

PAPERBACK HELL

‘BLACK TEETH LANE’ BY ZANDRA JONES

1. ANNOUNCER

We begin our adaptation now of one of last year's most talked about debut novels as author Zandra Jones reads from her sprawling warm-hearted epic of life in London's immigrant Welsh community, *Black Teeth Lane*.

1. GRAMS

'1977' BY THE CLASH (UNDER)

2. ZANDRA JONES

(V/O) It was 1976. London. Kensal Green. The unions were on strike and across the country kids were discovering punk music, Evel Kinievel and those sweets – oh you know the ones, you can't get them anymore. It was a time of change. I know because I borrowed a video of *The Rock n Roll Years*. But at 8am on a cold unlovely winter morning there was no change in the life of 16-year-old second generation Welsh Methodist Megan Evans. Slightly overweight, buck-teethed but keenly intelligent, Megan was clearly autobiographical.

3. GRAMS

OUT, AS:

4. FX

RADIO IS TURNED OFF.

1. FX

HOUSE ATMOS IN

2. MEGAN

(WELSH) Oh, Dad, I was listening to that.

3. DAFFYD

It's a bleeding racket my girl and you're supposed to
be getting ready for church.

4. MEGAN

Oh, Dad.

5. FX

ATMOS OUT

1. ZANDRA JONES

(V/O) Daffyd Jeremiah Brimstone Evans was a large block of patriarchal Welshness. A man who feared God and punk music in equal measure, Daffyd ruled his family with a rod of iron and a lovespoon of wood. Unafraid to appear at times clichéd and broadly stereotypical, he had the confidence of a man who knows his character is based on someone I knew when I was growing up.

1. FX

HOUSE ATMOS IN

2. MEGAN Dad! It's 1976! Everybody's listening to punk music!

3. DAFFYD Not in my house they're not Megan Gwyneth Chastity Evans. I've heard you and your friends sitting round, eating those sweets, talking about 'Punk' and Evil!

4. MEGAN That's Kinieval!

5. DAFFYD You're 'kin'right it is! If your mother was still alive she'd have a thing or two to say about it.

6. FX

ATMOS OUT

1. ZANDRA JONES

(V/O) The silence that always fell at the mention of the late Gwyneth Gladys Severity Evans descended. Megan's dead mother was a constant presence in the house – not an actual *presence*; her mummified corpse wasn't propped up in the hallway – they just thought about her a lot.

1. FX

ATMOS BACK IN

2. DAFFYD Have you done your rugby training today, Megan?

3. MEGAN Oh, Dad, this is England. We don't have to do rugby training.

4. DAFFYD Just because we're in this Godless wilderness doesn't mean we have to let the old ways die out. Rugby training five times a day. Face towards Cardiff Arms Park and recite the Union Rules.

5. MEGAN Oh Dad, I've had enough! I'm going out! It's the 1970's!

6. DAFFYD Where do you think you're going on that space hopper?

7. FX

SPACE HOPPER BOUNCING

8. MEGAN Out!

9. DAFFYD This country... It chews you up. Like one of those sweets.

1. FX **STREET ATMOS**

2. FX **SPACE HOPPER BOUNCING**

3. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Megan Evans space-hopped down Kensal Green High Street, past the shops and restaurants of London's Welsh immigrant community. Past the stovepipe hat retailers and the rarebit takeaways, the leek importers and the wholesale Druid Cash 'n' Carry. She had grown up on these streets and the cries of the stall-holders were as familiar to her as breathing.

4. STALLHOLDER Coal! Lovely fresh coal! Get it while it's hot!

5. STALLHOLDER 2 Eisteddfod tickets! We buy or sell, look you!

6. STALLHOLDER 3 Daffodils! Don't be silly, buy a daffodilly!

1. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) So here's Megan on her spacehopper, both rotund, both with a cheerful smile and long pointy ears. Megan Evans – overweight, but destined to be played by someone a lot prettier in the inevitable Channel 4 adaptation. She has no idea that after she lurches chaotically round this next corner, her life will change for ever. There she goes. Here it comes. It's coming...

2. FX **CAR BRAKES SCREECH, SMASH.**

3. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) There we go.

1. FX

STREET ATMOS DISTORTS.

