

Wind

DAY IN AND DAY OUT

Haley Truscott leans against the side wall of the lounge window staring into the storm. The open sea stretches as far as the eye can see. A never-ending race of white horses reaches towards her kicked away by the howling gale. And the gale beats against the window, coming on stronger and stronger, determined to beat its way into the lounge. She leans forward and presses her forehead to the glass. Nothing frightens her. She can hold the beating of the wind, her heart cold, her feelings numbed to the bone.

She raises herself onto the skirting boards and peers over the ledge of the window sill. Far below the waves crash against the rocks; their message a merciless pounding of inevitable destruction. And the cycle never ends. Day in and day out she stares into the eye of the storm holding the numbness as a sign of life and the beating of the wind the only warmth in her heart.

Haley sways, but she does not move. Her shoulders dip effortlessly in the darkness of her mind from one side to the other in a blue trance of emptiness. Deep inside the fire has gone. The gaiety of her inner dance lost to the wind outside. She once struggled to climb the white horses to dance on the surface but, gave up and sank beneath the water. Her suffering relieved. The burden of her disgrace weighing her down; not even swimming; taking no breath just sinking into the depths.

A lone bubble reaches the surface.

“Pop.”

And is gone.

IN HEAVEN

A baby seal glides through the swirling green waters. Another joins the baby and then another. The seals play among the rocks, squeaking joyfully. Then they see Haley, her ankles in the foam of a wave, and dart down into the murky depths. She stands waiting, hoping for them to reappear. They don't. They disappear only to break through the white horses far out to sea.

Haley and Matt walk hand in hand along the shore stopping to admire the myriad of life in the shallow pools between the rocks. They help each other, careful of every step and paying attention to each other's presence.

Matt pulls Haley towards him, whispering in her ear. "We're in heaven."

He kisses her forcibly, pulling her into his embrace.

"We deserve it. How many years?" And his eyes sparkle in their joy.

"God you make me happy," he says.

Haley throws her head back, engulfed in the magic of the moment.

"You were so right," she says. "This is ours..." And she looks around at the haven of their bliss. "We're the only ones here."

Matt stands on top of a rock, the waves threatening to pull him in. He spreads his arms and proclaims, "Ours. All of it." Suddenly inspired he rushes over to Haley and kisses her again, forcing his lips onto hers. "We will," he says, and stands back to announce his place in the kingdom of the giants. "We will...we proclaim this to be ours. Ours alone. None else." He points out the boundaries encircling the property within his reach to be a sanctuary of his ordinance. "From that headland to those cliffs and this open stretch of grassland, I now declare out of bounds to all of human kind," and he laughs. "Those with two legs stay well clear...this is mine." Adjusting his pose he ushers Haley into his enclosure. "I mean ours," he says.

Haley turns in the circle of her delight, her mind warped by the magnitude of this proclamation. "What will we do here?" she says.

"We will fuck like rabbits...and...raise little ones of our own kind," and Matt wags his finger threatening those who dare. "Let no man...not one single man come between us," He laughs; laughs loudly, absolutely sure that no man ever will. And the wildness in his eyes saturates his laughter.

In the kitchen Haley reaches up and turns the volume of the overhead speaker to loud. She pauses for a moment to listen to Leonard Cohen singing "*My Secret Life*." Then she opens the refrigerator and takes out a bottle of wine.

IRON COVE

Matthew Truscott built Iron Cove, the house of his dreams, on the golf estate known as Imbuè, outside Knysna. The Estate runs along the shores of the Indian Ocean through rolling countryside, bare and bracken, the gullies overgrown in wild bush and indigenous fynbos. The cliff face steep and ragged. The sea forever a grey myriad of unanswered depths reaching beyond comprehension only to return in a mighty smashing of force upon immovable force. When the wind whips the surface to a galloping of white horses, the gods rise in their element; baying for the fight. And Matthew joins their call.

Matthew Truscott is a manmade man, a multi-millionaire, Mr Kitchen Extraordinaire, owner founder of The Matthew Truscott Corporation and creator of The Truscott Collection, the only and ultimate choice in kitchen ware.

His famed slogan:

for your ideal kitchen, reach beyond into the living space of your dreams and create the perfect food for a perfect life.

No gods were present and none gave sanctuary to his bearing. He arrived by dint of his unforgiving nature.

