

## Close Encounters

He's always got one over on me. That bloody neighbour of mine! There he is cutting his grass with his Hayter lawnmower. And English stripes. I mean, I ask you. Why as straight as that pinstripe suit he wears to the city every day?

'David! Breakfast!'

'Coming dear.'

'What's wrong? Paul annoying you again?'

'Nicole, how many times have I told you he doesn't annoy me. I just don't like his showboating. And nor do the rest of the Close.'

'That's not true. Marcie at number two rather likes Paul.'

'Marcie would.'

'Anyway, you pick up the Porsche this morning. That'll will eclipse his Audi TT.'

'You might laugh Nicole, but this is important.'

'Important for who? You were same when you took over the chairmanship of the Neighbourhood Watch. You wish you had all the attention?'

'No. I don't need attention.'

'Oh yes you do... bet you wish Marcie fancied you as well, haha!'

I tucked into my bacon and eggs and downed a strong Colombian coffee made using our fine barista coffee maker. The pods being the very best and on mail order of course from Harrods. Standards and standards. Not your common Waitrose in this house!

'David, do go upstairs and change. You can't pick up your new Porsche looking like a gardener.'

I arrived at the showroom and spent the next two hours tediously going through the whys and wherefores of my new gleaming red toy. Finally, I drove the Porsche home and heads started to turn in the Close. The sun was bright. Paul was manicuring his borders and Marcie, handing Paul a coffee, started to gawp. They wasted no time coming over for a closer look.

'David, if I'm not mistaken, the new Porsche Cayenne Turbo E-Hybrid Coupe. Capable of 188.3 mph.'

'Of course. A fine machine. You're looking a little perturbed young Paul.'

'Not at all dear fellow. I'm just wondering how you're going to get your golf clubs in the boot!'

'Hi David,' said the voluptuous Marcie. 'Nice looking car. Will Nicole allow you to take me for a ride?'

'I doubt it Marcie. Besides, I have to wash my hair and then take my lovely wife out to lunch.'

Nicole approached to welcome David home with his precision-engineered mid-life crisis.

'You sent Marcie packing then. Silly woman.' Turning to Paul, Nicole flirtily said, 'So Paul, what next for you? I guess you'll be trading your Audi TT for a Bentley?'

'Oh, the Audi stays. Besides, how would I get to the station? My Aston Martin DB12 Volante will be delivered next month. Stella's movie has grossed at the US box-office. She's ordered the car for my birthday.'

My heart sank and I could feel a tightening across my chest. I started to sweat profusely. I fell shouting out, 'Nooooo!'

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I awoke to the sound of beeping machines. Wires crisscrossed my body like spaghetti. Nicole, Paul, and Marcie stood around my bed.

Paul took my hand and simply said, 'Sorry.'