

# **"WHITE VAN MAN"**

**by**

**Kevin Fegan**

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**CAST: 2 male 2 female**

### **CHARACTERS**

**Driver**

**Matey**

**Wife**

**Woman**

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DRIVER AND MATEY IN VAN, APPROACHING  
BARROW.

DRIVER Did you say you'd been here before?

MATEY I didn't say.

DRIVER My missus says, it's me what put the "wheel" back  
into Barrow.

MATEY I take it you've been delivering here a long time then?

DRIVER If it's Thursday, it's Barrow.

MATEY What's with the Safari Park?

DRIVER There's only Barrow could have pink rhinos.

MATEY Why does the Lake District need to look like Africa?

DRIVER This by-pass is the best thing that's happened to  
Barrow.

MATEY I think the Wembley cup-final might have the edge.

DRIVER How come you remember that?

MATEY I thought we did a drop at that tissue factory?

DRIVER We pick it up on the way back.

MATEY Why do we deliver tissues to a tissue factory?

DRIVER I know all the short-cuts.

(THROWING HIM THE PAPERWORK) I've got this  
route down to a fine art.

MATEY All the way from Manchester, when they could just chuck a few boxes across the shop-floor.

DRIVER Don't knock it, keeps us in business. Fastest growing business in Britain, us.

MATEY What? Catering supplies?

DRIVER Road deliveries. This is the age of the "White Van Man".

(SHOUTING OUT THE WINDOW) Oi! You could get a double-decker bus through there. Learn to drive, will you?

MATEY You sure this is the right way?

DRIVER Hey, who's driving? I know this town like the back of me hand.

MATEY So why are we going the wrong way down a one-way street?

DRIVER (HALTS ABRUPTLY) Shit, what's going on? I don't believe it, they've changed the direction of the traffic again.

(LOOKING AROUND AND SHOUTING AT ANOTHER DRIVER AS HE REVERSES) What's up with you? Never made a mistake before?

(TO MATEY) That's just great, that is. They've only gone and cocked-up me route, haven't they?

(SHOUTING AGAIN AS HE SCREECHES AWAY  
CAUSING ANOTHER DRIVER TO BRAKE HARD)

You shouldn't be driving so fast then, should you?

MATEY TAKES THE MOBILE PHONE AND DIALS.

DRIVER                   What you up to?

MATEY                   I'm phoning that number on the back of the van.

DRIVER                   What number?

MATEY                   You know: "If this van is being driven discourteously,  
please phone – "

DRIVER                   (SNATCHING THE MOBILE) Give that here.

MATEY LAUGHS.

MATEY                   Do you know this street?

DRIVER                   I've never needed to know this street.

More diversions than a virgin's knickers.

MATEY                   We're on Walney.

DRIVER                   We don't want to be on Walney. How did we get on  
Walney?

MATEY                   Are we lost?

DRIVER                   We're not lost.

MATEY                   We just don't know where we are. What's that?

DRIVER                   It's the sea, dickhead.

MATEY                   Can't be right that.

DRIVER                   That's it, I've had it.

MATEY What now?

DRIVER Ice-cream.

MATEY What?

DRIVER Ice-cream. If I'm at the seaside, I'm having a bloody ice-cream.

MATEY Sounds good to me.

THEY GET OUT OF THE VAN, COLLECT THEIR ICE-CREAMS AND SETTLE DOWN BY THE SEA. MEANWHILE, IN MANCHESTER, THE DRIVER'S WIFE (WHO HAS ONLY RECENTLY LEFT HIM) IS ENJOYING SHOPPING IN THE LOCAL SUPERMARKET.

WIFE Do you know, I can't tell you what a joy it is to shop for myself. There was never any pleasing him. If I gave him garden peas, he wanted processed. He had no appreciation of food. I hated cooking for him. He'd say things like -

DRIVER I only eat because I have to.

WIFE How come men don't enjoy food like women? How much a man enjoys his food is a measure of how much he enjoys life. Mind you, the junk food he used to eat, it's no wonder he had no respect for it. I love going out for a meal; but he'd always have to

spoil it. First, he'd moan about the cost; then he'd moan about the menu –

DRIVER I don't like seafood.

WIFE How can you live on an island and not like seafood? Can you imagine a fisherman, in olden times, not eating his catch? Men have lost the plot when it comes to food. Then he'd shovel it down his neck like it was a race.

