

# PREGNANT

*"Both their lives were over, for good"*

*"I'm pregnant" Carrie announced nervously as she sat on the sofa in front of the open fire. Andrew, who sat on the arm of the sofa, looked at her before turning away. He blinked. He could not believe it. PREGNANT! I am going to be a father. Carrie and I are going to be parents, at 16! Oh god!*

He did not need this right now.

Carrie watched Andrew's face carefully. She knew he was not taking the news very well. Why should he? Andrew and Carrie were still at school, hopes of passing their forthcoming GCSE's. Carrie had made plans to go to college to study English and Andrew hoped to do the same, only with I.T. There is no hope of them fulfilling their plans now. They are trapped!

Both their lives and future were over for good.

Carrie called out Andrew's name. He did not answer. Carrie repeated herself, this time whispering as if it was her last breath in her body. Andrew again did not respond. Instead he turned and stared at her. His light blue eyes suddenly changed to a deeper shade of blue, his face darkened against the roaring flames of the open fire. Andrew's hair, black as the ace of spades, created a different atmosphere. It was as if Andrew had become this dark figure that Carrie did not know. Carrie sat back; she did not like what she saw.

Finally Andrew spoke *"What."* he replied bitterly

Carrie's heart sank; she did not like the way he responded. Does that answer my question? She thought. It was as if she was dying from an incurable disease, Andrew was the only cure and he was not prepared to save her. Carrie got the impression that Andrew was far from pleased with her news and did not want to rush out and buy a box of nappies. Carrie suddenly got a gut feeling Andrew did not want any part of their child. Although he had not said much, she considered the possibility of self-supporting their child very high.

If there was a deep, dark and dirty hole present in that lounge that evening. Carrie would have gladly jumped right in it. Nothing was going to be easy from now on. She had hoped so much for Andrew's support as she knew her father would turn his back on her. Carrie had promised on a number of occasions that she would not get pregnant before the age of 18. She can still remember when her sister Yvonne fell pregnant at 14; her father threw her out onto the street. Her mother was heartbroken, but could not undermine her husband's authority. Carrie can still hear her sister's screams as her father pushed her out of the front door. She had never seen him so angry. Yvonne was helpless; Carrie had tried to help her but was told to stay out of it. Carrie swallowed hard, she knew she was going to be next. *'Looks like a case of history repeating itself'*

Tears streamed down Carrie's face as she stared into the burning fire. How am I supposed to cope? I'm only 16! I don't want this responsibility to face on my own. Why can't Andrew be supportive? Is my pregnancy such terrible news? Why won't he understand I want him to be a part of our baby's life? Why does everything have to be so difficult and how am I going to tell Mum and Dad? If I tell dad he will throw me out and blame me for getting myself pregnant. I'll be forced to raise my child alone, oh my god I don't want that to happen to me. Despite all the anguish, fear and regret that Carrie was feeling she was not sure if she wanted to terminate the child. Carrie thought having an abortion was an easy way out; she did not want to sacrifice her child for herself.

Andrew sat in silence, staring into space. What is happening? What is happening? I can't believe Carrie has done this to me, I thought she cared. Why has she got herself into his mess and trying to drag me into it? I mean, she is not the most sensible person in the world, but she has got sense. Well, I

thought she had. I assumed she was taking contraception, I thought she would be sensible enough to consider me. How could she do this to me? I had my whole life ahead of me and her selfishness has just taken any chance away of my living it. I thought Carrie cared about me; obviously she was just out for herself and having this child.

Andrew spoke:

Andrew could not bear to look at her face “What are you going to do about all this?” he asked still looking away from her.

Carrie looked at Andrew “Me?” The words rang in her head like an old school bell, ringing and ringing. “What about you?”

“*You’re* the one who has to deal with *it*” he retorted, “I’m not the one who’s gone and got pregnant”

The words *you’re* and *it* burned Carrie’s inside like a candle on a dark night, she ignored the pain. “What do you mean? Aren’t you going to help me?” Carrie was asking Andrew questions, which she already knew the answers.

Andrew gave a cold look, how could Carrie think I want any thing to do with this child? “No. I’m not gonna help you. This pregnancy is your problem, not mine” he hissed.

Carrie’s heart sank; it sank so low that she could feel it moving down her body. Carrie could have burst into tears, begged for Andrew’s reconciliation until morning. Instead Carrie chose to hold in all her emotions until later. Carrie stood. I’ve gotta be strong, she thought. I won’t cry, not gonna cry, can’t cry, “Oh thanks Andrew, just when I need you. You turn your back on me”

Andrew shrugged without a word

“This baby needs you Andrew, it’s your child” she said pointing to her stomach. Why is Andrew saying this? Why is he turning his back on our child? He must know that I have to keep this child.

Andrew glared at Carrie “DON’T put all this pressure on me, this is your problem not mine”

Carrie sat back down in shock. She could not believe what she was hearing; it’s my problem and my mess? Anybody would think I planned this, it just happened. We have to deal with this, whether Andrew likes it or not, this is his child. Carrie could feel all her emotions boiling up inside her. Everything that had gone throughout her mind that evening was about to explode into Andrew’s face.

How dare he do this to me, pass it off as my problem. It was his fault too. He didn't ask me if I was using any contraception. Andrew didn't care, now he's paying the price. Well, that's good. Okay, so I maybe looking at a chance of being homeless, but it's Andrew's duty to help me. He has to support me, he as got to! He must!

"You can't do that! I have no one else to turn to!" Carrie cried. She could feel her tears of anger, fear and sadness welling up in her eyes. Carrie tried to blink them away, but she could not. She slid down off the seat onto the floor.

Andrew stood up, glaring right into Carrie's emerald green eyes. Carrie was surprised by his determination not to accept any responsibility; it was as if Carrie was not even carrying his child. "I don't care if it's my child, I couldn't give a monkeys. I'm not going to look after it. I don't care that you have no one else to turn to. Like I said, that's your problem. I can do what I like, you can't stop me"

Carrie was now sobbing like a lost child in a department store, she wanted to stop, but everything was getting too much for her. She began shaking her head, not wanting to believe what Andrew was saying, but deep down she knew it was true. Andrew did not want their child and that was final. Carrie cried some more. What am I gonna do?

Andrew listened to Carrie's quiet sobs, he hated to hear her cry and more importantly he hated to be the cause. I don't want it; I want a life, not someone else's. Why should I give up everything I want up for a child? No, I refuse. I don't care if it's mine. All I ever wanted was for Carrie and me to be together and her stupid mistake has ruined everything.

Carrie's sobs got louder; she just could not stop.

Andrew started to pace. I've gotta get out of here, I have to leave Carrie. I can't cope. He stopped to look at Carrie. She was in a heap on the floor crying, Andrew's heart weakened to see the mental state that she was in, but he was not going to back on his word.

Carrie's sobs were softer now and she raised her head. Her face was wet' her eyes were as red as roses and her ebony black hair was everywhere. Carrie looked a mess, but she did not care, as she wanted Andrew to see what he had done to her. There were a few seconds silence

"Why are you doing this to me?" she whispered "I don't understand why you are leaving me and our baby?"

Andrew rolled her eyes in frustration. Every time he heard the words "*Our baby*" he felt like smashing Carrie in the face. I don't want to hear about *my* child, *our* child or whatever the hell it is, as far as I'm concerned I have no child.

Carrie straightened herself up and looked at Andrew. Her eyes were slowly clearing up "Just give me one reason why you don't want our child"

"I'm too young for all this Carrie"

"And I'm not"

"From where I am all I can say is that I don't wanna be looking after some kid" Andrew clenched his fists "I want a life" he said simply "I don't want any health bills, tins of milk and baby food stains on my clothes or smelling of sick. I don't want any kids until I'm married with my own home, I'm sorry Carrie, but you're on your own" Andrew got ready to go. I need to get out of here; she's putting too much pressure on me. He headed for the door.

Carrie watched him "Where are you going?" she felt like crying again "Andrew don't go, you can't leave me. We have to talk" Carrie pleaded, she was about to get up

Andrew shook his head; I can't stay here anymore, I need to get out, stop pressuring me Carrie! Reaching for the door handle, Carrie began to panic.

"I can't cope on my own, you know Dad will throw me out like he did to Yvonne" Standing up right on her knees she walked on them "Please Andrew, I don't wanna do this without you"

Andrew's back faced Carrie; he had had enough of Carrie's constant persuasion. Give it up Carrie, I'm not backing down. He did not want to hear anymore. Turning the doorknob, he faced Carrie and without saying a word he left.

The world of Carrie Shannon has just crumbled into dust. She screamed out Andrew's name before she fell in a heap on the floor. Carrie burst into tears, tears that she had never cried in her life before, Carrie had never felt so alone in her life and she knew this was only the beginning.

The night was cold; air was crisp and filled with the smell of leaves and petrol. There were not many people out on the street, only a few cars out on the roads and the odd light from one out of the ten houses showing. Andrew sat outside on the wall in front of Carrie's home; smoking a cigarette he shook as he took a puff. Shit, Carrie and me are over. I never thought things would end like this. Taking another puff, Andrew let the smoke sail through his nostrils and stared out into the night. He did not want things to end the way it did, he did not intend to walk out on Carrie the way he did. Andrew knew his behaviour was unforgivable, but he was not prepared to live a lie with Carrie. I don't want a child, I'm too bloody young for that and that's all there is to it. Andrew knew his parents would be far from pleased about the news, their insistence on finishing his education without any disruptions was important to them, this was another reason why he did not want their unborn child. Walking out on Carrie may have been a big mistake, but Andrew was convinced that continuing his relationship with Carrie and their child would have been an even bigger one. Finishing his cigarette Andrew glanced back at the house,

"It's just all about me from now on" he said aloud before setting off home.

Carrie's cotton sheets were soaked with tears that night, her eyes were red from crying and her throat felt dry, she could also feel a headache approaching. Although Carrie had been crying for the past two hours, she still could not believe what Andrew had said and she was about to face mother hood alone. Carrie would feel content to be sure of her parents blessing, but she knew that would be last on their minds. Her parents has gone out for the evening and she felt glad for the solitude as she felt unsure how she would have handled everything if they had been home. Carrie turned over onto her left side; she then began to think about what she was about to expect of life alone, she knew she would be homeless. Her father would ask her to pack her bags and go, even if she was to tell him that Andrew has abandoned her and she has no where else to go. Her mother would stay almost silent, but occasionally attempt to stand for Carrie's defence. Carrie felt her life was about to end before it was to start. The thought of sheltered homes made Carrie feel sick, she was not sure whether she would be able to live in one. Carrie wanted to live at home, but he did not have any choice in the matter.

Turning on to her back, she looked at the ceiling in her bedroom. She saw nothing. The darkness lingered and the silence was almost too silent. More tears rolled down Carrie's cheeks and shook her head. What am I do to now? I might as well just run away and never come back. I mean, what's the point? It's not as if I've got anything to live for. Andrew's left me; my parents are going to kick me out on the streets. I'll be homeless and alone. I might as well just end it all right now; I'll save myself a lot of pain.

Carrie sat up and stared ahead of her. The darkness still lingering in front of her like smoke from a chimney. Why not do it now? I don't think anybody will miss me, especially Dad and Andrew. I'm certain I won't cope on my own. What if my baby gets sick and I can't find the bus fare to take he or she to the doctor, suppose something happens to me, anyone could easily take my baby away from me. What if I live on a park bench somewhere? What about the birth? I'll be alone. There will be no one to hold my hand and tell me I'm going to be all right. No one to say what a beautiful baby and say I can depend on them. Carrie tilted her head back who am I kidding? I'm not fit to be a mother, I'm not fit to be anything. Staring ahead again, Carrie could not think straight. What if I need money to buy food, I have to sell by baby. I don't want that!

“I want my baby, but what choice do I have?” she said aloud, Carrie began to sob

Carrie turned to her bedside draw; leaning over she pulled it open. Inside was a jar of 400 aspirins that she often took for stomach cramps, Carrie held the jar in her hand and shook it. The small tablets rattled together like a dangerous omen. Well this is, Carrie thought. The end of the line, she sniffed before twisting the childproof cap that cracked as she turned it anti-clockwise. Carrie took off the cap and shook three tablets then another three into the palm of her hand. She looked at them. Is all this really worth it, am I willing to put my life in the hands of these six painkillers combined with a glass of vodka? Looking down at her stomach, Carrie shook her head. I suppose I'm not ready, my child is not worth the agony and selfishness that I'm going to leave behind, especially with my mum. Carrie knew her father and Andrew would not care, she knew her mother would be devastated. Carrie placed the tablets back into the jar, replaced the cap and put the jar back in the draw.

Laying back down Carrie stared up at the ceiling, she still could not believe how Andrew had reacted, it was as if she had planned the pregnancy to spite him. She wanted so much for Andrew to be apart of their child's life, for him to take her or she out, feed it and give their child a name. Carrie wanted Andrew to teach their child all the values he grew up with and tell their child he would always be there for he or she and Carrie. But. Andrew's sharp words: 'It's your problem. I don't want it. You deal with it' spun around her head so fast that she could not think. Why did he have to refer to our baby as 'it'? Anybody would think our baby is going to be a UFO or something featured on X-Files- Reopened. Carrie sniffed, but she felt too tired to cry. She rubbed her stomach and felt convinced she could feel her child. Although she was only a week into her pregnancy, she still felt convinced. I can't give up on our child Andrew; it's the reminder I have left of you. This baby will be you and I. this baby will be of two people who love each other, when you see your child you'll realise how much you will love it. You and I will be together. Oh what's the use, you know it's not going to happen Carrie.

“ I can't believe this is happening to me” she whispered



Andrew slammed the front door behind him before heading down the garden path leading from his home. He wanted to get away from everything and he did consider going away for a few days but has a limited amount of places to stay. The day was bright and sunny, but he felt no reason to bring out his shades and grin from ear to ear. After returning home last night, he decided not to tell his parents yet what was going on and has decided to leave it until he has finished his final exams. Wanting to forget and move on, Andrew has decided to concentrate on his studies in order to get into a good college. Andrew is determined to change his focus's he thinks it is the best thing to do. He wants to move on, he HAVE to.

