

The Nurse Diaries

The Life and Times of a Brighton Serial Killer



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The Nurse is in prison. She's been banged up at Her Majesty's Pleasure in a half-forgotten ex-asylum for years, deep in the marshy Cambridgeshire fens. Her only way to communicate with the outside world is her beloved smartphone, hidden somewhere unmentionable to stop the Screws from getting their filthy hands on it.

Writing helps The Nurse forget she's stuck in a damp, cold jail. When she's writing, she feels free. Part of the real world. Part of society, a thread in the fabric. The rest of the time, she's bored shitless...therefore, extremely dangerous.

The Nurse knows she'll never be released. People find her ghastly crimes too awful to contemplate. But when, on the edge of starvation, she breaks out of solitary confinement, The Nurse realises the Screws have disappeared, her fellow inmates are dead, and she is finally, wonderfully free.

Welcome to The Nurse Diaries.

XXX The Nurse

Prologue – Fucking Nicked

The Nurse, interrupted

The Nurse is poised, a carrot-sized joint dangling from her lip, strong arm raised high above the man's head. The orange street lamp's glow casts deep shadows onto his face. His eyes frantically signal panic. He is unable to free himself, tied to a chair with a pair of fluffy pink handcuffs she half-inched from a gay sex shop in Kempton.

The victim's eyes bug out, and he struggles violently. The Nurse's trepanning blade scythes down, but before it reaches his scalp, a policeman crashes through the door of the flat, followed by several others, like something from a black and white Keystone Cops movie. *Get her, lads.* A meaty hand wrenches back The Nurse's arm, forcing her to drop the knife, and the rest of the rozzers jump on her, bringing her crashing to the ground. Oh, fuck. She is well and truly fucking nicked.

The neighbours in the other flats peer out of their doors, amazed, as The Nurse, a respectable young woman who has done nothing nastier than 'keep herself to herself' as far as they're aware, is manhandled down the stairs of the house on Denmark Terrace, Brighton, and shoved - beefy copper's hand firmly on top of her head - into the back of a police car. And that's that. What a sorry end to what was steadily becoming a glittering serial killing career.

Missing the rozzers by a whisker

Chemical Dave, The Chief Surgeon, and Hairy Dave are down the Pedestrians Arms, pints in front of them and spliffs in hand, when The Nurse is arrested. It is nothing short of a miracle they weren't hoovered up by the rozzers at the same time as her. A mere coincidence prevented them from wandering home to Denmark Terrace for their usual Sunday lunch and - this time - certain doom.

Huddled in the corner of the Poison Ivy bar later that day, still shocked rigid by The Nurse's capture, the three men decide it's safest to scarper. The last thing they want is to be dragged in for questioning, and while they know The Nurse is the ultimate in

discretion, they still feel edgy. What if she spills the beans?

All's fair in love and war, they conclude, and after one last pint, they stand up, wipe the beery condensation from their palms, shake hands, and leave the pub, each going in a different direction. After which, Brighton being such a nutter-magnet of a city, they simply blend into the background and fade away.

Part 1 – How it all Began

Some people, simply by being alive, tear holes in the universe. The Nurse is one of them. The chaos and misery caused by her work are cosmic in scale. She is a modern Ming the Merciless from the Planet Mongo. She makes Jeffrey Dahmer look like a wuss. She is not at all nice.

This is not just a serial killer. This is a fucking prolific serial killer, and her activities cause much wailing, pulling of hair, and gnashing of teeth across the land. The Nurse is doing a decent job of reducing the population of Britain. She is fucking good at it.

Way back then

The Nurse can't recall a time when she wasn't into pain. Not her own pain; other people's. Never animals, mind you. She has standards. In her opinion, it isn't fair to cut a hole in the skull of a living being who doesn't understand what the fuck is happening. It's no fun unless the victim 'gets' what is going on and she can see the horror light up their eyes as she pounces with her super-sharp tools.

At age eight, when The Nurse first discovers the ancient art of trepanning in an old Encyclopaedia Britannica, she's lost in wonder. She's still lost in wonder at trepanation, now called craniotomy and used to this day to relieve epidural and subdural bruising.

While common sense and medical science both say it's wise to replace the chunk of skull that's been drilled out as soon as possible, then close the hole, The Nurse never bothers with all that fucking nonsense. She's only interested in the hole-making bit, experimenting

with her Victorian diamond-coated cranial drills and trepanning knives.

She adores the sheer effrontery of it, breaking into someone's most secret place without their permission. The boldness of it, the bravery of it, actually opening the human skull like a nut and watching the brain pulsing beneath. It's a bit like being a god, peering through the neat edges of the hole she's made into the ball of grey flesh that makes a person a person. Their essence, their experiences, their emotions, everything except the skin, sinew, bone, and meat that makes up their bodies, it's all crammed in there, inside a wrinkled, spongy brain, but it is completely invisible. When someone dies, it disappears, leaving fuck all behind except the meat and offal part.

