

# Chekhov

A Hive by Landru

Bunting Far

By

Crowmarsh Gifford

# The Wedding feast at Canaan

I'm going to try and work a bloody miracle; I'm going to try to make sense of everything that's happened. Not just for you, but for me as well.

There are things which should have been said a long time ago but weren't. Things which were said which shouldn't have been. Nothing I say is meant to embarrass you in any way, but I will have to mention everything which I think is relevant.

I just need you to understand the truth and not what people who don't know me have said about me. In the whole of the time I knew you did I ever do anything deliberately to hurt you?

I know you tried to ring me several times, but I just couldn't pick up the phone. I'm not sure why. I never found it easy to talk to you. It just seemed easier to keep you in suspense.

I once gave you a piece of paper with ten things I wanted to discuss with you written down. When I came back from the kitchen it was tossed down the side of the sofa. You said you had read it, but you said nothing. Words are important to me. I prefer to express myself through words.

Some of what you read may be a bit distressing. I am sorry about that, but I just want you to understand what you have done. Some things are very hard to talk about...as time's gone on you must have done a lot of things I haven't been a part of, but there are a lot of questions which still need to be answered. Trying to make sense of the terrible sequence of events may actually make them more bearable. Surely all this suffering can't have been for nothing...?

I may have strained the boundaries somewhat, and I do tend to challenge authority, but I have never been an unpleasant or malicious person. Most things have been as a result of my mischievous nature, my habit of taking risks, my temptation to bend the rules, and to question everything.

I can't begin to say how sorry I am about how things have turned out. I am truly sorry for all the hurt and upheaval I have caused you, but you can't go through the rest of your life believing what is wrong about me. I'm not perfect. I know I have a devilish streak, and I have done a lot of things I haven't been proud of, but you only have to scratch the surface to find your Guardian angel.

There are lots of things I would change if I could do.

When I met you I never wanted you to think I was anything other than a decent caring thoughtful gentleman.

Please read carefully what I have to say in private, quietly, without any interference from anyone else.

When we first met you seemed very vulnerable and withdrawn. I drove across in the van and kissed you through the window (your cheek was very soft). I recognised your voice from the phone. You were saying goodnight to some Solicitor friends. I couldn't stay very long. It was already dark.

You complained later about the times I came over. Sometimes it was because it was quieter in the evenings at work and it was the only time I could get away.

Another reason is because I find it a lot more peaceful and relaxing after the sun has gone down.

I contacted you because you lived close by and I felt like some fresh company.

You seemed a bit straight up and down. Not very curvy.

You were very different to anyone I had ever known before.

The second time we met you invited me in and we cuddled on the sofa. You sent me a message on my way across which read...'in lust..something something:' I thought it was a bit inappropriate. I wasn't really looking for that. Your skin wasn't like anything I had ever felt before.

You made me a fish curry which was actually very nice even though you refused to believe it.

You made it very obvious what you were looking for and I felt it was my obligation to oblige, but I didn't enjoy any of it. You made me suck your breasts to see if they were still providing milk. Emily was six, so you would have had to be doing something unusual for them to go on producing for so long. Anyway, I went along with the occasion, but it all seemed a bit crazy. You said that you thought Brian had left you because your tummy was too fat. It wasn't that. You said that you never felt really confident about yourself, so I tried to rebuild your confidence as best I could.

There was nothing I didn't like about you physically, and you did have blue eyes, but there was nothing I felt particularly attracted to either. You seemed very fragile.

You asked me several times; "do you think you could love me, just a little bit?"

I felt a bit unsure because I didn't know you. You seemed alright.

I thought you had a lovely house, and it was in a nice part of the country. You seemed to have all the material things in life but very little direction.

You acted as muddled as a hen at a foxhunt. One minute you were a drab housewife, next minute 'Mother Theresa,' and then a craving nymphomaniac. I wasn't sure what I was doing there or what I really wanted from you, if anything.

You said that when you came back from Saudi and were living in London you were quite promiscuous and only used men for sex (but not that many!).

I tried to make excuses for your conflicting changes of opinion by saying you were trying to view life from a lot of different angles, but I disagreed with you a lot about how you went about things. I decided you were totally wrong for me, but that it didn't really matter because I was never going to stay with you. I told myself that I should never get involved with your family and that they were incongruous and always bickering.

There is a reason why I never intended to stay which I would like to tell you about...

You asked me if we got along and I said yes. I decided then that I could always come back to you whatever happened; it was your vulnerability and craziness...your acceptance, and your gregarious nature.

I went to bed with you without any real desire at all; because you seemed to want me there. You gave me one of Brian's t-shirts to wear.

You turned up at my place of work early in the morning and shoved a letter through the letterbox. It was pink and very sweet. You woke me up.

You used to ask me where I was all the time. You sometimes pleaded with me to let you drive across and stay the night. You seemed desperate not to be left on your own.

When I rang you from work it was quite funny; "two minutes" – you'd disappear, and all I could hear for ages was shouting while you put the kids to bed.

You put a lot of pressure on me which I wasn't really prepared for, but I continued to come round to see you, even though I never felt really sure about my intentions. I am a very quiet person in spite of my outward appearance, and I'm very shy sometimes. I don't like a lot of people around.

About three weeks after we had started sleeping together I went to Wales with my employers. You tried to speak to me every single night.

I should have treated you better. You talked a lot about Aspergers. I still feel very guilty for cold-shouldering you and leaving you on your own for so long when you needed me to be by your side so very much.

When I got back you went off to London for the weekend. You seemed different when you returned. Less enthusiastic and demanding. Part of me suspected you had seen someone.

I found you to be very much one of the herd. You didn't want to stand out or be thought different. You wouldn't even admit your married name was 'Strange' for ages.

You were very demanding in bed. I suppose all you wanted was straightforward sex. I feel sorrowful to this day that I couldn't have been more normal for you. I tried Viagra once and all it did was make me feel extremely poorly. I just needed to meet someone I could be myself with.

I wasn't lonely. You did ask.

I got up in the middle of the night to find out why you hadn't come to bed and found you dancing like a dervish in the kitchen to your Michael Jackson tapes. You did try to force me to have sex several times. In the end I asked you to leave me alone, which you did. I never meant forever though. I just wanted to be able to come to you when I was ready.

You turned up at work with two sets of pills for healthy wedding tackle.

You told me that you spoke to your mum on the phone about me.

She told you that you couldn't marry me because I wasn't a doctor or a barrister, which I thought was a bit of a cheek, because I have some good qualities along with all the dubious ones. I didn't have the material wealth which seemed so important to you but I did have a good idea about how to look after people and how to bring up a family.

Your mum asked me what I would do if my employer suddenly died...

The closest I ever felt was when I spent three or four days with you in the summer. I remember going round the market in Wallingford with you. It all felt a bit mad. I took you to a club to play pool and darts. I'd never met anyone who kept missing the board before. It did make me wonder what was wrong with you and I did lose a tiny bit of respect.

You said you had once been on Prozac, and then I found out you were still on them. I found it hard to take you seriously and it made me a bit reserved.

You sent me these texts; 'I think you have a beautiful nose'  
'shall we get married?'  
'I love you dearly'

I kept the first and the third on my phone for a long time.

You said that whatever happened you would never say or do anything to hurt me, even if we split up. I didn't like you talking like that.

I remember you driving us through the red lights at a roundabout. You suddenly said "bread!"

Rose once said to me that she didn't know how you managed to hold down your job sometimes. You were reprimanded for not taking enough time with a patient and for doing your shopping in work time.

Rose once asked me if you were still drinking and where you were hiding all the bottles.

I should have been more understanding. I should have been more sympathetic about what you had been through and the stresses on your life. We both agreed that all we wanted was for you to be happy.

Rose said that she and Dennis had been intervening in your marriage and helping to heal the arguments for the final four years.

On the night Brian restrained you and you called the police to have him arrested he said: "there's no way I'm putting this in there!"

No wonder he didn't come back for six weeks.

You said that the reason it had lasted so long was because the sexual side had always worked...sharing confidences and making disclosures to each other is very important too.

I tried to help you but I didn't want to touch you. I don't really know why. I am very sensitive to location and to the situation I'm in.

I once went through your entire wardrobe and drawers. I read everything I could in an effort to understand where I was.

I never saw you wearing anything sexy or seductive.

I watched you go and pay for the petrol in Benson once and watched you walk back. I couldn't see a single thing I desired, which is very regrettable.

Do you remember the flies that summer? They were everywhere. On the ceiling, in the bedroom, on the fly paper. I cleaned the house several times and hoovered them up in thousands from the floor.

We went along to church together for weeks and I met all your friends, even though I had rejected standard Christianity long ago. Then you said you wouldn't go if I was going. Apparently people were asking why we weren't married. Anyway, it felt insulting.

It was a taste of normal family life I had never had. It was sweet to see the children attending their little groups. I suppose it must have happened to me once upon a time....

The first time I started thinking about you was after seeing you trying to play the violin in church. It was hilarious. Very brave!

I remember you calling a dinner party. You invited a lot of your old friends including Justine. She told you that she thought I was very well groomed.

