

Les Anglais En Vacances

- Serge Gainsbourg is a pervert
- It's Charlelie Couture
- Sounds like Gainsbourg
- It's not
- That doesn't stop Gainsbourg being a pervert

Giorgio skipped the track. He'd rather have the sound of music filling the car than their voices. The children were quiet and he wanted to enjoy this moment. A moment of serenity pocketed amidst the ceaseless turbulence, the noise and action of parenting, the volume and frenzy cranked up by being on holiday with an eight month old baby and a four year old. Myrtle, the baby, was asleep. She'd been named after Myrtle Wilson in *The Great Gatsby*, Emma's favourite book. She didn't like the name Daisy and thought poor Myrtle deserved a lot more sympathy than she got. Matteo was staring out of the window, his right hand holding the soft floppy chewed rabbit that was his constant companion. Matteo was named after Giorgio's dad. He had died young and never met his namesake, his only grandson.

The countryside was full of rape. The French called it colza, le colza, a masculine word with a feminine ending. Thousands of yellow blankets that warmed and cooled with the day's turn.

They'd set off that morning from the Limousin farmhouse that Emma's parents had tenderly restored. The low, rising sun gave the rape fields a gentle glow, a waking fervour trembling. Now as they were nearing Sarah's house, the fields were ablaze. As if a religious painter had poured his most impassioned yellow across these lands. Giorgio wasn't religious. He had an urge to stop the car, throw the children and himself in to this pulsating mass and disappear into its brilliant warmth forever. Close up, it vanished. Like a painting: the move toward was the move away. You were left with splodges of colours, incoherent lines, thick impasto risings, pimples that signalled the canvas beneath. This heaving blaze too would disappear. The delicate yellow flowers would stand separate, lifting themselves skywards, far from the coarse sturdy stems with their scraggy leaves, isolated and alone in the rock strewn ashen soil. Magic was snuffed out. Maybe that's what distance does. Giorgio didn't stop. Twelve days ago he'd been desperate to leave, to come away from the city, his job nursing the flowers and shrubs and trees of others, the relentless grind of family life. Now he couldn't wait to go back. Giorgio loved his wife, he loved both children and wouldn't want his life without them. That didn't stop the boredom. Even on holiday.