It is bizarre. The Nurse never quite manages to get her mind around the fact that humans are nothing more than ambulant meat, no better than supermarket barbecue packs on legs. It's a bit like the feeling she gets when she looks up at the night sky and thinks, *Fuck me, that's fucking massive*. A slightly unpleasant kind of awe, but that's the main reason she is so captivated by the potential that trepanning offers. Her experiments might even deliver cosmic answers to universal questions. Who knows?

After uni, seemingly on track for a career in the Secret Service, The Nurse is rejected by MI5 thanks to a battery of psychometric tests that reveal a slew of troubling hidden habits and attitudes. Interestingly, as she observes at the time, she isn't bothered. It means she's free to make her own way, tread her own path, earn enough cash to plan, create, and manage a scheme to indulge her fascination for trepanning real, living humans. And getting away with it.

The Nurse muses while smoking a huge doob. She isn't an actual nurse, it's just her nickname for herself, but nursing has to be a good place to start. She'll be able to play with lots of ill and vulnerable people. They're much easier to experiment on than the hale and hearty, who have an annoying tendency to put up a fight. She'll even have access to the tools of the trade, the kit, the know-how, and the necessary expertise around drugs. *Resultamundo*.

When The Nurse's much-loathed Great Aunt dies, leaving her a nice, airy flat in a large Victorian terraced house on Brighton's tree-

lined Denmark Terrace - plus a private income - everything changes. She's fucking made up. Who needs a nursing job when you've got an HQ like this in a city centre street, a place that's packed with vulnerable pissheads most nights? Denmark Terrace is a busy road rich in victims: the nutters, the arseholed, the forgetful, drugged, lost, late, unwary, and unwise. It is so much more discreet than a hospital setting, now that she thinks about it.

The Nurse has fucking arrived. She's in business. She is motoring. This is where real life finally begins.

Being buggered

Having just left Oxford University, most of the wannabe Chief Surgeon's life has been spent either being buggered or bugging some other poor bugger. That's the English public education system for you. The Establishment views such places as perfect proving grounds for the nation's future bell-ends: the Tory politicians, spies, diplomats, millionaire CEOs, and right wing lobbyists of this world, and he fits right in.

A booming voice – a mellifluous tone – is the Chief Surgeon's unique selling point. So much so that behind his back, his fellow undergraduates nickname him 'Mellifluous Tone,' even though his name isn't Tony. It's Geoffrey.

Meet Mister Geoffrey Cocks. Geoffrey has been practising talking like a tosser since childhood. A long, deep breath, the flaring of the nasal passages, and the shifting of the diaphragm in exactly the right way delivers an enormously satisfying boom of a sound, the kind of voice that belongs to people who never listen. The perfect Conservative Party politician's voice, if you like. Luckily for everyone, he isn't into politics. He is fascinated by surgery in general, trepanning in particular, and the 'forever' role he's aiming for is Chief Surgeon.

When the Chief Surgeon – as he secretly calls himself - encounters The Nurse, they each recognise a kindred spirit. At twenty-five, he likes to think he already looks the part: a portly ball of a young man with surprisingly small, delicate hands and feet, a massive protruding stomach, balding head, watery blue eyes, and a patterned bow tie. A proto-Gammon, in other words.

The Nurse is not impressed. He's obviously a massive twat, but she senses he'll be useful all the same. When they go for a drink in the King and Queen on Grand Parade, he starts talking with some authority on her pet subject. She's thrilled. He might be a bit of an arse. A lot of an arse, actually. But in one crucial way, he's *her* kind of arse. An arse who loves to experiment. An arse who isn't bothered when his trepanning experiments result in some poor sod's death. An arse whose particular area of madness is familiar, therefore comforting, as well as inspiring.

Hairy Dave's close shave

In the manner of so many great British nicknames, 'Hairy' Dave isn't actually hairy. He's bald. But there's more. Look closely - something not many people do, to be honest - and Dave actually has no hair at all. Not one hair, anywhere. Rampant early childhood alopecia has left Dave as bald as a billiard ball. He even has bald balls.

Despite the fact that it's a lie, Hairy Dave is thankful to be called Hairy rather than 'Baldy.' As nicknames go, it could be so much worse. At sixteen, he'd spent a particularly miserable year nicknamed 'Biscuit,' thanks to some cunt discovering his middle name is Gary. Gary Baldy, Garibaldi, Biscuit. God, that was a shit time. He was so heartily pissed off by the time he left school that he acquired another nickname. For a few dreadful weeks, he was 'Miserable Dave,' and he was one truly, madly, deeply pissed off individual. It's the kind of thing that leaves scars.

If you didn't know already, or are foreign, you'll have noticed how the English are hot on nicknames. As The Nurse found out long ago, it is better to give yourself a nickname and make it stick than wait for some cunt to dream up a right shocker for you.

Anyway. Hairy Dave's balls have not had an outing for a very long time. Not that being celibate bothers him. Having tried every imaginable turn-on, as well as plenty of things nobody in their right mind should be turned on by, Dave knows the only thing that makes him properly horny is criminality. He isn't fussy, mind you. He just gets off on the thrill of doing bad things, whatever those bad things happen to be.