"I am me," he said and that was that.

Haley was a conquest. He wanted and went out and got. She never knew the odds. If the stack was high she could climb it. She didn't care, her vision blurred the real line. She wanted the same thing as Matt; a life of excitement, comfort and never ending horizons. And in her own way she went out and got it. First she got fucked. That becomes Matt and his nature; conquer then proceed.

Haley was ambitious. But then ambition became love and that turned her values upside down. How do you marry love and ambition...she never quite answered her own question. So she sank. She sank into the sludge of her own doubt. Love comes with values; ambition with none.

Iron Cove is a fortress of the cold. Not a sound penetrates and not a sound leaves these walls. How can they? The walls are four meters thick. The ceiling of solid wood and the furniture glass and steel. Every line a monument to the straight and arithmetically correct. Every beam painted grey, so too the window frames and inside walls. The only colour in Haley's grey, grey world is the crimson scarf around her neck. There is no carpeting and only one curtain in the kitchen; one in the entire house.

The stairwell into the lounge dominates the entrance with drums of a different size and percussion positioned on every step. Another one of Matt's glorious strokes of genius, not his own actually, he stole it from The Lost Arc, but to be fair he just made his stairwell bigger.

Giant wooden sculptures from North Africa and carved logs and several dead trees adorn the cavernous space of the lower level. The house is really only one room divided in two by the stairwell. The lounge, dining room and kitchen confined to the lower level and the upper level consisting of the main bedroom and the guest rooms. A tortured alcove leads from the entrance into the upper bedroom level. Matt called it the tortured alcove because of the rough black stone lit by tiny pinpricks of light and the water dribbling into an oily pond. It did look eerie, but then eerie became second nature to Matt. Jutting walls divide the upper level into the respective rooms so there was no defined passageway with square cubby holes leading off at regular intervals. Nothing with Matt was regular, his habits, his routine and especially his designs were all single lines of intent. A journey to the bathroom was never to be a step of a thousand squiggles.

"Get there and get there in a straight line," he used to say.

Yet his curiosity knew no limits. He could jump from one line to the next. He would confuse those around him by dangling conflicting ideas on the same string searching each for their conclusive end. Once he had settled on an idea he would pursue it with an aggressive focus frightening to the uninitiated. He would either dominate it or reject it. That made him rich. And that killed off Haley in his mind.

The main bedroom is set aside from the rest of the house, connected by a broad glass walkway suspended over a narrow crack in the cliff face. At night the lighting glows from under the glass. Haley tip toes across this walkway, timid in the bubble suspended across the abyss.

A controlled heating system keeps the rooms at a constant temperature. Every square centimetre of the house monitored for pressure points and shrinkage against any possible sliding of the foundations and shifting of the rock face. And the security system is just as intense; every angle of attack covered by cameras and heat sensors. Any ground attack could only come from one direction, the west, across the grasslands. The seagulls pose the only threat from the front. Matt had enemies. Enemies come with money and to him security was no game. He played it hard and without mercy. The grey light and constant mist the real threat, against which there was no system.

No window opens and no door closes by human command. Automatic the order of the creator. Pencil thin red lights monitor every movement, and life happens accordingly. Big life; free life; freedom from the banal responsibilities of life; and the quest of mortal man. Doors swing open, and so, bereft of command, Haley feels free to explore her absolute mind.

She begins in the music, the sounds reverberating in her head and the cavernous space of the inside amplifies the sound. She cannot compose or sing, neither can she write the lyrics or pretend to be the artist of the song. She dances. She dances in her mind. She moves in her imagination. The sound of each enters her soul and she becomes as one. One in the original heart of the creator. She disappears.

There can be no other, no other absolute but, sound.

The sheer cliffs board the eastern wall of Iron Cove, the sea the southern face, and open grasslands to the west stretching for miles without answer. Only the northern face appears open, climbing first towards the horizon before tumbling out of sight. And the sound of the ocean stays within the enclave now known as Iron Cove.

Number thirty one the number allocated by the Estate management to the site. What does a number mean? In this case, the end of the line. No other property extends to the east and none to the south. The north Matt labelled as the unknown but, since it tumbles into obscurity, he figured so what, it could stay unknown.

He wanted the end of the world and he got it. At a price, to be sure. But, he could afford that.

END OF SAMPLE READ