

THE LAST LAUGH.

One misty night in autumn, Ian sat in his flat, staring at the wall, having eaten the pumpkin pie which had been prepared for him three weeks ago. He lived alone. It was not by choice, but it was the way it had worked out. He'd had a number of girlfriends over the years, but only one special one, Caitlin, who had agreed to marry him. Then, two weeks before the great day, she pulled out, giving him no explanation and refusing to answer his emails and phone calls. She had disappeared from sight when it came to social media and her mobile phone could not be traced. Her boss was as perplexed as Ian himself. The police had tried to trace her whereabouts, but to no avail. All Ian had was the note that had been pushed through his letterbox two weeks ago. What had happened to Caitlin? Had she suffered a mental breakdown?

These were the questions that Ian asked himself, but only when he was with his friends and Caitlin's family.

As he sat there, Ian stared at the spider who appeared to be struggling to find a way through the living-room door. However many times it tried to get under the door it had failed. Should Ian open the door to award it freedom? No, of course not. Ian was taking too much pleasure in watching it struggle. Should he just kill it? That would just spoil the fun.

Why shouldn't Ian take pleasure in this? After all, hadn't Caitlin taken pleasure in watching him struggle with his dyslexia, hardly able to write a simple sentence? Had the note which had been pushed through his letterbox, been a way of poking fun at him? 'I have leafed you forever. Goodbye.'

The questions that Ian asked himself now were not those he asked himself when in the company of others. But it was true that Ian did not know where Caitlin had gone. Two weeks ago, at Caitlin's flat, Ian had given her sufficient 'medication' to make sure that she would not be seeing the light of day the following morning.

'Knock! Knock!'

The sound at the front door reminded Ian that it was that special night when irritating children banged on his door, asking for money which they did not deserve. Ignoring the knocks, Ian resolved to leave the flat to escape further

interruptions. Waiting for the visitors to leave, Ian put on his jacket and slammed the front door behind him. Suddenly, he heard a voice, an all too familiar voice, speaking to him from the alleyway. 'Hallowe'en', or should I say 'Hello Ian. You always said that I had a way with words. You tried to put a stop to my life, but I had already worked you out. You can't be killed by someone who doesn't live here anymore, can you? Hello Ian, and with that Goodbye! I hope you enjoyed your pumpkin pie, my little Munchkin! Ha! Ha! Ha!'