

Untold Stories Alan Bennett

An example of writing style. Alan Bennet has a 'voice' The sentences have to be read out (with his northern mincing prissiness- entirely put on as experienced in the Car and Kitchen in Settle. He has a normal cultured northern accent) to see the repetitive structure 3 sentence or phrases with a 'punch at the end'

The change in my mother's personality had come about with startling suddenness. Over a matter of weeks, she had lost all her fun and vitality, turning fretful and apprehensive and inaccessible to reason or reassurance.

As the days passed the mood deepened, bringing with it fantasy and delusion; the house was watched, my father made to speak in a whisper because there was someone on the landing, and the lavatory (always central to Mam's scheme of things) was being monitored every time it was flushed.

She started to sleep with her handbag under her pillow as if she were in a strange and dangerous hotel, and finally one night she fled the house in her nightgown, and Dad found her wandering in the street, whence she could only be fetched back into the house after some resistance.

Occurring in Leeds, where they had always lived, conduct like this might just have got by unnoticed, but the onset of the depression coincided with my parents' retirement in 1966 to a village in the Dales, a place so small and close-knit that such bizarre behaviour could not be hidden.

Indeed, it was partly the knowledge that they were about to leave the relative anonymity of the city for a small community where "folks knew all your business" and that she would henceforth be socially much more visible than she was used to ("I'm the centrepiece here") that might have brought on the depression in the first place.

The cottage faced on to the village street but had a long garden at the back, and it seemed like the place they had always dreamed of. Now Dad was being told that it was this longed-for escape that had brought down this crushing visitation on his wife. Not surprisingly, he would not believe it.

In their last weeks in Leeds, Dad had put Mam's low spirits down to the stress of the impending upheaval. Once the move had been accomplished, though, the depression persisted, so now he fell back on the state of the house, blaming its bare unfurnished rooms, still with all the decorating to be done.

"Your Mam'll be better when we've got the place straight," he said. "She can't do

with it being all upset." So, while she sat fearfully on a hard chair in the passage, he got down to the decorating.

Mam seemed scarcely to notice, the clouds did not lift, and in due course my brother went back to Bristol and I to London.