summer 2022 issue #5



SIX ЧО RULE

her world words LORNA SMART six ended. In

drink. Unknowingly This is her last CAROL SAINT MARTIN

To have the untouched of me tightly

I'd shed one thousand layers, to be

pure and true,

ease as oxygen does whenever I

breathe,

Grandad Nan licked her CALUM ECROYD fingers. helped.

should In hindsight he ANNABEL BAINBRIDGE have lived.

and She held my hand LYDIA LUKE jumped.

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FINGERNAILS

an itch. And I want to massage it but the heart has for our intimacy of way, so when it gets serious, I can laugh it off I can call you abusive, but in a natural, aloof sort we feel when we notice the other is thriving. And into existence and overcompensate for the pain laugh politely and notice the gap that has come a way of being totally inaccessible. I can feel the heart in my chest. And it feels like fill the silences as soon as they feel awkward. And your fingernails underneath the table. And we can and slam it against my leg, and you can pick at we're different, now. And I can pick up a spoon ameliorated a deteriorating situation and how we can discuss how we've grown and how we've special in knowing how your body works. And sounds of your stomach. There's something quite smell what you used to smell like and hear the coffee shop too cramped in a capital city, so I can I think we should meet again. But this time in a Yes, let's meet in a coffee shop, far too cramped And we can

BY NATALIE LEWIS

BY TONY PIPES

DOWNWARD DOGS

Finding myself is not something I'd ever and even analysing dreams. Eastern contemplation. I've tried happy places, and mindfulness blogs, I've tried meditation, just full on ranting, I've tried prayers, Buddhist tantras, deeper drinking, Downward dogs Deep breathing, Primal screams, managed to do. Deep thinking, I've tried yoga, finding themes finding spaces, Medication, But then... chanting, mantras, You.

For acceptance, a pass granting un-

relinquished forgiveness,

would do simply the intangible,

It's unimaginable but yet still I

held by you,

For whatever may be to come, have

A certainty, or comfort, have me,

me,

As shield and armour, have me,

For everything, For anything,

For you, can just -

Have me.

To escape this skin with as much

BY CAITLIN LAUREL

HAVE ME

WRITING PROMPT:

Reversal

QUIZ

won the Booker Prize since it was established in 1. How many men and how many women have

;6961

line of which classic 1960s novel? 2. "What's it going to be then, eh?" is the first

3. Who is the current Poet Laureate?

published posthumously? 4. How many John le Carré novels have been

5. Where was the Helvetica font developed and

how is this linked to its name?

- Helvetica comes from the Latin name for the pre-Roman tribes of what became Switzerland

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Pitch black. The eyes of a **MAN** open as he awakens in a sparsely-furnished bedroom.

MAN (V.O.) Today was the day I was going to use the weird key.

He sits bolt upright, staring into the middle distance with a barely-contained look of glee.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The **MAN** goes about his morning rituals... making breakfast, washing and dressing himself in an unremarkable suit.

MAN All in all, it had been a long time coming... But now it was unavoidable...

As he makes to leave his apartment, briefcase in hand, the **MAN** pats his pockets with a growing anxiety.

MAN Upon leaving my apartment, I found myself almost deliberately trying to forget it. Leaving it in the coin bowl here...

The **MAN** retrieves the WEIRD KEY from a small bowl full of foreign coinage.

OUTSIDE

MAN ... under the door-pig there...

As he steps out of his front door he pats his pocket again, looking confused for a moment. He lifts a heavy, pig-shaped doorstop, retrieves the weird key with relief and walks away. MAN ... as if it was consciously trying to get loose of my grasp. But the direct import of its use that day could not be denied. As I rattled away from my domicile, I could already -

INT. BUS - DAY

The **MAN** sits on a rattling bus as he catches other passengers' eyes with a small smile for each of them.

MAN - see the sparkle of anticipation behind people's eyes at the prospect of my using the weird key at last.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY Through revolving glass doors with a multifaceted sheen, the **MAN** paces with conviction past the secretary and onwards to the inner corridors of an expansive, modern office building.

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE

MAN Entering my place of work, I saw that Peter had already scheduled a meeting with myself. 03:30am on my white - No! *Rainbow* board.

The **MAN** stares blankly at a message left on his whiteboard within a pokey personal office room filled with assorted boxes and trash.

MAN I had oftentimes worried that this circumstance was long in the pipeline but, as long as I possessed the weird key, I had the confidence to face anything.

He paces up and down, staring at the clock on the wall as it steadily approaches: 03:33.

MAN It was my suspicion that Peter already knew that I had possession of the weird key and its power, and wanted it for himself.

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR

The **MAN** leaves his office and marches down the corridor towards the meeting rooms.

MAN Each agonising second that passed felt like a step forward into an unknown, unfathomable future, as I walked towards Meeting Room 17B.

INT. MEETING ROOM 17B

The **MAN** enters Meeting Room 17B. **PETER** is already there, looking slightly miffed at his tardiness.

MAN When I arrived, Peter was already there... I could see his game here... Nonetheless, I acted as aloof as I possibly could about the whole situation.

PETER Late again, J____? I can't even say I'm surprised at this point... Look, I just want you to see this as an informal but very serious warning here. We like you, I like you! You've already proved yourself to be a valuable member of the team. But this recent behaviour is... Well... It's unsustainable...

You see?

The **MAN**, J____, nods agreeably with everything **PETER** has to say but it's obvious his mind is elsewhere.

As **PETER** talks, **MAN** steadily starts to remove the weird key from his inner jacket pocket. It is revealed to be a passkey made from the purest blackness. Little rainbow gleams glance off the edges.

MAN As I removed the weird key from my inner jacket pocket a magnificent light started to shine from Peter's forehead.

A keyhole-shaped hole starts to shine from **PETER's** forehead magnificently. As **PETER** continues to talk, **MAN** slots the weird key into the middle of **PETER's** forehead.

MAN Everything changed...

PETER's head opens up like a music box, revealing an assortment of intricate cogs and machinery.

INT. OUTSIDE MEETING ROOM 17B

The **MAN** jumps up and down with elation, chanting madly as thick blood splatters over the partially-misted glass of the office window.

MAN Weird key! Weird key! Weird key! Weird key! Weird key! Weird key! Weird key!

TITLE CARD: 'WEIRD KEY'