I wasn't really in the mood for socialising but I tried my best for you. They were all nice people and very respectable. Your behaviour was a bit erratic though. Later in the evening as we were at the table I stood up. It was quite mellow in the candlelight.

(I sometimes cooked you a meal, especially if I was off work, for you to come home to).

You suddenly threw yourself onto me and begin crying and kissing my hands. (You have a way of doing this which is quite endearing but too threatening for me).

It was one of the most touching things I remember about you.

I told your friends that I was standing by you. I didn't know if I was your therapist, lodger/housekeeper, or lover....

You invited me to Malta very early in our relationship. I was quite flattered, but I didn't really want to go. I believe that quality time is better spent at home.

I remember walking out on you three times during our relationship. Once was in Malta. I'd had enough of all the children's crying and their spoilt petulant behaviour.

I had been invited on holiday by a work colleague: a big Kenyan girl, who had actually asked me through Pam. I got along with her very well, and she definitely liked me, but I went on holiday with you out of a sense of duty, and feeling I was a member of your family. I asked her what she thought of you after you had come to our barbecue. She said you were very pretty.

I remember that barbecue in the garden especially for one thing. You sat down on the grass with your legs up a little. I was really shocked to see very bad bruising all over your inner thighs high up. When I asked you about it you said that it had been caused by riding your old bicycle. The only other time I have seen bruises like that was with a girl I taught literacy skills to at the Trust. I saw them one day and wondered if I should report it because I suspected abuse at her house.

I met your aunty, and quite a few of your family. I was struggling to find anything to bond me to you though.

Do you remember going on the giant banana in Gozo harbour... and falling off?

Do you still have the pearl earrings I bought you on holiday?

I would have preferred to go abroad on our own rather than with Roger and his screwball entourage. It could have made a big difference.

One of the most enjoyable days I ever spent with you was playing at the side of the river in Wallingford, just beyond the bridge. We played for hours with a burst football, throwing it up in the air and catching it. We pretended to push Benji in and wouldn't let him get out of the water.

We were larking around there all afternoon.

Do you recall sitting on the high bench in the castle grounds? We often went there at the weekend.

I tried to understand you. I thought that one day my feelings might suddenly grow, but I struggled to find a way to connect to you. I even wondered if you had a soul. You seemed to be so disconnected somehow. I think it's a mistake to think that people have to be very alike to get along though.

It may have been my intuition telling me something. From the moment I first drove up to your front door I kept telling myself; if this goes wrong you could end up in serious trouble or you could even die.

I never really committed myself fully to you. I am extremely sorry for being so disingenuous.

You must have been very confused.

You once said to me; "You don't come here for sex, so what do you come here for....I don't do a thing for you do I? I can feel it."

I didn't like drinking wine every night, although I often went out to that off-licence in town. They must have got sick of seeing me I went there so many times for you in the evening. Wine gives me a headache. I could quite happily go the rest of my life without a drink. My dad had a bad drink problem and I never wanted to be like him.

I used to check your phone sometimes, and all it had on it were messages from me and Penny...

You said you had fallen out with her, and then I would find you both drinking together in the garden.

I am sorry I used the 'thing' with you. How did I ever sink to that? Some people might see the funny side, but it should never be a substitute for normal loving. I saw you sat up in bed looking at it once. I don't think you really liked it, although you said you knew someone who would. You stripped off on the sofa to use it once. I used to hide it under the stairs. Then it suddenly disappeared. You thought Rose might have found it. How embarrassing...

You pleaded to stay with me at Grays road one night. My laptop was on my bedside cabinet when we decided to watch a film. When I turned it on the most hard-core porn suddenly started playing. It was a short clip of something which had turned up in my e-mail and I had started watching. I suppose we all get a bit bored sometimes, but I hated to think of you knowing I watched things like that. I remember you sitting up in the bath at Grays road, and me washing your hair for you in your own bath.

I got to the point where I didn't even want to scratch your back in bed. I used to turn over and sleep at the other side. Sleeping has been a big problem for me for years and I fidget like mad sometimes. I don't find it at all easy to sleep when someone else is there. I know you were sad and confused by this. I was very aware of you lying there with your eyelashes fluttering wondering what you should do. I know you wanted to sleep with your head on my chest but it felt too intense. You once called out 'help!' You once crept your hand slowly up my leg. All you wanted was to be close to someone. I am very sorry I found that such a strain. I like privacy and solitude. I even went to sleep in the spare room sometimes as Brian had done.

You even found me on the floor in the spare shower-room once.

You started to drink more. I went to the house one evening quite late to find you in a terrible state in bed. I can't even describe how bad. I don't think it was at all good for the little ones.

You said: "you're never going to give up your job to be with me!"

You asked me about my bank account and how much I was worth. I did offer to help you pay your mortgage. I did help where I could. One evening you had fallen into a coma. I couldn't wake you and I got very worried.

For ages I just sat and talked to you. I thought that maybe your soul would be listening to me somewhere or sometime. I found it very unsettling and I didn't really enjoy being with you. I wasn't comfortable.

That didn't stop me from trying to talk to you and spreading little tears over your eyelids while you were slumbering.

You told me that if I wanted sex I could touch you or do anything to you, even if you were asleep. I don't think that is a very nice thing to do. If I could have found a way to find you more desirable I would have done. I have to apologise for touching you inappropriately while you were asleep. It wasn't nice, and it wasn't enjoyable.

While you were asleep on the sofa downstairs once I discovered you were wearing a pair of black knickers with a huge patch in the crotch which had been frayed to almost nothing....

You told Penny we were finished, and then she saw us together in bed again. You stopped smoking and then you had a fag in your mouth. I hate to see women smoking. Were you trying to tell me something? You had a hard look, which alarmed me...I don't know where it came from.

We went out for a meal once with Adam at Waterstones.

It was in the middle of the Michael Jackson court case.

You went off to buy one of his CD's...

## Benji

When I first met Benji he was on his own. I was shocked by how small and young he was. He was only seven or eight. I remember what a sweet little voice he had. I think he knew it as well. He would sit beside me when we played on the computer or while watching telly. I couldn't understand how he kept beating me at world cup soccer. I saw you watching us through the kitchen window as we played at shooting-in on the lawn.

I wanted to teach him so many things. About empathy and truth. How to behave and how to write.

I went off to buy him a new football down at the shop because he asked for one. When I came back he just kicked it in the corner. I suddenly realized he had several footballs there already.

I never saw kids with so many bluddy toys and things lying around. Their bedrooms were full of them and they were always getting more.

His leg went a bit septic once, so I went out every day to the chemist to buy him some antiseptic dressing and clean his wound. You wanted me to take him to football practise which I did.

At night he would come and bang on the bedroom door or throw things if he heard a sound. You said he had once walked in on you...

I didn't like the way there was no privacy, and there was a lodger, with people coming and going all the time. The atmosphere seemed strange. Something seemed to be missing....

I think it would have been a lot better with just the three of us. I would have liked to start afresh somewhere completely different if that had been possible. It was your house filled with lots of your memories.

Eventually you let Benji come in with us. I must say I didn't like to upset him and he was so sweet. When he fell asleep I would carry him back to his own bed, but if he woke up he invariably left and came back again. He seemed to stay if I dumped him in with Emily. She protested every time. I know you shouldn't laugh. I did love them.

One time we had gone into her room for some fun while they were fast asleep in our bed. You were a bit drunk I'm afraid. When I opened the door to come out Benji was waiting for me. He'd sprung from nowhere, with a toy sword, which he proceeded to gallantly use against me.

I once had a bad dream at Grays Road. He was attacking me in bed with Emily just stood there.

I remember carrying him carefully through the door so I didn't bang his head. He was always asleep by then. When I was eleven my mum and dad split up. I was very close to my mum and wanted to sleep with her at first so I did understand.

I helped Benji with his homework and tried to be a good daddy for him.

I never treated him with anything but love and tenderness in the whole time I knew him. I once brought him some rocks back from Wales.

He just wanted to be loved really. I once stroked his head and his face lit up with gratitude. Little boys are often said to be more affectionate than little girls; I know I was. I think little boys need to have a man around. I wanted to be a positive male role-model for him. Your children seemed to be only interested in material things and didn't seem to be taught enough about feelings. I'm sorry I wasn't more loving, and I didn't make more of a fuss of him. You once teased him in bed about his ears.

He told me you used to shout a lot...

Do you remember the way Fluffy always came in and cleaned between our toes at night, until he got a bit carried away and started nibbling.

I was sorry to read about the ginger cat getting run-over....

Emily

I walked in through the middle door into the living room one day and there was this little girl with straight brown hair. Only a little tot really. I felt an immediate bond as if I had always known her.

She walked forward and took my hand. For the next few weeks every time she saw me I was led around everywhere by her. I can't say I disliked the attention, but I thought I should have been giving some more attention to you.

She took me round all her toys, and when we ever went out together she held on to me and wouldn't let me go.

Everywhere we travelled she automatically came to sit on my knee. It would normally have been you. A real daddies' girl.

We were watching television one day when she suddenly said...."are you going to be my new daddy now Andrew?"

A bright funny little girl with lots of character. They reminded me of my sister and me. Both very different but also remarkably similar.

