

APPREHENSION

She wearily got out of the lift on the 6th floor, walked towards her flat, and stumbled inside. It had been a very busy day at work.

Would it be a warming cup of coffee, a refreshing cup of tea, or a glass of cold white wine? Putting her packages down she pondered on these choices. As she headed towards the fridge there was a knock at the door. She froze.... "Not again," she thought. Either children playing the fool or the shadowy figure she was sure had been following her for the past few days. Tip-toeing to the door, she silently pressed her ear against the rough wooden surface, listening intently for any tell-tale signs. Nothing.

"Well it is wine for me," she thought walking towards the kitchen only to be distracted by the insistent ringing of her cell phone. Unknown number - she swiftly cancelled the call, and sat down taking a long sip of her wine.

Closing her eyes she imagined being anywhere but where she was ... when her reverie was disturbed by the shrill ringing of the landline phone. She decided to ignore this, but the persistent caller would not hang up, so finally she answered ... only to be greeted by silence. "Fools" she muttered, feeling more than a little shaken by these events. She took a long slurp from the refreshing glass of crisp, cold, white wine.

Triiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiing, the landline again. Finally her outrage overtaking her anxiety she answered the phone to the sounds of heavy breathing.

"Listen you creep, you need an inhaler, your breathing is laboured," she barked, banging the receiver down. Finally a chance to unwind, but as she settled down again, feeling more than a little irritated she once again heard the knocking on her door.

She froze - could this be an assailant? Who had been following her? Ringing her phone? Finally plucking up the courage to open the door on the safety chain she gasped.

There, standing in front of her was old Mrs van der Vyfer from next door, balancing precariously against her Zimmer frame, waving her inhaler frantically in the air and gasping ... I can't breathe ... please help!

Julie Hattingh