DRIVER When I was a lad, we had to eat us dinner quick or me dad would be there with his fork, stealing it off your plate -

WIFE Why do dad's do that sort of thing?  
Worst of all, he eats with his mouth open.

DRIVER One day, she got up from the dinner table and says -

WIFE I can't stand the way you eat any more, I'm leaving you.

DRIVER And off she went.

MATEY Sorry, mate, I didn't realise your missus had left you.

DRIVER Best thing that ever happened to me.

MATEY You don't really mean that.

DRIVER Don't I?

MATEY Maybe you weren't suited?

DRIVER Yeah, I'm a man and she's a woman.

MATEY                    They don't appreciate us – they're like people who live by the sea, they take it for granted.

WIFE                     Women are from Venus, men are from Mars.

DRIVER                 I'd say, men are from the planet "Penis", myself.

WIFE                     Women are like waves.

DRIVER                 The only time a woman is like a wave, is when she "waves" goodbye and fucks off with the kids.

WIFE                     It was like living with another baby: I had to support him emotionally all the time.

DRIVER                 I gave her financial support. She should give me emotional support, otherwise what am I paying her for?

MATEY                  It's much harder when kids are involved.

DRIVER                 My youngest girl is 10. She tried to stop me seeing her.

MATEY                  It's not right, that.

WIFE                     I had to get the police onto him, he kept harrasing me.

DRIVER                 I went 'round to try and get her back. I was nice to her, at first.

WIFE                     He said, what about one last shag?

DRIVER                 The mean bitch wouldn't even agree to that.

WIFE                     Like I was an old motorbike he was having to part



with or something.

DRIVER She used to like me talking dirty.

WIFE Timing was never one of his strong points.

DRIVER We had great sex.

WIFE He had great sex.

DRIVER I thought she liked it rough.

WIFE If I ever tried to tie him up, he'd go mad.

DRIVER So when I went 'round to fetch her back, it came natural to restrain her. I only slapped her once.

WIFE He blacked my eye.

DRIVER I went back later with a note, you know, by way of an apology. I shoved it through the letter-box. That's when the police dragged me off.

WIFE I went to the doctors.

DRIVER They threw me in a cell.

WIFE I wasn't badly injured; it's the fact that he could do that to me.

DRIVER At least she didn't press charges.

WIFE I read his letter when I got back. I don't understand men.

EXIT WIFE.

MATEY Debenhams.

DRIVER Before 10.00am - what time is it?

MATEY 9.45am.

DRIVER Oh shit, we're running late.  
(JUMPING BACK INTO THE LORRY) Get in the lorry.

MATEY (FOLLOWING HIM) It's a van.

DRIVER Lorry.

MATEY Box van.

DRIVER It's a seven-and-a-half tonner.

MATEY Van.

DRIVER Truck.

MATEY It's not Heavy Goods.

DRIVER Don't matter, it's still a truck.

MATEY You drive it on a normal licence.

DRIVER I'm not bothered as long as I can sit up here and look down at the chicks in their cars.

MATEY I had noticed.

DRIVER Chick's call it a truck, so it's a truck. I can see right down their tops and watch their skirts rise up when they're riding the clutch.

MATEY Hey, no hand-relief while I'm here.

DRIVER Everybody gets horny, driving. Especially women, they love it.

MATEY Wishful thinking.

DRIVER It's a power thing for women, being in control.

MATEY (EGGING HIM ON) And there's a lot more women got cars nowadays.

DRIVER That's where society's got it all wrong, giving women too much of a say.

MATEY Before you know it, they want their independence.  
Sorry, mate, that was a bit close to home.

DRIVER At least we don't have to put up with many "white van women" – the job's too physical for them.

MATEY Paper cups and tissues?

DRIVER Some of these boxes are pretty heavy; you wait til the end of the day, we'll see who thinks it's easy.

VAN STOPS. THEY JUMP OUT.

(PASSING HIM THE PAPERWORK) While I'm doing Debenhams, you nip across to the bingo. Tell them you're with me and you'll get free breakfast - mine's a bacon butty and black coffee. I'll join you when I've done. And no feeding your face until you've unloaded.

EXIT DRIVER.

ENTER YOUNG WOMAN AT THE BINGO LOADING BAY. SHE IS CHECKING STOCK. SHE IS AWARE OF THE DELIVERY BUT HAS HER BACK TO

MATEY WHILE SHE GETS ON WITH HER WORK.