The only person who came between us was 'Catty.' It was a bluey-grey colour. She called it Catty. It had whiskers. It could have been a mouse. She carried it everywhere and would cry if it wasn't there.

Do you remember a little tin doll I gave her on her birthday? She burst into tears when she saw it. It was nice. You laughed at her.

I once brought her some rock back from the seaside. She pranced up the stairs. What a little show-off.

She still trailed around with her dummy in. She was a bit old for one, but it would have been cruel to take it off her. It suited her.

I often read her a bedtime story until she fell asleep. The last story I remember reading to them both was 'the Magician's Nephew' which was one of my old favourites. I'm sorry I never managed to finish it. Roahl Dahl's Big Friendly Giant was another one. I read it to them more than once.

I remember swinging her round in the garden by her ankles and throwing her up high into the air in the swimming pool at the Phoenicia in Valetta. She reminded me of myself in some ways.

The children never seemed to have a proper breakfast. Everything was done at a pace without any real organisation.

I remember putting on her shoes halfway down the stairs one morning....

We were coming back from the fish shop in Wallingford one night. Her tiny little frame was sat in the passenger seat of my Mitsubishi Warrior. I thought it would make a good family car. I remember going to buy it with you.

She suddenly said; "Andrew. Who do you love most. Me or mummy?"

I thought for a while. We weren't getting along too well by this stage.

"I love you both the same but in different ways," I eventually said.

And I always will no matter where she is or how big she gets.

We went to a ballet concert, the first I had every been to, at the little theatre in Wallingford. You were acting bizarrely for some strange reason. If we had been really getting along I would have held your hand all through the performance. It was your behaviour which put me off you. For an intelligent woman you seemed to be so shallow and fickle.

Emily sat on my knee as usual. I wish I could have hugged her more, but she would probably have squirmed and tried to get away.

I leant forward and kissed her little head. You were there. Some of her hairs got stuck to my mouth. She always smelt nice.

She sometimes cheated at cards. I think you should have told her not to do that. She once pretended to comb my hair....so she obviously had a great sense of humour.

She had a little pound money container. I didn't like you to encourage it, but I didn't have the heart to discourage it either.

After Emily realised Benji could get away with staying in our bed she thought she could too. In the end we all slept together in a heap. I think it's called 'pigging.' It bonded me a lot with you all, and it made me feel left out when I came in at night later and saw you all together.

If I had to leave I always kissed you all before I left. I was just happy for them to be there and I never wanted to push them away or take them anywhere else except their own home.

I don't think it did anything to help our love-life, but it did bring us close together. It gave me a break from the pressure of trying to satisfy you. Who knows. It might have happened naturally one day.

I admit that I have had my problems though.

There isn't anything I wouldn't have done to protect and guard them both from harm. If Emily had been mine I don't think I could ever have left her, and I would have taken her round with me everywhere I went.

No matter how much I loved her, I could never have loved one more than the other.

I will never forgive you for turning them both against me and robbing me of their most precious years.

Before we met

You might think that what happened before we met was not important.

You might wonder why I have to mention these things but I do...!

I met a wonderful attractive lady with reddish brown hair called Mary Holmes (I knew her first as 'Lizzie'). She is the reason why they found the things they did. She was intelligent as well as very beautiful. Some women just have it.

When I went to meet her I always felt happy.

When she nestled her head in my lap, just like she used to do with her dad, and I put my arms around her and my head on hers it felt lovely. It felt like true love.

One word one message from her and my heart seemed to soar.

I only went with her three times and even then I was getting my headaches. I drove halfway across the country to see her and all the time it felt natural.

Even if she was asleep she could hear me speaking and would answer me.

The trouble is: every man who met her seemed to feel the same.

She was tall; nearly six foot.

She told me that I was a really nice guy, but that she needed someone to make her feel small. To be honest I do like tall women, but I hate having to stand on tip-toes.

I was devastated and felt very ill. My face actually started to swell up.

She'd been married to a six foot five black American basketball player. Her parents had begged her not to marry him, but she said he was unbeatable in bed. She said that marrying him was the worse mistake of her life, yet she said that it would not put her off going with another one.

I decided that it was the last straw. I would do a couple more paintings and make one final collection of poems before ending it all. I still needed to find a way.

Then I met you....

I came over to work in Oxford after being offered a really lucrative job with a reputable academic family close by. It also meant that my then girlfriend could visit me more easily. She lived near Coventry and was a Probation Officer. She was very pretty with blonde hair and big blue eyes. We were perfect in every way except one. She was very sociable and relaxed, while I am a hermit who likes to live in a cave.

I am very confident, but I'm also a great perfectionist.

We first met on the train to Oxford, and walked around hand in hand all day. She was a really lovely person, and there was certainly some good chemistry, but even with her I was a complete idiot sometimes and couldn't act normally. She put up with it for a long time though. I think she really cared for me and she didn't want to see me get hurt.

After we went to Florence together I checked her e-mail and found out she had been with an ex boyfriend just after we had a slight tiff. Unbeknown to me he had been pestering her for months.

I just knew something was wrong: apart from me I mean. We were about to take a bus trip around Florence and we climbed on board. She sat half-way down the bus. I walked all the way down to the back. She started crying....

I carried her little picture around in my pocket and slept with it under my pillow for over a year.

I was five years old when I first saw Lydia. She had just started school. I remember her being brought into our classroom, and blushing near the door just as I had done.

I loved her all the way through school.

When I was eleven my mum and dad were going through a very unhappy divorce. My dad used to get very violent when he had been drinking, and a lot of it was directed at me.

We were in the top class, and due to leave. We were due to go to different schools. I remember agonising for months how to tell her how I felt but never did even though I saw her looking at me sometimes.

I was sixteen when I saw her walking with her sister down the street. She lived on the next street to my uncle and grandmother.

Everyone could see that she was pregnant. I knew from that day I could never ever be happy.

When I was about forty-three someone sent me some details from a dating agency. I rang the owner and managed to get her phone number.

The woman who answered could have been my Lydia. She talked about her family having to flee Eastern Europe at the beginning of the last war.

I wrote a long letter to her, and only at the end did I tell her about the girl I used to know.

I was working down in southern England at the time.

She rang my mum wanting to speak to me. She wrote a very sincere and heartrending letter all about her life.

She spoke about a toy soldier I had given to her in the school playground when I was eight. It had been very important to me but I had forgotten all about it. She also brought back other memories I had forgotten (and I thought I had a good memory).

She spoke about a little boy at school who was like her in every way.

She said:

“Andrew, we all have problems, just different ones!”

“The soul is immortal, and lives far beyond this space and time.”

She said: “this is the love I would have always wanted...”

I found her very deep and moody though. She warned me about how hurtful she could be...

Lydia was still living with someone in a large house on the outskirts, but they were getting divorced she told me.

She would ring me in the middle of the night and beg me to take her away.

I had her in bed several times but I just couldn't find any desire.

When I couldn't or wouldn't make love to her she burnt all my letters and sent them back to me in the post...

When I opened her letter I could feel my heart stop beating.

That's the first time I ever thought about ending my life.

You once said that you had done when Brian left.

As you know, I once worked for the Samaritans.

I managed to persuade a gangster in Chicago to send me a revolver disguised as automobile parts. I told him it wasn't to hurt anyone else, but that I knew someone who wanted to end their own life. It was nothing to do with me hurting anyone else: it was about being a failure and worrying about growing old. Too many things had gone wrong to mention. I was close to someone in my early twenties, but lost her.

He said he would send me ten bullets to practise with. I had no idea what dum-dum bullets were or how to fire a gun. I wasn't even sure what a firing pin was.

He said that he didn't know if it would be any good to me...

I tried to contact him again because it kept falling apart and seemed to be welded in the middle but his phone didn't answer.

It had a swastika on it, and appeared to be from the First World War, a Browning revolver, with 'museum de Belgium' stencilled on it....

I was scared to go near it and kept moving it about into secret places.

I told myself that I would not change my mind.

That was when I met you. The gun was nothing to do with you. It was a silly idea: although we all have to die some day, and I would rather it was quick. My stepfather was dying of cancer and is still suffering today.

I should have thrown it away or just talked to someone. You knew something was wrong but I didn't think you would be able to cope with what I told you. Quite understandably you would have been very worried about me.

I bottled it all up every night and that is why I behaved like I did.

That is why, even when you were doing your best to love me, even when you were following me around all weekend so I didn't abuse myself and flooding me with affection, I couldn't open up and say anything.

I must say I have always been a bit of clown. I have played a number of practical jokes over the years, but nothing as bad or as serious as the ones which followed.

Benji had gone to his friends in Eyam when I decided to close the place I had been renting in Wymondham. It was costing me a fortune, and I was hardly ever there.

We went across to pick up all my things with Emily.

You made me call at my mums, but they were out. I wonder if that would have changed anything if you had met. Keith had to go to hospital.

I really regretted Benji not being there. My mum would have loved him. She would have really spoiled him. I greatly regret him missing her, because I think he would have loved it too. My mum has a great way with children.

I remember getting some fresh prawns and going down to the beach in Sheringham. You were really annoying me and I was ready to finish with you when we got back. I suppose I must have appeared very grumpy and bad tempered. I couldn't sleep and I felt unhappy and under a lot of pressure.

