



BEAUTIFUL MUSIC FOR THE DEAD.
By JAY CREEPY.

1.

The tree has stood for years out back of the house. It's been there far longer than my lifetime and it's part and package of the home.

I've lived alone for many years now, never being able to find the perfect soul mate or the person to last even a short time and shatter the monotonous days plus nights. When I turned fifty, I realised and understood once and for all I would be alone for the rest of my given days. As the city had been whitewashed by a nationwide recession, my job had gone.

With so much experience in random odd works in so many varied categories, whatever I could find, both my age and my lack of worth on a C.V made it damned impossible whilst this storm was being blasted around the U.K to find employment.

So the hours spent at home added up far more than wandering the streets in my second hand warm coat. My hair sprouts far more grey than I want it to. My face is nicely free of wrinkles practically. I put this down to water, a lot of water, and the unfortunate fact I rarely laugh or smile.

Water. Cheap and cheerful. Sometimes I've bought a lime and sliced it up, put it in an empty plastic bottle, filled it and shook it up. Delicious.

The tree without fail tends to give me apples. Juicy apples. Ahh, the things my Mom taught me to do with apples. Mouth-watering amazing adventures. Of course, this was all before she died and my Dad went totally insane. He lived alone like myself in his own little world miles away from me.

The evening he attempted to carve me up changed the world around both of us. Well, I still had the house, I had everything inside, and I had the long and winding garden with the tree centre right two thirds of the way down.

There's always far more apples than I need so I truly have no issues with any of the neighbourhood kids popping over the low fence to grab a couple of fallen ones on the grass. No harm in it. In fact it refreshes me when I catch a glimpse. They could be indoors watching TV or glued wide eyed to a games console, but instead they're taking chances in the fresh air. So be it.

I'm liked around the street which is set nearby a park and a few fields. I chat with passing folks I

recognise to kill a few moments. So quiet around the neighbourhood most of the time so it does a man good to see fellow human beings.

So one day I'm in the kitchen filling my kettle and pondering what to do the next day since it was slow down to bed and chill out relax time, when I sensed rather than saw movement in the tree itself. I slowed the flow of water to a standstill and looked out. Pardon me, am I going mad?

Nope, there was a young pair of legs in jeans sticking out from the lower section of the trunk. Ha ha, it was rare somebody made the effort so I had to congratulate the person. One of the legs kicked up desperately finding a solid hold. I grinned to myself and decided to nip out. It amused me so much. On the way, I unlocked my old coal shed – Dad's old coal shed, and carried a battered set of step ladders outside.

The apple fanatic didn't hear me coming so I made it to the tree and stood below smiling up at a boy who was aged around ten or eleven I suppose – perhaps nine, no idea, kids had faces which were difficult to work out. Should be like trees, cut them and count the rings.

“Be easier with ladders.” I stated out loud, perhaps too loud for the kid jerked around.

Next thing happened so quickly I was frozen to the earth unable to register what had just occurred. As the evening darkness sends shadows across the lawn, the boy silently fell, smacking his back and shoulders against the tree on his way.

He laid there about three or four feet away from me, his face contorted in a hybrid of pain and shock. I let the ladders fall and crouched by him. “Bloody hell, kid, that was a drop. You OK?”

“I... my head's killing me!” he was around ten, his short black hair soaked in sweat as his green eyes peered at me fearfully. “Sorry, I...”

“I don't mind. Look, I'll ring an ambulance.” I began to straighten my legs.

“No, no I'm okay, Mister, honestly.”

I was beginning to get flustered with it all. I didn't really want to help him up, you hear of parents trying to pin a witch hunt of molestation on anybody for a bit of entertainment. “No, I'll at least ring your family and get them round here. You took a bit of a crash there lad.”

He reached and grabbed my arm. “No, no. I’m OK, I’ll stand up. Thanks though.” The image of an existence of beatings dripped from his frightened gaze. I reluctantly nodded.

The boy managed after a minute or so to gather strength and stand erect. He sighed and winced, hands to the rear of his neck. “Whoa....”

I steadied him when he swayed and he swallowed deeply. “Can I just sit down? I feel weird.”

Against my better judgements I lead him carefully and slowly into the house, guiding him over steps. I left him sat on the couch and I walked away debating my next actions. He appeared to be very unwell. This wasn't good at all, he took a hell of a pasting from my tree.

