

JANE IRELAND

Perfect

I have the niggle of death on my mind but for now I just want to soak up the bliss. I've washed off every trace of brine and sand, leaving my exfoliated skin shiny soft. What lingers is the sweet waft of coconut from this morning's generous lathering of *Reef* tanning oil. I want my skin to stay perfect. Swaddled in my silk lined bamboo pod chair, perched high on the deck of our clifftop home which overlooks iconic Little Cove beach, through the pandanus I can make out the rock where I sat earlier to apply it. Before my morning dip. I close my eyes. The chair's slight rhythmic rocking takes me to my yacht on the ocean. A gentle breeze sighs in my ear. It's my pilot, helping me navigate the deep. We're off to see the world. Tahiti looks nice.

The screech of rainbow lorikeets pulls me back to my lovely coconut haze, my tropical Utopia. That's fine. I feel centred in both worlds. The cheeky birds flit in feeding frenzies among the *Honey Gem* grevillea which grow in our front yard. I scan the ocean for my yacht. A fleeting spray of white blots the aquamarine deep just short of the breaks. A breach. A white whale! Is it? No, couldn't be. Yes. It. Is! Migaloo! I can see him waving his fin directly at me. Hello, Mister Whale! I call to my husband who doesn't hear me. All morning he's been busily fashioning profiteroles for the croquembouche. He'll soon be bringing me my midday cocktail. *Cosmopolitan* today, I believe.

The premonitions are escalating. Something dire is about to happen. A fatal crash. Crush injury. Or is it a mass murder? Electrocutation? Both? Hard to tell. Will I be the instigator of such carnage? Gladly. We both will. Will we get away with it? Of course, we always do. I hear the first incident as thumps, shuffles and curses coming from the kitchen. A loud buzz muffles the deathly gasps and death throes of the intruders. Such a horrible sound. Why does killing have to be so, so blatant?

The next blood to spill is mine. But I fight back with all my might. When I've finished the slaughter it's hard to tell which blood is mine, which is the victim's. Oh no, my coconut haze will soon be replaced with the chemical fug I detest. 'Darling, can you please bring me the insect repellent?' Bloody mozzies.