HE RECOGNISES HER VOICE.

WOMAN Don't put anything away until I've checked the delivery. And don't try and pull any of your usual tricks, I know what you're like.

MATEY (APPROACHING HER FROM BEHIND) I know what I would like.

WOMAN (TURNING) You cheeky little - Matey?

MATEY Two bacon butties.

WOMAN What you doing here?

MATEY One black coffee and one white tea.

WOMAN You're not working for these cowboys?

MATEY Can't keep me away.

WOMAN You still in Manchester?

MATEY Yeah, except on Thursdays. From now on, if it's Thursday, it's Barrow.

WOMAN I can't believe it. You left in a bit of a hurry, didn't you?

MATEY I told you I was going.

WOMAN Yeah, well, lots of people 'round here say that.

MATEY I did it.

WOMAN Has it worked out for you?

MATEY I'm doing just fine.

WOMAN Married?

MATEY Living with someone.

WOMAN Kids?

MATEY Little boy - eighteen months.

WOMAN Happy then?

MATEY Yeah. You?

WOMAN Divorced.

MATEY Kids?

WOMAN Little girl, not so toddler; another on the way.

MATEY You don't look pregnant.

WOMAN I feel it.

MATEY Are you with the dad?

WOMAN Dads. No. Bit of a mistake - both of them.

MATEY Babies or the fathers?

WOMAN Fathers. I love babies.

MATEY What happened?

WOMAN The first one left me.

MATEY It seems to be the national pastime.

WOMAN Ran off with another woman.

MATEY The bitch.

WOMAN She can have him, he was a loser. He doesn't even bother seeing his own daughter.

MATEY I don't know how guys can do that?

WOMAN He's got kids all over the place. You know the sort: too handsome, goes to their head. I should have known better. He'll wake up one day, when he's a wrinklie.

MATEY And this one?

WOMAN He doesn't know.

MATEY Why haven't you told him?

WOMAN He's a sailor.

MATEY You could still tell him.

WOMAN He lives in Somalia.

MATEY Where?

WOMAN Africa.

MATEY What are you like? You know how to pick 'em, don't you?

WOMAN I do. I had the best night of my life.

MATEY I don't know how women can do that?

WOMAN What, sleep with a drop-dead gorgeous black man?

MATEY Have a baby and not bother about the dad?

WOMAN We all make little mistakes.

MATEY Little?

WOMAN I kicked you into touch, didn't I?

MATEY Was that a mistake?

WOMAN Is that why you left town - because of me?

MATEY Don't flatter yourself.

WOMAN You came 'round to ask me why I'd dumped you.

MATEY I waited a few days first, trying to be cool about it.  
I still don't know why you left me?

WOMAN Blokes never understand, do they?

MATEY "Too nice for me," that's what you said.

WOMAN See what I mean, you don't understand, do you?

MATEY No.  
My partner doesn't think I'm too nice.

WOMAN What does she think?

MATEY When we had a baby, I was buzzing. I was looking for people to bump into, to tell them I was a dad. I wanted to beat my chest like a gorilla. Before you know it, you're pissed. I thought she was all right, she'd got everything she needed. I bought a barrow-load of presents for her and the babe.

WOMAN Did you leave her at the hospital?

MATEY I was there for the birth.

WOMAN It's afterwards. It's those first twenty-four hours when a woman is vulnerable, that's when you really need your fella.

MATEY The baby fell seriously ill – I wasn't there for her.

WOMAN Can she not forgive you, is that it?

DRIVER RETURNS.

DRIVER Oh aye, what's going on here then? All very cosy.

WOMAN Oh, it's you.

DRIVER Thanks very much.

WOMAN I knew it couldn't last.

DRIVER You love my smiley little face, don't you?

MATEY Fancies himself, dunt he?

DRIVER (TO MATEY) I can see I'm going to have to get a lead for you. (TO WOMAN) Has he been bothering you?

WOMAN We were fine 'til you showed up.

DRIVER He doesn't mess about, does he? Straight in there for the meat.

WOMAN Do you mind? This i'n't a cattle market.

DRIVER You can't keep a good lad down. A bit of skirt and he's in there.

WOMAN We were discussing old times.

DRIVER What, you and him, old flames?

MATEY We go back a long way.

DRIVER (TO WOMAN) You from Manchester then?

WOMAN Barrow.

DRIVER (TO MATEY) You never said you was from 'round here?

MATEY You never asked.