I headed back to him. His eyes found me and he managed to smile. “I’m cool, Mister. Thanks.”

“I’m thinking you might be a lot worse than you think, lad. I saw what happened. You’re lucky you’re not unconscious.” That, or dead, I considered. “I better have a look. What if I get you a cold compress?”

“Huh?” he frowned.

I perched one knee on the sofa and leaned him carefully forwards and had a look at his neck. Red raw and swollen. “Can you turn your head?”

He tried and winced. “Ouch.” he tried to laugh.

“It’s a bit red. What’s your name anyway?”

“Lewis. I live next road.”

“You like apples?”

He started to laugh. “Not anymore.”

I moved away. “I’m going to get you a cold cloth for back of your neck. Gimmi a minute or so. Lay down a second see if that helps.”

He had become silent. Lewis flopped himself to the side heavily. His eyes rolled upwards. “That better?” I asked.

“Hmmm,” he muttered.

I walked into the kitchen and thought about ringing someone, anyone. The look of horror on his

face when I suggested his parents obviously meant there was something not quite right there. I could ring an ambulance, but again the parents would find out. I didn't want to be the one who delivered the kid to a good hiding whatever the reasons. At the end of the day, he was caught stealing from a garden. I ran upstairs and fished about for a face cloth.

It seemed to take a whole age for the water to run cold enough. I soaked the rag and squeezed it out. Back downstairs I headed and into the lounge. Lewis was asleep, his thin features peaceful. Oh wonderful! Now I'd have to be a total bastard and wake him up.

Then I noticed the colour of his jeans.

The lower part of his body had darkened.

“Lewis,” I sighed, “Wake up, lad. You've had an accident.”

I placed the cloth on my coffee table and knelt beside him. The urine stank and I gulped back a throat of bile. Bloody kid! I felt a brief but powerful eruption of anger, I shook his shoulder.

“Wakey, wakey. I'm going to have to get you home.”

Lewis didn't react. Must be deeply asleep. I took a moment or so to think. Fuck this, and fuck him! I gripped his shoulder more violently and properly shook him. “Wake up, Lewis! Time to get up and go!”

I simply at that time refused to accept the truth. What was so obviously in front of me I couldn't face the reality. Who'd really want to have the obvious slap them in the face so hard? Not me. At least not for a few more blissful carefree minutes.

I sat waiting for him to wake, I prodded him, I gave him a shake. Finally after all my methods, I lifted an eyelid, then I felt for a pulse, I listened for his heart. Lewis had slipped away and left the world. This caused me to lose my own will to live. Oh my God, a boy died in my house. He was dead and I was totally fucked now!

I could see the newspaper, the local news, the police, the faces of those chucking bricks through my window. I was a dead man walking. The truth was an empty object in a society which loved to hate and scream. I would be a child killing pariah!

“But the police could prove it.” I stated aloud.

Yes, but since when did that matter? The damage would be done. I would be the man found with a dead boy in his home. Lewis, you utter little bastard! “You fucking shit!” I shouted in his face.

“You've fucking died and left me to deal with this!”

I gripped my sides, hugging myself close and bowed my head. I didn't want to cry, I needed to think so very hard. What was I going to do? That smell of urine was honestly the least of my worries yet all I could think about was it soaking into my couch. Nothing but that!

“So what? It'll clean. *So what?*”

Yet it persisted and writhed in my head. Oh for fuck's sake! I jumped up and charged from the room. There you go! Happy now? You can't smell it! Oh yes you can! It's in your nostrils and it's burning and getting on your nerves. It's getting to you! So what? So what? *So what?!!*

“Oh shit!” I found myself gasping for air. I had to hold onto my dining table. Oh shit. This was so bad, this wasn't good. It was bad! I was in trouble. I should have just called someone whilst he was laid out in the garden and I should have just been brutal and acted on my gut instinct.

It was all done and dusted I couldn't go back on any of it. I had to weight up my next actions. I sat on my rickety wooden dining chair and gazed about the small darkened room. My bookcase in the corner was so dusty. I needed to dust everything in the house. I had neglected it all for so long.

“No you don't,” I scolded myself. “You're not getting out of this one. What are you going to do?”

Totally black and wide open nothingness replied. Oh my God, did you expect anything else?

You're a bloody fool! I really laid into myself because it at least eased off the pointless futile anger.