2. MEGAN (D) Ohhhhh.

3. MICKEY (D) Oh my God! Are you alright? I didn't see you.

4. ZANDRA (V/O) Megan stared up into a face peppered with acne, spiked with ginger hair and pierced through the nose with a safety pin.

5. MEGAN You're beautiful.

6. MICKEY You *have* had concussion, love. What are you doing jumping out in front of my scooter? Here let me get you up.

7. MEGAN Thank you. I think my pelvis is broken.

8. MICKEY Nah, you're alright. But I think your space hopper's had it.

9. FX

SADLY DEFLATING SPACE HOPPER.

10. MEGAN Oh dear.

1. MICKEY Here, you're Welsh, aren't you?
2. MEGAN Erm... no.
3. MICKEY It's alright. I think the Welsh are cool. I love your music.
4. MEGAN Really?
5. MICKEY Yeah, I really dig all that male voice choir stuff. It's groovy.
6. MEGAN 'Groovy'?
7. MICKEY It's a punk thing.
8. MEGAN You're a punk?
9. MICKEY Yeah. I'm Mickey by the way. I'm in a band called Mickey and the Mongoloids.
10. MEGAN Wow. Which one are you?
11. MICKEY I'm Mickey.

1. MEGAN Wow.
2. MICKEY So, what's your name?
3. MEGAN Megan Gwyneth Chastity Evans.
4. MICKEY Blimey.
5. MEGAN It's my Dad, he's very traditional.
6. MICKEY Well, Megan Gwyneth Chastity Evans, let me take you for a coffee – it's the least I can do after running you over with my scooter.

7. GRAMS APPROPRIATE SEVENTIES TUNE (FADE UP AND OUT)

1. FX

CAFÉ ATMOS (UNDER).

1. FX

CAFÉ FALLS SILENT.

2. MARIO (WHISPERED) Mickey, she's Welsh. I don't-a want-a no trouble. Why you bring-a Welsh girl to my café?

3. MICKEY I don't believe you Mario. Well, you know what you can do with your coffees, don't you?

4. MEGAN Don't, Mickey, it's not worth it.

5. MICKEY No, Megan, this is like... political. Yeah, they'll listen to Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey but if an actual Welsh person walks in they can't take it. Fascists.

6. MARIO Hey! I'm-a no fascist. I should-a know. My father was a fascist.

7. MICKEY Come on, Megan, we're out of here.

8. FX

SHOP (Café) BELL JINGLES

9. FX

DOOR SLAMS. (BEAT)

10. FX

DOOR OPENS AGAIN.

1. MICKEY How much do we owe for the coffees?

2. MARIO It's alright-a, they're-a on-a the house.

3. MICKEY Fascist!

1. GRAMS

MEN OF HARLECH.

2. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Daffyd Jeremiah Brimstone Evans was on his way to church as across town his daughter was encountering first a scooter and then a punk. As he walked along, ignoring the skinheads shouting racist abuse...

3. SKINHEAD Get back to Cardiff, Taffy!

4. SKINHEAD 2 Watch out! Baaaaaaaa!

5. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) The grey monoliths of Kensal-ironically-named-Green seemed to recede and fade and morph into the honestly green hills of his native Rhondda. A tramp's urine flooding from a doorway became a crystal stream flowing down the hillside to trickle past the rose-covered doorway of his boyhood miner's cottage. A pile of crusty white dog poo began to bleat and gambol; a flock of snow-white sheep in lambing season. Of course, none of this *actually* happened. It's magical realism. As in...

1. GQ REVIEWER

Miss Jones combines the magical realism of the young Rushdie with the satiric sharpness of mid-period Swift to create a Proustian Forsythe Saga for the Cold Feet generation.

2. ZANDRA JONES

As GQ put it. That's Rushdie, Swift and Proust. Boy, is my second novel going to be eagerly awaited. (BEAT) I hope it's not a slight disappointment.

1. FX

CHURCH ATMOS

2. DAFFYD

(PRAYING) Oh Lord, Thou knowest that I haven't always been the most methodical of Methodists. I did have that liqueur chocolate when we won the Five Nations. And Thou knowest that sometimes I have been guilty of letting my rugby training slip, and I have... I have committed knock ons. But please, Lord, please don't let my Megan get knocked *up* by a punk rocker.