DRIVER Did you let us get lost this morning on purpose?

MATEY Everything's changed, it's a long while since I've been here.

WOMAN Not everything.

DRIVER Where's my butty then, if we're being all lovey-dovey?

WOMAN You're a cheeky git.

DRIVER Don't forget the coffee.

SHE LEAVES.

You're a dark horse, you.

MATEY Small world.

DRIVER I think she fancies me.

MATEY You what?

DRIVER Don't be fooled by the sharp tongue. They like men to treat them rotten, that sort.

MATEY Bollocks.

DRIVER You trying to get back in there, then?

MATEY I've got a family.

DRIVER Never mind family, this could spice up your Thursdays.

WOMAN RETURNS.

WOMAN Here, watch it don't burn your tongue, it's been in the microwave.

DRIVER                    You could always kiss it better, love.

WOMAN                    Please, you're putting me off my food.

MATEY                    What time do you knock off?

WOMAN                    Four o'clock.

MATEY                    We'll pick you up.

DRIVER                    Hey, this isn't a bloody taxi.

MATEY                    Don't mind him.

DRIVER                    We have to be back at the depot before half-six or  
they'll go ballistic at the warehouse.

MATEY                    We can make it: we'll be away by half-four.

DRIVER                    We're behind as it is.

MATEY                    I'll work faster.

WOMAN                    Don't let me drop you in it.

                              MATEY TAKES DRIVER ASIDE.

MATEY                    Look, this is unfinished business.

DRIVER                    Yeah, that sounds like a woman to me.

MATEY                    I'd do the same for you.

DRIVER                    Would you?

MATEY                    If it was important.

                              (TO WOMAN) Four o'clock.

                              MATEY AND DRIVER CLIMB BACK INTO THE VAN.

DRIVER                    You staying the night?

MATEY                    Give over.

DRIVER I'll cover for you.

MATEY What would I tell me partner?

DRIVER Partner? What kind of a word is that for someone you exchange bodily fluids with?

MATEY You're gross.

DRIVER She's your "mate".

MATEY I thought we were mates?

DRIVER I'm talking animal mate: a raw, passionate, fleshy, steamy mate.

MATEY I get the picture.

DRIVER Tell her it's a stop-over on a Thursday.

MATEY She's not stupid, she knows it's not long-distance.

DRIVER You'll be telling me next you're in love.

MATEY I don't ever see us splitting up. We're faithful to each other and we don't tell lies. We don't argue, well, not properly; neither of us lose our temper. And we have a beautiful son.

DRIVER There must be things you don't like about her.

MATEY No.

DRIVER Don't give me that, all women are weird. Come on, stop making out like you've got the perfect relationship.

MATEY I never said that.

DRIVER   So give me an example of something you don't like about her?

MATEY   I suppose there is one thing: she won't say my name.

DRIVER   What, when you're at it, like?

MATEY   Yeah. I like a woman to say my name.

DRIVER   That's 'cause she's thinking of somebody else.

MATEY   Bollocks.

DRIVER   It's a well-known fact -

MATEY   Here we go -

DRIVER   Women fantasise more than men during sex. They're not thinking about us, they're busy fantasising about some other geezer or some other intimate situation. I mean, we're not like that, are we? We're turned on by a bit of juicy flesh; let's have it real, keep the fantasies for when you're spanking the monkey.

MATEY   I dunno about that. I reckon there's plenty of blokes thinking about other birds instead of their missus.

DRIVER   If you'd seen mine, you'd know why.

MATEY   You're not exactly the body beautiful yourself.

DRIVER   Anyway, take it from an old slag like me, the trick is to get your woman fired up first, then just before she explodes, make her say your name - that way, she won't just say it, she'll squeal it.

MATEY TAKES OUT A PHOTO FROM HIS  
WALLET. Is that her?

MATEY That's me boy.

DRIVER I love my kids.

MATEY Yeah, kids are good.

DRIVER Shame they have to grow up like us.

DRIVER TAKES A PRESS CLIPPING FROM  
MATEY'S WALLET.

What's all this? (READING) 1990 - F.A. Amateur Cup  
- Barrow versus Leek.

MATEY I was the youngest player on the pitch.

DRIVER Says here, you were a sub.

MATEY I still played. I came on in the second half.

DRIVER You didn't just live here, did you? You grew up here?

MATEY Yeah.

DRIVER Don't know why you didn't tell me?

