

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Instinct

by Gill Kane

Instinct is a marvelous thing. It can neither be explained nor ignored. Sometimes it gives us no choice but takes over our logical mind and directs us in unexpected ways.

I suppose I wouldn't have been there that day if it weren't for my friends. Their discomfort at my single status, their encouragement to get back out there and meet someone new had led me to the dating site long before I was ready. Long before my heart had mended.

But I tried, I really tried. Lipstick, perfume and a big, brave smile on my face. I got out there and met...well... a lot of frogs and not too many princes. I had pretty well exhausted the supply of men of a suitable age in my area when Phil popped up in my inbox. He looked sweet, pixie like and seemed to have an oddball sense of humour. Not really my type but there was something appealing about him and I thought 'Well why not, what have I got to lose?'

So I went for it. Saturday, 3pm at Bond Street station. And on that sunny Saturday afternoon walking along Oxford Street I caught sight of a man walking towards me. Something about him held my eye. He looked a bit like Phil but a bigger, brutish version. The hair on the back on my neck really did stand on end and my body recoiled. Thank God he was walking in the opposite direction. For a terrifying moment I thought he might be my date.

Slightly unnerved I took the escalator down to the ticket barriers and stopped in shock as I saw him standing there waiting, his eyes scanning the crowd. How did he get down here? I just saw him upstairs walking away from the station. I felt an uncanny horror and as his eyes found me I plunged back into the crowds, running up the escalator, out into Oxford Street and jumped on to the first bus that passed. Panicked, I spent the journey looking over my shoulder as if the devil himself was chasing me and when I got home I locked all the doors and windows. I immediately deleted my profile from the dating site and slowly, slowly my panic subsided.

Over the next few days I felt embarrassed about my behavior. How rude to have stood him up and run away. How unlike me. But as time passed it became a joke. My internet dating joke. One of the horror stories of my single years.

And it remained a joke until earlier today when I casually picked up a discarded paper and there staring out at me was Phil. Except that wasn't his name, he had many names but he was best known as the notorious Camden rapist. So how can you explain that? How did I know? What instinct delivered me from evil on that sunny Saturday?