

## ROSE SIDE #1

HAZEL. You have a choice, don't you, exactly, at our age which is that you slow down, melt into your slippers, start ordering front-fastening bras out of Sunday supplements, or you make a committed choice to keep moving you know because you have to think: This is not the end of our lives but a new and exciting chapter.

ROSE. That's a philosophy I really admire.

HAZEL. If you're not going to grow, don't live.

ROSE. Exactly.

HAZEL. No, I mean, if you're not going to grow, don't live.

*Pause.*

ROSE. Yes.

HAZEL. No, but you see what I'm saying, don't you? If you're not going to / grow

ROSE. You've really got it all worked out, haven't you?

HAZEL. Well it's just what we think it's not rocket science.

ROSE *laughs*.

What?

STAKE

ROSE. No, you just -- I actually went out with a rocket scientist for a while. In America, I used to try and trick him into using that phrase. Like if he did housework or something, I'd really go for it, what a WONDERFUL job you've done mowing the grass, how DID you get this toilet so clean that sort of thing.

HAZEL *smiles*.

What?

HAZEL. No it's, I'd forgotten what an odd sense of humour you have.

ROSE. Right, well anyway, he never said it until finally one day, he made dinner and I went for it, how did you get the skin so crisp! And the inside so fluffy! And I moaned and stamped my feet and banged my fists on the table and finally the rocket scientist puts down his knife and fork, and he goes: *(American accent)* 'it's a baked potato, Rose. It's not brain surgery.'

ROSE *laughs hysterically*. HAZEL *laughs politely*.

People think we're a breed don't they? Scientists. They don't realise that we're all standing in different fields, just as in the dark about what goes on beyond our own hedgerows as the next man.

END

HAZEL. I met a geneticist once, at a wedding, and we were having quite a good chat about shrubs for a north-facing garden and then the dreaded you know, he says 'and what do you do?' So I said, I work at the power station, I'm a nuclear engineer. And he says, so what does that entail?

ROSE. God. Not really wedding talk is it, fission?

HAZEL. Exactly and so the heart sank a bit but I explained it, in layman's terms. I said well a slow-moving neutron is absorbed by a uranium 235 nucleus, and this turns it briefly into a uranium 236 nucleus and then that turns into fast-moving lighter elements.

ROSE. And releases three free neutrons.

HAZEL. And releases three free neutrons, yes, and he nodded and smiled and said oh yes I see but I knew he didn't, he was faking it, this... dumb show of comprehension.

I mean I could have said we use tiny hacksaws and a salad spinner, he wouldn't have blinked. And this is a man with two PhDs. So what happened?

ROSE. I'm sorry?

HAZEL. With the rocket scientist. Are you still?