A ray of sunlight burned through Carrie's bedroom window, casting a heated shadow over her pale face. She woke, opening her emerald green eyes and slowly yawning into her pillow. Carrie did not want to wake for she wanted to stay in bed forever, the reality of being a single mother who will be homeless in less than three hours was not something Carrie wanted to get out of bed for. She tried closing her eyes, hoping to fall in a deep sleep, but she could not. She could hear her mother and father moving around downstairs and suddenly felt sick. Carrie had never dreaded anything in her life than telling her parents what she was about to tell them, but she knows she has no choice. Sighing with dread, Carrie slowly pulled back her duvet covers. This is going to be the hardest thing to do in my life; I have faced anything like this and don't want to either. Carrie placed her feet on the soft rug and stood. Instantly Carrie saw her reflection in her bedroom mirror. I look awful. Pale, so thin she could see the outline of her neck bone, withdrawn and under nourished. Her eyes were a little blood shot from crying and her lips were dry. The yellow dress that Carrie has been wearing for the past twelve hours hung on her like a garment on a wire coat hanger. Carrie looked as if she had been left to starve. Carrie went to her cupboard and took out a pair of jeans to put on; she then pulled down a back top from the top shelf before pulling off the dress. I can't do down in that dress. Carrie pulled the top over her head and reached for her jeans. Sliding each leg in she nearly lost her balance, fastening the zip and button she stood in front of the mirror again.

She reached for a brush on her dressing table and began to brush her hair slowly. After two brushes she put it down as she did not have the energy to continue. All she could think about Andrew and what he said to her. Carrie began to think maybe she was better on her own, maybe she would be able to cope. Shaking her head, Carrie knew she would not, she lifted her top and rubbed her extremely flat stomach and felt a little sick

"Whatever the outcome at least we'll have each other" she whispered. Taking a deep breath, Carrie she put her hair behind her ears and left her bedroom. As she stepped out onto the landing she saw her father heading for the living room, her throat felt dry and her stomach felt weaker than ever. I can't turn back now, for she knew running away would only make matters worse. It was time to tell her parents, whatever the consequences were she had no alternative.



Carrie pushed the cream kitchen door and walked in slowly. Her mother was sitting at the kitchen table drinking a cup of tea and about to read the day's newspaper. Fiona Shannon looked forward to reading the newspaper, now it's time to catch up with the news she thought. Having been on her feet since half past six this morning she felt entitled to sit down for five minutes and relax.

Carrie coughed to get her mother's attention and it worked. Carrie's mother looked up at her daughter and smiled "Morning"

Fiona Shannon is five feet five, oval and kind face. She has thick, brown curly bobbed hair with strands of grey and green eyes. Slim, pretty and quiet Fiona is content with her life and likes nothing more than a chat with her youngest daughter. Dressed in a pink sweater, jeans and blue fluffy slippers that Carrie bought her for her birthday two years ago, Fiona's eyes met Carrie's and instantly she knew something were wrong. Fiona could always sense when her daughter's not happy, just by looking at her face.

Carrie pulled up a chair and sat opposite her mother, she then placed her hands on the table in front of her and began "Mum I have something to tell you"

Her mother attempted to open the newspaper closed the front page "What is it love?"

At that moment Carrie wished the ground would open up and swallow her, she did not want to do this. Taking a deep breath, she heard Yvonne's screams in her mind and saw her father pushing her out of the door and she knew those visions were about to become reality.

"It's about me and Andrew"

Fiona took off her reading glasses; she felt a chill go up her spine for she did not like where this was leading to "What about you and Andrew?"

Taking her hands off the table, Carrie put them in her lap and looked down. She could not look her mother in the eye and started to babble "Well you see. I mean, you um, Andrew and I, well mum, I'm pregnant"

Fiona looked at her daughter with horror and fear burning in her eyes. She did not know what to do but shake her head from side to side. No. No. No. Not again "What! You're so young!" Fiona exclaimed standing up

This is not happening, again! For Christ sake, not again! "What were you think of? You know how your father was with Yvonne. You know that's forbidden Carrie!" Fiona put her hand on her head and looked out the kitchen window, outside was their garden. There are no flowers in their garden, only weeds.

"I know I'm young, it just happened and I can't do a thing about it" Carrie said still looking down, she felt like a child who was about to be told off for not brushing her teeth.

Fiona turned to Carrie "How can it just happen? Why didn't you protect yourself and realise what you were doing? Don't you remember what happened to your sister? You're only 16! Carrie things like that doesn't just happen! What's the matter with you?" Fiona sat back down in front of Carrie

Carrie shook her head and suddenly broke down in a flood of tears "Please don't turn your back on me. She sobbed, "Andrew has already said he doesn't want anything to do with me and the baby, please help me mum. I know dad's gonna throw me out. What am I going to do?"

Fiona's bottom lip quivered as she watched her daughter slowly get herself in a state, she had not heard her daughter plead and cry so many tears of fear, rejection and anguish. Fiona reached out her hand; she did not have the heart to turn her back on Carrie.

"Don't worry Carrie. I'll see that nothing will happen to you"

Carrie sniffed "What about Dad? I know he's gonna make you throw me out, he'll make me leave. I knew he will, just as he did to Yvonne"

"I won't let him do that," Fiona said, but she herself was not convinced

For the past thirty years Fiona Shannon has lived under the thumb of her stubborn, cantankerous and short-tempered husband. She has never plucked up enough courage to stand up to his ridiculous values, especially concerning their daughters. Fiona has tried but each time to no avail. She hated to admit it, but Carrie too was going to be homeless and she would not be able to do anything about it.

Carrie reached out her hand and held her mothers and sniffed again. She has never felt so relieved in her life and wished Andrew were there to hear that everything was going to be all right, maybe he could

reconsider about our baby she thought. "Are you going to tell dad or me?" Carrie hoped her mother would say, "No, I am"

Fiona shook her head "No, you are"

Carrie nearly lost her breath "I can't" she exclaimed "Dad will kill me mum!"

"Carrie, calm down. I'll be there for you. Like I promised I won't let him throw you out" Fiona lied

Carrie was calmer, but she was still worried

Andrew pressed the doorbell and waited. Seconds later the front door opened and a broad five feet nine bot, blond hair and hazel eyes. Dressed in a t/shirt, faded Levi's jeans, and white trainers, he looked surprised.

"Alright Andrew, what's up?"

Andrew sighed, "Alright Matt I need to talk"

Stepping aside, Andrew walked in

The front door slammed shut that afternoon, Carries' heart nearly stopped. It was time. Her hands began to get sweaty and clammy, I can't do this! I just can't. Looking at her mother who sat before her, Fiona gave her a nod. Carrie's hear beat faster as she stood and headed for the kitchen door.

"Remember, I'm right behind you" Fiona called out after her, but she knew it would not make any difference

Carrie could only nod as she all she had to say was to her father.

As Carrie walked along the hallway, she felt the seconds that went by beat inside her head like an orchestra of drums. Each beat was a second; each seconds it got harder. Her father has taken off his coat and headed straight for the lounge. He wanted to catch up on the racing results, hoping that his horse had come in 2 to 1 and earned him few pounds to see him until the end of the week.

Carrie approached her father before she realised. I wish mum were here, she said she'd be right behind me. I wish I wasn't here, for things would be better for me to handle. Stopping at the doorway of

the living room and watched him carefully while going over in her mind what she was going to say. Oh god help me, please help me.

Clark Shannon is five feet eleven inches, the right weight for his height and medium build. He has a round unshaven face, a few spots, a scar from a fight ten years ago and a cut above his lip. Clark's black hair is slowly thinning at the top and once brown eyes are red from early mornings. Clark is a workaholic and made it his duty to provide for his family as he considers it a ritual for a man to be able to provide for his family and look rugged at the same time.

Okay Carrie, this is it. There is no turning back now; you have to tell him. Carrie approached her father "Dad" she began "I've got something to tell you"

Clark looked at Carrie before slowly sitting down in the armchair; closing his eyes he tipped his head back and sighed with relief "Yes Carrie, what is it?"

Oh, oh. I don't wanna tell him, I know he's gonna throw me out so why bother. Carrie put both hands in her pockets "Um"

Fiona appeared behind her daughter and put both hands on her shoulders "Go on Carrie, tell him"

Carrie's stomach churned "Dad Andrew, I-. Well this wasn't meant to happen"

Clark opened his eyes and looked at Carrie "What wasn't meant to happen Carrie?"

Digging her hands in her pocket deeper to stop them shaking, she had never been so scared in her life.

"I'm, p-pregnant"

Clark's face turned crimson, his eyes widened as she stood "You are WHAT?"

Fiona decided it was time to step in and help Carrie "Now Clark, don't do anything stupid" she stood in front of Carrie and tried to reach for Clark's arm

Clark glared at Fiona "Keep out of this!" then back to Carrie "How could you be so stupid? What's the matter with you? Don't you know anything about protection" oh my god, I am going to kill her

Carrie looked down at the floor; she could feel her knees weakening and her eyes filling up with tears of fear. "Yes, I suppose we forgot" she replied in a whisper

"Forgot!" Clark spat. Stepping closer to Carrie he wanted to hit her, so hard it would knock her to the ground "Forgot. How can you forget? What are you, dumb?"

Carrie shook her head as she looked up at her father "No dad, it just happened. It wasn't meant to" she said quietly oh my god, I know he's going to hit me

"Oh don't give me that rubbish about it wasn't meant to! It's too late. It has happened and you are going to have to deal with it" Clark swung around and faced the mantle piece. What is my family trying to do to me? Carrie knows how I feel about young pregnancies; she knows what will happen. Didn't she learn anything from what I did to Yvonne? Why me god? Why do I have two insubordinate daughters who continue to undermine my authority? That's it, it all stops here.

Clark turned and faced Carrie "so, what does Andrew's parent's say about this?"

"I don't know" Carrie replied looking at her father she could see anger burning red in his eyes. Carrie felt convinced she could see flames rising higher and higher.

Clark could not believe what she was hearing "You don't know" he said slowly "You are going with this boy. He is the father I assume or is that something else you haven't told me?"

Fiona's eyes widened in horror. He came near to calling our daughter a slut "Clark!" she cried

Clark pointed his finger at Fiona "You can shut up. You most probably put her up to this, you yourself have done it so it wouldn't surprise me"

Suddenly Fiona could not breathe. How could he say that to me? He promised he would never mention that to me again. It wasn't my fault I too feel pregnant young and we were forced to marry young. How could he use that against me?

Clark did not regret a word he had said. He felt too disgusted with Carrie.

“What do you mean you don’t know, have you not told Andrew? Or are you planning to keep that from him?”

“No!” Carrie cried. All her father’s constant questions and accusations were starting to get to her, she felt like she was taking the Spanish inquisition. Looking at her father Carrie felt she was standing in court facing charges of murder, Carrie admitted to the crime but was pleading her defence. “Andrew said he doesn’t want me or the baby. He doesn’t want it; he blames me for everything. Andrew has left me dad, I’m so alone”

Clark tutted as cut his eyes away from Carrie. He could not believe how irresponsible Carrie was. What was she thinking? She’d be able to get a free ride by living here with that child? Did she really think I would let her bring up any child under my roof? Nine times out of ten I would have to provide for it while she would be out ‘raving’ every night. No! I won’t have it! I expected more of Carrie, I thought she was the brightest out of my two rotten children. Carrie has let me down, I don’t know whether I can forgive her.

Carrie watched her father, she should have known better to tell him. She knew she should have made up a false story and left home, or just left. Tears rolled down her face, she felt like dropping to her knees and begging for her father’s mercy. She wanted to do something drastic, like slit her wrists or stand in front of a moving bus; just to show how desperate she was to have her father’s support. Nothing would have been too much for Carrie, just to have a secure home for her and her child.

Clark crossed his arms and glared at Carrie. Carrie could see the hate, disappointment and anger in his eyes. She thought she had been it all then he looked into Andrew’s eyes the night before, but this was much worse. Oh my god, help! I know what’s going to happen to me!

“Since you have everything so planned” Clark began, trying to maintain a level tone “You can go about this pregnancy alone”

Carrie’s and Fiona’s eyes widened in horror “Dad no! *Please*”

Fiona swallowed hard, she knew what she was about to do would take all the courage she had “Clark. You can’t do that, she’s only 16!” well done Fiona darling “We’re her only hope!” she cried

Clark looked at his wife and shrugged, he could not care less "Tough! She should have thought of that before she acted like a tart with her boyfriend"

"Dad, I didn't mean for this to happen" Carrie protested

Clark gave Carrie a look "Shut up! I don't want to hear another word from you"

Carrie fell silent.

"Clark, she is 16. She is our daughter, how can you say that!" Fiona exclaimed, "You can't throw her out"

Clark closed his eyes and shook his head "I am sorry Fiona, but I don't want her living here"

Fiona looked at Carrie. Is this the person I married thirty years ago? Am I going to let him throw out my baby onto the street just because she bears a child? Fiona stepped forward and stood in front of her husband, she looked into Clark's eyes "You can't Clark, she's a baby"

Clark pushed his wife aside "Too bad. Carrie you have to go"

Carrie knew arguing would only make things worse, if there was a possibility. She knew her father would be happier if she left, she couldn't understand why. I'm only pregnant; I don't have an infectious disease. I'm just pregnant. Carrie turned to leave the room.

Fiona glared at her husband, she swore she had a knife in her hand she would have easily rammed it into his stomach. Clark Shannon is being totally unreasonable; he was the same with Yvonne and again with Carrie. "What do you think you are doing? She's our daughter for gods sake!"

Clark looked Fiona right in the eye "I don't care! She got herself into this mess and she can get herself out" he said bitterly

Fiona was beginning to get fed up with her husband "Oh okay. So she and out grandchild will just die on the streets instead" she said flippantly

Clark guided Fiona aside "Yes! As far as I am concerned I have no daughters" and to that he left the room

Fiona stood in the middle of the lounge with both hands by her side. Feelings of rage and anguish boiled inside her. Why isn't he listening to me? I don't want to lose another daughter. Why does he

have the idea that everything he says is right? It isn't, Why is he being so unreasonable? Doesn't he realise this is tearing our family apart? Clark you are one nasty piece of work!

Carrie sobbed as she climbed the stairs, although she knew deep down this was going to happen the feeling that everything was a nightmare would not go away. Entering her room, Carrie walked to her wardrobe and pulled the doors open. As she did so, she heard footsteps and before she could blink Clark suddenly burst into her room and pushed past her. He then began taking all her clothes off the changers and tossing them onto the floor.

Carrie nearly lost her balance "Dad, what are you doing?"

Clark threw a stack of Carrie's tops onto the bed and glared at her "The sooner you are out of her, the better" he hissed

Carrie could not believe what she was hearing, never in her wildest dreams has she have thought her father would literally throw her out onto the streets.

Reaching for Carrie's bag from the top of her wardrobe, Clark threw it on her and began shoving her clothes into it

"Dad stop!" she pleaded "Please"

Clark ignored Carrie

Carrie called for her mother "Mum!"

