

### **A woman is sat in a child's bedroom.**

**Woman:** The hardest job of all...that's what all the stay at home mums tell you. A thankless, payless festival of tears, grazed knees and bum wiping. It is quite hard, don't get me wrong. It's tiring looking after kids, and annoying and expensive...but mostly it's boring. Deadly boring.

I personally found that after 6 months of maternity leave I couldn't wait to get back to work and spend time with actual adults. I didn't have to watch Barney the bloody dinosaur or pretend I wanted to play crap board games. I could talk about politics or telly or even the sodding weather. It was great to be a real adult again.

I loved the kids though, they were really annoying, but I loved them. There's something very sweet about the way they loved me unconditionally, even when I was angry and unreasonable with them. Even when I just shouted and shouted at them, just because they were being children. That never made me feel very good about myself...it's not ok to be crap to children. Which is an ironic statement considering what I've done.

If you're familiar with Euripides' play Medea, then it's down to my husband being a bastard. Bugging off to be with a younger model and leaving me to be the mother to his kids. This isn't like that though, I haven't done what I've done to upset him or destroy the one thing that he held most dear....which is mainly because he's already dead. Nothing spectacular, just a heart attack in his sleep I think. Admittedly he was quite young; 50 years old. But he smoked and drank and worked too hard. It's not uncommon. It was a bit of a shock though, waking up and finding a corpse next to you. I actually knew he was dead before I even opened my eyes. I'd brushed against his arm and it felt cold...too cold. I just lay there for a while hoping I'd touched something else, or he'd already got out of bed and had replaced himself with a selection of joints of meat from the fridge...

The kids had come in and I'd told them that daddy was asleep. They did their usual irritating bed bouncing and then went off to the TV. I couldn't bring myself to touch him again. I just got out of bed and made a cup of tea in the kitchen. I made a potful, like I always do; I got out two cups and poured both. I thought...if he's alive then he'll want tea, if he's dead then I'll want two cups...funny what you think in these situations.

When I entered the room again I realised that I'd not actually looked at him yet; his eyes were closed but he was pale...I've been told before that dead people really do look dead, not like they're sleeping at all; and it's true, there was no mistaking it. I sat on the edge of the bed and drank both cups of tea...I had to touch him some time I knew. I went for the armpit in the end. It's a funny place to choose I grant you, but my thinking was that it would be one of the last bits to stay warm, so I could see how dead he really was? I've also seen death as a two-stage thing...stage one is when your heart stops...stage two is when your brain is dead...if he still had some warmth, then stage two might not have completely finished. It's a weird thing to want to check, but it's what I wanted to know...