

Jake slammed the front door behind him as he left his fourteenth floor flat in a rundown area of the city centre. He just had to get out of the flat; he was tired of listening to his father shouting and losing his temper with his mother, whom, although Jake loved very much, he felt she didn't help herself and stand up to his father enough. Jake hated his father. His father spent all day watching his favourite television programmes, usually cowboy films or horror movies. Jake had even been given the name of his father's favourite film character; a beer swilling and bullying cowboy. His poor mother was always tired and worn out, cleaning in the morning to earn money, then watching her husband drink his day away in front of the TV, caught up in some sort of violence or another.

As the door closed behind him, Jake pressed the lift button and waited. As usual, the lift did not come. Sighing in exasperation, he angrily kicked an empty beer can down the fire escape stairs before starting the long walk down himself. As he descended down the stairs Jake reflected upon his life; at nineteen he was unemployed and had little in the way of prospects having dropped out of school early in order to get a paper round and help his mother out at home. He felt the change in his pocket. It would be just enough to buy himself and his new girlfriend two drinks each at his local pub. He walked out into the street and listened to the wailing of police sirens in the crime ridden area in which he lived.

Jake walked along the side of the road past the old industrial estate as he made his way to his local pub. He was meeting Jane at 7.30 pm, therefore he had to get a move on; he only had five minutes to spare, damn the lift for being out of order. Just as he approached the main street he had to jump onto the grass verge, to narrowly avoid being hit by a fast approaching car, driving along without any headlights. As the car flew past, an object was thrown out of the window and hit Jake hard on his back. He looked down at his feet and saw that the object was in fact a small handgun. He picked it up just as a police car came tearing around the same corner as the car before. He hurriedly put the gun in his pocket and, with his head held down towards the floor, he carried on walking hurriedly before he was late for his first ever proper date.

As he arrived at the bar, Jake was a couple of minutes late. He walked in, saw Jane sitting at a table with another man. The stranger was good-looking and talking animatedly with Jane. Jane seemed to be having a good time, they were both laughing together. Jake went to the bar ordered a large vodka and downed it quickly. His 'so-called' mates looked up as he stood by the bar and followed his gaze over to Jane. 'Ooh, look out, cowboy's here' one of them retorted. 'What's the matter Jakey boy? Your girl gone and left you already?' 'Uh huh, looks like he's gonna get mad now- look at how his face is going red'. The gang of youths were laughing and pointing at him. Jake felt his face go red and the blood pulse through his temples. 'Aw, come on cowboy, don't get mad – what you gonna do now? Get your gun out cowboy?' They all laughed again. Jane, hearing the laughter looked up and smiled at Jake. He looked at Jane, even she was laughing at him; so was the stranger.

All of a sudden Jake reached into his pocket, pulled out the gun, pointed it at the stranger and fired a shot. It hit the stranger in the centre of his chest, killing him instantly. Unfortunately, the stranger was actually Jane's brother, who had been looking forward to meeting Jake. When later interviewed by the police, Jake's mother was devastated. 'I can't understand it', she said. 'He was always so gentle, he never argued, never shouted, I simply don't understand...'. Witnesses claimed that Jake had seemed in a daze, unaware of his actions and 'out of sorts'. Jane said 'he seemed to look straight through me, as if I was not there...'.