

Hinge

The shattering noise of power tools shook Ben's bedroom. It was Sunday morning. The old boy who lived upstairs was just being rude. Ben was confused, the council had only just done the place up.

Ben boiled for a while. Annoyed at the wizened, white haired, little man who lived there. A drinker who could have been 49, 71, or anywhere in between.

The noise abated for a moment, then started afresh. It was too much. Ben got out of bed, put on some shorts and a T shirt. He didn't like confrontations but the little alcoholic with the lost eyes was half his size.

He banged on the door. The power tools stopped. There was no movement. He banged again. "I know you're in there. Half of London knows you're in there."

He heard steps. Then stillness. Then the door opened. The old boy peered at him for a moment before recognising him. "Sorry about the noise."

"It's 8:30 on a Sunday."

"Sorry. I'll stop. Sorry if I woke you."

Ben was annoyed. He'd wanted to have a good shout. Lose his temper. Feel righteous. The old man was denying him by just apologising.

"Right then." Ben swung away from the door. As he did he caught sight of the old boy's hands.

He stopped. They both looked at the red smudges on them.

"You'd best come in."

"Er no, you're alright." Ben backed towards the stairwell door.

The old man stepped forward. Ben got to the door. It opened the wrong way. He pulled it open. As he did he had to step towards the little soft eyed boozier. And his blood stained hands.