3. ZANDRA

(V/O) Because Daffyd, the immovable unchangeable Mount Snowdon of a man, could feel somewhere deep within him the changes that were going on across town. This was an example of synchronicity, another device that I apparently use to good effect. I don't want to go on about it, but GQ did like that too. And sometimes – for instance if you're reading this in a book group – it can be helpful to know terms like that. Okay, back to the story.

1. GRAMS

ANGRY PUNK MUSIC

2. PUNK VOICE (ON RECORD) Lahn-dan! Lahn-dan! Lahn-dan!
Lahn-dan! Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah! Makes me angry!
Aaaaaaaaaah! Makes me sick! Lahn-dan!

3. GRAMS

SONG FINISHES IN A BURST OF CACOPHONY

4. MICKEY It's called 'London'.

5. MEGAN Wow. Is that you singing?

6. MICKEY Singing?

7. MEGAN Is that your voice?

8. MICKEY Oh, yeah, I'm on lead vocals and spitting. Here, give us that bong joint.

9. MEGAN Sorry am I bogarting the Mary Jane?

10. FX

COUGH

1. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) I know all about drugs. I went to comprehensive school.

2. FX **COUGH**

3. MEGAN Wow, the sensemillia is making feel really high.

4. ZANDRA (V/O) Mickey and Megan. Megan and Mickey. They were in bed in Mickey's tiny room, basking in the warm glow of each other, staring up at the grubby ceiling, making patterns out of water stains and cobwebs.

5. MEGAN That one looks just like a cobweb. (BEAT) Oh.

6. MICKEY So tell me about yourself, Megan.

7. MEGAN There's not much to tell.

8. MICKEY Well, I'm a...

9. MEGAN I've got a dad and a brother.

10. MICKEY Oh, you hadn't finished.

1. MEGAN They work in a restaurant.
2. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Not just a restaurant, but Kensal Green's first authentic Welsh restaurant – the Star of Cardiff.
Serving the finest in Welsh cuisine to the drunken, unappreciative palettes of North West London. And as Megan and Mickey skinned up another doobie, Head Waiter Daffyd Evans was arranging napkins and confiding in his only son, Ivor.

1. GRAMS

MUZAK VERSION OF 'GREEN, GREEN GRASS
OF HOME' (UNDER).

2. DAFFYD I tell you this, Ivor...

3. IVOR You'vor what?

4. DAFFYD No, no, no. I'm saying that girl will be the death of me.

5. IVOR She's gone off the rails, Dad. Not enough Bible learning. You know what you need to do.

6. DAFFYD I can't.

7. IVOR Send her back to Wales.

8. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Ivor Owen Perseverance Evans was taller than his Dad and a member of a radical Fundamentalist Methodist group. He was thus closer to God than Daffyd in at least two ways.

9. IVOR Well, I say send her back, but bloody Cardiff's swarming with English now.

1. DAFFYD It's not as easy as you think, boy. I never wanted to be here. You think I don't wish I was still back in the Rhondda Valley like your great grandfather Owen Penitence Evans?
2. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) And here, we must go back, like a confused clock or a reckless firework lighter. Back, back back once again like the renegade master. For all stories can retrace their routes, especially ones with a clever split time-and-place narrative structure like mine. These sections also make really good television. So, here we are in the Rhondda Valley half way through the second decade of the twentieth century and Owen Penitence Evans – famed Welsh rugby captain and pride of the valleys is boarding a train.

1. FX

TRAIN SOUND EFFECT, STATION ATMOS

2. MRS OWEN I'll miss you, boyo!

3. SON Don't go, Da!

4. OWEN Oh, don't take on so you two; it's only a rugby tour,
isn't it?

5. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) History is in the details, and if Owen had been
the sort of man who read the front as well as the
back of the newspaper, he might not have missed
the all-important headlines on that summer day in
1914 and might have checked once again his rugby
tour itinerary.

6. OWEN It'll be bloody marvellous, look you. We kick off in
Ypres, then we've got a couple of games in Mons,
another in Paschendale, before a week's rest and
recreation at The Somme – don't know what that is,
must be a hotel. That nice man from England
organised it. Anyway, we should be home by
Christmas.

7. FX

STEAM TRAIN (UNDER AND FADE)

1. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Did you see what I did there? I've thrown in another generation and another major historical event. The reviewers were right, this really is a sprawling warm-hearted epic.

