



**Arresting  
development**

Damian Lewis in the  
US cop thriller *Life*

**don't  
miss**

**Little Dorrit**  
Sunday, BBC2,  
8.00pm

Tom Courtenay stars in  
a timely adaptation of  
Dickens's classic about  
the misery of debt

**Spooks Monday,**  
BBC1, 9.00pm

Rupert Penry-Jones is  
back in the spy thriller  
series - but not  
necessarily for long...

**Prescott: the Class  
System and Me**  
Monday, BBC2,  
9.00pm

The former Deputy PM  
brings his rhetorical  
virtuosity to the  
subject of social class

**Neil Morrissey's  
Risky Business**  
Tuesday, Channel 4,  
10.00pm



*Men Behaving Badly's*  
star (above) fulfils a  
lifelong dream and  
brews his own beer

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**Review**

**Treating addiction with delicacy**



JOHN  
PRESTON

There are programmes that you run  
towards with the finger of anticipation  
poised eagerly over the remote, and  
others that can only be approached using some  
sort of complicated winching device. For obvious  
reasons, **Mum, Heroin and Me** (Thursday,  
Channel 4) fell into the latter category.

Jane Treays's documentary examined the  
relationship between a Brighton interior  
designer, Kate, and her 20-year-old daughter,  
Hannah. For the last three years, Hannah had  
been a heroin addict - before that she had been  
a binge drinker and before that an  
unusually angry child. Now she slept  
rough with her boyfriend, Ricky, who,  
inevitably, was a junkie himself. Kate lived  
not far away in a rather grand Regency  
house and spent much of her time trying  
to stop Hannah from sinking any further.

Normally, the spirits of the viewer go  
through an all-too-predictable trajectory  
while watching a film like this: down, down  
and down, often hastened by an  
unacknowledged glee on behalf of the  
director at being able to rub people's  
faces in such a brimming pot of human  
misery. But Treays's film wasn't like that at all.  
She didn't seek to diminish the grimness of  
Hannah's life, but this was less a portrayal of  
addiction, more a delicate, unusually penetrating  
portrait of a relationship in which the ties of  
devotion were being tested to their limits.

It was also about how we construct little piles  
of illusions to live by. Hannah clung to the idea  
that she would one day get off heroin, but did  
nothing constructive about it. At first, Kate  
appeared to have no illusions about Hannah's  
prospects, but as the film went on Treays  
showed how - despite herself - she kept pinning  
one imaginary target after another to the wall.  
Then, as disappointment swept in yet again, she  
struggled to readjust and start afresh.

Would the film have been less poignant if Kate  
had not been so conspicuously genteel? Very  
probably yes. Here was a woman who'd been  
forced to enter a world that nothing in her  
previous life had prepared her for. Starting out as  
an innocent, she'd had to trawl through the  
deepest troughs of experience. Only once did  
Treays put a foot wrong. Towards the end, we  
heard her offscreen voice tell Kate that this was  
'a film about love'. It was - but I think we could  
have worked that out for ourselves.

While this won't come as any consolation to  
Kate, misery, as **Imagine... A Love Story**  
(Tuesday, BBC1) made plain, is a key ingredient in  
any great love story. Happy endings, unruffled  
accord, everlasting sexual bliss... None of that

nonsense. What we want is cruel fate, swinish  
behaviour and brine-sodden hankies.

During a richly enjoyable programme which  
analysed what makes love stories, from  
*Casablanca* to *Brief Encounter*, tick, Alan Yentob  
also talked to an American psychologist who had  
asked various couples about their experiences  
of falling in love. Without exception, they  
described it as some outside force that had  
magically struck them. Everyone was trying to  
shape their experience to a grand romantic ideal;  
they too wanted an illusion to live by.

As for the prospects of new great love stories  
coming along, these look pretty bleak. You need  
codes of behaviour to make the thing go with a  
lurch, and we live in a world where codes of



**Mum, Heroin and Me** Interior designer Kate  
and her heroin-addicted daughter Hannah

behaviour have laid down their weapons and  
mooched off into extinction. There are other  
factors too. Great love stories involve people  
stripping their feelings bare. Now, they strip both  
their feelings and their bodies bare.

In **Miss Naked Beauty** (Tuesday, Channel 4),  
Gok Wan was looking for 'a girl with real beauty,  
brains and courage to spearhead the real beauty  
revolution'. To begin with the contestants had to  
complete the sentence, 'The reason I think I'm  
beautiful is...' If they'd had to do it without  
bursting into tears, none of them would have  
got through the first round.

Stripped of their make-up, the women promptly  
dissolved into the biggest boo-hoo since Rachel  
wept for the Israelites in the book of Jeremiah.  
Meanwhile the judges attempted to soothe  
them with empowering blandishments - 'you  
look just like a goddess.' Then came the clincher:  
'Girls, I'm going to ask you now to take out your  
piercings.' This was more than several could  
stand and they flung themselves clanking to the  
floor like the felled losers in a jousting contest.

'How tall are you?' one woman was asked.  
'I'm four foot eight,' she chirruped. Not to be  
outdone, the next contestant said, 'I've just  
had a hysterectomy because of cervical cancer.'  
But then the inevitable happened: her eyes  
began to brim and she too was swept away  
on a tide of strident self-pity.

the actress Helen McCrory  
yed Cherie Blair in *The*  
ith Helen Mirren). When  
ting *Life* he brings the  
stay in Santa Monica with  
he can't see them much: 'A  
ay on set is 13 hours,' he says.  
of the hours, *Life* will be the  
eries he makes, he says.  
n be tempted back to TV,  
: it's to guest present *Have*  
*us for You* again. He did it  
in 2006 (making an  
e off-the-cuff pun about  
cows); team captain Ian  
ys Lewis was one of the  
w's best hosts.  
y, this is a good opportunity  
say this,' he says. 'In the  
o the filming [of *HIGNFY*],  
d a horrible put-down [from  
rs] in which I basically  
d bicyclists. I get gyp about  
ime I go in my local bicycle  
entish Town. So I've always  
at if I go on again I'll make  
atement about how I love  
and that I was weak and in  
need of a gag... That's  
ng to go in your article,  
hael Deacon