of amusement and horror.

Inside information

The wife of a junior member of the aristocracy who works in the City. She herself is a member of a major branch of the aristocracy. She works for the [\[\[27\]\] Department of Health](#),[\[\[133\]\] Elephant and Castle](#). Noblesse oblige.

What she is doing or thinking

She is remembering this morning's conversation with her daughter's Nanny. Nanny is attractive, bright, 25 with a delectable smile and good manners. This morning she casually mentioned that she had difficulty with her parents.

"Daddy raped me when I was nine," Nanny said, brightly. "I didn't really know what it was. So I dismissed it, I suppose. Except I did rather keep away from him." Dr Beffont expressed the hope that she did. Did she tell anyone? "Oh yes, of course," said the girl. "That's when he tried to kill me."

"Kill you!" exclaimed Agatha. "Mmm Hmm," said the girl nodding happily. "I woke up with my face covered by a pillow."

She sounded so cheerfully normal that Agatha left for work. She is only just remembering that most child abusers were abused themselves. And that her daughter is now alone with her. And nine years old.

To make it a perfect morning, [\[\[124\]\] someone then throws up on her](#).



Car four

129

Mr John Minnott

Outward appearance

Cherubically round man, about 45, in a spruce pinstripe suit and a new blue tie. Grey, flyaway hair. Smiles benignly through slightly piggy eyes.

Inside information

Works in Shipment Traffic for [\[\[132\]\] Pall Mall Oil](#). Once used pins on maps, now works with computers and feels up to date.

What he is doing or thinking

He is thinking of his wife Jean and their morning snuggles. Jean is plump and soft with a vast bottom. Their routine is to wake up at 6.30 every morning for a half hour hug.

It starts with Jean inserting herself under his arm, and resting her head on his grizzled chest. This is called Minging. Then she turns on her side and he hugs her bottom. Then they roll over and she hugs his. It's like toast, you have to do both sides. The climax is the Smumph. He rolls one leg over her and sinks as if she were pillows.

John is convinced being that being snuggled regularly gives people an aura. He is sure [\[\[125\]\] the old gent opposite](#) is snuggled. So is [\[\[127\]\] the laughing girl](#) at the end of the row. Not many other people are, and he feels sorry for them.

He is sure that snuggled people have a broader perspective on life. He could write a book about it: *The Secret of Snuggles*. It would advise long warm showers afterwards as part of the general cosiness, and give practical advice on what to do if someone farts. (Basically, you ignore it or light a match).

What a lucky man you are, he thinks.



Car four

130

Mrs Gerta Fazahi

Outward appearance

Golden coat, matching scarf, small black shoes and bag. Middle aged, carefully groomed. Smiles to herself, shakes her head, and is suddenly laughing and crying at the same time. Hurriedly wipes her face. No one seems to have seen.

Inside information

Teaches Arabic and Hebrew two days a week at [\[\[140.htm>Merely College](#). Her husband Saul, a lecturer at [\[\[53\]\] University College](#), is dying of motor neurone disease.

What she is doing or thinking

Remembering dinner the night before. Saul has been fitted with a vocaliser, a machine that transforms laboriously typed words into sounds. When it speaks, the machine has an American accent. Saul is Jewish Lebanese. The visiting couple were French academics, colleagues who had made a special trip to see Saul before he died.

Saul made light of everything. He started to type in textbook French. The machine burped with an American accent. "Cesste bun, cesste see deliseeox," the machine said. "Jay oon ideeee. Juh voodraize parlezz avek twaaah." The party took Saul through as many languages as they in all their cosmopolitan glory could speak, the funniest being German.

Gerta has just realised that she will never hear Saul's own voice and accent again. He'll still tell jokes. But he's like a tree, falling away leaf by leaf. She wishes it wasn't winter, but spring.

She hears laughter and turns to see [\[\[127\]\] a young girl](#) in a red coat, teasing a boy in the next car. Gerta watches them, aching for them. Life is great rolling wheel, moving on. Sometimes it crushes.

[\[\[124\]\] Then a drunk vomits](#). Sometimes you laugh.



Car four

131

Mr Ron Busby

Outward appearance

Ronnie Kray? Thick-set man, slick hair, cheeks troubled by Marilyn-like beauty spots. Huge shoulders under camel-coloured overcoat. Copper wrist band, gold (?) watch. Going over papers. Sits with one ankle resting on the opposite knee, both arms firmly occupying the armrests.

Inside information

Busby is going to a stakeholders' meeting at [\[\[213\]\] Adventure Capital](#). Runs a deregulated bus company in West Oxfordshire, a cattle feed processing plant, and several homes. Currently developing a property in Little Scam, Oxon.

What he is doing or thinking

Grumpily reviewing papers for today's meeting, still angry at having his planning application turned down. A year ago he moved into a large farmhouse on the outskirts of Little Scam, redecorated and renamed it The Manor House. The plan was to get clearance to build three new homes in the orchard and sell the entire property with the valuable planning permissions

Then, attack of the nimbies. Middle class farts simply didn't want anyone young or non-U moving into their cottagy paradise. Road use in the village, no development near the 12th century church, etc. He wasn't given permission. He's writing to Douglas Hurd about it.

Suddenly Mr Busby's aerial foot is kicked by [\[\[124\]\] someone also suspending his foot](#) in the same way. Busby glowers at him. The man's drunk. At Waterloo both men stand to leave. The idiot bends over and shoves Busby backwards with his bum. Then their briefcases collide. [\[\[132\]\] The person sitting next](#) to Busby starts to giggle. Angrily Busby sweeps away, in the opposite direction.

He hates trains. They're full of people.



Car four

132

Mr Richard Thurlow

Outward appearance

Delicate face, stringy, tanned, and ruddy. Narrow shouldered but somehow outdoorsy. Wears a suit and a body warmer without sleeves. Squashed sideways by the bulk of the man next to him.

Inside information

Dick is a champion clay shooter. Works in the York Road branch of [\[\[34\]\] Lloyds Bank](#). Lots of friends in [\[\[150\]\] Pall Mall Oil](#) with whom he shoots regularly.

What he is doing or thinking

Wishing [\[\[131\]\] his neighbour](#) would shrink. He knows the type: self-made man, thumps around the ground, arrogant as hell, is a poor shot, but thinks he's a member of some kind of elite.

It pains him to say it, but manners on the grounds are deteriorating. Only last Saturday, he saw some idiot abusing the young scorers. "I'm not satisfied with the birds!" he shouted. By bullying a youngster, he was allowed to re-shoot the entire stand. It made Dick's blood boil.

Suddenly Dick's eyes clear: the man next to him. It's him. He's the same one. Dick is about to say something when the man's foot is kicked by [\[\[124\]\] the fellow opposite him](#). Serves you right. Then they both stand and the two of them do a Laurel and Hardy routine, bumping bums and cases. Dick makes a point of sniggering nastily. He catches the man's eye. No wonder you have to take it out on children, matey. Idiots like you scare good people away from the sport.

Dick stands up to follow and sees that this man is too short. He's not the same person at all. But Dick is still mad.



Car four

133

Mrs Margaret Levesque

Outward appearance

Late 20s, neat beige suit, long baby-blue cloth coat. Sits frozen, eyes fixed on [\[\[121\]\] passenger 121](#).

Inside information

Works in administration for the Tabernacle, an evangelical ministry near [\[\[137\]\] Elephant and Castle](#).

When she was seven, Margaret returned from holiday. On the landing outside her bedroom, something evil waited, small, round, like a mouse without a head. Margaret wailed and it sprang apart and leapt at her face. "It's just a poor little bird," said her Mum, who always sided with Maggie's younger sister.

Ever since Margaret has disguised [\[\[248\]\] a mortal terror of birds](#). She and her husband just moved to Theydon Bois. Rooks caw in the trees, jackdaws nest in their new chimney, sparrows feed on neighbour's tables.

What she is doing or thinking

There is a bird on the train. It keeps fluttering upwards. She'll be covered in mites, in dust, in feathers. Her beautiful blue coat will get filthy, she'll choke. She'll itch for hours.

She can't stand it. At Waterloo, she bolts. On the platform, the shaking stops. The guilt comes, then anger, frustration. She'll be late, she's out of control. She's still angry with herself when [\[\[one\]\] the next train rumbles in](#).

Just past Lambeth North, it stops. They all wait. The speakers crackle and the driver announces, "I'm very sorry to tell you we'll be here for some time. The train ahead of us has gone through the barriers."

Something without a head jumps again. Margaret remembers the people on the other train and thinks: the bird. It saved me.

So does she like birds now?



Car four

134

Leon de Marco

Outward appearance

Skinny young man, Italian pallor, 1960s pointed boots, brown leather jacket on coat-hanger shoulders, pink shirt with black bead patterns embroidered on it. Sits scrunched up against the section divider, legs crossed at ankles, face bitter with fatigue. Suddenly smiles gently at [Passenger 121](#).

Inside information

Leon has been out all night. Lives on [an estate](#) on [Hercules Road](#) with his Mum. She will already have gone to work, leaving an anxious note to ring her.

What he is doing or thinking

Remembering last night. Went with his mates to *Wet*, a new club, and stayed til 5 am. *Wet* has a temporary swimming pool set up in it. Everyone strips down to their shorts, the girls take off their tops, it's cool, nobody gets hassled. It just so much fun to dance until you're sweaty, and then to swim. It was sexy but nobody got groped. Well not badly. They all just talked.

He can't remember what it was about, but it was light and heavy at the same time: stars, the beginning of the universe, how good everybody looked. And don't swallow the water.

Then out, feeling glossy, cool, fresh. On to the caff by the market for coffee and donuts. They loved each other, at least when they said goodnight, see ya, with the birds beginning to sing in the trees.

He wishes he could hold it in place, build some kind of monument to it. The train slows at Lambeth North and he moves towards the pigeon. "Come on little pigeon, go on home," he says.



Car four

135

Mr Jack Spufford

Outward appearance

Late 20s, casually but neatly dressed, fawn slacks, dress shoes, grey anorak.

Inside information

A part time classical musician and partner in *If you've got it, flaut it*, a shop that stocks nothing but flutes and sheet music. A year ago, on a concert trip to Poland, met and married Katya. The Home Office would not let her into the UK. They said they had to be married for six months first. So Jack returned and they both waited for six months. Then officials said he had to buy a flat before they would let Katya in. He was sharing with three other blokes. Someone said it was because they thought he was gay.

He saved and searched and finally found a one bedroom place for £59,000. In London that's a bargain. He wife is still in Poland.

What he is doing or thinking

Yesterday, waiting in the Croydon immigration office, he met the white wife of a black man. Her husband came here as a student. They are in love, they are married, but he was not allowed to work. She applied for work permits, the officials lost the applications. Now they are saying he has to go home though the marriage is legal. Why? Well, because he hasn't worked all the time he has been here!

An official, another woman, took her aside and told her out of kindness to give up -- the Agency thought it was an convenience marriage, and nothing she could do would change their minds.

Black or white, if you're foreign, England can be a shithole.



Car four

136

Mr Ibrahim Gurer

Outward appearance

Oppressed clerk. Bald, sweaty, plump, in fawn overcoat, grey suit, glasses and briefcase.

Inside information

[[219]] [Turkish](#) Cypriot working in his own travel agency on [[168]] [Kennington Road](#). Times are hard. This is usually his best time of year and bookings are down. He is a specialist in tours of Turkish [[138]] [Cyprus](#), which is little help.

What he is doing or thinking

His life is like a nutcracker. His English wife has gone a kind of crazy. The symptom is buying sprees. One room is full of toys that the child doesn't want. Huge blue teddy bears, pink bunnies. Another room is full of clothes and shoes. She buys a CD a day.

He has seen *Absolutely Fabulous* and knows who his wife is: she is the PR lady. That is how other English people see her, almost pretty but gauche, always in pain, always demanding something. She thinks she is a woman of no position. After all she married a Turk. He can see why she spends: if you spend money, people treat you well. It is not toys she is buying but respect.

His brother in shipping back home sent Ibrahim a substantial sum to invest. He is doing nothing with it, but let his wife spend. He will be destitute. He looks at the travel advertisements above the seats, they all offer the same destinations. He racks his brain. What else can he offer?

For no reason, he remembers an old Led Zeppelin album cover: the Devil's Causeway.

Of course. *Come see beautiful* [[152]] [Northern Ireland](#). After all, there's a ceasefire.



Car four

137

Mr Xavier Ducro

Outward appearance

Determined young black man. Blue suit, burnished black shoes, beige overcoat. Shaved, short hair with a fashionable Tin Tin flip in front. Stares, his face slack, at a personal organiser.

Inside information

His father was a builder who decided that Chartered Surveying was the profession for his son. His son agreed: it was an attractive mix of professional standing with outdoor, masculine work. Has met at his church the woman he wants to marry, Charlotte. He is courting Charlotte in the classic manner of dates and visits with her parents. Works in an architects office near [\[\[5\]\] the Elephant](#), serving his apprenticeship to become a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (FRICS).

What he is doing or thinking

He is turning the station names on the Bakerloo line into anagrams.

Bakerloo line anagrams have become an obsession. It started when, through a train window, the words "Oxford Circus" miraculously rearranged themselves into "X. Ducro, FRICS". He took this as a symptom of overwork.

The next day, however, the letters of the word "Waterloo" swam like fish until they read "a Wet Rolo", which he is what he was eating at the time. It seemed the anagrams only formed when they told the truth. After arranging a loan, "Embankment" became "Met bank men".

Just now in his notebook, "Charing Cross" has morphed from "Char Crossing" to "Scorch in rags" to "Crash so ring C".

If that's true too? What if Charlotte's in trouble? He gets off early at Waterloo to ring.

The signs in the station now read "Woo later".



Car four

138

Mr Nicholas Paganos

Outward appearance

A gangster from a 1930s movie. Plump, groomed, handsome, with slick wavy hair, and a suit and a tie. Curve of his mouth gives a permanently satisfied look.

Inside information

Owner-manager of gentleman's hairdressers on [[204]] [Lower Marsh](#). Came from [[136]] [Cyprus](#) just after the troubles in the sixties, when he was just a child. Happily married, one son in university, one daughter taking A levels.

What he is doing or thinking

His third child, 12-year old Angelica, has the potential to be a professional tennis player. Her teachers spotted it first. She began to train an hour every day after school, and win weekend tournaments. On Saturdays, the family would watch Angelica play. She looked so small and frail with the huge racket. But her very smallness, hardness was a kind of strength.

They've been told that now she needs professional, individual coaching. This is different from lessons. This means someone who devotes himself to training her. They are talking Olympics. They talking prize money. They are talking fees that he can't afford.

Nicholas remembers driving out of Cyprus. There was a terrible smell, and the car crept cautiously into a village. A man in khaki trousers lay in the dust, and suddenly, his mother's hands covered his eyes. Your life is upended, you change countries, you cut hair, and suddenly you have a chance for your daughter to really achieve something. And she wants it. She works so hard, so small, so serious, her face like a little hazelnut. What wouldn't he do?

Nicholas decides. He'll remortgage his house.



Car four

139

Mr Hisham Badhuri

Outward appearance

Indian movie star? Handsome, broad shouldered. Blue jeans, trainers, brown leather jacket with an American oil company logo.

Inside information

Graduate business student on a trainee placement [[206]] [with British Telecom](#). First degree from Ein Shams University in Cairo. Taught himself English as a part time tourist guide. Learned other things from them as well. A Muslim fundamentalist dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Poster in his bedsit shows the hand of Islam smashing the star of David against the dome of the rock.

What he is doing or thinking

His memories swim like fish in a pool. He sees the old man on the bus many years ago back home. He sees his English girlfriend Karen. He sees his mother in their flat in Mansura, reeds on the floor to repair chairs. He sees the many photographs of himself, handsome in a gelabiya.

He sees Karen's father, big, pink faced, crumpled, white haired, in the showers after tennis. Karen's father's hand on his thigh. Karen's father lying face down on the bed. Karen saying, "My father really, really likes you, he keeps asking after you."

He sees the rowboatmen in Mansura. "You are an Egyptian, why are you taking the side of these foreigners?" And he himself saying, "It doesn't give you the right to cheat them." He cheats them himself. He loves them.

He supports a group that aims rifles at them because Islam stands up to Mubarak and his corruption.

What stands up to his own corruption? He stands, and his many selves swim like fish, on from Waterloo..



Car four

140

Ms Anita Mazzoni

Outward appearance

Floppy velvet hat, black bangs, red lipstick, Gothic pallor, bover boots, charcoal stockings. Sits smiling slightly, legs crossed.

Inside information

Works for [[197]] [a small commercials production house](#) behind [[155]] [Merely College](#). Her boss is an ex-academic who gets nervous in presentations and nervous around her. She likes making people nervous.

She's an unusual girl. She would have been on the Marchioness the night of the disaster, but a last minute liaison meant she was otherwise engaged. Her mother dated [[ftnt186b]] [Mick Jagger](#); was briefly famous as a model, and went out with [[ftnt140]] [John Noakes](#) of *Blue Peter* fame. Anita inherited this capacity for effortless notoriety. Her friend Ruth did a portrait of Anita for a degree show. It won a prize, and she ended up on posters all over the Underground.

What she is doing or thinking

Anita loves herself. She is about to embark on another escapade. The *Big Issue* salesman at Waterloo is a real hunk. She's been chatting him up for weeks, getting off one stop early. Today she's going to tell him: don't be homeless, come live with me and be my sex slave.

His name is Antonio. He's from Italy, and is so much more interesting than English men. He's an actor and worked in New York for years which is why he speaks with an American accent. Antonio came over here for a show. It went bust, which is why he's on the skids. Anita knows people who could help him.

She thinks: [[198]] [who else but me would have an affair with a *Big Issue* salesman?](#)



Car four

141

Miss Josette Parely

Outward appearance

Middle aged woman, thick pebble glasses on a chain, grey overcoat, brogues. Sits reading with ferocious concentration a *Beryl the Peril Annual* . [[142]] [A young woman next to her](#) reaches across and shakes a pack of licorice allsorts at her. The woman chooses one with great care -- a pink square. "Put the book away," says her companion, and they begin to pack up for Waterloo.

Inside information

Josette suffers from Down's Syndrome. Her family are French. They escaped the Occupation and stayed after the war. Her mother was a trained nurse who devoted herself to raising Josette. Her younger brother took great care of her and defended her if she were teased.

"How cum your sister is funny?" children would ask. "I'm retarded," Josette would answer. She learned how to manage other children. They grew up. She did not.

What she is doing or thinking

Josette wishes she were like Beryl, looking after herself. But she doesn't because she has Down's Syndrome. They are going to visit Mummy, and talk to Mummy and leave her some sweets. You can't replace a Mummy, she goes away and leaves a hole. You want people to hug you, but no one hugs you like Mummy.

They're going to change trains! Josette recognizes the signs in herself, she could get overexcited and silly. She gives Nane a quick hug, and Nane knows what that means. "We'll settle down soon," Nane promises. "Got everything?"

"Except my Mummy," says Josette. But that will solve itself soon because Josette knows Down's Syndrome don't live long. She'll join her soon.



Car four

142

Miss Nane Parely

Outward appearance

Old-fashioned woman in her late 20s. Vanessa Redgrave hair, tan sheepskin coat, Laura Ashley dress. Tends [\[\[141\]\] the older woman next to her](#).

Inside information

Graduate student doing a PhD on Dog Latin and Renaissance verse. Born out of wedlock to Josette Parely when Josette was 16.

Josette was always affectionate. One day she hugged the wrong man. No one knows who the bastard was. Nane and Josy grew up like sisters in the grandparents' house. Nane assumed that Gran was her mother. Both are now visiting Gran's grave.

What she is doing or thinking

When Nane's girlfriend asks what was it like to grow up with Josette, Nane says that it was fun. Like having a big sister who was just a bit bigger than other people's sisters. They had friends and parties together. They would make paper crowns and sing. It was easy to scare Josy, with ghost stories or summaries of horror films. "You mustn't scare me," Josette would warn. If frightened, she would weep, beg and scabble at the floor until her fingers bled.

Josette loved putting on plays. In 1981, when Gran was dying, Nane was 13. She decided to distract Josy with a production of *Grease*. They and little Christian rehearsed "You're the One that I Love" between summer visits to the hospital. Their father sat in the garden and wept.

Now he lives in France, with other graves and memories. In her mind, Nane sees him, her girlfriend, her Gran and has a sense of unlikely connections. Time and family. Her sister-mother stands.



Car four

143

Ms Lucie Friend

Outward appearance

Going to dinner dance in 1957? Satin top, full black skirt, velvety black high heels, tweed coat with black velvet collar. About 36. Looks across the row and fans out her fingers of both hands. Turns her head to the left, to the right. Squeezes both earrings. Grimaces showing all her teeth, moving head from left to right again. Licks teeth. Reaches into purse.

Inside information

Works for [[219]] [Beetlehide Shippers](#) as PA to the Mediterranean Controller. Unmarried, lives with her mother. The two are very fashion conscious and share clothes.

What she is doing or thinking

Lucie is using the windows of the train as mirrors. She was very impressed once by a description of [[186]] [Mrs Thatcher's grooming](#). The secret was constant maintenance. Lucie checks out hair, fingernails polish, and teeth, for any signs of breakfast. From her colour-coordinated purse, she gets an id badge, and tries out various positions which combine modesty and assertiveness.

Lucie knows her workmates are spreading vicious rumours. They say she has fallen in love with the Mediterranean Controller. That is because she must restrict access to him, protect him. Others are out to undermine him, and so target her as well. Naturally a woman devoted to her work is devoted to the man. She keeps a picture of his two children on her desk. She sends them birthday cards and presents. She gives him presents: mugs, pens and once a set of six white Y fronts.

Armoured for the day, she walks early to the doorway, rustling from silks and girdles underneath her skirt.



