

NEEDS MUST

Adam Neill

1 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. MORNING. 1

A pretty 30-something blonde, CLARE, hums a happy tune as she makes and cuts sandwiches. She folds them into wax paper and places them in a lunch bag with an apple.

2 EXT. CITY STREET. DAY. 2

TOM, 39, in a suit, walks the streets aimlessly. He passes shop windows, fast food joints, passers-by. Nothing really catching his eye. He comes to the entrance of a gritty urban mall. He stops outside it. Might as well go in and kill some more time.

3 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S BEDROOM. MORNING. 3

TOM, unseen in the en suite bathroom, is going about his morning ablutions. One side of the bed is neatly slept in, the other is more disturbed. A pillow lies on the ground, sleepwear abandoned on the coverlet. Despite the bright morning, one bedside lamp is still on; a bunch of keys, a wallet and a watch in its glow. Beneath the other a stack of books. TOM, wrapped in a towel, enters. He opens a cupboard and takes a collared shirt off a hanger, slips it on then reaches in for a suit. Tosses the suit on the bed. Takes a pair of boxers and sensible dark socks from a drawer.

4 INT. MALL. DAY 4

TOM walks listlessly through the mall, staring mindlessly at the low grade window displays. He doesn't notice an advertising board standing in his way and falls right over it. People stare. TOM scrabbles to his feet and picks up the board, trying to make it stand again on the tiles. He manages at last, then notices the wording...

'MOLE EXTERMINATOR NEEDED. GOOD CASH OPPORTUNITY. INQUIRE WITHIN.'

TOM looks at the shop front. Covered over by newspaper it's a blank save for a single, small sign indicating; 'Savage and Savage - Mole Exterminators'.

5 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. MORNING. 5

TOM, now suited up, puts the lunch bag in his briefcase. CLARE pours him a coffee to go.

CLARE
(giggling)
Come on. You can tell me!

TOM
(laughs)
No. I can't. It's a surprise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARE
A clue then...

TOM
No.

CLARE
Just a little clue.

TOM
Stop it.

CLARE
A kiss for a clue...

She hands him the coffee, then pulls it away, drawing him in for a kiss while she holds it out of his reach.

6 INT. SAVAGE AND SAVAGE OFFICE. DAY.

6

TOM enters the Stygian gloom of the small shop. It is dusty, quiet, and smells of old men. Plastic garden chairs neatly line the walls. Empty, apart from one old white bum, who sits silently. With no response from the bum, TOM sits. At the rear of the shop is a single door in a dry-wall separation. An unnerving length of silence is broken by the door opening to reveal an even darker hole in the gloom. Silence. Then a voice, very old and deeply earthy, comes from the darkness.

TALPIN
Next please.

The old bum doesn't move one bit, so TOM stands and approaches the door.

7 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. MORNING.

7

TOM
(breaking from the kiss)
You are incorrigible!

CLARE
No, you are for not telling me.

TOM
When have I ever in all the years told you.

CLARE
I'm hoping this is the one.

TOM
You're going to be disappointed.

CLARE
I'd better not be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

I mean that I'm not going to tell you.
You have to wait until the day.

CLARE puts on a faux sulky face.

8 INT. SAVAGE AND SAVAGE BACK ROOM. DAY. 8

TOM steps cautiously into the darkness.

TALPIN

Come in. Come in. No time wasters
please. Take a seat.

TOM finds his way to a plastic chair, only faintly visible in
the darkness. He sits.

TALPIN

Good. Now. Name?

TOM

Tom. Stutchen.

TALPIN

Tom or Thomas?

TOM

Thomas.

TALPIN

Thomas. You want to kill moles?

TOM

I... uh.

TALPIN

No time wasters.

TOM'S eyes slowly grow used to the gloom. He realises there's
a table in front of him, a few papers stacked to one side. A
desk set placed just so and, on the far side, he can only
just make out the dark humped shape of TALPIN.

TOM

I need work. Money.

TALPIN

HA! First honest answer today. What do
you need it for?

TOM

I... I have a wife. I...

He trails off. A deep silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TALPIN

She hot?

TOM

Um... yes. I guess...

TALPIN

You fuck?

TOM

What?

TALPIN

Never mind. I'm guessing you don't
fuck so much. No money. No job... you
don't have a job do you?

TOM

No. No job.

TALPIN

Not fucking then. Good.