Emily changed on the beach and went to splash in the sea. She was very funny and loved every minute of it. I went in as well.

I got some paint things out at the house to give her something to do. I still have a painting she did.

I am really sorry I couldn't be more normal with you. I am really sorry I worried you.

I was horrible to you, and you didn't really deserve it. You were still very loving.

Your attitude was strange. I didn't feel any connection with you and your ways.

You once said that you were even more sensitive than me.

I drove back as quickly as I could. When we got near home you said; "Can't you drive any faster?"

I told you that you should be more loyal to people. I am sorry I ignored you for most of the journey.

When I returned to Grays road you sent me a message to say you didn't want to see me any more. I couldn't have blamed you, but after all the attention you'd given, if anyone was going to finish with anyone it was going to be me!

I went round to Rose and Dennis's. I couldn't believe it when he told me to go away or he would call the police. I thought he was being a very horrid little man.

When I eventually found you we made up and I stayed the night again.

I might have been a lot closer to you than I thought.

12 I helped you with repairs and did all sorts of chores which needed doing around the house. You said that Brian had never bothered.

### Property

When we returned from Norfolk I put some of my possessions into the garage, and some in the house. These included:

- ☒ A brand new large screen TV
- ☒ Some of my favourite DVD's
- ☒ A brand new hi-fi (which resided under the fish tank)
- ☒ A new DVD recorder

☒ A brand new mountain bike for you to use in place of your old one (we went out sometimes on the bikes at weekends in an effort to get you fitter or did some running on the hill)

☒ A new web-cam

☒ I left some of my best CD's in your stack and I bought you some new ones

☒ I did a small watercolour which you hung above the fish tank...behind it I stuck a note :- 'you gave me a dream of a happy home and family, something I never really had, and I gave you this little picture, which I mistakenly thought would be my last'

☒ I left a large picture of you. I think I had your face brilliant at one point, but I took it a bit too far as usual...

☒ I left you a selection of books...

In one of the books I wrote - 'for Benji and Emily - I love you both....'

### Car boot sales

We did a few car boot sales, mainly at the Kassam.

Do you remember me in the back of the pick-up giving away almost everything I owned for next to nothing? Bottles of wine, mini TVs - everything. I sold a lot of other things when you weren't there. You went off to get some drinks and a bacon sandwich with the kids. I think some items were stolen because I couldn't keep my eyes on everyone.

You looked puzzled and a little confused.

You kept wondering why I was giving away all my worldly goods, well now you know....!

You told the fuzz I had sold everything I had at the sales.

You even betrayed me with your neighbours.

That dog of theirs was like Sherlock bloody Holmes; always picking up my scent.

### Internet dating

I had relationships with a lot of different women from all around the world while living in Oxford. I saw the way people went from one partner to another all the time, and I never wanted you to be the same. It seemed such a waste of time and effort. I think the best relationships develop and deepen over time.

You told me you had met about two people between Brian and me.

One was a vicar with funny shoes, and the other one worked in a supermarket at Didcot (I found a message from him saying he had to go home but that he didn't want to). You told him you didn't want to see him but he kept pestering you?

Just before you I met Honor. She mixed with some of the Royal family and her family owned land all over the place and a restaurant in Italy. I'd seen it all before we met. She was very into exhibitionism, which I really wasn't.

She brought a lot of presents when she came over including a lot of wine and cheeses. She gave me a little bible which she had been given in Mexico.

She was very bright and loving, but we were like chalk and cheese.

When I came home one day you told me you had been with three different men that week while I was away.

You told me that you wished the sexual side had worked better in our relationship because it would have brought us a lot closer together.

When I checked your phone and e-mail it appeared to be true.

One of the messages said; 'right thing wrong time, I enjoyed it too!'

You said that you had only just met one of them on the street.

I was under a lot of pressure at the time. I would like to tell you why. I still didn't want to touch you. You told me that you wouldn't be bothered if you went with five different men in a week.

You told me one of them was only interested in sex.

You said that you wouldn't mind using the internet for sex.

I told you I didn't want to lose you.

I didn't know what to say or what to believe.

You said I already had.

You said you were going to marry someone called Dave. You said you could feel it.

I said, "but you haven't even met him yet...!"

It was all very confusing. I didn't know what to do.

Then you told me that you thought you might have dreamt it all...

I had wondered about some kind of threesome to get me interested. I once left Rachel a note near the washing machine one night. She sometimes came down to unlock the door for me. It was very brazen.

You were snoring away upstairs. I asked her if she wouldn't mind coming and sucking on your breasts for half an hour....

I couldn't believe it when she thought for a while, and then said ..."Oh, alright!"

I didn't take her up on it and left soon after, but your voice sounded a bit quaky when I spoke to you on the phone the next day.

I came back one night and you told me to go away or you would call the police.

I had a key cut when you left me to go off to work.

I went back the next night and you asked me if I would be staying all week.

You were in a terrible state. I had a pretty good idea you had been with someone. I still felt nothing except confusion: no feelings. I told you that you didn't have to do this.

You were lying in Emily's bed when we started petting.

You told me David had brought an overnight bag the first time you met. You went to pick him up at Cholsey station. I've hated the place ever since.

The men you went with all seemed to fizzle out. You told me that you might have sex with me next, or it could be someone else.

I thought your behaviour just wasn't right.

Your tongue was wagging about as I looked down on you in the light from the doorway.

"If you could make love with anyone in the whole world who would it be?" I asked.

You hesitated a second and said..

"You?!"

What can I say?

Your craziness was exasperating. Perhaps I had started to care about you. It's the one thing I do miss a bit.

The love I had only felt in your hands started to come back again. Perhaps you are a Healer like me...?

I woke up one night with you feeling the top of my head. You shot back. Bound to be curious I guess. I wasn't angry. It was quite sweet. Then one night your arm suddenly flopped over me. You laughed when I made a funny sound in bed. We started having sex during one of your periods, and I got your blood all over me... You asked me if I would be taking my things when I went. I left them because I always thought I would come back... And I never wanted you to forget me.

### An incident

In August something really bad happened. You kept asking me what was wrong. You said there was something wrong, but I wouldn't tell you. You told me about a dream you had. You had gone somewhere to see me. Some of your friends were there. The flatfoots were there too, but they wouldn't let you into the building to see me.

It was a stupid petty little business, which was blown right-out-of-proportion. I was struggling to know what to do with you.

I was bored and fed-up. My life just didn't feel at all happy, and I wasn't cut out for balloon dancing.

I didn't do anything sexual. I suppose I just like to shock people sometimes. I really should know better. It was a very silly thing to happen. All it brought me was misery. I told you that I'd had an argument with someone in town. I was very ashamed of letting you down.

I called in a shop on the High street and started trying on clothes. One of the assistants came back with a pair of trousers and when she handed them over through the changing room curtain she saw that I was only half dressed, and that was all. She turned and walked away without reacting. Two to three seconds at most.

The Assistants could be seen acting out what had happened on the shop video. I walked calmly out of the door.

No matter what you think about these things, it certainly doesn't deserve the title 'sex-offender,' and I did not deserve the awful repercussions which followed.

It wasn't something I could really talk to you about even though you ran a clinic on sexual health.

The Authorities must have known about me and you. I am surprised they didn't come rushing around to tell you bad things about me.

Shortly after it happened you were leaving work and the miserable toads fined you for not wearing your seat belt.

About three weeks after the original incident I cycled into town down Headington hill and saw there were people in plain clothes and uniforms around.

When I came out of Boots the chemist four officers jumped me and dragged me in handcuffs through the crowded streets to the main police station. I decided to plead guilty to exposure and wrote the manager of the shop a letter of apology. I just couldn't face a lengthy court case.

I was held for ten hours while they played their pathetic games. Poor Adam was at home wandering what had happened to me.

I spoke to Pam on the phone about what had happened. She was very understanding. I sent her a text saying that no-one love me.

She said that lots of people did.

Pam said I ought to tell you myself what had happened rather than you hear it from someone else. We weren't getting along too well. Even if it had been months before I would have found it hard to tell you.

You had just started your course at the college.

I needn't remind you that it was my idea that you did Osteopathy. You weren't happy in your job. I suggested it because I had a friend called Clare Farleigh who had gone on to do it after nursing.

I came up to see you. You were parked outside. You drove off.

You said that love had to come from both sides. What a bluddy cheek!

You'd started asking me if we were better just being friends. I recall going up the hill to the garden centre. What a cold mood you were in. I was really fed up with you.

I was there one night when you said you were expecting an important phone call or two.

You had been away all weekend and your phone was switched off.

When I turned up and asked you where you had been you asked me what I was doing there.

You flinched when I touched you. The first time I felt a twinge of desire you pushed me away.

You said you had stayed one night with Karen, and one night with your brother's friend. His wife didn't really like you staying. He was black I think. You said he had been suspended from his job in the Health service for a suspected sexual assault. You said he once made a pass at you.

You told me your breasts were sore because I had sucked them too hard.

When the phone rang you closed the door.

I sat on the sofa in the lounge and tried to hear what you were saying. It all sounded very deep and emotional. Your voice went quite high some of the time. You said to whoever it was; "We are friends, aren't we?...you are the best friend I have ever had. Friends, yes! Yes I know you are having trouble with you wife..."

