

# **The Door was Framed**

**Katy Wimhurst**

There are many things a woman is prepared for in life, but being assaulted by The Smiths' CD *Meat is Murder* is not one of them. When Tania arrived home from work, her mind, quite sensibly, was more concerned with supper than with a potentially psychotic inanimate object.

It had been a long day, and Tania first went to the bathroom. She briefly checked herself in the mirror, taking in her dishevelled hair, smudged eye-liner, nose-ring and pallid skin.

"You look rough," said the mirror.

Tania hesitated, stunned. "You what?"

"I said you look rough."

"Well... I'm meant to look rough, that's my image," said Tania indignantly.

"You look rough even for someone whose image is to look rough – the revenge of image on reality, perhaps."

"Just... just piss off."

Still shocked by the mirror's outburst, Tania strode into the kitchen and opened the fridge.

"Bugger off. You're on a diet," said the fridge.

Tania looked bewildered. "Says who?"

"Says me, Fatso."

"I'm not fat. I'm just a bit curvy."

"Well, you're not a model, are you? Go starve yourself, Pork-pie."

*What the hell's going on here?* thought Tania. She slammed the fridge-door shut and marched into the hallway. As she did so, two sexually-entwined, red figures, a woman and a man, drifted out of a brightly hued Marc Chagall print on the wall, and floated down to rest on a rug, where they began to make love, the woman on top.

"What on earth are you doing?" asked Tania.

"We're bored of life in the painting. Having sex in the missionary position for donkey's years gets dull. I haven't had an orgasm in over a decade," said the red woman.

"But... you're not real, you're figments of an artist's imagination."

"If you say so," said the red woman, arching her back and moaning gently. The red man turned to Tania with a smug grin. "Serves you right for liking modern art. If you'd preferred Vermeer, you could've had a demure girl with a pearl earring in your flat right now."

"Just shut up."

Tania was feeling uptight. She hurried towards her bedroom. As she went past the book-case, a voice cried out, "You've had me here for years and haven't once run your elegant fingers over my white, fleshy pages." Tania peered closer. It seemed that Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* was talking to her.

"I tried to read you, but couldn't get past page 2. You're incomprehensible. 864 pages about 'being and nothingness'. I mean, did Jean-Paul have a life?"

"Philistine," said the book.

"Pretentious toss-pot."

"Woman with the IQ of a fence-post."

"Okay, that does it," said Tania. She seized the book, opened a window and threw it out.

The window, however, reached out with translucent fingers, which seemed to grow elastically from the glass, and caught the book, throwing it back at Tania.

"Not so quick, madam. You haven't paid me attention for ages either. You just stare through me like I'm invisible."

"But you're glass. You *ARE* invisible."

"You could still be grateful. I bring you the smile of the sun, protect you from the tears of the rain. And what thanks do I get?"

"You're a window, for chrissake. Why should I be grateful? Anyway, I paid £500 to have you double-glazed. Have you ever thanked me for that?"

The voices were now beginning to multiply through her flat. All the windows were whining loudly, the red couple were panting heavily, and every light-bulb had spontaneously burst into an out-of-tune song. Tania went straight to her CD player, hoping to drown out the noise with loud music. She grabbed The Smiths' *Meat is Murder* album and opened the cover. But the CD jumped out and spun through the atmosphere, glinting threateningly.

"You're not even a vegetarian, you hypocrite," said the *Meat is Murder* CD. "I hate the way you listen to me while you chomp your greedy chops through some chicken sandwich."

The CD launched a violent attack, slicing the top of Tania's right thumb cleanly off. As the blood spurted out, Tania screamed. But that just seemed to encourage more CDs to pop out of their boxes.

"You never play me," growled one CD.

"You use me as a beer coaster," snarled another.

"You've used me as a goddamn frisbee," added a third, which Tania thought was probably *Dark Side of the Moon*.

A horde of CDs levitated into the air, circling Tania ominously. She sprinted into the bedroom and slammed the door shut.

"Ow!" exclaimed the door.

"You what?"

"I don't like you slamming me. It gives me such a dreadful headache," said the door with a whimpering tone.

"Shut your trap." Tania grabbed a hanky to wrap around her bloody thumb and then leaned anxiously against the door. She could hear the sinister humming of CDs on the other side.

"And whilst we're having a chat, I'll tell you I'm not happy with the colour you painted me. Red. I mean, I'm not a post-box," said the door.

"I'm being threatened by a militia of deranged CDs, one of which has taken off the top of my thumb, and you're moaning about being red? Get over it, door."

Suddenly there was an enormous cracking noise, like some ancient dinosaur egg was breaking open, and Tania watched, half in horror, half in amazement, as the wooden doorframe wrenched itself out of the wall and stepped into the room in a shower of plaster, leaving the door standing in a vacuum.

"That door's being driving me nuts for years," said the doorframe in a posh accent. "It's such a whinging wuss. And can I say that, even though you've neglected me, I don't give a toss, my dear. I don't need your approval. I am what I am: a doorway."

"Thank god! A sane item of furniture with no identity crisis."

"But may I suggest we leg it? Unless you want to end up diced, that is. Death-by-CD would not be an entirely satisfactory ending."

Tania quickly opened the window as wide as possible. The doorframe bent down gallantly and she jumped on its back. Just as the CDs were beginning to creep through the gap around the door, the doorframe leap-frogged through the open window, with her clinging on. It galloped like a two-legged giraffe (minus a neck and head) along the open road.

The doorframe was unexpectedly speedy. Tania looked back with relief to see the cloud of CDs, which had tried to follow them like a horde of flattened hornets, disappearing into the distance. She patted the doorframe.

"Thanks. I'm forever in your debt."

"No problem, my dear. If there's one thing I can't abide, it's inanimate objects with no manners. I think I should drop you off at the hospital, though. You seem to be missing part of a thumb."

She looked down. The blood was still pulsing crimson from her thumb. In the escape, she had forgotten about it. "Oh god," she said, flopping forward, shattered.

The doorframe trotted gently along until it reached the entrance to the A&E Department of the local hospital. Tania dismounted and turned to face it. "Will you come with me, doorframe?"

"Not really my thing. All those sick people and bleached corridors. Ghastly!"

"Where will you go?"

"I fancy a jaunt to see my brother, who I believe ended up as a goal-post in Manchester. I intend to liberate him."

"Good luck," said Tania. But the courteous doorframe had already skipped off. Tania watched affectionately as it pranced its way with awkward elegance into the night, stopping occasionally to converse with a telegraph pole or a wooden fence.

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Katy Wimhurst lives in the exciting flatlands of Essex, UK. In her spare time, she pens serious existential literature like *The Door Was Framed*, and has been published in several magazines/e-zines. She would like to stress that all characters in this story, including the Doorframe, are real and any resemblance to fictional characters is entirely coincidental. Katy Wimhurst might have studied for a doctorate in Mexican Surrealism after training initially as a social anthropologist. She might also have worked in publishing.