Silence. TOM squints into the darkness but he can't quite
make out the man questioning him. He senses he is being
watched closely. The silence grows uncomfortable...

9 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. MORNING.

9

TOM

(laughing)

Stop it now. I'm going to be late.

CLARE

Oh well. At least my only consolation
is that you will spend your entire
salary on it...

TOM

Oh will I?

CLARE

You better. Or at least half of it.

TOM

I won't have a salary if I'm late.

CLARE relents and hands over the coffee.

CLARE

Motivation enough.

She kisses him again.

CLARE

I love you baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
I love you too.

TOM heads out the door.

CLARE
Call me later. I'll miss you...

10 INT. SAVAGE AND SAVAGE BACK ROOM. DAY. 10

Out of the dark silence...

TALPIN
(softly)
You ever kill anything?

TOM
Only once, by mistake with a catapult.
I was 12. A little bird.

TALPIN
Pah. Birds you shouldn't kill.

Silence again.

11 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. DAY. 11

TOM gets into his car. He lets out a huge sigh. He sees himself in the rear view. Steels himself. Starts the car and drives off.

12 INT. SAVAGE AND SAVAGE BACK ROOM. DAY. 12

Again from the darkness...

TALPIN
You ever feel like killing?

TOM
I... is this for real.

TALPIN
Very. If you don't want to kill
then...? (a sucking of teeth)

Silence.

TALPIN
You ever feel like killing something?
Honestly.

TOM
I hate cats. I ran one over once. On
purpose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TALPIN

Cat! Good! Good! Vermin. And you lied.
You have killed.

TOM

I guess so. I'm sorry I...

Suddenly, with the creak of an old, sprung office chair, out of the gloom, TALPIN leans forward. A terrible sight; pale, wrinkled, a head so full of dark hair it seems to grow almost as low as the eyebrows which sit above dark, cold eyes. TOM recoils.

TALPIN

You got the job.

The terrible face disappears again back into the darkness.

TALPIN

By the door on your way out you see a briefcase. Take it. You'll find what you need inside.

TOM

Um...OK... thanks. What about salary?

Silence.

TOM (CONT'D)

Hello? What about how to...

But now the room feels empty. TOM stands and makes his way back to the door way rectangle of gloomy light. He bends and feels around until he comes up with a pale-brown, old-style briefcase.

He looks back into the room and then exits to the relative brightness of the exterior room.

13 EXT. CITY. DAY. 13

Tom drives along with the other nine to fivers towards the city but he turns off the freeway and heads into a suburb.

14 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. DAY. 14

Tom pulls up to the curb outside a neat, well to do suburban home. He checks it over. He takes the briefcase from the seat beside him and steps out. Closing the door, he regards himself in his car window.

15 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. LATE NIGHT. 15

TOM pops the latches of the briefcase and opens it. He stares at the contents... A neatly folded workers jacket and pants. A small roll of bin bags. A list of names, address and

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appointment times. A single sheet of paper headed '*Instructions*'.

And two pieces of steel rod.

TOM takes these out. Looks at them. It's apparent they're supposed to join in the middle. And one end is honed to a vicious looking point. He presses it with his finger tip.

16 EXT. BENNINGTON HOUSE. DAY. 16

TOM rings the door bell. A pause. The door opens to reveal a middle aged woman, MRS. BENNINGTON.

TOM
Mrs. Bennington?

MRS BENNINGTON
Hello. Yes.

TOM
I'm here about your moles.

MRS BENNINGTON
Oh Yes. Of course. Please come in.

17 INT. BENNINGTON HOUSE. DAY. 17

A well kept upper middle class suburban home.

TOM
Have you somewhere I could change?

MRS BENNINGTON
Yes. Please, through here.

18 INT. BENNINGTON BEDROOM. DAY. 18

The door of the bedroom is slightly ajar. TOM opens the briefcase, removes the workers outfit and places it on the bed. He undresses down to his underwear. He reaches for the work pants and notices the door is ajar. Is he being watched? He closes the door fully.

19 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. LATE NIGHT. 19

TOM is now reading the '*Instructions*' sheet.

The last words, in bold type, read:

"Note Bene: Full payment only after PROOF OF KILL"

From off CLARE calls out...

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CLARE
(sleepy)
Tom?

TOM packs everything back into the briefcase and snaps it quickly closed.

CLARE
(entering)
Are you working?

TOM
Hi. Yeah. Just checking something. You OK?