“Lewis,” I sobbed out loud. “Lewis...” Then I could at last let go of a few tears. That helped some more.

Somewhere along that path I must have fallen asleep uncomfy on the stained table top.

Lewis was still there. He hadn't moved. Nor had he woken up and gone away. His flesh looked darker, but maybe that was my imagination. The piss had dried now and I could smell ammonia in the air. I must have stood and stared at him for easily twenty minutes. He had certainly bloated out and wasn't as thin as I remembered him to be.

I could hear flies in the room, though not as many as I had imagined there would be. Did I think there'd be clouds of them all covering Lewis from head to toes? Yes, I did soon after I had woken up. One or two strolled casually and with arrogance across his mouth. I hurriedly wafted my hands around the air close to him and dispelled the insects. I knew it was pointless, they'd come back no matter what and lay the maggot eggs. I had a lot of issues coming up.

I headed to the kitchen and grabbed a half tin of fly spray. This I blathered all over Lewis and in great arches in the atmosphere around him. Okay, fine, they'd do their deed but I'd make it bloody hard for them. I needed to wee but couldn't go just yet. I had to wait, my head pulsing from inhaling the awful spray, I had to make sure they wouldn't be back so fast.

At least that was something delayed so far. They were off him for now. I had to close my windows. Had to prevent more getting in. I soldiered through my home, like a military man shutting the bathroom, the kitchen, the front bedroom. Afterwards I laughed aloud. I was proud. In the face of oncoming chaos, I was thinking outside the box and covering all smaller corners first.

Now what? Why did I never get on the internet? I could have probably typed in all stages of decomposition and educated myself on exactly what to do and look out for. Hell, I could have probably found a website devoted to getting rid of an unwanted dead child.

“Oh, boy.” I breathed to steady myself, reel myself back in from the panic which suddenly hit me. That wasn't going to solve anything.

Inspiration! Where was my inspiration? There had to be an easy, or hard working, way out of this. Sooner or later someone would be knocking on the door. A kid goes AWOL and the whole world

combines and erupts in anxiety. I perhaps had at least a couple of days. A day at least. What could I do?

“I can, erm... I can chop you up. I could buy some acid...” I was almost sick at the mental image conjured in my head. Lewis was a child, I couldn't mutilate his body no matter what.

I seated heavily onto the side of the couch and glared at him. “You little fucker! My life wasn't much, but it was still my life! You've took it from me, you savage little bastard!”

Rubbing my forehead vigorously and realising I was very close to actually passing out due to the horror and the spray fumes in the air, I retired to the back garden and stared at the tree. There was a long list of dos and don'ts which I was unable to fulfil unless I could simply travel back in time. My sweat beaded head lolled against the peeling paint of my back door. For a sweet juicy moment, shut everything and all reality out of my mind. That was it, relax and clear my thoughts.

“What if...??!!” I jerked upright very fast and strode briskly to the tree. I turned three hundred and sixty degrees carefully and concentrating.

My God, the neighbours! Who might have seen Lewis fall? Anyone of the three houses either way had they been upstairs and staring out at the time. All OK until the news spreads about his disappearance. Gossip, fingers pointing at me from all directions!

I raced to the shed which sat at the bottom of the garden, held secure by a long broken padlock which was positioned to appear in use. I clicked it down and heaved the door open wide.

Somewhere inside the turmoil of the contents which all had a thick layer of dust and webs, somewhere I knew there would be an axe. Only a small hand held one, but enough to chop the fuck out of bones.

Yet they would splinter, they'd crush. His blood and his muscles would ooze everywhere. Oh Christ, did I have the guts to do such a deed? Had to do something soon, he'd start to decompose and stink the house out. Yeah, gruesome.

Back inside and a stance above Lewis, I weighed and danced the axe in my right hand. His skin was changing colour, I could see that, plus I wasn't sure if I could smell a weak odour of eggs in the

air. Maybe I couldn't, not spot on with that. I felt my bowels almost loosen. Just no way, unable to get the strength together. Fucking hell!

I collapsed in a tangled heap on the carpet. The shakes, my body was alive with cold shudders and I was sweating. I closed my eyes and hugged the axe to me, waiting for this to fade away. I needed a glass of water so badly but there was no way I could move. I just wanted to remain motionless. All day. Forever. Let him decay. Let them come for him. If I stayed here, closed eyes blocking out the world, then I'd be OK.