Car four

144

Mr Dominic Sharpe

Outward appearance

Old soldier in green camouflage jacket and blue jeans, hiking boots, tartan beret with a regimental badge on the side. Red beard streaked with grey. Matching scarf. He looks pudgy, persnickity, gruff.

Inside information

An unemployed Munchausen, who imagines he was a soldier. On his way to the [Imperial War Museum](#), where he talks to visitors about his wartime experiences at the Battle of the Bulge. If challenged by a foreigner for being too young to have served in World War Two (Dominic is 55 years old), he pretends to think they are German and yells xenophobic abuse at them. If they could not be taken for German, (for example, black Americans) he thanks them for being too kind, and says that he is sure he looks every one of his 77 years.

If challenged by a Brit, he winks and admits he is an actor paid to enliven the exhibit. This is also untrue but it is close to what he tells himself -- that he is an unpaid display. Then he asks for money.

Has just sold his volume of wartime memoirs for an undisclosed sum.

What he is doing or thinking

Fuming over the size of the advance. The book took years to write, the product of bitter experience. The incompetence of his commanding officers, the heat, the dust, the loss of young life. The book will blow the lid right off the scandal of that fiasco. What do they know about it, snug in their publisher's offices?

What happens if they ask him for proof he was there?



Car four

145

Mr Douglas Esswood

Outward appearance

Middle-aged man, prematurely grey, bustles into the car. Heavy grey suit, clean beige overcoat. Briefcase and smaller cloth bag probably containing laptop computer. [[110]] [Passenger 110](#) moves feet so he can sit down. Nods to the kid, then settles in more pensively, index finger pressed against the line of his mouth.

Inside information

Sales Director of Effective Buggers Inc, an American company. On way for third presentation to the [[193]] [Met Police](#). Douglas's company offers realtime image enhancement to video surveillance systems.

What he is doing or thinking

Pondering Britain. A kid like that back home would be a punk, here he's sweet and polite. This is such a nice country, but all anyone talks about is security - job security, [[171]] [locks](#), CCTV. Douglas knows his product works. It enlarges, clarifies but it's being called upon to do new things.

Because to put it bluntly, it's illegal to spy on people in America. A visit [[213]] [to New Scotland Yard](#) left him exhausted. [[91]] [A very pretty woman his own age](#) simply switched channels from flyovers to alleyways, shopping centres, main streets. The whole country is wired. In a department store in Oxford street, the cameras followed a man the operators didn't like around the shop. After he left, they warned other stores by radio.

Then cameras followed him down the street, saw him get on a bus, and videoed the bus to make sure he didn't get off. The English live in *1984* and don't know it.

Still, it's good for his business. As long as nobody tries to do the same to him.



Car five

146

Miss Amelia apJohn

Outward appearance

Early 20s, small, sturdy, sits on tiptoe as the seat is too high. Black stockings, stubby, soft black shoes. Tan overcoat with corduroy collar. Blue dress peeking through underneath. Sits looking at the rings on her fingers. Begins to take them off, one after another.

Inside information

A trainee nurse at [[221]] [St. Thomas' Hospital](#).

What she is doing or thinking

She is not allowed to wear rings or wristwatches at work and so is removing them.

Amelia hates being around sick people. She dislikes the old, particularly old men. She didn't know that men's body hair continues to grow, on their shoulders or chests. It gets very long, and then it goes white, a grizzled mat over withered dugs. Their arms look like crepe paper. Their lips go thin, their ears fat. She didn't realize they get covered in little brown spots. She has to plug colostomy bags or feed gurgling pipes down into their bellies. Old men make her feel continually sick.

A fine time to find that out; after you've decided to become a nurse. Yesterday an old man collapsed in the toilet, and Amelia ran out to fetch the ward sister. "You can't panic like that," said the ward sister.

"It's not panic," Amelia said before she could stop herself. "He's just so...UGLY."

"This isn't a beauty contest," said the sister.

Amelia became a nurse with images in her head of healing the pathetic, the young, the sad, the handsome. Something clicks. It's young hunky soldiers she wants to heal.

She could always join [[81]] [the Army](#).



Car five

147

Mr Daniel Richards

Outward appearance

Small, slim, young black man. Thick-framed glasses. Short, white overcoat, dark suit, blue shirt with white bordered squares, black and yellow tie. Shoulder bag made of tan leather, slumped between feet. He prods chin thoughtfully, reading *Conningsby* by Benjamin Disraeli.

Inside information

Works for [[227]] [Dun and Old](#). Should be studying the documents in his bag on qualifying for tax accountancy, but sometimes the soul gravitates to what it truly needs.

What he is doing or thinking

Conningsby 's a bloody awful novel, but its siren call is this: Disraeli was a Jew who decoded Britain enough to rule it. Daniel has not had an easy life. He's small, not physically strong, and comes from a family of robust brothers. They are proud of him now. They used to beat him up. When he was a child, his favourite bible story was Daniel in the Lions' Den.

When Daniel was ten, his calm and funny mother collapsed while the boys were at school. No one told them she was in hospital and their father, not a resilient man, disappeared from grief. The boys were left on their own to cope for a week. Little Daniel emerged as the brightest. He decoded the cookbooks; he found where Mum was; he found the way to the hospital. When both parents finally returned, Daniel was head of the family.

His brothers defended Daniel after that. He found that wit could marshal strength. He is still small, still in the Lion's Den, still learning. Daniel has a vision of Britain, one in which he fits. Rules.



Car five

148

Miss Helen Thistlethwaite

Outward appearance

As slim as Audrey Hepburn. Wiry red hair in careful disorder. Clothes all black except for the raincoat. It looks like a shopping bag, lime green with huge white dots.

Inside information

Works in *Horse(clothes?)* a shop on [[200]] [the Cut](#) that specialises in restrained fashion -- beiges and blacks, usually long, knitted, and baggy.

Helen's sister Pearl has been missing for 20 years.

What she is doing or thinking

Helen is shamed by the raincoat. It's cold today and both of hers were being drycleaned. She found this in her closet: she thinks it's her Mum's.

She looks at the sleeve and can't help but think how different fashion is now. This must be from the early 70s. Even in midwinter, women went about the streets in miniskirts (though they wore long, long boots when it was really cold.) They were either cheerier, bolder or stupider.

It was about then that Pearl disappeared. She was six years older than Helen, a teenager, with long hair and tight-ribbed sweaters. Helen lived through Pearl: boyfriends, fashion, fun.

She disappeared, no news, no body. Mum never gave up trying to find Pearl: mediums, sniffer dogs. Arrested serial killers got a letter with a photograph, pleading to end a mother's suspense. Nothing ever did.

For the most part they never talk about Pearl, though her photograph is on top of the telly. Helen has only just been able to leave home, and Mum has never thrown out the old clothes.

Neither one of them ever wear strong colours. Something lurches.

This is Pearl's coat.



Car five

149

Miss Selima Haydir

Outward appearance

Nearly middle-aged, beaky woman, with neatly tied scarf over her head, wearing a suit that the Queen might wear: navy blue with white polka dots and a pleated skirt. Flicks through *Introduction to Assessing Environmental Impact*. The top of the pages have been stamped [[157]] ["University of the South Bank"](#).

Carries an empty cloth bag. A printed panel on it shows a hand draped in the American flag holding a bouquet of Planet Earths. *The Ninth International Conference of ...* it says *July 1995*. The main word is an unintelligible hippy logo.

Inside information

Well known [[16]] [Bosnian](#) film critic. Selima's career has suffered a certain amount of disruption. Her father is prosperous and has paid for her to do a degree in safety in Britain.

What she is doing or thinking

Selima aches like a loose tooth that needs to come out. Her home city is under siege, the landscape of her childhood is being blown up. Is that Environmental Damage enough? Films bore her, everything makes her feel like a coward, safe, away.

And alone. Her English, which everyone told her was excellent, is fine on theoretical matters, but she doesn't know words like 'bicarbonate of soda' or 'mushrooms'. The embassy has no work for her. Her father has gone underground, and the Muslim men she meets are all Arabs. The bag is empty so that it can be filled with shopping, which she will eat alone. The conference it refers to is for Peace. It has not happened yet.

[[end5]] [What she really wants to do is pick up a gun.](#)



Car five

150

Miss Caroline Roffey

Outward appearance

Discreet long black coat, brown suit, dress a bit short. Honey-highlighted hair, luxurious makeup. New, slim leather case. Badge just visible on inside jacket. Reading the [[235]] *FT* .

Inside information

Director of Training for [[205]] [Pall Mall Oil](#).

What she is doing or thinking

Scanning the paper when she senses [[151]] [something out of kilter](#) next to her. "Caroline! Hello!" says a deep, rich, posh voice. Looks up to see a grey-fingered, grey-faced man with unwashed locks spilling over a re-stitched jacket collar. "How're things at Pall Mall? Still doing the training? "

Who is this? An ex-colleague? Pall Mall has downsized twice. Caroline frantically tries to place him, re-imagining him in clean clothes and short hair. "I'm fine thank you, how are you?"

He bellows. "Couldn't be better. You know I'm working on the Internet now? In fact I was speaking yesterday at the Marketing on the Internet conference."

"What a coincidence!" she says. "I was at that conference." Back, very far back at university, Caroline knew the band Genesis before they made it. She is beginning to wonder if this is one of the original members Ñ one who left too soon.

He pats his pockets. "I used up all my cards yesterday. Do you have one of yours?"

Something tells her no. She chuckles. "I used all mine up, too,"

She gets out at Waterloo and walks quickly away in case he follows. She feels sorry for him, and awful about her reaction. I used to know him, she thinks. Who, who, who?

And why?



Car five

151

Mr Danny Dodding

Outward appearance

Filthy middle aged man. Uncut hair and beard, Frankenstein boots. Suit repaired with thick white thread. Enters at Embankment, scans the carriage, and promptly sits next to a woman.

Inside information

Begs for money and travels all day on the Underground to keep warm. Grew up in Barnados and drifted ever since, bugged off as he puts it, except for a brief period in university. Danny studied philosophy. Proved to his own satisfaction that it was illogical to wear shoes.

He is to be seen in summer walking along country lanes. Likes to talk to people, but has to scheme to gain and hold attention.

What he is doing or thinking

[[150]] [What a pretty woman](#), the kind he went to university with. He spots a forgotten conference badge on her jacket. *Marketing and the Internet*, it says, *Caroline Roffey, Training Director, Pall Mall Oil*. Oil huh? Well all the trendy little girlies went into business and became like their Dads only not bald and fat.

"Caroline!" He greets her like a long lost friend. He would like to take her for a six-month walk, show her the stars from under a hedge. He would like to put his hands on a fully operational warm radiator. He might just get her card, if he asks.

But, no, her caution is automatic.

"I'm in the book." he calls out as she leaves. Her smile looks clear, unforced. That was all he wanted. He sits back content.

Then [[176]] [the man opposite](#) sits forward. Oh good, someone else to talk to. His lucky day.



Car five

152

Mr Terry Mack

Outward appearance

Small, handsome man. Kindly face, red moustache. Green jacket, bilious sweater, hiking boots. Holds open [[18]] [The Daily Express](#), but his eyes are fixed elsewhere.

Inside information

A member of the IRA posted to London during the ceasefire to recruit Irish men who already live here. The mission has changed. A friend has identified the wife of an informer.

Terry is tailing [[74]] [passenger 74, Christine Marre](#).

What he is doing or thinking

He knows Christine will get out at Waterloo to work in Epik. He has seen the way she travels, nervous, looking over her shoulder. She's an informer's wife all right, in a permanent state of nerves.

He's been in her flat, looking for photographs or letters. She's thorough. Obviously trained -- not a letter anywhere. She must read them and eat them. He looked through the wastebin for torn paper. He looked at her phone bills, from Mercury, itemised. No Irish calls. Everything in the flat looks temporary, like she doesn't really live there.

He wants to fuck her. She's the kind of woman he likes; there is something delicious and theatrical about her face. He wants to have an affair with her, and find out all about her husband. And then one night, with his dick up her, he'll tell her: I'm a Provo.

That will make her come; he knows that from her face, from its avidness, its blank stare. She'll be terrified, thrilled. Middle class British bitch.

He decides. Today on the platform, they'll meet. He stirs himself as the train slows, ready to catch up with her.



Car five

153

Dr Anthony Jamieson

Outward appearance

Grey hair, but young, pink face. Arran sweater with black trousers. Voluminous but shiny overcoat. In boisterous conversation with [[154]] [his companion](#), legs apart, apparently holding an invisible cup of coffee.

Inside information

A GP with an enthusiasm for boating. He and his companion crew together. Both are visiting [[161]] [Buntleys Coachworks](#) to hire a trailer to haul a very particular boat to The Boat Show.

What he is doing or thinking

Telling his friend about a live videoconference from on board a Ship in the Fastnet boat race. The chairman kept lurching in and out of the picture. Tony mimes it. "He kept disappearing out of shot. Then he'd swing back in and start talking about sponsorship." Less experienced participants were flung about in the background. One of them suddenly leant overboard and vomited in shot.

"But there was this one old man. Nothing fazed him. He just stood there like this, absolutely unmoving. He looked a bit like a drunk, only he had a cup of coffee. And he stood there drinking it, like this..."

Tony mimes a superior looking man, with his coffee tacking back and forth across the air in slow progress towards his lips.

"He never said a word, he just kept looking at all these berks trying to have serious business meeting the middle of a boat race."

Tony's wife is a serious, middle class woman tormented by the children's education and ecological issues. His work consists of prescribing happy pills to lonely old people.

"So," he suddenly says. "What's our next little adventure going to be?"



Car five

154

Mr Neil Sylvan

Outward appearance

Balding, fit, but chinless. Brown sweater, trousers and boots, but his tartan shirt collar is in vibrant colours. Neil nods, laughs, crumples forward as his companion completes his story.

Inside information

Analyst for a City merchant bank, who captains [[153]] [Passenger 153](#). They are selecting a trailer to haul one of Neil's boats to The Boat Show at Earl's Court.

It's all a bit of laugh. The boat is a six-foot dingy from an old cruise ship. They have entered it in the Classical Yachting exhibition. It is, after all, by definition a classic boat. They've had a lot of fun pretending to be insulted that the Show don't want it. Now the Show has agreed to exhibit it. They can't wait to see the look on people's faces.

What he is doing or thinking

His chum asks: so what's our next adventure? "The Club Supper," Neil replies.

"Oh, you're joking," says Tony. "I said adventure, not a wake."

"You haven't heard about our outfits," says Neil. "I reckon tuxedo tops. Tailored shorts. And yellow wellington boots."

"With waterproofs?"

"And Sou'westers," says Neil. "Very elegant."

"Now what will the wives wear?" They exchange a gleam of understanding. The real reason for being a sailor is to get away from patients, bosses, aggressive barrow boys, wives, spreadsheets and diaries.

This could be the last year for Neil. Running a boat costs money. Things at the bank aren't good. Something funny seems to be happening with some of their futures in the Far East. Mind you, nothing they haven't seen before at [[ftnt154]] [Barings](#).



Car five

155

Miss Iris Kraushaar

Outward appearance

Elongated 13 year old, brown hair pulled back, wraparound tartan skirt, powder blue stockings, with socks rolled down around ankles on top of spongy brown loafers. Braces on teeth. The whole effect is curiously 1940s. Listens warily to [\[\[156\]\] the girl next to her.](#)

Inside information

A ballet student who gets two mornings a week off from [\[\[36\]\] St Paul's](#) girl's school to attend dance classes held in the [\[\[156\]\] Merely College](#) studio. [\[\[248\]\] Grandparents are German refugees who escaped Hitler's Germany.](#) Father is Financial Director of a large pharmaceutical company.

What she is doing or thinking

That Sonali is trying to tell her she's got a big bum. They were supposed to have a truce. Neither one of them is exactly a dancer yet. Iris tries to talk instead about a favourite teacher.

Sonali keeps up the attack. "Well she's got the reverse problem. Tiny legs."

Iris delicately rubs the tip of her nose. Sonali is the nearest thing Iris has to a friend. This new jealousy, if that's what it is, is some kind of last straw.

Maybe Sonali is put off by the big house in Bishops Drive. Iris is. She wants out from under her family. Above all else she wants to be a dancer. She knows she is shy, slow to make friends. And dedicated.

She decides, very quietly. She'll leave, go to a boarding school with a proper dance programme. To begin work in earnest. To grow up.

"Tiny legs or not, she's a good teacher. " Iris chuckles. "She's just a bit demanding for people who are too young."



Car five

156

Miss Sonali Shetty

Outward appearance

Thirteen years old. Raw silk top, white slacks, green cloth coat with fake fur collar. Short hair, which she keeps tossing out her face. Gold earrings, and make up. Strains upward to talk to [\[\[155\]\] her taller companion](#).

Inside information

Ballet student given time off regularly from St Paul's to practise in studio at [\[\[33\]\] Merely College](#). In love with the girl next to her.

What she is doing or thinking

Everyone knows that she, Sonali, is prettier than Iris and looks are important if you're a dancer, so why is Iris so superior all the time? Is it money? Well Sonali's family have money too.

She's trying to help Iris. "You have to have a good silhouette. A large bottom needs long legs. You can away with it if you have a high waist and a good carriage."

Maybe this sounds a bit personal, Sonali thinks. But you have to be objective about such things.

Suddenly, Iris is talking about their teacher Miss Boniface, who Sonali is sure fancies them both, and that makes Sonali sad, angry.

"But she has the reverse problem, tiny legs," Sonali says. It's her problem, too. She thinks her own legs are small, bandy, nearly misshapen.

Iris wipes her nose in that prissy way. Iris! Notice me, not your bloody teacher!

"Also, the legs are thick, just here in front." Sonali says, continuing, sensing that something has veered out of control. She hates Miss Boniface.

It's not like that when the music plays, and they strip down to work and they are like horses, running. Running together.



Car five

157

Dr Paul Binyon

Outward appearance

Aging art student? Facial stubble, pony tail, black corduroys. Desert boots, ethnic waistcoat, white jacket. Looks disgruntled, arms shoved into armpits.

Inside information

Young Turk of the gardening establishment, those authors and presenters who provide advice and inspiration to a nation of gardeners.

Dr Binyon is the author of *The Exploded Garden*, which advanced a radical approach to garden design. *Forget Man* advocated a non-anthrocentric approach to gardening, putting the needs of wildlife and fungi above people. The BBC are talking to him about presenting a final episode of *Arena* on the radical gardening movement.

What he is doing or thinking

Dr Binyon is contemplating ecological catastrophe. The New Zealand [flatworm](#) has finally appeared in the heartland of British gardening -- the rich southeast who buy his books.

The flatworm coils the domestic earthworm, liquifies and then drinks it. Like one gardener to another.

No one seems to be recognizing the scale of the disaster. It's on a par with grey squirrels. The extinction of the soil-draining earthworm would mean a return of low pastures to marshland. There needs to be a national day of action. Out of the lounges, onto the lawns. Seize specimens now! His lecture today at [USB](#) is devoted to it. Is it the kind of thing that will mobilise young people?

More important, will it make good television? Can a non-anthrocentric radical gardener be seen to be campaigning against a worm? Dr Binyon considers. In fact, the imported flatworm is a prime example of human interference. Radical!

[He'd better talk to the Beeb fast.](#)



Car five

158

Miss Tina Ravon

Outward appearance

About 24. Red jacket, jeans, a skimpy white T shirt, showing pale, limp tummy. Explosion of curly hair, Irish-fresh face and merry eyes.

Inside information

Student at [[242]] [RADA](#), club organiser, and businesswoman. En route to a temp agency for tips. Her real name is Monica.

Got into this car to avoid [[87]] [Mind the Gap](#), with whom she used to work. Tube theatre was fun but was never going to make any money. Tina took the basic idea and came with up a few scams of her own.

First she hired out student actors for parties. The actors insulted the hosts who had prearranged scripts with brilliant replies. But that required the hosts to perform. Some of them sounded like they were reading. Others forgot their lines. Some of them didn't pay.

So Tina eliminated the host. Instead, her actors staged blazing rows in the middle of dinner parties, breaking sugar plates over each other's heads. It was trendy for a while.

What she is doing or thinking

Tina looks at [[169]] [the faces around her](#), the strain and exhaustion. These sad people, she thinks. I should hire them friends.

The idea takes hold. No one to invite to your wedding? Hire some attractive guests. Rent a jolly best men who can deliver a genuinely funny speech. Embarrassed by your parents? Hire some others. Told the boss that you went to Oxford? Hire yourself some old classmates, every one guaranteed genuine Oxbridge.

Friends: the ultimate fashion accessory.

Chums R Us.

MacPeople: fast & tasty.

In three years' time, Tina will be a millionaire.



Car five

159

Mr Clive Sidden

Outward appearance

Grey and pink and creased, in a crumpled brown pinstripe suit. Scuffed old briefcase.

Inside information

Retired information officer of the General Education Funding Body, late of York Road.

The Funding Body was broken up into four separate organisations. Three moved to Carlisle, Norwich, and Okehampton. A rump body to be renamed the Office of Educational Finance moved to a vacated floor of the Civil Servants Union. There, for a month, the old GEFB flag flew.

What he is doing or thinking

Of how loyal he used to be. The Government Information Directory listed his home phone number in case he was needed. He commissioned a GEFB uniform for exhibitions. The GEFB flag and motto were his ideas.

He thinks about how he grovelled to his bosses, and how he boasted of his relationship with them. "And the Director said to me, Clive, he said, I trust you to do the right thing."

He thinks what a fool they made of him. He supervised the move; briefed his successors; they suggested early retirement; he said goodbye to what was left of his staff.

And then in the winter darkness, he climbed up onto the roof and he cut the cords of the flagpole with a stanley knife. They won't be able to hoist the GEFB flag down. They'll have to shimmy up the flagpole or build a scaffolding.

