

## JILL SIDE 1

MISS DEE. Of course! Regeneration Through—

JILL. The Creation of Dream Homes.

MISS DEE. All it needs is for one house to sparkle.

JILL. Oh, it makes sense, Ollie.

OLLIE. It makes sense if it *works*.

MISS DEE. It *always* works.

OLLIE. You've done this before?

MISS DEE. Many times.

OLLIE. And it's always successful?

MISS DEE. If I've chosen the clients correctly, yes.

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JILL

JILL. Give me that contract!

*Snatches contract from Miss Dee.*

OLLIE. What the—?

*Jill signs contract.*

Jill! Jesus! Wh-what've you done?!

JILL. I want this house.

OLLIE. I'm *part* of this equation too, you know.

MISS DEE. The contract needs *both* your signatures.

OLLIE. There! We *both* need to...to—

MISS DEE. Consult!

OLLIE. Exactly! We need to *consult* about things.

*Takes contract from Jill.*

JILL. *What* things?

MISS DEE. He's worried about all the red tape involved—Right?

OLLIE. That's on my mind, yes.

MISS DEE. Fear not. Clause Four. You see? We will arrange all the legals. We will transfer all utility bills on your behalf. You will have no forms to fill in or phone calls to make.

OLLIE. But what about—?

MISS DEE. We will arrange for a delivery van. And workmen. And before you ask—Clause Five, Subsection B—it won't cost you a penny. You see?

JILL. Oh, Ollie, sign. *Sign!*

OLLIE. Wait, wait... What's this? Clause Six, Subsection six.

MISS DEE. "The signatories must maintain discretion."

OLLIE. What's *that* supposed to mean?

MISS DEE. What do you *think* it means?

JILL. ...We mustn't attract attention. Getting a house for free. People can get jealous—Right, Miss Dee?

MISS DEE. You want to be on good terms with your neighbours.

OLLIE. Okay, okay. What about basic improvements?

MISS DEE. All repairs and renovations to the property are *your* responsibility.

OLLIE. Aha!

JILL. But...but surely that's fair.

MISS DEE. The basic structure of the house is sound.

OLLIE. The whole place needs rewiring.

MISS DEE. That would be advisable, yes.

JILL. So...how long will that take?

MISS DEE. One week.

OLLIE. If you're a professional.

JILL. Then we'll *get* a professional.

OLLIE. We can't *afford* a professional.

MISS DEE. I'm sure you're more than capable, Oliver. Say it takes *longer* than a week. You can have candles for light. A small gas heater for cooking. As for heating...well, the weather's clement.

JILL. We won't freeze.

MISS DEE. You won't.

OLLIE. What about hot water?

JILL. There's no hot water?!

OLLIE. Ha! She hadn't thought of that.

JILL. I don't care! I'll wash in cold!

OLLIE. She says that *now*.

JILL. Ollie. This is a chance for us. *Please*.

OLLIE. ...I'm not sure.

JILL. He's not sure! He's never bloody sure. One day he'll drop dead and you know what they'll write on his tombstone? "Here lies Oliver Swift...but he's still not bloody sure."

*...Ollie heads for door.*

Where're you going?

OLLIE. To check the exhaust on the car.

JILL. Oh, Ollie—

*Ollie exits.*

MISS DEE. Let him go, child.

JILL. ...I shouldn't have said what I did, Miss Dee.

*Slight pause.*

MISS DEE. ...Where did you both meet?

JILL. What—? Oh! The local church. Mum was helping Father Vianney put on a party for some underprivileged kids and—I have a feeling you know this already.

MISS DEE. I'd still like to hear it from your lips.

JILL. Mum had booked a magician. Mr. Mysterio the Mysterious. He was late. The party was almost over when his van rolled up. I was outside waiting for it. A spotty teenager wearing glasses gets out.

MISS DEE. Oliver.

JILL. "Sorry, sorry," he said. "We've been stuck in traffic." Mr. Mysterio was Ollie's dad. Ollie—he was the assistant in the act. He did all these funny voices to distract the children. You should have seen the children, Miss Dee. They couldn't stop laughing. And Mr. Mysterio—oh, he had a magic wand that shot sparks out of the end—Whoosh!

MISS DEE. Impressive.

JILL. Ollie made it! And lots of the other things too. After the show me and Ollie talked and talked. We were so...open with each other. Right from the start. He told me he wasn't religious but he was in the school choir. I said I was too. And by the end of that very first conversation...we...

MISS DEE. You were in love.

JILL. Oh, Miss Dee! He's beeping the hooter. I'll...I'll have to go.  
You understand, don't you?

MISS DEE. Of course.

JILL. Thank you for...for thinking of us...for this. Perhaps...some-  
time in the future...

MISS DEE. Perhaps...

*Jill goes to leave—*

Just one last thing—Oh, I know it's going to sound foolish and  
you'll probably think me a silly old woman—

JILL. What is it, Miss Dee?

MISS DEE. ...Selfridges.

JILL. Selfridges?

MISS DEE. It's my favourite department store in the whole world  
and...well, I know you went there last week.

JILL. That's right.

MISS DEE. I haven't been there for years. Will you tell me about  
your trip? What you saw. The colours. The smells—Is there still an  
angel over the entrance?

JILL. Yes! Yes, there is!

MISS DEE. And when you go through the revolving doors—Perfume!

JILL. Oh, the smell made me giddy.

MISS DEE. And all those magical names—*Shalimar*.

JILL. *Estée Lauder*.

MISS DEE. *Dior*.

JILL. *Yves Saint Laurent*.

MISS DEE. You took the escalators up?

JILL. Up and down, up and down.

MISS DEE. What things caught your eye?

JILL. What *didn't*? I wanted it *all*—There's the hooter again!

MISS DEE. And then? You went back to your flat?

JILL. What—? Oh, Yes.

MISS DEE. And how did that make you feel?

JILL. ...Abandoned. Oh, I know that sounds over the top. And...well, how can I be abandoned? They say God's everywhere, don't they.  
MISS DEE. That's what they say, yes.

JILL. Well, there's a place He doesn't visit very often. And that's Red Ocean Estate.

*Ollie has appeared (unseen by Jill).*

It sucks all the joy out of you, that place. I don't want to bring our baby into a world like that. What will its future be? Drugs? Gangs? Prison? I want *more* than that for our child. I want...this house. Oh, yes, I know there'll be problems. Ollie's right. He usually is. But...but at least we'll have...we'll have the *hope* of things getting better. That's all I want. Isn't that the least we owe our child? Hope.

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*...Ollie signs contract.*

**END**

MISS DEE. Enjoy your new home.

*Heads for door.*

OLLIE. Oh! Your phone number, Miss Dee.

MISS DEE. Why on earth would you need that?

OLLIE. In case we need to contact you.

MISS DEE. If *you* need to contact *me*, I will contact *you*.

*Leaves.*