You looked quite secretive and cold when you returned.

Pam once asked me why I always seemed to meet such needy women.

I deliberately stayed away or went off somewhere else. I am a strange man sometimes I know. I had a special cake made for your birthday, and I made you a card with a poem I'd written inside.

I also ordered you a large bouquet of flowers in Wallingford.

I went out to Woodstock shopping for you and found a brown fur jacket top. I got you a size too small. She said I could bring it back if it was too small.

These I presented to you on your birthday.  
I just turned up at the house like before.  
You said that Penny had invited you out but that you would rather stop in with me.  
You wore your new top, even though it was a bit of a squash. I am so sorry for that. I never got chance to change it for the right size.  
I never got to taste any of that lovely cake either...  
On Sunday you invited me to help you all day at Emily's birthday party.  
Dennis was surprised to see me at the hall. We made friends. He'd had a lot of trouble with his eyes I think.  
I helped to pay for the venue as you didn't have enough money.  
It was a nice day, and I remember us taking pictures of Emily running across the hall. She was in her element.  
I felt very tense. You pushed me away when I touched you which wasn't very nice and you made fun of me.  
Rose noticed how you were treating me.  
The clown said he thought I was with Rose. Not very complimentary, but you did say Brian had a nice face.  
That night I read Benji his story in bed as usual, but I had a splitting headache.  
You asked me if I would be staying, but I had to get away to bed.  
In the morning I appeared in Court all by myself.  
I did my best, but still received a hefty fine.  
What was even worse: they put me on the sex offender's register for five years. It meant that the police would be calling round and interfering in my life. I also had the Probation department ringing my employers and trying to cause trouble.  
I had just got back from Court when I received a text message from you. I could have done with all the help I could. I have never been sure to this day whether the police came to see you and tried to say the most nasty and unpleasant things about me.  
Your text message said: 'I don't want to see you again. No further contact.'

My care of Adam was affected by what was going on and I greatly regret that.  
I think that if he had ever seen you he would have run you down in his wheel chair.  
Adam never knew about the Court case. He would have been too upset.

I still came round as you know. I didn't know what to say to you.  
I sent you a text message. I was used to you being there.

You replied with the only truly hurtful message I have ever received from you;  
'I don't know you!'

That is so true really. I never let you get to know me because I was never sure about you or the future.

I felt guilty that you had known me for eight months, during which time we had slept together on and off, and I had never let you into my heart or confided in you about anything which really mattered or which had altered my life...  
I cycled all the way from Oxford just to look in the drive. I even saw Benji and Emily taking Fluffy for a walk one morning, but I couldn't go near you.

On one occasion Benji came running from his friends to talk to me. He thought I was coming in, but I told him to go back.

Another time he actually blushed.

There was an occasion a few months later when you had a college teacher with you all morning: a Friday I think.

Benji; "I've just seen Andrew!"

You ; silence....then "Where was he?"

Benji; "Just outside..."

After your friend had gone...

You; "Did you really see Andrew? What did he do?"

Benji; "He just went away!"

You; "Don't talk to him!"

Benji; "Why not?"

"Why do you think...!?" you snapped.

You might wonder how I know all this...

I looked at you one day, and decided you would be the wrong person to joke with.

You said I would see a different side to you.

You were in the kitchen with Sandra.

Let me tell you something about Sandra. I don't think she's had it as easy as you might think. You were always sensitive about her. Yes, I saw she was beautiful, but there is no way I could ever have touched her instead of you.

I sent you a message about wizards. It was only meant as a bit of light-hearted banter.

You replied (with Sandra): 'go and see a doctor. You are sick!'

And 'fuk off you impotent loser!'

If you thought things like that would hurt me you are very much mistaken, but you obviously thought they would hit me where it hurt. I thought they were very childish and petty comments to make, and they say a lot about the kind of person you are.

I was shocked that you could send messages like that though.

By the way. I never sent you twenty messages a day. You were lucky if you got one or two.

I once rode past you on the field. You were standing with your arms round Emily.

The reasons I came back and what I did there

I came back because, strange to say it, I actually missed you, and it felt like home...

I had often left in the middle of the night to get some sleep.

I had often turned up late because that was the only time I could get away, and because I liked to read their bedtime story and tuck you all in.

One day you stopped right next to me in the car at the traffic lights. Emily stared at me through the window and seemed very puzzled. I was staying in a hotel down the road at great expense.

You were on the computer with them one night. You talked to them about the devil's number. You had obviously discussed it with them before.  
I wonder what they will think of you when they get older?

I sent you a message at most once a month, but each time I did I was there watching you in the garden. Maybe I just like spying on people. I do like finding out about people's little secrets. It was a teeny bit creepy!  
I wanted to see your reaction and I actually learnt a lot more about you during this time. You once tracked your ex all the way to Spain (the German guy who you met as his nurse in hospital) and groped his partner. You said there was nothing there (she had a flat chest). So you know all about this kind of behaviour?  
You once said to me; "You wouldn't ever hurt me if we fell out would you?" What a silly question to ask! It was almost as daft as asking me if I would touch either of them. Not in a million bloody years! I thought it was stupid and insulting.

I saw you in the restaurant we used to go to, with Mat R.  
He didn't take his glasses off even when you massaged his back.  
You kept referring to me as 'the nutter.' Thanks!  
I saw you take out the photograph album when he had massaged your chest.  
You touched his leg.  
I watched for a few moments. It was so boring. I felt a bit sorry for both of you and went home.  
You left his address at the side of the sofa. He used you just for the night and you had probably done likewise.  
I spoke to him disguised as another woman on-line.  
He bragged about fking you listening to the BG's on my hifi.  
I woke about ten the next morning with a horrible impression. I could feel and hear what you were doing. It was truly awful. I could hear you saying ouch...he bragged about a...l intercourse. What on earth were you doing letting him do that to you!? I could hear a lot of panting and grunting.  
He didn't come back. He must have been quite sane after all.  
The next time I saw you after Christmas you looked awful...your hair was very bedraggled and you looked pale and drawn. You looked very upset and unwell. It may have been me. You reported me for leaving some poetry in a drawer, and a Christmas card on the wall.  
I was out in the garden when I sent you one of my rare messages. I was watching you carefully, but I couldn't go across or do anything.  
I texted you; 'I miss U' - that was all.  
I saw you read it and nod your head. You started crying and touched your face. I am so sorry for any pain I have caused you....

I left you a bottle of wine sometimes and other things. I wrote a note on the back of my kitchen board until you took it down. It was the one with a duck on the front, which had hung on my kitchen wall for years.  
I thought it was especially funny to write notes in your Calendar, like 'apologise to Andrew'...(in December).  
I am a very sentimental person really. I thought that one day you would understand me better.

A WPC I met at a party in Southampton advised me not to have anything more to do with you. She warned me you were trouble and to keep away from you. She said you were the one with the problem.

I remember Howard insisting, "She's reported you once. She'll do it again!"

I deliberately set you up with a black guy called Massi to see how you would react. It was a silly thing to do. I gave him your name on 'lovenfriends.'

He was nasty piece of work. He went around seducing white women on line and then he would display the pictures he took, so everyone could see.

I used to read your e-mails between each other. He contacted you under two different names. In one he pretended to be white.

The last thing I knew about him he was living in Croydon.

I once rang him to find out about you but he was very slippery. Not even my private detective friend could get him to say a thing.

His usual voice-mail message said; "life is a box of chocolates. You never know what you are going to find...."

I put a photo of you up on line a few months later. He obviously recognised you, and seemed to know a lot about you. He said he wanted to meet someone who was passionate, very sexual, and could keep a secret. He also said he was into Dildo's and oral sex. He told me that he had never visited Oxford.

You told him that I had put a picture which looked like you on-line...

{A man listed as living at your address but also with a business address in Oxford called Calvin Craig Shields sold marital aids and sex aids on the Internet}.

You told a policewoman who called at my place of work that I had put your details on line because someone told you.

I found Massimo's details on your phone when I came in one night.

One evening before you met Kevin you dressed yourself in black with little ringlets in your hair I had never seen before, and were gone all night.

You looked a bit the worse for wear the next day, but not as bad as before. Your hair looked a bit matted.

In 2006 you sent me a sexually explicit voice-mail message when you thought it was Massi who had texted you. You said that you had once had an incredible sexual experience in your car and that you hoped he would respond. I think you were a bit drunk to be honest.

I am sorry for playing these silly games with you. It would take a lot of explaining...

I was very unhappy when I saw you meeting regularly with Kevin Br. Naturally I read all your messages. It lasted a lot longer than I thought it would. I saw Roger in Wallingford. He told me that he was alright but that he wasn't used to dealing with children. I was there the first night you introduced him to the kids. You kept going back to see how they were getting on.

I heard you telling someone on the phone that all Kevin did was stuff himself with cream cakes all day and talk about his ex wife.

You told them that he certainly wasn't the one for you.

You actually described him as 'sweet!'