In fact, *any* bad thing's a good thing in Dave's world, a curious landscape populated by people he's hoping to rip off, wary people who sense he's a rip-off merchant, and people who are after his blood because he has ripped them off. As a result, he doesn't really have friends, just random contacts who are either terrified of him or keen to relieve him of his gonads.

When The Nurse, fancying a spot of trepanation, knocks Hairy Dave out one dark winter night down Foundry Street in Brighton, it changes his life. Hairy Dave is a bit of a munter despite his youth. The Nurse is quite attractive in the way most young things are attractive, simply because of their newness and freshness. Let's face it, even baby spiders are fairly cute. While they don't click immediately, and it isn't a love thing, they've got something dark in common. They both love doing dodgy shit.

The Nurse has Dave where she wants him, manspread-tied to a chair, when he regains consciousness. Most of her victims are terrified when they come around. Hairy Dave is merely inquisitive. Most of them don't have a word to say for themselves except endless pleadings and beggings, something The Nurse finds fucking tedious. So when Dave starts asking questions, clearly fascinated by the gleaming trepanning tools she's wielding, she is so taken by surprise that she unties him and hands him her joint to toke on.

It feels fucking great, to be honest, being able to actually *talk* about her amateur brain surgery exploits with someone who's this intrigued and impressed. There's no way she's killing off this useful fucker.

Saved, it isn't long before Hairy Dave joins in. The Nurse is a tall, big, powerful woman, but sometimes her victims fight hard to survive. Dave comes in handy, with his total lack of conscience and fiery passion for doing awful things.

With The Chief Surgeon already in The Nurse's life, they are three, and it feels *so* right. An unholy sort of triumvirate emerges. Hairy Dave, who regards The Nurse with a heady blend of respect and terror, provides the muscle. The Nurse isn't quite as skilled as the Chief Surgeon at first. As keen as mustard, she steps back metaphorically and physically, and simply observes. In the early days of their partnership, he does most of the trepanning, and she does the

typical nurse thing, handing over sharp instruments on request. As time passes, she graduates to trepanning victims of her own. It didn't take long before they were neck and neck, no pun intended. Now The Nurse is streets ahead of the posh fat bloke, an incredibly skilful trepanner with more dedication in her little finger than the asshat has in his entire over-privileged, over-entitled body.

Inspired by the Dutch librarian Bart Hughes who, in 1965, drilled a hole in his own head with a dentist's drill as a publicity stunt, The Nurse tries to trepan herself while The Chief Surgeon and Hairy Dave are down at the pub. It fucking hurts.

Chemical Dave, artistic genius

Chemical Dave takes drugs. Shitloads of drugs. He's not too keen on the booze, mind you. He's aware it turns him into a dickhead, and he steers clear of cocaine since it transforms him into even more of a dickhead, but as for the rest? Yes, please. He has no idea how he manages to stick three years at Brighton Art College, being completely off his face the entire time. It's probably because he's an artistic genius and everyone at the college does everything in their power to keep him sweet.

Tripping his nuts off one day on the second floor of the Grand Parade building, looking out over The Old Steine towards the King and Queen pub, Chemical Dave has an epiphany. He's been watching his fellow arty types for a couple of years as they graduate, drift around the city working in cafes and pubs for a while, then give up and get a 'proper' job in insurance, estate agency, hairdressing, or whatever.

I mean, fuck off. There's no way Dave is going to end up in a three bed semi, bored stupid with a crappy job, a couple of kids and a tired wife, wondering what happened to all his youthful creative fire and passion. But how is he going to turn the tide of awful inevitability that sees more or less every art student in the land end up in banking or managing a shoe shop? It's a fucker, alright.

When Chemical Dave leaves art college and starts commuting to London daily in search of a suitably arty job, inspiration finally strikes. Bollocks to paying these mental-crazy train fares. He decides

to forge his tickets instead, makes a marvellous job of it, and soon gathers an extensive clientele of commuters keen to swerve the outrageous annual cost of a Brighton-to-London-at-stupid-o-clock-in-the-fucking-morning season ticket. At a fee of a grand a pop, Chemical Dave is doing nicely.

It's no surprise Hairy Dave and Chemical Dave get on so well. When they first meet down at the Pedestrians Arms, they recognise in each other a fellow evil sort, someone else who's equally easily led and just as happy to do nasty shit. No wonder, along with The Chief Surgeon, they become so keen to support The Nurse in her ambition to become Britain's best-ever serial trepanner.

Creative explosion

Welcome to the Amateur Brain Surgery Club. Between them, the Daves, The Chief Surgeon, and The Nurse get a lovely rhythm going. They pick up some random cunt, knock them daft, bundle them into a vehicle, trepan them, then either bury the failures or let the successes loose on the South Downs with fucking great bloody holes in their heads, drugged into a state of permanent amnesia. It is huge fun, until the fucking rozzers catch on.

The rest, as The Nurse says, is history. And now she is fucking well nicked, buried extremely deep in the deepest, smelliest shit.

