

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## Catch 22

by Zoé Carroll

It was love at first sight. She was beautifully put together and perfectly balanced. She was aerodynamic and had lovely lines. Danny touched the cold steel top tube of the shiny bicycle and imagined himself riding it at high speeds to college. Everyone would think you were somebody if you turned up on a ride like that. But there was no way he could afford the £500 price tag. He only had £47 in his bank account and he knew that he wouldn't be able to get a decent job without any experience.

There wasn't even any point in lying on his CV, because at 16, what experience could he possibly have had? He needed to think beyond the minimum wage jobs some of his friends were starting to get. No, he needed to get rich quick, he was worth more than that. The only trouble with working the stock exchange or starting a business was that you needed money in the first place in order to make more of it. He was really stuck.

Just like that the idea struck him. He could just go in to the bike shop, ask to take the lovely shiny bike for a test ride, and ride it off into the sunset. It was so easy. He wondered why more people didn't do it but then decided that it was because he was just cleverer and braver than most.

It was truly a joy to ride. Danny felt like a king pedalling furiously down the High Street away from the shop. He couldn't believe he had got this far. He had only needed to leave his wallet with the shop owner as security and he was away. A smile spread across his face as he felt like a winner. His wallet only had a few coins in it anyway.

He heard the screech of brakes moments before he was struck broadside by the car. He hadn't seen the red signal in his haste to flee the bike shop on his steed. He felt himself flying through the air, his hands trying desperately to keep their grip on the handlebars.

"Danny, can you hear me?" He opened his eyes briefly.

He hurt everywhere but his Mum's voice was comforting and he could feel her holding his hand. "You've been out of it for a couple of days now love, you gave us all a fright."

Danny tried to speak but his throat was dry so he squeezed his Mum's hand instead.

"The driver said he felt so bad he would like to pay for the repairs to the bike but the shop said it was on loan so he bought you the bike as well as getting the repairs done." She squeezed his hand again to make sure he was still listening and went on "The chap in the shop said you knew your stuff about bikes. He was so impressed he's offered you a job when you get out of here."

Danny was both elated and embarrassed. He had sought to steal because he didn't have the experience to get a job to pay for the bike, but here he was with both a job *and* the bike. What a day. What a result.