**It’s all about Matty**

She leaned against the bar the bottle of alco-pop dangling lightly between her fingers. George Michael was reminding the revellers of their duty, “Cos you gotta have faith, a-faith, a-faith, yeah you gotta have faith! Baby!” Matty was ‘throwing shapes’ on the dance floor. His grin spread from ear to ear. He loved these 80s/90s revival nights. She loved Matty. She loved him with every fibre of her being. You couldn’t find a nicer guy than Matty. Gentle, kind, placid – well most of the time. She drained the dregs from the bottle. Her teeth felt like they had a sugary coating; she ran her tongue over them. Matty’s enthusiasm more than made up for his lack of dancing skills. The club’s strobe lighting made his movements all the more disjointed. He would not be leaving the dance floor until the final strains of the last tune had come to its usual abrupt halt and the lights had been turned to their brilliant best. She smiled to herself and turned to place the bottle on the bar. Should she have another one? A quick glance at her watch, twenty minutes left. Catching the barman’s eye she ordered a Pina Colada in a bottle.

Clasping hands they walked out into the fresh air. Her head was still throbbing from the disco’s beat or maybe it was all the excess sugar. She looked up at Matty, at his gentle, open, honest face, and raising herself onto the balls of her feet she kissed him on the cheek. Matty turned and smiled at her. “I love you Tina.” “I love you too Matty.” They headed down the narrow back street, poorly lit by the ancient streetlights. The council had not yet got round to renewing this area of the city. The little alleyways that ran down the side of the houses leading to their backyards were in almost complete darkness. Tina thought she could see shadows moving. Cats? Urban foxes? “Oi! Moon-face. Mong! Where ya going ya spaz?” Tina gripped Matty’s hand hard and quickened their pace. She wanted to go over and punch that prat. Punch him really hard. But she didn’t dare. They might not be so lenient this time, might put her in prison. Then what would happen to Matty? They pressed on as the sound of abuse finally faded to nothingness.

They slowed their pace, Tina confident that they were away from trouble. Then Matty stopped all together. “I’m Perspex,” he said looking down at Tina.

“Why do they say those words?”

Tina’s brow furrowed slightly, “Perplexed Matty, I think you mean perplexed.” “

Yep, I do, I do mean that.”

“Because they’re ignorant Matty, that’s why. Don’t worry about it.”

Tina tucked Matty into bed giving him his old, rather tatty looking lion, all its stuffing squished towards the head, so one back leg hung limply. She kissed him on the forehead.

“Mummy said you’d look after me. You’re the best sister in the world.”

Tina smiled at her elder brother, as he lay cocooned in the duvet, though she felt her heart could burst.

“Night, night Matty, sweet dreams.”

“Night Tina,” Matty’s voice was already slurred with sleep.

Tina flicked the light switch to off as she closed the bedroom door. The glow of Matty’s nightlight gently warmed the darkness.

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