2. FX **STEAM TRAIN FADES INTO RESTAURANT**
ATMOS.

1. GRAMS

**MUZAK – WE'LL KEEP A WELCOME IN THE
HILLSIDE (UNDER)**

2. DAFFYD He never came back.

3. IVOR The English tricked him and he died because of it.

4. DAFFYD No, he didn't die. He ran off with a French girl.

5. FX

DOOR OPENS, SHOP DOOR BELL.

6. DAFFYD Look you, there's customers need serving.

7. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) The Friday night ritual, serving up slop to drunks with no idea about real Welsh food.

8. BLOKE Alright, Taffy.

9. DRUNK GIRL (LAUGHING) Here, Steve, don't call him that!

10. BLOKE He don't mind, do you, Taff?

11. DAFFYD What can I get you?

12. DRUNK GIRL Don't he speak funny?

1. BLOKE Right we'll have what...? Two? Three. Yeah three rabbits.
2. DAFFYD That's rarebit.
3. BLOKE Whatever, three of them. Each. Does that come with chutney?
4. DAFFYD Yes, and mustard.
5. BLOKE Right, then some sheep's cheese. And er...
6. DRUNK GIRL I want to try some of them leeks.
7. BLOKE Do you do leek?
8. DAFFYD Yes, sir, we do leek.
9. BLOKE Right, well, couple of big bowls of that.
10. DAFFYD You have ordered quite a lot of leek there, sir.
11. BLOKE Watch it, Taffy. A whole lamb and what kind of beer you got?

1. DAFFYD We have Brains Bitter, brewed in Cardiff. Very nice.

2. BLOKE Eurgh, nah. Got any English lager, like Carlsberg?

3. DAFFYD Yes.

4. BLOKE Right, ten Carlsbergs. Each.

5. GRAMS **TINNY MUZAK SWELLS.**

1. FX

RESTAURANT KITCHEN ATMOS, WASHING UP
(UNDER)

2. DAFFYD Well, that's the last of them.

3. IVOR Bloody buggers. Did they leave a tip?

4. DAFFYD Two pence.

5. IVOR Oh. Have we had decimalization yet?

6. DAFFYD I don't know.

7. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Hmm, must check *The Rock and Roll Years*.

8. DAFFYD Megan will know. She's a proper scholar. I'll give her a ring.

9. FX

PHONE PICKED UP, OLD FASHIONED DIALLING.

1. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) The telephone. Ever since Alexander Graham Bell first stole the idea off an Italian we have stared into the dark unknowable of the ring tone. *De Profundis Clamavai.* We are caught Odysseus-like between the Charybdis of uncertainty and the Scylla of call waiting. And I don't mean Cilla Black. This is quality contemporary fiction. Now, where were we?

2. FX PHONE RECEIVER REPLACED.

3. DAFFYD No answer.

4. IVOR But it's eleven. Where could she be?

5. DAFFYD Oh, I hope she's not having sex with a punk and discovering a wider world outside of the narrow confines of her own culture.

6. IVOR Come on, Dad, look on the bright side. She could have had an accident.

7. DAFFYD You're a good lad, Ivor.

1. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Ivor Evans was what kept the family going, their powerhouse. If Daffyd was the head and Megan the heart, then Ivor was the engine.
2. IVOR Don't worry, Dad, I'll find her.

1. FX

WINDY NIGHT ATMOS (UNDER)

2. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) So out into the cold London night went Ivor Evans, like a grim spectre of revenge with a touch of the young Windsor Davies. He was mad; mad at the corrupt English society around him; mad at a world that could drag his sister out at a time like this; mad at a town that called him Taffy. But there was Methodism in his madness.

3. IVOR Oh God.

4. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) He prayed.

5. IVOR Help me find Megan. Please don't let her have had sex with a punk.

6. FX

ATMOS OUT

1. GRAMS

PUNK MUSIC STING.

2. FX

CROWDED HALL MURMUR.

3. SPEAKER

Alright, brothers and sisters. Settle down. Greetings, Comrades.

4. MEGAN

(WHISPERED) Oh, Mickey, this is so exciting. What a day. I've been knocked over, possibly knocked up and now I'm at an anarchist meeting. My Dad would be furious if he knew I was discovering such a wide world outside the narrow confines of my own culture.

5. MICKEY

Yeah, it's pretty wild, isn't it? These guys are really radical, they're really shaking things up.

(SHOUTING) Class War Now!

6. FX

THE CROWD SHUSH HIM.

