

## DOES THE END JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

'You look so cool!' Rebecca kissed Eric as she adjusted his hat. 'I love fancy dress parties. You look great as Buster Keaton. Here, let me adjust your top hat. There you are. Perfect!' Rebecca stuck a white spot at the hat's base.

'You look wonderful too, my sweet. Now don't forget to use concealer will you. We don't want people getting the wrong idea.'

'Only if you promise you won't take your hat off, darling. We've got to impress the taxi driver, you know.'

'Of course I won't. We have to show these common people who the gentry are.' Two people laughed, one at their own wit and the other out of compliance. Eric was flattered to have been invited to Joe Simmonds' birthday party. Joe had a murky past, having spent time 'inside', but he was a reformed character. He had achieved so much, but there was one woman, his true love, who he felt he could not live without. But she dared not leave her partner for him.

An hour later, and Eric and Rebecca arrived at the party, held in one of London's most expensive clubs. They were ushered into a large room, filled with people in fancy dress. Eric shook Joe's hand. 'I'm Buster Keaton, just in case you couldn't guess, and Rebecca here is Ellen DeGeneras. She's even dyed her hair and put on a waistcoat. I don't know why she chose DeGeneras, but that's women for you!' He looked to one side. 'Only joking darling.' Rebecca smiled politely at Joe, nodding her head briefly so that no-one else noticed.

'Delighted to meet you, Buster,' replied Joe. Only one other person knew why Rebecca had put on such thick make-up. Only she knew that she had chosen her character, DeGeneras, as a joke to herself. Eric was always calling her 'a degenerate' in private. Rebecca's make-up concealed her true face. Drugs were doing the same thing for Eric.

As the evening drew to a close, Rebecca visited the ladies' room to check her watch. 'Perfect timing!'

Descending the steps from the club to the pavement, Rebecca observed the rear of Eric's top hat. The white dot was still in place.

'Where would I be without you?' Eric smiled at Rebecca. At that moment a black saloon car hurtled past and there was a loud bang as a bullet raced towards its target.

Eric hit the ground and Rebecca answered his question, 'You'd still be alive.' The years of abuse had come to an end. Rebecca's life had been one where she had had to act happily in front of others, as she suffered deep inside. Now her role was reversed. She portrayed horror on the outside, while she felt freedom within. It was true that Joe was a reformed character, but he still had connections. He knew that he couldn't live the rest of his life without the only woman he had truly ever loved. Their plan was coming to fruition.