I went in once when he had hurt his foot and couldn't visit you that weekend. He preferred to go out with the boys then anyway, he said.  
You were in a poorly state in the small room at the front. You had made it into a little bedroom. I felt really sorry for you, and went close to you a few times but was frightened to wake you up because I wasn't sure how you would react. You seemed so lonely and alone.  
I hated you making fun of me with the kids and their friends.  
I hated you playing games at the window and kissing him when you thought I was outside.  
I hated seeing his car there, seeing him pawing at your chest, attempting to kiss you, you wiping his saliva away, you lying on his chest, slopping wine.  
I wanted it to end...I thought that I would forgive you though.  
You saw me once in the garden, I think, I don't know how. You went on the phone. I was questioned by a police car which suddenly appeared from nowhere on the High street.  
I went back and saw you were absolutely paralytic.  
You were on the sofa all alone and looking very unhappy.  
I looked at you and said out loud from the garden: "I love you!"  
It was as if you could hear me.  
The reaction from you was very upsetting.  
You burst into tears like I had never seen before. They were rolling in big lumps down your cheeks and you were sobbing. You started nodding your head exactly as I said it.  
You got up after a while but you were very rocky and fell, breaking a glass.  
Fluffy was petrified.  
As you lay on the floor he was meowing loudly in consternation.

I let myself in and cleaned up the glass, then I lifted you up onto the sofa and covered you with a blanket, and then left. I think Kevin had gone to bed to sleep off the drink.  
I was there the first night that Yas stayed. I thought he looked Chinese.  
He kept dusting the side of the sofa. You were upstairs, and when you came down you had a lot of eye makeup on. You kept licking your lips. He had gone upstairs by then.  
He seemed a pleasant enough fellow. He told you that relationships were never equal. He said Kevin looked like a used car salesman. Yas was always looking for more from you. Originally you told him "friends, just friends, yes?!"  
Yas started coming across on a Friday at a time when Kevin wasn't coming as often.  
I heard you in the garden drunk and begging Kevin not to go, just as you had done with me.  
He came round for the last time at Christmas. You kissed him at the doorstep.

I came back to see Fluffy, sit him on my lap, talk to him, feed him, and clean his tray, which was really disgusting sometimes.

☒ I mended your door which was sticking.

☒ I checked my property and your phone. You left it out in the garden more than once.

☒ I put the boot down on your car because you had left it open all night and it was blowing in the wind.

☒ I took some milk to make a drink.

☒ I used to come in late at night and look at you in bed with Benji and Emily holding you on either side. I turned the light off once and you woke up. You must have known it was me. You said to Anna; "It's my Stalker. He comes in at night, but I don't think he's dangerous."

☒ I left you some chocolates in your coat pockets (which I believe you handed round to friends) – they came to interview me about them as you know because Debbie G. showed you my book. Didn't you ever see the advert...Cadbury's milk-tray? I didn't even know it was a crime.

☒ I was in and out like a jack-in-a-box one night. You were lying in bed. They should have been there, but I couldn't see them anywhere. You were all alone I think. It was now or never. God, did the floor in your bedroom creak. Back and forth like a yo-yo. Eventually I leaned over and kissed you ever so lightly on your forehead. You stirred and moaned a little. I was scared what you might do if you saw me. It was the first time I had touched you in months. It was very tender. I turned and walked carefully away...

☒ On your birthday you must have been out somewhere. You were dozing on the downstairs sofa. Your face looked a little thinner. I wondered what it had been through since we were friends. I didn't touch you. I just stood there looking. Your dress was rucked up and your nylons all hanging down. I felt quite sorry for you. I went and found some flower petals and scattered them in your lap. I didn't dare leave any obvious evidence of my visit because I didn't want any more pigs embarrassing me at work.

☒ I left you bottle of wine.

☒ I took a pair of your used knickers (to my surprise they were very intoxicating).

☒ I left two little jugs. You kept some papers in one. I heard you say to Rose; "I don't know where that came from!"

I made them myself in a kiln nearby....

I played tricks on you with the keys. I sometimes took them from your keyring and had them for all the doors. I thought I had lost the front door key once so went in and took the only one you had. I am extremely sorry for that. I heard you outside trying to get in. You had to go round to Rose's. I heard Benji and Emily sighing; "locked out of our own home!"

I left a little bonnet I had bought at the British library for Emily. I hope she wore it.

I left your Christmas presents.

I checked my note to see if it was still there, and when it wasn't replaced it with a carbon copy (as you know!).

I wrote in your address book.

I signed you up to an internet telephone account and monitored your calls.

I twiddled with my thumbs and wondered what to do.

I used the loo, or had a bath.

I read all your post.

I changed some of the labels on your Osteopathy skeleton.

I went to the garage.

I moved your vase. The one you had tried to hide behind when Yas was there.  
I turned your bedroom light on and off.  
I went through your drawers.  
I left a photo in one of my psychology books.  
I asked myself various questions, like;  
    Do you think this is bordering on obsession  
What if she finds out...  
What is going to happen?  
How do you think this is all going to end?

I just didn't want you to forget me! As if you ever could.

I kept a large notebook of my activities. It was really just a wind-up. I kept it out of boredom. I needed something to occupy my mind.

I have always liked writing.

A chap called Shane rang you. He arranged to meet you while you were out at Dennis's. He was from Mauritius. He told me you were keen on his nationality but you weren't sure about him being follically challenged and over fifty. If I remember rightly you said that anyone who wasn't married and hadn't had kids by the age of fifty wasn't fit for anything. You left his details in the cat basket. Then you met Danny. He was the one with the piggy-eyes. You told him about me, and went to the pub up the hill. The one we used to go to on a Sunday. You both looked at the sidewall when you drove in the cul-de-sac. He started groping your chest on the sofa. Not again I thought.

By that time Yas had gone up to bed. You left him in the house by himself. He appeared content to step aside but you could tell what he was thinking and where he wanted it to lead.

You were dressed in your usual red cardigan when you went out with Danny that night, and you had applied a lot of make-up. When you came back your face was very pale and you looked terrible. All your make-up seemed to be gone. When Danny started groping you you seemed very nervous, but still flung your head in his lap. It all seemed so unreal. As if you were just acting a part. Yas went to the upstairs window and looked out into the garden. I thought he might have seen me dashing across.

You were quiet the next night and sat with your back to the window. You looked a bit self-conscious talking to Yas and Anna.

Yas liked it better when it was just you and him. He joked about having to lock his door at night, and paying you in sex instead of board. You glared for a long time on your own...

"Friends, just friends!" you said. You took it in turns to go on-line. You told someone you had spent the last four days together.

You read him Kevin's e-mail when he finished with you. Kevin said he had wanted to finish with you before but he couldn't because Alex was there.

I sent you a message about having your back scratched.

Yas told you that you if you scratched someone's back they would have to do the same for you.

I recall him pretending to expose to you, and playing games at the bathroom window.

You told him about the church in London and your friends there.

You bragged to him about your being a Scorpio.

That night you sat there applying makeup and doing your nails. You kept on applying lip-gloss, as he sat behind you....I couldn't see if he was touching you or not....your eyelids began flickering nervously, then you looked very worried and self conscious, then you looked very hard and a bit upset and got up. You went back to the computer. He castigated himself, as if he had missed his chance. You both kept on going to the bathroom.

The next message I sent you was a bit of tease.

I said that you were bound to turn someone on if you had your white breasts and pink nipples sucked.

You told Yas I was your Stalker, and that you couldn't stand me. I heard you saying the same thing about him on the phone.

You sent me a message with him and asked for his help. It said;

'squishy little pink dick' and (once more) the well worn 'fuk off u impotent loser!'

He was quite submissive most of the time.

I went in one night and heard you open your door and pretend to scream to see if he would come to your room.

Sandra asked you if he smelled.

When you showed him a picture of Danny. Not a very attractive person by all accounts, Yas said, "well maybe he has a big dick?"

You replied; "I don't like it when you talk like that!"

You asked him if he found you 'boring.'

You sat there on the couch, almost laughing, playing with your bra-strap, sneaking a look at his face. You even had Anna in on the act one night, while I was freezing out in the garden....

I left a poem about Fluffy for Benji. You took it down after a few weeks.

Apparently Emily found it and wouldn't go in the Wendy house again.

I don't know why but Yas seemed to have decided to keep himself to himself. You asked him if he would like to go on holiday to Malta: "I'm on my own and so are you. The kids would love it!"

He asked you to ask him again in the middle of the week when you hadn't been drinking.

You asked him if he would like to start a business in Malta...

He said it didn't matter if you were 42-3 and he was 27?

You told him that you couldn't give him any children though...

Anyway he suddenly got up and went to bed.

You sat there for ages by yourself, licking your lips and fantasizing. Putting your hair up, and letting it down again. Then you fell over spilling your glass.

I don't know what happened when you eventually went up to bed, but I got bored of sitting around and trying to stand in that little infant chair.

The next night your face was very flushed as you rushed around his bedroom changing the bed sheets...

The next weekend Yas was there with Anna. Benji was on the Osteo couch. He was stroking his head and talking to him the way I used to do. You were a little the worse for wear, but went in the kitchen and started talking to Anna. You told her that he was 'very sexual' and that you had had sex. The next night you were by yourself at your computer touching yourself.