In the end, it's the thing in his life he's proudest of doing. No one knows. He's going back now, to take a photograph. Then he'll salute, the GEFB, the old world, himself.



Car five

160

Ms Sasha Bingham

Outward appearance

Woman about 25, blonde hair, David Bowie face -- pretty, angular, sardonic. Brown pinstripe trousers mismatched with a fluffy collared, slightly grubby sheepskin coat. A large handbag doubles as briefcase. She flicks through an issue of *Inside Housing* as if angry with it.

Inside information

One of many financial advisers for [[211]] [the Peebrane Trust](#), a housing association near Lambeth North. The Peebrane buys properties, acts as a landlord, works with the Prince's Trust, and matches a £30 million government grant with private capital. It is now raising a further £70 million by debenture stock issue.

What she is doing or thinking

She thinks she is scanning the news. Her mind is blocked by unacknowledged anger. Her last two jobs were with merchant banks and it was made plain in each that her services were no long required. She ended up working for a business that masquerades as a charity. It's just not honest enough to admit it.

It's happening again. The gossip, the politicking. Her boss is a nice old gent on his last legs. They liked each other, Sasha knew he saw her as new modern woman, a kind of progeny. One night drinking late, he told her he had cancer.

Wasn't she supposed to tell anyone? Look, your main fund-raiser is ill, just when you need him most? Wasn't telling the Trust about him a kind of loyalty? Launching a debenture is not easy, do they want someone who's on heavy medication?

So why is nobody talking to her?

They'll think better of it when she's given his job.



Car five

161

Mrs Pru Waverly

Outward appearance

About 40. Blue suit and black and white tweed overcoat. A firm, dour face, rumped around the mouth. Untidy, dyed hair. Eyes watery, round.

Inside information

Switchboard operator at Buntleys Coachworks. She is posh to customers, robust with staff. Yesterday, over a crossed line, she heard a murder being planned.

What she is doing or thinking

She feels shaky inside, exactly as though she'd eaten something off. She's been telling [\[\[162\]\] her friend Stef](#) about it: the red light came on for Mr Gray's extension. He was busy, so she picked it up. The line was dead. Then two women came on, nothing out of the way about them.

Except that one of them said straight off: "We'll get her, then." She was talking from a payphone near traffic. You could hear it roar and hum.

There was a silence and the other woman said: "You mean what I think you mean?"

The other one sniffed. "You know what I mean. We talked enough about it."

"She IS such a bitch." the other one agreed. A baby was screaming. She told it to shut up, then she said. "He'll stop us doing it. He's not up for that sort of thing."

"Him? Won't be anything he can do. When she's dead."

Pru slammed the phone down. What does she do now? Stef says: nothing, you don't know who they are, who they're talking about.

It was the noise that got her. It was just the noise of humming traffic, but at first it sounded like voices, thousands of them, singing. In hell.



Car five

162

Miss Stefanie Parashar

Outward appearance

Tiny, foreign women, with a lively face, lipsticked mouth in a seemingly permanent smile. Volumes of spidery dressed hair piled up around a seashell grip. White shirt, black slacks, very stacked heels.

Inside information

Clerk at Buntleys Coachworks. Shares office and often lunch with [[161]] [the woman next to her](#). Shares drinks and often a lot more with the lads. More than anything else Stef likes a laugh.

What she is doing or thinking

Trying not to smile. It was a bit naughty of the lads, but Pru can be bossy at times, so to send her up they made this tape. Even [[199]] [Mr Gray](#) was a sport about it, letting them play it through his extension.

They all thought Pru would make a fearful fuss, call the cops, demand action, all of that, make a right idiot of herself, and then they would tell her. Instead she went all quiet. She sat and stared, hand over her mouth. The lads peeked in through the door window and she didn't even see them.

They'd found a weak place in tough old Pru. She looks like she's been kicked in the stomach and you can't blame her.

Pru says, "It was horrible, Stef. It just made me feel sick." She's really worried. She really thinks someone is going to die.

It's not funny, Stef tells herself. And then she thinks of Andy and the boys with their tape recorder and wants to giggle.

"And their voices, Stef. They were so mean. You know how horrible people can be."

"Yeah," says Stef, and smiles.



Car five

163

Mr Sunil Kurash

Outward appearance

Tall, prim gentleman sitting upright in grey suit and overcoat. [[164]] [Another passenger](#), swaggering, deliberately kicks his briefcase. It is Sunil who apologizes.

Inside information

Works alongside his solicitor brother for a law firm that rejoices in the name of Kurash and Steal.

Sunil is the model of polite behaviour. His politeness annoys people. He apologizes for arriving late or early or dead on time. He apologizes for talking to people or not talking to people.

When he was a child, Sunil had a terrible temper. He would leave the table in a high dudgeon. His father warned, "If you smash your sister's new fire engine I shall punish you," and Sunil did smash it. He would howl and rage and kick.

But now when Sunil loses his temper, something worse happens. He starts to talk like Donald Duck. Exactly like Donald Duck. Wharr wharr wharraraa. He finds this mortifying.

What he is doing or thinking

Sunil can't believe that he apologized. The old man, red-faced and drunk, feints at the case again as if it were a football and drops into his seat.

Sunil finds his soul prickled as if with a rising of feathers. He can almost feel them under his skin.

"Scotland Forever," the drunk says.

Sunil struggles to suppress his inner Donald Duck. His soul is filled with wordless anger in a language from beyond childhood. He yearns to lisp and spray and throw things.

Instead Sunil clenches his paper into folds, picks up his case, and gets off at Waterloo.

Sunil cannot speak any Asian tongue.



Car five

164

Mr Bill McReady

Outward appearance

Short, grey haired man in red Adidas shirt, denim jacket and jeans, rubber-soled bover boots. Makes a football kick at [[163]] [someone's](#) briefcase.

Inside information

A sailor in the merchant marine docked at Chatham for the last time. Drunk and lost in the underground system. Has a semi-derelict home in a Glasgow suburb. No wife or family.

What he is doing or thinking

Last night's bender has induced a kind of euphoria. Bill hears all around him the roar of a [[171]] [football](#) crowd, thousands of people singing : You'll never walk alone!

Bill loves footie. He played a lot when he was younger. He couldn't resist taking a swipe at the gentleman's briefcase.

Bills feels friendly towards him. "Scotland Forever," he says, meaning, you and me, we're not one of these English cunts. Bill spent six years of his life, anchored off Ascension Island. He remembers the chief of police from St Helens. He was black, a great little striker.

His tanker never moved. It was filled regularly with oil to supply the Beeb, the Yanks, the RAF. During the Falklands War, the sky was filled with planes. At night on the beaches, giant turtles would lay their eggs. You'd take motorboats to go ashore, and you had to duck the flying fish. The island was blistering hot -- red, black, and beige from different kinds of lava. But the top of the mountain was emerald, like a memory of the heaths of home.

How he wanted to be back home. [[end5]] [Now he wants to be back on Ascension](#). The crowd roars.



Car five

165

Mrs Mel Mckinney

Outward appearance

Late 20s, drifting off to sleep behind huge specs. Ill-assorted clothes: black leather jacket with a flimsy green dress bunching up behind her knees.

Inside information

Her husband Bill is the caretaker of [\[\[55\]\] St Michael's RC school](#). Their flat is stuck on top of the scruffy, modern, brick building. The roof terrace deserves tricycles and building blocks, but they have no children.

Mel's husband is away on a conference. Last night, Mel popped out for a loaf of bread. "We are trying to keep this door locked and secure," says a hand-lettered sign on the school door. Mel remembered halfway to the shop that she'd left her keys behind. She had to stay the night at her sister's.

What she is doing or thinking

Mel is dreaming of her brother-in-law, Ray. Shy, sweet, he has high cheek bones, a snub nose, and black hair that keeps its comb marks. Her sister Sandra has blond slightly spiky hair. She has two kids and a ring through her nose. Mel showed up, apologized, was given the usual lecture. "Honestly, you'd think you'd learn!" The two sisters don't get on.

Years ago it was Mel who brought Ray home first. He wasn't quite her boyfriend, but he was going to be. Sandra as usual wanted something someone else had. She's got him now.

But Ray still likes Mel, best. His eyes go all soft when he looks at her. All of Mel goes soft for him. Asleep now, she dreams of the taste of his tongue, of having his babies.



Car five

166

Mrs Mary Lenehan

Outward appearance

Pixilated and prim, pursed lips, purple hair, slithery lapis dress, and shoes with diamante buckles. Fills in a typed sheet, smiling.

Inside information

Now works as an EO in the [[99]] [Department of Transport](#) office near Lambeth Bridge. Used to work with mass murderer Donald Nielsen. She has consented yet again to answer questions for another book.

Mary has two boyfriends, both 50, one to pay the bills, the other a well hung Serb. They don't know about each other. She plies the first with drink until he passes out. Then she sees Marco, and after a bit of the other, she gets him drunk too, and slips back home.

What she is doing or thinking

Mary is writing terrible lies about Donald. She says that he slept in a coffin imported from Hungary. She writes that he brought curries for the office Christmas party in large pots, the very ones in which he cooked the heads of young boys. She smiles, thinking this is a lie. It is in fact the truth: she's told the story so many times she now thinks she made it up.

Mary dropped in on Donald one night to find him very embarrassed. [[234]] [A sleepy young man](#) grinned on the sofa. He was drugged, about to be killed. At the time, Mary was pleased that Donald had a sex life at all. Shame. Rather pretty.

She decides to tell the researcher that Nielsen was addicted to absinthe. Sometimes she confides giggling to friends that she didn't know Nielsen at all. But she did.

He reads what she writes.



Car five

167

Mrs Paule Wright

Outward appearance

Tired, middle-aged black woman. White track suit bottoms, white trainers. Brown and green coat with a "Lake Louise" logo on it. White shirt in Matisse patterns, pink and black.

Inside information

Lives on [[134]] [a Hercules Road estate](#). Returning home from a cleaning job. [[238]] [Her husband](#) who worked as a clerk in a bank for years was made redundant, so Paule went back to cleaning offices.

What she is doing or thinking

Has Charly remembered her birthday? He was asleep when she left. She imagines a card on the table, a red rose. Charly is so casual about birthdays. In Paule's family, birthdays were big.

Paule gets out at Lambeth North. "Hello, Paule!" someone cries and her heart sinks. She turns to see [[194]] [her friend Mary](#), looking like she just left the beautician's, with an artfully arranged scarf and a hairdo like Jackie O's.

"What you doing out this time of the morning?" Mary asks.

"Out early doing my birthday shopping," chuckles Paule.

"Have to do your own? What about that lazy man of yours?" Mary asks. They laugh sociably all the way to the lift, Paule on tenterhooks.

Mary asks "Your husband still in banking?" but doesn't wait for an answer. She talks instead about trouble with a noisy neighbour.

Paule is relieved. She and her husband came here 30 years ago to make something out of life. She doesn't want anyone to know she's gone back to cleaning.

It is not until they are outside, saying goodbye, that Paule suddenly thinks: what's Mary doing coming back at this hour?



Car five

168

Mr Gurdev Dhollin

Outward appearance

Tough, perhaps sour, middle aged man. Black hair streaked with white. Jacket, shirt with broad blue stripes, no tie. Light blue-grey trousers too tight. Briefcase.

Inside information

Runs [a small dry cleaning shop](#) on [Kennington Road](#). Lets his staff do the work while he goes through his business papers. He has a phone in his briefcase and one plugged into the cigarette lighter of his car.

Grew up in the Punjab, where his family now are. Has carefully mapped out his return in five years' time.

The money from the shop is enough to finance property developments in his native state. His eldest son runs the casino in one of his hotels. The other runs a series of housing developments, building homes for the new middle class.

What he is doing or thinking

Dismayed by the invention of Hindu fundamentalism. Where does this come from? The term Hindu refers to geography not belief. No one in India calls it Hinduism. It is the dharma. People can worship Rama or Durga. All religions are individual and personal.

Gurdev blames the failure of politics in India, and he blames that on corruption. He intends to return and enter politics for the Congress party.

India should be a number-one country. It has the resources and the people. Why are they licensing foreign car manufacturers? Give the contract to Indians.

But the image in his mind is this: a slow, sluggish river winding through a hushed, hot landscape, patient, heavy, like a pregnant woman; and a giggling boy shimmying up a tree: himself.



Car five

169

Miss Estelle Irwin

Outward appearance

Large woman in her early 30s. *X Files* T-shirt, tie-dyed gown, leather coat with Indian fringe. Generally pugnacious air, softened as she reads a leather-covered book.

Inside information

Since 1991, Estelle has been in love with Saddam Hussein. [[49]] [The Saturday Independent](#) ran a photograph of him swimming. His delighted smile seemed to stare up at Joy itself, his bare shoulders promised an exotic body. Estelle desires his olive skin, his dark and dancing eyes, his cheesy grin. Saddam makes Estelle feel like a loosened girdle.

Her husband used to masturbate at night next to her when he thought she was asleep. He was small, pale, and pretty, and left her for a man. She became obsessed with Saddam: his terrible childhood, his beatings with tar-covered sticks. Part of her thinks she could make him good through love, kissing his closed eyes. Part of her can see his penis, very clearly.

What she is doing or thinking

Estelle has found a rare volume -- *The Wit and Wisdom of Saddam Hussein*. This is one of the jokes: what is that a rich man keeps wrapped in cloth, but a poor man throws away? Answer: the results of a blown nose.

Saddam called his secret police The Apparatus of Yearning. That is tattooed on Estelle's smooth, white arm. His political prison was called the Palace of the End. He made building-size statues of broken hearts. People paint portraits of him in their own blood, out of devotion.

At home, Estelle has a canvas waiting, a brush and razor blade.



Car five

170

Mrs Linda Scralg

Outward appearance

Silver blonde hair, white T-shirt, loose black coat and jumper, very tight jeans.

Inside information

Designer at Broad Brush, a small design agency. Recently married to a hulking New Zealand farmer who is also an Olympic high diver. He is to say the least very different from the men she met at St Martins. He's called Heathcliff.

What she is doing or thinking

That the marriage won't do.

On Sunday Heathcliff burned her [\[\[62\]\] cat](#). Verity was a beautiful all-white Persian. She was a famous cat. She'd starred in a series of Broad-Brush greeting cards.

Linda was looking out the window at Daddy's herbaceous border, and saw Heathcliff throw Verity, stiff as a board, onto a bonfire. She'd died of a heart attack; it was the shock of seeing a farm. Heathcliff couldn't understand why Linda was upset. "It's just a dead old puss," he said.

Then she had some friends round to lunch, and he insisted he could imitate a bull's mating call so well that the cows would be fooled. There was her new husband making urgent, guttural, bovine noises. The worst of it was that the cows did come crowding round. "Is that how you and Linda met, then?" Livvy asked. It was so embarrassing.

She's left him down on the farm. The terrible thing is Heathcliff and Daddy get along wonderfully. They sat up til three in the morning talking about her. Daddy thinks he's found someone to inherit the farm.

Heathcliff's going to be terribly difficult to get rid of. Just like the others.



Car five

171

Mr Victor Dowie

Outward appearance

Short, athletic black man in mid 20s, sleepily slumped, grinning, occasionally shaking his head in amusement or disbelief.

Inside information

Works as a secretary and sales assistant for [[191]] [Sarf London Security](#) , a shop specializing in [[13]] [locks, bolts, bars and alarms](#). It's owned by [[191]] [Sanjay Kumar](#), but managed by Victor's mate Ian, who got him the job. Ian's a fellow Arsenal fan and lets Victor use the shop's computer to lay out his [[181]] [football](#) fanzine. It takes the piss out of the professional football magazine *Shoot !*. It's called *Shit !*.

What he is doing or thinking

Thinking of his next issue. He's just come up with an article called *You are the Ref* . The reader has to call unusual football violations such as invasion of the pitch by Morris Dancers, or misbehaviour by the giant styrofoam arrow that keeps pointing to the ball. *Spot the ball* has photographs of football players in showers, shorts etc.

Say Cheese is a more regular feature. It asks for examples of readers' worst ever football memorabilia. Last week a photograph of the Esso 1970 World Cup Coin collection was sent in by novelist Jeffrey Archer. Victor rang the publishers, and it's true. "I think you need to know that Mr Archer threatens to send you," the publicity executive continued, "his collection of football star jam jar lids."

Fame at last. Vic eases out of his seat, still grinning. He's just had another idea. He's going to run a story on Jeffrey Archer memorabilia.

It would be nice [[ftnt171]] [if there was a way to make money doing this](#).



Car five

172

Ms Lisa Muir

Outward appearance

Fawn overcoat belted over brown corduroy trousers, yellow sweater, fawn jacket. Thick, fur-lined gloves in pocket. Large cloth bag laden with papers. Reading *Exchange and Mart*. Mid-thirties but first impression is ten years younger.

Inside information

A property developer. Does up properties or supervises building work under contract. The recession made her life easier. It weeded out the cowboys and made everyone else grateful for work. Her previous jobs have included reviewing feature films for airlines, selling car insurance, and writing template tenders for corporate identities. Knows contract law backwards.

What she is doing or thinking

Getting a rough idea of property prices this week. Smiling slightly to herself because she has sprung a trap.

She showed up yesterday at a flat being converted on King Edward Walk. It was 4.45 and the house was empty and dark. One of the mates showed up, claiming to have just stepped out for fags. She pretended to believe him; and casually let him know her car was being serviced today.

This morning she'll let herself into King Edward Walk with a small electric heater, some letters to finish and some reading to do. She'll be there for 8.45. It will be interesting to see when they turn up. Any time after 10.00, and they're fired.

She likes it when their faces fall, and they suddenly realise that this slim pretty woman knows what she's talking about and that she has no problems with fights and firings. In fact she rather enjoys them. As she has enjoyed them these last 15 years.



Car five

173

Mrs Delia Hendy

Outward appearance

[[18]] [Camilla Parker-Bowles](#)? A white sporting jacket with a thick, accordion collar over a brown sweater and a white sailing shirt. White towelling trousers, thick-soled, clean trainers. Waterproof bag printed with bamboo imagery and a stamp "Forbidden Cargo". Stares shell-shocked at a form, then writes.

Inside information

A professional domestic carer, contracted to [[78]] [Lambeth Council](#). She visits the infirm, cleaning their flats and cooking them lunch. [[225]] [The Billericay Building Society](#) has just found a new way to make her homeless.

In November she bid for a house that the Billericay had repossessed. She won the auction fair and square, for £34,000. Guess it wasn't enough. They exchanged contracts, and the Bill told her the completion date would be January 12th.

She went and sold her flat didn't she? Exchanged contracts. Then her solicitor got a letter saying the Billericay ("Feel Dicky with the Billericay") were pulling out of the deal.

Delia rang and the girl cheerfully admitted that they had reneged. She kept calling Delia Mrs Henry, despite being corrected. "It happens sometimes," the girl bubbled. "We will be paying you compensation for any inconvenience caused." Delia is now sleeping on a client's floor. You call that inconvenient?

What she is doing or thinking

The Bill has sent her [[252]] [a customer satisfaction questionnaire](#).

Does she like the decor of her local branch? How long does she have to wait in line? Do staff smile? She has responded positively to each question. There is no opportunity to do anything else.

Suddenly she writes at the bottom, "But I hate you."



Car five

174s

Mr Anthony Auldgirth

Outward appearance

Old blind man with a white cane and carefully maintained suit. A few wisps of red hair over his head. The bald skin is mottled with age spots, which have gone crusty. His hands are frail bundles of tendon and blue veins. He sits patiently, quietly, waiting.

Inside information

His name would have been well known to readers of *The Times* during the early 1950s. Became a friend of Samuel Beckett at Trinity College Dublin. Saw *Godot* in its earliest production and realised then his friend was marked for greatness.

Misses his wife Elizabeth beyond endurance. In New York, Norman Mailer once said of her : "This is a woman you can talk to on any level". Elizabeth died of cancer in 1985.

What he is doing or thinking

Remembering his first meeting with his wife's best friend in 1934. Daphne lived on a house right on the banks of the Thames. She wore a green bathing suit. Anthony was shy: all he could think of saying was "Elizabeth tells me you stand on your head." Daphne promptly did so, and walked back into the house on her hands.

Daphne's son Thomas is now 50 years old, running a business in [\[\[251\]\] Australia](#). Thomas knows nothing of the house near Reading, or of how beautiful his mother once was. As a schoolboy in the 1950s, Thomas would come to stay bringing his friend. In consequence, here Anthony is, in the 1990s, going to visit that friend in [\[\[end5\]\] West Square](#) with [\[\[175\]\] Elizabeth's daughter](#). The consequences go on and on.

The people don't of course.



Car five

175

Mrs Madeleine Strickler

Outward appearance

Instant 1960s. Long auburn hair, brown overcoat, left arm across tummy, right hand in "Thinker" position, both resting on top of Acorn computer bag. Contemplates the old gentleman next to her.

Inside information

Freelance editor and journalist. Lived for many years in the Orient, then America, where her children now live. Converted to Buddhism along with her husband. Lives with [\[\[174\]\] her father](#) who is sitting next to her. They are visiting a family friend near the Elephant.

What she is doing or thinking

She is remembering a day on the tube in 1957. They were going to a wedding, so she and her sisters were all in ribbons and white. Daddy was in a morning coat. People travelled on the tubes like that in those days. There was an advertising campaign for Heinz on underground posters. Each poster told you which of the 57 varieties a particular Heinz product was: tomato soup, no. 2, brown pickle no. 37. If you collected all 57, you won a Christmas hamper.

Daddy was a freelance journalist: they needed the hamper. She and her sisters ran up and down the cars dressed for a wedding, squealing. They changed carriages at each station, calling like seagulls, "40 is spaghetti in tomato sauce!"