Fiona was still standing in the middle of the lounge, now she was motionless. This is it! It's happening all over again and I can't seem to do anything about it. I'm about to lose my baby!

Clark had now emptied most of Carrie's clothes into the bag and was ready to zip it up. He thought about putting a few pairs of shoes in there, but then decided on either throwing them away or giving them to charity. Carrie watched in horror and despair her father zipped up the bag before he lifted it up and headed for the door. Clark went to the top of the stairs and threw the bag down the stairs. THUMP! Fiona watched from the living room.

"Now you've got some things, get out!"

Although Carrie wanted to protest, she knew it would be no use. So she picked up the nearest pair of shoes and her trainers and ran the stairs calling her mother's help. Clark pushed past her on the stairs to the front door and opened it. Carrie stood at the bottom of her stairs facing her father who just looked blankly at her.

Clutching her shoes to her chest, Carrie sobbed "Dad please. Don't do this, you and mum are all I've got" why is he being so cruel?

"I don't care. Get out!" Clark shouted

Carrie froze. Everything was going to fast for her. Leave? Get out? I don't want you here. She looked to her mother for support, but could only hang her head. Mum lied, she said she wouldn't let dad throw me out. She promised, she said it would be all right. She lied to me! Carrie shook her head in disbelief. Right now I'm going to wake up and I'll be okay and none of this would have happened. Well?

Suddenly Clark grabbed Carrie's arm and pushed her out onto the front step, she lost her balance and dropped her shoes as she fell to her knees. Seconds later her bag hit her in the face, her face stung so much her eyes began to water even more.

"Don't ever come back here!" Clark shouted

Carrie did not move instead tears of fear, anger and humiliation ran down her face. She didn't notice her mother looking at her from the lounge window, over ridden with guilt. Nothing seemed to make sense to Carrie at the moment. Carrie was homeless within 24 hours; some things just do not make sense. The next thing Carrie heard was the sound of the front door slamming shut. Carrie jumped as if she had sat on a drawing pin, sniffing she screamed for her father

"DADDY!"

It was no use; Carrie was on her own.

An hour has passed and Carrie was still sitting on the front step of what she once thought was home. She had no where else to go and did not want to go anywhere else either. Carrie had considered going to see Andrew, but knew it would only lead to more heartache. Carrie heaved herself up from the

ground, dusted the dirt of her and reluctantly put in her jacket. Looking down Carrie slowly picked up her shoes, unzipped the bag and stuffed them in. sniffing again; she picked up the bag.

Although Carrie had no idea where to go, it was clear to her that she was not to stay where she was.

For the next two hours Carrie walked around the local high street not knowing where she going she was still feeling disbelief towards the fact she had no family and was homeless. She was scared. She did not want to spend the next nine months worrying about whether the doorstep she would live on belonged to someone else or if the park keeper were to catch her hiding in the bushes. Carrie walked across the road with out looking where she going, stepped onto the pavement in a daze. Why has everything just gone so sour for me? What did I do to deserve all this? I thought I'd get a little support, but all I've got is grief. Are you telling me this is going to be what life is going to be like for me from now on? Carrie blinked and acknowledged the surroundings. She looked at the bright shop signs, passers by and listened to the roaring traffic that burned up and down the roads. Carrie hoped one day she have her life back, one day she would be able to hold her head up and say "Yes. I made it". Although, a future for Carrie was a possibility all her dreams were over forever. Carrie's eyes filled up with tears as she continued to walk down the busy high street. Everything became a blur as they fell down her cheeks and onto the top of her mouth. Was this her home for the rest of her life? Were the street lamps and sleeping policemen in the roads going to be her only source of light? I don't have anything to my name she thought; I only possess a bag of clothes and fifty pence in ten's and a twenty pence piece. How long is that going to last me before I die of starvation? Am I going to have to steal to survive?

The aroma of fresh bread, cakes, sausage rolls sailed up Carrie's nose as she past a bakery. Her stomach rumbled with hunger, she considered buying a bread roll but decided against it.

Looking ahead Carrie noticed the local park was still open, sniffing back tears she slowly made her way up there. The public park was first established in 1949, a local committee leader opened it for the youth and residents. The park consists of hundreds of acres of grass, trees, flowers and five park benches made from pinewood. The park is used daily by the residents and the occasional visitors from the outskirts of London. During the holidays it is busy with children, families, elderly and teenagers who ride their bikes, roller blades and skateboards along the soft west wet grass. Those on roller blades have a fun time by easily escaping with the park keeper's hats that they have deliberately taken while skating past them. Carrie walked into the park through the open gate and looked idly around for a

bench, she scanned around for a few seconds before she spotted a large pine bench what was situated just before a bed of daffodils. She sneezed before she sat on the bench, putting it down to pollen it did not cause any concern. Despite it the sun was going in, Carrie could still detect the pollen in the air. Sighing Carrie rested her bag beside her and looked to the busy street, she could see an old run down café, and her stomach twisted as she assumed it would be there she would be dining tonight.

Andrew felt sick when he opened his eyes that evening, after drinking two cans of lager he fell into a drunken sleep. His stomach ached, his head felt as if it was splitting into two and his vision was blurred. Groaning Andrew rolled out of bed before he hit the floor, not caring if he disturbed his parents down stairs. His chest hit the ground with a thud but he was too weak to cry out in pain even if it hurt him a great deal. Lifting his head, Andrew came face to face with Carrie's photograph. He winced before coughing then pulled his self up. Get a grip Andrew man he told himself. Leaning over to this television he switched it on, the evening news has just finished. Thank fuck for that, I hate the news he said to himself. Suddenly Andrew's mind wondered to Carrie, it was hard for him to admit but he still loved her and missed her a lot. Managing a smile he remembers the first time he met Carrie, he watched her from the bus window as she walked along the high street. From then Andrew has always loved to watch her, the way she walked, talked and looked. Carrie's looks sends Andrew into a wild frenzy. Closing his eyes, Andrew pictured her clear emerald green eyes, ebony hair and slim and slender body. Carrie's eyes were looking back at him, shaking the image away Andrew opened his eyes and pulled himself off the floor. Standing up he felt very sick and quickly made an exit for the bathroom.

Carrie sat on the park bench until 9.30 that evening, eyes red and puffy from crying, skin as white as snow she lay down on her bag bringing her legs up. Having closed hours ago, Carrie was surprised he managed to avoid the park keeper. She put it down to the dark clothes her wore and the many bushes that were situated around her. But she was witnessed by many, despite being asked of her concern. Using her bag as a pillow Carrie stared out to the quiet street, looking at the shops, passers by and

briefly noticing the street lamps switching on one by one. Feeling sick, her stomach rumbled Carrie sniffed with discomfort as she could feel the bench arm through her bag. Lifting her head, she put her hand under her head to rest on, but Carrie was still uncomfortable. I can't believe how much of a mess I am in. no home, no money, no family. What am I going to do? So I forget to ask Andrew about protection, I thought he was going to protect me. He said he'd always be there and he isn't. If only we'd stop for second, if only I didn't tell mum and dad. What good what that have done Carrie? Something would have twigged with your lump? Maybe I should have blackmailed Andrew, yeah with what? I dunno, I should have done something rather than let him and everything else go. "What am I gonna do?" she whispered into the cold air. "If only"

Two of the ugliest words on the English dictionary, two words which would have made everything for Carrie make sense. The evening air began to turn bitterly cold; an icy breeze cut across Carrie's face and blew her hair. Bringing her legs closer to her body, Carrie reached down and buttoned up her jacket. Cold, tired and frightened tears ran down her face, Carrie almost felt them freeze when they reached her chin. Settling on the bench again, Carrie closed her eyes. Too tired to contemplate any more she tried to sleep. Her stomach rumbled again. Carrie knew this was her life on her streets and it was only the tip of a long and frozen iceberg.

Carrie looked around to see the park has just opened gates each side and already people coming in to enjoy the swings and roundabouts. Stretching Carrie neck and had hurt from her sleep, her bones clicked as she yawned. The temperature has risen against the cloudy blue sky, but still there was a little grey in the clouds. The air smelled of wet grass, daffodils, petrol and food. The local café has been open since six and the aroma of eggs and bacon lingered. Carrie wrinkled her nose, her stomach rumbled; she had to eat. Rubbing her eyes Carrie was not sure if she spend another night on the park bench, despite sleeping well he ears, head, neck and arms began to ache. Her clothes were dirty and also she smelled of pinewood with rain. Carrie slowly stood up and picked up her bag. Sighing she looked at the park, she left for breakfast.

The café is small, old but seemed clean and tidy. The food looked to be edible and employees seemed to wash daily. Carrie pushed open the door; dust came away on her hands as she noticed the building did need a coat of paint. She bought a cup of tea with no sugar. The girl who served her noticed the grubby state of Carrie's clothes. She gave a concerned look to which Carrie returned with a smile, before taking the hot and steaming mug of tea from the girl's hand and found a seat by the window and placed her bag down beside her. As Carrie sat down with her mug of tea she began to think about what to do next. She did not want to spend another night in the park, but then thought that she may not have much choice. Beggars can't be choosers Carrie she thought. Carrie considered going to see her doctor for help, but she was afraid her child might be taken away from her taking into content her age. Carrie sipped her tea slowly; it burned the top of her mouth slightly so she put it down to cool.

Looking out the window Carrie watched the bust street. The traffic, the people and listened to the noise of the engines voices which defined the busy street. Suddenly someone entered the café; Carrie turned her attention to the stranger and found herself watching him. He ordered a cooked breakfast with a cup of coffee to eat inside. Carrie sighed before looking out the window again. There was nothing, which caught her interest. The traffic was heavy the sky was turning grey and it seemed everyone was

out taking part in a busy morning. I wonder what Andrew is doing? I bet he's not homeless, penniless, alone and frightened because he doesn't know if he'll live until next week. I bet his father hasn't thrown him out for one mistake, mother lied and loved one turned their back on them due to their own selfishness. Life's pretty good for you, isn't it Andrew? Sniffing Carrie could feel her eyes filling with tears; she didn't want anyone to see her cry so she wiped her eyes vigorously hoping no one saw her. God is this what life's gonna be like for me? Waking up in a different place, not knowing what to do all because I made one mistake. How am I going to survive? I'm only 16, I don't know the first thing about living alone or having a baby. Where is my baby going to be born? A back alley? A dirt road? A bus stop. Hey maybe even a brothel? I can't take this! Carrie's hands began to shake.

Letting her finger circle the mug of tea, it was like a therapeutic process, shaking her head Carrie sniffed back her tears. God, what am I gonna do? Somebody help me.

The stranger was about to sit down and read his newspaper, when he looked up and saw Carrie. He stopped in his tracks and stared at her. Who's she? She's nice. What great eyes and her face are just beautiful. Folding his newspaper in half he put it under his arm he felt the urge to just go over and make conversation, before he knew it was. What the hell am I doing? He asked himself, I don't even know the girl!

"Excuse me, can I ask you something?"

Carrie looked up at him "What?" she replied, wanting to be more polite but Carrie felt so reason to be happy.

What great colour eyes? So bright.

The stranger's name whose Danny stepped back slightly. Maybe asking her if the seat is free isn't such a good idea; it's obvious she's not interested in guys (if you know what I mean). Danny looked into Carrie's eyes and she looked back. Oh what the hell, she's much too much of a goddess to pass. "Is this seat free?" Go on my son! He asked pointing to the seat in front of him.

Carrie shrugged "Yeah, be my guest" she sniffed hoping Danny could not see she had been crying. Why does he want to sit near me?

Bloody hell, this girl is hard work. Danny pulled out the chair and sat down. He smiled at Carrie nervously. There is something about this girl; I just can't put my finger on it. Carrie could not help looking at Danny, he seemed to resemble Andrew in small ways and she found herself beginning to like him.

"So" Danny began "What's your name?" he asked putting the newspaper down beside him

Carrie rested her chin on her left hand and gave him a look. Is he trying to chat me up? Cos if he is I'm really not in the mood. I'm gonna answer him anyway. "Carrie" she replied

Danny nodded with approval "Nice name" matches her face

"Thank you" Carrie said with out smiling. She still kept her eyes on Danny, moving them every time he moved.

Okay, she's a lesbian. I can handle that. No she isn't. No way looking like that "So, what's a nice girl like you eating in a dingy café like this?"

Carrie decided to play hard to get, it was going to be her only bit of fun for a long time. Rolling her eyes she replied "Drinking tea, what else" with that she took the mug and drank a little of the tea

Danny exhaled lightly. Damn, talk about ice maiden. I'm not getting anywhere with this one. Reluctantly he took the newspaper, unfolded it, and glanced at the front page. I give up, I'm just gonna eat my breakfast and go.

Carrie softened her look; her intention wasn't to be so rude. Oh come on Carrie. He was only trying to be friendly; the least you could so is be civilised. Crossing her arms Carrie spoke "So, what's your name then?"

Danny looked up at her in surprise "Danny and I'm just here for the food" he replied hoping Carrie would smile or even laugh.

Carrie nodded "Cute" she said with out any emotion.

Oh this is not right; she should be cracking up by now. Carrie meant what she said, she found Danny very cute. She liked the way his light brown hair parted in the centre and his dark brown eyes were bright. Carrie studied his nose, almost perfect as well as his lips. Dressed in black jumper, dark blue jeans, trainers, grey sweatshirt and jacket, Carrie swore to herself that should she have not met

Andrew. She would have jumped at the chance of going out with Danny. Carrie hoped Danny would not ask too many questions for she was feeling embarrassed enough and did not want Danny assuming her sudden politeness was used in hope of gaining a roof over her head.

“Do you live around here then Carrie?” Danny asked. Please say yes. Please say yes.

Great, I should have seen that coming. Carrie took a deep breath as her stomach tightened. She felt there was no point hiding the truth it was not as though the police had a warrant out for her arrest “No” she replied as she picked up the mug she was surprised to find the mug was still warm.

Danny looked surprised “Oh. Where?” He paused. It can’t be too far from me “Lemmie guess-“

“There’s a lot of things you don’t know about me Danny” Carrie interjected

Danny’s inhaled slowly. If she’s a female axe murderer on a revengeful quest after us blokes, I will scream. “Such as?”

Carrie placed both hands on the table, she felt as if she was about to reveal her inner most secret. Looking at Danny, she explained. Danny said was silent, it was not every day he met a girl who is homeless and a mother to be. Even though Danny didn’t know anything about Carrie, he knew enough himself that we wanted to know more. When Carrie had explained everything, Danny was nonplussed. Carrie sighed as her heart sank. I knew it. I bet he can’t wait to get away from me, just like everyone else. “Look. I’ll understand if you wanna go and sit somewhere else. I don’t want you think I’m on the look out for a father for my child” although Carrie was firm she was not sure she’d be would be able to handle another rejection.

