

A fly on the wall

‘So could everyone please stand and applaud this family, who have given so much to this community, their donations and commitment making it what it is today. Without them who knows where we would be. We are all truly grateful and would like to take this opportunity to let you know that you are the rock of this village, holding us together and making it as strong as it is today.

Ok, the fat woman’s clapping now, a bit too energetically I think. Whoa, look at her go, its like she can’t stop. The crowds doing it now an’ all. It must have been their cue, when the fat lady sings, start clapping. I suppose the family do deserve the appreciation, they have done a lot for the community.

I ain’t been around much, but they seem quite decent, kids included. The man’s not a bad family guy, looks after his kids well, and treats his missus nice, all that kinda stuff. The missus ain’t half bad looking either, plus she’s got the brains to match. Both own that really big company, the one that produces all that sports gear. No wonder they got dosh, they rake it in. But they don’t let it get to their heads mind. The old folks are pretty harsh on the kids, not givin’ ‘em enough to waste, but just enough to appreciate. They’ve raised them good, smart kids they are. The boys off to uni some time this year, and the girls just finishing her last few exams before she follows suit. Good family they are, half decent I reckon.

Look at them, standing on that stage, they all look so happy, so genuine. So perfect.

Well, they’re leaving the stage now, and finally the crowds easing up. Quite a lot of people turned up, more than I expected, more than anyone expected I guess. Everyone’s off home probably, though the pubs a better guess. Oh look, they’re going home an’ all. Might as well hitch a ride with them, since we’re all going to the same place.

As the door closed, the smiles began melting away, fading from the faces until all that was left was a line. A line of motionless expression, void of any feelings, or emotions that may have been running through their heads. They split. The father heading for his study, the mother to her room, the children to their own separate chambers. No talk, no last looks.

That’s weird, no ones said anything since they’ve got home. How come the woman’s gone straight to her room and closed the door? Wait, wait, wait. Made it in. Who’s she phoning so secretly? A solicitor? What’s she phoning a solicitor for? A divorce? What she want a divorce for? She’s unhappy? What she so unhappy bout? What, who’s been beating her? Him? Her husband? Nah, can’t be, the man’s the perfect gentleman. Well, this is news to me, did she keep it well hidden or what?! OK, she’s meeting him tomorrow to discuss this further. She wants the divorce right away, without him knowing about it. She’s kept that well hidden too, she is good. Oh she’s crying now, what do I do? Well, I can’t really do anything anyway, I’ll probably just annoy her, I can be a bit

irritating at times. I'll just have to sit here until she's ready to leave the room. Don't want to leave her alone now, case she does something stupid.

Quite a while she sat in that room, going over it again and again in her head, reassuring herself that she was doing the right thing. He probably didn't mean to do it, he was after all, under a lot of pressure from work. And she did get in his way occasionally. But, as the counsellor had said, there was no excuse for a man to hit a woman.

She tried to calm herself. She knew she had to collect her thoughts and emotions, and then lock them away, in the deepest part of her mind where they would not trouble her, bother her, where they would not fill her head from the moment she awoke to the time she finally drifted off every night. By eliminating the fear, she convinced herself she was eliminating the pain, no matter how hard he struck her, no matter how hard he tried to break her. She was determined, the lines in her forehead straightening in a manner that changed her into a different vision, a vision of beauty linked to happiness, no longer an expression of fear linked to pain.

Finally she opens the door; boy did she have a good long cry or what! The house is way quiet I have noticed. I wonder what the girls up to, she's always been sweet and innocent. On the outside that is, never really got to know her properly. Her doors never closed, easy to get into her room.

She's always working though, never leaves her desk unless there's a family do or somethin' like that. Lets see what she's writing, probably something boring like her maths homework or something....

You OK?

'Too much has been going on here at home. I think Mum's in real deep now. She tries to hide it but I can see straight through her. She's so pathetic, thinking she can get away with it. I know dad might not be the best, but he don't deserve this. I never thought she could be this selfish, but it just proves that you don't even know your mother. How could she do it? I would never have believed it if I hadn't heard it for myself. But I did. Just now. She was the phone to him, saying how she was gonna meet him tomorrow at some swanky café. I can't believe it, I really can't. My own mother...'

