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Culturefly

THE LAST THING I REMEMBER

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THE
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THING I
REMEMBER

DEBORAH BEE

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For Felicity Green





1

Sarah

Day Zero – 11 p.m.

Hello. Hello?

Can you hear me?

Hello? I'm here.

'Alright, Lisa?' A man's voice.

I'm not Lisa. Am I? Am I called Lisa? What's my name?

Hello?

There's the sound of an engine switching off and running footsteps.

'Another day in paradise, Tom. What you got?'

That's a woman talking. She is out of breath.

'Brain trauma. Female. Late twenties.'

He sounds Australian. There is shouting in the background and more running. And a siren.

'Tottenham?'

'Yeah, Haringey.'

'Evening, Lisa.'

Another male voice. Not Australian. More London.

‘The one from White Hart Lane. We should keep a squad up there permanently on standby.’

There’s the sound of scraping and clanking. Their voices are getting lost in the distance, cut short by gusts of wind.

‘Thanks, Matt. We’ll take her from here.’

‘She say anything, Tom, did she? On the way. Did she, you know ...?’

That’s the London man.

‘Nah, mate. She didn’t say anything. I didn’t say anything about anything else either. Usual procedure. Best leave that sort of stuff to the experts. You know.’

‘She’s not even conscious, is she?’

That was the woman again.

‘No ... Hang on a minute – she did say something.’

That’s the first guy again. The Australian one.

‘Well? What’d she say?’

‘She said thank you’

‘She did?’

Everything is quiet, apart from the traffic and the restless wind. Footsteps. Running. Someone arrives, breathing hard.

‘Come on. The trauma unit is ready.’

‘Can I just get that down on the report? So, she *was* conscious when you arrived on the scene?’

‘She was then. We sedated her of course but, yes, at the scene she was conscious, just for a bit.’

‘And she said thank you?’

‘Yeah, Matt. “Thank you” – that’s all she said.’

‘What’d she say thank you for?’

‘I dunno. She’s British. The Brits always say thank you.’

Hello.

Hello?

Where’ve they gone?

This is me thinking.

I have woken up and I’m not there.

I can hear. There is a buzzing sound and a rhythmic heaving, in out in out, and a click, click, click, click.

But there is no me.

My body has gone.

I have disappeared.

This is me thinking.

That is all I can do.

I am a thought, lost in a dark, empty room, forgotten in an abandoned house.

It’s dark. Too dark. Nothing but darkness.

Hello?

There are voices next to me. There’s a clanking sound of metal hitting metal. People are straining to lift.

‘Bed 4. Cerebral haemorrhage.’

‘What time d’ya get home last night?’

Can you hear me? There are two women’s voices. Close to me. I can hear them breathing.

'Quarter to five.'

'Same.'

'Can you do the admit for A&E?'

'Nah. I hate that fucking computer.'

'I've got Malin coming in ten. He's in early. Just my luck.'

'They haven't done the admit already, have they?'

'She only got here five minutes ago.'

'Don't tell me, Lisa's on.'

Lisa again. Is my name Lisa?

'How did you guess? Did you see Mark last night?'

'What, shit-faced and all over Emily?'

'Emily Whiting? Shut up. I didn't see that. Suspected brain haemorrhage, it says here. No life signs.'

'Really? Stroke?'

'No, mugged. Trauma to the anterior cranium. Tottenham. Not even that late. Brought in at ... 23:04. Been trying to stabilise her.'

'Really? Tottenham. Totally wrong nails for Tottenham.'

A door opens.

'I'm off, ladies. How was last night?'

'Yeah, Lisa, amazing. Have you done the admin for Bed 4?'

'I've been in A&E. Was Mark there?'

'I never saw him. Did you, Beth?'

'Who?'

'Mark.'

'Did you even make a start on the admit for Bed 4?'

'I brought her in – the preliminary report is right there. See you tomorrow ... bright and early.'

The door bangs.

‘... when we will still be filling out this fucking form. She is such a lazy slag. I am so not surprised Mark dumped her.’

The door opens again.

‘Beth. There’s a man here to see Sarah.’

‘Tell him no way. Jesus. Give us a chance. Who is he?’

‘Brother.’

‘Tell him no way. Not right now. Tell him we need to get her sorted. Take his number or something. Tell him, oh I don’t know, tell him we’ll call him. In a few hours.’

Hello. Can you hear me?

I have heard this voice before.

‘Hello, Sarah.’