Danny shook his head “No. I’ll stay and anyway I like you” he smiled and it was the truth

For the first time in two days Carrie smiled. “Thank you” and she meant it

Sighing to himself Danny sat back slightly. Yes, I got her to smile.

“Tea and breakfast” the girl behind the counter called out, holding it out she looked at Danny for him to collect it.

Danny spun around in chair “That’s me” he said holding his hand midway in the air. He then went up to collect his breakfast before returning to his seat.

Carrie looked at the plate of sausage, egg, beans and bacon and felt queasy. She did intend on ordering something to eat but her appetite was deteriorating fast.

"What you going to do now?" Danny asked as he picked up his fork. He knew it was a stupid question, but he felt it was the right one to start with.

Carrie shrugged "Don't know Danny. I suppose I'll have to find somewhere for tonight" she said with dread. Carrie was not looking forward to spending another night rough on the streets again.

Danny looked at Carrie in horror "And what? Find a Sainsburys' cardboard box and the front page of the independent newspaper to keep you warm?"

Carrie was taken back with Danny's scorn. It was not for Carrie. It was for Andrew. Danny was disgusted with the how much Andrew and her father had been so unreasonable. Those worthless bastards! How could they let Carrie just go out onto the streets and die?

"It doesn't matter Danny. I won't be on the streets for long anyway" Carrie lied. She knew she would be on the streets for the rest of her life for she did not see any guardian angles walking around or any genies with lamps offering her three wishes. Carrie had to face the fact her baby was to be bought up on the streets and most likely die on the streets.

Danny tapped the table lightly with his fingers. "Do you know Andrew better pray hard that he doesn't bump into me on dark night, 'cos I can tell you there'd be a huge fight" he warned "I swear I'd have some serious words for that bastard" and that's not the only thing I'd have for him.

Although Carrie knew Danny had goon intentions and was flattered for his concern, but she did not like the idea of Danny fighting with Andrew, as she knows that Danny would lose. Andrew is a few inches taller than Danny is and is also a sports fanatic, swearing on no fatty or sugary foods Andrew is a health freak and is extremely fit. Carrie said nothing.

"I don't mean to be nasty and I can see he meant a lot to you but. Why aren't you angry?" Danny asked as he took a small bit out of his over cooked sausage "If that was me, I'd be ready to blow him up and scatter his remains in the local river"

Carrie rubbed her stomach as she felt it tighten. "I'm too tired to be angry Danny. All that's left me to do now is to survive"

Danny felt a lump in his throat, he could not bear to see Carrie lying in the streets or being forced to commute up to places like Kings Cross to make enough money for food. Fighting for her life, being at risk to every disease there is and scared stiff that one day she might find her child lying in a pool of blood. Danny thought hard. He did not want to read about Carrie in the newspaper under the headline *"TEENAGE MUM, DIES FROM OVERDOSE AND STREET LIVING"* I can't let her just die; I have to do something to help her. I don't know why, but I just have to help Carrie. I want to.

"Carrie, I know this may sound a little odd, but I might be able to help you" Danny said

Carrie shook her head, despite her desperation for help she did not want to be anybody's charity case. She was not sure whether she could accept help from a total stranger. "No Danny. I don't want your help, I'll survive"

"I want to Carrie" Danny insisted

Carrie shook her head again "No really Danny, I'll be fine" she lied. Carrie has never wanted anyone's help so much, but she could not bring herself to accept.

Danny dropped the knife on the plate in irritation. What is the matter with this girl? "Don't make me lose my temper with you Carrie" he warned

Carrie smiled a little "Really. I'm nobody's charity case"

Yes you are, you're mine "You ain't a charity case Carrie" Danny said picking up the knife and resting it on the edge of the plate "I want to help you. Now hear me out"

Carrie was dumbfounded, then curious. "Why are you doing this? You hardly know me?"

"I know, but after hearing what's been going on with you, I just can't let you live on the streets"

Carrie crossed her arms and gave Danny a hard look "So you feel sorry for me" she said bitterly

"No, I don't" Danny protested "I really wanna help you Carrie"

Turning to the window Carrie looked out, she should have known Danny was just being nice for the sake of it. She knew he had no intention of offering her any kind of help as she wasn't pregnant or homeless. I bet that if I told him a different story he wouldn't be so *nice*. "Yeah sure" looking at Danny again "I told you before Danny. I'm no charity case and I don't need your sympathy"

Danny sighed with distress. The last thing he wanted to do was upset Carrie. "I know"

Carrie glared at Danny; to her he was beginning to sound patronising. "Do you Danny? I don't think you do" she snapped "You won't have to wake up every morning on the streets, shit scared for yourself and your child. Starving hungry, penniless and desperate for any way to survive. You have your warm place Danny, I don't" Carrie looked away again, she could feel her eyes filling with tears. This time she wanted to cry.

Danny understood why Carrie felt the way she did, but he was determined to make her see what he was willing to help her out of the kindness of his heart and not because he felt obliged to. "Listen Carrie, despite what you think. I want to help you and I will help you. You being homeless or pregnant has nothing to do with my wanting to help. I want to. How many times do I have to keep telling you?"

Carrie was silent

Oh great, the female silent treatment "Are you listening to me?"

"I heard what you said" Carrie replied stiffly

"Well look at me then"

Carrie looked at Danny. Her eyes and face full of tears skin pale and blotchy. His heart sank. "I heard what you said Danny"

"Good, then you're going to listen to me. I'm offering you help, the least you can do is have the decency to listen" Danny said firmly

Although Carrie felt guilty she was still upset with Danny "Fine" she said quietly. Have I any choice? She asked her self. Carrie gave up looking at Danny questionably she asked, "Okay, how?"

Yes, at last she's gonna listen to me Danny thought as he picked up a rasher of crispy bacon with his hand and bit into it. "Well" he chewed "I know a place where u can crash for while and be free of charge"

Carrie sat back in shock; her mouth parted a little. You what? Are you telling me I have an ounce of luck left inside of me? "Free of charge, where?"

Danny swallowed hard, nearly choking on the bacon. "My place Carrie" he paused for a reaction then added "Separate bedrooms of course" I don't want Carrie thinking I'm a pimp

"Your place" Carrie said slowly. Is Danny for real?

“Yes my place. I need a flatmate the flat is too big for just one person” Danny took his sausage and ate it whole, he was that hungry. “So, what do you say Carrie?” he asked with his mouth full

Someone is offering me a place to stay, free of charge. It was only yesterday I didn't have anywhere. Is this really the breakthrough I need? Free of charge? I will get a job and be able to support my baby, we'll have roof over our head. I can be a real mum and Danny is allowing me to do all that. I'll be able to prove Andrew and dad that I can do it. No park benches, wet grass or cardboard city. For once I have a choice and I'm thinking about it

“What's the catch?”

Danny shook his head “No catch Carrie”

“No catch” Carrie repeated “Yeah okay. What do you want from me in return?”

Danny felt hurt. What does she take me for? “Nothing. I was gonna put an ad in the paper, but meeting you has saved me the trouble”

Carrie nodded, she still had a few more questions before accepting Danny's offer “So, how did you own your own place?”

Danny sipped his tea “Well my parents decided to move abroad when I was 16, I didn't wanna go. So, they got me flat and I pay them rent”

Carrie raised an eyebrow. Hey this man is rich! “Nice one”

Danny made a face “I suppose, I don't mind giving them £150 a month for rent”

Carrie crossed her arms “That's a good rate Danny. My parents wouldn't dream of doing anything like that, especially my dad”

Danny shrugged “I s'pose it's nice of them, since they hardly did anything for me when they were over here”

Carrie dismissed Danny's comment she was beginning to get a little excited at the prospect of a new place “Do you work then?” she asked pushing the mug of tea aside

“I work” he replied before taking a bit out of a piece of toast. “In Sainsburys' near where I live”

Carrie was impressed, looking at Danny she guessed he was around the age of 22. “I take it you're 22”

Danny felt surprise with Carrie's accuracy “Yeah, last may. How did you know?”

“Call it female intuition”

“Anything else?”

“No”

“Well?”

“I accept”

Yes! Result. “Good”

Carrie held up her forefinger “Only on one condition”

Danny frowned “What’s that?”

Carrie pointed at the remaining sausage, fried egg, a slice of toast and the rasher of bacon from Danny’s breakfast. “You share of that with me”

“Okay” Danny agreed pushing the plate in between them “But leave the egg, it’s mine” he warned sticking the fork in it.

Carrie smiled a warm smile “Fair enough”

Danny led Carrie to a block of flats, which resembled Greenwich; London's the Canary Wolf. Looking up at the building she hoped Danny did not live on the top floor, other than that Carrie was feeling a little excited. This is gonna be our new home, she thought rubbing her stomach gently. The building was light grey and slim with wide windows going all the way to the top, it looked to have about 20 floors and Carrie thought only estates has that amount of floors. There are two double doors as the means of entrance, Carrie tried to guess which window belonged to Danny's flat, but they were too many. When they came to the double doors, Danny punched a few numbers in the security lock and turned the knob. "It's like living in a prison using these things every day" Danny said as she stood aside for Carrie "Ladies first"

Carrie smiled and walked in "Well that's the price you pay for living in a place like this" she said just as the door slammed shut. She jumped a little and caught her breath. "God, that scared the hell out of me"

"You'll get used to it babe" Danny said walking down the corridor

Carrie smiled to herself; she was beginning to like the way Danny called her babe.

This is a wicked building by the way" Carrie looked around "It's so modern, the outside reminds me of the canary wolf"

"Yeah, it does a bit"

"This place looks so quiet, not like" Carrie paused "Other places"

Danny shrugged "I suppose it is, but I like it"

Carrie followed Danny through another door and another corridor, a few seconds later they came to a bright blue door marked 28B and a large black knocker.

"Well, here we are" Danny said reaching inside his pocket for his keys, looking at Carrie Danny saw she was leaning against the wall looking slightly out of breath "You okay?" oh god, she could go into labour. At a few weeks Danny, get a hold of your self! Sorry.

"Yeah, just a bit tired"

"I don't want this place to be too much for you"

Carrie rolled her eyes as she leaned off the wall "Danny, I'm pregnant not a paraplegic"

Danny dangled his keys loose "Okay. I'm only concerned babe"

Carrie felt guilty for her retort. I shouldn't be so evasive; he's giving me a home. "Sorry"

Danny smiled at her. God, I love her eyes already "Don't worry about it" Danny turned the key in the lock and stood aside for Carrie "Well, here it is"

She stepped in and was instantly impressed

"What do you think Carrie?" she'd better like it. I hope she likes it.

Carrie scanned around Danny's flat. It was small, but cosy and to her surprise it was tidy. Carrie had the impression that all single males homes would be a pigsty and smell like one too. From what Carrie could see the flat was light blue and white, there were blinds instead of curtains and the carpet looked either brand new or had just been hovered. The sofa was blue and white stripes, which reminded Carrie of sticks of rock. There was a small coffee table in the middle of a living room with a few magazines scattered on top; there were two pictures of the sea on either side of the living room wall and a clock with large numbers. Straight ahead was the kitchen that Carrie tried to get a better view of, but could only see the corner of a cupboard and one of the windows. With a few rugs, mats and a set of blue cushions, it resembled pictures out of a home-shopping catalogue. It was almost too perfect. Carrie was dying to see the rest of Danny's flat and her room.

"It's cool" Carrie replied walking towards the kitchen. At last I can get better look. Walking into the kitchen, she thought it was even better. The kitchen was brown and white, fitted entirely with sink, dishwasher, washing machine, Fridge and cooker. Blinds again for the windows, there were sugar, biscuit and tea jars on the side and a pinewood kitchen table with a bowl of fruit in the middle. Again it resembled a kitchen out of a home-shopping catalogue.

"I love the kitchen Danny, it's no nice"

"Great, glad you like it babe" Danny shut the front door behind him

Carrie ran her hand along the kitchen table; it was as if she'd never felt food before or never been in kitchen. "Did you do all this yourself?"

"Yeah, I did a course in decorating and a bit of interior designing when I was at college" Danny replied standing in the kitchen doorway. He watched Carrie's every move.

Carrie looked at Danny in surprise "Well you've done well, your place is really nice. You should be proud of yourself"

Danny could feel himself blushing. This girl is so sweet. "Anyone can do that babe, it ain't nothing to special"

"Yes it is. I can't decorate to save my life"

"Well. I'll teach you"

"I'll have to hold you to that when I do the baby's room"

Danny suddenly got a warm feeling in the pit of his stomach. The thought of having Carrie and a baby in his home made him feel excited and content, he didn't know why.

"Are you sure you don't mind me staying?"

Danny shook his head "No" he replied throwing his keys up on the air and catching them "I could do with the company"

Carrie laughed a little "I'll ask you that in nine months time shall I?"

"Yeah and you'll get the same answer"

Carrie nodded and looked around the kitchen one last time, she still could not believe this was her home. I can't believe this is happening to me, I'm so happy I wanna burst.

Danny watched Carrie even closer; I'm finding it hard not keeping my eyes off her. Every time she moves, it's like watching nature. Danny get a hold of yourself. Sorry. Danny broke his concentration.

"Right, make yourself at home" he said throwing his keys on the kitchen table. "Your room is next door to mine"

"Okay" Carrie said walking out the kitchen and placing her bag on the floor, she didn't realise she had it in her hand. Flopping down on to the sofa Carrie rubbed her hands together with slight contentment.

"Good"

Carrie looked at Danny "Thanks Danny"

"Oh, don't worry about it"

"Really, I mean it. Thank you"

"And I said don't worry about it"

Carrie smiled. For the first time in two days she felt safe and secure.

Since Andrew had walked out on Carrie, he was still angry and bitter. He never wanted to leave her; he blamed their child. If it wasn't for the child me and Carrie would still be together, why did it have to come? I still can't believe Carrie expected me to throw my life away over it. Why did she do this to me? Andrew was happy with the way things were he never thought Carrie would be stupid and ruin everything they had. I knew none of this is my fault, she knew what she was doing, and I have nothing to do with all this. I thought we'd be together forever, its obvious forever isn't what it used to be anymore. Closing the front door Andrew looked out onto the road. The day was mild and a little sunny with a few clouds. Andrew still had not told his parents about he and Carrie, he had considered it but thought best not to tell him in further consideration it was none of their business anyway. Already his mother has been asking about Carrie as having not seen her and so far Andrew had managed to create a number of excuses but he knew it would not take his mother to work out what's happening. Andrew didn't care, as he didn't see it was his problem. I'm not the one pregnant; I'm not the one whose gotta look after it. As Andrew walked out to the front gate he began to feel a little lost, usually at this time he'd be either with or going to see Carrie. For some reason he half expected to see Carrie sitting on the doorstep begging for reconciliation, not that he would give her one for he still stood by what he said. He didn't want to see Carrie covered in baby lotion, talcum powder and smelling of Cow&Gate apple and pear desert. He wanted freedom, independence and a future with Carrie. Now all that had changed.

