

## Chapter 1 (What was life?)

Before Steve could find out where it had all gone wrong, first he had to find out what it was that he was upset about. He looked about the room and saw nothing. There was stuff all around, but none of it made an impression, none of it mattered anymore.

It seemed to him that today was much the same as yesterday, much the same as tomorrow and only a tiny hope of illness gave him the feeling that anything might change over the course of the next year.

So that was the plan for today, a fucking plan. He stood up and realised that the presence of this plan clearly identified today, the fifth of February 2005, from all the days preceding. Steve's great plan.

"I'm going to write a fucking book about my life so I can figure out what the christ I am meant to be doing," he said to the room. He sat at his computer and clicked on the OpenOffice icon on his taskbar.

UNDERSTANDING GAMMAL - Steve of Dave (edition 1)

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He sat back and took a screenshot of this momentous occasion of activity. Then, after a brief while fucking about with some pagination settings he didn't understand, he began.

## Chapter 2 (While we are at it)

### Chapter 1 (What was life?)

Before Dave could find out where it had all gone wrong, first he had to find out what it was that he was upset about. He looked about the room and saw nothing. There was stuff all around, but none of it made an impression, none of it mattered anymore.

He looked at the words he had written and nodded to himself, as he chewed his gum. This was going to be a strange week.

While we are at it, some details: Steve was 32 and lost. He was trying to sort that out. He was tired and on the brink of quitting for the day. It seemed to him that nothing much mattered anymore and that tomorrow was going to be nearly identical. All he had to show for the day was the first few lines so far.

It seemed to him that today was much the same as yesterday. Only a tiny hope of illness gave him

the feeling that anything might change ever.

He felt the need for a plan, a fucking plan, an objective. "what I need is a goal," Dave said to himself as he shut his eyes from the horror of the life around him.

Dave resolved to write a book, a book to change the world, a book to fucking free him from the old tired muddle that he had become. With that he opened the word processor and began typing.

GAMMAL - Chief Dave of the Village (1<sup>st</sup> edition)  
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It was pretty fucking gloomy, but he couldn't help that. It was always going to be. After all, what did Steve know that wasn't gloomy?

### Chapter 3 (What am I?)

Steve asked himself the question "What am I?" daily. Every night as he lay on the sofa looking at the shitty walls in the shitty room that closed in around his shitty life. His first memory was one of a carpet, his face pressed into it, and a vague feeling of guilt. This guilt had never left him throughout all the years, all the ages, all the people he had been. He was actually quite happy as the person he was now, but then again, isn't that how most people are all the time, only to look back in ten years and see how wrong they were?

When was he ever going to be right about himself? When is anyone actually right about themselves? His second memory was of some horses in a stable, for some reason he felt that his proximity to the horses gave him some kind of tangible importance in the community he inhabited. He was three years old at the time, but as children do, he had created the world around him in his own image, unaware of the truth that the horses would have continued to exist even if he had never done so.

In looking back at his earlier memories, he tried to reconcile that with now. Failing, he struck dumbly at his keyboard and some words appeared.

### Chapter 2 (while we are here).

#### Chapter 1 (Your Life Gone Wrong)

So this is Christmas? Surely there was some mistake. Frank sat back into his chair and blew his nose. He realised it wasn't Christmas, it was fucking February. "How GAMMAL," he told himself. He looked around the room and saw just shit, just shit and more shit. All of it was gammal, all of it was shit.

Where the fuck was he? Where had he been? Where the fuck was he going?

Dave looked on in amazement as the first paragraph wrote itself in front of him, maybe this was going to work.

These questions shot into his brain making him sit upright and breathe.

It seemed to him then, as never before, that he had become lost, become totally lost. What had happened to him? He needed to know. This activity was most unusual but he decided to act upon it.

He got a piece of paper and a pen and wrote the words "WHAT IS LIFE?" on it and then put the pen down and began to think.

Dave breathed and checked the start of his book. "A little gloomy perhaps," he thought. He took a swig of the water beside him and rearranged his jeans around his crotch.

while we are here, let's have some facts about Dave. Dave's a fucking loser. He used to be somebody but now he's just a shell, he doesn't even realise it, but he is. No one cares, nor should they... He certainly doesn't. He's about 30 and to be totally frank, he looks it.

Steve awoke with a start, he had slept on his chair, his face numb in places and sore in others where it had been resting on the tabletop. His first thought was to stop the project. He read back the start of his book and realised it was getting complicated, but perhaps that was necessary. The character Dave seemed to resemble Steve himself but was being portrayed in a very negative light, he felt.

#### Chapter 4 (How to proceed?)

It was Sunday morning, just, and Steve wasn't hungry, but wanted to eat. He wondered routinely where all the food he ate went. He decided to forego eating for now and to crack on with his book.

#### Chapter 3 (Who am I?)

Dave thought about who he was about once a week, his normal reaction to this pondering was to laugh aloud and clap his hands in joyous despair. He no longer minded who he was, he used to know. He used to be that bright eyed child, that kid on the train head deep in a book.

These days though, Dave had little regard for who he was, or who he wasn't. It barely mattered. His first memories had long since been forgotten. His ambitions and dreams had been swept aside like the rubbish they were. Nothing was going to set Dave back in his path to wilful reclusion.

This, to Dave, seemed part of the solution and the problem. Irked and scowling, Dave bashed at the keys on his filthy keyboard.

#### Chapter 2 (We are here)

Frank's list of achievements in life could be displayed as follows:

- Born
- Educated
- Became someone
- Forgot it all.

He looked at the list of achievements and nodded. Frank was feeling gloomy now. His pen fell to the table and his eyes collapsed to the floor.

We are here to inspect Frank, so let's have a closer look. He's a white man, with about 30 years of life behind him and an unknown number ahead of him. He's not handsome particularly, but he's got a certain dangerous charm, like a house fire or an amputated limb.

A big shit inside Dave's body interrupted his writing at this moment.

A cat scratching at the door interrupted Steve, it was the black one. Proceeding wasn't going to be a simple task today.