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Extracts from STRUGNELL'S WORLD



two:

THE CITY

(1971)

RG GREGORY

SCENE SIX

Enter MAN to STRUGNELL

Man: Help me please. If they get me. My wife. Family.

Strugnell: Yes. But what....?

Man Blues. Chasing me. I'm hurt. Fell over. Must have help. Stay with me.

Strugnell: But how? I don't really want to get involved.

Man Wrong to involve you. Trapped. Prison. My card. Explain to my wife will you?

Strugnell: But why?

Man: Broken law. Left-handed. Sinister. Eating in first-class restaurant. Waitress reported me. They all watch nowadays.

Strugnell: Against the law?
Man: They have to. Can lose their own jobs. Stupid of me. Business contact.

Strugnell: For being left-handed?

Enter TWO BLUES

1st Blue: No use sinny. The sport's over.

Man: Family man. Ran in panic. Please.

2nd Blue: You gauchers have been told to keep out of decent places.

Man: I'm law-abiding.

Strugnell: The man's hurt. Look at his leg.

1st Blue: He'll be hurt a lot more yet.

2nd Blue: You slimy lefter. I bet you even screw your wife backwards.

1st Blue: Keep still you sinister bastard.

Strugnell: Can't you see he's shaking with terror.

1st Blue: I can't see anything I don't want to see. And nor will you bignose if you don't stay wise.

2nd Blue: Make us run a bloody half-mile would you.

1st Blue: Shitbum!

2nd Blue: Bumshit!

Man: O God. Mary.

1st Blue: Blaspheming sinny runt.

2nd Blue: Exposing your dirty left hand in front of young girls.

1st Blue: I suppose you bred all your brats out of your left bollock.

Man: I shall die.

Strugnell: You don't have to kill him.

Man: We don't have to drink piss either.

Strugnell: Not a sinister. Right-handed. Right-handed.

2nd Blue: Which hand do you wipe your arse with slimey?

1st Blue: Come on Bert. Let's get him back in the van.

Strugnell: What kind of law is this? You're thugs.

2nd Blue: You've broken the law mister a thousand times whatever kind it is. Aiding and abetting. Obstructing. Abusing a Blue. So which side of the sewer you crawl out of?

1st Blue: Leave him Bert. Just give him a kiss and say goodbye.

2nd Blue: A kiss and a kick for being so quick. And no return.

STRUGNELL falls

1st Blue: You're a proper sweetheart you are Bert.

2nd Blue: We ought to be allowed a gaucher as soon as he breaks from cover. It's the only way.

SCENE ELEVEN

Enter SEBASTIAN and GENTLEWISE to JACKO

Sebastian: My friend Gentlewise.

Gentlewise: My pleasure.

Sebastian: Gentlewise will help you if you need help.

Jacko: I'm past it.

Sebastian: Don't you believe it. You know this man?

Photograph

Jacko: I've seen him somewhere.

Sebastian: You spoke to him.

Jacko: Where?

Sebastian: In Dock Park.

Jacko: Was that the man?

Sebastian: His name is Quest.

Jacko: I didn't ask.

Sebastian: Why speak to him?

Jacko: I can't remember.

Sebastian: Gentlewise.

Gentlewise: My pleasure.

Jacko: We discussed the weather.

Sebastian: I'll make a note of that. You often use the park?

Jacko: Almost every day.

Sebastian: It's a protected place.

Jacko: First class citizens only.

Sebastian: What class are you?

Jacko: Beneath contempt.

Sebastian: Gentlewise.

Gentlewise: My pleasure.

Jacko: Third class - casual skivvy.

Sebastian: You are not allowed in the park?

Jacko: Because I would dirty it.

Sebastian: You might have fouled the seats. It's been known.

Jacko: I use the pavements.

Sebastian: Gentlewise.

Gentlewise: My pleasure.

Jacko: Is he real?

Sebastian: He only wants to be friendly.

Jacko: There must be thousands in the world who'd be glad.