Then they bumped into teenagers doing the same thing. After that, to keep the secret, they whispered or passed notes.

Madeleine can't remember if they got the hamper. But where are the children running now? The white dresses? The top hats? She takes her father's hand.

[\[\[end5\]\] "This is the last stop, Daddy,"](#) she says.



Car five

176

Mr Pete Daymond

Outward appearance

Trim man in his 30s, blue jeans, white trainers, thinning blonde hair. Two plastic bags full of something square-cornered. Eyes keep looking up.

Inside information

Poster sticker, some time dope dealer. Returning from work, pasting girls' cards in phone booths.

What he is doing or thinking

He's scared and knackered. He hates putting up the cards. You do five or six girls at a time. You have to leave the bag outside the booth, put in your money in and phone home. While it's really ringing, you paste the cards, receiver under your chin. Just in case someone checks you're making a call.

You work from 6.30 to 8.30 am. There's enough people around in case of aggro, but not so many that they get a good look at what you're doing.

There's rival groups, and some of them are not very nice people. They don't particularly like it if you paste in what they think is their turf. But you've got to post where the punters are. Kings Cross, Tottenham Court Road, all round there.

Pete's sure he was followed into the tube. At first, he thought it was [\[\[151\]\] passenger 151](#). Then he saw the state of it. Bet he could use some dosh. Subcontracting would be good for my health.

"You looking for some work, mate?" Pete asks.

"I'm an Internet trainer," the man says, grandly. Well maybe.

"This is part time, just mornings." The man's eyebrows rise. "Where you getting off?" Pete asks.

He shrugs. "The Elephant, I suppose." Going nowhere.

They get off at Lambeth instead.



Car five

177

Mr Amitabh Chopra

Outward appearance

A tiny middle-aged Asian gentleman, slim, in a green suit, white shirt, red tie. Sits reading a magazine with the cover folded over.

Inside information

Works in [[238]] [the Sweet Shoppe](#) in [[203]] [Waterloo Station](#). Hates chocolate. But it is a clean and orderly environment. Has to control feelings of shame that he does not at his age run his own business.

What he is doing or thinking

Reading what he thinks of as a dirty magazine, the February 1995 issue of *Stardust*. He deliberately sat a seat away from another Indian man to prevent being discovered. The cover shows a pretty girl taking a sudsy bath in a bikini and floppy hat.

SEX, it shrieks. Then tiny letters: *the industry's* . Then huge:

ORGY, tiny letters: *of immorality exposed* .

Mr Chopra loves Bollywood movies. *Stardust* is devoted to them, in over thirty countries. **Sanjay-Raveena STRIP each other**, it promises, with Sanjay and Raveena both in tummy-revealing pervy leathery glowering into the camera. **MAMTA ACCUSED! How Aamir Faked his Illness to Save his Marriage** .

It's a magazine for scandal-soaked women. Aamir loves the movies, and wants to read about them. He extracts from the scandals, news about movies like *Karan-Arjun* . In between there are ads for skin lighteners, wedding dresses, movie-star address finders, *Bombay Jungle mix Bollywood Fever* and AT&T.

Where does he fit in? Amitabh has always been a dreamer. In his mind at night he sees gods and heroes, riding elephants besaddled in red and gold. He hears the sweeping sounds of orchestra and voices.



Car five

178

Ms Debbie DeNussi

Outward appearance

Glamorous red lipstick, long red hair. Floor-length coat made of black leather. Black beret perched on the side of her head. Blue jeans and patent leather, alligator-pattern shoes. Tiny dangling earrings with a Dracula-eyed glint of light in each. Clutches a tiny purse. Keeps standing up, looking at the map, peering through the window. Takes out a personal organiser and keys in a question.

Inside information

An American film maker following English instructions to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, where she is to be briefed on the making of a new film about [\[\[157\]\] threadworms](#).

What she is doing or thinking

Where the hell is she? They told her to walk from the tube station to [\[\[125\]\] the Church Tower](#) and then cross to the blue pub called the Hercules and go down that street and then turn right. Can't miss it.

But which tube station? She looks at all the people getting out at Waterloo. [\[\[179\]\] The willowy woman next to her](#) saunters out. It must be nice to be that confident of where you are going. No one gets on, and Debbie starts to get worried. What if she's going to a bad part of town?

At Lambeth North she gets out. She looks at the dingy platform, and at the wall map, and sees the next station is the end of the line. That must have been why they didn't tell her. [\[\[end5\]\] You can't miss the station at the end of the line](#).

She hops back on just as the doors rumble shut. Whew, she smiles. Just made it.



Car five

179

Ms Annabelle Rowan

Outward appearance

Woman about 40, wearing black trousers which show a well preserved figure. Cloth coat with extravagant fake fur trim. With stately calm, reads Jeff Noon's *Vurt* .

Inside information

Receptionist at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and ex-devotee of the Bhagwan Sri Rajeesh. Sits all day surrounded by a collection of 19th century pharmaceutical jars. They are nearly as tall as she is, translucent with ornate labels and filled with green, blue or red fluids.

What she is doing or thinking

Calmly waiting for the moment when she has to tell the Publicity Chair that [\[\[178\]\] his film maker](#) will not be showing up. She printed a map with instructions, but he insisted on giving directions over the phone. No one in England can give directions. That is because there are no reliably placed street signs. We direct people to the local Tesco then on past the off-license and wonder why foreigners stop us in the street for help.

It was one of many things Annabelle learned in [\[\[49\]\] Oregon](#). The Bhagwan told her: life is a joke. Always land on the wrong airfield, buy as many cars as you can. Imelda Marcos's shoes are a great joke. One must be calm and laugh. For a woman as highly sexed as Annabelle, [\[\[ftnt179\]\] it was paradise](#) for there were handsome men, beautiful women, and they all made love rather as cats must, in complete security.

The bottles surround her, historic, preserved, huge, and highly coloured as if her own past were bottled in them.

I wonder what this film maker would have been like?



Car five

180

Mr Terry Wilcox

Outward appearance

Fawn raincoat, blue suit, soft shoes. Balding in the middle of his head so that his hair makes wings. Florid face a bit like Albert Finney's. Opens up a slim leather case stuffed full of magazines, and pulls out a DTP document.

Inside information

Manager at the [Wasteco Supermarket](#), [Elephant and Castle](#). Terry's hobby is hobbies -- matchbox toy cars, rare records. His jazz collection is complete, except for a few Stan Kenton LPs, and a rare Brubeck. All 4,500 records are catalogued and hardly played. The walls are insulated with video tapes of his favourite movies: he's missing a few Deanna Durbin classics. For a while, he was in a Iron Age recreation group. He wore hessian tunics and collected replica maces and battleaxes.

His two new enthusiasms are picture phonocards and becoming an umpire for American baseball.

What he is doing or thinking

Reading the rules. Baseball moves faster than cricket. You need to have eagle eyes. It all comes down to if the man on base catches the ball before the runner gets there.

Baseball's a kind of fantasy: coke, hot dogs and hot summers. It's neither as bruising as football, or as fast as basketball, the real American National Sports. Baseball belongs to the 1890s.

Whereas phonocards ... It really is extraordinary how fast they have become collector's items: [Star Trek](#) phonocards, Disney phonocards. Wasn't there something in the last issue of *BT Card Collector* about special phonocard storage furniture? Complete with indexing and retrieval? He puts down *The Umpire Strikes Back* to look.

He likes to keep active.



Car five

181

Mr Kevin Spinnaker

Outward appearance

Tall, skinny, mostly in black with black dressed hair. Yelps with laughter. Stands up and makes faces through the window between the cars.

Inside information

Works for the Pay Unit of the [\[\[30\]\] London College of Printing](#). Wanted to be a professional [\[\[192\]\] football player](#). On the field he transforms from an easily pleased, nice-enough bloke, to someone demanding, aggressive and quick. It is the one area of life where he can be so. Boyfriend of [\[\[127\]\] Jenny Green](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Waving through the window at Jen. To tease her, he told her she was getting plump, so to get her own back, she changed cars. She sticks her tongue out at him. He loves her humour. He loves going to gigs or Formula One with her.

He doesn't love having sex with her. He has managed to hide this from Jen by effort of main will. He's young and fit, but it takes him forever to come because he's so unexcited.

She misreads this. For her, a man who takes half hour to come is a hero.

The man she loves is the man his friends sometimes call gormless. She doesn't know the man who forces balls past goalposts as if by concentration, who feels implacable hatred for his opponents. She doesn't know he hates her lack of make up, her ordinary body, her ordinary face. Sweet, nice Kevin does know, but it is this Kevin who won't be able to tell her.

So he mugs and smiles, and waves through the separating glass [\[\[end5\]\] as if saying goodbye](#).



Car six

182

Mr Tony "Wrong Way" Khan

Outward appearance

Angular, handsome young man in a tuxedo and white scarf. Sits in angry silence next to a young woman who looks at him mournfully.

Inside information

The son of the Pakistani lawyer beloved of [\[\[40\]\] Georgina Bullen](#). Tony's father moved back to Britain in 1979 when his English wife became homesick.

Just returned from a wedding in France. Went the wrong way from Waterloo, heading north on the Bakerloo line. Changed at Embankment, and is now heading the right way.

What he is doing or thinking

Why does everything go wrong? He met [\[\[183\]\] the woman next to him, Georgina](#), on [\[\[183\]\] the Shuttle](#) on his way to the wedding.

"I'm going to a wedding too!" Georgina said pleased. "What's your friend's name?"

"George," was the answer. "So's mine!" she cried. It was in the same town. They bought Shuttle champagne on the strength of it. They laughed all the way under the Channel, through Paris and to the country train station.

The taxi driver smelled of sweat and couldn't find the address Georgina that gave him. They arrived late and embarrassed. The French bride pressed them with more champagne.

Anthony couldn't find his friend. "Have you seen George?" he kept asking. Georgina replied, mystified. "He was just here."

Finally she dragged him to George. He turned out to be Georges, and French. Anthony was at the wrong wedding. Another taxi ride. Anthony's George had already gone by the time he arrived.

No one bought champagne on the trip back. Now at Waterloo, Georgina stands us to go. "Goodbye?" she says.

It's a question.



Car six

183

Miss Georgina Havistock

Outward appearance

A glum fairy? Pretty, plump woman in a pink dress, all lacy pleats like a ballet tutu. Veiled 1950s hat over short black hair.

Inside information

Part-owner of Yesterdaze, a shop near Waterloo that sells vintage magazines and clothes. Her partner is her ex-boyfriend. Things are a bit tense.

Just back from France on [[209]] [the Shuttle](#). Has followed [[182]] [her neighbour](#) first north from Waterloo, then south.

What she is doing or thinking

It always seems to happen. She never had so much fun as yesterday, all done up, taking the train to France.

And meeting Anthony. She thought he was gorgeous the moment she saw him. He was so much fun as well. She would like to remember just one of his jokes. Maybe they weren't that good; maybe you had to be there. Maybe you had to be going to someone else's wedding by yourself, a bit tipsy, and relieved to meet someone so nice. Who was going to the same wedding as you.

Only he wasn't. Her hands rise and fall with frustration. She's already lost her temper with him for blaming her for taking him to the wrong wedding. "I wasn't blaming you," he said mysteriously. So why isn't he talking to her?

At Waterloo, Georgina says, "Goodbye."

He looks up, suprised. "You get off here? Why did you take the tube north?"

She shrugs. "To stay with you."

"I'll call you," he says.

On the platform Georgina sees [[40]] [an older woman](#) who looks firm, settled. Georgina wonders: will I ever be as tough as that?



Car six

184

Ms Sabrina Foster

Outward appearance

Brown suit, tan ribbed jumper, long brown coat. Piled up, M-People hair. Hands held criss-cross over the top of a letter.

Inside information

Teller at [[192]] [Kennington Building Society](#). Advertiser in the same [[ad3]] [Time Out personal ads](#) being scanned at that moment by [[71]] [Passenger 71](#). Reading her first batch of replies.

What she is doing or thinking

It was a mistake to advertise as a black woman. It would have been a mistake not to. Right now a crab-faced white man with a grizzled beard is leering up at her from a photo-booth nightmare. His letter keeps talking about his car and house. Glancing sideways first, Sabrina looks at the next letter.

And quickly, she covers it. Attached is a tiny photo from a contact sheet of a man in the nude. Not to be unkind, but she would need a magnifying glass anyway. He looks doe-eyed and sweet, dumb enough to think that a full-frontal would turn a woman on.

What she wants is a mature, intelligent black man who is in stable employment that does not cost him his dignity. There must be one somewhere?

Her next correspondent is white, pockmarked, with a pony tail. His letter is amazing. He plainly thinks women advertise for one night stands. The next reply is an outright proposal of marriage from Zimbabwe.

Sabrina pushes the whole mess into her bag, and goes. On the platform she thinks: I'd settle for someone nice, fat. Like [[71]] [the big, suited pillow who just pushed past her](#).

Well, maybe next week...



Car six

185

Mr Yong You'd Dandusitisphant

Outward appearance

Neat, middle aged Asian man. Thin, inward turning mouth. He rocks slightly in place, and then slowly lowers, hangs, his head.

Inside information

Qwner of Cow Tom's Thai restaurant on Westminster Bridge Road. Was given [[214]] [a work permit in 1984](#) as a specialist chef. Soon discovered that England offered little of the smiles, hand greetings and gentle good grace of his own country.

After 10 years, saved up enough to open his own restaurant in an unpromising locale. It proved to be an immense success. Married Sanam, one of the waitresses, and is now a proud father. He often trots his son Sammy around the restaurant, teaching him to walk.

What he is doing or thinking

Fearing for Sammy. He is huge for his age, but has not begun to talk. His cheeks are covered in a rash. His mother keeps laughing and says the rash will go. It's spreading. The boy's chin has swollen, while his head stays narrow.

Last night Yong Y'oud took Sammy for his usual walk. He kept stumbling and falling, vacantly, without crying. Indulgent customers pretended to be charmed. They asked how old he was, and when Yong Y'oud said 22 months, their smiles grew shadowy, strained.

Sammy is ill. Yong Y'oud thinks of how Sammy used to love hanging upside down from his knees, or hiding under the bamboo chair, grasping at his yellow duck as if at a mystery. He sees his wife Sanam's thin face: its smile too wide, and wonders how he can make her accept the truth.

England suddenly seems smaller.



Car six

186

Mrs Margaret Thatcher

Outward appearance

Short-haired woman in workman's jeans and donkey jacket. Reading *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*. Understandably, looks bored.

Inside information

[[40]] [Mrs Thatcher](#) is a thatcher, currently working on the roof of the new [[ftnt186]] [Globe Theatre](#). It's traditional straw and reed, fireproofed and hiding a sprinkler system.

Margaret has lost her car keys. This is particularly poignant as her husband Dennis has just lost his.

What she is doing or thinking

Margaret is reasonably certain that the keys fell out of her pocket while she was on the scaffolding yesterday. If so, they will be bundled up with the thatch.

The scaffolding has moved. She can ask the works supervisor, but he's hardly likely to re-erect the scaffolding just for her. Or allow her onto that steep roof without it.

She's had the keyring since she was in university. The medal, in the shape of a panda, says on the front "Sold to assist the World Wildlife Fund." On the back it's engraved, " Awarded to Margaret Thatcher for excellence in canoeing."

She imagines 500 years from now, when they tear down the Globe. The beams are held by wooden pegs; the walls are horsehair and lime. They'll think it's the original theatre, and as it falls, they'll find a keyring with a panda. A World Wildlife Fund? Pandas? In Elizabethan Britain? Awarded to [[ftnt186b]] [Mrs Thatcher?](#) The Prime Minister? In Elizabethan Britain? Why was she canoeing? Was this a traditional Thames pastime for politicians?

History's just a myth anyway, something we make up to reconcile evidence. Margaret leaves with a smile.



Car six

187

Mrs Angie Strachan

Outward appearance

A certain age, trying hard. Ribbed white jumper, white leather jacket, long flowery dress. A cloud of wispy blonde split ends down her back.

Inside information

Has worked in front of house for ten years at Anderson Imports. Travelled to Singapore and Turkey for the company. Lately has been subject to offers of further trips, not especially for business purposes, with the MD.

What she is doing or thinking

Angie is considering the MD's offer. He is portly, second generation Lebanese, aggressive. He goes around the world bartering for [hides](#). He smells of them. His attentions are demanding, but in a slow way that work their way in. "The offer stands," he says, every day. Angie has admitted to herself that she dyed her hair for him.

Tommy, her husband, is a tall, thin and acerbic Scot, whose bitter wit is often turned on himself or on her, especially when drunk. Tommy works in [a car showroom](#). He sweats with nerves, is covered in freckles, makes love in hard quick jabs.

[Someone jumps past Angie](#) to get off at Waterloo. His metal watchstrap catches in her wispy hair. She is jerked sideways and yelps with pain. She sees the man's pale, pudgy face. He is panicked, needing to get off. He keeps yanking.

"You're pulling my hair!" she says. He doesn't stop. She gives him a light little punch. The doors shut.

He drops his hands in dismay and that also jerks her hair. He doesn't even apologize.

"Do you have a pair of scissors?" he asks.

You could hate men.



Car six

188

Mr Bal Patil

Outward appearance

Delicate man, his moustache and thicket of silver-flecked hair overwhelming his face. Grey dust in the crevices of his shoes. Endlessly [twirls uncut hair](#) round a finger.

Inside information

A maker of memorial stones for Heritage Stone and Marblecraft, near [the Elephant](#). It is not an occupation for a person of caste. His father made a living carving figures for temples. His father gave him the image of Hanuman the monkey that hangs around Bal's neck.

Bal's own son has qualified as an airline pilot; his daughter is a solicitor. In this sense, Bal feels his life has been accomplished.

No one in his family knows this, as it is a low occupation. Mr Patil's father was also a carpenter, but he built film sets in Bombay. He believed in doing everything well. Around Bal's neck hangs an emblem of Hanuman the monkey god, emblem of strength, inherited from his father.

Bal's own son has qualified as an airline pilot; his daughter is a solicitor. In this sense, Bal feels his life has been accomplished.

What he is doing or thinking

The carving of names is an unnecessary call by the dead, who are free, on the living who are not. But it is something the English believe. Lately the company has gone from restoration to selling old gravestones as new. Mr Harris comes back with covered lorry loads sold to make way for roads or new development.

This has left Bal with a bad conscience. He shaves exfoliating granite until there is something like solid stone. Sometimes the stones, like toast sliced too thin, collapse.

Yesterday, through one grey window, the sun came out, and in a sideways light, a vanished name emerged from the stone. *Virginia..... 1839*. It was like a face. Bal is an imaginative man, and saw Victorian dress, hair, eyes.

A native Marathi speaker, Bal keeps a bound volume of Ramdas open on his table. Ramdas abjures us: don't talk, act. This is wrong. His hair twirls faster.



Car six

189

Miss Samantha Wilson

Outward appearance

Dishevelled young woman in black overcoat, clunky shoes, red sweater, grey suit. Balances a huge, rebellious bag full of papers. Firm, sensible face undermined by an almost drunken wooziness. Starts playing with a strand of her hair.

Inside information

Teacher at [\[\[55\]\] Lower Marsh Primary School](#). Inamorata of [\[\[82\]\] Thomas West](#).

What she is doing or thinking

At a very deep, lower level of her brain, [\[\[188\]\] the spiralling gesture of the man next to her](#) mirrors two things: her love life and her stomach.

She was up late last night marking papers and forgot to shop. There was nothing in the fridge except her flatmate's frozen pizza. Potato and Garlic -- "You'll never fear vampires again". The pizza was still cold and doughy in the middle when she ate it at 12.30 am. She spent the night writhing with indigestion, burping bubbles of [\[\[200\]\] garlic](#) and basil.

Tossing on the bed, all the terrors of her life tossed with her. She was 26 and had no boyfriend, not a trace of one. Amid the bicarbonate and the fear, something happened.

Thomas West. In her mind, in garlic gas, he transmogrified from a dumpy carrot-top, to a big, masculine man. She saw his green, steady eyes. Why was she turning him down all the time? How had he seemed so small? Mingled with the burning, linoleum pizza in her belly, he seemed looming, inevitable.

She wonders how Thomas will look in the flesh, in winter, at a primary school. Hands occupied, exhausted as if from multiple orgasms, she cannot cover a huge and garlic [\[\[190\]\] yawn](#) .



Car six

190

Mr Rick Juniper

Outward appearance

Young businessman in a blue suit and Frank Church shoes, sits shell shocked, staring. Starts twirling his hair and yawning.

Inside information

Recently promoted to Four-Colour Manager at TipTop Printing, east of Waterloo. All was fine until his current assistant, Lola, started work.

Lola is possibly the most beautiful woman in the world. This is not good for Rick's composure. Lola is married, American, in Britain for a year while her husband finishes his postgrad work. She's like a filled-out Audrey Hepburn: leggy, brunette, confident, jolly. And given to wearing skin-tight black leggings.

What he is doing or thinking

He'll resign. He's just not suited for the job. He can't control his own space. Jools, the Dutch guy, sits on Rick's desk, ignores him, and jokes with Lola for hours.

Clients call to see how their work is progressing. Lola gives them coffee. They stay all afternoon, in gradually increasing numbers, flicking ash. Rick's boss hangs mournfully over Lola, reminiscing about his days in a rock band. He gives Rick basilisk stares and asks why he doesn't have any work to do.

After a drunken lunch, Bollocks (an amateur [rugby player](#)) actually stuck his hand up Lola's skirt. Rick threw him out. Lola chuckled at him. "I don't need you to look after me."

Anybody else would politely but firmly see all of them out of his room. Rick has to get up at 6.00 am to catch the train from Petersborough and is seriously wondering if it's worth it. He yawns and retreats into a quiet [snooze](#).