Although Andrew felt strongly, he still loved Carrie. Nothing that changed where love concerned, it was just his love that was not strong enough for him to spend the rest of his life looking after a child.

Fiona Shannon frowned at her reflection in the mirror. Eyes puffy from crying face pale from lack of eating and hair pulled back from her face so far she looked like a manikin. Dressed in her pink dressing gown and slippers she was clutching a hankie in her hand. Looking at herself in the mirror, Fiona felt sick. How could I let my baby go? How could I let that bastard take away my baby, just like that? I

didn't even help; I just stood there like a bloody statue! Fiona lay back down on her bed, staring up at her ceiling. For all I know Carrie could be dead, lying in the gutter or lying floating in a river. It's all my fault, if I'd stood up to Clark, none of this would have happened. What do I expect? The same I was with Yvonne is the same I am with Carrie, helpless.

Carrie's life seemed to be working out, once she settled in with Danny that she began to adjust to the changes in her life. Both had devised a daily routine of shared housework and cooking while Danny paid for bills and food. Even though was not bringing in any income, she made it her duty to help and promised to seek employment as soon as possible. Carrie loved living with Danny; but was very disheartened, as Andrew wasn't here to share it with her.

Danny had not realised how lonely he was until Carrie moved in, before he lived in almost silence and used to arrive home as late as possible. Now his flat was filled with Carrie's humming along the R&B and Hip-Pop sounds of Aaliyah, Mary J Blige, R.Kelly and Brandy. Within a week Danny's flat was filled with the smell of impulse body spray, perfume, 19 Magazine, and pasta (Carrie's favourite food). Despite Danny having to hide his secret stash of pornographic magazines, he wouldn't have it any other way.

Carrie took a sip of lemonade and played with the glass in her hands. Tears sprang to her eyes, what have I done to deserve all this, why are dad and Andrew being so unreasonable, it's not fair, it's not as though I planned all this. Everything was an accident, why am I the one to suffer? Carrie wiped the tears from her cheeks and sniff. She could feel her nose beginning to run. And mum just stood there and let dad throw me out, she promised to help me. She promised never to let dad throw me out! I still can't believe it. I may never see my own mother again? I may never see Andrew again (oh god). My child will never know its grandparents or father? All because they don't want to know, what am I supposed to day? Sorry sweetheart, your grandfather is a narrow-minded old fool (grandmother is a coward and a liar) and your father is a selfish bastard. Now I know how Yvonne feels, I suppose I should have gone to visit her. Maybe I will, when the baby's born. I know she won't turn my back on me.

Carrie took another sip of lemonade and placed the glass on the coffee table, not caring about leaving a mark on it. Oh God I hate them! How could they do this to me? In despair she pulled out her hair clip and threw it aside, she shook her head before covering her face with her hands. Thank god I met Danny, she thought.

“Thank god” she whispered.

Just then Danny came to the door. Carrie swore to herself that she didn't hear him turned the key. Carrie rubbed her eyes quickly, not wanting him to see her cry.

Danny shut the door “Hi babe” he unzipped his jacket, revealing a green ‘Soviet’ T-shirt.

“Hi” Carrie said, trying to be cheerful.

Danny sat next to Carrie, he noticed Carrie has been crying. His heart sank for he hated to see Carrie upset, Danny's face was full of concern. “What's the matter babe?”

Carrie shook her head; she did not feel like replying. Plus she knew that if she was to say anything it was just be blubs and sniffs. Looking at Danny, Carrie noticed his eyes were so gentle and warm. Unlike her own, filled with pain, fear and certainty. Here am I singing Danny's praises, what's stopping him from leaving me? Everyone else has or let me down haven't they? Nothing. Danny wanted so much to take away all her pain, if only I had met her earlier. None of this would have happened and that fool wouldn't have hurt her so much. Oh Carrie, stop being so negative. I think him giving you a free home has said it all. Carrie smiled. “Nothing” she finally said wiping her face vigorously.

“Just as long you're okay” Danny touched her shoulder and squeezed it.

Carrie touched his arm and squeezed it “I am, really”

“Okay” Danny let go of her shoulder, despite not wanting to. “Hungry?” he asked getting up

Carrie stood; she could feel all her bones crack “Yeah” closing her eyes she stretched. As she did so her top lifted slightly revealing her toned stomach, Danny couldn't help but to stare. He imagined caressing his hands over her stomach; it must be so smooth and kissable. Danny man, get a hold of yourself. Carrie doesn't wanna get involved with anyone. She's pregnant and still I love with her ex. I know, but I can't help it. She's so beautiful and I'm falling for her. You are not falling her Danny, no way. Okay! Danny quickly regained his concentration. “So what do you want to eat?”

“Don't worry, I'm making sandwiches”

Danny grinned “I have no objections to that”

Carrie shook head “No you wouldn't would you? You'd eat your own arm”

Danny pretended to look shocked “How dare you”

Carrie laughed before she headed for the kitchen.

“Just think” Danny began between mouthfuls of his cheese and marmite sandwich. Ever since Danny was a child he has always loved the mix-flavoured treat. “You’ll be a mum in nine months”

Carrie watched Danny with disgust. How can he eat that crap? It’s disgusting! “I know that Danny, I did study biology”

“Funny” Danny said with his mouth full.

Carrie took a bit out of her ham and banana sandwich and grinned showing blobs of the soft fruit between her teeth. This is the first time Carrie has eaten this sandwich and she had to admit to herself that it not be the last.

Danny stood “I reckon you’ll have a boy,” he said before stuffing the remains of his sandwich into his mouth

Swallowing hard Carrie frowned “Why do you say that? You can’t see my baby”

Danny shrugged and headed for the kitchen “I just do, I have a hunch that’s all babe” pulling the dishwasher door towards him, Danny leaned forward and dropped the plate inside and closed it shut. The cutlery rattled as he did so.

Carrie put the plate down on the coffee table, she had finished her sandwich “Well thank you doctor Danny for your analysis but keep it”

Danny got the feeling that Carrie did not appreciate his theory. I think I’d better shut up. Entering the living room he retrieve his jacket.

Carrie watched Danny “Where are you going?” she asked quickly

Danny felt surprised by her concern. Hey, she’s asking. When they wanna know where, they care. “Nowhere, well not until tonight”

Carrie sat back before placing her finger in her mouth to remove some food stuck on her back teeth. “I see, out raving are we?” she asked trying not to sound nosy.

Danny walked to the coat rack and hung up his jacket. The coat rack was given to him from his grandfather as an 18<sup>th</sup> birthday present. It is made from oak wood and resembles those seen in classic

movies, such as *Casablanca*. At the time Danny did not appreciate it and would have rather had money but now, he loves it. "Yeah. Only to that new club with a few mates from work"

"What, the new one that's just opened up opposite the Mercedes car showroom?"

"Yeah, that's the one. I wanna try it out, see what's it like" Danny replied as he picked up his house keys

Carrie nodded "I've heard good things about that place"

"Have you?"

Carrie sat up a little and crossed her legs "Yeah, the opening week they had guest and artists" she said swinging them back and forth with out realising

Danny blinked hard twice to stop himself from staring "Cool. I should have a good night then"

"Yeah" I wish I were going out I haven't been out with Leanne and Lucy in ages, but it's too late now.

"Any phone calls?"

Carrie leaned forward to pick up her plate "Yeah" she balancing it on her lap she frowned to remember the caller's name "Emma-Louise? But she didn't leave a message"

Danny exhaled "Good, that means I don't have to ring her back."

Carrie looked surprised "Why? Don't you like her or something?"

"Hmm. She's okay" Danny sat on the arm of the sofa "But she just ain't my type"

Carrie didn't like what he said "Why? Don't you like blondes?"

"Yeah, but I prefer brunettes" Danny said slowly "And she's a red head"

Typical bloke, no tact "So, why has she got your number and why haven't you told her?"

"I have told her believe me and my soon to be ex mate gave her my number for a joke" Danny protested

Carrie stared at Danny "And have you told her any of this?"

"Yeah, like I sai-"

"I don't think you have Danny" Carrie interjected

Danny thought for a second, he had to admit all he had done was avoid the poor girl "Okay, I haven't"

Carrie was not impressed "Yeah, well you'd better tell her before it gets out of hand Danny"

Danny sighed "Yeah, I know"

Standing up Carrie took her plate and headed for the kitchen "Well do it then, it isn't nice you making her think you like her when you don't" Carrie's mind turned to Andrew. "No one likes to be made a fool of"

Danny closed his eyes, me and my big mouth, how could I be so insensitive? "I know. I'll tell her. I promise"

Carrie turned to look at Danny, she said nothing. Instead she went to her room.

Carrie tipped her head back slightly as she looked in the mirror, turning her head to the side her examined the length of her hair. Oh no! She whispered to herself, it's growing out of shape. It need cutting, I don't want it getting any longer. Brushing her hair Carrie sighed as she remembered that her mother would always offer to cut her hair, Carrie still could not believe how much her mother had let her down. Staring at her reflection in the mirror, tears sprang to her eyes as she almost saw her mother looking back at her.

*Knock. Knock*

Carrie sniffed back her tears and shoved her hair behind her ears "Come in pest" Carrie was desperate for Danny not to see her in such an emotional mess.

Danny opened the door and stepped in "Next time, I'll just barge in"

Carrie laughed a little "Yeah, you can try"

Holding out both arms, Danny showed Carrie his cuffs that were loose "Button these up for me please"

Carrie turned and stood up before Danny "okay. I like to help the needy" she said taking the left cuff

Danny loved her smile "Thank you. I'm glad that us less fortunate can be of service to you"

"No worries babe"

Carrie looked up at Danny and smiled. I must admit he looks good. Danny could smell the scent of roses on Carrie mixed together with *Oil of Olay* face cream. She smells so good; I can feel myself giving way here. Suddenly Danny leaned forward, both their lips touching and him wrapping his arms around Carrie's waist and pulling her closer. Then pushing Carrie slightly, she falls on the bed with Danny falling on top of her, kissing, caressing, touching and hearing Carrie's soft moans. Danny blinked away his fantasy, get a hold of yourself Danny! Sorry, but I can't help it. I'm crazy about her, crazy.

"There. Done" Carrie announced, stepping back slightly

Phew thank god. I didn't know how much I could take. "Cheers" he stepped back "Look alright?"

Carrie nodded "Cute"

Danny's face fell "What is it with you girls and this cute business? It's really pisses us blokes off you know"

Carrie shrugged "Well I'm not going to say that you're drop dead gorgeous"

I wish you did babe. My god I wish you did "Why not?"

Carrie looked Danny in the eye and put both hands on her hip "Danny" she said "You're many things, but gorgeous isn't one of them"

Danny pretended to look hurt, even though he did feel a little put out "Fine, I'll just go out tonight and find someone who wants me for my looks and charm"

Carrie gave him a look "I think the old people's home closes at half six"

"Ha! You're hilarious," Danny said sarcastically

"I'm glad" Carrie said as she walked over to her wardrobe, she opened it. Looking inside she realised how little clothes she had with her. It's like an empty warehouse in here. Carrie had barely enough clothes to see her through the next week, she had been intending to go back and collect her clothes, but she felt unsure whether she'd be able to get pass the front gate. There's no chance of me getting them back now; mum and dad don't even know where I am. Shutting them suddenly she turned and faced Danny. "Well enjoy your self tonight " she smiled thinly as she pulled on her cardigan over her shoulder.

Danny's heart sank. Seeing Carrie such an emotional wreck made him want to break down and cry. He did not want to leave her alone tonight. I can't leave her like this; she's likely to do anything to herself. Invite her out then. What? With them lot, they'll be really impressed. The whole idea of tonight was you find skirt to bring it with you. Do you want her to be alone? No! . Well Danny boy, you know what to do then don't you.

"Why don't you come too?"

Carrie's eyes widened in slight horror "What?"

"You heard me," Danny said, "You've got ten minutes to get ready" he was already getting used to the idea

"Danny don't be silly, I'm under age. I'm 16 remember?"

Danny admitted he had overlooked her age, but he wasn't giving up "So. Make yourself look older. I'm sure you've done it before"

Carrie done it before, but that was to see a 15 film. There is a difference when going into an over 18's club. "I can't Danny" Carrie protested "I have nothing to wear"

"Rubbish" Danny headed for the door "You've got ten minutes until the cab gets here, move yourself" he told her before leaving the room.

Straight away Carrie opened her wardrobe and rummaged through, despite only having two dresses, a skirt, and two tops she was determined to find something to wear. Carrie pulled out a black vest top, jeans, and heels (how did I manage to grab that?), looking at the shoes they needed a polish, but Carrie was not bothered. I'll be in the dark for god sake! They will have to do. Pulling off her cardigan Carrie looked at the dress. What if Danny doesn't like it? I don't want him thinking I'm a tart. Tough girl, as you'd better make the most of that dress as in a few months time it won't fit you.

Carrie just managed to get ready in time, without wearing any make up and spraying herself all over with body spray and perfume (she was sure none of it actually went on her clothes) she was ready. Looking in the mirror, Carrie stared at her reflection for a second. I'd better get in. Carrie knew she looked simple, but she didn't care. I've got one life; I might as well use it. Just as she picked up her cardigan and folded it, she heard

"Come on, cab's here"

"Coming" she said before rushing out, just before she left Carrie caught her reflection in the mirror. For the first time in ages she liked what she saw.

Danny pulled on his jacket as Carrie came out of her room. Losing his concentration Danny caught his ring on the inside of his sleeve. "You look great," he said trying not to look at Carrie too much.

Carrie smiled "cheers"

The car horn beeped

I'd love to tell you babe; I'd marry you in that outfit. Danny managed to free himself from the sleeve "it's nice babe, very nice"

Carrie walked forward "Thank you"

Danny smiled "No worries babe"

The car horn beeped again

“Come on, let’s get going” and they left

Doolalies was huge; to Carrie it was enormous. Andrew never took her to any clubs as he much happier going to the local pub. Carrie had no objections, but she would have appreciated a change of scenery.

“See easy as pie” Danny said

“Yeah okay, you were right. So I got in,” Carrie said with a touch of relief

“All we have to do now is look for them lot,” Danny said.