MATEY No reason.

DRIVER Did you come back here deliberately?

MATEY What for?

DRIVER Maybe looking for that bird from the bingo?

MATEY No.

DRIVER You're doing plenty of running 'round after her.

MATEY I'm just being considerate.

DRIVER                         That won't get you nowhere. We're not put on earth to please women.

MATEY                         No, but you think they're here to please us?

DRIVER                         I never said that. They please themselves. We should do the same. You younger guys are too soft.

MATEY                         Being hard didn't exactly work for you, did it? Look at your marriage.

DRIVER                         Bloody feminism, that's the problem.

MATEY                         Women expect us to be a bit more considerate, that's all.

DRIVER                         Aye, when it suits them. They're always on about how we don't understand them; but how much do they understand us, eh?

MATEY                         Hospital.

DRIVER                         What?

MATEY                         You've missed the turning into the hospital.

DRIVER                         Oh yeah.

                                     HE TURNS VIOLENTLY.

MATEY                         You can't go down here, it's not wide enough.

DRIVER                         Rubbish, you could drive a low-loader through here.

                                     THERE IS A CRASH FOLLOWED BY A SCRAPING NOISE.

MATEY                                You've taken out his wing-mirror.

DRIVER                                His car's too wide.

MATEY                                What do you mean "his car's too wide"? He's parked  
up.

DRIVER                                Yeah, well, he shouldn't park here, the road's too  
narrow.

MATEY                                We're not supposed to come this way, it's for patients  
not deliveries.

DRIVER                                That's typical, isn't it? Whoever designs these places  
wants locking up.

MATEY                                Aren't you going to stop?

DRIVER                                What for?

MATEY                                Leave a note or something.

DRIVER                                Get real. Do you know how much a wing mirror is for  
a Mercedes Sports?

MATEY                                If that big guy over there's the owner, I'd say you  
were about to extend your visit to this hospital.

MATEY JUMPS DOWN AND RUNS OFF. DRIVER  
SCREECHES AWAY.

DRIVER SLUMPS ON HIS WHEEL. MEANWHILE  
HIS WIFE IS AT THE GYM, EXERCISING.

WIFE                                    I'm making a fresh start and it feels good. I've joined  
a private gym, getting my body back into shape.

Spending time and money on myself for a change.

DRIVER

How do I start again, at my age? I don't know what to do any more without her and the kids. I feel about as useful as an ashtray on a motorbike.

DRIVER TURNS TO LOOK AT HER.

DRIVER

Talk to me.

WIFE

We've never been able to talk.

DRIVER

That's not true.

WIFE

I'm a different person.

DRIVER

I've changed as well.

WIFE

Have you? You've got a dead plant on your windowsill. I'd never do that. Not only do you let it die, you just leave it there.

DRIVER

Can't says I've noticed.

WIFE

Don't you think it might create a slightly negative vibe in the house?

DRIVER

"Negative vibe" – is that how your hippy boyfriend talks?

WIFE

I talk for myself now. I was in your shadow for too long.

DRIVER

Whose fault was that?

WIFE

I've discovered there is light at the centre of my being.



DRIVER I prefer the dark.

WIFE That's because there's darkness at the centre of yours.

DRIVER That's me arse.

WIFE See? There's no talking to you.

DRIVER This old hippy's filling you full of shit. I can be light and fluffy, if you want me to be. You could grow cannabis under my bushel.

WIFE He's not a hippy. You're looking for someone to blame.

DRIVER No, I've got you.

WIFE I'm trying to get on with me life, if only you'd let me.

THEY TURN AWAY FROM EACH OTHER.

DRIVER She haunts me. Sometimes, I can hear her in the kitchen, throwing crockery across the room. There's all these spices in the cupboard, I don't know what to do with. I keep finding strands of her hair in the bedroom. I've tried putting everything of hers in the attic; but she won't lie down. She wanders around the house like the undead. I'm going to have to burn everything to get rid of her.

WIFE I've rented a flat nearer school. I thought he might

have let us have the house, you know, with me looking after the kids.

DRIVER She wanted me to make myself homeless as well as losing me wife and family. Like I'm not enough of a sadbastard already.

WIFE I've got meself a little job, cleaning. It's not much but it keeps us going.

DRIVER I took a jigsaw to the sofa, chopped it up into little pieces. I had to. I could still see her, sat with me watching telly. Some things are just too sentimental. I thought, that'll show her. She'll see how much I love her and she'll come running back.

