

WE ARE THE GOTHS

ANDREW: It was 1964, 65. Something like that. I was 16 and I thought there must be more to life than this, you know? Boring school, boring job, boring wife and kids.

JULIE: For me it was the clothes. Other kids, the way they looked made me sick. Skirts and blouses and frocks. I hate that word. Frocks. Mum took me shopping to Marks and I wanted to kill everyone in there.

JOHN: A bunch of us used to hang out in the graveyard. Cliché! Someone had a transistor radio and we used to listen to Luxembourg 'cos the BBC was rubbish. Beatles and all that crap. Music for nans. But if you could get Luxembourg you could hear the good stuff. Real music. Goth music.

KEVIN: I hate that word.

JULIE: I won't even say it.

ANDREW: "Goth." That's just a label the papers put on us after Brighton. "Goths and Rockers." What a ton of shit.

JOHN: I'm a Goth, yes. Say it, I'm Goth and I'm proud.

ANDREW: I was in it for the music, the clothes, and the magick.

KEVIN: Normally I wouldn't be seen dead at a concert. All the little teenyboppers doing the twist and that sort of thing. Dreadful. So naff. But Sundays at the Marquee.

JULIE: Sunday nights at the Marquee.

ANDREW: If you were anyone, if you were a face, it had to be the Marquee.

JOHN: Slip out during Sing Something Simple, clothes in your school bag, get changed in the bogs in the caff, and join the queue to get in.

ANDREW: My brother knew the DJ so I was on the list. Always first in.

JOHN: Goth was about belonging, being part of a gang. It was never about style.

JULIE: It was all about style. Being the elite. No tickets allowed!

ANDREW: Tickets? Weekenders, we called them. You know the sort. Little kids with back-combed hair and too much make-up. They'd take it all off on the bus home so Mummy wouldn't get upset.

JOHN: Once you were in, oh my God. All my mates were there, and if I didn't know someone, I would by the end of the night. It was magical. Just me and my gang, snakebite, dancing to the best music.

ANDREW: Yeah, it was great. Until it got in the papers and then everyone wanted some.

JULIE: I knew it was over when a girl in my class, Theresa Morgan she was called, came in. Previously she'd been all beehive and frilly knickers. Her dream was to get a job in Woolworths and as for music, she probably had sexual fantasies about Max Bygraves. Then one morning she comes in and she's got the lot. Black lace, black fishnets, crosses, hair like a fucking cormorant – Mrs Willis took one look at her and said wash all that off your face, Theresa. Theresa goes out the room, defiant, and she looks at me. Gives me a look like we're in the same gang. It was sickening.

KEVIN: Everywhere it's Goth this and Goth that. There were adverts in the back of the NME – "Get your authentic Goth gear." You could buy upside-down crucifixes in Carnaby Street. Little kids in the park dressed like the fucking Munsters. Just awful.

ANDREW: I knew it was over when I saw a bunch of girls walking down the street, arm in arm, and they were chanting. No, I'm not going to say it, fuck off.

JOHN: "We are the Goths, we are the Goths, we are we are we are the Goths!"

JULIE: It's like wearing a cloak that only you can see. You and the others like you. You're protected from the rest of the world. Parents, teachers, they can tell you what to do, but they can't get inside the cloak. They don't even know about it. But if too many people join in – the cloak gets torn. That's deep, isn't it?

KEVIN: Something had to give. Which is how Brighton happened.

ANDREW: Bank Holiday Monday, everyone's going to Brighton. I mean, come on. Brighton. Kiss-Me-Quick hats and candyfloss. About as Goth as Andy Pandy.

JULIE: I didn't want to go.

JOHN: I really wanted to go. All my mates were going. It was gonna be a laugh.

KEVIN: To this day, I don't know why I went.

ANDREW: I went because I had a feeling. I just had a feeling that this was it. The final day. Do you know what I mean?

JULIE: I went because everyone else was going. I was a sheep. And that's not what it was about. It was about being an individual. And you can't be an individual if you're doing the same as everyone else. But I went.

JOHN: We saw the first bikes as we were coming out of the station.

KEVIN: Just greasers, sat there, staring at us. Chewing gum like apes.

ANDREW: I just stared back. Most of them looked away then. I can really stare when I want to. It's not exactly magick but it works.

JULIE: Most of us were nervous. You would be with all those stupid greasers looking at you. But no-one let it show. I'm proud of that.

JOHN: We didn't really know where we were going. We just headed for the beach. Sat there on the pebbles in the drizzle. I think I bought some chips.

JULIE: Then they started coming.

ANDREW: They drove their stupid bikes onto the beach like wankers. Got off, started walking towards us.

KEVIN: Most of them were unarmed. Some had wrenches. I definitely saw a knife.

JOHN: I mean, we're peaceful. We don't go out tooled up. We don't get drunk and fight on terraces. We just keep to ourselves.

KEVIN: We had nothing.

ANDREW: I knew some spells.

JULIE: I was scared, I admit it. But there was nowhere to go. Goths don't swim, know what I mean.

KEVIN: They were surrounding us. Like a fucking wagon train in a cowboy film.

JOHN: I picked up some big pebbles, and I saw other kids doing the same.

KEVIN: And then one of them, out of nowhere, pulls out a sword.

JOHN: I never saw a sword.

ANDREW: It was the sword that make me do it. I couldn't remember the words at first and I garbled it. Then it came. All in a rush it came.

JULIE: There was this kid next to me. He was a face, I didn't know his name. Beaky nose, eyes that were always staring. And he was shouting.

KEVIN: I couldn't understand what he was saying. I thought he was German or something.

JOHN: He was shouting and he was walking towards them.

JULIE: One of the greasers ran at him, with a spanner in his fist. And –

JOHN: He just –

KEVIN: “Boom!”

JOHN: He just exploded.

JULIE: All his greaser mates were covered in blood and bits of skin.

KEVIN: I remember one of his eyeballs landed next to me. An actual eyeball.

ANDREW: My head hurt. But inside me there was more. I knew there was more. I couldn't stop it.

JULIE: Have you ever seen six people explode? It's fucking weird. They all went off at once like the fireworks.

KEVIN: The police finally got off their arses and waded in. After it was over, naturally.

ANDREW: They handcuffed me and took me to the cells. But what could they charge me with? I literally didn't lay a finger on anyone.

KEVIN: After that, there was no more bother.

JULIE: People leave us alone. Of course, there's less of us, which is a bonus.

JOHN: I've got two tattoos. I was scared shitless about getting them done but that just shows you how important they are.

KEVIN: I suppose you'd call me a straight now. I got a job, started wearing a suit and tie. Mister Suburban, that's me.

JOHN: This one says AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY I WAS THERE.

ANDREW: I haven't changed. How can I? I can only go deeper.

JOHN: And this one says, “Goth Til I Die.” Because that's what I am. That's who I am.

DAVID QUANTICK