

# Bourne toWrite...

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## Partners in Crime

by Stuart Carruthers

As the girls screamed with laughter, Michael Whatmore stood alone in the corridor, his face as miserable as Walsall town centre. At the same time his best friend Ginger McCabe was recovering in the canteen after receiving a verbal assault from Lucy Walters and the girls' rugby team.

They were determined to have their revenge.

Trinity School housed the kids from the local estates, who were destined for a life of hard labour and low wages. As 1<sup>st</sup> year students, Michael and Ginger were prone to attacks from the older students especially the girls, who congregated by the doors to the sports changing facilities, to prey on their victims. They had learned a very important lesson within the first few weeks that reporting such abuse to the head teacher only resulted in physical violence from their peers, so they just had to put up with it.

They lived two doors apart on Parnell Street in the terraced house next to the malt yard. Mr Henderson the factory owner had built the houses for his workers and this was where the boys would end up one day, joining the other members of their families hidden away behind the imposing steel gates.

One afternoon as they strolled down by the river plotting their revenge on the girls, a field mouse emerged onto the bridle-path and carefully made its way across the undercarriage of the footbridge towards the factory.

“That’s it!” shouted Ginger pointing in the direction of the factory.

“What?”

“The girls, the girls, that’s how we get our revenge on them,” said Ginger as he followed the mouse over the footbridge. Gesturing frantically to his friend, Ginger stood on the brick buttress wall to gain a better view of the factory and was amazed to see that the mouse had more than one friend.

“There are hundreds of them, it will be easy to catch one!”

Looking puzzled Michael still didn’t understand what his friend was going on about. Clambering up on the wall, he careful gripped the outstretched branch from the adjacent oak tree and wasn’t impressed when he discovered exactly what his friend had in mind.

“And how do we catch one of them?”

“Traps, my dad’s got loads,” and with that the boys returned to Parnell St to finalise their plans.

It didn’t take long for the first phase of their plan to work. With an army of victims to choose from the boys could barely hide their excitement when they returned to the footbridge the following day. Carefully removing a barely alive mouse from their trap, Ginger placed it in his lunchbox and then they quickly made their way up the hill to undertake phase 2 of their master plan.

Entering the school sport’s building via the emergency door, they headed for the girls changing rooms. While Ginger checked the corridor to ensure no one was coming, Michael opened the door just enough to allow him to release the mouse onto the unsuspecting victims.

As hysterical pandemonium erupted behind the door, they carefully positioned a chair under the handle and slipped away unnoticed. Never again would the boys from Parnell St suffer at the hands of Lucy Walters and her friends.

In fact it was a perfect plan until a mouse dropped out of Michael’s pocket and emptied Mrs McKlusky’s geography class.