Part 2 – Banged Up

One door closes, another door closes

In custody down Brighton nick, The Nurse sits up straight in an uncomfortable orange plastic chair and scowls at the shitty public service posters on the interview room walls. There's fuck all else to amuse her while the silly cunts run around in circles, trying to decide

what to do with the worst serial killer the city has ever spawned. The only one, for that matter. They're not used to this kind of thing in right-on Brighton & Hove, where the locals are more likely to politely persuade you to attend a play about homeless disabled lesbians - or bum you - than actually murder you.

The interviewing detective turns out to be Fatty Marsden, from school. He's still a chubby fuck, but this time he's in charge, not aged twelve, grappled to the ground by The Nurse and her grinning teenaged mates, nylon y-fronts around his knees and funny little pre-puberty bollocks flapping in the breeze. Roll The Nurse's complete lack of remorse into the equation, and before long it becomes clear she is fucking toast. When it turns out the prosecution is being led by some famous cunt of a criminal lawyer from Finchley, she grits her teeth. Things are looking crappier by the minute.

Once the celebrity cunt of a solicitor from Finchley comes to the end of his long, deadly finishing statement at Lewes Crown Court, The Nurse sighs and prepares for the worst. She glances down at herself. Her own Brief has done his best, but to be honest, she doesn't look the least bit insane. She stands straight and impressively tall in a good woollen suit, crisp blouse, and discreet string of pearls. Her hair is coiffed into a stiff, fox-brown helmet above stern, intelligent blue eyes, a strong nose and thin, firm mouth. She's no oil painting, but she looks perfectly sane and sensible. It's her Thatcher-like face that does it. Sadly, she'd look just as sane and sensible wearing rags, pulling her hair out and trying to swallow her own tongue. It's just the way her face is. Such is life.

When the judge bangs his gavel for silence, waiting to announce her sentence, The Nurse suspects she's in the deepest possible shit. She has been expecting a long stretch. But she can't help being surprised by the locked-up-to-rot, life-without-parole horror of a sentence she is handed. The hammer comes down, The Nurse bows her head, and two heavies escort her politely to the back door of the court, down the stairs and into a windowless cell to await transfer.

Post-sentencing psychometric testing clearly reveals The Nurse as a person without conscience, a high-functioning, drug-loving sociopath with powerful anti-social tendencies and a raft of severe behavioural

issues. No combination of happy pills will fix *this* lady.

The testers report back on her mental condition in a typically verbose fashion, sending a thousand-page document to every interested party, depressing numbers of the cunts. The Nurse moulders on remand without bail in Lewes Prison, seething with boredom, for several months while the powers-that-be wade through acres of paperwork.

HMP Lewes, being less than ten miles from Brighton, is mostly populated by the city's waifs, strays, misfits and nut-jobs. A category B local prison with 742 male inmates, The Nurse proves an oddity. But the local authorities, never having encountered anyone quite like The Nurse before, have no clue what to do with her while the legal system grinds tediously in the background. In the end, they shove her in a spare room in G Wing, where twenty-three vulnerable and at risk prisoners are cared for. The Nurse appreciates the irony and stays put. It's crazy-easy to escape from a place like this, but the world and his fucking dog probably know what she looks like by now, and she won't get far. Fuck it.

When Jo, one of the Screws, sends the library trolley her way, The Nurse feels so much better. Being banged up with a good book is a world away from being banged up with fuck-all to read. If anything sends her over the edge, it's being bookless, the purest of torments.

Once one of her fellow inmates swaps her a nine bar of excellent quality hash for a jolly hard, enjoyable beating from The Nurse, she is reasonably content. Life without a decent toke or two would be completely unbearable.

The weird elasticity of time

Amusing herself while she awaits transfer to wherever-the-fuck proves tricky. She can't plan. She has no idea where she's going to end up. It could be Bronzefield, modern yet brutal. Or some remote secure unit for the dangerously insane in a really shit part of the country. She grinds her teeth in frustration. It's hard dealing with the unknown, much easier to tackle problems when you actually know what the fuckers are.

It's interesting to note how weirdly time passes when one is

locked up without enough to occupy one's mind. Time more or less slows to a standstill. The Nurse stares around the room a bit, fidgets, scratches her bum, observes a fly zizz past her face, glances at the clock, and only one second has gone by. What the holy fuck? Playing the waiting game in limbo, The Nurse has lost track of the days she's spent reading, smoking, reading, smoking. Reluctant to start her last book of the week, risking a weekend with nothing to read for days, she decides to undertake a forensic exploration of one of her shoelaces.

She intends to take her time. She may as well. Time is her only possession right now, aside from the dozen almighty plastic baggie-protected spliffs hidden up her chuff. She will screw every last, tiny fucking sliver of pleasure out of the experience, pun intended. She will use up as much time as she can on life's teeny, weeny details.

Taking a long toke and leaning down with her head between her knees, The Nurse observes one of her shoelaces. It is less than a metre long, five millimetres wide, a quarter of a millimetre thick and dyed pale pink. Leaning in so closely that she almost faceplants the cell floor, she notices the threads that make it up. The shoelace has been woven using hair-slim pure cotton. Each miniature strand disappears under its opposite number, creating a detailed V-shaped weave that's remarkably strong and hard to break. When The Nurse picks up one end of the shoelace and tugs, the bow unravels smoothly, leaving a puddle of pink spaghetti on the floor that she idly writes rude curly-fonted words with: cunt, twat, bastard. Hmph.