WIFE I've met this lovely man. He's a bit older than me; but he's very casual and he's got this intelligent shock of grey hair. And he's gentle and he buys me music and books and he makes me feel like a woman, not some kind of "creature". There's a whole side of me, even I don't know. My life is my own again, that's the important thing.

DRIVER I've tried sending her flowers, I've tried threatening to kill her, I've asked her to come on a second honeymoon, I've done everything I can think of. Not a letter, not a phone call. It's the shock of the

relationship going from everything to nothing. I'm falling too fast. I don't know if I can survive this. I've hit rock bottom and I'm in bits.

MATEY PULLS DRIVER FROM VAN.

MATEY Snap out of it – they've had faster deliveries on maternity.

DRIVER I've had enough.

MATEY Fine. You just sit there pulling your plonker and I'll do all the work, shall I?

DRIVER I've made up my mind.

MATEY Can you make up your mind after we've unloaded?

DRIVER What do I care if the hospital gets its black bin-liners or not?

MATEY You're kiddin' me – what they gonna do for body-bags?

Joke.

DRIVER There's no point any more.

MATEY Come on, there's only a few drops left.

DRIVER Let's take the van back.

MATEY Truck.

DRIVER It's a bloody hearse as far as I'm concerned.

MATEY Don't get all morbid on me.

DRIVER You go ahead if you want, I'm going for a pint.

MATEY                                  You can't just quit. That's what they want.

DRIVER                                 What do you mean?

MATEY                                 Why do you think they sent me along to learn the route?

DRIVER                                 If ever I'm taken sick or on holiday –

MATEY                                 Wrong.

DRIVER                                 They're looking to replace me? With you, is that what you're saying?

MATEY                                 'Fraid so.

DRIVER                                 You bastard, you never let on.

MATEY                                 I've let on too much as it is. If you won't retire they're planning to "ease you out" later in the year.

DRIVER                                 Retire? I'm only 52.

MATEY                                 So don't give it them on a plate.

DRIVER                                 This job's all I've got in the world now.

MATEY                                 Take them to court – industrial tribunal.

DRIVER                                 There's only so much I can take.

MATEY                                 You've got rights.

DRIVER                                 I'd sooner trash their poxy deliveries.

    HE SMASHES UP THE GOODS. MATEY STOPS HIM.

MATEY                                 No, not that way. Go and have your pint, I'll finish off. Go on, I'll pick you up later.

EXIT DRIVER.

WOMAN CLIMBS INTO THE VAN BESIDE MATEY.

WOMAN

Promoted already?

MATEY

Don't ask.

WOMAN

He's not run off with another delivery man, has he?

MATEY

I wish he had.

WOMAN

Well I, for one, won't miss him.

MATEY

He's having a tough time.

WOMAN

He's a slimeball.

MATEY

Do you fancy him?

WOMAN

Please: give me some credit.

MATEY

Do you like all your men to be bastards?

WOMAN

What's he been saying?

MATEY

I'm asking.

WOMAN

Maybe I should walk home?

MATEY

What's the matter? Don't you like it when I'm not  
"nice"?

WOMAN

You're missing the point.

MATEY

Oh, there is a point, after all?

WOMAN

What is it you need to know?

MATEY

You can start by telling me what you meant when you  
sacked me for being "too nice"?

WOMAN

You were too...gentle.

MATEY Gentle? Gentle with what? Your jewellery? The furniture?

Your cat?

WOMAN In the bedroom, mainly. I was fed up doing all the running.

MATEY I thought you said you liked to dominate?

WOMAN Sometimes I want to be dominated.

MATEY I used to make you come.

WOMAN Yeah, you were very patient.

MATEY You didn't have a clue how to touch me. Women expect us to stick at it, even when your arm's dropping off; yet you won't give us the same in return. You think it's all over in a flash for us.

WOMAN That's more like it. This is the passion I knew you had; but you never showed it.

MATEY I could show you passion, don't you worry.

WOMAN I saw it on the football field; I never saw it between us.

MATEY I put you on a pedestal.

WOMAN I didn't want to be on a pedestal.

MATEY No, you'd rather be treated like a slut.

WOMAN Grow up. Why is it always either/or for men? Is that how you treat your partner?

MATEY She thinks I should be more understanding.

WOMAN About the baby?

MATEY She's obsessed with him. She 's got no time for me.

WOMAN It's the baby blues.

