

THE NEIGHBOUR. Don't worry, I won't be a minute.

PETER. Okay.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Do you have a minute?

PETER (*dying for an excuse*). Um. Well. God! I mean, it's all go, isn't it –

THE NEIGHBOUR. Just a minute. That's all.

PETER. Well – okay, yes, yes, come in. Please.

Desperately trying to conceal his reluctance, PETER ushers him in.

THE NEIGHBOUR. I won't be long.

PETER. Oh, no, it's fine –

THE NEIGHBOUR. I won't even sit down. I know how busy you are.

PETER. Well that's entirely up to you, I don't mind. You can sit.

THE NEIGHBOUR. No, no. You're a busy man. Every time I talk to you, busy, busy. I can stand.

PETER. Up to you.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Middle of something, are you?

PETER. Well – just with Alex. We were discussing a few things, quite important. You know. That age.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Is he the one with the guitar?

PETER. Yes.

THE NEIGHBOUR. The electric guitar.

PETER. Yes, electric.

THE NEIGHBOUR. He's very keen, isn't he?

PETER. Yes.

THE NEIGHBOUR. I'm always hearing him. Playing away. All hours.

PETER. So what's the problem?

THE NEIGHBOUR. I was just wondering. After what we talked about yesterday. Have you had a chance to think about it?

PETER. Think about what?

THE NEIGHBOUR. What we talked about yesterday?

PETER. Um... well – which part?

THE NEIGHBOUR. Ha! I *thought* you weren't listening.

PETER. Oh, no, no, I was.

THE NEIGHBOUR. I said to Joan, he wasn't listening. You had that face – not listening. I know that face.

PETER. No, no, not at all, no.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Busy man, I completely understand –

PETER. I *was* listening.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Oh, good, good.

Painful pause.

So what did you think?

PETER.... Um. What about? Specifically.

THE NEIGHBOUR. The garden.

PETER. Right, yes. The garden. The garden.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Is it okay with you?

PETER. Um... I mean... you know... broadly...

THE NEIGHBOUR. Would you like me to explain again?

PETER. *Yes.* Yes, okay, why not? Just to... really nail it down.

THE NEIGHBOUR *goes to the back window.*

THE NEIGHBOUR. That wall there – between our gardens – which is my wall – is starting to collapse.

Behind him, PETER reacts to a buzz from his phone. As THE NEIGHBOUR drones on, PETER gets out his phone, checks his texts...

Now the wall is mine. But the quantity of soil pressing against it, and causing the collapse, is yours. So I wondered if we could split the repair costs.

He turns to look at PETER, who is frowning at the text he just received. He looks up at THE NEIGHBOUR.

PETER. Sorry. My wife just texted me. She wants me to google someone. Not really sure why she can't do it herself, but there you go.

THE NEIGHBOUR. So what do you think?

PETER (*realises he hasn't listened*)...um.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Were you listening? I can see you're on your phone.

PETER. No, no –

THE NEIGHBOUR. Always on your phone, aren't you? I see you sometimes, head down over your phone. In the sunshine.

PETER. No, no, it's not that – I was just trying to remember what you said yesterday, and I ended up... not... completely focusing...

THE NEIGHBOUR. Will I explain again?

PETER. Let's run it through one more time, yes.

THE NEIGHBOUR turns to the window. PETER immediately looks back at the puzzling text on his phone

THE NEIGHBOUR. If you look in the garden. The line between your garden and my garden.

Now as THE NEIGHBOUR keeps talking, we hear a car drawing up outside. PETER goes to the front window who it is.

The wall is our wall, but the damage to the wall is coming from your side of the garden. So could we split the repair costs?

He turns to PETER, who is in the act of turning from the front window.

What do you think?

Painful pause. PETER – Shit! Didn't listen again!

PETER....that's Debbie home.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Yes.

And THE NEIGHBOUR just stands there, resolutely smiling and waiting for an answer.

Bit early actually. Let's hope nothing's wrong.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Yes.

THE NEIGHBOUR nods, smiles, waits.

The car door bangs outside.

PETER. She sounds okay so far.

THE NEIGHBOUR. She always parks in your driveway, doesn't she, Debbie?

PETER. Well, of course –

THE NEIGHBOUR. You usually park in front of our house.

PETER. Well, it's not on purpose –

THE NEIGHBOUR. Oh, no, no –

PETER. I just park where there's a space –

THE NEIGHBOUR. That's what I tell Joan, when we're discussing it. He probably hasn't had time to clear his garage, he's a busy man.

PETER. Clearing it this weekend.

THE NEIGHBOUR. Oh, no rush, in your own time. So what do you think?

PETER. About what?