

THE END OF TORMENT.

Michael had attended one of England's top public schools, doing well in all his exams and succeeding in charming his teachers. For Michael, outward success was something that came naturally. He was superior and he knew it, and anyone of any intelligence knew it too. A sense of superiority was Michael's birthright.

But as time went on, Michael became more frustrated about the lack of recognition of his talent amongst his peers, so his fantasies increasingly involved belittling others. This was right and fair because, in a world where the mediocre were given the same rights as him, someone had to right the wrongs. 'Checks and balances' was a term that Michael heard those 'holier than thou' use. But it was he, Michael King, who had been given the responsibility for ensuring that superiority, and not mediocrity, would achieve the recognition it deserved.

When he was just 28, Michael met the woman of his dreams. Michael did not love her, or feel any warmth towards her, but she was the woman of his dreams because she was recognised by all as a beautiful woman. Michael, determined to have that symbol of superiority on his arm, showered Michelle with gifts and compliments, so that she eventually succumbed and agreed to move in with him.

That was when everything changed. Michael had won the competition, so all pretence had gone. The energy required to act on a daily basis required too much from a man fixated on far greater things.

It was a Saturday morning when it happened. Michelle, preparing the breakfast for the two of them, had managed to break Michael's poached egg so that the yolk spilled, like the remnants of a jaundiced volcano, down the side of Michael's plate.

Appalled, Michael threw the plate against the wall, so that the splintered crockery hit Michelle's cat in the eye.

'Michael, what have you done?' screamed Michelle as she took Mr. Jinx in her arms.

'You think more about that bloody cat than you do about me! It's only a cat for Heaven's sake! It wouldn't have a home to live in if I didn't go out to work! And what does the cat contribute, preening itself, like it was the lord of the manor?!

Michael lunged at Mr. Jinx with his breakfast knife.

With a speed, born of a sub-conscious preparedness, Michelle pulled herself and Mr. Jinx to the side, so that Michael, in his rage, tripped over the open dishwasher, spearing himself on an upturned bread knife, and crashed to the ground. Michael had stabbed himself in the heart.

Michelle stared in horror. She knew she had to do something, but what?

She dialled 999, not bearing to touch the groaning figure at her feet.

Michael had stabbed himself through the heart, but he had, emotionally, stabbed her through the heart many times before.

Four weeks later, at the funeral, Michelle wanted to feel disappointment because their relationship had not succeeded.

But she only felt a sense of relief.