

Hanging in the Mist

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CHAPTER 1

Well I think that this is working out pretty good. This recorder, I mean. It's dead light so it's no big deal to hold it, and when I tried it out earlier, the sound was dead good as well. And it records for hours on one of them little 'flash' cards. And it was dead easy to nick from that market stall. I've had loads of stuff from there. Mostly batteries and little stuff like that. But when I saw this thing, I just had to have it. It's dead trick. There was about six of em on the stall and it was a busy afternoon, so it was easy just to stuff one in me jacket when the bloke wasn't looking. A bit harder than slipping a packet of batteries up your sleeve, but no big deal. I wasn't scared or anything.

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Market stalls are better to nick from than the shops. They have cameras and all that in the shops. And the big ones have store detectives and stuff. I've never been caught. But I know people who have. I stay away from the big shops. The guy that runs this stall is a dick anyway. He's a big bloke and he's big headed with it. I hear him when he's talking to people who're asking about the stuff he's selling; the cheap cameras and watches, and radios and DVD players and that. He's talking out of his arse and he doesn't know any better than the people who are asking.

Anyway, screw him. I'm back in me bedroom now, and it's funny standing on this wobbly computer chair in here. It's funny cos you'd think I'd be up high enough already, wouldn't you? Our flat being on the tenth floor of the block and everything. I hope this recorder thing is getting all this.

I can see out of the bedroom window from here. It's another shit day and it's dead cloudy and it was cold outside when I was down at the market. I can see chip

papers blowing around and all the crap that people can't be arsed to put in the bins. I can even see one of the big bins in front of the shops and the chippie. It's been dented and bashed, and even though it's fixed into the ground, it's almost leaning over. Somebody's had a right go at kicking it out of the ground altogether. I know this for a fact, because I was one of the ones doing it. We'd already ripped one out over the other side of the estate and it was a bloody good laugh doing it. But this one just wouldn't budge. It's been a few months now, and nobody's come to fix it up or anything. Me mate Johnno has said we should finish it off properly sometime. But that would just be boring. Everything's boring around here.

I can see Marina Surtees now, crossing the big grass area in the middle of the estate. She's sticking to the path, even though it will take her the long way round. It makes sense cos I can see from how she's taking these dead little teetering steps that she's got her usual high heels on. It's late in the afternoon, but it's still daytime, and it's windy and cold and everything, but she's

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got this denim mini skirt on and a black tee shirt. I can't see from here but I bet it's got *Metallica* or something like that on it. She's well into metal and that, and her hair is dyed black all the time. Although sometimes you can see the roots showing through where it's growing out. Like me mum's.

One thing I can see from up here is Marina's tits. She's got big tits has Marina and she always has had. Well, for a long time anyway. She was an early starter. First to grow tits, first to go on the rag. All the other girls in school were always dead jealous of her back then. I'm bugged if I can see why. It's a bloody messy and smelly thing to have to go through every month if you ask me. If I was a girl, I would be praying for it not to happen. But I suppose for them, it's like a sign that they've grown up and everything. And I suppose us boys were no different really. I can remember all of us in the changing rooms at school inspecting the skin around Eddie Bassett's dick to see the first pubes that any of us had grown. We'd have been about ten or eleven then. And it wasn't long after that when the word went

around that Eddie Bassett had fetched spunk. I can remember Johnno when he told me with a voice full of wonder. "He's more mature than us," Johnno had said at the time. I don't know why I remember those words, but I do, and the way he said them, and the look on his face. Funny what crap sticks in your mind, eh? Anyway, after that you can imagine loads of us boys wanking away every spare minute in an effort to be as 'mature' as Eddie Bassett. Sometimes we'd be doing it in a group, all of us inspecting each other like scientists looking for signs of jism. What a fucking laugh.

Mind you, I bet none of us have stopped doing it, even though all of us have been fetching spunk for years now. The evidence is all around for anyone to see. Four of the girls who were in the same class as me and Marina Surtees are already pushing prams and we're all only fifteen and sixteen. One girl, Kylie Erickson has two kids. They don't come to school much, the girls with babies, and you see them hanging out around the estate, smoking and talking to each other, babies either asleep in their pushchairs or

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screaming fit to bust. And the girls seem pretty natural as mums, like it's what they'd always wanted to be, and that all they were waiting for was to be sixteen so they'd get a council flat of their own and even more benefit money. One of the girls I know who has a baby was dead clever and all. She was right brainy, but here she is, a mum at fifteen and she acts and talks like this is all she ever wants to be. All she ever wanted to be. And maybe that's true, even though it seems stupid to me. She will at least get a council flat and her rent paid for and everything, and then she can live off benefits, and if she wants more money or a bigger place all she'll have to do is have more kids. It's more of a future than I'll ever have though.

And anyway, it's none of me business. I've thought about being lots of things, but what I wanted more than anything is to be a mechanic. I love cars and engines and that, and I love fixing things. I don't mind the oil and stuff. I just like cars and motors. I can see a car over there, all burned out and rusted. Somebody must have took it

and then burned it out when they'd had their fun with it. You can hear cars at night, screaming round the estate. A little kid was killed by one last year. They never caught the kids who were driving the car, neither. I know who they are. I think a lot of people do. But you just don't talk when you live around here. Especially to the filth.

All the same, looking at that wrecked and burned out car, I can't help wanting to get a set of tools and go about fixing it up. It would take a long time but I could do it. Except for one thing. I haven't got any tools any more. Fucking bastards have pawned them. I bloody hate them, me so-called mum and dad. Bastard one and bastard two is more like it. It's not the first time they've taken stuff of mine and pawned it. Fucking pair of crack heads.

Funny thing is, despite what I said, I don't really hate em. I don't much like em though. But they're me mum and dad, and I live with them. We're not so unusual. Well actually, maybe we are. There aren't that

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many two parent families on this estate! Ha ha! Still, I'm used to them doing shit like this. All me life I've been promised stuff, had stuff to look forward to, but it's always turned out shit or never happened at all. There's always been some excuse.

There's a teacher at school who tries to encourage us to work. He's not such a bad bloke, I suppose, even though he is a bit of a div wearing market stall clothes and them crappy Jesus sandals all the time, but he wants us to do the best we can. He keeps saying that we should make the most of every opportunity because you only get one bite of the cherry. That's what he actually says: one bite of the cherry. Well I know what he means. And there have been loads of times when the cherry has been close to me mouth, but I've never had that bite. Bastard one or bastard two or both of em have always made sure it got knocked away.

Marina Surtees is just disappearing from sight now, round the back of the little council office with the wire over the

windows. It's a shame. I liked watching her tits jiggle as she walked. Makes me think of the times I've seen em for real. Not that I've ever got off with Marina, or anything. But I did used to go out with her best mate, Sharlene Stokes, when Marina was going out with this biker bloke who was twenty. We used to go round his place a lot and all we ever did was watch telly and smoke and fuck. Sharlene's tits were nothing like Marina's. They were dead small actually. But I liked them. I liked Sharlene, come to that. But that didn't end well. Just another thing taken away from me.

Woah, shit! Nearly fell off the fucking chair. Cheap piece of crap. Wobbles all over the place.

It's getting darker outside now. Not properly dark yet, but I can see lights are on in a lot of the flats in the other tower blocks. And the street lights have just come on down below. There's only a little lamp on here in me bedroom and if I try, I can see me reflection back from the window. It's not a pretty sight. Both eyes black, bottom

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lip all swollen up on the left side and me cheeks are all swollen and bruised. It's shit being me.