

IT'S IN THE BOX
by The Ghostwriter

Placed on the office canteen notice board 20th October
2003:

"WANTED SOMEONE TO SHARE MY FLAT IN BARRONS COURT. OWN
ROOM. LOVELY VICTORIAN BUILDING. NEAR TUBE. I'M EASY GOING.
FEMALE. 20'S. WANT YOUNG PERSON WITH SENSE OF FUN. MUST BE
TIDY AND MUST PAY RENT PROMPTLY. CONTACT ANGE IN ACCOUNTS
DEPARTMENT ON XTN: 7135."

Carrie's diary: 7th November 2003.

Brill! Fab! It's just what I wanted. This is the flat.
THE FLAT!!! Ange says she interviewed 12 people but I was
the one she chose 'cos I looked like I'd be the most fun!
It's great! She's great! Everything is GREAT! We made plans
tonight after I'd unpacked and she told me about the routine
and rules. We'll have fixed times for showers in the morning
so we don't get in each other's way. We take turns to tidy-

up the living room and the kitchen and we buy our own food but share things like salt, pepper and ketchup and loo paper (of course)., Ange is dead organised about all this but she's shared loads of times. She bought the flat last year with some money her Great Aunt left her but she needs a lodger to help pay the mortgage. She says that Judith, who shared with her before, was DEAD boring and never any fun AT ALL. This is proved by fact that she (Judith) met a bank manager and they have got married and gone to live in the suburbs with their Renault Clio. Ange is so funny. This is going to be great.

Carrie's diary 9th November 2003.

Rod came to flat. He's Ange's boyfriend. Lucky Ange. Tall good looking and judging from the noises coming through my bedroom wall very FIT.

Carrie's diary 11th November 2003

Ooops! Seems I got it wrong. Rod is just a ship passing in the night (Ange's expression). Seems that Chris is the regular boyfriend (not met him yet but he's coming round tomorrow apparently). But bit of a shock tonight. Carrie turned up late and pissed from the pub with a bloke on her arm (blond, arty type. V. sensitive face. And nicotine stained fingers). I just managed NOT to say "Oh, you must be Chris?" Good job, 'cos this turns out to be Eddy from the art college round the corner. All v.v. confusing. I think

Ange is a bit of a goer!!!! What have I got into??? PS She came into room and asked me what the hat boxes on top of the wardrobe were for. I said "For hats, stupid!" She was drunk and laughed and that was that.

Carrie's Diary November 12th 2003

Still no sign of the illusive Chris. Ange very hung-over. She has been sick but cleared it up herself. GOOD! I will not do that for anyone ever again. My friend Sue did that once all over my bedroom floor when we shared rooms at college and I had to clear it up or tread in it - as she was so, so out of it! Needless to say it was one of Sue's great crimes in my book and was added to the list of things she did which annoyed me and which we DISCUSSED before she finally left.

Carrie's Diary November 14th 2003

At last have met the mysterious Chris. I got home from work and was getting changed when Ange knocked on my door and breezed in. This is v.v.v. annoying. I am entitled to my privacy - I pay my rent after all (well, not yet but I will on Nov 30th) - I was in my undies (clean, thank God, though panties have a small but highly embarrassing tear in buttock area - but then you don't expect people to see you in them - at least I don't). Anyway, Ange just blathered on and seemed not to notice - either my embarrassment or the tear! She was going on about work and some new boss she's got and I was

trying to pull some clean jeans on and look interested when I caught a glimpse of this bloke through the half open bedroom door. Really ace looking. Wicked body and film star face - like Piers Brosnan - and he was just looking at me in my undies and grinning. How could she!! How could Ange not tell me that Chris was there and why the hell couldn't she have closed the door. I must have turned puce 'cos Ange suddenly said "What's up?" And then she laughed when she saw Chris staring at me and vice versa - "Oh," she said, dead casual like she always introduced her boyfriends to people in their underwear, "Carrie this is Chris. Chris this is Carrie." I wanted to die. We will have to DISCUSS this!! I'm going to have to start a list - a list of things to DISCUSS - like I did with Sue. Anyway, they went out quite soon and I stayed in my room until they did.