Car six

191

Mr Sanjay Kumar

Outward appearance

Broad-shouldered man, balding, all in grey: jeans, shirt, jacket, scuffed boots. Between his feet is a grey bucket with washing up liquid and window wipes. He appears to be asleep. His hands clasped in front him form an arrowhead shape with his index fingers. They point to the bucket. A large keyring weighs down his belt.

Inside information

Owner of seven businesses around Kennington Road near Lambeth North. All of them were having difficulties with the exception of the dry cleaning shop. Now they all are.

What he is doing or thinking

Sanjay is resting but not [\[\[192\]\] asleep](#). He takes advantage of the tube to close his eyes. He thinks of his businesses.

Another dry cleaning shop has opened on the parade. It's part of a large chain. [\[\[168\]\] The manager, a Punjabi](#), offers swingeing discounts. "Your second item free. Half price discount for all items brought in before 9.00 am."

Such pricing is not sustainable. It's an attempt to drive Sanjay out of business, backed up by the stability of the chain. They are relying on his other losses to pull him down. When the Punjabi, sleek with his mobile phone, passes Sanjay in the street, the man grins.

So Sanjay washes his own windows, hovers his own floors and racks his brains. He sees the faces of the staff he might have to let go, in [\[\[171\]\] the security shop](#) or [\[\[237\]\] pharmacy](#).

Can he offer customers something else? Loyalty vouchers? Personal delivery? He sees himself carrying hangers in plastic bags, running up office stairs.

[\[\[ftnt191\]\] Then falling](#).



Car six

192

Mr James Whitthead

Outward appearance

Plump, bullish man in a white shirt and smart, patterned black-and-white suit. Crumpled in a heap, fast asleep. [[193]] [Starts to snore](#).

Inside information

Meet the contented man: the Branch Manager of the [[4]] [Kennington Building Society](#). Considers himself a kindly, hands-on manager. Recently had to let someone go. Carol (what a terrible name for a man!) really wasn't suited to finance. He kept [[226]] [doodling on documents](#). James protected Carol until he found a job in [[215]] [the Health Advice Centre in the Cut](#).

James looks older than his 35 years, which has so far been a help in his career. Still plays midfield in the branch [[205]] [football](#) team. Everything in his life, from his wife to his two beautiful young children, is as he would wish... except for his expresso coffee machine.

What he is doing or thinking

Making the same noises as the coffee machine that haunts him. Snort, gurgle, steam. He inherited from it Carol. It was a beautiful present, gleaming and metallic. Maybe a little lime-caked inside.

It went proudly into Jim's office, dribbling out small, cold cups tasting slightly of de-scaler. Then the Building Society Interest Group visited. James proudly turned on the machine.

It produced steam in a mounting, volcanic rush, but no coffee. It began to whistle. His important guests stirred uneasily. To his horror, James heard the thing begin to creak. He pulled it out at the plug just before it exploded.

James snorts loudly and stops. He blinks and wakes up.

Surely Carol wouldn't have given it to him deliberately?



Car six

193

Miss Lorraine Hant

Outward appearance

Young, long blonde hair, freckles, layers of blue clothes, jeans, trainers. Gazes at the row next to her as it snores, yawns or twiddles.

Inside information

[[44]] [A policeman's](#) only daughter. His stories have made Lorraine distrustful of black people, dance music, clubs, etc. Does church work on Sundays, where she met her fiance Dominic.

Temporarily works in a warehouse for a minimum-staff retail chain. She counts the sheets, the pillow cases, the toy trucks as they arrive. It will do until she is married.

Yesterday in the lunchroom, the conversation turned to crime. Lorraine told them what her father said about single mums and the decay of the black family. "In some areas, people just aren't very nice," she said.

"Well bugger off somewhere where nice people are," said Jennette, a black woman of whom Lorraine has always been afraid.

"That's not very nice," said Lorraine, and they all roared.

What she is doing or thinking

Is there some kind of virus that makes people act alike? She can't explain why nobody likes her at work. It was spooky the way they all laughed at her.

She has watched the twiddle, the yawn, and the snooze spread down the row like a disease. She tries tapping her foot. Involuntarily, the foot across from her jerks. Lorraine gasps. [[192]] [The man next to her gasps and wakes up](#). Experimentally, Lorraine whistles George Michael. As if annoyed, [[206]] [the black man across from her starts whistling too](#).

So that was it. People follow each other, don't like anybody different. Not like her and Daddy.



Car six

194

Mrs Mary Wallis

Outward appearance

Well turned-out older black lady. Shawl with sequins in zig-zag patterns. Examines items from her bag: a clock, a wooden frame the size of a pocket calculator, something with a wooden handle and a long metal prong.

Inside information

Lives on [[134]] [Hercules Road Estate](#). Friend of Paule Wright's. Has invested some of her husband's redundancy money in a small antiques business. Returning from [[224]] [Camden Passage's Wednesday morning market](#).

[[ftnt194]] [The metal prong is a device for firing pills down horses' throats](#). The wooden frame is for storing playing cards. The train eases into Lambeth North; Mary puts away her acquisitions.

What she is doing or thinking

She sees Paule on the platform and calls. Paule freezes and almost walks on. She doesn't want to be seen. Has she got a boyfriend? "What you doing out this hour of the morning?" Mary teases and then instantly regrets it. Paule's had to be taking up cleaning again. Mary tries to change the subject to [[238]] [Charley](#), but that's a bit sensitive too since he's been fired.

Mary feels terrible, and gossips about neighbours. Outside on the street, she makes excuses, and darts off towards the Cypriot bakery. Oh Mary, love, you got to watch your mouth.

Then she thinks: I could have told her about my antiques. I could have asked her to join me. I need someone to help run my stall when I get it going. Still feeling remorseful, Mary turns and runs after her friend.

"Paule!" she calls. "Paule. I got an idea!"

[[238]] [Paule walks on, pretending not to hear](#).



Car six

195

Miss Harriet Zinovsky

Outward appearance

Slightly plump businesswoman in brown trouser suit and long overcoat. Keeps rubbing her thumb and fingers together.

Inside information

Miss Zinovsky has a Russian father and an Israeli mother. She speaks three languages and has a first in Organic Chemistry from Cambridge. She is 23, but older people, particularly academics, feel comfortable around her. Recently began her first job at the Science Museum in Kensington.

Harriet organises interactive exhibits. By interactive she means people get to touch real things. She calls it RR -- Real Reality. Her current project is Fakes: children get to touch real fur and fake fur, costume and real jewellery. She is on her way to [[187]] [a leather warehouse](#) in the Elephant and Castle.

What she is doing or thinking

Remembering her first visit. The warehouse smelled like a cross between an abattoir and a jar of vanilla sugar. Pale bales of leather, all undyed, were in shaggy rolls like giant pastry. You could tell what country the skins came from by the scars. From Western countries, there were close stitch marks around cuts. From others, there are fat ribbons of scar tissue.

Is she going mad? She remembers that one of the skins had a tattoo. It's possible that people tattoo the skins of sheep somewhere in the world. But a rose and a banner with the name Maria?

Harriet has a nightmare vision of a third world so poor that it has started to sell human skin for leather. She shakes herself. It must be false memory syndrome.

It isn't. [[end6]] [She goes on to the Elephant.](#)



Car six

196

Tony "Peewee" Hatchet

Outward appearance

Tiny, older man in T-shirt and sneakers. Continually massages a salt-and-pepper beard.

Inside information

Film editor for [[231]] [LWT](#) and director of an educational film version of *Beowulf* . It is his final effort to be taken seriously as a film maker.

What he is doing or thinking

That he's accidently made the sequel to *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* . OK, it was low budget and had some bad luck.

The flooded quarry looked perfect for Grendel's lair. Beowulf needed to stride boldly into the waters. Unfortunately, the waters were only three feet deep. In one shot, Beowulf dives in and doesn't sink. In the second, he wades in already dripping wet.

Then there were the horses. Well, ponies. They refused to ride up a hill. Then Beowulf made a John Wayne noise -- "Yeee-ha!". The ponies bolted. Their bareback riders dropped spears, scattered shields, and fell off, swearing. "Whose fucking bright idea was this?"

The flame thrower for the dragon didn't work. Peewee doused Beowulf's shield with petrol and flicked matches at it. The rushes show vapour trails of matches. The shield never caught.

Beowulf's funeral pyre did. Halfway through the scene, the corpse jumps up screaming. They had no more wood for a retake. Saxon warriors wore wristwatches and spectacles. Mobile phones rang during undubbed dialogue.

There is not a single saveable shot.

All his life, Peewee has aimed at dignity. All his life, people have clutched their sides. He is unfailingly funny. His soul aches.

OK, he tells the universe, next time I make a comedy.



Car six

197

Mr Jim Haigh

Outward appearance

Young, with floppy hair shaved at the sides, blue jeans, blue-tartan shirt, big new soft boots.

Inside information

Administrative gopher for Nexus Productions.

Jim is not ambitious. All he wants is a regular job that will give him enough money to buy some clothes, some dope, some free time. He keeps trying to plan a trip to India. He doesn't remember much about the last one.

What he is doing or thinking

Fuming about a woman at work, [[140]] [Anita](#). Jim tries to be friendly with everyone. He was pleased when Anita suddenly said, "Jim, you go home by Dillons don't you? Do you think you could pick up a book for me?" He thought she was asking as friend, and was happy to help. He went to Dillons and bought the book with his own money.

Yesterday, when he gave it to Anita, she didn't even look back around from her desk. He told her the price, and she said, "Well, claim it from expenses."

He was so surprised, he just walked away. His own boss refused as it's not out of his budget, and Anita's boss said she knew nothing about it.

Anita was just too important to do her own shopping. She tricked him into being her gopher, and she plainly won't pay him the money unless he nags her. He remembers as he walked away that she smiled with satisfaction.

Being nice doesn't work. Did he ever think it did? He prods the numb spot in his soul that doesn't want anything and fears for his future.



Car six

198

Mrs Beverly Tompset

Outward appearance

Worn, middle-aged woman, grey face, bright red hair, green overcoat, black jeans, loafers. Reading *The English Verb*. The lettering is 3-D and emerges from the distance, like the opening of *Star Wars*. **LTP**, it says, as if that were something thrilling.

Inside information

Lecturer in commercial sociology at [[23]] [Bruenwalt International](#). Her foreign students tend [[111]] [to speak textbook English](#). They cannot fathom English verbs, which are modified out of recognition by prepositions. 'To beat' is different from 'to beat up'. Beverly is yet to find a textbook that adequately explains this.

What she is doing or thinking

She is thinking of [[216]] [Attila, the homeless Big Issue](#) salesman outside Waterloo. She wants him to lecture her students on English. He's a Cossack but his English is flawlessly American and colloquial. Perhaps he could explain prepositional verbs to them. As it happens, there is a lad on the course from the old Soviet Republics. Beverly is sure that it would be a relief for Attila to talk to someone from home.

She thinks of her lovely, plump, pallid husband. How can she explain to him or herself that she is love with wild Cossack who worked many years on American merchant vessels? Beverly has spent her life banishing romance, all that novelettish stuff. She can banish it again.

But for now, surely it's all right to dream a little bit of being swept up in firm, brown, young arms? She lowers the book and sighs.

In the meantime, she can at least get him work. Again, she lifts up *The English Verb*.



Car six

199

Mr Stan Gray

Outward appearance

Carefully groomed older man, wavy silver hair, computer-salesman gray suit, blue overcoat, rotund tummy. Sits frozen with a smile pressed so tightly that is almost frown.

Inside information

Owner of Buntley Coachworks and [\[\[161\]\] Pru Waverly's boss](#). He may just have successfully framed one of his employees for murder.

What he is doing or thinking

Would it have happened at all without Andy? He came up with the idea for the joke, a tape of two women planning to kill another and played so that Pru would think it was a real crossed line. Stan's ears pricked up at the word murder. "I'll go along with it," Stan said. "If you supply the tape."

Stan wouldn't have gone ahead if the tape hadn't made plain it was a woman who would be killed. One of women talking on the tape was Andy's wife.

Stan had two days to steal Andy's things: a cigarette lighter with his initials engraved on it, and the 27-inch waist Y-fronts from his workout bag.

They'll be found under the sofa and behind Stan's own bed on which his wife will lie still, after lunchtime today when he nips home with wire and tape. After he rings the police tonight.

Will he be able to weep for the cameras? Will he hell. He goes on sexual binges, drinking binges, he's found, our Stan, that he can do anything necessary.

[\[\[230\]\] And Andy or his wife or both will go down](#). Stan allows himself to grin.

On the platform he is able to say, lightly, "Hello, Pru."



Car six

200

Mrs Rosemary Oliver

Outward appearance

Striking woman, early 30s. Mediterranean complexion, fragile face. Short tousled black hair. Blue, tousled, furry jacket. Legs as thin as wrists and elbows thicker than her hands huddle in the seat as if cold, or crowded by [\[\[201\]\] the huge man next to her](#). Her thinness makes her look tall: her feet reach the floor only on tiptoe. She smiles.

Inside information

A professional key-cutter and full time anorexic. Works at Stanley's Key Bar on the Cut. Her workmates are all male, and bully her, they think, for her own good. She has just had her day of vengeance.

What she is doing or thinking

So she hates eating. That's her business. They keep dumping food on her desk -- oh Jesus! -- greasy hamburgers, or lumpy health food Spinach and Vegetarian Cheese Pasties, or pink cheap cakes.

So. Yesterday she bought some HobNob biscuits, which look like a kind of pressed sawdust floor tile. Then she melted chocolate Ex-Lax on the little one-ring cooker. See how domestic I am? *Pour liberally over biscuits and let cool and harden in fridge for half hour* . It was like being on one of those nightmarish cooking programmes.

And when her workmates were tucking into their laxative biscuits with afternoon tea, she took out her brand new crusher and sprayed them with [\[\[189\]\] fresh garlic](#). "Isn't it delicious?" she cooed.

She's been thinking of new recipes all night. Salt instead of sugar icing. Steak and kidney pies lurking under a smothering of Bird's custard. Used coffee-ground pasties.

The Anorexic's Cookbook . See how it feels?



Car six

201

Mr "Bertie Jeeves"

Outward appearance

Huge, loose-limbed black man with no 1 trimmed beard and head, in blue track suit and *Planet Hollywood, Beijing* cap.

Inside information

Real name Andre Chambers. Manufacturer and retailer of own-brand ice cream. It is a top quality product, which is why its trademark is a snooty Englishman with a monocle. Bertie's vanilla uses real vanille from France. It is full fat, no air. "Like me," Bertie always says. He insists on being called Bertie Jeeves. His wife Frances drew the line at the monocle.

Bertie plays tennis every lunchtime at [\[\[85\]\] Archbishops Park](#), [\[\[15\]\] rugby every Saturday](#) and works out every other day. He has developed a rather embarrassing health problem.

What he is doing or thinking

Bertie is suffering from ice cream poisoning. His motions have turned white.

Bertie slips into the giant fridge to cool off after sport and can't stop himself eating ice cream. It's cold, it's liquid; he's hot and thirsty. Before he knows it, he's eaten an entire tub of Real Walnut or Canadian Maple or Surrey Strawberry.

His wife Frances has noticed that stock is missing. She's had to raise the price by ten pence in the pound. She's harangued the staff for theft.

"When I find out who's been spiriting the stuff away, they'll be gone, too," she warned them, "to jail." She tells Bertie. "You're too easy on people."

Bertie lives in dread of Frances' rage. He lives in terror of forgetting to flush the toilet and her finding the evidence.

There are times, he thinks, when I wish I were anorexic.



Car six

202

Mrs Maryan Elliott

Outward appearance

Tiny, plump woman wearing a black shirt printed with gold leaves. Sits with a handwritten list on her lap. Eyes closed, she recites.

Inside information

[[ad3]] [Maryan emigrated from Armenia](#) after marrying a British tourist. He looked big, clear-skinned, blue-eyed -- the model of a Soviet citizen. Back in Britain, he simply looks fat. He's a taxi driver.

Maryan's father was an economist. Her mother, heavily made-up in orange silk, frequently visits Britain, looks stricken, and lobbies the embassy to see if they can give her daughter a job. After months of applying for research or translation work, Maryan took a job in [[168]] [a new dry cleaning shop](#).

Two days convinced her that she needed to do something else. She decided to become a taxi driver.

What she is doing or thinking

Maryan is studying [[213]] [the Knowledge](#). To be a taxi driver you have to pass a test to prove you know the streets of London. So with Charlie's help, she is memorizing London.

She spends weekends driving up and down roads, to learn what they look like from all angles. She has to know every no-left turn sign or one-way street.

She can feel her brain being colonized. Sections of it feel weighed down, as if lead were being poured into a filigree mould. At night, as she goes over the names, the streets spread in her mind like frost.

Maryan will be one of the few people who know what London really looks like. She will never again stumble on anything new by accident. She recites.



Car six

203

Ms Leone Skerrit

Outward appearance

Leonine older woman, with a mane of streaked hair. Carefully made up. Red jacket. Small suitcase. Glances at her watch.

Inside information

Leone was a Bond Girl. In *Goldfinger* , she lounges around the Miami pool and lowers her sunglasses as hairy-chested [\[\[ftnt203\]\] Sean Connery](#) walks past. She was in *The Liver Birds* , two Carry On films and [\[\[ftnt203\]\] Confessions of a Window Cleaner](#) , playing an aging masseuse. She calls herself a one-woman barometer of the fall of the British film industry.

Late in life she showed a talent for understanding technical briefings. Today she demonstrates cellphones at a temporary stand in [\[\[115\]\] the concourse of Waterloo Station](#). Special offer: only ten pounds for the phone and your first three months of non-international calls free.

She is nearly late, but elegantly as always.

What she is doing or thinking

About her [\[\[26\]\] grandchild](#) who is coming to stay on the weekend. It will give her daughter Jemima and her new man a rest. Which is what Leone will need one herself when the weekend is over.

Leone lies about her age: she says she's 45 which is old enough. She's 52. At the end of the day grinning at potential buyers she feels like a death's head. Her feet ache, her knees hurt.

Jaimie will want to walk in the park and be taken to see [\[\[ftnt203\]\] The Lion King](#) . He is a bright, pretty little spark, and makes her feel grateful for what she's got.

It's all worth it. Jemima has just landed a small part. She's a Russian bar girl in *Goldeneye* .



Car six

204

Mr Harry Migson

Outward appearance

Bulky, youngish man with teddy-boy hair. Purple, broken veins map his cheeks. Corduroy overcoat with fake fur collar. Soft shoes masquerading as office shoes rest on a large cardboard box tied with twine to form a handle.

Inside information

Record dealer. He and his brother Terry run two separate cut price CD [stalls](#) and supply numerous others. Friends in warehouses supply them with returned job lots. What'll cost you fourteen quid in a shop, Harry will sell you on [Lower Marsh](#) for £9.99, or he'll get it for you. It's a cold job this time of year.

Today, his brother's got the van to make a collection from Polygram (and to keep Rufus, their bull terrier, with him and out of trouble).

Going through stock this morning, Harry opened up a cardboard box full of reggae and Jamaican imports. He has a terrible feeling that [Ashley Watkins](#) got the box meant for a Carpenters Fan Club Sale.

Now on his way to swap boxes.

What he is doing or thinking

What he is going to say to Ashley. Sorry, mate? Ashley always looks so long-faced and grim.

Nothing personal? Got to see the funny side, don't you? Somehow Harry doesn't think Ashley will.

Maybe, thinks Harry, I should go into classical. Different kind of clientele. After all there's that second hand shop by Waterloo. They do all right, and the same places will supply job lots of old Nigel Kennedy stuff. Three Tenors and all that.

He decides to talk to Terry when he gets back from the [Elephant](#).



Car six

205

Mrs Dodie McGinlay

Outward appearance

Professional woman, all in black, knees neatly together. Shiny, childlike shoes with buckles. Large legs in black tights. Slightly straggly face between gold spirals of hair.

Inside information

Works in [[232]] [Pall Mall Oil](#), supervising orders and invoices for the company's helicopter fleet. Her eldest son Dave wants to be a helicopter pilot. So does she.

Dodie is Captain of the Netbusters women's [[164]] [football team](#). They are top of their league and have a big game this Saturday.

Dodie has pulled Catherine, an aging player, out of the starting line up. Last season Cath was scoring brilliantly. In the game against the Girl Pipers, Dodie fed her, Cath dummied, cut inside the Pipers' defence and bent a superb shot round Relper into the top corner.

But Cath started doing benders of a different kind, burning the candle at both ends, and her game went right off. A spell on the benches might just focus her thinking.

What she is doing or thinking

Wondering what to do. Cath and Dodie have been an item. Cath's a big, raw Irish girl with a mouth, and she warned Dodie in no uncertain terms.

If she's pulled, she'll bring a case of sexual harassment.

Dodie considers her husband. He plays in his matches while she plays in hers. A peck on the cheek, teenage children: it's a settled life.

She imagines the scandal, the embarrassment. She has just learned that football is the most important thing in her life. But she'll have to betray it for that life.

Glum, she stands, admitting defeat. Cath will start.



Car six

206

Mr Michael Hanshaw

Outward appearance

Slim, youngish black man. Grey slacks, red-striped sweater, elaborate jacket in art deco knitted patterns and leather panels. Starts to whistle edgily, in competition with [\[\[193\]\] the woman opposite.](#)

Inside information

A 27 year old telephone engineer with [\[\[15\]\] British Telecom](#). The job is skilled and well paid. Mike spends his days out on call. Lunchtimes, he [\[\[12\]\] lifts weights](#) with two guys from work. He has a wife and a one year old baby daughter. Going to an appointment with a private South Bank clinic for drug abuse.