“Do you know where they’re gonna be?”

“No, but if I find the bar. I’ll find them” Danny replied. Taking Carrie by the hand, he suddenly felt butterflies in his stomach. This feels good; her hands are so warm. As he lead her through the dance floor, Danny felt Carrie’s slender fingers in his palm and he did not want to let them go.

Carrie could hardly believe the size of the dance floor and the amount of people who were there. This place is massive; I’ve never seen so many people in one place. The red, green, orange and blue strobe lights danced around the ceiling and floor, the music was so loud you could feel it and just by looking at everyone you could see everyone was enjoying themselves. Carrie looked around and sat people dancing, standing at the edge of the dance-floor under the fans and the bar. All of which bopped their heads to the music. Carrie could just make out where the bar staff were and that there were six bottle of spirit hanging above their heads.

The music was a mixture of modern day house n’ garage and dance with heavy R&B and hip-pop as already the DJ had mixed old school garage. Bopping her head slightly Carrie smiled to herself, I’m really gonna enjoy myself tonight.

Danny led Carrie top a group of men who she guessed were his friends. Well this is it she thought to herself. Pulling away from Danny quickly, she didn’t notice slight hurt look on his face. Carrie smiled briefly as the approached them. One of them who had a bunch of keys in his hand pointed out at Danny.

“You’re late”

Danny showed him vee sign “So what? Kill me”

Another leaned back and looked at Carrie’s legs. Damn, she’s fit! “Who’s the skirt?” where did he find her?

Carrie took offence. Excuse me? Danny could see Carrie was not amused and guided in front of him “This is Carrie”

Muffled greetings arouse from Danny’s friends who were clearly not interested in her name. “Carrie, these *people* are my mates” pointing to each one Danny introduced them by name “Paul, Steve, Matt” “Hi” Carrie said, despite hating being the centre of unwanted attention.

“So” Matt began “How did you come to know such a gentle man as Danny?”

Carrie wondered if he was taking the mick with his choice of words. She stared at Matt for a second. Matt is two inches taller Danny. He has broad shoulders, well-structured face; he reminded Carrie of a model from the magazine My Guy. She put it down to his nose and thin lips. With his staring green eyes (which were slightly red at the moment), dark brown hair and dressed in a blue shirt, trousers and shoes Carrie thought he looked good but she felt there was something that he didn’t like about him. Looking down at his hands she noticed he was holding a cigarette in hand and a glass of scotch in the other, but that was not it. Glancing back up at Matt, she also didn’t like they way Matt looked at her.

“Coincidence” Carrie replied as she tapped her foot to *David Morales*.

Danny was impressed with Carrie’s reply for he was somewhat afraid she would say something that would have everyone asking questions all evening.

Matt nodded. “Okay”. Taking a puff from his cigarette, he kept his eye on Carrie as he blew out the smoke.

Paul who seemed to Carrie to be more a gentleman cocked his head to the side. “So, you live around here then?”

Carrie looked at Paul “Yeah, with a friend”

Carrie watched for any expressions on Matt and Paul’s faces, but there were not any

Matt reached inside his shirt pocket and pulled out his wallet “Right” he said with the cigarette in his mouth “Fancy a drink Carrie?”

Carrie watched the cigarette bounce in Matt's bottom lip and feared for it to drop. "Yeah, *Malibu and coke please*"

Paul gave Matt a look "And what about the rest of us?"

Matt looked at Paul as if he had spoken a foreign language "You've got money with you, spend it" and he disappeared into the crowds towards the bar

Danny shook his head in disgust "That bloke never changes, always has and will be a tight fisted bastard"

Carrie took another look around, she could get over the atmosphere in the club, and it was if everyone came here to get away from anything and everything that life threw at them. The chance of dancing all night, meeting people and drinking really thrived her.

Matt returned with Carrie's drink, she took it "Thanks" she took a sip

Paul did not want to look at Matt "Don't worry Danny, I won't let you die of thirst"

"Cheers mate, the usual"

"No worries" and Paul disappeared towards the bar

"Nice?" Matt asked

"Yeah" Carrie nodded

*"Okay now we're gonna step back in time with a dance floor filler that's gonna keep you up all night. This is N-Trance's Set you free"*

*U HUH YEAH. WHEN I HOLD YOU BAYYBEEEE*

Yes, this is my favourite tune. I've got the urge to dance and I have to dance. Carrie handed Danny her glass "Hold this please" and grabbed Matt's arm "Come on, let's dance" at that moment she did not see the look of jealousy on Danny's face. All she wanted to do was dance. "I love this tune" Carrie said

Although Matt was taken by surprise, he did not object at all.

*SET YOU FREEEEEEEEE. SET YOU FREEEEEEEEE*

Carrie spun around like a spinning top while Matt danced closely in front of her. "God, I love this tune" she shouted before turning to face him.

"Really" Matt shouted back

"Yeah. When it first came out I used to play it every day"

Matt nodded "The tune all right" he was lying through his teeth for he thought the song was complete rubbish.

Matt watched Carrie. He never realised Carrie could let herself go so much, as she closed her eyes to the music Matt shook his head. She is well into it. The sound of the thunder and lightning made Carrie feel as if she was actually on a moor in the middle of the night, just as they girl was in the actual video to the song. Carrie could feel the music, vibe and electricity that brightened her insides like the Blackpool lights. Carrie sighed, in her mind she was in heaven and dancing was the only way she could live. Throwing her arms up in the air she sang along

"Only you can set me free"

Matt smiled to himself; this girl needs loosen up just a little more.

Paul pointed to both Carrie and Matt with his forefinger "Looks like Matt and Carrie are having fun"

Danny watched them carefully. I can't believe she is dancing with him, why didn't she ask me "Yeah, lots of fun" taking a sip of his drink. I don't believe this, I bet she'll fall for him. Like they all do.

"She's cool" Steve said

Danny nodded "Yeah"

Both Steve and Paul were baffled with the identity of Carrie; they wanted to know who she was and what was actually going on.

"So Dan', where did you meet her then?" Paul asked

Danny sighed. I knew it would come to this, I might as well just tell them. He turned to them "Okay, this is to go no further" he warned looking at them

Paul shrugged "Okay"

Damn this must be good. "I met her a couple of weeks ago in a café"

"Yeah" Paul said expecting Danny to say something much more exciting

"And she was in a lot of trouble and I had to help her"

"What kind of trouble?" Steve asked

"Her dad threw her out and her boyfriend dumped her because" Danny looked to Carrie and Matt they had finished and were coming towards them

Paul frowned "Because what?"

"Woo! I need a drink," Carrie said aloud as she fanned herself with her hand. Carrie could feel the sweat running down her temples and her heart thumping against her chest. Despite her physical condition, she had never felt so good.

Danny shook his head "I'll tell you later"

"I'm not surprised Carrie, you danced for the entire song" Matt said, he too was covered in sweat but was not out of breath.

"Someone looked as if they were enjoying themselves," Steve said

Carrie smiled "Yeah. I was, that's my top tune" still fanning herself "Besides someone's gotta dance when none of you lot can"

Steve and Paul pretended to act shocked "You are so rude, you never told us she was that as well Danny"

Danny shrugged, pretending not to care he sipped his *Becks* lager "I've got a bad memory" I can't believe I'm jealous; she's only dancing with Matt. It's not as though she asked him out or anything. Yeah, but Danny. What if she does? He thought.

Carrie ignored Danny's comment for she was having too much of a good time. This was the first chance she had to forget all her problems and she was going to enjoy every minute of it. Sitting on the stool between Paul and Steve she looked at them both "Now. Which one of you lot is gonna buy me a drink?" she asked crossing her legs

Danny watched intently

Paul was about to volunteer when Matt interjected "Go on then, you twisted my arm Caz"

Caz? Danny looked at Matt. What kind of name is that for her? Caz.

“Cheers Matt, I’ll just have an orange juice this time”

Matt suddenly remembered Carrie’s Malibu and coke, looking over to the bar it was still there. “Yeah” Matt said making his way over to the glass. He touched the glass and it was still cold. Hmm, great. Just right. Looking over at the rest, he saw that they were chatting amongst themselves. Reaching inside his pocket he pulled out a tiny plastic bag with a white tablet inside it. Pulling it open, he emptied it into the drink. Now, let’s see what Carrie can really do with this zapper inside her. Smiling to himself he watched the tablet instantly dissolving. Just a little harmless fun Matt, that’s all it is. Just to make sure he shook the drink a little and shoved the remaining evidence in his pocket. Returning he handed Carrie the drink

“Here Caz, you forgot this”

“Oh yeah. Cheers Matt” she said before gulping the entire drink in one go.

Matt watched carefully.

“That’s better” Carrie said handing Danny the glass, despite Danny feeling a little rejected he took the glass.

“So Carrie do you go out often then?” Paul asked

Carrie shook her head “Nope, I never have enough money to go the places I wanna go”

“So how come you’re such a good dancer then?” Matt asked

Carrie smiled at the compliment, maybe I was wrong about Matt after all. I mean he’s bought me all my drinks and danced with me. I half expected Danny to do all that. “I studied dance for 4 years at performing arts school”

“Really?” Matt asked looking impressed.

Danny also shared the surprise “You never told me you studied dance”

Carrie looked Danny and shrugged “You never asked”

At that moment Danny felt an inch small. Well that has just put me in my place, just goes to show how much I actually know about her.

Paul, Steve and Matt could also see how Danny felt. Poor bloke, they thought living with his bird and he knows fuck all about. Never mind Dan.

Carrie bopped her head to the music as she watched everyone on the dance floor. There more that danced the hotter the club got, Carrie could feel the vibe with the music and was ready to dance again. Standing up Carrie suddenly needed to the toilet. "Back a sec" she said heading of left towards the red flashing lights saying *Women's Toilets*.

Matt followed her with his eyes and smiled slightly. Oh yeah, she's going. Carrie's about to go on the biggest ride of her life.

When Carrie came out of the cubicle, her heart began to flutter, to stop herself from falling she grabbed hold of one of the sinks and looked into the mirror. Oh god. What's the matter with me all of a sudden? Carrie felt as if all her blood was pumping quickly around her veins, so quickly that she began to feel faint. Tightening her grip on the sink Carrie took a deep breath, but it seemed as if she losing all her strength. What is going on? I feel as if I'm going in my own world, it's as if what's going on around me doesn't involve me. I feel as if I'm the only one here and everyone else has just disappeared, like images. Am I going crazy? What's happening to me? I can't focus- this is scaring me. I wish Andrew was here, or Danny. Although this was giving her a boost, she still could not think straight. Carrie straightened herself up a little more and took another deep breath. Instantly she felt better, she did not know why but she did. That's better. Carrie made her way out of the toilets, as she came towards Paul, Danny, Steve and Matt, Danny felt there was something was wrong. She looks different.

"Carrie, you okay?" he asked reaching her hand,

Pulling away slowly, Carrie could only nod as she began to feel worse.

Matt watched Carrie. Hey. Hey, miracle pill is doin' the dill.

Danny did not believe her. It could be her pregnancy, that dancing must have taken it all out of her.

"Here, sit down babe" he said helping Carrie onto the stool. Carrie gave no resistance. She began to feel odd as if she had lost control of her mind. Crazy? She knows but she could not shake the feeling.

Paul looked at Carrie then at Danny. What's with the girl? A minute ago she was dancing and now she can't even stand up. Danny glanced at Paul, he could see that Paul shared his concerns for Carrie.

I don't know what's going on, I don't know why I'm feeling like this. I really don't. All I know it EVERYONE is watching me. Carrie covered her face with both hands.

"Carrie are you okay?" Danny asked touching her arm

Carrie nodded. She was sure that everyone was watching her. I can feel their eyes, hear their voices and see their expressions on their faces. 'Look at her' they're saying 'Isn't she strange. I get she isn't even human'. God, why don't they just leave me alone? I haven't done anything. Go away! I'm gonna scream if they don't leave me alone! Carrie took her hands away from her face. If I wanna get rid of

these people, I'm gonna have to dance and that way they'll leave me alone. Once I relax then they'll go away. She stood up

"I'm gonna dance" see; now I feel better.

"Having fun" Matt called out

Danny glared at Matt "What's the matter with you? Can't you see she ain't fit to dance?"

Matt shrugged "Well she doesn't seem to think so"

Paul watched Carrie dance "Danny's right Matt, she aint fit to do anything"

*"Right, just leaving the h n' g for a while. Now here comes the sounds of Prodigy- Outer Space"*

Danny's heart tighten, his eyes fixed on Carrie as if she was bomb ready to explode. Oh shit. Please not this record. It's gonna kill her! He watched Carrie as she began to move slowly to the beginning of the song "You're right she isn't" he said quietly

"Why do I think Carrie's sudden change in something really bad?" Steve whispered to Paul

Paul kept his eye on Danny, hoping that he would not hear what he was about to reply "Because I'm afraid you're right"

This is going to be fun Matt thought

*I'm goin' sendin' to outer space, to find another race. I'm goin sendin' to outer space to find another race. The song sped up. I take your brain to another dimension. I take your brain to another dimension, pay close attention.*

Carrie spun around and around with her arms stretched out like an aeroplane. She felt as if she was flying high, high in the sky. I'm having such a wicked time; I can't believe how good I feel. I could do this forever until the die I die. I'm so happy. It's unbelievable. Carrie had never felt so much energy in her life; she began to dance faster and faster. Surprised by the speed she was dancing in, she still wanted to dance faster. Carrie felt as if she was on a mission, a mission impossible.

The song sped up, beats racing and the rhythm doubling in pace. The lyrics sped up, sounding as if recorded on dub. Everything within the song reminded Carrie of speed and how fast she wanted dance.

Danny and his friends were stunned, not to mention a few others who stopped to watch her in amazement. Danny sucked in his breath with fear, what is going in Carrie? What's got into you? Are you on something?

"Woo" Carrie said aloud "Love life"

Everything was spinning and spinning for Carrie. Faster and faster she spun, she could hear the music buzzing in her ears and see the lights flashing before her. *Outer Space* came to an end *then No Good/start the dance* began.

*You're-no-good-for-me. I don't need no-body. Don't-need-no-one-that's-no-good-for-me*

This tune, even faster.

Woo! This is wonderland. I'm buzzing; I'm buzzing so much I could just-

Carrie opened her eyes and stopped. She then began to sway from side to side. Danny looked at Steve. Shit, she's out if it. Big time! Matt's eyes widened in horror. Maybe what I did wasn't such a good idea, I mean she's no supposed to react to it so badly. Carrie continued to sway.

