

The Game of Life.

The alarm sounds, and the sound of the beetles song "I'm a loser" rattles around the room, laughing at me from the tiny tinny speaker.

Gloom, depression, disappointment.

Unable to move, with the duvet feeling like a ton weight pinning me to the mattress.

Given up all hope, like a butterfly caught in a spiders web.

But yesterday that butterfly was free, Yesterday was full of optimism, happiness, good positive feelings about the day ahead.

The answer would definitely be yes.

Yesterday I had "Feel good tunes" dancing through my head as I prepared for the day. The lightning seeds accompanying each mouthful of my cereal. New Order playing harmonies with the hum of my toothbrush.

I was sure I wouldn't be let down.

Yesterday the Sun streamed through the window chasing away all the shadows where the last vestiges of doubt and pessimism hid, like cockroaches scuttling away into their secret hiding places.

It had to be Yes.

Yesterday I Bounced to work, faced my usual daily nemesis - the snarling dog tied up outside the News-agents. But even he seemed to know that it was a day for smiles, not snarls.

Everything was going to work out right.

Yesterday, any attempt to concentrate at work was pointless, so I flittered around like a moth, attracted to those who emitted positive feelings, optimism and sentiments of good fortune. Staying away from the darker personalities, who offered supposedly wise advice on "managing expectations", and other phrases that are normally reserved for management training courses.

It just had to be Yes.

A quick drink at the local on the way helped settle the nerves, and my companions jiggled with shared excitement like kids eagerly waiting the arrival of the ice cream van. A few disparaging words emitted though a pungent smell that occupied a corner of the bar, but these were easily dismissed by another drink.

Tonight was going to be the start of something great, the rekindling of a relationship that had been ongoing for years. Sure there had been rocky times, especially in the last year or so, but things were turning the corner.

The time was right.

It must be Yes.

But today, 24 hours later, all is different.

It was no.

Darkness, a void in my life, a feeling of utter helplessness and despondency.
Not wanting to go on.

The answer was no.

Peeking out from under my duvet, and the darkness still remains. Even the sun seems to agree that there is no point in carrying on.

No?

Memories from the night before flash into my mind, the questions were asked, plain and directly. But they were followed quickly by initial disappointment, crushing my spirit, and knocking the wind out of me like a heavyweight boxer.

But I didn't give up. Be patient, persevere. We have been in similar situations before.

My perseverance brought hope, but it was a short, brief taste of success.

It was a false cruel hope, like Brutus embracing his emperor, only to plunge the knife into the back at the final moment.

Failure!

The sound of industrial pistons in my head remind me of the drowned sorrows, hoping like so many that the answers could be found at the bottom of a beer glass, but each time only discovering an empty feeling that is temporarily filled by the next pint pulled by a sympathetic looking barman

But the hangover is nothing next to the pain caused by the sense of loss in my head

Its not the end of the world, and consciously I know its not, but it feels like a different world, and will do for a couple of years, lacking something that has been ever-present for a considerable time.

Like waking to find your partner has thrown away your favorite jumper. Or finding out that you have a lethal allergy to Curry.

How could this happen?

Even the toothbrush seems to be singing a different song today, "Heaven knows I'm miserable now" by the Smiths, dull, monotonic and dreary.

And the shadows have returned, feeding on the last remnants of happiness like the scuttling cockroaches searching for their next meal.

Work will be hell.

The bright cheerful smiley faces from yesterday will have been reduced to short sideways glances full of sympathy and pity, with only a few able to truly share my pain.

But worse are the "I told you so's" who will be in my face all day like passengers on a crowded tube train.

A substantial portion of the population will understand. Some have been through this before, and can share the feeling. But to many it will seem silly and misguided. My melancholy is as understandable to them as the success of the spice girls is to me.

How could it happen?

Facing the outside world at last, with one lead filled foot begrudgingly following the another, I approach the news agents and my daily foe - the scowling dog. But again today his scowl is missing, replaced not by a welcoming expression, but by an almost mocking smile. He stands guard over the newspaper headlines which pound down on my head like a hammer:

FOOTBALL SHOCKER : ENGLAND 2 - CROATIA 3.
ENGLAND DUMPED OUT OF EUROPE.

But the worst feeling of all is that it will happen again. And I will let it!