

Bricks

—James Zhao

After two days of running about in the concrete jungle of Marvellous Me!bourne, you find it utterly refreshing to wake up to the cry of *cock-a-doodle-doo!* You open your eyes to golden rays of sunlight streaming through the window, and breathe in the smell of fresh straw as it rustles beneath your shoulders. Everyone should get the chance to enjoy country life.

Your daydream is shattered when your novelty rooster alarm clock smashes onto the floor, launched off your Ikea bedside table by your VCE-honed *alarum silentio* reflex. Obviously, what goes around, comes around, for in the next instant you are thrown onto the floor next to your alarm clock by the vibrations of the construction site that has become your new and rather disagreeable neighbour. Picking yourself up, you remind yourself to check whether the police have caught the wretches who broke in and stole your mattress. At least they left your bike and shoes this time, and nicking that straw from the pet shop saved you from having to sleep on the floor.

You aren't particularly surprised when your mobile phone beeps, signalling the arrival of another text message. This one reads: "lizzie, im so sorry, i didnt mean any of what i said, really i didnt, please reply, i just need to hear from you"

Just who is this enigmatic Lizzie? And who keeps sending these messages?

Shaking your fist at the construction site as you briskly walk out the door, you try to imagine what either of them might be like. A tall woman? A short man? Long brown tresses? Or balding, perhaps? Suddenly you remember that you knew a girl called Lizzie when you were in Year 9 who'd seduced all the boys with her impish little smile; could it possibly be her?

Out of the corner of your eye a hint of motion grabs your attention, and you spy a shadowy character hiding behind a metallic rubbish bin barely large enough to conceal a fully grown wombat. He senses that his cover is blown and immediately tries to spring away. In a fluorescent yellow blur of agile motion, his shiny new hard hat is dislodged and two enormous pink ears are revealed. Stealing one final look towards your mobile phone, the mysterious stranger bolts off. Suspecting that it's the same cloaked figure from two days ago, you walk carefully to where he stood a moment before, and peer into the bin.

You reach in and take out a scrunched up ball of paper. As you unfurl it, it starts to resemble some kind of blueprint.