Sebastian: Listen Jacko - oh yes we know your name. I've been playing with you. I'm not going to play any longer. You're trapped. And if you want to be you're dead. Gentlewise can get peevish and he hurts. He's been trained to hurt. Thousands have been spent on him – courses in many cities – to perfect his gifts. Yet he sits there suave and human like the best of us. He's the ultimate *homo sapiens*

- a technological monstrosity contained in a skin as smooth as my baby's bottom. And my baby's bottom is the smoothest I don't mind telling you Jacko. It purrs in my hand like silk. This is just talk Jacko to impress you. I'm in my world and you're in this dirty old cell.

Jacko: Oh I've had silk too man.

Sebastian: Oh we know Jacko. We know the lot. When for instance you were lost in the City after dark for illegal and terrorist activities. Naughty Jacko. You have a taste for first-class gravy we don't appreciate at all. However we've held on tight to our scruples in the belief that sooner or later you'd really jump into stinking water. And now Jacko you've jumped.

Jacko: I'm small fry man.

Sebastian: Feel honoured, We shall make you very important indeed.

Jacko: And if I don't want in?

Sebastian: Gentlewise is so unto death.

Gentlewise: My pleasure.

Jacko: You call me to suit yourself.

Sebastian: I want Quest implicated in Indigo's bomb outrages.

Jacko: Can't be done. Quest told us to piss off.

Sebastian: For our purposes Quest and Indigo are one. Either you prove that with evidence or Gentlewise will disintegrate you.

Jacko: I don't have that kind of imagination.

Sebastian: We have the magic I imagine and Gentlewise finds what we imagine in you. If you're sensible it's painless. Yours is the hack role Jacko. You learn the script - rewarded and prodded by Gentlewise.

Jacko: Man you're on to a loser.

Sebastian: Don't turn a born loser into a dead end Jacko. I need you. I confess it. But not that much. Besides there are other ways. It's just that this way's more natural. I do it in wax.

Jacko: They say in the Grot you're a slimy bastard.

Sebastian: Slimy? The City doesn't think so. Realistic. Practical. Understanding. And most important – successful. With the indispensable aid of Gentlewise.

Gentlewise: My pleasure.

Jacko: Why don't we all sleep in the same bed?



three:
**AND THE
GROT**
(1971)

RG GREGORY

SCENE ONE

Enter SNIG ROZ and other LICE

Snig: Roz this one here. Get away you others. Mine! Roz

here quickly. This one mine! Here first. Roz!
Slowcoach – we nearly lost it!

Roz: Oooo nice. Lucky us.

Snig: Not lucky. Wise. Smell in air.

Roz: He's lovely. Bruised. Good meat. Cuddly and warm.
Snig! Snig! He moves.

Snig: Shh! Quiet. Yobos will hear, Best we've had.
Mustn't lose him.

Roz: But he's alive. His heart. Listen.

Snig: Very faint. Beaten badly. Dead before morning.

Roz: Mustn't kill. Eat meat not people.

Snig: Will die. Bound to. Must get him home. Hide for
weeks living on this. Not coming out.

Roz: Safe from Yobos. Happy in peace.

Snig: Not yet though. Yobos will be on dump. Somewhere.

Roz: Nice man. Our friend.

Snig: Stop feeling him. Lift him. Must get home before
end of dark.

Roz: That noise. Snig. That noise!

Snig: Oh no. Oh no. Yobos killing Lice. Come on Roz.
Come on. Run!

Roz: No. can't leave man. Food for weeks.

Snig: No time. Yobos knife us. Come back for man.

Roz: Too late. Other Lice get him. Snig help me. Help
Roz.

Snig: Pull this way. Oh Roz. Too many Yobos. No good.
No good.

Roz: Stay still in dark. Yobos will go past.

Snig: No Roz. Yobos know. Yobos see in dark. They will
come straight here. We are to die.

Roz: Don't want to die. I like life.

Snig: We are to die. Life is like that.

Enter FLICK and TRUDY

Flick: The Lice here. My knife itches.

Roz: Oh Snig. Run now.

Trudy: That's Lice.

Flick: They'll have a body.

Trudy: Filthy sods. How can they eat people?

Flick: There they go. Quick. Get behind them.

Snig: Get away. Ours a good job. Help the City.

Flick: You disgust me. You slimy turd. The Yobos are going to wipe you off the face of the earth.

Roz: Peaceful people. Hurt no one.

Trudy: We hate your stink.

Snig: Keep the world tidy. Not you. You kill. For no reason.

Trudy: Flick. He's not dead.