When she re-ties the bow, the bits of shoelace that disappear into the knot itself are squashed flat, and the chevron-like construction distorts. Four small filaments of cotton ease themselves loose and spoil the neat perfection of the lace. She lifts it delicately between her forefinger and thumb and smooths the loose threads until the oil from her skin forces them to lie flat again. And again, and again. And again.

And again.

And again.

And again.

One of the ends of a shoelace has lost the solid bit that lets you thread it through a hole in a shoe – is there a name for it? - and the end is fraying. She eases one of the frayed threads loose, and it pulls the others into a series of tiny wrinkles. She smooths it, then lets it wrinkle, smooths it, then lets it wrinkle. Breathing heavily through her mouth like a bored toddler, The Nurse examines her shoelace until she knows the cuntin'g thing backwards and inside out, then begins to examine the sole of her shoe in similar detail. Such are the minutiae of her life right now.

The Facility

It's a relief to get shot of Lewes jail. But by the time the Big Day arrives and she is finally transferred to the place she'll be spending the rest of her days, The Nurse is feeling mightily hacked off. While sixty killings plus roughly the same number of assaults and GBH charges is not to be sneezed at, and she understands the public's outrage, it comes nowhere near the volcano of barely-suppressed fury she feels at being sent down for life. She is fucking livid. And typically, the more livid she gets, the calmer she looks, and the smaller her pupils become. Once she's safely masked, grabbed by the scruff of the neck, dragged out of the Pig Wagon and marched through the moated gates of the prison-cum-loony bin, The Nurse looks so alien and strange, it gives the officer on the reception desk nightmares for weeks to come.

Bundled along what feels like a low, narrow tunnel, occasionally bashing her head against the ceiling, The Nurse discovers she's entering a new state of mind. She's gone beyond fury into an eerily calm curiosity born of the inevitable. A state of 'fuck it,' basically.

The more human half of The Nurse's psyche remains frozen with horror at the thought of imprisonment. No freedom, no self-determination, nothing to do, nowhere to go, no plans to make. The idea of countless monotonous years makes her feel like lashing out. Her kind of mind is ill-suited to idleness. Her darker half feels oddly stimulated. The prison is going to feed her, clothe her and house her. Even if the food's shit, she looks like shit, and she's housed in a fucking hovel, her basic needs are met, and she will have large

amounts of time to fill.

She is not alone, either. There are *inmates*. Not ordinary villains, but the mad and the frightening, the brainless, the disillusioned and delusional, the murderous, the committed and the lunatic. As far as The Nurse is concerned, now that she thinks about it, this place offers far more potential for medical mischief, experimentation, collaboration and trepanning than an ordinary jail full of boring, everyday criminal bell-ends.

The Screws don't take off the leather face mask – which makes her look like a gimp, for fuck's sake - until they've marched her down many, many damp corridors and pushed her into a small enclosed space. Whipping the mask off, leaving The Nurse blinking and rubbing her eyes, they slam the door behind her, and that's that. She's arrived.

The Nurse is razor sharp, button bright and twice as smart as paint. Her intellect is formidable, she is powerfully built and as fit as a flea. This is an awful lot of angry, violent lady to accommodate inside a cramped, three-metre-square cell for a few days, never mind for decades on end.

A shithole with potential

At first it appears even shittier in here than she'd imagined. And things quickly get worse. Having some cunt of a Screw sticking her fingers up The Nurse's arse isn't much fun. What the fuck do they imagine she's got hidden up there, anyway? Rip-off porn CDs? Bales of fucking hash? Power tools? Emigrants? For fuck's sake.

The shower, where she is observed by three fat, grinning, truncheon-wielding female Screws, is no better, humiliation personified. And the clothing they've given her is desperate. She doesn't know if she can bear it. Disgustingly uniformed in cheapo padded pink towelling slippers and a dirty flesh-pink Crimplene tunic with integral pocketed tabard-fucking-thing, head in hands, hair shorn, she slumps, motionless, until some fuck yells over the tannoy and a cross-eyed Screw unlocks the cell door for lunch.

Following the crowd to the dining hall, The Nurse people-watches. The vast majority of the population is male, and the few

females – maybe four at a glance? - mingle freely, presumably because of the libido-numbing pills everyone's given. Most of the inmates are too mental to pay her any attention. They wouldn't know a new prisoner from the hole in their own arse, handily pre-classifying themselves as victims. Jolly good. She quickly spots a few potential collaborators, too. Playmates, if you like. Excellent.

Lights out at eight throws The Nurse into a pit of freshly-bookless despair. She realises she's going to lose it fast unless she can get hold of some reading material and a supply of skunk. For now, she lies rigid on the thin, hard mattress, stained with Christ-knows-what, and sends her mind somewhere better.