Sarah? Am I Sarah?

‘Time to wake up now, Sarah. You’re in hospital. I’m Nurse Hodder. You can call me Beth. I am one of the nurses looking after you. You’ve been in an accident and you are going to be fine. It’s time to wake up now, Sarah. Can you hear me?’

Yes. YES, I CAN HEAR YOU.

CAN YOU HEAR ME?

None of this makes sense.

An accident?

I don’t know why I am here. I don’t know who I am. I’m not here. This isn’t happening.





2

Kelly

Day One – 7 a.m.

You don't know me. I'm not what you think. You're just like all those people out there who think you can take one look at a person and, like, sum them up. Just like that. Just by the clothes they're wearing or the amount of lip gloss they've got on. I don't do that. I don't assume. That lady there, for example, in that orange plastic armchair in the corner, with the perm and the peach-coloured lipstick? You could look at her and think, middle-aged, middle-class, boring, watches *MasterChef* and listens to like Classic FM or something. Look at the tiny piece of pink toilet roll that she's dabbing her eyes with. It's twisted so tight. Someone my age, someone young, might decide that that lady didn't have much to fucking say that could interest me.

Drug smuggler. Seriously. She's a drug smuggler. The police were just talking to her. She's been brought from a maximum-security prison because her son has OD'd. He's on life support. You see, you don't know. I nearly shat myself when the nurse



told me. I was like, OMG. You can't tell stuff just because her skirt's like this massive great tent. You have to see 'beyond the clothes' – that's what Sarah says. That's how this all works.

I look at how someone sits. You can tell a lot about a person by how they sit. How comfortable they look. Her arms are folded too tightly around her body – do you see? She's crossed her legs and the way that her foot is twisted and jammed behind her flesh-coloured support tights like my mum wears, that shows how nervous she is. How intimidated. Every time a policeman walks past the window she grips herself tighter. Every time the swing doors bang against the wall making the windows rattle in their dodgy wooden frames, she jumps and her eyes flick sideways. Those things you can't control. They're much harder to mask than, say, how you put on a hairband or tie your tie. You need to really work at them.

You might think you can tell a lot about me just by looking at me, but you can't. You might think, yeah, she's around thirteen, maybe younger. She's a total geek. My skirt is the wrong length and my Little-Miss-Prim white shirt is overly white and beyond ironed. The collar lies nice and flat and my tie is neatly knotted. And this god-awful satchel. Totally random, I know. You think that makes me a type. My school socks are too long, folded over twice at the knee; my heels are sensible, beyond sensible – lace-ups. What sad fucker wears lace-ups? Even little kids don't wear lace-ups any more. You probably look at me and think I'm a bit sad. Maybe you feel a bit sorry for me. You think, bit of warpaint, bit of lipstick and mascara, and take off those goofy glasses, I might be sort of pretty. 'Your hair,' my Mum said to

me the other day, while looking totally disappointed at my carefully combed bunches. 'Your hair. D'ya think it could do with a bit of curl?' A bit of curl? It needs straightening irons and a pot of peroxide. Bunches at fourteen. That is actually sad. But, you'd think, bunches? Typical of a *nice* girl. A good girl. Sweet. She won't know anything about anything. She's probably so busy doing her homework or reading a fucking Jane Austen novel to even notice what's going on.

So, here I am. I'm in my school uniform because it was nearest my bed on my floor at 2 a.m. and I've been here for what, five hours. They came to Sarah's house in the middle of the night and then knocked on our door – we live next door. The blue flashing lights woke me up. I heard them ask if we knew Sarah. Asked if my mum was a good friend. She said yes. Slowly. Like she didn't want to hear what was gonna come next. They spoke real quiet so I couldn't hear. Then my mum saw me, standing at the top of the stairs, straining to hear in my PJs. My mum said I had to get dressed, then she went round and got Anna to look after Billy and we drove straight to the hospital. We waited here for like ages and they didn't say nothing to us. Not at all. My mum went home at six to get Billy ready for school. Cos he's a lame-o. Can't even make a sandwich for himself. Can't even get his uniform on. I bet I could get my fucking uniform on when I was fucking seven. She should've got back here again by now. She should be here any minute. She said she'd be really quick.