Flick: You spewbags. You were going to eat a live man.

Roz: No. Wait for him to die.

Flick: Vermin like you must be exterminated.

Roz: No other food. Must live.

Flick: Not you sister. Not one second more.

He kills ROZ

Snig: Evil. Evil. Roz a good woman. Loved her. Loved her. I want to die. Kill me. Leave us for other Lice to eat. Don't want to live any more.

Trudy: Anything to oblige.

Flick: How dirty can you get. Licking up your own shit. I'm glad I'm human.

They kill SNIG

Come on Trude. Let's get out of this cesspit.

Trudy: Flick. What about the body?

Flick: Leave it girl. Whoever he is he's nothing to us.

Trudy: No. We can't leave him here for the Lice to get at again.

Flick: He'll die anyway.

Trudy: I must look and see.

Flick: Oh come on Trude.

Trudy: He's not going to die Flick.

Flick: We've had our fun. I want to get off this Dump.

Trudy: We haven't found a live one before.

Flick: He's trouble Trude. We ought to put him out of his misery and get back to the Beat. The gang won't wait up all night for us.

Trudy: He opened his eyes. He wants to talk.

Flick: If you don't come now you're out. You understand? I can get other bitches.

Strugnell: The City is evil.

Trudy: I wonder who he is.

Flick: He's nobody. A heap of dying flesh. We can't afford to give him a name. He's nothing to me. Now come on Trude. I picked you because you were hard.

Trudy: But he's real Flick. He's not an animal like the Lice. He's a real person.

Flick: Trude you pervert me. You make me want to stick my knife in you. If you save him what do we do with him? He's been sent here as dead. Let him be dead Trude.

Trude: No Flick, I'm staying with him.

Flick: You stupid bitch. Do you want me to split you open? Like those Lice?

Enter SPENCER

Spencer: Mr Strugnell? Quest?

Flick: You bum Trude. I told you we should have gone.

Trudy: This late? On his own? He must be stupid.

Spencer: Alan Strugnell?

Flick: It's a bloody Blue.

Spencer: Who's that?

Trudy: Let's go. We don't have to mix with the Blues.

Flick: He's on his own. I'll get my knife into him easy.

Spencer: Couple of dead Lice? Listen you over there. Bodies were dumped out here tonight. One was alive. I'm not interested in you.

Strugnell: Destroy the City.

Trudy: He's coming round.

Flick: Keep him quiet or we're done for.

Spencer: That was Quest. That's the man I've come for. Don't be daft man. You can't destroy the City.

Strugnell: The City destroys.

Flick: Keep the bastard quiet. Stick him if you have to.

Trudy: I shan't. Don't try to get tough. These Blues aren't stupid.

Spencer: Alan I've come to help you. I knew you weren't dead in the cell but I couldn't see how else to help you. They all think you are dead.

Flick: They'll know you are - you bloody Blue.

He attacks SPENCER who disarms him.

Spencer: Flick. Barmy as ever.

Trudy: I told you Flick. You've got no more sense than flyshit.

Flick: Knife him Trudy. Don't let him take me to the City.

Spencer: Stay away Trudy. I haven't come here to fight you.

Strugnell: I shall pull down the City stone by stone.

Trudy: Let him go mister. He was messing about that's all.

Strugnell: The City corrupts its servants one by one.

Flick: They'll kill me in the City. Stop him. Stop him.

Spencer: Don't be crazy. Push off both of you.

Strugnell: The City must burn to the ground.

Spencer: Quest. It's Spencer. I've come to help you get away from the City. I don't want to see you die.

Strugnell: You belong to the City. You must die.

Spencer: I've come out here to help you haven't I?

Flick: I'll give you humiliate me. Die you bloody Blue. Die.

He stabs SPENCER who collapses and dies

Trudy: It's stupid. He was going to help us. Now there'll be hell to pay.

Strugnell: The City must be destroyed.

Flick: And so must you mate. I've had enough of you.

Trudy: No Flick. I don't want him dead. He's ill.

Flick: So are we all. I've killed the Blue. Now I feel like killing him.

Trudy: But why?

Flick: Because he's from the City. There's no place for him here.
He's as good as dead. And if it hadn't been for him I wouldn't have killed the Blue.