A strange thing happened while I was at my caravan round the corner doing your portrait. I put your picture next to a decent picture of me to see what we looked like together. It was very sad to see: we might have been a lot closer than I imagined.

I couldn't wait any longer.

I sent what I believed to be my final book of poetry to your father (and I thought you were mad).

As a Professor of Literature I thought he would preserve my work and when I was dead appreciate my sincerity.

You were down in Wales going through my book the next weekend...

When you came back you took down my picture again because of something I had written and left it on top of the table...I wasn't going to put a message behind it a third time if that's what you were thinking!

I once spoke to your father about Shakespeare. He was sat on the purple sofa in the living room.

When your parents visited I acted normally and tried to get on with them both. Even though you said your mother was a bitch I was determined to give them a chance and treat them both with respect. I tried not to think about the story you told me about your dad getting down in front of a car to stop you going to church. I can get along well with anyone who likes words and literature.

I thought you took after him quite a bit in other ways.

I never noticed your mum's legs. She is quite old. I found her to be more sensitive than you made out.

Your dad wanted to know how I was able to quote things from King Lear. I had done it for A-level many years before.

He kept ruffling his head and looking at me. Never seen a bald one before....

I never in all the time I knew you made a proper effort to dress up smartly and conduct myself in the way I know I can. It was because I had given up on life. I used to leave my shoes and clothes at the side of the bed, and they were always still there the next time I came.

We had a meal with your mum and dad at the table. I think Sandra was there too. I was interested to discuss religion with them. Your mum appeared to be a very traditional Catholic and a monarchist.

I even stood up for your mum a bit when you began putting her down. That is why I was a bit disappointed when you told me she said I "wasn't presentable" - a doctor or a barrister like your brothers.

I didn't sell myself or make myself presentable. That was my frame of mind and I am very sorry for my failings.

She said she had only put up with Brian for your sake.

Pam once said of you that I could do a lot worse....

When you came back from visiting your mum and dad the police tried to talk to me but I ignored them. I could feel your mother's thoughts. She must have read some of my book- 'small birds sing.' It needed some more editing.

I think she felt a bit sad about what was happening.

Adam had suddenly died. You remember stopping at his house and meeting his family...?

I was at his bedside holding his toe when he slipped away. I had brought down all his cuddly toys to put round him at the John Radcliffe: his brown bear, his giraffe, and his blue sea-lion.

I sent you a message from his bedside. His sister was in tears.

You replied: 'fuk off, or u r nicked!'

You were lying on the sofa by yourself. I think you knew I would be around. I just wanted to put my arms round you and make everything alright, but I just couldn't do it. I was scared of someone coming down. The light was on in the bedroom even though it was very late. I went in and out several times, before I suddenly saw Benji at the top of the stairs looking down. He came down a step or two. I would have loved to reassure him, but I simply shut the door and went away. I went back to see him trying desperately to wake you up. His face was pouring with tears, poor lad. What did I ever do to make this happen. What did I ever do to make this poor little boy who I had carried in my arms to bed each night so afraid?

I knew it was bound to happen one day after several close escapes.

You even came down one night in your blue nightie and missed me by a whisker.

One time you sat with your head on the kitchen table. I couldn't have done this to anyone else.

It was you! Telling them stories. My behaviour was very silly, but I certainly didn't mean any harm. I wouldn't have hurt him for the world or harmed a single hair on his head. I wouldn't have hurt any of you in a million years, but I have been labelled along with the very worse type of people despite my saying this over and over again.

If only we had been able to talk instead of you sending silly messages and shaking your head.

You were sitting there one night all alone and crying. You were wearing a pullover I had left you which my mum had given me. I sent you a tease -"that's my mother's woolly pullover you're wearing...!"

It was very touching seeing you in it and it made me cry.

You told Penny about my message...

She replied: 'scary-call the police!'

You told me Penny could be very two-faced.

The next night you locked the front door.  
The night after that you didn't.

## Crime and Punishment

I had just been to Adam's funeral. There were some lovely people there. It was all very emotional.  
I'd had my caravan on the site just round the corner for about a year.  
Apparently I had been spotted on the road.  
I saw you in the supermarket. Tried not to look. You went back to be with Yas...you told the pigs I had parked my blue Landrover next to yours.  
And reported me again.  
You nearly ran me down on my bike turning in ahead of me the short way to your work. I volunteered to be a guinea pig at the centre while you were training in the next room. I asked your colleagues not to tell you....  
I saw you cycling across the bridge on the old bike on the other side.  
I went in to see the Vicar of St Peter's to have a chat about us...  
The church said I could go in any time.  
You reported me for sitting with my bike on the bend.  
I am sorry the children were upset and didn't understand.  
Eventually I received a caution.  
I hated you behaving like a perfect stranger and telling everyone our relationship was never intimate.  
You told them our relationship was never a physical one.

After that night when you lay sleeping waiting for me I went to my caravan. I had finished at Grays road and didn't know what else to do. I was in limbo.  
The first thing I remember is the pigs raiding it early one morning and being dragged off to prison.  
When they charged me with the possession of that old firearm without a licence I was knocked for six. It didn't even work. They charged me with a lesser offence by mistake (Debbie G. was fit though; I nearly kissed her in the cop-shop). I rang my mum and step-dad. Keith wanted to know what on earth I was doing with a thing like that.  
Apparently they went round and told you and you immediately assumed I was going to kill you. What do you really take me for?  
The Officers told me that I would get about eight or nine years in prison. I told my mum that I would rather die...I thought I would die, in prison.  
It was like a hell on earth. I had to live with the kind of low-life scum I have avoided all my life.  
I really didn't think I would be able to survive but my friends in Oxford supported me tremendously. They were instrumental in getting me through it and provided the Judge with some very good references.  
The police tried to paint me in the very worse light possible.  
The Judge told the Prosecution that they had to stop mentioning the other things they found unless they were going to charge me with them.

The Prosecution said that there were many more charges to come but they didn't materialize. There was a woman in the court who kept smiling at me who seemed vaguely familiar.

A small amount of cannabis in a bag with a pipe (I had once experimented with Sarah (the manager of Headington library), who I had gone out with briefly after you. She came in and cooked me a meal for my birthday and really looked after me. I don't know what I would have done without her. (Unfortunately I needed a much stronger personality).

A sacrificial dagger. Some liquid I had bought on the Internet without any serious intentions.

I had money to burn in those days!

What an idiot.

I received eighteen months for the time when Benji saw me closing the door. I received two years for the firearm business. My Solicitor's Secretary said; "What do you think of that? You will be out in March." I was greatly relieved.

Two years in prison (and I was forced to serve the full two years in prison, even though I was released to a hostel at the half-way stage): for having a firearm I had only had because I felt depressed. It could only happen to me.

Those days in prison were the worse of my life.

I felt you thinking about me when you found me second jug, and when you found my woolly hat. The one you all laughed at me wearing in Malta.

The second jug wasn't as nice as the first one. It's face wasn't as expressive.

I could also feel your mother's sadness despite what she might have said about allowing me into the house...

Shortly before I was due out a really nasty man, who was there on some very serious charges, attacked me from behind in a dark corridor, because he said I owed him a mars bar.

It took me a while to get him down and restrain him, but by that time he had hit me with something in my face and my blood was spurting all over the corridor and walls.

One of the officers said she had never seen so much blood.

I was in a terrible state and made a mess...

I nearly passed out.

I called the police in to press charges, and all they did was give him a 'caution.'

The Officers played tricks on me all the time. A lot of people went mad in there.

You said in one of your statements that you thought you were going mad. You are lucky.

You were mad already.

When I came out they sent me to Milton Keynes.

They told me I couldn't talk to any women without their permission because I was so 'dangerous'.

I went to a beautician without telling them (I could have been recalled).

When I saw a woman up at the shops with the same mouth and nose as you it made me feel very sad. A year in prison was a very long time to me.

Roger gave me some book tokens he had just received the day I was released and took me for a curry (it was his birthday!).

When I came back from spending the tokens the police were waiting for me, and tried to charge me with something I had not done.

When I eventually moved to a hostel in Norwich I was saddened to see how much time had gone by.

I was training to be a Spiritual healer at a nearby church when I met a really pretty lady in her early thirties called Cristina. She had a first class honours in literature, and could speak four languages fluently. She had grown up in Portugal but looked and sounded a bit Swedish. I was extremely proud of her.

We started a friendship which had my heart soaring for the first time in ages. I never told her what had happened or where I was living. She kept asking me why I had to keep leaving her so suddenly and couldn't stay any longer. She asked me if I had a 'deal' to make (jokingly).

She actually sent me about twenty text messages a day which I reciprocated. I kept about five hundred of her messages on my phone for a long time until the police stole it along with all my other property again.

When I spoke poetry in French she not only knew who it was but which poem I was quoting from.

We had been to see Pentangle in concert at the playhouse and met the lead singer. She wandered out to see where I had gone half way through the performance and I nearly lost her. I had to sign at the hostel every hour as part of my curfew requirements or be recalled.

The staff at the Playhouse said she had been looking all over for me. She called me a 'boy:' can you imagine? All I wanted to do was kiss her.

She had a little boy, but always slept alone. She was still living in the same house as someone, and had been the lead singer in a rock band...

