

I N T H E D O G H O U S E

Written by

Carl Chetty

INT. LOUNGE. DAY.

Wearing animal print, DOREEN is sitting on the sofa reading a newspaper. She gets more and more worked up as she reads an article.

DOM enters with a book, and sits beside her.

DOM
What is it?

DOREEN
(indicating article)
All the campaigns... All the warnings
about leaving dogs in cars on scorching
hot days. (very angry) This woman, she's
no better than a vivisectionist! THREE
cocker spaniels burnt to a crisp.
Some people are brainless!

DOM
You won't allow me to forget about Max,
will you, eh?

DOREEN
(abandoning paper)
'Course not! Cos you left him in the
back of the car to get toasted, roasted!

DOM
It was a tragic accident, Doreen.
I was young and stupid back then.

DOREEN
Now you're just STUPID! Max has gone.
And why? Cos of a trip to the bookies -
AND your bloody horse didn't even win!

DOM

(abandoning book)

How many times, Doreen? You know I got delayed by a neighbour.

DOREEN

Not just any ol' neighbour - Rob Little. You got it into your thick head that I was having a fling with Rob Little. Just coz we walked our dogs together on the common. He had a lovely sausage dog called Mary.

DOM

I know I was wrong about Rob Little. In those days I was crazy, possessive.

DOREEN

Rob was a brilliant conversationalist. I LOVED talking to him. Isn't a crime, is it - talking? What YOU did is a crime, though - destroying my Maxy!

DOM

Look, I'm really SORRY about Max, but it's agony for me...carrying the guilt...

DOREEN

Sorry means nothing coz while you were grilling Rob Little about our non-existent affair my Max was getting grilled - literally. (shudders) Poor sod!

DOM

I notice you always call him "your Max". Well, I OWNED Max too, you know. Just how do you think I felt when I got back to the car and found his crumpled little body on that tartan blanket he always drooled on. It was like something out of a horror film. I have to live with that grotesque image branded on my brain.

DOREEN

Dom! I don't wanna hear the gory details.

DOM

It was a quick exit, Doreen. I assure you Max did not suffer.

DOREEN

(working out on fingers)

If he'd lived, my darling would've been 21 tomorrow. You put a stop to that, though!

DOM

(shouting)

All those years ago I made a fatal mistake and you're never going to let me off the hook, are you? Resurrecting that event morning, noon and night.

DOREEN

If only you'd taken him with you.

DOM

(emotional)

I've told you - he looked so peaceful asleep on the backseat...I didn't have the heart to disturb him.

Nursing a cold, 20-year-old ZEB enters wearing a bathrobe and carrying a box of tissues.

ZEB plunges down on the sofa between DOM and DOREEN.

DOREEN momentarily brightens up at the sight of ZEB.

Balancing the tissues on his lap, ZEB puts one arm around DOREEN, the other around DOM.

ZEB
(dazzling smile)
I could hear you guys in the shower -
thought you might need a referee!

DOM
(calmer)
You should be used to us by now, Zeb.

ZEB nods knowingly, and dabs his nose with a tissue.

A preoccupied DOREEN rocks backwards and forwards.

DOREEN
(tearful)
I often wonder how my Max woulda turned
out... He was so bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

DOREEN struggles to hold back the tears. ZEB rubs her back to comfort her.

DOM
(looking at her quizzically)
You know exactly how our Max would've
turned out (indicating ZEB) like him!

A few moments, DOREEN composes herself.

DOREEN

(nodding)

Thank God we had twins, Dom. At least we were able to hang on to ONE of our beautiful sons. (tweaks ZEB'S cheek) I'm dead grateful for that.

DOM

Zeb was the lucky baby, safe with you in the conservatory that terrible day in June. Derby Day.

TOM ruffles ZEB'S hair.

ZEB

Freaks me out to think I coulda been curled up on the backseat with Max.

DOREEN squeezes ZEB'S hand lovingly.

DOREEN

It doesn't bear thinking about, Zeb.

ZEB

Dad? Why DID you take my brother out for a drive that day - and not me?

ZEB blows his nose.

DOM

You had a cold - I'm glad to say.

END.

