



HAPPINESS
By Paul Smith

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CHARACTERS

SAFFRON – 32 – smartly dressed, colourful scarf

ANDY – 34 – open-necked shirt, smart trousers

CARL – 39 – smart casual

An apartment overlooking the River Thames in London. Docklands. The accommodation has doors leading to the kitchen, bathroom and the front door. It is smart, modern, clean and tidy. Cranes in the distance. Large windows. Curtains open.

Neat and modern. Sideboard. Bookshelves. Large vase of flowers.

Early evening. 7.30pm

July – Sunshine.

SAFFRON, ANDY & CARL are all seated separately. All three have a drink in their hands and there is evidence that others have been there.

ANDY *(laughing)* I was wearing that batman outfit – everyone had told me it was fancy dress and there I was turning up at a posh black-tie event.

SAFFRON *(can hardly speak for laughing)* Oh Carl..... you wicked, wicked man.

CARL *(also laughing)* I just couldn't help myself. Seemed so difficult to resist and you've always been the most gullible person I know.

ANDY I know I take things at face value. I trust people. I believe what I hear. Carl said fancy dress, so I believed him! What an idiot!

CARL No doubting Thomas you!

ANDY But..... *(he is still laughing)*

SAFFRON That look on your face. Isn't there a photo of you somewhere?

CARL Somewhere.

ANDY Never find it now.

SAFFRON But the image is etched on the memory of everyone who witnessed it.

CARL It was classic Andy.

ANDY I guess I have never been so embarrassed.

CARL Nor so much the centre of attention.

SAFFRON You handled it as well as you could, the rest of us couldn't stop laughing.

ANDY Tell me about it. Not sure I will ever forgive you Carl!

CARL Think you mentioned that at the time, but not in quite the same words. Expletives deleted.

SAFFRON You and your fancy dress. What was that outfit you wouldn't take off when you were a child. Fireman Sam.

ANDY Postman Pat

SAFFRON and CARL roar with laughter.

CARL With that mangy moggie.

SAFFRON Yes, your Jess had things growing in her fur I think.

ANDY Don't mock her. She has sensitive ears, wherever she is. Probably still stuck in some station lost property office I guess.

CARL Awwwwww

SAFFRON Still miss her?

ANDY It's my childhood. I miss it everyday. We all become far too serious. Far too involved. Far too muddled up. Losing your childhood is the very worst part of being a human. Once it's gone, it's gone forever and you can only catch snatches of it thereafter. The odd fleeting glimpse. So, I hang on to every thread of it I can. Makes me feel warm and comforted.

SAFFRON And we all need that from time to time.

CARL Especially now I guess.

ANDY Mum was always good at keeping our childhood going so long as she could.

SAFFRON Stockings at Christmas – right up until she died.

CARL Loved them.

ANDY Still got the stocking somewhere.

SAFFRON We keep too much junk don't we?

ANDY That's not junk.

SAFFRON No, I mean, anyway, we have inherited Mum's hoarding mentality.

CARL Except me.

ANDY Except Carl.

SAFFRON Yes, it's too clinical in here isn't it. I like piles of stuff. I mean, where is all the 'stuff'? The magazines, the books, the bits and pieces that I fill my house with? Surely they must be somewhere.

CARL Don't collect them in the first place.

ANDY Always full bins. Rubbish and unnecessary stuff never make it across the threshold.

SAFFRON **(looking out of the window)** Glad I don't have to clean these windows. Inside or outside. Always thought this apartment needed a balcony. Ideal for an evening like this, warm, sun-drenched, balmy, gin and apple juice by the bucketload.

CARL Too expensive, the places with the balconies.

SAFFRON Could never have afforded this one.

ANDY Couldn't afford any apartments in London. Certainly not on the river.

SAFFRON Just can't look out on the view and love it anymore.

CARL I'm sorry.

ANDY Yes, know what you mean.

CARL Don't look.

SAFFRON moves away from the window and pours herself another glass of wine.

SAFFRON Jenny has aged hasn't she?

ANDY I didn't think so, not especially.

SAFFRON Well considering we're the same age I thought, well, wow. She's got more lines than the London Underground.

ANDY That is a supremely bitchy comment.

SAFFRON Very fond of Carl.

CARL I had a crush on her for years.

ANDY Should have married her.

CARL Too high on the maintenance front. Loads of baggage.

ANDY When did we last see her?

SAFFRON Her wedding?

ANDY Blimey. Ten years ago?

SAFFRON Something like that.

CARL Everyone has aged.

ANDY Cassie was looking very glam.

SAFFRON Nothing changes there; she wears a full DKNY ensemble just to go and buy a pint of milk.

Laughter

SAFFRON And always broke. Is it any wonder?

ANDY Daddy's girl. She just had to flutter her eyelashes at him and he would stump up anything she wanted.

CARL False eyelashes – even when she was 11.

SAFFRON Must be why she married someone 30 years older.

ANDY Still fluttering.

SAFFRON Of course.

SILENCE

SAFFRON I think I'll do some clearing up.

ANDY I'll give you a hand.

ANDY and SAFFRON gather up some of the plates and glasses and take them into the kitchen. CARL gets up and looks out of the window.

Lights fade.