

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Regret

by Garf Collins

As Pierre was driving to Orly airport for his weekly flight to London City, he reflected bitterly on his latest row with Celine. At a smart restaurant near their flat in Paris they had been discussing weekend plans. She wanted to join a friend's impromptu birthday party on the Seine. He had an invitation to a private view of a new exhibition at the Musee d'Orsay.

"It will be the same old crowd of people drinking too much. Why would I want to do that when I have an opportunity to see the new exhibition before the crowds," he had shouted.

"You're so boring Pierre. You know I like to be with friends. It's no fun looking at your meaningless splodges of colour," Celine had shouted back as she slammed the door of their spare bedroom.

"This wasn't what it was supposed to be like," he thought. "We argue more and more." He thought again about Carol who he had met at an art exhibition in London three years previously. She had seemed so attuned to his tastes in art. He remembered her being transfixed by the blaze of colour in the final work in that exhibition. He had loved her simple candour when they talked - so different to Celine's air of tired sophistication. He remembered with shame how, after a passionate night with Carol, he hadn't turned up at their rendezvous the next morning. He had been confronted by two possible futures. One with Celine, his new girlfriend in Paris, who was vivacious and well established in society there - very beneficial for his business.

The other was with Carol. With weekly visits for a couple of days it had seemed difficult to get to the point of knowing that was the right course. Then, living in separate countries, how could they have balanced their life together? At the last moment he had panicked and abandoned her.

“You were an absolute fool,” he told himself. “You should have realised that you had instantly fallen in love. She knew. You were flattered by the attention of someone like Celine. At first you enjoyed the whirl of social activity but it wasn’t based on the same essential spark.”

On many occasions Pierre had gone back to the cafe where he should have met Carol - just in case she was there by chance. In desperation he did so again the day after his arrival in London.

As he entered the cafe, to his delight, he saw Carol sitting alone. He rushed up to her but she had turned her head towards an approaching man. Noticing Pierre with a start, Carol said, “Oh George. This is Pierre. The person I was telling you about.”

“I suppose you’ll want to stay for a chat” George replied.

“No I’m ready. Let’s go.” Carol resolutely took George’s arm pulling him towards the exit.

“But Carol. I wanted to...” Pierre was shocked into silence as she turned at the door and sadly shook her head.