She said she would treat me next time and sent me kisses in bed.

I waited to hear from her for a whole day.

When she did phone she said we couldn't go on seeing each other. She'd had a blazing row with her husband and he had accused her of having an affair, and it had upset her little boy.

I accepted that. She was really decent about the whole thing.

She offered to give me back my Pan's labyrinth DVD.

I received a warning for walking her back to her car one night because she asked me to.

On the last night of my training I was ten minutes late back to the hostel and was due to be recalled for the final year of my sentence.

I went on the run...

Eventually I drove to Banbury where I had stayed before and kept a motor home. I was huddled up in bed to keep warm all through Christmas.

I was really surprised at how well I looked when I trained at the Spiceball every day. Nobody would believe how old I was...

I rang Yas to ask him about you. He was amiable enough and said he had just stayed over a few times as a friend.

I popped to my old doctor and dentist in Oxford, and visited my old work colleague Roger, who you had met a few times, because he'd had a bad stroke and I wanted to see him and thank him for all his support, and for his coming to see me while I was in detention; in case he died.

It felt so strange driving along that road past Wallingford to your house after two long and lonely years.

When you came back after Christmas with the kids they stood looking at you on the sofa a bit puzzled. You looked as if you shouldn't be there.

The next time I went you were sat on the sofa with Emily, then you stood up and walked round the room with the phone just as you had always done. You sat on the other couch facing the window. Emily followed you round and sat next to you while you put your hands in and out of your black cords. I couldn't believe you had your hand in so deep. My hi-fi had disappeared from under the fishtank. You appeared to be listening to someone on the phone. You made some faces, talking randomly. You looked at Emily as you fished around in your trousers again and made out to her it was a little game, bouncing up and down on the sofa next to her....

You left a postcard from your holiday in the kitchen. I did wonder why your escort had signed it G.Mills. Very formal. I don't know how I didn't wake you all slamming the door so hard.

The next time I went you were in the kitchen for ages stroking your hair on the phone. I was getting very bored, and it was bluddy cold in that garden. The spikes on the wall were no deterrent; I flew over them!

It felt so strange seeing you Elizabeth. You had hardly changed, but your hair looked a bit lighter. You were always asking Yas and people if they preferred blondes.

Benji and Emily came in and out of the room several times. I guess they were about ready for bed.

I don't know if I had been seen but Benji went to fetch your new lodger and got her to look out in the garden. He pointed but that was all.

She went back upstairs. Then I saw you hide behind the door with a very mischievous grin, peeping round it, as they all went up to bed. You scolded them up to bed.

You plonked yourself down on your computer chair with a glass of wine in one hand and a bottle in the other.

You pretended to peer round the door, and then very naughtily shoved both hands into your trousers. You made some really suggestive faces as you looked at the screen. Unfortunately I was unable to see what was on it in spite of standing in the corner with my binoculars.

You simulated sex and appeared very raunchy.

You were wearing your tweed trousers and you had your glasses on. Your middle area looked a bit loose and paunchy.

Emily came to watch you and stood by your side. You nodded at the screen. She stood for a short while and then went out and shut the door...good for her!

I was so sorry for you. I didn't know what to do. I have never seen anything so sad in all my life.

I could have cried. I think I did shed a few tears watching you.

Your hand went in and out all the time. Sometimes you just lolled in a stupor. You appeared to be communicating with someone and typing with great difficulty and deliberation.

After a while your glasses fell off and you slumped in your chair, with your belly extended and your shirt sticking out.

You seemed to be slurring your speech.

Then Benji came down from upstairs. He sat on the couch behind you pretending to be asleep. He kept sneaking a look out into the garden (god knows how he knew I was there) and then back at you at what you were doing. You were masturbating in front of your own children!

This went on for several minutes. He kept arching a bit closer and tried to peer over your shoulder to see what you were looking at.

You kept waffing your hand at him as if to say he had to stay put, and you couldn't help what you were doing.

I suppose he must have been about twelve by this time, although he still wasn't very tall.

Then he got up and went.

You spilt your wine.

Your trousers were split.

When you dropped your glasses you started to squint at the screen and your head tottered backwards and forwards.

Then you suddenly got up and went to bed.

Am I mad to think I should have been there with you in person?

I left Emily some presents, which I know she took.

I felt uneasy the next week. As if someone were thinking about me. I thought it was the u-know-who's. I always have a sixth sense.

Driving across I felt very troubled. I even passed a panda car leaving Didcot.

I parked my car up the road and walked down. The field and woods had changed a bit....I stood on a large tree-trunk.

When I got to the wall I knew something was wrong. You were all huddled together on the sofa. You looked absolutely petrified and on the edge of breaking down.

I am so sorry for that. I can never tell you how sorry.

I could not resist sending you a message as I stood in the corner on the spur of the moment. It was very foolish of me. I am very sorry for using the C-word. I meant to write hairy bush. It sounded very crude, and I never liked to be crude with you.

That's when you tried to ring me. I saw you toying with a white pencil between your lips and looking for some details; probably the Eustace fellow's.

You got the children upstairs, turned the lights off, and went to lie on the back hall floor looking through the cat-flap. I hardly dared to breath. I knew if I were caught there I would be in serious trouble. I was surprised after what I had seen that you told anyone.

I knew the cops had arrived but I couldn't move until you went upstairs.

I was only just able to get away as they came around the corner with a police dog.

I cut my hand scaling a seven foot fence...

I rang and said I was sorry and never meant to hurt you. Benji answered the phone. The policeman put on a funny voice pretending to be you.

I could have left the area but it was cold and I didn't really know where to go.

I knew they were after me and when I was followed coming from the bike-shop I knew my number was up.

They dragged me from my car even though I wanted to go peacefully. I was so petrified that I actually called for my mother.

I could hardly breathe and I thought they were going to kill me. They kept calling me the most repulsive names and thumping me because of you.

They told me that if I ever returned to Oxfordshire they would; "hunt me down!"

You said in your statement that you had to go to the doctor because of me and that Benji had to too. I am sorry if I added to your problems but you were seeing the doctor long before me. You made it sound as if I was the source of all your pains. You blamed me for almost everything. You said you were afraid of what I would do and that I might ruin your life...

You said that you knew it was me who sent you the message because I was always sending you explicit messages which wasn't true.

You told the court that you were afraid I was going to commit a serious sexual offence against you, which as you probably knew was absolute rubbish.

You told the court that you were afraid of appearing because you thought I might attack you...!

You told the court you didn't want to appear in person because you thought I might get too turned on if I heard your voice. I used to walk away from the phone your voice was so boring and monotonous sometimes.

I don't know if anyone has ever told you, but prison is not a joke, and it isn't funny. When I received another sentence of two and half years it was a terrible shock. I received an extra year for not notifying the police of my 'change of address.....!' Dave Eustace grinned at me when I got the sentence. A woman in the dock was almost crying....

He bragged about visiting you forty or fifty times. He said the kids came running to see him. Probably just trying to make me jealous.

I represented myself over the phone call business even though I was in such a terrible state and very out-of-sorts: no breakfast, no shower, no sleep.

I was charged with contacting you on the phone (on my birthday)... "I'm sorry, but I never meant to hurt you!" How is that threatening? I was referring to the broken fire-arm.

I was doing alright until they dredged up every horrid little detail they could from the past. They tried to make me look as bad as possible. It was very one-sided. They weren't interested that you still had some of my property, and they believed your statement that our relationship was never intimate, that you had only known me a few weeks, and that I had stalked you until you had to have psychiatric treatment and were in fear of your life.

I had to serve the remainder of the first sentence along with this new sentence, and also all the time I spent 'at-large'.

My former employers couldn't believe the severity. Neither did they think I deserved the label given me by the police and the media thanks to you.

My second sentence was even worse than the first.

I don't know how I ever got through it. It completely wore me out.

I was attacked by someone suffering from schizophrenia in the middle of the night. It just seemed to go on and on forever.

When I eventually got out I was recalled for going on a library computer even though I didn't contact anyone I was told not to and had to spend another humiliating and tortuous year inside.

I was sent to HMP \*\*\*\*\* where I went on the main wing, but had urine and even more unpleasant things thrown through my door. Some of the young men said the most revolting things to me. They threatened to slash my throat and even tried to set fire to my cell.

I couldn't help asking: what had I really done to deserve all this?

The police stopped me from going to my writer's group and from attending my church. They warned everyone that I was dangerous before I got out, and no doubt exaggerated everything I had done.

They poked their noses into everything I did.

I wasn't allowed to do anything without their say so.

I wasn't allowed to make any meaningful friendships.

My sister and mother were told the most spiteful and prejudiced nonsense.

Just before I came out they applied for a SOPPO order, because that was the end of my sentence, and I was not on the sex offender's register.

They applied for it just so they could keep tabs on me and so they could interfere in everything I did.

They told the court that I was in danger of attacking you or a member of the public and committing a serious sexual offence. They also labelled me as being a danger to children.

When I stood up for myself and said that this was absolute rubbish and that we had split up because I didn't want to touch you I was accused of being aggressive.

The Magistrates peered down their snooty noses at me.

All they saw was my label and where I came from.

I totally reject this description of me.

I do apologise for not being able to tell you all this in person.