I'll eat his corpse. That would be best. I could eat him before I start on what food I had in the kitchen. I had a deep feeling that I wouldn't be going out anywhere for a long time. I mean, what if I was burgled and the robber discovered him? What if?

I started to laugh. The image of Lewis and his limbs sticking out all disjointed from a huge KFC bucket amused me to no end. That felt so good under such circumstances.

How long truly did I have before he became putrid? I had to cover him with blankets at least because I one hundred per cent could smell sweet eggs amongst the stench of piss and fly spray. Gaining my feet unsteadily and shaking from each and every nerve end, I managed to head upstairs to my bed and strip two blankets off. Dragging these downstairs felt like the ultimate endurance task in itself but at least my mind was blissfully clear.

It took me the best part of two hours to lift him clear and wrap the blankets under and around. I went to great lengths to avoid contact with his flesh, but now and then it couldn't be helped. He was cold and his skin had the feel of cloth bags. I recoiled each time we met that way and had to recover before attempting the next part.

Finally after much horror, Lewis was tightly cocooned and I couldn't see him anymore. He was simply a caterpillar along the settee, face down beneath my heavy dark blankets.

“Enough!” I yelled aloud at myself. “This needs to be sorted!”

I had half a roll of bin bags under the sink, and a decent sharp saw in the shed, as well as an axe. I only needed to purchase some air fresheners ASAP and work gradually over the next week cutting

him into pieces. There would be no way I'd do it in one or two sessions. Now I had bundled him up I could perhaps stash him under the stairs? In the bath? Yeah, the bath! That's where I'd be chopping sooner or later. I raced through and began to slip my trainers on, then stopped. Hang on. What if they're looking now and get into the house whilst I'm out?

“Daft sod,” I cursed myself.

But what if they knocked and knocked and looked through the window? I almost dived into the lounge and stood peering across from the curtains and tried so many angles. I moved the sofa here and there. Whoa, *no!* They'd see the flattened circles in the carpet where the legs had been and wonder why I'd moved it. That would rouse them to come in! I couldn't close the curtains fully in daylight either. I mean, who does that unless they go on holiday? Then, you know, Billy Burglars come a grabbing.

Fair enough, forget the sprays then. Check list on food and other vitals. I hurried around my house and made mental notes. Toilet rolls, toothpaste, all good. I had two tubs of milk, a few cans of beans, frozen pies, potatoes, and....

“What?”

Surely not! I heard Lewis giggling. Just a second ago. I was crouched by my cereal cupboard. I froze, trying not to breathe too heavily, I needed to concentrate. Yes, *yes!* That was the sound of blankets moving and the sofa squeaking. Crawling like a half crazed flea into the room, I as good as dived over the sofa. I pulled back the covers. “Shit!” The terror of reality. Lewis and his whitened eyes staring. A fly was approaching the right, I swatted it away and tightly wrapped and tucked him in. Bleeding hell, there wasn't so much an imagined smell now, he was beginning to reek when up close.

I rubbed fingers through my thinning hair and lay my head against his legs whilst sitting on the floor. For God's sake, get a grip! Suddenly I jolted erect. My DVD player, the light was off, as was the red standby on my 32” TV. Why hadn't I noticed? In fact, everything getting dark, I had no idea whether it was night or day. I flicked my light switch. Nothing.

My token meter had already gulped the emergency electric. I had to have a token. No matter what, electric was vital. Especially to preserve my food.

“Fucking hell.” I sighed and took my coat from the hook.

May as well pick up a few sprays and powdered milk. Have to assume I wouldn't be leaving the house a while. Plan for a fortnight and maybe have some stuff left over. Buy coffee as well. Just in case. Loaf of bread... two, stick one in the freezer. Another roll of bin liners. Did I have enough money? As a matter of digression, what was I going to do about money if I was to be a prisoner in my home?

What time is it? Oh, that's OK. Get shooting off now and be back within ten maybe twelve minutes at a brisk pace.

3.

Days could certainly blur and creep by as empty pointless hours of absolute nothing if you had the company of a corpse. Keeping the flies away, sooner or later the maggots get hold of the flesh. They are born to eat.

The stench was something you grew used to. You had to. I suppose it's like a person owning so many dogs or cats. It merges into your day to day world and isn't noticed in the end.

