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Mark Burrows

Fragments Of Another

1: Nicholas Fisher

So I was at this party in North London. Not a very interesting party, it had to be said, the friend of a friend who I didn't even know very well and it had reached that point in the evening when I was starting to feel tired and more than a little drunk and had to decide whether it was worth drinking more and staying for the long haul or leaving in time to get one of the last tubes home. I was just readying myself to go when this woman approached me. I'd seen her a little earlier and I remember that she kept on glancing at me in a peculiar way. Well, the point is she came over and started talking to me straight out as if we knew each other. She was quite drunk and the party was rather loud and I'm tall, you see, and she was quite short so it wasn't that easy for me to hear what she was saying. At first I thought I must have misunderstood. I have a habit of assuming that I'm the one at fault on these occasions but after she kept using the words "redundancy" and "scapegoat" I had to interrupt. I didn't understand, I said. What was she was talking about? Certainly, I hadn't been made redundant. At that point the woman, well, she gave me a strange look and blushed. She apologised a few times and said things like "I could have sworn" and "mirror image." The woman – by now I'd ascertained her name was Carol – said she thought I was an acquaintance of hers called Nick Fisher. "He looks just like you," she said again. Curious, I pressed her for a few details about my alter ego. To my amusement she said Nick Fisher was a stockbroker for a big City firm, I think they were called Balls Brothers or something similar - I have a terrible memory for names - apparently her "ex" had been much better friends with this Nick character than she was but she had heard from someone or another that Nick had recently been made redundant. She'd heard rumours it had something to do with insider dealing but then in the current climate - or so she said - a lot of the big brokers had taken heavy losses and were letting people go all over the place. At this point I was