MATEY I've told her to get a baby-sitter so we can go out; but she won't leave him.

WOMAN It can take a couple of years for your hormones to settle down.

MATEY I help her out. I change nappies. I get up in the middle of the night sometimes.

WOMAN Take her away on holiday.

MATEY She says she hates being dependent on me; but she won't go back to work.

WOMAN Maybe she wants to be a full-time mum. I wish I didn't have to go out to work.

MATEY I've told her I'll provide for us; but she can't have it both ways.

WOMAN Then the problem must be you, not your child.

MATEY Why isn't giving everything to someone enough? I love her. I love our son. I go out to work for us as a family. I know I can be difficult to live with; but who isn't? I do the best I can, why isn't that enough?

WOMAN You'd best take me home, Matey.

MATEY I don't even know where you live?

WOMAN Walney Island.

MATEY Why Walney?

WOMAN It's by the sea.

MATEY I'd like to live by the sea.

WOMAN Why don't you?

MATEY Live with you?

WOMAN Live "near" me.

MATEY Don't tell me: you're used to being independent?

That's all women seem bothered about. That and having kids to dads they don't want to live with.

WOMAN That's too simplistic and you know it.

MATEY We should have had a kid.

WOMAN We still could.

MATEY How can you say that while you're carrying someone else's baby?

WOMAN Do you love me?

MATEY Is it enough to love someone?

WOMAN I could love you.

MATEY I don't know if I could leave my family.

WOMAN I didn't ask you that.

MEANWHILE THE DRIVER IS PISSED UP AND



RANTING AT THE SEA.

DRIVER

Come on you bastards, what else can you throw at me? I'm the nowhere man: no missus, no family, no job – a nobody. Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide.

Why is the sea so quiet all of a sudden?

(ADDRESSING THE SEA) Nothing to say for yourself? Brooding under the moon like some demented whore. What are you waiting for? You're the one with all the power, not me. Come on, wash me away with one of your spectacular tidal waves. Launch me in some beautiful ocean-going liner, take me on a pleasure cruise. And, just when I'm getting used to the comfort and joy, take me to your deepest point and smash the ship to pieces, leave me clinging to the debris, shivering to death in the freezing cold then cast me away on some desert island, a shipwreck of a man.

HE COLLAPSES IN A HEAP.

THE VAN STOPS BY THE SEA.

WOMAN

The waves are calm. Walk with me by the sea.

SHE TAKES MATEY BY THE HAND.

MATEY

It's like it's breathing.

WOMAN

Sometimes it roars.

MATEY                                      Should we trust the sea?

WOMAN                                     Do you have a choice?

MATEY                                     I suppose not. We have to live with it.

WOMAN                                     Hold me.

  THEY EMBRACE.

  This feels good.

MATEY                                     None of it makes sense.

WOMAN                                     It's not meant to. Feelings aren't thoughts.

  THEY BREAK THEIR EMBRACE.

  I'll see you next Thursday.

MATEY                                     I'd like that.

  EXIT WOMAN.

  MATEY NOTICES DRIVER. HE APPROACHES AND

  HELPS HIM TO SIT UP.

MATEY                                     Let me take you home.

DRIVER                                     I'm going nowhere with you.

MATEY                                     You can't stay here.

DRIVER                                     Why not? There's nothing for me back there.

MATEY                                     I'll drop you off first and take the van back later; I'll

  tell them you were ill.

DRIVER                                     They can shove their bloody van, I hate the job.

  You're welcome to it.

MATEY                                     I'm not taking your job off you; I'll quit.

DRIVER                                    They want you, that's all there is to it. I'm not staying where I'm not wanted.

MATEY                                    Sleep it off, you'll feel different in the morning.

DRIVER                                    I'm staying in Barrow.

MATEY                                    What about your kids?

DRIVER                                    I'll see them at weekends. I can drive down and pick them up, it's not far.

MATEY                                    I'm not leaving you like this.

DRIVER                                    I know what I'm doing. Go on, bugger off, sort out your own shit.

MATEY                                    Do you really want to live here?

DRIVER                                    I've never been more certain.

MATEY                                    I couldn't wait to get away from this town.

DRIVER                                    Do you think you did get away?

MATEY                                    What will you do?

DRIVER                                    Chase women, what else?

MATEY                                    What are you like?

DRIVER                                    I'm like a man, that's what I'm like.

PLAY ENDS

K.F.