CLARE
Mmm. Just thirsty.

She opens the fridge and takes out milk bottle. Glugs straight from it.

TOM
I'm done. I'll come up.

Clare smiles. She clocks the briefcase. Is that a new one? TOM puts in onto the floor behind the counter. CLARE takes another slug of milk. Closes the fridge. Takes TOM by the hand.

20 EXT. BENNINGTON GARDEN. DAY.

20

TOM is squinting through his glasses in the heat of the sun. He's looking at the raised trail of a mole run that courses across the grass.

He watches for a moment then wildly stabs at the grass. He stops. Looks at the pointed end of his spear but it's clean save a bit of soil and grass. Damn!

Sweat drips onto his glasses. He glances up. The curtain in one of the bedrooms twitches. Mrs. Bennington is watching his progress. He wipes his glasses. Looks down again. He has an idea.

He gets down on his knees and shoves the pole into the earth along the length of the tunnel, ram-rodging it with frustration. Nothing.

He stands again, panting. It's too hot. He takes off his jacket, leaving him bare from the waist up. Again he senses the eyes watching from behind the curtains. He instinctively puts a hand to his nipple.

21 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

21

CLARE runs a finger around TOM'S nipple on the way down to

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CONTINUED:

his crotch. They're getting it on and she's leading. She works away for a little, and they kiss, but it's a no show from TOM.

TOM

Sorry.

CLARE

Are you alright?

TOM

Yeah. Sorry. Tired. Thinking about other things.

CLARE

It's OK. It's fine. Sorry. What...

TOM

It's nothing.

CLARE

(kissing him)

OK. You reading?

TOM

Uh... no. I'll sleep. You read though. If you want to. I love you.

He kisses her again then rolls into the covers.

CLARE

I love you.

TOM stares at the wall.

22 EXT. BENNINGTON GARDEN. DAY.

22

Looking away from the beating sun TOM resumes; head down, watching. He is still. Suddenly a section of the tunnel moves. The mole!

TOM is about to lunge but holds himself. Watches. It moves again. The little fucker is re-burrowing. TOM watches. Takes a deep breath. Holds.. then strikes. Once. Twice. Three times. Four... and that one feels different.

The pole twitches slightly in his hand. He shoves down. Finishing the kill.

Then he's down and digging around where the pole penetrates the earth. Seconds later he pulls the steel rod from the ground with the dead mole skewered.

The coat is shiny, black, soft and the body is limp. The pole has gone through the shoulders. TOM gasps for breath as the wave of primal activity washes through him. He's done it.

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23 EXT. BENNINGTON HOUSE. DAY.

23

TOM has the mole in a bag; small, glossy and bloody. He has his suit back on, but with his shirt hanging out, he's still sweating lightly.

TOM

Well thank you Mrs. Bennington...

MRS BENNINGTON

Oh! Wait. Your fee.

TOM

Oh yes. Ha. I almost forgot.

MRS BENNINGTON

Mr. Savage says we're not supposed to tip but I always like to reward good service.

She takes a neat fold of notes to give him but his hands are full; briefcase in one hand, mole bag in the other.

MRS BENNINGTON

Oh. Sorry. Here, let me put it somewhere safe.

She pulls the waistband of his trousers forward and tucks the bills into his underwear elastic. She closes the door on him with a smile.

24 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. EVENING.

24

TOM is at the freezer. He's dumped a whole lot of frozen stuff out to hide the bag with the dead mole as deep into the freezer drawer as he can. He packs the other frozen goods back in. His eye catches the label on a packet of chicken; 'SKINLESS'. He stares. Skinless. A thought seeps into his brain.

25 EXT. PAULSON HOUSE. DAY.

25

TOM rings the bell of another suburban house. Another middle aged woman answers. TOM steps in.

26 INT. PAULSON HOUSE. DAY.

26

TOM changes, leaving the door purposely ajar. Exits to the garden without his top on. Stands. Watches. Curtain twitches. Mole run moves. He strikes. Twice. On his knees he digs. He bags the mole and looks at his hands. He smells them. He wipes them on his chest, leaving a war-paint smear of blood and soil. He clocks the inference; he's 'blooded'.