The Nurse imagines herself walking down many cool marble steps, barefoot and serene, before turning right to face a neat red-glossed door with a brass knocker in the shape of a lion's head. She opens the door and sails through the doorway into a beautiful garden where the sun shines and hummingbirds dart. There's a feast of fragrant blooms and stands of majestic trees, grassy glades, tinkling streams and tumbling waterfalls, winding mossy paths and shining, clear pools. Basically every 'beautiful garden' cliché you can imagine. Approaching her Happy Place, now almost fully self-hypnotised, The Nurse relaxes the last shred of herself into the illusion and sighs with relief.

Her happy place is a huge hospital. The visual details don't matter, they're all bare walls and beige. It's the action that counts, and that means *people*...of which there are plenty, each one a unique type of victim. The Nurse is the only member of staff. Every patient is either painfully restrained, unable to move through sheer terror, or tied up because they quite like it. She has been perfecting this imaginary place since childhood, and it is infinitely more detailed than those mind-houses that those memory feat twats dream up.

Choosing a ward at random, The Nurse eenie-meenie-miney-moes her way to a curtained bed containing an imaginary old scrote she created to celebrate her twentieth birthday. She was toying with S&M at the time (mostly S, to be frank), and the imaginary victim has an unusually low pain threshold. He isn't afraid to be vocal about his pain either. He weeps with abandon, suffering unbelievably thanks to a lifetime's chronic phobia of being tied up. And that's the secret. It's no fun imposing sadism on someone who likes it. But when it's a

person's worst nightmare? That's special.

The Nurse stores cutting edge tools in her mind-hospital, super-expensive, museum-grade vintage trepanning tools with crazy-sharp edges that cut fingers off as easily as slicing through courgettes. She plucks a tiny imaginary blade out of the air and experimentally swooshes it around her head. Just like in the movies, it actually makes a *swoosh* sound as it cuts the air. Such fun.

The vic's eyes go small, dark and watchful when he catches the knife's glint in the deep gloom. He stops breathing and swivels rapidly from side to side, listening keenly for tiny giveaway sounds. She coughs, then watches, slinty eyed, as he lights up with panic. He scrabbles off the bed and tries to disappear into the curtains, which look soft like fabric but are as hard and strong as steel. That's the beauty of imaginary stuff. You can do whatever the fuck you like. There are no irritating laws of physics to stop you.

The Nurse turns the fear dial up to eleven and beyond, approaching the man sideways, shining light from the barred window onto her knife and flashing it at him like Morse code. He *literally* gibbers with terror. Brilliant. Then he shits himself, a bridge too far in real life, but here she simply imagines it away. Imaginary shit only smells if you want it to.

A quarter of an hour later, she's feeling human again, ready for anything. Fucking hell. Bring on the horn-suppressing drugs. Who needs orgasms when you've got a happy place like this? Reassured that her imagination is almost as good as the real deal, even in this shithole, The Nurse sighs with relief and nods off. It's her first night in the nuthouse. Only twelve thousand and three nights to go.

Part 3 – Bored Fucking Shitless

Fucking mischief

Bad shit. That's about all there is to get up to in this shithole. Several years locked up, and The Nurse is fucking bored out of her fucking

skull. Thank bloody Christ for her smartphone, nicked from a Screw she killed. The rest of the silly shit-wizards think he fled the unit for good after falling in love with an inmate, but no. His final resting place is right under The Nurse's feet, buried deep where fuckers like him belong.

The smartphone is The Nurse's window into the world. She surfs through the night, face lit eerily by the screen's chilly blue light, on the prowl for subjects to investigate. The thing is, having been analysing, investigating and de-bullshitting for a very long time, she is running low on inspiration, scraping the bastard barrel. Tonight's investigation is about shampoo. Shampoo, for fuck's sake. It is hardly the world's most dangerous or scandalous substance.

Beggars can't be choosers. She sighs, settles herself on her lumpy bunk and dives in. Shampoo is innocuous enough, you might think? Not so. The Nurse, who enjoys de-bunking, soon discovers there's much less to shampoos and conditioners than she'd imagined. Down an Internet wormhole she goes, then down another, and another. Doesn't time fly when you're busy?

You don't get many luxuries in prison. The Nurse has often bemoaned the lack of decent shampoo. Most of the time, her hair looks like a nest. So she's cheered to discover that very few of the ingredients in shampoo have anything to do with actual hair. They're mostly there to improve the appearance, smell, texture and shelf-life of the shampoo itself.

While it's no real surprise that hair care adverts are bollocks, The Nurse is intrigued to find out exactly how much of a shampoo's contents are pointless. And what a walk of shame she uncovers. The detergent element of shampoo, anything between five and twenty percent, cleans hair. The rest doesn't. There's loads of water, plus special bubble boosters, essential because detergent won't foam on its own. There are oils to counteract the detergent's drying effect, emulsifiers to make the oil mix with the water, emulsion stabilisers to hold the whole thing together, a water soluble preservative and an oil soluble preservative. There are thickeners to create texture, and colourings, and UV stabilisers to stop the colour of the shampoo from fading. There are opacifiers to make the product creamy or opalescent, reducing agents to stop it from stripping out hair dye, and

of course fragrances.