Carrie's Diary November 16th 2003

After the terrible embarrassment of the undies situation I had a chance to get to know Chris today. He was up when I went in to the kitchen to have my brekker. This time I was in my pyjamas and full length towelling dressing-gown - the one that was Nickie's (but let's face it she won't be wanting that any more, now will she??) Turns out that Chris is dead nice. Ace. Really brill guy. He is funny and v. witty and has slight stammer - which some might think a little sexy. (I do!) We talk over coffee (instant - I will

not pay the price they want for proper stuff - ridiculous and always tastes too bitter, even with loads of sugar in it). Carrie was still in bed. She is HUNG-OVER again! I will have to DISCUSS this with her. She drinks far, far too much. Chris is v. sweet about this and does not say why she is really still in bed but says she has stomach ache. But I know what he really means and I wink at him to let him know that I do. He blushes - which is sweet. We talk about this and that. He comes from Lancashire and I say that is where Nickie came from and wish that I hadn't. He asks, "Who is Nickie?" And I say a girl I shared a flat with when I left college. He wants to know if we stay in touch. This makes me smile but I only say "She's very close to me!" Which I think is brilliantly subtle and quite witty. Pity I cannot explain to him why.

Suddenly it is nearly lunchtime. We have talked about this and that all morning. I like a proper Sunday lunch with the roast and trimmings but as this is silly for one person I have only got in a tray of meatballs from Sainsbury's which I am going to do with some new pots and a bit of broccoli. Chris says don't be silly. I don't see why this is silly at all. It is a mini roast dinner on a budget when all is said and done. But it turns out he does not mean my lunch is silly but it is silly that I don't go with him and Ange to the pub for Sunday lunch.

I think about it and decide that meat balls can wait. Chris is too nice to say no to and anyway I ought to get to know my flat mate better.

Ange gets up and we go to Fox and Duck. Straight away she has a vodka and red bull. "Pulling herself together." She says. Then she orders a large Chardonnay. I have a Britvic Orange juice and say to Chris, who has bought all the drinks, that it's only fair to help him save money as Ange seems to be drinking for two! She gives me a funny look like she hasn't heard me properly and Chris blushes AGAIN!

We have the roast lunch and Chris offers to pay for mine which is v.v. gallant but I insist on paying my own way, so he says "Well, at least let me buy you a glass of red to go with the beef." I say "No. I think alcohol detracts from the taste of food but I will have another Britvic. Thank you Chris." (Good manners cost nothing - my Mum said). I give Ange a little look. I hadn't meant to but it kind of slipped out. She says, "Oh, Christ I'm sharing with a puritan!" It is sort of under her breath but I know she means me to hear it. Yes, we have quite a lot to DISCUSS.

Carrie's Diary November 20th 2003

Quite a lot has happened in the last few days which is why I am behind on the diary front. On Sunday night, after Chris had gone home, Ange comes into my room, where I am in

bed reading and didn't want to be disturbed. Fortunately I have put EVERYTHING away and there is nothing for her to see. I will have to lock my door though, in future. She seems uncertain about what she wants to say and she talks about a new sweater she has bought and other stupid things and then she asks again why I have two hat boxes. I think it is only because she is nervous about what she really wants to discuss but it rattles me nevertheless, especially when she says, "And I've never even seen you in a hat!" I laugh and say, "You can keep other things apart from hats in a hat box, you know!" She laughs too and starts to say "Wasn't there some old film where they open the hat box and find..." But I interrupt her. I am too tired, I say, to want to discuss old films. Then she looks at me and comes to the point. She says that we should try to get along as we are living together and be more tolerant of each other's little ways. I think she is trying to apologize to me but I can't help but wonder if she has also apologized to Chris for always being drunk and sleeping with other men. He deserves an apology if anyone does and I wonder if he even knows what she gets up to when he isn't there. It might almost be one's duty to let him know. He seems too nice to find out by accident. It might really hurt him if he stumbles on the truth about her or some rough man friend tells him in the pub. Perhaps it is my duty to tell him. I'll think it over.

Anyway I thank Ange for her apology and say that I probably need to be a bit more tolerant myself (which of course I do not really mean at all but as I say, good manners come free). She gives me v. odd look and then she laughs out loud and says, "Stone me! You're a one-off!" And she goes off to bed. Actually she doesn't say 'stone' at all but I have never written that word and I don't intend to start now. We'll have to DISCUSS language as well.

Monday I manage to pop out to a butcher in my lunch hour. I need a decent meal. Sunday's pub lunch was what my Mum would have called "semi-frozen and fully bland." I also went to a kitchen shop. How Ange manages without the proper tools I do not know.

I can't believe anyone could be so squeamish. I didn't even know she'd come into the kitchen behind me. I had got home early, changed and showered and prepared the vege for the casserole and I was just sorting the meat when I heard this scream. I turned with the new cleaver in my hand and there she was in the kitchen door, white as a sheet and her mouth hanging open. "What's the matter?" I asked. "Surely you've seen someone cut the head off a rabbit before?" It seems that she hadn't nor had she ever seen the guts spread out in a newspaper. I don't understand it. I seem to have upset her but I'm only trying to eat like a normal civilised human being. Not everything can be wrapped in cellophane,

after all.