This is what they call the Family Room. It's got a sign on the door saying 'Family Room'. It's not really a sign. It's a bit of paper stuck with Sellotape that's gone yellow and split. Someone has



made the sign with that clip-art software we have at school to make the title pages for our coursework projects. They've done it in like curly font, in the shape of a rainbow. Trying to kid you this is not totally a shit place to be. Patronising prettiness. It don't make it any better. This is where they park the visitors of people who are dying. You can come in any time – they don't have visiting hours for patients who are like really, really ill. The room is part of the Critical Care ward. That's what they call it when you are like really bad. There are windows running the side of one wall that let you see the corridor, who's going in and who's going out. And let whoever's in the corridor see you. From my seat right by the door I can lean my head out and see all the way down beyond the Family Room towards the wards. It's dark. The nurses' station is lit with like angle lamps and computer screens. They talk quiet. The phone rings a lot. There's like a hum of electricity. Beeping and clicking. And every so often the doors to the ward crash open as a trolley gets pushed through followed by policemen in hi-vis jackets and nurses carrying bags of water with tubes and stuff.

No one has really said anything to me. When we arrived a nurse just took our names and told us to wait. They wrote our names down on a list on a clipboard. They said we weren't relatives so we shouldn't be here at all. But then someone else, another nurse – older – checked the list and said we were OK because none of the relatives were here yet. Apart from some bloke who had come and gone and didn't even leave a name.

Do you know what I think? I think they thought she was gonna die. I'm not even lying. So they needed us here to identify



her or something. They want you for filling out forms even if you're not related. I hate the police. Pigs.

And now, I don't fucking believe it, my mum's gone and I'm sitting here on my fucking own, right on the edge of this fucking plastic seat because if she dies I'll have to look at her body dead. I keep pushing my bum back into the chair but it doesn't feel right to be comfortable. The hot-water urn is bubbling in the corner next to a tray of like really horrible mismatched mugs standing in rings of washing-up foam and a box of sugar cubes that has got damp at some point at the bottom and so the cardboard has gone lumpy and torn. What'd they put them on there for anyway? Tea seems like too fucking comfortable when people next door are like dying. The lady in the corner looks too small in that great big armchair. She's still twisting that fucking tissue. Can't someone give her another one?

An old guy arrived at seven. He's parked in the corridor with the clipboard. He's just sat there. Old. Like maybe he volunteers or something. When a visitor buzzes the door he hauls himself up. He asks for a name then reads down his list. You can see people getting impatient. They think he is doing it too slow but they have to wait and be polite, while looking over his shoulder. Almost afraid to look over his shoulder. Then while he's still looking up and down the board, they might turn and look at me and the psycho in the Family Room. Some of them give me a bit of a smile. That's their sympathy smile. As if to say, there's a poor nice girl whose relative must be about to snuff it. What's she doing there all on her own? And then they head towards the nurses' station and their own relative hanging on to life by

their fucking fingertips. Two more policemen come through the doors. Tinny shouting comes out of their radios. They look at the drug smuggler first, then at me. They check the list. They nod. They obviously think that I'll have nothing much to say. I look like the sort of girl who has nothing much to say. They continue to the wards. To Sarah. In a coma. Did I tell you that? The nurse says she's in a coma.

This wasn't supposed to happen.



3

Sarah

Day One – 8 a.m.

Hello?

Can you hear me now?

‘Morning. Are you Mum?’

Mum? A woman’s voice answers quietly – almost whispers. It’s a thin voice.

‘Yes, I’m her mother. This is Brian. He’s Dad.’

‘How are you both? Was it a long drive you had?’

‘It was more the shock, wasn’t it, Brian?’

There is a constant beeping sound and intermittent clicks. Her voice feels a long way off even though she must be close.

‘So,’ Lucinda – she’s the Irish one, ‘can I ask you a few questions about Sarah, now that you both have your tea?’

There’s the sound of papers being leafed through.

‘Did you fill out this form with Nurse Hodder outside? The ones about Sarah’s age and occupation, all that?’





‘Yes, nurse. We did that when we got here. Sarah’s twenty-eight. She’s always been a good girl.’

She’s starting to cry.

‘She’s never been in any trouble.’

‘D’ya know what? I think everything is complete here. Let me go and check. So how are we doing with our talking, Mum? Have we been trying to talk to Sarah, like Nurse Hodder said? Did Nurse Hodder explain?’

She’s shouting a bit.

‘Oh yes. We’ve talked to her, haven’t we, Brian? Brian! He hasn’t got his hearing aid in. He didn’t even have time to pick it up. They came, you know. In the night. The police did. He didn’t hear the door. He never hears the door. The only reason I heard it was because I’ve had this cough and I’d got up to make a cup of coffee. I find a coffee sends me off. Just a small cup and then, twenty minutes later, I’m out. Gone. The kitchen is right next to the front door, you see. It overlooks our drive.

