

## MAGGOTS audition extracts

### Extract 1

It is a Tuesday morning at 6:36am when 58-year-old Linda Barnes sits on her bed in her flat at number 60 on the fourth floor of Laurel House – a small residential block on a quiet street off a busy road in London, although it could be anywhere, really - and types the words into Google:

*What does death smell like?*

Linda is getting ready for work, and working hard to ignore the smell that seems to be seeping from the very walls themselves. But it has become impossible to ignore.

Linda finds the scent hard to describe. She's never smelt anything like it before. It's kind of – sweet. But not nice, sweet. No. Sweet like fruit that's been left out in the sun for too long. Like an apple that's gone a bit soft and started to go acidic on the inside and turn that dark shade of brown that makes you not want to eat the apple. Like sweet, sickly cider. But not refreshing. Not like a cold pint of Strongbow on a hot summer's day. No. It's a sweetness, combined with something else.

Linda doesn't think it smells like death, necessarily. Well. She doesn't know. She's never smelt death before, as far as she's aware. She's seen dead bodies, of course, in funeral homes – her mother, her father, more recently, her husband – but that's when they're all, you know. Done up. Smells and unsightliness eradicated. So, yes. She googles it.

*What does death smell like? What does a dead body smell like?*

Someone on an internet forum compares it to rotten eggs or sewage.

Someone else describes it as having 'fruity undertones'. As if it's wine, or perfume.

Wikipedia says that death smell is made up of over 800 different chemicals and gases.

Another web page says that the bacteria produced by death is known to cling to your nostril hairs and remultiply later. So you can carry on smelling it, even when you're not around the smell anymore.

Someone on another internet forum says it smells like a butcher's shop on a hot day. Like meat that's just

rotting

and rotting

and rotting away.

Someone else on another forum says they like the smell. That's when Linda decides to get off the internet because she feels sick to the pit of her stomach, and she is going to be late for work.

## Extract 2

It is a Thursday evening at 8:04pm when 47-year-old Adeel Bakhsh stands on a chair to change his living room lightbulb, which has been flickering for a week. He hadn't gotten around to changing it because every day for the last week when he walked home from the bus stop after work, he forgot to pop into the hardware shop to buy the bulb. That Thursday on the walk home from the bus stop, he remembered, but only because he passed underneath a flickering streetlight.

That Thursday evening, when Adeel drags one of his rickety kitchen chairs into the living room to stand on so he can change the lightbulb, his teenaged daughter Aleena says to him,

Be careful, Dad, the legs on those chairs are shite.

Adeel says, I know. It's alright.

But his daughter stands behind him with her hands outstretched anyway, in a way that suggests he is safe, and that she'll catch him if he falls, even though she probably won't, because although her father is small in height, in the last year he has discovered the joy of the Cadbury's chocolate digestives that have that caramel layer in the middle, and that discovery, joyous as it was, has now shown itself in the tightness of his trousers and the number on the scales. Adeel jokes to Aleena that there is now more of him to love, which Aleena doesn't really get considering her mother died two years prior. But still, Aleena stands guard.

Adeel, atop wobbly wooden legs and his own creaky but still functioning legs, unscrews the finished-with lightbulb, and hands it to his daughter. Aleena, in return, hands him the new one, freshly unboxed.

Adeel turns back to the light fitting, now bereft of its bulb, open and waiting, and out of it crawls -

A maggot.

A single maggot.

Adeel yelps. The shite wooden chairs legs wobble and he falls backwards. Instead of catching her father, instead of softening his fall, Aleena unconsciously leap to the side to avoid her father altogether, who comes crashing to the floor.

Presumably startled too, the single maggot falls from the light fitting, landing silently on top of Adeel's curving belly. Father and daughter stare at it in horror. Aleena says,

*What the fuck?*