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- 27 EXT. PAULSON HOUSE. DAY. 27
- MRS PAULSON smiles as she slips a fold of notes into TOM'S pocket, her manicured finger lingering too long over his covered nipple.
- MRS PAULSON
I'll be sure to tell all my friends.
- The door closes.
- 28 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. EVENING. 28
- TOM closes the freezer door. Pushing a little to get it shut.
- CLARE
Baby! You're home early!
- TOM, startled, turns and CLARE catches a wild look in his eye.
- CLARE (CONT'D)
Hi. Are you alright?
- TOM, silent, takes CLARE in his arms and kisses her deeply. It's a surprise move but CLARE responds. TOM kicks the freezer door firmly shut as he seduces his wife.
- 29 EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE 3. DAY. 29
- The door is opened by another middle aged woman.
- She regards TOM knowingly.
- 30 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. EVENING. 30
- CLARE and TOM start to make love on the counter...
- 31 EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE 3 GARDEN. DAY. 31
- The spear point thrusts into the ground, twitches with the kill..
- 32 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. EVENING. 32
- TOM looks at CLARE and she returns the gaze with rising lust as they continue to make love....
- 33 EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE 3. DAY. 33
- HOUSEWIFE 3 reaches up and wipes at something on TOM'S cheek. It's blood. It smears. She trails her finger down his jaw.
- 34 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. EVENING. 34
- More vigorous love making. CLARE in the foothills of orgasm.

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35 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE 4 BEDROOM. DAY 35

Standing in his underwear, TOM draws tribal markings on his face and torso with lipstick and make-up liner. He senses then holds the gaze of the housewife watching through the open door and hitches his thumbs into the waistband of his pants...

36 EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE 5. DAY. 36

TOM stands in the middle of the lawn. A dark glint in his killer's eye, his face daubed, his torso patterned and his buttocks marked with aboriginal hand prints. He is naked save for a loincloth made of leather scraps and yellow strimmer cord, barely covering his genitals.

He is motionless, poised, focused. Then slowly he raises his spear arm to its full extension. The HOUSEWIFE (4) is watching from the patio.

His body stretches up as it gathers energy. Drawing in the power he has discovered from above the walls, from above the trees, from the sky that frames the patchwork of suburban gardens stretching away from him. All those gardens, all those moles, all that killing! And TOM thrusts his spear into the ground!

CLARE'S orgasm reaches crescendo.

37 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S KITCHEN. NIGHT. 37

CLARE orgasms. TOM orgasms. The freezer bursts open, the corpses of moles spilling out, a wave of dark pelts...

38 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. DAY. 38

TOM, back in his suit, opens his car boot, tosses in a freshly bagged mole, and closes it.

39 INT. CLARE AND TOM'S BEDROOM. MORNING. 39

The soft voice of TOM singing 'Happy Birthday' draws CLARE out of her sleep. She smiles, stretches, luxuriates in this waking. TOM has tea and a single cupcake with a candle perched in it.

TOM
... happy birthday to you.

CLARE
(kisses him)
Oh Tom! Thank you.

TOM
You are beautiful. And I love you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARE

I love you too! So much.

TOM

But wait, there's more...

He crosses to the cupboard and takes out a plain brown dress box. He lays it on the bed in front of her.

CLARE

(gasps)

Tom! You didn't!

TOM

(a small grin)

Maybe.

CLARE opens the box carefully. She gasps again, amazed, speechless, as she draws out the folds of a luxuriantly plush moleskin coat...

CLARE

Oh TOM!

She leaps out of bed and slips it over her naked shoulders, wraps it around herself. She looks beautiful in it.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Oh TOM! TOM! TOM!

She hugs and kisses him deeply. CLARE (CONT'D) (cont'd) How did you afford it?

TOM

I spotted it in an antique store. It's old. I don't think they make new ones anymore.

CLARE

You're a genius. And I love you!

She hugs him again. This time with intent.

TOM

(extricating himself)

Now listen I can't be late. I'll jump in the shower. Then you can thank me again...

TOM goes through to the bathroom and starts his shower.

CLARE enjoys her moleskin coat, the feel of the fur on her skin, the warmth... she falls in a reverie back on to the bed. She feels a wet drop on her cheek. She wipes it. It looks like... blood? She wipes her cheek again. Nothing there.

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CONTINUED:

She stands, looks at the collar of the coat and sees, unmistakably, the fresh, seeping skin of a pelt. She looks at it. Wipes at it with a finger. Looks at her finger tip smeared with dark blood. She stares at herself in the mirror.

Then wraps the coat around her once again. And smiles.

END.