‘Actually it was the blue lights that I saw first. I thought they’d come for that boy again down on the corner. He’s nothing but trouble to his parents since he left school. But the police car came all the way down to our end. Woke the whole road, I shouldn’t wonder. They’ll think we’re common criminals.

‘They didn’t put the siren on. They don’t put the siren on for domestic situations, that’s what the young man told us, unless there’s violence, you see. But they do put the blue light on if it’s an emergency. And this is an emergency because they’re just not sure that, well ... you know. They said they weren’t sure.



‘Took us three hours to get here. In the dark. We don’t know the area. Don’t know it at all. Not even in the light, you see. So they said they would give us a lift. That was kind. I thought the government didn’t have any money. Wasn’t it kind, though? I could see Paul, you know, he’s Rachel’s husband, on the corner looking out of his lounge window from behind the new vertical louvre blinds they’ve just had fitted. I would have waved to show that we didn’t have those restraints on, you know. Handcuffs. But I was too busy looking for Brian’s glasses in my handbag.

‘We’d just put on what clothes we had out, you see. I don’t think you’ll mind me saying that I’m actually wearing what I had on yesterday. Well, you see, it’s an emergency, isn’t it? And I just picked up my handbag. My glasses were in there from last night, when we were at Jean’s for the rummy night. We go every week for the rummy. Since her John died. But anyway I haven’t got Brian’s glasses. He’d taken his out the night before, you see, to look at the paper. He likes to read a bit before he goes off, you know. So his glasses will still be on the bedside table.

‘Do you know, Lucinda, you could say anything about him right now and he wouldn’t hear a word. Not a word.’

‘Morning there, Dad.’

The Irish girl is still shouting.

‘Have you been trying to talk to Sarah, Dad? We know how helpful it is, don’t we?’

‘We have. Haven’t we, June? Oh yes.’

‘Would you like some tissues, Mr Beresford? Mr Beresford? I have some super-mansized tissues here.’



Dad.

Is that my dad?

He is crying.

These people here in this room, they can see me. They can't hear me. Hello?

I'm here. HELLO!

I can't open my eyes. I can't move my hands. I can't feel my body. It's like I'm here but I'm not here. I've lost myself.

Coma. That's what this is. This is a coma from the inside. Coma. I'm opening the eyes inside my head. As wide as I can. Everything is black. It's blacker than black. Like inside a coal mine. I've been inside a coal mine. I remember a thick yellow gate smeared with black dust, banging shut. The clanking of a lift as it's swinging downwards. They told us that in a coal mine it is blacker than black. And it was. Not even a glimmer of light from anywhere.

There is no light here. Just sound. It's like I've been buried in a hole and covered over.

I'm dying then.

Dying.

I thought they said when you die, you see a tunnel of light. I'm supposed to see a light and I walk towards it and then I find God, surrounded by distant family members who I don't recognise. But they recognise me. They hug me. It's like being at a wedding. Or a funeral.

There's no light.

There's nothing.

I'm not surprised.



I'd be more surprised if there was.

I don't think I'm a God fan.

Am I?

This can't be happening.





4

Kelly

Day One – 8 a.m.

Still here. Still waiting. The pigs in hi-vis jackets come and go. Visitors sign in with the old guy. The drug smuggler is out cold. The scrunched-up tissue is drying out, in the palm of her open hand. But still no one has said anything more about Sarah. Maybe they've forgotten about me.

If they could've seen me back when I was twelve – or like nearly twelve – they would've thought something else, something quite different. They'd have noticed me then. You would have too. If you'd seen me walking home from school, socks rolled down, scuffed up platforms, dyed blond hair, Rimmel Scandaleyes blue waterproof eyeliner. My blazer collar would be up at the back like the girls in Year 13. I had quite a cool bag back then. Got it in Wood Green market – looked exactly like Prada, though. Same gold lettering and everything. Wonder where that's got to now. When Billy started at the junior school, Mum said I had to collect him and get him home safely. Hold his hand all the way.



