

Shift Key

He's walking down the street and it's all paved. All uneven and sloping away with the trees every twenty metres or hundred feet or whatever counts for counting 'round here, and lining the edges of the street, in fact the reason for the street being, are grand old houses; all three stories and black iron gates and golden ratios and paid for by the sweat and bones of black skins sold and transported via a local port for the benefit of a Nice-Cup-Of-Tea-and-a-biscuit-but-trying-to-cut-down-thank-you-very-much, and there's a reporter and a camera man, no big van in sight and no portable satellite dishes, just a camera man and a reporter with a mic pushing questions into a beard with a bike.

He's walking past all full of the last customer's talking of "Them". 'Them that swarm and "Them" that ride "Their" bikes on the pavement and "Them" that enforce "Their" "Beliefs" about climate change on others so that we all do twenty miles an hour in the city and cycle ways are growing like vines over the road, "Them" that enforce "Their" "Beliefs" on the world but-I'm-not-pushing-my-

beliefs-wouldn't-do-it-it's-not-me-I'm-just-a-tax-payer-a-rate-payer-a-part-of-a-silent-majority-and-we'll-see-about-that-referendum-we'll-see-I-can-tell-you-as-I-unironically-wag-my-finger-at-the-world.

He's all full of that flavour of man ("She's worse") and that reporter is definitely asking about the street parking and how it may have effected the traffic situation, how owners of the houses on this street may have been affected, how people have been **forced** onto the local park areas to leave their cars, so that they can get to work and he's hoping, he's actually forming the words of a response, all bile and

"You know what, I just don't care"

"But don't you live around here, and you seem quite well dressed".

"Mate, let me level with you; I'm dressed in a suit and I earn a wage, a salary, even. Not much, but a living wage, and I can't say it's a bad thing, but I live in a..."

He's walking, lost in this so much his mouth is working and his eyes flash and his eyebrows move, he's having an argument with himself.

"...I live in a basement flat and it's damp and I pay over forty percent of my salary into a flat that drips, and rots my book collection and drove a wedge between myself and my ex who suffers from asthma and all that forty percent, over forty percent to a landlord who doesn't even live here, not even in this country. He lives in Greece! But he comes back here to collect his mail and to use the NHS and reads the Guardian, that's the state of the left in this country, all sold out, the selfish post-Thatcher twats..."

He walks around a corner, over some tree roots that are currently digging up the tarmac and right, well, almost right, into a possibly future beautiful, possibly future lady who lunches fourteen-year-old girl, walking a dog, who may or may not like Lessing or be able to hold a conversation about the merit or otherwise of Žižek's take on the symbolism of the iceberg in James Cameron's 1997 waste of a GDP, Titanic, and may or may not have noticed the working mouth, the flashing eyes, the moving eyebrows.

"... and every week, every day, every hour, if the fucking radio's on I have to listen to how jobs will have to go to compensate for tax rises or living wages or let's face it, reductions in profits, and yet we all put up with it and continue to buy needless shit from these people, continue to blame the unions continue to blame the poor, continue to blame the homeless or each other, and you're asking me to feel sorry for these FUCKS"

This last sentence can be heard; whispered into the air but screaming so loud in his mind it breaks the surface of his body. He realises he's almost home and swearing, he's been pounding the pavement, not walking slow and gentleman like, the way he deeply wants to be. He's got a bit of a sweat on and he feels righteous as he pounds down the path to his damp basement flat and he flies into his kitchen to make a coffee and breathes, breathes, breathes.

Breathes.

Breathes.

Breathes.

He pours the water.

He brews the pot.

He has just a drop of milk and sits down at his desk.

He sips the coffee and begins to sort the day's expenses.

The shift key doesn't work.