

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Definition

by Richard Wilding

She is asleep, I think. I light the candles and when they are all lit I turn the torch off on my phone. The candle flames flicker with my movement as I go over to un gag her. She wakes. I remind her to be quiet, not to scream.

I have a few more questions for you, I say. Would that be alright?

“What have you done to me?”

I tell her I haven't done anything. It's not a, you know. Not a sex thing. I don't say that to her, not in so many words. But she must be able to tell. I stay looking at her eyes. I am very respectful. I don't let my own eyes stray down to look at her tits, like many men in my position would do, and even many men not in my position at all but in for example a workplace environment where men don't respect women and instead only ponder on the size of girls' tits and what they would feel like. And I certainly don't look lower down. Who does she think I am? I hope she doesn't think that I've. You know. I want to tell her I haven't and never would, that that's not what all this is about. But a voice in me whispers if you say that, she might think I'm trying to cover up. So what I say is, I don't want you, not in a physical sense. Not in that way. But please don't be offended. I mean, you're attractive and in other circumstances, you know. But that's not what this is about.

“What is it about? Money? I can give you money. How much? How much money to buy my silence?”

It's about love, I tell her.

She looks at me, straight at me. “Love?”

Have you ever loved? I ask her.

She nods her head. I wonder what it would be like to be loved by her? Would hers be a strong love, a forever love?

- There are many different forms of love, I tell her. There is a love so intense that it breaks through your ribcage and squeezes your heart so tight that you can't breathe, it is all consuming, it is your life, it is what you are put on earth for. There is parental love. Familial love. Love of the familiar. Love of oneself. Love of country. There is a love of learning. Platonic love. Love of addictions. Oh, I love to love, but my baby just loves to dance.

And then there is unrequited love, I tell her.

"Have you been hurt?" she asks. "We can't go through life without a broken heart," she says, "any more than we can go through life without a bruised arm. But bruises heal and hearts heal too."

Requited means to exact revenge, I tell her. I wish my love had been unrequited.

I start to whistle "I love to love". She looks at me like I am mad [500 words]

"I won't say a thing to anyone. I don't even know who you are or what you look like. I have no idea where I am. I promise I won't say a word to anyone. I don't even know where I am. Knock me out again and drive me somewhere, anywhere, and just drop me off and I'll never know how long it took to drive me there and I'll never be able to trace my way back here."

But you do know what I look like, I remind her. You saw me at the Smugglers.

This makes her pause. For a moment I think she had genuinely forgotten. I think fear can do that to people. It can make their brain freeze. They say there is the 'fight or flight' response in us but there is also the stay frozen to the spot response. The if-I-don't-move-they-might-not-see-me response. This must have been successful, because we still have it today so I assume it has been inherited and only successful genes get passed down, so.

Perhaps she is trying to trick me. She could be. I don't think I know her well enough yet to trust her. Say I let her go, and decided not to go through with the experiment. Say I let her go and made her promise she'd never say a word to anyone. And say she meant to keep her word. But one day, she'd break her word. And then she would remember what I look like. And where we met. And then, well, and then things might not look so rosey for me. Not that this is going to happen. But even so. It's good to think through all the possibilities.

I ask her if she has been an eavesdropper.

"What?"

Please, just answer the question.

"No."

Or falsely accused anyone, or been excessively angry? She shakes her head, no.

Have you had evil thoughts? I ask her.

"No," she says.

No? I ask. Not even while you've been here, with me?

“No,” she says, and she begins to cry. I don’t enjoy watching her cry and I consider telling her about the experiment and about how she will go down in history and be famous and people will want to know about her and hers will be the first heart in the history of all human hearts ever to be weighed for its love, but I’m not sure that knowing this, knowing what would happen to her shortly would have necessarily been a comfort to her so I put up with the crying because it won’t be for long.

The crying subsides and a lonely tear falls away across her cheek, like a lost child looking for its mother. She closes her eyes and scrunches up her hands. I think she is about to scream so I ask her if she has ever insulted a god or a goddess, to take her mind off things.

She looks at me again like I am genuinely mad.