He was five. He's seven now, and a right royal pain – that's what my mum always says. But he's alright, if you tell him he is. Once he knows not to do something, he don't do it. He knows now not to touch my stuff. Not never. Don't go in my room. Not never. Don't tell Mum nothing. He's alright. So there was this one day, when he was doing what he was told, holding my hand like I'd said, like Mum had said, and it was a sunny afternoon. Actually, really sunny. The pavement was fucking boiling. The tarmac on the road had gone shiny at the edges, like where it was melting. We were loping along even slower than usual. I mean you never walk fast coming back from school, do you, but sometimes it would take us three times as long as it takes to get there in the mornings. Even longer on hot days like that one. We'd stopped off at Tesco Express to get sweets. We always did. Mum doesn't know that. We used our dinner money. Sometimes we'd have to wait to get in because only four kids are allowed in at any one time. It says so on the door. It says 'South Haringey Primary and Secondary Schools – 4 children only at ANY ONE TIME' – that last bit's written in thick black magic marker. Obviously it didn't actually say that they suspected the kids of stealing, shoplifting, but everyone who saw the notice knew what it meant. We were really pissed off when it first went up. My mum told the Tesco people off and wrote in to the school. Mrs Backhouse wrote an official letter and complained that our schools were being singled out unfairly. The Tesco people wrote an official letter back saying that all the children were in a grey and navy uniform with a South Haringey tie. Plus there aren't any other schools nearby so it had to be us. In fairness it *was* us, but it might not

have been, right? Despite keeping the numbers to a manageable four, and putting up cameras and mirrors in all four corners of the store, Tesco Express in White Hart Lane didn't get any less shoplifting. We just got better at it. It was a game. We'd just wait until one of the staff went out the back. Or a few customers were at the counter. Then strike. Sometimes one of us would distract one of them – by asking if they had any salad cream or something difficult to find, and then when they went to look for it we would fill up our pockets with Haribo sours. Billy didn't do it. He was too young back then. He'd probably do it now if I let him. But I don't even do that stuff now. I'm good. Like I said earlier ... now, I talk nice and dress like a goon.

We'd already got our sweets that day. Billy's got a drumstick lolly with the pink and yellow wrapper – he still loves them. And I'd got my prawn cocktail crisps. I prefer smoky bacon flavour now. I go through phases with crisps. But I remember wishing I'd chosen something else cos eating prawn cocktail crisps and holding Billy's hand was totally rank. I had to keep dropping his hand so I can get the crisps out of the pack and then lick the pink stuff off my fingers and quickly pick up his hand again, in case Mum caught me, or one of her neighbours saw. She knows just about everyone in the street. And his hand was hot and sweaty and tacky from holding the lolly stick, and sometimes when I licked off the prawn cocktail pink stuff from my own hand I got a bit of the taste of his drumstick. We'd got nearly to the last corner before our street, and Billy was chattering away like always. And smiling. And I was laughing at something he said about Miss Treneer, who he always used to

get wrong and called Miss Trinnier. And then suddenly, out of nowhere, I yanked his arm. Like really hard. Like nearly out of his socket, hard. Poor Billy. He was so shocked. He had no idea what was going on. One minute laughing, next minute he was crying hard. Screaming. So what am I? A psycho in the making, you think? If you could pull back from the scene a bit then you'd have seen what was going on. On the other side of the road, that bloke who had just come around the bend, in the hoody, with the funny rolling way of walking, that was Wino, aka Joe Herne. They say he walks like that cos he's pissed all the time but I don't really think so. Mum said he was born that way – with a funny hip. She used to know his mum. She had another kid who had something wrong with it too. Autistic or something. But really bad. But that's not the sort of thing you want to get caught talking about. Wino would kill you for talking about that. He lives on the Huntley Estate, still with his mum. If he lives there, you wouldn't think he'd be able to afford to be pissed on wine all the time. Most of his mates drink lager. To start with everyone thought he was a complete girl for not drinking lager and drinking wine instead but nobody would say that now. Nobody would say anything, to Wino or about Wino. He's Year 10. Kathryn Cowell's year. Kathryn Cowell's best mate. Kathryn Cowell's henchman.