What he is doing or thinking

He's down. The world is shrivelling like a bad apple and he feels like he's wading through glue.

Coke doesn't change him; it makes him more himself. He sizzles through work, jokes with his friends, pumps iron, goes home and makes his wife giggle. The world seems full of love.

He remembers the first time he took it, at a party full of people he only half-knew and half-liked. His cousin Colin laid it out for him. That night, kipping at Colin's, Michael had a dream. It was more like a vision. All his friends were beyond the bedroom door and they made a light that shone under it, concentrated and searing like a star.

Michael loves cocaine. He's signed a piece of paper that acknowledges that he will be injected with a drug that reacts to it. If he uses coke, the drug will make him ill. The contract says it could even kill him.

He thinks of his wife and daughter. And the light.



Car six

207

Miss Angela Dowd

Outward appearance

Battered orange leather jacket with diamond-pattern shoulders. Black tights with a hole in the thigh, motorcycle boots with elaborate shin pads and rows of undone buckles. Ring through nose, black T shirt with the logo 'Misbegotten'. Long hair with pink highlights. Takes out mirror, examines her eye. Starts to read last night's *Evening Standard* .

Inside information

Part-time art teacher and band member. Was part of the Dublin scene for years. Knows Bono. Friend also of [\[\[52\]\] Annie Jeanrenaud](#).

Eighteen months ago, the band got a gig in Paris. With all their gear, they took [\[\[9\]\] a minicab](#) to the airport. At check-in, Angela realized that she'd forgotten her passport and dashed back home.

Only to find the cab driver standing embarrassed in her sitting room, hugging her stereo, jiggling it up and down as if it were a baby .

Angela teaches [\[\[236\]\] art](#) at Holloway prison. Yesterday, that cab driver showed up in her class. He stared embarrassed again.

What she is doing or thinking

Keeping her cool. She checks out her split ends: long hair doesn't really suit the image anyway. She examines her eye: she's got a stye coming.

Actually, it's kind of cool to be in a situation where you're training somebody who robbed you. Why else did she volunteer to teach art in prison? She picks up the *Standard* . And puts it down.

Because she's fucking angry. She's angry because she missed the plane, missed the gig; the police treated her like the criminal. And because at night, alone in her house, she's not cool at all.



Car six

208

Mr David Offsey

Outward appearance

Precise looking gent of a certain age in a traditional suit. Newspaper held awkwardly high. Sits legs wide apart, a large bandage over his nose.

Inside information

The maitre d'hote of the [[226]] [Britannia Club, near Waterloo](#). Appearances are important for the job.

David was trimming his hedge when he noticed blood on the leaves, on his trousers. It seemed that he had cut off the tip of his nose with the gardening shears. His wife asked him why he was on his knees. "I'm looking for my nose," he replied, testily.

She drove him to the clinic. "You can't park there, Sir," said the porter. "Oh can't we?" replied David, sounding as if he had a cold. He removed his hand from his face. The porter went white.

They repaired the nose by transplanting his foreskin.

What he is doing or thinking

It was a painful operation. Why aren't people sympathetic?

At breakfast, his son Peter smiled. "I always knew you were a dickhead, Dad."

"It will certainly change how I see a kiss on the cheek," giggled his wife.

On the train platform, smelly Vince insisted on talking loudly about circumcision. "It's like having an eyelid removed. The tip is that sensitive. You walk around bow-legged for days."

The people at work were equally flippant. "So you'll be like Pinocchio then," said Billy the bellhop. He mimed a massive facial erection.

"Brings a whole new meaning to the expression Nosey Parker, doesn't it?" mused Dora behind the desk.

David rattles his *Telegraph*. Can't see the humour in at all.



Car six

209

Mrs Alenka Misjeka Garrison

Outward appearance

Fierce faced, well built, middle-aged woman. Hair in a professional bob. Under the bulky coat, her white suit displays devastating cleavage.

Inside information

Alenka's husband is nice, good looking, and works constantly to keep her happy. For Christmas gave her a Ford Sierra. Alenka works constantly at being friendly with her 14 year old step-daughter. She is a civil engineer for Dobbs near Blackfriars. Unusually for a woman in an engineering company, she holds a senior position.

Until 1968 Alenka's father was a notable figure in the [[222]] [Czech](#) government. Alenka remembers giving wrong directions to the invading Russian troops. The Foreign Ministry helped her family escape by giving them holiday visas for Tunisia. They lived in Tunis for four years, then were granted entry to the UK. Alenka changed countries at 14 and 18. She now habitually restages such catastrophic migrations.

What she is doing or thinking

The season has changed. Alenka will get off at Waterloo and instead of turning right for Blackfriars, she will turn left for [[218]] [the Shuttle to Paris](#).

To lose her too-nice husband whom she pictures unloading clothes from a laundry basket. She sees his trusting daughter. Learn, Alenka tells her: life is not for trusting.

Her computer full of notes and research; her closet full of clothes and shoes; the flat full of photographs from this life; especially the Christmas Sierra. She will lose everything. She will be stripped of it, as if naked. That makes her feel engaged. In a dream, she gets off and walks towards the Shuttle.

London Spring.



Car six

210

Mrs Rezia Begum

Outward appearance

Bolt-upright, older woman wearing orange pyjamas, long peach top, and a gilded shawl. Her face is rigid, as if carved out of polished wood.

Inside information

Rezia's uncle married her to a distant cousin in the UK. It was a magnificent match. She went from a village in Bengal to Brick Lane, and from there to [[221]] [Harrow](#). [[233]] [Her husband](#) runs a restaurant in some place called Lamabett. She has never been there. Rezia only knows its name and that is on the Bakerloo line.

Her husband did not come home last night. She is going to the restaurant to find him.

What she is doing or thinking

After 30 years, Rezia misses her mother. She buys dresses from strangers. It is not the same as your family making them for you. Her sister writes tearful letters about the good life Rezia must be having. Could she send more money?

Back home, Rezia would have lived with her husband's mother, who would now be dead, leaving her to run things. Even 20 years of mother-in-law would be better than the huge English house on two floors with its gardens and silence. All three of her children have left home. Rezia wears silence like a cloak. Sometimes it does not seem worth getting up in the morning.

Now her fat, handsome husband has disappeared. She sat up all night; he did not telephone. If he died, who was there to tell her? Would she have to bury him alone?

Lamabett. Where is that?

[[end6]] [The train pulls out of Lambeth North](#).



Car six

211

Mr Andrew Vowles

Outward appearance

Tall, pudgy black man with long hair brushed straight down his back. Conservative brown suit, worn but expensive shoes. Carries translucent shopping bags full of unlabelled tins. Along with a tin opener.

Inside information

Qualified industrial caterer and past nominee for a Foody Award (Industrial section). Teaches at the Education Authorities Catering Training Unit, a homely bungalow in [[113]] [a Peabrone Estate](#) near Waterloo.

The bags contain prototypes for a new product -- ready-prepared West Indian dishes. Andrew has a theory about why Indian restaurants prosper and West Indian don't.

White people aren't frightened of Asians. Working class Brits, intimidated by posh eateries, feel at home with a curry and lager served by a small polite brown man to whom they can still feel superior.

But they're frightened of Caribbeans. And there are Caribbeans who would be buggered if they'll be waiters to anyone.

So how to get the British eating West Indian food? The answer is to serve it to them in non-West Indian environments. Andrew's *Typically Tropical* line of prepared food would be served in Italian restaurants, Thai restaurants, even Indian restaurants. He hopes to premiere his new product at this February's IFE 95 show.

What he is doing or thinking

Rehearsing his pitch. He pictures the bank manager. Did he know that chicken tikka is the second most popular British sandwich after egg mayonnaise? Did he know that Thai and Tex Mex are now the fifth and sixth most popular forms of cuisine? The British have developed a taste for spicy food.

But not, evidently, for spicy people.



Car six

212

Mr Henry Fisher

Outward appearance

Tall, beefy, raw-fingered ex-public schoolboy in conventional pinstripe suit and sensible shoes. Standing up, eyes closed, smiling. Purple port-wine stain across his forehead, right eye and cheek.

Inside information

Civil servant working in the MOD. His normal exit is Embankment. Got on the tube at Paddington, which was packed. He fell asleep standing up.

What he is doing or thinking

In a reverie of Jenny. They met at a party of his cousin's and knew each other for quite a while before he got the courage to ask her out. Finally his cousin told him to get a move on. To his surprise Jenny replied yes, without hesitation.

It was like the torment of university all over again. Henry didn't know what to do. He ended up taking Jenny to [\[\[95\]\] the Savoy](#), with its mirrored dining room over the river with the hundred-year old dance band in the corner. Jenny said she'd always wanted to see it, and with a pixilated grin, toured its [\[\[ftnt212\]\] bars, hat-checks, and theatre lobby](#). The bill came to £200.

After that, he treated her to nachos and movies. Nothing else. All his life, you see: his face.

Last night, Jenny coaxed him back into her flat and they made love. Henry was still a virgin, but it made no difference. Pent-up energy or something. They seemed to roll all night long in clouds of each other.

[\[\[187\]\] A woman shouts. "Leave it!"](#) Henry jerks awake: Good Lord, Lambeth North.

He jumps through the doors just in time. And thinks of Jenny.



Car six

213

Mr Steven Workman

Outward appearance

Plump, pale, about 35, in a grey suit, a tie that turns sideways, black Oxford shoes, and black Oxford hair complete with dandruff.

Inside information

Freelance systems analyst. Steven never fitted into corporate life. On time for an appointment with [\[\[57\]\] Adventure Capital](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Rehearsing his presentation.

"The technology exists to give every driver in the country instant knowledge of (cue Powerpoint slide)

- where on the map they are,
- the best way to get to their destination
- traffic problems en route."

[\[\[145\]\] Scotland Yard's traffic monitoring unit](#) has agreed to lease Steven their information. Traffic flow, cash flow.

"I call the system," he will say, "[\[\[202\]\] the Knowledge](#). Every car could have its own personal [\[\[216\]\] taxi driver](#)."

The doors open at Waterloo: his stop. Stumbling out, Steven catches his watch in [\[\[187\]\] a woman's hair](#). He tugs, thinking it will come free. The woman yelps.

The doors close. Damn. Frazzled hair is clenched between the sections of his metal watchstrap. Anyone could see, the only way is to pick it free strand by strand. Why isn't she helping?

Instead, she shouts. "It hurts!"

"Do you have a pair of scissors?" he asks.

"What?" Her eyes tear up; her arms fold.

He explains: "I've got an appointment." He starts to take off his watch.

"Will you stop that!"

They're already at Lambeth North. "Look, I've got to get off."

"That's too bloody bad," she says.

He gestures in frustration; her head is tugged again.

"Leave it!" she says. The doors rumble shut. [[end6]] [Both of them are swept on to the Elephant.](#)



Car six

214

Mr Christopher Brettenham

Outward appearance

Tall, graceful man, older than he looks. Longish red-blond hair, open countenance, donkey jacket, jeans and boots. Looks up from a book by Patrick Leigh Fermor to peer across the aisle.

Inside information

Stage hand at the [\[\[88\]\] Royal National Theatre](#), South Bank. Has survived all the contracting out. No longer actually helps build sets, instead determines budgets and badgers the contractors to stay within them. Loves travelling and has visited the Yemen, New Guinea, Pakistan, the Andaman Islands and in 1985, Thailand.

What he is doing or thinking

He has recognised [\[\[185\]\] Yong Y'oud](#) from the airplane voyage back to London ten years before. Christopher has never forgotten him.

Chris went to visit a friend who was working with Laotian refugees all along the Mekong. He saw a Thailand tourists to Pattaya, Bangkok or Chiang Mai never see. In places it was like the wild west, with anti-communist private armies. But employers took an interest in their employees' children, and bought them gifts, and found work for the proteges of their proteges.

On the airplane, Chris was friendly to Yong Y'oud. He said something simple like "What will you do in England?" Instead of being rewarded with a delighted smile, there was an awkward, bitter smirk. "I live there," Yong Y'oud said.

Christopher knew then: this one has lived in the West. This is what we do to them. To each other.

Chris think of the monks under trees, the women serving soup from corner carts, the beautiful children in uniform. He decides: it is time he saw Thailand again.



Car six

215

Mr Benjamin Posthate

Outward appearance

Fiercely red, thinning hair over pinched red face, grey suit, metal-edged square briefcase.

Inside information

Communications officer for Sum Total, the insurance company who insures [[51]] [Amina Khatun's](#) store. On his way to express his unhappiness with the [[192]] [Cut Health Centre](#), a one-stop health advice shop.

What he is doing or thinking

He'll withdraw funding from the Centre if they don't shape up. People do not understand that it's not his job to do good works, but to promote Sum Total. The Centre seems ashamed of being sponsored. ST's logo is hidden away on the lower corner of one window; ST's health leaflets are not given precedence in displays. There's nothing that says: Sum Total paid for this.

He'll tell them straight. Either ST's event contractor takes over the design and stock control of the Centre or he'll demand compensation.

It's not as if there aren't plenty of venues. That very nice girl he met from [[42]] [the Florence Nightingale Museum](#), for example. Now she had her head screwed on. She knew exactly what was wanted. Corporate entertainment facilities with priority booking for sponsors; a permanent exhibition of ST's role in health care, a constant flow of visiting health professionals plus students just entering the insurance market...

What if the Museum were a better deal? This would be the time to cut the Centre off.

He gets off one stop early at Waterloo, and looks up her mobile number. Warrington, that's it. He dials.

A far better bet. Easy on the eye as well.

Her phone seems to be switched off.



Car six

216

Mr Sam Cruza

Outward appearance

New York taxi driver? Translucent, polished complexion. Wild black hair, little moustache, clean but worn clothes, grubby shoulder bag full of uniform slices of paper. Smiles to himself, cupping his hand around the left side of his face.

Inside information

New York [[219]] [taxi driver](#). Came to London for some fun, plus he needed to duck out of a drugs rap. Some guys he knew got caught. Now he sells *The Big Issue* and shares with some Americans he met coming over. He eats their food and does not replace it.

He's got all these women dancing, man. They think he's from all over: Arabia, Turkey, Romania, places he's just seen on a map. He tells them all kinds of stuff.

On Charing Cross, he saw every one of them go past in the train windows. So he went into this car, and one of them was here too. So he's sitting low-down at this end of the carriage.

What he is doing or thinking

He's not really ready to introduce all those ladies to each other just yet.

He wants [[57]] [the rich businesswoman](#) most only cause she's the coldest piece of ass. [[198]] [Beverley](#) is sentimental -- but she'll be good for cash. The spent old broad who says she's [[79]] [Matisse's granddaughter](#), she keeps saying she's poor, but who knows -- maybe she'll give him a painting. [[140]] [Anita](#) is dangerous. She's smart; she could turn on him. Sam's a little afraid of Anita. Her, he would like to hurt.

All in all, it's probably best just to cruise on down to [[end6]] [the Elephant](#).



Car six

217

Ms Anthea Dobbs

Outward appearance

Tinted, straw-like hair, black knitted shawl, billowing printed brown dress and scuffed brown boots. Beautifully made up. Sits with small personal organiser, but is not looking at it. Very suddenly she stands up to exit at Waterloo.

Inside information

Partner of [\[\[20\]\] Joy Harvey](#) in Council information surgery. Regards herself as the more technical side of the partnership. On her way to [\[\[180\]\] Wasteco](#) at the Elephant and Castle.

What she is doing or thinking

She looks at the silent people around her and remembers the tube strike of 1989. Everyone walked to work. It was summer, and London was suddenly a festival of people. There should have been banners. The streets, instead being deserted, bustled. It was even better in the evenings: the shadows long, the sun golden. People said what the hell, and went to the pub. They walked in chains with hands on each other's necks. Pretty girls in halter necks, large bouncy men with Jewish hats. You saw faces everywhere, and the message of those faces over time was this: we are for the most part hard working, decent, pleasant people.

She has read recently of an alarming fall in numbers of people volunteering for charities. It is not due to overwork, since it is busy people who have continued to volunteer. The reason, the article claimed, is habitual isolation. It breeds mistrust and cynicism.

She almost thinks there should be a two-year moratorium on cars, tubes, TV. She suddenly yearns to be out on the streets and abruptly decides to walk to the Elephant from Waterloo.



Car seven

218

M. Anton Enzer

Outward appearance

Rail-thin young man, clear complexion, shock of black hair, outdoor overcoat, black suit. Stares at a white card.

Inside information

Returning to [France](#) for his father's funeral.

At the age of seventy, Anton's mother asked his father for a divorce. The shock triggered a stroke. When Anton's mother learned that her husband might die soon, and that she had been written out of his will, she tried to declare him insane.

Anton persuaded his father to sign a statement that he was content with his treatment. Anton used this to block his mother's attempts to re-examine his father with her own tame doctors. The divorce and the will went through.

His father re-married one of his students, a dull woman Anton thought would take care of him. She waited until his will was changed again, and then declared him incompetent. Morose, confused, his father died in care, leaving both Anton and his mother disinherited.

What he is doing or thinking

The invitation invites contributions to an Alzheimers charity. Anton's stepmother is implying that her husband died of Alzheimers. His father was bitter and acerbic, but deserved better.

[An old lady](#), some drunk, asks Anton to dance. He waves her away. She starts to sing. [A black woman](#) joins her, and demands "Everybody!"

Why the hell not? Anton stands up and bows. "May I have this dance?" The old woman's face crinkles into a smile. They waltz up the aisle and Anton decides: he does not approve of this funeral. He will not go. He dances [on past Waterloo](#).



Car seven

219

Miss Halet Ozgen

Outward appearance

Sophia Loren? Strong-featured young woman in black business dress.

Inside information

[[1]] [Turkish](#) business graduate working, like her father, for [[2]] [Beetlehide shipping](#). Just back from enforced return to Istanbul. Beetlehide have twice tried to get Halet a work permit. They have just re-advertised her job, tailoring it for a Turkish speaker. It is her last chance.

What she is doing or thinking

She cannot go back to Turkey. In Istanbul, she went to a friend's party, head uncovered in Western evening dress. Their car was repeatedly rammed by rented jeep driven by a man with a beard. Another car eased between them and they escaped down an off ramp.

A week later, she was in [[99]] [a taxi](#) that was stopped by police. Using the polite plural form of you she asked what the taxi driver had done wrong. "You are on the side of the guilty!" the policeman said, using the singular. "Are you my father or a relative?" she replied, insulted. He grabbed her wrist, flung her to the ground. She woke up sobbing in the back of another driver's cab. The driver said, "You cannot be Turkish, to help a taxi driver."

The next day she was followed home by catcalling men. They hated her loose hair, her clothes, her manner. They wanted her back in purdah. Halet needs that work permit.

[[253]] [An old crazy lady](#) is singing *Is that all there is?* Halet likes the song; there is something Turkish about its mournfulness. [[223]] [A black lady](#) starts to sing it too. Suddenly everyone is dancing.

Including Halet.



Car seven

220

Miss Ursula Gustaffson

Outward appearance

About 18, blond, heavy faced. Tan corduroys, black shoulder bag. Looking at a London A-Z.

Inside information

Swedish visitor from the town of Ostersund. Missing the first week of college to visit an English boy she met in Amsterdam.

What she is doing or thinking

Amsterdam had been the best thing in her life. She met Chris in a cafe; they just started talking. He was handsome, outgoing. He took her to a church where a German conductor was recording the King's College choir in a piece by Bach. The conductor smiled so kindly. He really liked Chris. She thought Chris must be part of the choir. "No, I just met him," Chris said, not explaining further. Together they watched this beautiful music being recorded.

She fell in love with him. They visited the Rijksmuseum, they ate meals, they talked and when they said goodbye at Amsterdam station, he waved, she wept. She wrote and told him she was coming.

"Would you like to dance?" [\[\[253\]\] an old lady](#) asks her, in a European accent. Ursula shakes her head. She sees herself when old.

Chris never answered her letters. He may have moved. He may not want her to come. A sense of feeling foolish or betrayed rises as she gets closer to Lambeth North.

[\[\[219\]\] The woman next to Ursula](#) starts to sing also. [\[\[218\]\] A young man](#) gallantly leads the old lady in a waltz. Suddenly there is a party.

Oh well, thinks Ursula, take what you can. Grateful, awkward, she stands up and traces patterns of dancing in the air.



Car seven

221

Mrs Emily Jenkins

Outward appearance

Mid thirties, old fashioned long hair in sweeping curls, blue jumper and slacks, navy blue coat, flowers by her bag. The flowers are brown at the edges. Writing in a card with great deliberation.

Inside information

Housewife. There still are some. Her husband is the manager of [a Renault dealership](#). Going to [St Thomas' hospital](#) to visit her sister. Her sister is dying, but doesn't know it.

What she is doing or thinking

It's taken Emily all the way from [Harrow](#) to write the card.

My dearest Rhona

Wishing you all the best, my darling, on your 28th birthday. I hope you have an absolutely fab day and year. It can only be better than the last one!

She wants to write, I remember you as my pretty little sister. I remember taking you to see [Starlight Express](#), and your eyes going big and round. I drove you up to university and I was so proud of you, Clever Clogs. Emily wants to write: Mum and Dad still live in the 60s; I don't like my husband; you're the only one I can rely on, Pet.

She had to buy the flowers at the station in a hurry. They're dying too.

"Would you like to dance?" [an old lady](#) asks someone. And someone agrees. [The gentleman opposite](#) takes out a bottle of whisky.

"I'd love some," says Emily. The whisky is harsh and warm in her throat. Somehow Emily goes past Waterloo. She gets out at Lambeth North, laughing with the old man. She looks at the flowers.

And they're fresh.



Car seven

222

Mr Vaclav Horacek

Outward appearance

Healthy old hippy? A cloud of tangled honey hair and beard, rumped pink cheeks. Ochre trousers, a natty polka-dot cravat, a grin of crazed enthusiasm. A plastic bag full of cloth and string.