7. MICKEY

(WHISPERED) Sorry.

8. SPEAKER

Comrades, we now move on to the first item on the agenda – the anarchist home-made wine tasting.

9. MEGAN

And there's booze as well. Brilliant!

1. MICKEY Yeah, we're reclaiming wine from the bourgeoisie.
 We're saying - let the people drink wine. With
 cheese. If they want to.
2. SPEAKER Our first wine is parsnip and nettle.
3. MICKEY Yeah, obviously they may *not* want to. But they
 should have the choice.
4. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) Choice is something that had not previously
 been offered to Zandra Jones – I mean, Megan
 Evans. It's only partly autobiographical. I'm much
 better looking than Megan. If you don't believe me
 look at the flattering author's photograph on the back
 of the book. Anyway, Megan had not been offered
 choice before and now she embraced it hungrily,
 slurping home-made wine, talking anarchist politics,
 forgetting who she was and where she came from.
5. SPEAKER So, that's enough about Gramsci. Who are you and
 where do you come from?
6. MEGAN (SLURP) Not the foggiest, boyo.

1. FX **DOORS BURST OPEN.**

2. IVOR MEGAN!

3. FX **CROWD SHUSH.**

4. IVOR (WHISPERED) Sorry. Megan! What are you doing here with these English scruffs? And is that wine? Oh, there's not lovely for you.

5. MEGAN Go away, Ivor.

6. MICKEY Is something the matter?

7. IVOR Who's this mongoloid?

8. MICKEY Oh, you know my work?

9. MEGAN Mickey, this is Ivor, my fundamentalist Methodist brother. Ivor, this is Mickey, the punk I just had sex with.

10. IVOR Right.

11. FX **PUNCH.**

1. MICKEY / IVOR Ow!
2. MICKEY What did you do that for? That hurt.
3. IVOR You're telling me it did. Why do you have a safety pin in your nose? I could get blood poisoning, bach.
4. MEGAN Stop fighting. Ivor, can't you see I'm culturally confused? I'm second generation see, I don't want to grow up to have an arranged marriage to a Welsh man.
5. IVOR Oh, you want an unarranged marriage do you? Too many guests, not enough chairs, nowhere booked for the reception?
6. MEGAN I want to get away from the caste system.
7. IVOR You can't, Megan. We're open cast mining people and that's all there is to be said.
8. MEGAN I don't want to end up like Mum.
9. IVOR Mum's dead.

1. MEGAN No, Ivor. No she isn't.
2. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) This was the big family secret I'd been saving up. Bet you never saw that coming. Or did you? Did you see it coming? GQ didn't, but, let's face it, they're thick. Oh God, my second book *is* going to be rubbish.
3. IVOR What do you mean, Megan?
4. MEGAN She's been writing me letters. Secret letters. Dad sent her away.
5. IVOR But why?
6. MEGAN He caught her interfering with a minor.
7. MICKEY What?
8. MEGAN Yes, he was the shop steward at the colliery.
9. MICKEY Ah.
10. IVOR And she's alive?

1. MEGAN And living in London.
2. IVOR London?
3. MEGAN With an Englishman. (PAUSE) An estate agent.
4. IVOR No, don't tell me he...
5. MEGAN He sells holiday cottages. In the Gower Peninsula.
6. IVOR Nooooooooo!
7. ZANDRA JONES (V/O) There is nothing that shatters quite so nastily as an illusion. Like a squash racket made impractically of glass, our dreams fragment into a million pieces at the first serve and stick in our toes and make the court dangerous for those that come after us and... hang on, I've lost the thread of the metaphor. Anyway, here's Ivor, here's Megan, here's Mickey, with the ground crumbling away beneath them and a starless void waiting to take them beyond the now into a fresh new 1977, born anew and lain on the soft green sward of the impossible future. Not literally, obviously. It is, as I've said, magical realism with a hint of social commentary. God, I am good.

1. GRAMS

SOMETHING APPROPRIATE (TBC)

2. ANNOUNCER

That was Chapter One of Black Teeth Lane, read by the author Zandra Jones with help from Mel Hudson, Michael Fenton Stevens, Rebecca Front, Alex Lowe and Dan Tetsell. Paperback Hell was ghost written by Danny Robins and Dan Tetsell and the producer was Lucy Armitage.

3. GRAMS

ESTABLISH THEN FADE

[END]