Pulling Billy's arm out of his socket, almost, may seem like a random thing to do just because Wino is on the other side of the road, right? But I had to do something fast. Having a laughing little kid brother was like a chink in your armour – something else to screw you over with. Acting like you didn't

care about nothing was how you got through South Haringey Secondary. It was bully or get bullied, right? You had to act hard or you'd get picked on – but not too hard, or you'd be competition. If you acted tough you would look like you belonged, that you approved, that you were one of them. So that's what we all did. Not just me. All my friends did the same. We dressed hard, we acted hard. If their crew was around, you just jutted out your chin a bit and set your mouth in a thin-lipped grimace, never met their eyes, and then you were in the crowd. That was the idea. Anyone looking vaguely vulnerable or scared would get robbed. Anyone showing off their new phone, robbed. Anyone daft enough to carry a laptop, robbed. People who stood out, they'd lose their dinner money, mobile, earrings, packed lunch – whatever it was you were carrying that Kathryn decided she wanted. She took someone's puppy once. But they did get it back – their dad went round her mum's. Maybe dinner money was how Wino funded his alcho habit. Dinner money goes a long way when you've robbed twenty kids in one day. After I got onto Wino's radar, there was no going back. Every time he saw me he'd wrap his hand around my ponytail and yank my head back. 'Ello, Blondie. What you got?' That's when my mum was starting to get suspicious, given the black eye and the bruises. But nothing was gonna get that out of me. Some things have to be kept secret. Best not to fucking say anything.

So, anyway, when we'd got to that corner and Wino was out of sight, my mum, in her slippers and her apron, came racing out of the house, where she'd been twitching her nets at the front window waiting for us. And she picked Billy up and cuddled



him and he was still crying and chewing his drumstick lolly at the same time, and there was a line of sticky pink and yellow dribble coming out of the corner of his mouth and draining onto Mum's white crochet cardigan and I said, 'Mum, he just tripped. He's fine', and he nodded silently, his face half hidden by her steel-grey perm. And she carried him into the kitchen and put him on his naff little stool where his squash was waiting, in his favourite naff Spiderman cup, and his small plate of biscuits was right next to it. And I looked in the hall mirror and applied another layer of glittery lip gloss in Pepto-Bismol pink, looking like the sort of girl who has a lot to say.

Fuck. I wonder where my mum has got to. How long can it take to get Billy to school? He's such a dick.

This all happened before my re-education. This is before I was taken in hand and restyled and reformed, and turned into the sort of girl who doesn't get noticed. Because Sarah said it's better not to get noticed at all than get noticed for the wrong things. She said if you're going to pretend to be something you're not, better to pretend to be nothing. Then you won't get seen. Then you disappear. That's what she said. And she said looking like a bit of a loser would make me disappear off Kathryn Cowell's radar, and anyone else's for that matter. She said I could become invisible.

You're probably thinking that this is really random because it's all happening in the wrong order. Twelve-year-old girls are supposed to be girly and do-gooding, then, bang, hit thirteen and become monsters. This is mainly right. All the girls at school did that, even Samantha Elliott who was seriously a total twat until she came back after the summer holidays with blond



highlights. If you flicked back to when I was, say, ten you'd have seen the makings of the prissy self you see here today. At ten I wasn't allowed to dye my hair yet. Mum had let me get my ears pierced when I was eight and I got my belly button done when I was eleven but Auntie Liz took me and Mum still doesn't know. If I'm honest it was a bit rank. It's healed up now. It went septic after a week and I seriously thought I was going to die because I was never going to tell Mum what I'd done because she'd have literally killed me, and all this yellow stuff started coming out. I'm not even lying. Auntie Liz took me down the doctors and they gave me some special talcum, and some tablets that I had to hide in my Rice Krispies.

Also when I was eleven I got my highlights done for the first time. It was my last year at junior school. Auntie Liz took me down the salon in Haringey High Road for a half-head and I got to sit on like three cushions so I could see myself in the mirror. My mum said it looked quite nice, but it wasn't really blond enough so I spent my Christmas money on getting a full set and went for White Platinum rather than Golden Glow and it looked wicked. Clare Millard in my class had had hers done there too and had the White Platinum as well so we looked the same. Like twins. Everyone said we actually were twins. We got the same wedge shoes too. And the same glittery lip gloss in Pepto-Bismol pink. And when we went out together people used to look at us and point. My mum said it didn't look nice. Not at all. She got really angry. I got the 'shabby little tart' line. But it was too late. By the time I turned twelve, I had the complete shabby-little-tart look down to an art.

The transformation from shabby little tart back to loser was not my idea. I'm not that smart. Well, I wasn't back then. It didn't happen overnight either, but it was a conscious gradual toning down of everything, from my hair – back to mousy – to my make-up – none – to my uniform looking boring. Probably at first I didn't even know she was doing it. As I say, it wasn't even my idea. It was Sarah's. And now she's going to die. Fucking brilliant.