My watch goes around and around. I won't switch on my TV because I think it'll be the news and reports on a missing child. Why haven't they knocked on my door yet? I wouldn't wish to tempt fate and dwell on that question too much. Once I dared peel back the blankets and his sightless eyes had sunken, whitened, and his skin had veined and bruised. Huge dark patches were developing.

I cannot touch him anymore. I simply refuse to contemplate the unjust invasion of the child's body if I was to start my work.

Probably the eighth day, I wanted to move him. My plans were simple, I wished to transfer him

somewhere else – anywhere else! Accompanied by a bone crunching chorus of cracking noises, I felt my spirit fail and I vomited the bottle of water I had drunk only minutes before.

Then I had the big idea. If I couldn't dispose of him the ways I had secured as safe in my head so far, I'd settle for a risky but more easier route. Taking my claw hammer from the shed, I was hell-bent on ripping up my floorboards. I could stuff him down below. I moved one side of the room's furniture along, exposing my worn carpet and knelt, gently pulling up the polypropylene material. I sipped pint after pint of water, and shook off pint after pint, it seemed, of sweat as I raised enough boards. The flies adored my perspiration, they simply wouldn't leave me alone.

I was exhausted after just half an hour but had to press on, force myself to do it. The nightmares which sliced any peaceful rest into pieces were regular and I felt so tired. Lewis jumping about, his arms two or three metres wide whilst maggot ridden blankets spun around on the ceiling.

Then came chapter two. The big reveal. Could I do it? I was in a balanced and steady stance above him and ready to quickly scoop him up. Dare I look? *No!* I cradled his corpse. Oh, God, the blankets were heavy and damp. The stench was unbelievable. There were moving crawling things in the small wisps of hair poking out. “Fuck me!” I sobbed, my throat stricken by razor sore lumps. How did this happen? “This is too much!”

“You're silly. You're thick!”

I screamed, then screamed again. After all this messing and stress, all this performance, the boy was alive. I began to cry and laugh as my crazed fumbling fingers tore at the blankets.

“Fucking hell! Fucking hell!” I leapt back upon seeing his dead face. He had no eyes. Maggots were everywhere. Impossible! I had battled off so many flies. I had sealed my doors and windows shut.

Running from the room, I decided never to enter again for any reasons. How long had it been? I thought little over a week, but the decay was so advanced. His skin was black. It looked as if it was about to run off his bones.

Maybe it had been weeks then. Considering I was living off tap water, blue bread and any nibbles

such as biscuits, then did it all mean I had lost track of time? Food wasn't an issue. A house mate such as Lewis was rather off putting.

"Mister? Are you there, Mister?"

C'mon, this is all wrong now. Don't fall for it, you're going quite comically insane. Bound to happen, old chum. *"Mister?"* I retired upstairs to escape his cries. He was sobbing and spluttering.

"I'm sorry I called you thick. Please stop them eating me, Mister!"

"I can't," I wept, sitting on the bed. "That's what they do. You're dead, Lewis. That's what they do."

"But it hurts. They ate my eyes. I can feel them inside me. They're eating me. Help me, Mister."

This went on and on for hours. Twice I crept downstairs and peeped it to find him still dead. I then seated myself outside the lounge, listening. *"Why won't you help me, Mister? I'm sorry, believe me I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."*

"It's in my mind."

"I can come back again, honest. I swear down."

My head raised. "Huh?"

"Call my spirit back with music."

"How? What music? I don't understand you!"

"Listen deeply to the inside. Picture the notes. Listen deeply, Mister."

So for hours, then I reckon days and nights I listened. I listened to the noise outside. I listened to my nightmares. I listened to my memories. I listened to the burrowing creatures all over Lewis. Gradually, over time and patience, I could see the notes before me. They were faint, like shadows, or burns, something easy to miss if you weren't seeking them. However, they existed and presented themselves.

Armed with a kitchen knife, I hacked at my sofa whilst Lewis cried and shrieked in agony behind me. I separated the longest and strongest choices of wood, then the springs. As an afterthought, I grabbed him and shut her inside the frame. Anything to dull the noise. My next port of call was my bed which I ransacked with glee, taking as many mattress springs as I required.

So many bruises and cuts on my hands and arms, so much pain, but I bared it all as I straightened the coiled metal.

The following day, I shattered the bed frame wishing I had used my saw but I was reacting on sheer guts with no forward preparation. At least I had a hammer, and nails ready for phase II of the resurrection. Short and long woods, I nailed them together then agonised tugging and stretching the uncoiled springs to each end. Four, careful not to break or overdo it. Then I created a smaller one, using chunks of my settee.