I think she may be vegetarian. Possibly even organic.

Work on Tuesday - nothing much to report 'though that creepy new lad, Darren, with the spikey hair is going to be sacked, which is a good thing because his language is foul and he smells of smoke. Though I do like his hair. It's really ace in a sort of dangerous, 'I don't much care about life' way. I hope I wasn't part of the reason for his dismissal but I felt Mr Braithwaite HAD to be told about what he called him behind his back. The other girls may find that sort of thing dead funny but I still think respect is a virtue.

In the evening Chris came round to the flat which surprised me 'cos Ange was out and I thought she was out with Chris. I said, "Oh, Chris. I thought you were with Ange because she said she was out with a feller tonight." Well I only told the truth. That is what she said. Chris went most funny and he stammered more than I have heard him.

"I kn...kn...knew it!" He said. "How long has this been g..going on?"

"It's not for me to say." I said. "And I'm not saying anything anyway. What you guess is what you guess!"

He looked at me.

"You're very loyal to her." He said. "And you've only just met her really..." Then there was a silence and then he

said. "She's less than we both deserve."

"That might be true for you." I said. "But speaking for my own part I deserve whatever comes my way and she has given me a good chance here in this flat and I would hate to spoil that and I think she is a good person at heart who doesn't mean to hurt you but makes mistakes and gets carried away."

It all came out in a rush and I'm not sure if it made much sense but he looked at me for a long time and then he said, "Carrie... C...Carrie you should have a b...b...bloke in your life. You'd make any b...bloke happy."

He left at midnight before she got in. It was more discreet we decided. I didn't get up but turned over and went to sleep as he crept out of the room. It's poetic justice... like the boxes are in their way, when all is said and done.

Wednesday was a horrible day. Mr B fired Darren and he went absolutely mad (Darren not Mr B). He was f'ing and blinding and some of the customers must have heard him and he called Mr B a complete and utter B-----d and a bloody Mother f----r!!! I was v.v.shocked. It was like Eastenders on TV or Big Brother.

Then at lunchtime I was sitting on the fire escape eating my sandwiches and he (Darren) found me and started to have a go at me. I can tell you we had a very serious

DISCUSSION about things and I did not take kindly to his insinuations - so I told him a few home truths about himself and about his personal HYGIENE or rather the LACK of it and I explained that nice people did not have stains on their trouser fronts or smell of sweat and smoke and that BLACKHEADS were something that could be treated quite easily with hot water and a scrubbing brush.

BUT I SWEAR that he was OK when I left him and how he fell down the escape I do not know. That's what I told the police and who's to contradict with the level of brain damage he suffered.

Apparently the police say I won't hear anything more because they found some drugs on him and are pretty sure he was STONED when he tripped. There is a God, I say.

I was a bit shakey when I got home I can tell you. I had bought a small bottle of sherry from the Offy by the tube station and I had quite a large glass of it in the kitchen. I was just having another one when Ange burst in. She was red and blotchy and v.v.v. ANGRY. She screamed really rude things at me and called me several things including WHORE.

Well, I won't stand for that so we had a really very, very, very big DISCUSSION about her attitude towards men and towards her flat mates. Perhaps Judith had left not just for the bank manager and his Renault but also for a bit of

respect and P & Q. And I said "Miss when you call me a whore, you want to ask who's the kettle and who's the pot and which one's painted what colour!" Which took her aback a bit. And then I said to her that when it came to good manners I knew better than to introduce a friend to a friend in their underwear. She laughed (which I hate) and said she hoped I had sewn up the air vents in the arse if I'd worn them in bed with Chris the other night. This is DEAD common of her and I told her so and then just to rub it in I said, "And anyway why would I have worn any underwear in bed with Chris..? There was no need!"

She said some awful things. So I told her she was an alccy who needed to get herself dried out and that she was sex mad and she would probably catch diseases of the personal kind and serve her right. And then she said I had to leave the flat by the weekend and she wanted all the rent paid up and then she stormed out.

Now we have had our DISCUSSION and it was one of the biggest I have ever had. Even bigger than with Darren or Mum or Sue or Nickie or that Japanese exchange student - and I suppose it's a case of here we go again.

The hat boxes are quite full so I will buy another one tomorrow. Good job I bought the cleaver the other day - typical of Ange that she hadn't even got one of those when you needed it.

Dear Chris. We could have been so happy together and he really is V.V.V. sexy - absolutely wicked in fact - but he'll only cause problems and ask tedious questions so he'll have to go as well... better make that two more hat boxes.

THE END

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