Inside information

[[209]] [Czech](#) theatre producer going to the Old Vic to force them to interview him. He is the director of a puppet version of *Yellow Submarine* . It was a big hit, only the second [[127]] [Beatles](#) show in Prague. It had wonderful songs, a tourist audience, and Vaclav's papier mache creations.

What he is doing or thinking

The British don't like the Beatles. No one is interested at all at all in *Yellow Submarine* . They keep talking about this thing copyright. It is very frustrating.

[[253]] [An old woman](#) comes up to him, hunched and small and smiling. "Would you like to dance?" She is desparate woman. You get them also in Prague station. If he wasn't also desparate Vaclav would give her money. But Vaclav can only afford one meal a day.

The old woman starts to sing and someone else says to all join. Then a young man starts to dance with her. Ah! This is why Vaclav dreamed for years of coming to London.

Vaclav pulls out his puppet of John Lennon dressed as Sargeant Pepper. He makes Lennon totter and starts to sing... "Pah, pah, pah...."

That is not a Beatle song he is singing. He has to think. It's Papagino from *The Magic Flute* . That is no copyright. Vaclav's pitch changes.

A puppet Magic Flute starring the Beatles and Charlie Chaplin?

Lennon dances.



Car seven

223

Professor Dionne Butler

Outward appearance

Elegant, but slightly down at heel, black woman about 45. Very tall, so her long brown flared trousers extend into the aisle, showing thick-heeled but scuffed shoes. Huge, new fawn anorak, low cut black sweater.

Inside information

American academic and ex-student of Angela Davis's at UCLA. Dionne emigrated to Nigeria ten years ago and now teaches at the University of Lagos. In London at the invitation of [SOAS](#) to lecture on African literature. En route to to visit [MOMI](#).

What she is doing or thinking

Since getting on at Kilburn, Dionne has had her eye on [the old lady in the corner](#), who kept looking around her, horror stricken. She has just stood up and asked a young man to dance. People's faces froze, they looked away. Oh come on, she just wants some life! She hasn't asked you for money. People cough and shift.

Then the woman starts to sing: *Is that all there is?* and Dionne understands.

Dionne first heard the song when she was 17, and it seemed then to sum up America; something sad and disaster-bound about it. Even then, it was loneliest country in the world. One reason why she lives in Africa.

And people look as if the poor old dear has said something obscene. She's singing!

Dionne stands up, and with her strong clear voice, joins in. Her eyes fix all the frightened people in turn. "Everybody!" Dionne shouts and links arms with the old woman, who looks up at her with comprehending gratitude.

The young man bows. The dance begins.



Car seven

224

Mrs Louisa Balbrough

Outward appearance

Craggy woman with cropped grey hair. Her trousers are tartan in front, yellow with red polka dots in back. Wistfully reading a yellowed letter.

Inside information

[[194]] [Antiques dealer returning from Camden Passage](#). Divorced, recently lifted up by a love affair with a tall, craggy man called Peter Wolffe. Her father, an ex-Army officer, recently died, leaving her his letters.

What she is doing or thinking

Reading words written in 1946 from Germany to her mother.

My darling, I'm so proud of you and baby Louisa. The photograph is beautiful. We are still sweeping up the mess made by this war but I will be home soon.

There is one thing darling I never told you. I have another child, a son. His mother asked me to help; she could not stand her husband, who does not know. I've never seen the little fellow, but both of us need to remember, for Louisa's sake, that his name is Peter Wolffe.

Louisa had never experienced anything like meeting Peter. His rangy body, the life etched into his face -- she saw him and thought: "that's the one". Peter said later he felt the same thing.

It's the Siegmund Syndrome -- in the Wagner opera a brother and sister meet for the first time and abandon the law from love. Peter lives simply in East Anglia, selling smoked fish. She wants to live there with him.

Louisa watches dancing people. She thinks: I'm 50; there can be no children, there are no Gods to enrage. She folds the letter away, smiles, and joins the party.



Car seven

225

Mr Henry Gidding

Outward appearance

Scuffed boots, jeans with an open fly over another pair of jeans, bumfreezer jacket over thick Arran-isle sweater, knitted hat, creased face, black beard. Head thrown back. Snoring loudly.

Inside information

Display Operative for EyeFeast Ltd. He puts up three-sided outdoor rotating signs. They come in nearly one hundred separately printed slats, about 9 foot high by 4 inches wide. He and his mate Mark usually do ten a day.

They have spent the last two days doing the same one. And the last two nights doing the other 19.

What he is doing or thinking

He's seeing slats in his dreams. Over and over he and Mark have tried to assemble the three-sided sign. It's like a giant jigsaw that won't come right.

One of the ads is for the National Power/Powergen sale of remaining shares. "An impressive release of power" it says, over a volcanic eruption, all red and black speckly bits that are absolutely indistinguishable. On the back of that is "Share the power" a clever tie-in from the [Billericay](#) who are a share shop for the offer. It's all red and black too.

In his dream, it's bloody cold on the scaffolding, and he keeps dropping the slats. They fall and impale passersby.

Then Nick Berry, Britain's highest paid television actor, steps in, dressed as a bobby. He starts passing Henry the slats in the right order, and Henry sees that yes, for real, this is the right order.

Then someone shouts "Everybody!" With a snort he wakes.

The right order scatters.



Car seven

226

Mrs Gemma Carty

Outward appearance

Woman in mid 30s. Fawns, pinks, browns merge to form a business-like presentation. Orange lipstick matches her short hair. Reading a document, shaking her head slightly.

Inside information

Conference Director of [[208]] [the Britannia Club](#). Gemma balances the needs of Club members with sales to other customers. She referees when catering, marketing, AV, bookings and finance all disagree.

What she is doing or thinking

Currently reading minutes taken by her new secretary and pondering the mysteries of the human mind. She was told that [[ftnt226]] [Sushita](#), an Indian girl adopted by Swiss parents, would be a very thorough notetaker and not to be alarmed by her methods. Gemma was appalled at the first monthly sales meeting. Sushita spent the entire time [[192]] [drawing circles, arrows, zig-zags](#), and Dumbo the flying elephant. Her ex-employer Mrs Hofer soothed Gemma's fears.

And here are the minutes, typed from circles and arrows.

"Mr Gestetner emphasized that the brief for the new audio visual equipment was a matter for the presentations team. Miss Buxton replied that it was typical of the AV team to try to do marketing; Mr Gestener replied that it was typical of marketing to think that equipment did not need specification. Mrs Carty resolved the issue by deciding to include marketing in the tender team."

Gemma can't send that to people. It's too accurate.

Gemma looks up to see people begin to sing and dance. She prepares to get off at Waterloo. What a strange and miraculous species we are, she thinks.

Then she thinks: I'll send it just as it is.



Car seven

227

Ms Elspeth Worlidge

Outward appearance

Very suitable girl, dressed like an ad for sherry in a 1967 *Sunday Telegraph* colour supplement. Hermes scarf tucked around neck, yellowish blouse, carefully combed brown hair, simple black business suit, clean coat with fake fur collar. She stares ahead frozen in horror, her freckled hand jammed into her orderly hair.

Inside information

PA to the Director, Public Sector Services of [[26]] [Dun and Old](#), the accountancy and business consultancy.

What she is doing or thinking

Everything has just fallen into place. The tenders for consultancies to the nearly innumerable government bodies (4,000 on their mailing list) fall like autumn leaves onto her desk. They want corporate strategies, sales strategies, efficiency savings, marketing plans. She photocopies the documents and sends them to the same ten people in Dun and Old, and sets up a tender meeting. Sometimes she reads them.

The tender in her bag is headlined "General Policy Direction and Application: tender for long-term consultancy and evaluation contract."

She read it several times before it made any sense. It kept talking about long-term targeting, horizontal and vertical analysis followed up by monitoring and corrective actions.

The sense it has just made to her is this: the governance of Britain has been put out to tender to the private sector. The United Kingdom will be run by a consultancy. No wonder Dun and Old has built a mini-Whitehall just across the river. No wonder her boss danced a little jig and then rang to thank Larry.

They are in competition with three other companies. Are any of them European?



Car seven

228

Miss Becky Patterson

Outward appearance

Raw-boned, hearty girl wearing an iridescent jacket in a pattern of roses and leaves. Glossy peppermint-pink lipstick. Lady-Di honey hair, grey slacks, red sweater. Takes out a torch from her bag, rifles through jump leads, and takes out a wiring diagram.

Inside information

Daughter of third-generation Zimbabwe farmers, with a degree in Tibetan. Assistant librarian in the [[109]] [British Library's](#) oriental collection near Blackfriars. Planning the rewiring of the flat she has just moved into with her partner Bill, a burly schoolteacher.

What she is doing or thinking

Bill turned out to be English, after all. He's so wimpish about everything. She'll have to do the rewiring herself. He's scared and wants an electrician.

It's like their bathwater. All she says is that it's wasteful to use the water only once. He gets to be first; and she's stopped using it a third time for the dishes. If only he'd remember to use biodegradable soap, like he promised, she could use it to water the basil.

He's never had to transport all his water by truck in barrels. He's never had to save and reuse everything. Why not reuse good fat? All the different things it's cooked add to the flavour.

She admits: it was a shame about the mouse. OK, so it fell into the fat jar and she didn't find it until months later. Doesn't he know what gives wine its bouquet?

That's the trouble with Westerners; they're just too clean. They don't develop their immune systems.

She sniffs, having decided how to rewire the flat.



Car seven

229

Mrs Nancy Kress

Outward appearance

Checked jacket, white shirt, long red dress. Reads *The Telegraph*, with beady focus. Her blue shoes are patchy with stains.

Inside information

Customer liaison at IBM, mother of three, proud cook, Nancy's life is a whirlwind.

What she is doing or thinking

Maybe she's doing too much.

The kids had their breakfast, Bill had taken them to school, she had her car keys in her hand, about to go, when she saw that a jar from last night's marmalade session was still unlidded. She screwed on the lid, and held the jar up to the light.

Baking the jar sterile must have cracked the glass. The bottom fell out. Marmalade poured over her keys, her suit, her shoes, the floor.

To sweep it up would run her broom. She tried pushing the dust pan into it, which was only partially successful. She went to get newspapers and heard the kiss of sticky shoes on carpet.

She took off her shoes and cut her foot on broken glass. Scraped up jam as best she could, flooded the floor with water, and covered it with newspaper to soak it up. Went off to change clothes and stanch bleeding.

Came back to find that the mixture of marmalade and water had flyposted the newspapers to the pine floor. Used the eggliifter to scrape them up.

Ran to car, and jammed keys into the ignition along with a chunk of orange peel. Abandoned car.

She has just remembered that she didn't have time to wash the jars. The marmalade will taste of homemade pickled onions.



Car seven

230

Mr Graham Waddle

Outward appearance

About 26, skinny, spotty, with a big nose, no chin, and huge teeth that threaten constantly to push his mouth into a smile.

Inside information

Van driver for Buntley Coachworks. Very quietly keeps the company functioning. Its stock control system is faulty: the computer system needs too much feeding. Graham knows what parts are running low and what is being repaired, and collects what's needed before it's even ordered. Gives staff and customers lifts, deals with [the MD](#).

What he is doing or thinking

Never a dull moment at Buntley's. Graham needs the loading bay for the van, but Mr Gray parks there overnight. Graham just has to laugh. The number of times he's pulled in with part of a chassis, or an exhaust, only to find Mr Gray's car there.

Graham's become quite an expert in the MD's movements. He says he's popping out for a sandwich, but takes his car. One lunchtime, Graham saw the MD's car parked in a residential street in Clapham. That would be some sandwich.

[\[\[9\]\] The two black guys](#) who'd had their car kicked in: Mr Gray told Andy to use an old panel. Graham slipped Andy a new one instead. He saw Mr Gray filch Andy's lighter out of his bag. And there was that joke on Pru.

So all in all, Graham's decided. If Mr Gray says he's going out for a sandwich, Graham will follow him. And if he goes to some bird's house, Graham will make sure the lads all know.

And he'll ask Andy if he got his lighter back.



Car seven

231

Mr Thomas Miley

Outward appearance

Casual labourer? Striped shirt, bulging tummy, jeans, orange anorak, thinning hair. Reading some kind of briefing document. Sticker on brown briefcase says "Temporary Pass [[72]] [London Weekend Television](#)".

Inside information

A professional mentor. He coaches middle managers, giving them advice on office politics or career strategy. To do that he must gain access to their places of employment in the guise of being a potential customer or supplier. Currently pretending to be a camera assistant in order to advise a producer at LWT. The terrible truth is, the producer isn't very good.

What he is doing or thinking

Reviewing the proposed charter for a new professional body, the Institute of Mentoring ("to guide, to advise, to nurture"). Some thorny professional issues are being faced.

- *If a Member discovers that mentoring one individual brings the Member into the position of potentially advising against the interest of another client, the case will be referred to second Member.*
- *Members are encouraged to become experts in the cultures of particular companies. This is to limit the need to access company realities under false pretences.*

The bloody puritans are saying that the clients should openly introduce their Mentors to the company. But the whole point for clients is that their Mentor is a secret weapon. And, they're ashamed of needing one.

If the Institute tries to make Mentoring open, it will create a second, secret profession. Like Thomas, it will gain entry under false pretences.

On the other hand, how else are they to get a Royal patron?

And what is he going to tell his client?



Car seven

232

Mr Peter Morse

Outward appearance

Young black man. Hair close-cropped in zig-zag patterns. Under an index finger, he hides a grin.

Inside information

Dishwasher at the lower staff canteen in [[64]] [Pall Mall Oil](#). Peter fires a hose of steaming water at the crocks before they're run through the main dishwashers.

Mr Cerbasi, the manager, has been trying to take the canteen upmarket. Customers can see into the dishroom. The dishroom staff talk and joke. That is not upmarket. So Cerbasi has put a bloody great chunk of lavender plywood across the tray window.

This reduced the space through which dirty dishes can be pushed by about two-thirds. Instead of resting on shelves, they avalanche either forwards into the dishroom or back over the canteen floor. And since there is no flow of air, the dishroom is a regular 45 degrees.

What he is doing or thinking

Yesterday, Peter heard a crash of trays the other side of the window. Mr Cerbasi, fat and pale, ran in, grabbed the hose and tried to prove that if you worked in a continual panic, you could, just about, keep up with all the trays. Sweat poured off him.

Peter shrugged, walked off, peed, and came back.

"Where were you?" Cerbasi demanded. "I'm allowed to pee," Peter replied. Cerbasi left.

Inspiration struck and to the tune from Handel's Messiah, Peter began to sing, "Hallelujah! Cerbasi! Cerbasi! Hallelujah!" Everyone in the dishroom joined in. It was quite merry. Then Peter rang the Health and Safety Executive and shopped the canteen.

He's looking forward to today's talk with Cerbasi.



Car seven

233

Mr Malik Begum

Outward appearance

Handsome businessman, dark suit, camelhair coat. Black hair rolls back in waves. Deep circles under his eyes. Rubs them, seems to crumple, then sits up straight, in power again.

Inside information

Owns the Sharma Restaurant near Lambeth North. It is well appointed, with glass panels frosted with Hindu motifs, though Mr Begum is Muslim. [[211]] [The restaurant is almost always empty](#), but keeps large numbers of people in employment.

It launders money for gentlemen in Soho. Last night they took Mr Begum to dinner. It went on too long, he became suspicious; they tried to get him drunk then they asked him to work through a ludicrous sum. His percentage would keep his family in comfort -- and he didn't know what would happen if he refused them.

It's such a risk. No one will believe that sum for food, tablecloths, maintenance. He spent all night trying to work it out and decided: the only way the business would move that much cash was if it were sold. He has to close it. Then that will be it, he promises, he will have no more dealings with them.

What he is doing or thinking

Mr Begum gets out at Lambeth, and to his horror sees [[210]] [his wife in the next car](#). The doors close, and the train pulls away.

What does he do? The platform is in strange disorder. A party from his own car blow favours. At the far end, [[98]] [two policemen interrogate some tourists](#). Their radios squawk. They all suddenly look down the tunnel in the direction his wife has gone.



Car seven

234

Mr Paul Henry

Outward appearance

Pretty man in his early thirties. A puff of blond, thinning hair. Brown winter coat, olive suit, brown wool tie. Stares smiling.

Inside information

One of the managers of the Queen of Tarts bakery on the other side of Waterloo Road. Lives with his mum. The only survivor of Donald Nielsen's attentions.

What he is doing or thinking

Paul is wondering why the meat pies don't sell. People buy them once, shudder, and ever afterwards order the spinach and aubergine.

A boyfriend ate one once and said it tasted like burnt tyres. Paul can cook every other sort of pie, even savory cheese. But not meat.

He has this weird notion that he is somehow tainted. He liked Donald Nielsen; he was older, stable, kindly. Nielsen cooked him dinner, and plied him with booze and then Paul woke up underwater in the bath with a tie being tightened around his neck. Donald apologized, helped him out of the bath, and dried him down. It was only the next day that Paul began to think that someone had tried to kill him and that he had allowed someone to get away with trying to kill him. Paul stayed silent, until he saw the papers. The police were thunderstruck. Why had he waited until now? Paul still doesn't know.

Donald Nielsen cooked him meat pies. He cooked other things as well. The train stops at Waterloo. Paul gets out and [a woman in blue](#), head held high, sweeps past him. For some reason, the platform sways underfoot and Paul has to sit down.



Car seven

235

Mr Tristan Sawyer

Outward appearance

Vaguely Mediterranean, slightly beaky gentleman in long grey coat, black hair. Has his [\[\[102\]\] FT](#) out, but isn't reading.

Inside information

Financial forecaster for a large corporation. Used to be a colleague and the best friend of [\[\[37\]\] Richard Tomlinson](#). Works late most nights. Has the confidence of the Managing Director. At dinner last night the MD asked Tristan if he knew why Richard had left. Tristan didn't say.

What he is doing or thinking

Thinking he really should give Richard a call. Tristan was very angry with him for getting himself infected. Silly trollop, there were plenty of nice men who would have fallen all over themselves to have a relationship with him. In his younger days.

The Corp sent them both out to the Essex office, and they had to share the company flat. It had been fun, getting drunk, pretending to be het. He really needed watching over that boy. Overdid the sauce at times.

It was pathetic after he resigned. He didn't realize he no longer had the same hold over people he once had: not as pretty, not as successful. It really was a bit difficult introducing him at dinner parties: this is my dropped-out friend Richard.

He's as strong as a horse of course, and will be fine. Anyway, Tristan has to fly out to Venezuela next week. Maybe he'll give him a call after that. Just to show he isn't avoiding him or anything.

Tristan suddenly sees Richard's face as it was in Essex, happy, bold, smiling, beautiful. He tries to dismiss it, and can't.



Car seven

236

Ms Julie Gluck

Outward appearance

Stylish woman in late middle age. Skin like a walnut, honey hair wrapped in a slinky patterned scarf, clean blue jeans, brown nylon stockings visible in cleavage of tiny shoes. A painting is turned to face the wall. Canvas has been left unstapled at the back; the wood is badly joined.

Inside information

Runs No Bars Gallery, a space on [[12]] [Lower Marsh](#). Friends stage openings, drink cheap wine, skittishly look for critics who never arrive, and then leave the pictures on the walls for two weeks in the locked and closed ex-cafe. Nobody bothers to steal them. [[33]] [It's called art.](#)

What she is doing or thinking

Wondering how she can face carrying the painting through the streets. It is an impasto portrait of female genitalia.

"I'm a heterosexual Mapplethrope," said the artist, Jeremy. Some hope. He's always been a sad little fuck, the kind of kid who gets beaten up. Julie has always found him physically repulsive; she didn't know that he was obsessed with prostitutes.

What faces the wall is quite simply the worst single thing Julie has ever seen in her life, muddy with paint, hideous to look at, poorly mounted, it involves an inserted and lit candle and is called *True Love* .

"I wanted to celebrate the endless variety of whores," says Jeremy. Sure. That's why all the paintings look the same.

The train whines into Waterloo. Julie stands, adjusts her headscarf and suddenly realizes she's not going to carry that thing out. With an air of delicate nonchalance, she turns and leaves it to its fate.



Car seven

237

Mr Bill Havers

Outward appearance

Burly man, mid 30s, curly hair, in slacks, soft shoes. Reading *The Daily Mail* .

Inside information

Pharmacist for a small chemist's shop [\[\[246\]\] in Kennington Road](#). Has been troubled by a series of unskilled, unfriendly shop assistants. Until Bertie arrived.

Bertie is 19, from a family in the garment trade. She isn't pretty, but she is remarkably cheerful and energetic, with a blunt nose and freckles. For some reason, their senses of humour mesh. She tells jokes about her boyfriends or family. Her uncle Joe is an unapologetic Stalinist who still hopes for a return of Communism. Her aunt Ruby saw off thieves by chucking her stock of fruit and veg at them.

They even went out together to see Diana Ross. Bill's wife was worried until she met her. "I was wondering why you were so much more cheerful lately," his wife said.

Bill replied, "It's just nice working with such nice people."

Bertie's brother was convicted of causing an affray. The original charge was assault. He's big, cheerful, but loses his temper. Bertie asked if Bill couldn't try to get him a job in the shop. Something told him: no.

What he is doing or thinking

He's agonizing over it. He would hate to turn Bertie down, and hate even more to lose her friendship. But someone with a temper dealing with customers? He can't imagine what [\[\[191\]\] Mr Kumar](#) would say. He can't ask. It's not right. The train slows. He's going to have to say no. With a sense of loss, almost of doom, he folds away his paper.



