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| 1  5  10  15  20  25 | It was a quiet time of day but I had to sit for over an hour in the waiting room. Where the human need for order meets the human tendency to mayhem, where civilisation runs smack against its discontents, you find friction, and a great deal of general wear and tear. It was there in the stringy holes in the lino on the threshold of each door, in the snaky vertical crack up the frosted glass behind the Reception Officer's counter space, and in the hot, exhausted air that forced each visitor out of his jacket and each cop into shirt sleeves. It was in the slumped posture of two kids in black puffer jackets who stared at their feet, too furious with each other to speak, and in the chiselled graffiti on the arm of the chair on which I sat: it was bland defiance or mounting anguish - fuck fuck fuck. And I saw it in the fluorescent pallor of Duty Inspector Linley's large round face as he wearily showed me at last into an interview room. It looked like he rarely went outdoors. He had no need when all the trouble filed through here.  A journalist friend who had served three years on the crime desk of a tabloid had advised me that the only way to get the police even faintly interested in my case was to make an official complaint about the way it had been handled so far. This way I could get past the woman in glasses who guarded the reception desk. The complaint would have to be dealt with at least, and I could explain my problem to someone a little further up the station hierarchy. The same friend warned me not to expect too much. My man would be looking at retirement and wanting a quiet life. His brief was to suppress complaints while appearing to address them.  Linley waved me into one of two metal stacking chairs. We faced each other across a Formica table patterned in coffee rings. At every point on its surface my cold chair was greasy to the touch. The ash tray was the sawn-off butt of a plastic Coke bottle. Near it squatted a used teabag on a spoon. The squalor in here was laconic in its challenge: who was I going to report it to? |
| **Guiding Questions**  What importance does imagery have in this extract?  What ideas are explored about order and disorder in the extract? | |