

Ron Dalmer wasn't your typical junkie. He certainly wasn't hooked. And he wasn't even sure if he liked the stuff. But the buzz of scoring, boasting to his mates and the thrill of doing something illegal was how he got his kicks.

"Did you get any, then?" asked Dazza impatiently.

"Nah - he wasn't home." Dazza looked disappointed.

"What do we do now? D'you know anyone else?"

"Maybe."

Ron had been hanging out with students ever since he left university with a fairly ordinary degree in history of art. Of course, he couldn't get a job with those qualifications, nor did he want to. He had discovered that life had much more to offer than Rembrandt or Moore. Crystal Meth. That was his Mona Lisa. And its smile was far more enigmatic.

Although he graduated nearly ten years ago, he still rented a small flat just off Dartborough road, in Walcombe. He got on well with his landlord, Mr. Singh, because Ron was his 'enforcer'. If any of his tenants were late with their rent, he'd get Ron to go round there and have a word. But Ron wasn't a hardman - he was their ice man - if they didn't pay the rent on time, there'd be no drugs. They would even come out of hiding from behind the sofa when he came round. It made sense to be nice to Ron. So, although Mr. Singh wasn't too sure about the company he kept, the rent was paid and so was the mortgage, and there were no visible signs that the house was slowly being destroyed brick by brick.