

## ABOUT A GOTH

Tom Wells

NICK: As beds go it is passable, I suppose. Obviously I would prefer to sleep in a coffin but as my mum has so hilariously pointed out, they don't sell coffins at IKEA.

Yet.

I've written a letter informing the managing director about this potentially profitable gap in the market. I also included some of my own designs, though I'm not particularly hopeful about the whole thing. Partly because all hope is futile, and partly because I doubt they even have goths in Sweden. Just Vikings.

I check my phone but. Nothing. Greg still hasn't replied to my text. It has been three days and eleven hours now, which seems a bit relaxed even for someone as simple as him. Look in my sent messages. It's there in capital letters: I HATE MYSELF AND I WANT TO DIE.

I wonder if I've been too subtle again. Probably. I forget not everyone is as emotionally mature and sensitive as me.

Breakfast is depressing as usual. All I want is to read Camus and eat my Coco Pops, but it is so hard to concentrate with Dad's armour clanking and Mum clattering about with her tankards in the sink. And they're always talking to me.

'Good day, young squire,' Mum says.

Dad gives me a kiss on the top of my head then goes back to jousting with a Swiss roll. Honestly. It's tragic. Everyone else's parents lie and cheat and have inner turmoil and chuck teapots at each other. I get the world's most cheerful medieval re-enactors. My mum leans over, dangles her fluted sleeve in my chocolatey milk, passes me a postcard. It's got a donkey on the front. Looking jaunty.

'Camping is amazing.'

Three exclamation marks.

'Weather perfect.'

A further two exclamation marks.

'Dropped my phone off a cliff to prove it is shatterproof. It's not. That was my old phone. Brilliant.'

Underlined.

'Bet your missing me.'

'Your' spelt wrong.

'You big gay.'

No comment.

'Greg.'

And a kiss.

*Pause.*

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'Fancy finishing off this mead?'

Mum holds out a bottle.

I give her a long, stern look.

'Wench, I do not. 'The bus isn't due for another ten minutes so I undo one of my badges and self-harm for a bit. I don't draw blood cos my cloak is dry clean only but it helps pass the time. The bus stop smells of piss and regret. It's a very sunny day, the worst kind of weather for a goth, so I lurk in the shadows contemplating the great tragedies of my life. The burden of my intelligence, for example. Loneliness.

I am an only child.

Unless you count Lizzie, my sister, but I don't since she is so clearly a moron.

Right on cue, she drives past the bus stop. Like a twat. Beeps her horn. Like a twat.

Stops and winds the window down. Like a twat.

'Alright, gorgeous,' she says.

I could vom.

'Need a lift into town?'

'No, you div, just like hanging round bus stops on my own.'

*(Actually, that is partly true.)*

I get in the car. She's listening to James Blunt. I try to hurl myself into the oncoming traffic.