Holy crap. Basically, when one shampoos one's hair, one strips out its natural oils, which one then has to replace with man-made chemicals via a conditioner. If that's you, you're a wanker. You've fallen for the cosmetic sector's junk science promises. Next time The Nurse sees a shampoo advert starring some silly bint fart-arsing around in a flower-filled field, she'll think twice before wishing she could shell out on expensive shampoo.

Not only are manufacturers' claims unsupported by science, they're unregulated. In the words of one expert, they're *"free to use just about anything in cosmetics and toiletries."* Maybe they put shit in it, and that's why The Nurse's hair always looks so shit. Who fucking knows.

Aha! Suddenly inspired, heart beating faster, The Nurse takes herself off to plan an experiment with homemade shampoo. Not on herself, of course. Because she's worth it, she experiments on an unwilling dicktard of a fellow inmate...whose head more or less dissolves like something out of a horror film.

Fuck. Another failed experiment. The Nurse is hurled back into solitary to mull over her wicked ways. Life isn't fair. Ah, well. On the bright side, at least there's telly down here. On the downside, it's usually shite.

The Nurse whiles away hours, the days, the weeks, the months watching telly, dreaming up ways to kill people she dislikes. Whenever a pompous knob-jockey politician gets on her nerves, she imagines them naked except for socks and sandals. It's a neat trick that makes it impossible to take them seriously from then onwards. She also likes to squint at politicians through one eye until she has them in centre view. Then she squashes their silly little heads between her index finger and thumb until, in her imagination, they pop like berries. That's better. Alternatively, she imagines their heads squashed flat by great, big, massive wobbly arses. It is just as effective.

Right now, The Nurse's TV viewing pleasure is being ruined by an outbreak of catastrophic eyebrow embellishment. A lack of eyebrows makes a person look like an alien. Immense eyebrows can be just as disturbing. Even middle-sized ones can prove risky. You

should see the fuckers on some of her fellow inmates. Anyway, attempting to enjoy one TV show this week, The Nurse finds herself driven to distraction by the contestants' astonishing brow creativity.

One thundercunt of a would-be Master Chef has plucked hers into such a high arch of surprise that The Nurse can only assume she unexpectedly sat on something pointy. The night before, a misguided lady had plucked hers from above, with disturbingly Neanderthal results. Monday night's classics included a pair of eyebrows with a wide, stubbly gap right in the middle of each one. Four-brows. Why?

In the olden days, The Nurse's mum bought her a weekly copy of Jackie magazine. It taught her how to talk to boys, navigate teenager-hood with a modicum of success and - crucially - pluck her eyebrows without ending up looking mental. The Nurse dreams of a time when she can watch telly in peace without being menaced by shit like this.

The Nurse extracts her phone from her undercarriage once more, grits her teeth and hunkers down for the duration. It looks like, this time around, she's going to be in solitary for a while. Bored beyond belief, still stuck for a decent subject, she investigates false teeth.

Thanks to being a child during the '60s and '70s, The Nurse has crap teeth. Her childhood dentist was spectacularly bad, as well as really scary: Mr. Sockett, she shits you not. No wonder, when she left home, she didn't go to the dentist for a decade. No wonder her teeth no longer do what it says on the tin.

Let's face it. If false teeth were in fashion, The Nurse would have her gnashers whipped out without a second thought. Especially given their current condition. Bored one long, dark winter's day, a couple of years after being banged up in this hell-hole, she filed her front teeth to sharp points, cute yet painful in a draught. No wonder she's inspired, speculating wildly about marketing false teeth as the next hot trend.

On a roll, it doesn't take long before she realises there's a lot more to falsies than meets the eye, plenty to keep her interested. False teeth are actually rather thrilling. The business possibilities are endless, bearing in mind the public's obsession with super-white implants and veneers. She gets her notebook out and jots down ideas. A few days later, and she's sure she's onto something. *Definitely* onto

something.

The Nurse reckons hip-hop has gone some way towards kicking things off. She envisages a time when ageing hip-hop superstars might replace genuine bejewelled gnashers with falsies. She imagines party teeth for special occasions. Royalty with diamond encrusted teeth. Self-assembly falsies from Ikea in cheery primary colours. Flashing LED teeth. Glamour teeth. Limited edition teeth. Hello magazine would wet themselves over the latest celebrity teeth. There'd be porn teeth. Recycled teeth. Gay teeth. The opportunities are fucking endless.

Having said all that, the worst thing about false teeth is the way your face collapses into a frightening, loose heap when you take them out. To remedy this, The Nurse proposes a comfy self-cleaning device that sits permanently in your mouth. You'd simply slot interchangeable sets of teeth smoothly into it; your mourning teeth, Bar Mitzvah teeth, Divali teeth, Valentine's day teeth, wedding teeth, fatwah teeth, whatever the fuck. That way, you never have to horrify your partner - or yourself - with a face that hangs like the flat, dangly tits on one of those African tribeswomen you see on telly. Thanks to The Nurse's contraption, a person's face would always look nice and pert, with cheeks as smooth as a baby's arse.

Stunning false teeth, plus the extra benefit of a non-invasive partial face lift? What's not to like? The Nurse decides she needs the support of a great science brain, a marketing genius, and a celebrity endorser. Imagine, a huge and growing audience of people across the planet who are sick and tired of things going wrong with their teeth. Many of whom would, if it became cool, jump at the chance of having The Nurse's ground-breaking falsie system installed.