“*Shit!*” it snapped, trapping my fingertips in two strings. I hastily rebuilt it.

Unfortunately for the flowing creation, there was a knock at the front door. I was quaking in shock and cold fear. After all this time, I had dreaded this happening over and over again, then somehow prevented myself from thinking about it after a while. Now, though.....

Whoever was responsible was totally persistent. They banged and banged. My brain banged and banged back at them with pulsing throbbing vibes. I opened the upstairs window and leaned out, calling.

“Matty, it's me!”

My next door neighbour, Basher. A tubby man who's family roots were from Bangladesh. He had a neat suit and a neater haircut. “Matty, I haven't seen you around for ages, mate.”

“I... I've been away, come back really ill.”

“Spain?”

“Naah, man, Pakistan.” I forced a smile.

He laughed. “Fair enough, filthy country. Seriously though, you need a wash, you hair is all mad

as well.”

I shrugged. “Cheers for that.”

“Your welcome,” he brushed his shoulders, looking uncomfy. Maybe my appearance. “Mate, come over when you're better, yes?”

I grinned. “Will do. Say, Basher, what happened about that missing kid?”

He frowned, then nodded. “Oh, that boy who went missing six weeks ago? Funny, his real Father, he went missing same time the police think. He was seen around and about a couple of days before. Been on the news.”

My head simply exploded within. “Okay, see ya.” I edged in and closed the window. Six weeks? Six weeks of being stuck with Lewis. That's impossible! It hadn't been that long. I wouldn't accept that. Perhaps he meant another kid because what's the odds of Lewis and his real Dad missing? But if the cops thought he'd been abducted then that would make sense that nobody had called. Yeah, on the news, I don't watch the news. Fucking Lewis!

I returned to my task. Lewis was sobbing now, exhausted by his yelling and carry on. It was easier to ignore him now. I strung everything tightly and leaned them against the far wall. “Okay, that's all done. Now what?”

There was no answer. I glared his way. “Now what? You little fucking *bastard!* Don't you *dare* go quiet now you bastard!”

His sobs eased. “*You'll hear the notes, in your mind, at the rear of your thoughts. You'll sense them again as you did before, rather than hear them and you will be able to build a bridge to them.*”

For a brief fleeting moment I debated on one thing: Had I gone insane? I was in the middle of a chat with a dead lad about.....

Then I heard something.... Like an ice cream van deep inside me. Jingles. I tugged carefully on the notes and brought them to the surface. Gripping the first instrument in a vice, I placed it under my chin and played with my bloodied fingers. Warping twisting twangs and a deranged thudding as the wooden frame bent. I tried to make the noise as close to the tune in my head but it was no good.

Next I clutched the smaller one, my hideous digits scrawling up and down the wires. Pain, slicing and sneering teasing cuts. Like razors up my finger nails. Still he didn't move.

What was this? I felt my faith dripping out of my body like the speckles of blood which sprinkled from my skin. I played and played. Must have been for so many hours, or it was probably only minutes. I didn't care. I cried aloud and he wouldn't raise his head. Lewis was dead. He would remain dead.

I dashed the useless instruments of my torture against the walls in a blind rage. I screamed! I ripped at my clothes, somehow trying to let loose the madness which overwhelmed me. Oh my God, it was surely over now! Next door couldn't fail to hear what was happening. I collapsed in a crushed heap by the boy.

“You lied to me,” I whispered. “I get why. You blame me. I had to suffer for the sins.”

Lewis was silent, but that was enough. The realisation had me gagging and choking. It was all for nothing. I was a broken hollow void and could do no more. I could hope no more.

My eyes aimed to the upheaval in the room and the hole in the floor. Sliding on my stomach it was what I deserved. I was a maggot, a low level creature who achieved zero. I lowered into the self produced grave my torso and reached for the boards. I was tired, my eyes blind to all but closing out the planet and my life.

Lewis knelt beside the hole in the floor. He was safe, and his body was pure again, nothing had taken away his youthful beauty. Lewis smiled at me as he helped me bury myself. In fact, he was the one who neatly placed the last board in position and his face was the last I saw.

5.

His was the last face I saw until strangers grabbed the boards some time later and glared in. A collage and a mixture of anger and bewilderment.

The End.