

PETER *stares. What??*

PC JUNKIN *barely registers PETER's presence – just a brief nod. PC JUNKIN goes to the fridge, opens it. He takes out a half-full bottle of milk. Sniffs it. Frowns slightly. Sniffs it again. Ew! Bit off. He puts it back, takes out another, fresh milk bottle. Opens it, sniffs. Clearly better! He's about to close the fridge, when he notices something else.*

He reaches into the fridge, takes a banana, pockets it. Again, he's about to close the fridge, and notices something.

He reaches in and takes a slice of a cake that's sitting there on a plate. Sniffs it, considers. Nah. Puts it back.

Finally, he closes the fridge. He nods briefly to PETER again, ambles calmly out the back door, and closes it behind him.

A silence as PETER just stares. What the fuck was that??

Then the back door opens again, and ELSA sticks her head through.

ELSA. I'll explain in a moment.

She withdraws, closing the door.

PETER *stares for a moment. What? What??*

He steps towards the door, when –

– the front door flies open. Now storming into the room is DEBBIE. (As she comes storming in, she doesn't completely close the door when she slams it.)

DEBBIE. I've had enough! Peter, seriously, enough! She's a murderer. *She's a murderer!* And we're too polite to bring it up. We're dying of manners. We're under siege from personal embarrassment. This is not sane. This is not rational. That woman is a monster! She's a cold-hearted killer who killed members of her own family. Her father! Her sister. At least three old ladies! One-and-a-half husbands. And we've let her stay in our house for *six days*. That's a day per victim! She's a serial poisoner and we let

her *cook for our family!* We sit there, saying 'no you have the first bite!' That is *not* an adequate safety precaution. That falls short of due diligence! That is an affront to health and safety! And why? Why?? Because we can't find a way to say 'No, please don't cook for us, Elsa, you have a substantive history of poisoning people to death!' Because it might hurt her feelings. How did this happen? How did we get here? We've got a serial killer as a houseguest – a certifiable psychopathic monster – and every day, somehow, it matters a tiny bit less. Piece by piece, it's more and more okay. It's our new normal. Like you just have to hang around with a mass murderer long enough, and you start thinking 'Hey, we've all got our irritating mannerisms.' Less than a week, and we're starting to be okay with the deliberate, planned murder of the innocent. Just *six days* and we're accepting her. Give it a year, we'll be voting for her! And you know what the worst part is?? She's nice! People love her! Our kids love her. She's made this home a better place. Rosie is communicating with us in something other than a permanent state of offence. Alex is actually leaving the house and exercising. You are phoning and visiting your mother, instead of just using her as an all-purpose excuse – and all that's down to Elsa. She's the killer who came to stay – and every day she's improving our lives. She's Murder Poppins! Everyone in the street adores her. She's the most popular human being I've ever met. But she *kills* people! She kills people and she's *popular!* *That's not fair.* It's not fair, Peter. I've gone through my entire life not killing people. I thought that was what you were supposed to do. That's what they told us! I've got friends, I've got family – and I have spent many, many years very specifically *not killing* any of them. You think I didn't want to? I'm human! I've got feelings. Anthea! You've met Anthea! I have spent day after day *not killing* Anthea. Do you think that was easy?? A person *burns calories* not killing Anthea. And where's the gratitude? What do I get for that? I get called uptight. That's what people call me. Uptight. Elsa's popular, and I'm uptight. Of course I'm uptight – *I'm not allowed to kill anyone.* Nothing in my life makes sense. Since that woman stepped through our door, nothing has

made sense. And you just stand there, gawping at me. Say something. Please, just make some of this make sense. For Christ's sake – for once in your life – *say something!*

PETER....there's a policeman in the garden stealing our milk.

The doorbell rings and THE NEIGHBOUR pops his head round the partly opened door.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Peter, did you find time to glance at that photograph?

PETER. Oh! Christ! Sorry!

THE NEIGHBOUR. You're a busy man.

PETER. It's just, you know, one of those days –

THE NEIGHBOUR. Shall I give you another five minutes?

PETER. That would be great –

THE NEIGHBOUR. It'll only take a second. You just have to glance at it.

PETER. I will. I'll glance.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Just before your evening gets started.
Hello, Debbie.

DEBBIE. Hello.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Your husband and I are just discussing a photograph. Or we will be, just as soon as he's found time in his schedule for a brief glance.

DEBBIE. I'll make sure he does.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Would you mind, I'd be so grateful.
Before you two get started on one of your evenings. Five minutes!

He withdraws.

DEBBIE. What photograph?

PETER. Christ knows, something to do with the garden.

DEBBIE. Where there's a policeman apparently.

ELSA has come through the back door and now emerges from the kitchen in time to hear this.

ELSA. Oh, don't you worry about the cop, honey. I'll take care of him.

DEBBIE. What's he doing here?

ELSA. Oh, they always show up, don't they, cops. With all their 'investigating'. Who gave them the right? That's what I want to know!

DEBBIE. What are they investigating?

ELSA. Oh, who cares? It's like an obsession with these people.
Why do they have to find out things all time? What's wrong with a little mystery in our lives?

DEBBIE. No, but specifically what are they investigating?

ELSA. I gave him tea and sandwiches, he's still in the garden.

ELSA is heading for the stairs.

PETER. Does he want to talk to us?

ELSA. Maybe, I don't know. They just like asking questions, these guys, so they can write things down – it's very unhealthy.

DEBBIE. Well, what would he want to talk to us *about*?

PETER. Has something happened?

ELSA. Barnaby.

PETER. What about Barnaby?

ELSA. I told you about Barnaby, right?

PETER. He died.

ELSA. He's dead, yes.

PETER. So what's happened?

ELSA. He got worse.

PETER....sorry, worse?