The basic permanent mouth unit would be painless, simple to fit at home, and affordable. We're talking high fashion false teeth for the masses here, no elitist nonsense. Once you've got your basic kit in place, the sky's the limit as far as your falsies are concerned. From basic white to rainbow tie dye, real rubies or crooked comedy Billybobs, pure gold to cheap daily disposables - whatever tickles your fancy.

By this stage, The Nurse is almost breathless with excitement. A generous spirit despite her murderous tendencies, she would like

to throw open the false teeth fashion challenge to the world at large. All she asks is a 1% cut - for life - of the profits of every company that succeeds with her invention. While it might seem naive to be so free and easy with such a superb business opportunity, The Nurse is confident that nobody will take the piss. There's no need to patent her idea. She is a very scary person.

Still musing about the possibilities, The Nurse reminds herself to get Vlad the Dentist, her neighbour upstairs in the main jail, to pull her super-sensitive, pointy teeth out before the icy winter fenland winds arrive and start whistling through the cell walls like a tune by Al fucking Jolson.

Right. It's time to do an experiment.

Sadly, The Nurse's initial false teeth design, and fitting efforts don't go well. Remove a set of teeth from one fucktard inmate, paint them with pretty canal boat art-inspired designs, relocate them to the newly-toothless mouth of another inmate. Simple. It should have worked like a dream, but a chronic MRSA infection gets in the way. And here she is again, thrown back into solitary confinement for two more accidental manslaughters. Fucking hell.

In solitary, out again, in solitary, out again. The Nurse is losing fucking count and losing her mind. At the moment, she's free to roam again, part of the general prison population. There's no sign of Vlad the Dentist, which is a bit of a bugger. No sign of some of the other usual suspects either. Actually, things are looking a bit weird around here. Kind of empty. Where is everybody?

After another restless day spent bored to distraction, The Nurse focuses her next research project on recreational drugs. While she doesn't get out much - not at all, actually - she devours the TV news avidly via her smartphone, and her attention is grabbed when a senior police officer recommends making drugs legal, facing the consequences instead of spending obscene amounts of cash criminalising drug users, as well as the abusers. This fascinates The Nurse. Out comes the smartphone. Hours pass peacefully as she investigates.

Apparently, millions of ordinary law-abiding folk hold down jobs, pay massive mortgages and rear nice, polite children. At weekends, they indulge in a marvellous array of illegal drugs to no ill effect. These happy Weekend Warriors are not vomiting up their kebabs in the street, showing their tits to passers by, falling down, stealing or fighting. That's the binge drinkers.

The police chief's recommendation to legalise recreational drugs makes sense, sparking The Nurse's scientific curiosity. Retrieving her laboratory test logbook and pen from their hiding place under her stinky toilet bucket, she decides to test the theory: to offer unlimited prison moonshine and home brew to half her fellow inmates - thus simulating an all-night Stella-and-spirits session - while giving the other half free access to a generous pile of pure ecstasy pills.

Spare inmates prove thin on the ground. The Nurse gathers the few subjects she can find, then gives both inmate test segments basic instructions about how to consume their stimulants reasonably safely. Boozers - don't drink too much. Stop before you get drunk. Alternate booze with water. Caners - don't drink water if you're sitting still. If you're dancing, drink some water. Everyone - have an early night beforehand to avoid the jet-lag effect you get after pulling an all-nighter. Otherwise, you'll fuck up the test results.

The Nurse sits back and observes. Eight hours after the experiment begins, she logs the fact that the drinkers are too troused to remember her 'stop before you get drunk' safety tip. The booze test segment is stealing knives from the prison kitchen, hanging the Screws, vomiting in each other's beds, engaging in beer goggle-fuelled incidents too horrid to detail, and arguing irrationally. Some are texting takeaways, demanding they deliver extra-large kebabs, others are smashing up the television room, bleeding profusely and calling each other cunts. Overall, it looks like excessive alcohol makes the inmates boring, ugly and stupid. Or *more* boring, ugly and stupid.

As far as the druggie test segment goes, The Nurse observes the pill-up group sensibly abiding by her safety guidelines despite having decimated a huge pile of Es. They appear busy and productive, setting up impromptu therapy sessions, sitting in the exercise yard,

marvelling at the night sky, holding hands with the Screws and spontaneously cleaning their cells. One group pushes back the tables and starts a mini-rave in the dining hall. The only dramatic effects appear to be excessive gurning and the occasional massive rush, where the pilled-up inmates go purple from the neck up and can't stop grinning.

The Nurse acknowledges that drug addicts have a terrible time. They deserve to have lots of money spent on them to help them get better. But happy, harmless drug users? She'd let them be. Alcohol is the only fart at the Bar Mitzvah, and it's a particularly stinky one. The Nurse rests her case. And now she's off to neck a crafty doo-dah or two herself. Nice.

Fourteen alcohol-related inmate deaths later, and she's back in solitary, for fuck's sake. What's their fucking problem? Do they not appreciate science?