"I think we'd better help her. Now" Paul said backing away to put his drink aside

"He's right Danny, something is not right" Steve agreed

Danny watched Carrie; stunned he just stared at her. What's happening? Well don't juts stand there Dan, go get the girl.

Steve could not believe that Danny was just standing there "We've gotta do something now Dan, before she gets anymore out of hand"

Matt started to back away. I gotta get out of here. I should have never given it to her, this isn't meant to happen. God, I'm an idiot. Matt looked around nervously; I gotta get out of here before any of them lot sees me. I ain't getting' in trouble. It's not even my fault anymore, how was I supposed to know her body would react like that! I just wanted to her to have fun that's all. Matt slowly backed away and ran to the toilets, he felt sure no one saw him escape.

Danny saw something that moved at the corner of his eye, it was Matt. Suddenly it clicked. Matt! Bastard!

"Stay here you lot, just make her sit down and I'll be back in a second," Danny said

“What? You can’t just chip” Steve cried

Danny looked at Steve in the eye “I aint, there’s just something I gotta do first” and he disappeared into the crowd to follow Matt.

“Fine” Steve muttered. “Come on Paul, we’ve gotta get Carrie”

If Carrie were to stand in a witness box in an English court of law and try and give an account of what she did that evening, it would be a waste of time. Carrie was delirious. I am swaying. I am swaying, across the sky. I am swaying, everywhere. Bowing her head Carrie began to shiver. I’m cold; I’m so cold. Carrie then felt uncontrollably tingly and felt her nerve endings twitch. Carrie hugged herself. What’s going? Where am I? Regaining her balance slightly Carrie looked around of Danny, but could not see him. Where is he? Why isn’t he here? Carrie could feel herself getting colder and colder. It was as if her body temperature had dropped to 20o/c. maybe if I dance I can get warm again. Carrie began to dance, despite not knowing what tune she was dancing to and feeling the worst she has ever felt in her life. As her body began to move, she closed her eyes again and turned slightly. Steve and Paul watched in horror as her eyes opened and rolled up wards.

“Shit! Let’s go!” Steve said

Paul and Steve made their way to the dance floor; each took Carrie by the arm and led her back to the row of chairs where they had been standing. I can’t believe this is happening. How can she let herself get in such a state? Paul thought as they reached the chairs. By this time Carrie was delirious.

“Okay Carrie, you sit down,” Steve said lifting her on the chair. Carrie slid off and stood instead, leaning back on the chair for support.

Paul sighed and looked at Steve “She is mashed”

Steve who still had hold of her arm nodded “You know it”

“I better go tell Danny what’s going on” Paul said, “Where did he say he was going?”

“Ain’t got a clue, but try the bog” Steve replied

Sure enough Paul found Matt and Danny by the sinks.

“Dan’. You have to come and sort Carrie out, she’s out of her head” Paul shook his head

"What?" Danny cried before turning to look at Matt.

Oh fuck. The game is up now, I'm busted.

"You've done it again, ain't you?"

Matt tried to look oblivious "I don't know what you're goin' on about"

Danny pushed Matt into the cubicles; Matt lost his balance and went crashing into the toilet itself. "You know exactly what I'm chattin' about Matt" Danny hissed

Paul frowned "What's going on?"

Danny ignored him; he kept his eyes on Matt. Anger burning inside him like indigestion. "You fucking spiked her drink!" he spat

Matt regained his balance and tried to keep his act up.

Paul closed his eyes. You idiot. Doesn't he ever learn? Didn't what happened last time teach him a lesson?

"No I never"

Danny pushed Matt again and then walking inside the cubicle, he grabbed Matt by his shirt collar

"Don't fucking like to me! You gave Carrie something, I know you did!"

Paul thought of stepping in, but he knew it was about time Matt paid the price for all his wrongdoing.

Matt's face went red; he reached out to Danny in his won defence but could not, so he nodded instead.

"What the fuck's matter with you? Don't you know that could kill her?" Danny shouted

Matt shook his head and managed to speak "Danny, no body dies", he said in a breath "It's only the unlucky ones who die"

Danny blinked and looked at Matt, he felt like spitting in his face. Tightening his grip on Matt's collar

"You're a fucking idiot Matt. This is different, Carrie's pregnant"

Matt could not breathe "What?"

Danny let go of Matt's collar, much to his relief "You heard me" Danny walked out the cubicle. I can't believe him, how can he do this? After all that's happened in the past with his dealings, he goes back to his old nasty ways. Looking at Matt, Danny could feel him losing his temper again. I should just bang him up right now. No Dan, it ain't worth it. Danny stepped closer to Matt. Both eyes met. His of anger

Matt's of fear. Matt tried to look away, but could not. He's gonna hit me, I know it Matt thought. "I swear, if Carrie dies. I'll kill you myself"

Matt said nothing for her knew Danny meant every word.

"I need to go to the loo," Carrie said

Steve took Carrie by the arm and led her "Okay, let's go" please god, don't anything happen to her.

Carrie held Steve's arm tightly, when she reached the doorway she stopped.

"I'll be okay now"

Steve did not want to leave her but he was not going into toilets with her. "Okay, I'll be right here" and the door closed in his face.

Carrie stumbled into the toilets, she felt surprised that she did not slip over. Steve stood in the doorway watching her; a second later Paul joined him

"Where have you been?"

"Toilets with Danny and Matt"

Two young women who passed both Danny and Steve gave them filthy looks before muttering "Benders" under their breath

Paul overheard but could not be bothered to explain himself "Great"

"Well?"

"Matthew Star strikes again"

Steve's eyes widened "You're fucking joking"

"Nope, he spiked her drink with what looks like an E" Paul sighed

"I don't believe this, she could die" Steve said keeping his voice down to a whisper

"Yeah, I know. Plus she pregnant"

"You what?"

Carrie was freezing. Now her body temperature had dropped further, she could feel it. Hugging her self tightly she shook her head. What's going on? I'm freezing. Carrie then felt dizzy, she could not see any of the sinks in front of her, and she tried to focus but could not. Everything was a blur to Carrie, visually and mentally. Nothing seemed to be real, she felt as if she in a fantasy world, only this world was not all fun and games.

"Where am I?" she whispered to herself.

Now feeling disorientated, she tried to reach out for the nearest sink but they looked as if they were moving from side to side. Why is everything moving? Keep still! I can't so this, the keep moving! Carrie attempted to reach for the sink again, this time she managed to grab hold of one. Lifting her head Carrie looked in the reflection in the mirror, she did not like what she saw. I feel sick. I feel really sick. My head is spinning like a wheel, I feel dizzy and I can't seem to get a grip on myself. Where's Andrew? Where's Danny? Why has everyone just left me? I hate feeling like this! I feel so out of it! I just want to get back to normal. I want to feel like me again!

Carrie took a deep breath, but did not feel any better. Suddenly she could not see her reflection in the mirror; she attempted to focus but could not. Oh god help me! Carrie cried out for help. Steve and Paul burst into the toilets

"Carrie"

Carrie turned to both Paul and Steve. Her eyes were rolling slightly, she looked paler than ever and she was struggling to keep her balance.

"Grab her Paul"

Paul took Carrie by the waist, while Steve cupped her face in his hands. "Carrie look at me. We're gonna get help, you're gonna be alright"

Carrie began to sway. Paul tightened "Steve we've gotta get help"

"Don't you think I know that? Where the hell is Danny?" Steve demanded he was finding keeping Carrie's face straight increasingly difficult due to her sweat.

"Help me" she begged breathless "I don't know what's happening to me" I'm floating, Carrie swayed back. I'm falling, I'm-

Carrie's vision got blurred. "I can't see properly" She began to sweat even more. Forehead and temples drenched making her hair stick to her face. "I feel" Carrie's eyes rolled to the back of her head before she collapsed on the floor.

At that moment Danny burst into the toilets "SHIT!"

"Paul GET AN AMBULANCE NOW!" Steve shouted.

Paul went. Danny knelt down beside Carrie and took her hand to feel her pulse, it was faint. Danny could not believe what was happening, he looked at Steve "What has he done?"

Steve touched Danny on the shoulder "Keep calm Dan, Paul's gone to get the ambulance. She's gonna be alright"

Looking down at Carrie, Danny took her hand "Hang on in there babe. You're gonna be all right. Nothing's gonna happen to you, just hang on in here. You'll be okay, I promise" Danny looked at Steve "What happened?"

"She complained of not being able to see, she said she felt as if she was floating or something. Carrie begged for help, Paul and me kept her up but then she collapsed" Steve replied, he felt a little shaky himself.

"That bastard, I fucking hate him" Danny muttered looking down at Carrie

"I heard" Steve said "Doesn't change does he?"

A bouncer popped his head into the door "The ambulance is on its way and we're evacuating the place"

Steve looked to the voice "Yeah, thanks" both Danny could hear everyone leaving, lights switching on and that there was no music. What a night this has turned out to be.

"You know the police are gonna know what's going on, don't you?"

Steve nodded "Yeah, we know"

Nodding, the bouncer disappeared.

Danny looked up "Where is that fucking ambulance it's been five minutes now?"

Paul appeared with two paramedics following behind him "She's in here" Paul watched.

One knelt beside Carrie before taking her hand for her pulse; it was still faint "What's her name?"

"Carrie Shannon" Danny replied

The paramedic whose name was Jane put her ear to Carrie's mouth "Hello, Carrie. Can you hear me?"

Danny could not see how that was going to help, but he knew Jane knew what was doing. "She's been given something"

Jane looked at Danny "What is it?"

"I think it's an E, I'm not to sure"

Oh god, not again "Do you know who gave it to her?"

"Yeah I do"

This is getting worse. "Right. Come on Carrie. Let's see if we can get you better" Jane stood up as the second paramedic brought the stretcher closer, both hoisted Carrie onto it before attaching oxygen to her. The other paramedic took one end and Jane took the other and made their way out "Mind your backs please"

"Wait, there's something else" Danny said following them out

"What's that?" Jane asked walking across the empty dance floor

"She's pregnant" Suddenly Jane could not breathe.

Danny shook slightly as he gave the hospital receptionist Carrie's details. Despite the vagueness, the receptionist was sure that Fiona and Clark were able to track down.

"I'm sorry I just met her, I hardly know anything about her" Danny said

The receptionist smiled warmly "Don't worry Danny, we'll track them down" looking down at the card

"Do you know what she took?"

Danny nodded, he was now sure "Yeah, an E"

"Okay, if you like to take a seat in the waiting room, someone will be along to see you"

Danny nodded

"Thanks" Steve said and followed Danny to the waiting room.

The receptionist picked up the telephone to contact the police. Within half an hour two officers were contacted and were on their way to tell Fiona and Clark the news.

Danny sat in the hospital waiting room with only a dim light from a small lamp to his left. Paul had gone home and Steve went to use the toilet. Danny had been told to wait until a doctor was available to see him. Already a staff nurse had been into to see Danny, giving him a brief outline to what was going on. Danny had asked to see Carrie, but he was declined permission.

I can't believe this is happening. This is the worst night of my life. Oh god Carrie, I'm so sorry for all this. What was Matt doing? Doesn't he know what's he's done? If I'd known that Carrie was going to be in this much danger, I would have left her at home. Danny stood up, he felt restless to sit. I suppose they have got in touch with her parents, but they were the ones who threw her out. They won't want to know, if they cared Carrie would still be alive now. None of them give a toss. Shit! I shouldn't be sitting here, Andrew should? He should be here worried sick like I am. Well you have nothing to worry about Dan, Carrie's gonna be right as rain in a few months. Danny suddenly thought of Carrie lying in ICU fighting for her life. Having her stomach pumped, being scanned and having hourly tests. He felt sick, sick with fear. Sitting back down Danny tipped his head back and looked up at the ceiling. Who

am I kidding? This is all my fault. If I'd left her at home, none of this would've happened. Danny closed his eyes. For god's sake, just let her be okay.

The door creaked open. It was Steve. "Any news?"

Danny shook his head before opening his eyes. I can't just sit here. I've gotta do something

"No sign of her mum and dad?"

Danny shook his head again.

"They always say no news is good news," Steve said sitting a seat away from Danny

Carrie's health was deteriorating. Her heartbeat had increased, her body temperature was erratic and she was attached to a life support machine. Doctors who were monitoring her feared that Carrie would not survive. In many cases victims would suffer brain or kidney damage, loss of sight and heart failure anything is possible with the subject of drugs. Carrie had not suffered any kidney damage, but has suffered brain and suspected lung damage. Her heartbeats were too fast, which caused most of her concern. Although everything is done to save Carrie's life, the loss of her child made doctors very dubious. A matron was silent when she connected Carrie to the life support machine, after having to turn of her own mothers six months ago she felt as if Carrie died already.

The matron looked at the monitor, it showed Carrie's heartbeat had decreased slightly, but her body temperature was still showing signs of being erratic. Shaking her head the matron looked to the doctor, who had a worried look on his face?

Fiona gave the young police officers a confused look "She's in where?"

"Hospital. Suspected drugs Mrs Shannon. They will be able to tell you more at the hospital"

Fiona stood up and walked numbly to the passage. She slowly pulled on her coat and when the door.

"I'd better go and see her" Hospital. Critical? Drugs? My baby?

Both the officers swiftly followed her. One took Fiona by the arm "Let's go Mrs Shannon, we've got a drive ahead of us" he muttered.

Danny stood and began to pace "What's going on? They haven't told us anything"

"Sit down Dan'. She's gonna be fine" Steve said but in the back of his mind he knew otherwise

Danny looked at Steve "Will she? Steve she's pregnant for fucks sake" he said with frustration

Steve gave Danny a look of disapproval "Dan, that ain't the way to think. How do you expect Carrie to pull through is you don't believe she's gonna make it"

Danny sighed, "I know, but I just could kick the fuck out of Matt"

Steve huffed "So could a million other people"

Danny sat down, but he had to stand up again "How could he do that? Didn't he learn anything from what happened the last time?"

Steve shook his head "Nope. Obviously his own sisters death to him spiking her drink has made no difference whatsoever"

"And no Carrie. I don't even know her that well" Danny kicked his chair. Steve could see the despair, anguish and fear in Danny's eyes.

Are you sure you can Carrie were just mates Dan? "Dan' get a grip"

"I can't! I'm too fucking wound up! I'm shit scared she's gonna die!"

Steve stood up and took Danny by the shoulders "I know, I would be too if a mate of mine was lying there"

Danny looked out the waiting room window. He could not see anything, he felt as if everything has disappeared. Oh Carrie, please be okay.

"I'm gonna phone Sonia, tell her what's going on. Call me if you hear or need anything"

Danny nodded before he finally sat down, for a second he wished that he were lying there instead of Carrie. Danny looked at his watch it was ten to twelve.

