

THE LATE DATE

At last, his trouble was rewarded.

Armed with chocolates and flowers, he made his way to her door.

It had taken her some time to agree to this date.

**Unexpectedly, when she finally agreed, she'd suggested
him coming to her house for a meal.**

He rang the bell once and stood, waiting.

A minute later, he rang it again.

She was making him wait a little, that's all.

He stood, staring intently at the door.

It really had been a very long time.

His wife, Amy, had been dead for nearly ten years...

He had never really tried to find anyone else...

**All his friends said he should, but it always seemed to him
that Amy was still there, peering over his shoulder.**

Peering over his shoulder even though she was dead...

The door suddenly opened. Two men faced him.

The larger one grabbed him, dragged him inside.

He stumbled and fell. 'We'll teach you a lesson.

We'll teach you not to chase another man's wife.'

The larger man held him down. The smaller man kicked him.

He sensed there was blood already on his tie.

They kicked him some more in the head and ribs,
then picked him up and tossed him back out.

He lay for a while, hardly conscious at all.

She had just led him on. He had followed like a fool
and been well and truly rewarded.

Darkness.

Feeling his way in the dark, he moved forward.

He could just see, ahead, a tiny ball of light.

But the light grew no nearer as he went on.

The light just seemed to move further away.

Where was he now? Some sort of tunnel...

He remembered nothing.

‘FOR GODSAKE GET A GRIP!’

‘Don’t panic,’ he told himself. Just keep moving.

When he reached the light, he would know where he was.

As a boy he had gone through a tunnel like this.

In Cornwall...yes... not a tunnel.... *A cave...*

with stalagmites.... yes... he had ended up lost.

His parents were frantic. Calling his name.

‘Daniel! Where are you?!’ Other voices joined in
in a kind of chorus. ‘Daniel! Daniel!’

It had seemed to him, then, he would never be found.

In the end, they *did* find him. They’d find him now, too.

He'd be back with Amy in no time at all.

How he loved her now, more than ever before.

Keep moving! Keep moving! His legs felt like lead.

Keep moving! Don't think! It's pointless! Come on!

You'll make it. You will. The light's getting nearer!

The light's getting nearer! Nearer all the time!

The surgeon's voice was soft, reassuring.

'Believe me, you've had a very lucky escape.'

His mobile plucked him out of his dream.

'Hello, it's me. I hope you don't mind me ringing.

It's about our date. Our date tonight?

I was wondering if you'd prefer to come here?

Instead of going out, I could make us a meal...'

(493 Words.)