

Next thing you know, Marsha wasn't all drippy, but all perky and asking Delma if he wanted to dance.

'May I', she slurred, 'put on some music', 'okay,' Delma replied, 'you wanna dance, we will dance'.

I decided it would be best to go to my room and for a while all I could hear was thumping and Marsha's crazy laugh and Delma's deep one. I got rapt up in this drama between my doll and its baby and it seemed like ages had passed before I heard another knock on the door. It was my mothers boyfriend Joe. Joe is an orthodontist and he fitted my mothers false teeth. That was how they got it on as Delma would say. I hate him, he appears out of my mothers room with a gin and tonic, his skinny chest heaving along with a thick night-time voice. He and mum dance alot to the 'Best of Bread'. She told me, he was a 'Zany little man with no back bone but good in bed'.

Joe immediately started talking and dancing with Marsha, as if he hadn't come to see Mum at all. Marsha was getting very drunk and her hips were gyrating which made me feel dizzy. Delma's eyes were sticking out of his head and his mouth was open like he was ready to catch a fly. We both sank back into the couch which seemed to be sweating all on its own. We tried to listen to their conversation as they danced slow and slopped words into each others ears. Joe was telling Marsha that he liked her body and the way she danced. That's all I could hear because they were so revolting that I blocked my ears and went to the bathroom. I sat on the toilet banging my head against the wall, but I stopped when I heard the noise that suddenly broke out when Mum came home. She must have found them doing it on her bed. Every word she said was loaded and I could hear their voices falling about the house. I've known her to get pretty furious when things don't go according to plan, but this time her voice seemed to be slowly winding up. From very deep to medium deep and shaking. I went out into the hallway where I could hear her loud and clear.

'Get out, get out Marsha you bitch, you remind me of some corny woman from a soap opera. I know that you are sick now for sure, doing it in front of the children. Prancing about with your fat body and straw hair. As for you Joe, Oh Joe. . .'

The Perry Como record was stuck on one track and his crooning was more than I could bear so I went into her bedroom where they were all standing under a slutty red light. Marsha looked as if she didn't understand a thing and Joe was laughing. I tried to change the record but getting past them was hard.

They kept changing positions, kind of shuffling about, like the wind up toys that children have. So Delma and I went to our room and snivelled in one bed together, until morning came.

The next morning mum was walking around like one of the ladies from 'The Young and The Restless', that are always being dropped by their boyfriends. She felt bad I guess because Joe and Marsha had come in, like it wasn't even her house and done all that stuff. Then they left but I bet like two dogs with their tails between their legs. All day she would just burst out crying for no reason and then she'd cover her eyes with her blue vained hands. Delma tried to make her feel better by saying that at least she was capable. She would laugh, madly.

Maxwellton Braes has changed since that night. The Olivers colonial house has taken on a mucky look and the Japanese style one looks fragile and sick. No one is ever out on the street. I guess they feel their shoes would dirty the pavements. Mum went out and got her bright red hair cut short and it turned brown. She started wearing jeans instead of tight skirts and let her nails go to pack. She says, 'I tried hard in a no mans land where everyone is dressed in a bloody military tracksuit, in which they puddle about, re-organizing their lives to suit the schemes and politics of damned American shows on the colour T.V.' So we are leaving.

We never liked it here anyway. Everyone else's mother has a fat ass and the sea is either still or dirty with puny little waves on top. The girls are all nice looking and well behaved. They have boyfriends at thirteen who are blonde surfies with cool voices and nice eyes. Their eyes look at the girls long figures and silk hair. They don't know they are just plastic. Anyhow its best to think that when they laugh at Delma and me. Mum does not know it but I saw Marsha and Joe walking into her rotting stocco house. They moved like people filled with sticks.