Fiona looked out the busy road. Not noticing that the patrol car has stopped at a red light and was stuck in traffic she began to hum. My daughter is in hospital. Clark hasn't spoken to me for weeks, I feel numb and confused, what do I do? Hum. Fiona continued to hum. One of the officers looked into rear view window at Fiona

“Are you all right Mrs Shannon?”

Fiona did not reply

Steve dropped a twenty pence piece into the telephone. He dialled home and waited.

“Hello”

“Hey Son’, it’s me. Yeah I know what time it is. You sound like mum. Okay joke! There’s been an accident. No. No, I’m fine. Danny’s mate Carrie. Long story babe. Okay. Matt spiked her drink and now she’s fighting for her life. She’s pregnant too. I know he’s more than an idiot. Danny’s worried sick. I can’t see her making it. Yeah I know. Well gotta go babe my money’s running out. Yeah, I love you too. Bye”

The patrol car turned into the hospital car park and parked near the rear of the building. Both officers and Fiona got out. As Fiona shut the door and looked at the hospital, her stomach twisted. She could hardly breathe. My baby is in there! She could be dead! Oh god, where’s my baby? Walking on ahead, Fiona left the officers behind. Pushing the emergency doors open she ran to the reception desk. Oh god my baby! Please don’t let her die!

“*Where’s my baby?*” Fiona shrieked at the receptionist

The receptionist was taken back and then guessed whose mother she was “If you take a seat, I’ll get a doctor to come and see you”

Fiona’s eyes widened with horror “You’re going to make me wait! Haven’t I waited enough? I want to see my baby NOW!”

One of the officers took Fiona by the arm “Mrs Shannon, there’s no need to cause a scene. Now if you”

Fiona pulled away “Get your hands off me!” she turned to the receptionist again “Where is she?”

“Any news?” Steve asked as he returned to the waiting room

Danny shook his head

"We've got a long night ahead, wanna coffee?"

Danny shook his head again. I'm gonna kill Matt if she dies. I don't care. Carrie means too much to me to let this lie. I'm gonna report Matt, then kill him.

The time is twelve midnight.

BEEEEEEEEPPPPPPPP

Doctors tried to revive Carrie. Her heartbeats had decreased, she was weakened by the second. Carrie went into cardiac arrest. He felt a lump in his throat as he told the rest of the staff to stand back. Despite not being to turn off the life support machine, Doctor Robert Smith knew Carrie was dead. Hanging his stethoscope around his neck, he felt sick.

"That's all we can do. Thank you for all your hard work" he said quietly as he looked down at Carrie.

Doctor Robert Smith left theatre. This is the worse part of my job. Every day I watch so many teenagers throw lives away with on drink or tablet. I don't think I can deal with this any more, it's been thirty years and I have never seen so many cases. What if my own daughter decides she wants to get s "buzz"? I can't stop her. Today's generation is living to fast for me, what ever happened to responsibility and ambition? I hope to god that daughter is never Lucy lying this hospital fighting for her life. As he approached the waiting area, he heard shrieks. Looking to them he saw a dark haired woman screaming at the receptionist and two police officers struggling to keep her quiet.

"What's going in here? This is a hospital not a playground" he bellowed

Fiona looked at Robert "How's my baby Carrie?" she asked running up to him. He caught her by the wrists

"Mrs Shannon?"

"Yes! How's my baby? I want to see her!" she said anxiously

Robert's heart sank. Oh my god, this is her mother. "Of you'd like to follow me to the waiting room"

Fiona's eyes widened "No! Tell me now!"

Robert shook his head "I won't tell you anything until you come with me Mrs Shannon" he said taking her by the arm he lead he to the waiting room.

Fiona followed him to the waiting room; he opened the door and looked at Danny at Steve who stood as both he and Fiona entered.

"Take a seat Mrs Shannon"

Danny frowned. Shannon? Then he realised. My god she looks just like Carrie.

Fiona didn't sit instead she stood before Robert with both of her hands together "Tell me doctor" she said calmly

Fiona looked into Robert's eyes. She knew what had happened. She could see that his eyes were almost filled with tears.

"Were you the ones who brought Carrie Shannon in?" Robert asked

Steve nodded "Yeah"

Fiona spun round and looked at both Steve and Danny "You were with my baby?"

Danny felt a huge lump in his throat "Yeah, it was an accident" he stammered

"Oh god" Fiona whispered as tears streamed down her face. "Carrie's dead" she looked at Robert "Isn't she?"

Steve also felt a lump in his throat and felt sick. His fears had come true. Steve looked at Danny, he hoped he would not do anything stupid. Oh god Danny.

Danny shook his head in disbelief "No" he whispered "No"

Robert took a deep breath, his chest felt tight with nerves. "She suffered a considerable amount damage to her liver, brain and heart. We did maintain her in a stable condition but went into cardiac arrest"

"My baby" Fiona whispered. Staring into space Fiona started to mumble incoherently under her breath. I can stay in this room; I want to be alone. I want to scream, shout, cry and wail. But I can't, not in front of these people. I want to get out of here now! "Doctor I want to leave, I want to leave if you don't mind," she said without looking at Robert.

He nodded "Do as you wish Mrs Shannon"

Fiona opened the door, turned and looked at Danny. Eyes met before she turned away and closed the door behind her.

Danny sat back down in the chair. He felt as if his whole world had fallen apart in front of him. He was feeling mixed emotions of anger, sadness, confusion and guilt. Why did she have to die? Why did Matt have to go and kill her? I can't believe she's gone. I don't understand anything. Why did it have to be

Carrie? This is all my fault. I should have never have asked her to come out. Why did it have to be her? Leaning forward Danny rested his face in both hands, shaking his head slightly he sniffed. This is all a nightmare. I want to cry, but I can't. Not yet.

Steve was silent, he could not think of anything to say but "I'm sorry Dan" he placed his hand on Danny's shoulder and squeezed it before taking it away.

"I'll go and see if Mrs Shannon is alright. I'll come back in a few minutes" and he was gone

"Why did she have to turn up?"

"Dan. She's her mother. Despite what you think, Carrie is her responsibility"

"Oh yeah? Then why did she throw he out? Why did she turn her back on her when Carrie needed her the most?" Danny spat

"I don't know, I suppose she had he reasons" Steve's nausea was returning

"And *she* just leaves, just like that. Like she doesn't even care!"

"Now Danny you know that ain't true, she's just as shocked as you are" Steve sat forward "She has just lost a daughter Dan' and you know that's every mother's nightmare"

Danny sniffed again. He cried. Danny has never cried so much in his life "Why did she have to die?" he sobbed

Oh god I can't take this. Danny please I hate to see you like this "Only the good die young" like that's gonna make him feel better Steve

"Yeah, but why her? It's not fair" He looked at Steve, his heart sank "I want her back"

"I know you want her back, but she's gone Dan" Steve knew it sounded cold hearted but it was he could say "You'll get through it, like you did the last time"

Danny sobbed into his hands again. I'm crying like a baby over a girl. I can't believe I got myself so emotionally attached to Carrie. But, I don't care. I want her back and that's final. Steve sensed Danny remembered when his parents and sister died. Danny lost them to a car accident on new years eve three years ago, after saying good bye to them that next time he saw them was when they were laid into the ground. Within a week he was back at work, working all hours everyday. Steve and Paul were worried and begged him to take a few days off work but he would not. Despite Danny's constant

persistence in saying he can handle the deaths on his own, Steve knew he could not. Steve could still hear Danny's sobs week after week, it was as if she was a lost child who was trapped in a maze and could not escape.

"Why does everyone who I get close to just up and leave me?"

Danny don't do this yourself "Danny, I haven't left you"

Danny was not listening "First my sister Katie. Mum, dad and now Carrie" Steve saw Danny's lip quiver "I really can't handle this anymore. I want her back! I want Carrie back now and that bastard has taken her away from me!" Danny raised his head as tears streamed down his face. He could still see Carrie's face. Suddenly Danny felt angry. Why did Andrew have to leave her? What the hell was he thinking? If he didn't turn his back on her she's still be here now! How can anyone turn their back on someone they love? Her parents! Their own flesh and blood! They all knew she was desperate for help and yet they still let her go. How dare they! So, her mother is here to see her. It's a bit late! And Andrew! Worthless bastard! I'd serve time for those two.

Although Danny felt angry, he still could not stop thinking about Carrie and having to get used to the fact that she was no longer alive hurt him.

"No!" Fiona screamed as she threw off her coat on to the ground in frustration. Standing outside in the hospital car park she hugged herself to keep warm. I wanna wake up! I wanna wake up now! My baby is not dead, she is alive and any minute now she's gonna come walking up to me telling me how much she misses me. Fiona stared out into the street. Well? Where is she? Come on Carrie, I'm waiting! Where are you?

"Mrs Shannon" Robert called out to Fiona

Fiona ignored him and stood still facing the passing traffic. My baby is dead, no. My baby is dead. No. No. "Oh god no" she said aloud

Walking towards her Robert felt his stomach twist and his sweat in his brow. What am I doing? How can you comfort a mother who has just lost her daughter? Nothing what you say or do is going to bring her child back, so why bother? "Mrs Shannon, please come inside where it's warm"

Fiona shook her head "She's not coming is she doctor?"

"No, she isn't"

"If only I'd got here in time"

"You did the best you could do"

"Did I?" Dropping her arms Fiona eyes watered and tears of guilt streamed down her face "I should have never let the bastard throw her out. It's all my damn fault! If I had stopped him, she'd *still* be here today. I'm a terrible mother, I'm supposed to protect her not cause her arm and that's what I did. I should die not her. Or even my *bloody husband!*"

"Mrs Shannon, I'm sure none of this is your fault"

Fiona spun round and looked at Robert deep in the eye. He could see the anguish burning in her eyes. "*Isn't it?*" she said stiffly. "If I didn't listen to him she's still be here and I would be standing here riddled with guilt" Fiona got agitated and stamped her foot like a small child who was throwing a tantrum "Why did I listen to him? WHY!"

"I'm afraid I can't answer that Mrs Shannon"

"I can tell you why" Fiona wiped tears away vigorously "Because I'm a bloody coward! I didn't stand up to him. That bastard threw her out and I just stood there! Me being such a coward has cost me my baby!" she spat "*COST ME MY BABY!*" Fiona screamed into the air before bursting into flood in to tears. "Oh god, she's gone and I want her back"

Robert did not know what to say, instead he watched Fiona and felt useless. What can I say? Nothing that's what

"I want her back now" Fiona sobbed

"I know you do Mrs Shannon"

Fiona's sobbed softened; she turned and looked at the doctor "Can I see her?"

Robert nodded "Yes, of course. You will have to decide to switch the life support machine off"

Fiona walked towards Robert, leaving her coat lying in the hospital car park.

Fiona and Danny went to see Carrie for one last time. Fiona was asked if Clark was to be contacted, but she told the hospital no and would tell him in her own time. When Fiona met Danny, she thanked him for all that he had done for Carrie and not to blame himself for anything. Fiona felt distressed with the details with the accident, was grateful for Danny pressing charges against Matt.

“He took something away from me, now it’s time to take something away from him” she said in the waiting room the next morning, Danny asked why Fiona let Carrie go, she replied with a shrug and said whatever the reason was she is to pay the price now. Danny realised Fiona had no control over what her husband did and clearly showed she loved Carrie. Fiona told Danny not to blame himself; “if it wasn’t for you Carrie may not have lived so long” although Danny knew she was right, he was not ready to accept it. Danny felt surprised to see the resemblance between Fiona and Carrie, every time he looked at her he saw Carrie. Danny made a promise to keep in touch with Fiona so he could keep Carrie’s memory alive, after speaking to Fiona for over an hour he felt Carrie was still very much alive.

When Danny got home that afternoon, there were six messages on his answering machine, not wanting to hear them he tossed his keys on his coffee table. Sighing he sat on the sofa and closed his eyes. When he opened them he felt haunted by Carrie. He half expected to see Carrie sat on the sofa or hearing music coming from her bedroom. I still can’t believe that Carrie dead; it’s all going to fast for me. It was just a day ago she was alive and now she’s gone. Any minute now this nightmare is gonna end, I’m gonna wake up and she’s gonna be there. Danny waited, but he knew it had already begun. Living without Carrie was going to be hard for Danny. How am I going to cope? Danny could still smell Carrie’s impulse body, the aroma of citrus fruits lingered in the air. Danny inhaled as his eyes watered. He loved it and his loved Carrie too.

“Carrie, I’m gonna miss you so much”

Carrie’s funeral was held the following Wednesday at the local church. The weather was pleasant; there was a clear blue sky, sunshine and a light breeze. Danny felt numb. I can’t cry anymore, I’ve done enough. I won’t cry. After seeing Carrie in her casket Danny had lost all emotion, it had bought

back the memory of losing his family. Having had their service at the very same church, he could not help but to feel a sense of déjà vu. Fiona pushed her emotions aside for the day and focused on the attendance and was surprised to see who had come. I suppose everyone loved Carrie. She contacted all those she thought necessary, especially Yvonne. Yvonne apologised for not getting in touch sooner and was devastated that such an event had brought her and her mother together again. Fiona did not even think about Andrew as far as she was concerned he was more responsible than anyone was. Most of those who had attended paid their respects with large bouquets of flowers, plants, reeves and many cards. Fiona promised herself that she would keep herself occupied, leaving Clark at home after he refused to attend she did just that. Despite Fiona's determination she felt heartbroken that he did not attend, she had hoped that her death would have brought them closer together but it drove them apart. Fiona finally realised her husband's true colours, which were black and white. All Clark saw was right or wrong, never a maybe. After the funeral Fiona promised to take more charge of her life that Clark Shannon and controlled for so long. What Fiona did not know that it was Clark's guilt, which prevented him from attending his own daughter's funeral.

As everyone slowly left. Danny stepped forward and kneeled down bedside Carrie's casket and studied it for a few seconds. The closed casket, which was covered in scattered earth and surrounded by flowers, made everything so final to Danny. Twirling both a yellow and a red rose between his fingers, he stood. Sighing Danny dropped each rose onto the casket.

Danny sniffed as tears flew down his cheeks, taking his hand he wiped them away "I promised my self I wouldn't cry" he stood before dropping both roses on the casket "Goodbye Carrie" he whispered.

Looking up to the pale blue sky, there were no clouds. A ray of sunshine shone over Carrie as Danny put his hands in his pockets and turned to leave.

A light breeze blew, as the graveyard grew silent. Seconds later two sparrows swooped down beside Carrie before one hopped on the stem of the yellow rose and the other hopped on the stem of the red.



