

I likes waving.

I likes waving. Some people don't spot me but I still waves. Nowadays, I can see lots of cars that are looking out for me and they even waves before I do. They're the best.

Mind you, there's some, usually young flighty lads in flashy cars, who shout out rude, nasty things, but I ignore them if I can. "Shut them out," Beth says to me. So I tries. I do that, you know, shut people out with other things as well as waving.

My Beth's a clever girl; she's going to do well when she leaves school. She's not such good company as Jimmy is but...no, no, hang on, I'm fuddled again. No, Beth must have left school 'cos Jimmy's her son and he's twelve and little Fiona, she's going to be seven soon. Jimmy is probably my best friend now. I think we're still friends 'cos I helped him with his paper round last week. But when we got home, Beth went crazy at us. Well, me really.

"What time do you call this blah blah blah, you should've been back by six and it's gone nine now! You can't be trusted blah blah blah."

She sent Jimmy to bed and grounded him, whatever that means, so I don't suppose he's happy with me either.

It's times like that when I misses Dorothy most. She would have given me one of those sly little winks and made me feel not quite so stupid. Our Beth says I didn't always used to be stupid. Not before the incident. I likes waving. It takes me mind off of things.

I can remember when I started waving. I was just leaning on the wall out the front of our house and I just waved at this car as it went past and the man smiled and waved back. So when the next car went past I waved again, just like that, not even thinking. I don't think I've stopped waving since then except when I go away for "a break" as Beth calls it.

Tom Meredith used to fill out my book when I was away. You knows, my Waving Book. I likes to keep a note of all the people I waves to. It's very neat book. I likes to be neat. It's black and fits into my pocket. It's divided into columns: Column 1 - How many people waves back; Column 2 - How many people smiles back; Column 3 - How many people both smiles and waves. And then Column 4 - How many of 'em are rude. I've even started a new column for how many pretend not to see me. That's my favourite column 'cos it shows I'm not stupid. Jimmy was surprised that I can stand here all day and then come back and know the figures to go in the book. But I always knows the figures, the exact figures. Beth says it's because I used to be a bank manager. I think she gets muddled up because I was only on the till. Behind the till, that was the best time of my life. It was like waving but you would get to talk to people, have a joke, and hear all their little moans and little stories.

That's how I met Dorothy. I looked up from my ledger work and there was the sweetest face I had ever seen in my life. She was blushing when she spoke:

"I want to open a bank account."

"Well, you've come to the right place," I says, as quick as a flash.

We was married one year four months and three days later. We was really happy, I think. That was until the incident. I miss Dorothy every day.

There goes the lady with the red hair, "Hello!" When I waves to her, she always waves back and smiles. She's in my favourite five wavers' column. PF10 ZNZ, that's her number. When I've filled out a book, I don't know why I don't throw it away. It's nothing to read afterwards, not that I reads much anyway.

If I go away nowadays, no one keeps my book filled. Certainly not bloody Tom Meredith! Blooming crook! Bloody even numbers! When I checked his entries in my Waving Book, all the columns were bloody even numbers. He must have thought I was simple!

Waving is best when the sun's out. Everyone smiles then and lots more of 'em waves back. I don't wave much when it rains, I get wet and people don't look anyway. They just stare ahead as if I wasn't there. So I may as well not be there.

So I just sits and thinks when it rains. And look over at Dorothy's chair. It's empty now. There's no one sat there sewing and smiling back at me. Before the incident, she was always there. She says the incident changed me. I think it changed her more.

It hurt so much, all those things that changed after the incident. I remember when it happened.

I was putting on my shoes and all at once I couldn't work out which way they went on. My head went all cold, like really, really cold and my shoes had these stringy things on them and I couldn't remember why and what you did with the stringy things. And then I remember crumbling, just like a sandcastle. One second I was a sandcastle, the next I was just a splodge on the beach.

That was a long time ago, before yesterday. So nowadays I just waves and thinks about Dorothy. About how I miss her and what she's doing now, with Tom Meredith. I suppose one day I'll stop waving but I'll never stop thinking about Dorothy.

But Tom Meredith, no, I don't want to think about bloody Tom Meredith. I wouldn't wave at him if he was the last man on earth.

And I likes waving.