Trudy: But he's against the City.

Flick: He's raving. And that doesn't make him good for the Grot.

Trudy: You mustn't do it.

Flick: I'll tuck him up warm for the night.

Trudy: You're itching to knife him.

Flick: He's a germ Trude. A new-fangled disease. We don't know him.

Trudy: He could be good for the Grot.

Flick: Those we don't know should be killed. That's common sense.

Trudy: We have to start somewhere.

Flick: There's no place to start in the Grot. It is what it is.

Trudy: We could help him to live.

Flick: Not me. My job is to kill.

Trudy: So was mine. But I want him to live.

Flick: Don't be so soft. If you go soft you're dead in the Grot. Go home if you can't stand the sight of his

blood..

Trudy: I'm not going to let you kill him Flick.

Flick: Get out of my bleeding way. You're making a mountain out of it.

Trudy: We'll see. We'll see.

Flick: You stupid cow. You must be after his gristle. Get out of it will you. What you doing Trude?

She knifes him

You stinking bitch. The Grot will tear you to pieces for this.

He dies

Trudy: I'm sick to death of living by killing. Come on mister. Come on. Come on!

She goes out with STRUGNELL

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SCENE TWENTY-ONE

STRUGNELL to INDIGO

Indigo: Well man? Satisfied?

Strugnell: You did it on purpose.

Indigo: Did I shit. I have plans and I don't alter them for anybody.

Strugnell: But the Grot was bombarded and many innocent people died because of your explosions.

Indigo: Maybe. Or maybe it would have happened anyway. The big guns weren't for polishing. And why should the Kacks resist having a go at the Grotties? You gave it to them on a silver plate.

Strugnell: It was working. Until you interfered it was working.

Indigo: And if it worked? What then? The Grot would have achieved the loss of a day's pay and nothing more. Gentlewise is smarter than Sebastian when it comes to democracy. You would have found the day next year honoured as a public holiday. By which time the

spirit of the Grot would be right back where it has been for years. But what the City has done today will never be forgotten or forgiven. It's a day that will be celebrated everywhere by the City's enemies and the City will (to the end of its time) never be allowed to live it down. In the scales of time man what are the lives of a hundred or so half-living bastards compared with the eventual destruction of the City?

Strugnell: Ruthlessness breeds ruthlessness. Death breeds death. When the City is brought down by violence and fear what replaces the City but violence and fear? In the name of the Grot the Grot will still be the mess it is today. If we want a new world we've got to go about it a new way. We must put people above guns.

Indigo: Good. I'm in favour. You go back to the Grot. If you can stop them from tearing you to pieces because they stupidly hold you responsible for the deaths of their comrades and the gutting of their shacks you can get them to put on demonstrations of weakness as often as you like. Meanwhile I'll go my own sweet way taking advantage of your exhibitions of weakness to blow the guts out of the City. Yes Quest. This is a partnership I have a great deal of trust in.

Strugnell: You're telling me to clear out aren't you?

Indigo: Listen Strugnell. I'm the only one around here who can see what you've won today. You've forced the City into an admission of its own stupidity. You know it can't happen again. And if you don't clear out the Grot will kill you. That would be a waste. Go and climb a mountain somewhere and shout your ideas where there aren't any people for a bit. Power and the people don't belong together. Not yet. Not for a very long time. And when they do it'll be the doing of the likes of me not you.

Strugnell: I believe you're wrong. I mean to return to the Grot.

Indigo: Then I shall have you shot. You are too dangerous to all that I still have to fight for.

Strugnell: You've brought me here to kill me?

Indigo: Olive Trent is dead. No - no questions. She might have wanted that. Not me. I've brought you here to save your life. To congratulate you and send you packing. I'll have you smuggled away from here. If you attempt to return to the Grot I'll listen to Olive's whisperings in my ear.

Strugnell: I'm being sent away with my tail between my legs.

Indigo: Better than to be put out a second time for the Lice. You've got a hard lesson to learn Quest. Nobody wants you any more. Nobody is interested in what you are looking for. The world is too stolid a place to be able to accommodate your whims.

Strugnell: I'll not believe that till I'm dead.

Indigo: Man where it counts you're dead already. You're a walking dream.

*and so quest
out into the dark
went once again
groping for more light*

* * *

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