What she talking about? Knows bout her mum gettin' divorced? Don't know why she's getting so worked up though. Wait, there's more...

'my own mother having an affair. Its disgusting, totally disgusting. I don't think I will ever forgive her for this. For doing this to us or to dad. Ever. I'll let you know when I learn something new, but promise me you won't tell a soul. For now, I want to keep it in the family, you know, see if she'll have the guts to tell us herself. Waiting for your reply,

Jaq xx

What?! Where did she get that idea from? She actually believes her mother, the wreck I saw in the bedroom is having an affair. How could she even think that about her own mother? And there was me thinking mother and daughter were so close, yet its clear she doesn't even know her. How could she accuse her of something so... 'disgusting' as she put it? I wonder who she's writing this to as well. Truthfully, she's got no right making something like this up and then telling others of this ridiculous lie. To spread this nonsense without a shred of evidence apart from hearing one phone call, even though it is clear she didn't hear very much of it as she seems totally unaware of the divorce stuff. Boy, how wrong can you get someone?

And what is that constant banging sound coming from the boy's room? Its been going on since they returned home, yet everyone seems unaware of it, apart from me that is. She's already licking the envelope, I might as well leave her to it since there ain't nothing I can do about it now anyway. Unless she wants to talk to her mother, or her mother wants to talk to her, there ain't no way that problem is gona get cleared up as quickly as its escalated.

What's all this then? Packing a suitcase? Don't remember them lot talking about a holiday to some place or other. He seems to be packing quite a bit, all his wardrobes empty. Where's he off to then? What's he mumbling to himself? Can't quite make out the words. Hang on, he looks really angry, that's probably what's making him talk louder. I can make out what he saying....

'...always my fault. Can't ever do anything right. Always has to make sure I know how stupid I am. Never praises me, but one thing wrong, even if its bloody minor and stupid, that's it, he's off. Why couldn't I have got a decent father, someone who actually cares about me, instead of their stupid image. Always flippin' forcing me to do everything his way, anything I have to say is irrelevant, not quite up to his standard. Not quite what he expected from me. Not quite as sharp as I should be for a boy of my age, blah blah blah. Never just says 'well done son.' Well, we'll all see who comes looking for who, who apologises to who, who admits they're not quite as good as they should be, for a dad of his age. We'll see. After today...how dare he think he can just dispose of me whenever one of his idiot stuck-up bosses comes along. We'll, they can all...'

Whoa, this is one angry guy. Didn't realise the old man was this bad. Must really give his son some stick for him to be doing a runner. Where will he go though, don't reckon they've got any family near round here. Just his face says it all. All red, lips pursed together with the words just sort of dribbling out, a word, a sentence here and there. I'm surprised he's speaking at all. Must be all that anger forcing him to talk to himself. Must be his way of getting it off his chest though running away seems like the quick solution for him. At his age, even he should know how stupid that is, how that is a clear reaction

from a panicked person. I can't say anything, or stop him. He looks so determined, must get that from his mother. That's it. He's zipped it up. Putting it under his bed, pushing it quite far back, probably to keep it away from the probing hoover stick.

The mans calling 'em all downstairs now. What? They're all going out again? Again? After everything that's happened? Well, that's strange, they're all listening to him. Look how they are though, all look like zombies, no emotion, no expressions. I'm sure someone will notice if they step out of the house with faces as sullen as those. Looks like someone's gone and died on them! Hang on, wait for me, don't want to be left alone in the house now do I?

Oh, another community event, a school fete. Got some nice stuff here. This cake here looks quite nice. I'll just help myself to some. Look at them all. Making their way up onto the stage. Wait a minute. They are not the same people I just saw. Look at how much she's smiling, laughing at every corny joke, not slipping up once. Maybe it is true, that someone can have two totally different personalities. And look at Jaq, linked arms with her mum, bringing her drinks, talking to her friends. This is really strange. And the boy looks like his won a million bucks. Standing there with his father, shaking hands with all those flash business men, its like a completely different set of people. This cannot be true, it seems so strange, so...

...
...
...
...
...
...
...
...

'...damn that stupid fly, we're going to have throw that slice away. God knows where that fly's been.'