Car seven

238

Mr Charles Wright

Outward appearance

Unshaven, plump older black man with twists of silver in his hair. Green track suit bottoms, working class cap, trainers. Sits holding a W H Smith bag with a CD in it.

Inside information

Took early retirement from Lloyds. The payout wasn't quite sufficient. Has worried too much about finances since. He's distracted.

This morning he woke up and realized that he had forgotten his wife's birthday. [[167]] [Paule](#) makes such a big fuss over occasions. He pretended to be asleep, as she got ready to go out to her cleaning job. He waited until he heard the door close and then got up, ill with the earliness, did his morning chores, and nipped out of the house.

He went to [[115]] [the concourse at Waterloo Station to buy some chocolates](#). The confectioner's was closed. Then he thought: I'll buy her a CD single for a card and say I'm getting tickets for a show. But Our Price was closed as well. In a panic he headed across the river, to Charing Cross. He had a coffee until W H Smith opened. Saw nothing she might like. Bought *Now That's What I Call Music 30* .

What he is doing or thinking

Getting back on at Embankment, he saw his wife flash past in Car 4, followed by her [[194]] [friend Mary Wallis](#) in Car 6. Finally made it into Car 7.

Which means he'll have to get out at Waterloo, or they'll see him. He'll have to run all the way home and hope that Mary and Paule will stop to talk.

Happy birthday.



Car seven

239

Miss Cherl Jones

Outward appearance

About 24, hair in stripes of different shades of blonde pulled back by hair grip. Black jumper, red body warmer, blue suede hiking boots, all spotless. Large cloth bag with ROCK GEEK logo.

She sits like a stack of precariously balanced china. She seems to be looking permanently upwards because of the tilt of the tip of her nose. Her upper lip looks numb.

Inside information

Dental nurse. The gear is a disguise. She'll bounce back into the practice and breathlessly tell them she just got off the train from her especially long skiing holiday in France. In fact, she is returning from plastic surgery.

What she is doing or thinking

She is completely occupied simply with sitting on a train. She feels exposed as if the top layer of skin has been peeled away (it has). Are people looking?

Cherl is convinced that she is now extraordinarily beautiful. She glances sideways in the reflecting windows and has this confirmed. She looks just like Sharon Stone. She feels nervous and joyful all at once. Her chin used to jut out towards her long and downward turning nose. She looked like a nutcracker.

Now she wonders if a career in modelling might not be possible. She crosses her legs and holds her hands aloft in the air, to judge the effect. Her whole life will change.

She only wishes her face wasn't so cold and heavy. She stands up at Waterloo with a flourish. Her feet pluck a pathway down the aisle, as if she were being married to a new self.



Car seven

240

Mr Stuart Cowe

Outward appearance

Pale, aging man, grimly chewing gum. Ribbed white pullover in stretched ruffles around the bottom edge. Shoulder length blonde/grey hair. Grey woolen hat with row of red stars. Lumpy silver ring on finger. Sits like knock-kneed schoolgirl, a bloated hardback notebook on his lap.

Inside information

A compulsive diarist. Stuart cannot help himself writing down every aspect of his life. He feels something akin to terror if he cannot, as if life is leaking away. The current notebook is two weeks old.

Works in an cramped [[103]] [electronics retailer](#) east of Waterloo. Gets up at 5.30 am to record the previous evening's events.

What he is doing or thinking

Has recorded the morning's ironing and television news, and has moved on to his train journey.

Dear Bill

it says at the top of the current page. Every page starts like a letter to fool anyone who sees him writing.

Sitting opposite me is [[230]] [a rather pathetic specimen of manhood](#) very skinny with bulbous nose and buck teeth in a blue shirt with diamond patterns and clean blue jeans probably married. Trainers have grease mark along one edge. My tummy is burning from the bacon. I got off schedule and wolfed it down. This is because I did not sleep with worry. I sit here fuming about bloody Ian reorganising my shelving, but there is no communication at that place. All this angst is such a waste of energy...

Unlike his diaries.

[[241]] [The woman next to him](#) is leaning over the page. He rears back, snorts, and snaps the book shut.



Car seven

241

Miss Mary Sherratt

Outward appearance

Woman, late 20s. Stretch cord slacks, pointy lace-up boots, enormous fluffy blue hat, matching blue scarf, art nouveau broach. Hair short, black, in a feather cut.

Inside information

Works part-time for the National Dysphasia and Dysgraphia Society, an under-funded room in the ex-nursery of a housing estate behind Westminster Bridge Road. An accident prompted a small stroke: Mary is dysgraphic. She cannot turn speech into writing. She also has a slight dysphasic speech impediment. She's good at accounts, fashion, make up and shoplifting. She knows precisely how pretty she is, and how much of the prettiness is contrived. Part of her feels even the prettiness is false.

What she is doing or thinking

Trying to solve the mystery of what [[240]] [the man next to her](#) is doing. What it must be like to read and write. What on earth can he find to write about on a train? Is it for work? He must have to work very hard. She feels sorry for him and wonders if being dysgraphic means she has escaped some hardships.

Suddenly the man snaps the book shut and bloats like an angry bullfrog. She wants to tell him: it's all right, [[33]] [I couldn't read anything](#). He flounces off; she looks around for something to do... and hears a merry wheezing sound.

[[249]] [A Chinese lady](#) is blowing a party favour. [[250]] [A bottle full of brown fluid](#) flashes between people along with plastic cups. Who needs boring old words... and boring old people? There's a party! Mary moves up the carriage to join in.



Car seven

242

Ms Susan Wheen

Outward appearance

Conventional student: blue donkey jacket; limp sweater in streaks of ochre, pink and beige; clean jeans. Sits bolt upright, avidly reading the bestseller *Clean and Jerk*, about female weightlifters. Shakes her head in wonder and delight. The cover features huge sweaty breasts.

Inside information

Friend and occasional employee of [[158]] [Tina Ravon](#). Helps pay for her drama course at RADA by hiring out her services as a new form of advertising. She rides up and down the tube [[ftnt242]] [visibly reading particular books for money](#). Today it's the Bakerloo line, shuffling back and forth all morning from the Elephant.

Susan calls this "reality editing". She invented it herself. Instead of using media that are understood to be bought and paid for, this new advertising changes reality to carry the desired message.

What she is doing or thinking

Acting. She has not read a word of *Clean and Jerk*, quite deliberately. She focuses instead on communicating different kinds of reading experience: rapt attention; shock at a plot turn-around; being overcome with emotion, tears filling her eyes. Sometimes she manages to say to someone convincingly: "This is such a wonderful book."

It's hard work. It would be even harder if she found out how awful and dykey the book actually is.

She's getting increasingly annoyed by [[253]] [an old woman](#) singing loudly. It's a distraction from her own performance. When [[223]] [someone shouts "Everybody!"](#) and people dance, Susan knows she's beaten. Better to work another car heading north. The bookbuyers all get off at Waterloo anyway.

Glaring at the dancers, she stands to exit at Waterloo.



Car seven

243

Ms Marina Pensbury

Outward appearance

Corkscrew hair, age somewhere between early and late 30s. Woolen tan matching jumper and skirt, large tan overcoat. Listening intently to her neighbour. Then a sudden, withdrawing shift of body language.

Inside information

Works in HM Customs and Excise, well east of Waterloo. There is something in Marina's timeless looks, professional dress, and sympathetic manner that means she is forever receiving confidences. People tell her about their anal warts; their snoring, their dislike of colleagues, how they changed their names when their father was convicted of child abuse.

[[244]] [Her workmate Susy](#) was desolate after her husband left her. Marina invited Susy to stay, to talk. That was four weeks ago. Marina now knows everything about Susy's sex life, childlessness, and pets. Susy's mother has come to stay as well.

What she is doing or thinking

Marina listens to Susy rejoice: her husband wants to come back. Susy can get rid of her Mum and go home to some comfort.

Susy's Mum announced, "I've decided to clean that oven of yours," the day after Marina cleaned it. "I've thrown out all that old food from your refrigerator. I brushed Susy's cats. Sorry about the fur. I'll deal with it later."

Susy's mother drinks. She snoozes on the staircase. None of this has bothered Susy. "At last the old bag will be out of my hair," she chuckles.

Susy still has not thanked Marina. Not once in four weeks has she expressed concern for anyone else. Marina can understand why Bill left.

The real question is: why do I keep asking for this?



Car seven

244

Mrs Susan Reece

Outward appearance

Heavy on the slap. Ruby cheeks, vermilion lips, long polished boots. Clutches a black bag, leaning sideways, confidentially, towards her neighbour. Talks, stops, leans sideways again, adds something else, looks away, is moved to speak again.

Inside information

Works in HM Customs and Excise. Workmate of [\[\[243\]\] the woman next to her](#), with whom she has been living since separation from her husband. The rat has asked to come back.

What she is doing or thinking

She feels vindicated, enraged, and can see that Marina feels the same on her behalf. She really doesn't know how she'd have got through it without Marina, especially after Mum stuck her oar in.

"I've told him, if he does come back then we'll have a contract in writing about what happens to the property. If I play my cards right I'm sure I'll get my new kitchen out of it. You remember the one I showed in the catalogue? "

She leans back, absorbing the sense of victory.

"The all-white counter tops with the built-in stove? I mean the least he can do if he's coming back is finally do something around the place. It's a tip. The whole house will have to be re-decorated, and that's a promise."

She leans back. She wants a fag. A white Kleenex is wrapped around her thumb, in case she starts to cry. "Oh God," she says in despair. "I'm sure I'm being too nice again." She looks into her companion's eyes, then at her silver fingernails.

"I'm sure you're not," says Marina, tartly.

What?

Waterloo.



Car seven

245

Mr Mab Mahanchandra

Outward appearance

Plump, brown, sharp. Short, greased ,standing-up hair. Thick overcoat in zigzag black and white pattern. A green suit that seems to flow like the sticky plastic from which squidgy toys are made. Cobalt-blue tie. Reading a Superman novelization.

Gives the party in the car one gimlet look and joins it.

Inside information

Anglo Indian. Degree in computer science. Writing cyberpunk novel. Loves dance music and helps a friend convert his stuff to MIDI files. Folded in his pocket is a business plan for a consultancy to get small firms online. He is en route to the [[32]] [SBS](#), to present it to [[106]] [Camilla Burke-Harris](#).

A free man in the new Britain. Mab fancies Dean Caine. He fancies Lois. He fancies anything. Already a father: his girlfriend gave birth at home. Even his bewildered parents don't know about it. His various occupations mean he spends most daytimes taking care of the infant. Works on his programs in the evening until ten 'o' clock, then goes out til 3.00 am.

What he is doing or thinking

Right now, Mab is thinking of Dean Caine's body in his own new suit. It's by Tom Gilbey, it's green, everyone else is in blue or black. Mab is the bee's knees and knows it.

The dance begins. [[223]] ["Everybody!"](#) Mab jumps up, swings the black woman around. She recognizes a fellow spirit and roars with laughter. He kisses her on the cheek. He shakes his plump tummy, hands over his head. Then they all spin off the car at Lambeth North.

World, meet your future.



Car seven

246

Mrs Sylvia Kaye

Outward appearance

Plump, red-cheeked woman in grey raincoat, scarf, good black shoes. She looks at the floor, the lower half of her face continuing to sink.

Inside information

[[65]] [A beautician](#) in a salon on [[122]] [Kennington Road](#) near Lambeth North. Her husband, also 38, looks years younger and now lives with an exciting 25 year old. Peter has always been outgoing, but weak. He lets their daughter Diana go clubbing with him. They smoke dope together. Diana comes back and abuses her mother. This morning Diana hit her. The red cheeks are bruised.

What she is doing or thinking

What do you do when your daughter continually calls you a bitch? When you ask her to turn down the music and she tells you to fuck off? When you ask her friends to leave at 2 am and they all just laugh?

This morning Sylvia had enough. Diana called her bitch again, and Sylvia grabbed her arms and spun her around. Diana slapped her, hard on the face. "Keep your fucking hands off me!" The girl's face was a mask of hatred. Sylvia broke down in tears.

Sylvia remembers her baby daughter's merry little face. How did it happen? Di was always cheeky, but it made people chuckle. There was no malice.

Sylvia stares glumly at the party in the car. Crushed by a sense of weakness and failure, she is immune to it. Right now laughter is for other people.

My daughter hates me, and I can't cope any more. The only question now is: how do I get her to leave?



Car seven

247

Ms Lisa Sindorsly

Outward appearance

Chunky young woman in loose ethnic trousers, bulky sweater, AIDS ribbon.

Inside information

Contract data processor for [[48]] [USB's Technopark](#), working on a project measuring differences in male and female brains. Last night, the patterns came together.

What she is doing or thinking

Lisa is remembering her father, a big slow kindly man obsessed with order. He trainspotted, recording engine numbers. He would travel overnight to Clapham via Carlisle. His travel bag always held a campstove for boiling water.

Lisa remembers her autistic cousin Annie. Annie loves bank interest and counts it obsessively. She plots the stars. She has a system for recording her own learning process using fruit gums, paste-on architectural symbols, and electrical wiring.

Autism is produced by damage to the cerebellum, which controls movement and mimicry of movement. Mimicry of movement allows us to recreate other people's feelings, to understand them. For Annie, people move too quickly to be read. She is subject to rages especially when someone disrupts her systems of order.

Lisa's data has proved that men are born with a differently functioning cerebellum. Men are mildly autistic. Their elaborate systems of logic, their narrow focus, the lack of emotional understanding are symptoms.

What happens when science proves that a group of people are limited? Do we love them more, like Annie who has learned at 35 to say sorry and mean it? Lisa likes fast cars and raunchy bars. She likes men. She loved her obsessive father.

[[218]] [A young man](#) bows, offering to dance with an old lady out of kindness. Lisa has her answer.



Car seven

248

Mrs Catherine Sobel

Outward appearance

Middle aged woman festooned with symbols of beauty: rings, a brooch of a cat, a bracelet of semi-precious stones. Enters at Embankment, fingermarking her place in the *Journal of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*.

Inside information

Wealthy volunteer for the RSPB. Her family were Italian Jews who escaped [\[\[253\]\] the war](#) by fleeing to Chicago. Her parents are dead; her cousins scattered to Chile or Israel. Her nephew has cancer.

Much troubled by peacocks. Catherine loves birds, but banshee wails from neighbouring [\[\[106\]\] Wimbledon Common](#) plague her all night. Peacocks line up like fluorescent ghosts outside her window, peering in, demanding. They follow her footsteps, pecking at them. This morning they lined up across her drive, inflating their tails all at once in a phalanx, saying: remember?

What she is doing or thinking

Remember?

When Catherine was 17, her synagogue put on a production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. She wasn't pretty, so they put her in charge of the lights. The hall was to be in darkness, until the first line. Catherine couldn't find the right switches. The hero entered a baldly lit temporary hall, and said, "Let there be light." Catherine plunged the hall into darkness.

Like [\[\[133\]\] the birds, this unnerved her](#). What had been meant to be beautiful had become terrifying: there was no light, not from God. Why else would so many of her people have been killed?

Nightmarishly, the carriage begins to dance; the party favours sound like peacocks.

Then, in the swirl of movement, Catherine understands: the darkness and the light are one.



Car seven

249

Mrs Chung Mae

Outward appearance

Tiny, rumpled Chinese lady in khaki anorak, tartan lining inside the hood trimmed with green fur. Lenin style cap, black jeans over the top of her trainers. Carries various cheap plastic bags. Pink objects with yellow feathers are pressed up against their sides.

Inside information

Granny imported from Hong Kong. Worked for years in the kitchen of a Lisle Street restaurant. Got too old for the hours and the physical demands. Now runs [a stall](#) at [the Elephant](#) selling party novelties. The season for novelties has just past.

What she is doing or thinking

Her bones ache, she will be cold, but it's better than sitting behind a till in a steamy shop. The family keep trying to pull her back inside. They don't understand: she likes being on her own, with the little money she gets. Everything else in her life is work and duty.

[A strange woman](#) is singing. Suddenly people are dancing; out comes a puppet. Mae doesn't understand. [The man next to her](#) offers her a glass of whisky. At first Mae is suspicious. Is it poison?

It is a party. Why else does she have party favours? She takes out a whistle and blows it. It unwraps its pink and feathery length, squeals, and people applaud. "How much?" asks the whisky man. Mae understands that. Two more people buy them, and blow them, warbling.

The train stops at Lambeth North. Mae hesitates as they all tumble out, having so much fun. Just before the doors close, the strange old lady pushes Mae out. The party continues.



Car seven

250

Mr Harry Runciman

Outward appearance

Plump, Pickwickian gentleman in un-ironed striped shirt, plaid green jacket, grey trousers, greenish Burberry.

Inside information

Lecturer at the new Electronic Polymer Unit at the [[118]] [University of the South Bank](#). Has had to wear the same clothes since Monday.

What he is doing or thinking

Facing up to the fact that he does indeed need to go shopping for clothes. Shopping is something that seldom enters his purview. Harry does not shop. [[252]] [A market researcher](#) once thought she had found a prime AB. She questioned Harry. How often do you buy the following: CDs? What are they? Oh, you mean those compact tape things. Televisions? Don't have one. Video recorders?

He does his laundry on Sunday nights. Last Sunday night, he smelled smoke. He thought it was his lovely log fire. When he finally went downstairs to the basement to unload his laundry, he was amazed to see smoke pouring out of the washing machine. Flame circulated round and round inside it. It was only 18 years old.

All eight pairs of underpants, four shirts, four string vests and three drip-dry slacks were burned to ash. He has nothing to wear. It's depressing because he knows from past experience that he won't be able to find exact replacements.

[[253]] [An old woman](#) is asking people to dance. Harry loves eccentrics. He begins to giggle as she starts to sing. Then to his surprise, people join in.

Harry just happens to have a bottle of whisky in his briefcase, and plastic cups. You never know when there will be a party.



Car seven

251

Wathagundarl

Outward appearance

Tall, brown, high-cheeked woman. Her hair is coconut-oil black, flat, parted in the middle and pulled back, like a photograph from the 1840s. She looks half-starved, beautiful, but with a downward crumpling of the mouth as if she might at any moment tumble into old age. All in black. The clothes merge into a seamless shadow.

Inside information

Wathagundarl is an aboriginal word meaning spirit people. Watha is a fairy. She's from Port Fairy, [\[\[34\]\] Australia](#), born along with the town in 1810 when the captain of the cutter *Fairy* took shelter in a verdant inlet made by a river and fell in love with the place. Watha was born out of his response.

What she is doing or thinking

Watha is increasingly aware that she is a character in a work of fiction. She knows that no train actually crashed on 11 January 1995. Everything around her keeps breaking up into letters and code.

The code breaks into numbers, which decay further into a blizzard of zeros and ones. They slip down wires like a dose of novocaine through nerves, to be reassembled. She feels this happen to herself, in several different machines. She feels herself leap on light as words into eyes. She becomes a series of chemical charges stimulating parts of people that recognize still, horizontal or vertical shapes. She is fed to verbal parts of the brain. She rises again, like smoke, out of the response.

She doesn't want to see the crash. She spirits herself away, downline. See? The empty, slightly itchy, upholstered seat.



Car seven

252

Mr Harold Pottluk

Outward appearance

Pale, slim, about 28. Grey slacks, white shirt, no tie, shaved black hair. Rubber-soled Doc Martens mutated towards respectability. Writes on a clipboard.

Inside information

A market researcher for London Underground.

For the last six months, Harold has listed people on carriages by age, gender and racial background. He then selects [individuals to interview, using demographic criteria](#). He asks them about the length of their journey and things to improve. [This is the last car on his last day.](#)

What he is doing or thinking

Busy finishing his draft report. It ends with a list of those people who do not travel on the trains: the infirm, infants, men with cars. He identifies the need for further research. Why do so few children go to school by tube? Why are there more women than men until you pass Lambeth North station?

Working on the tubes, Harold has witnessed two suicides, one busking quick-change drag artiste, and one successfully completed sexual act. When [the bag lady next to him](#) starts to sing *Is that all there is?* in a voice like Lotte Lenya's, he is merely mildly pleased. When she succeeds in persuading other passengers to dance, he thinks: that's a nice send-off, one final fling on the cattle trucks.

Harold sees them all, sitting inside their fates like eggs in cartons, there through an inexorable logic of age, gender, genes, character, their time in history, luck. He sees their faces like insulation wrapped around boilers. Their stories wheedle out them like escaping steam. Mostly unheard.

Like his own.



Car seven

253

Miss Anne Frank

Outward appearance

Elderly woman in a donkey jacket and old corduroy trousers. Lumpy bandages under stockings are visible over the tops of her scuffed shoes. She scans the rows of faces, stricken. She smiles sweetly, and says to [[218]] [the young man across from her](#), "Would you like to dance?"

He stares at her and doesn't answer. She looks at [[219]] [the foreign business woman](#), at [[220]] [the sad blonde girl](#), at [[222]] [the nervous old hippy](#). Anne starts to sing *Is that all there is ?* She starts to dance alone.

[[223]] [A tall black woman](#) stands up, joins her, demands "Everybody!" The young man approaches and bows. In the aisle he and Anne begin a sedate waltz. [[249]] [A Chinese woman](#) shrugs, takes out one of her party favours and blows it, unrolling it with wheeze. Out comes a puppet of John Lennon that starts to pump its feet. [[250]] [Someone passes around the whisky](#). By Lambeth North, the car is having a party.

Inside information

She is Anne Frank, the famous diarist, but she doesn't know that. She has wandered Europe for the last 50 years. She sometimes sees the face of a child in bookshop windows, and knows enough to be happy for her. That child got what it wanted. It is not what Anne wants.

What she is doing or thinking

Anne thinks she is still on the train to Auschwitz, and that she is trying to make people happy one last time. She thinks she is sprinkling joy from her eyes, with her voice. [[end7]] [If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing.](#)