

Bourne toWrite...

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Room 101

by Nick Barrett

The club made that distinctive swish sound as it cut through the early Spring afternoon air, followed almost immediately by a loud and familiar cry of ‘fuck’ from the hapless golfer holding the straight end of the stick, which then described a perfect arc as it was hurled through the air to join its many look-alikes stuck up trees all across the golfing world.

“I don’t know why I bloody bother, stupid bloody game, stupid bloody clubs, stupid bloody...oh, the whole thing’s too bloody stupid, that’s it, I give up, sod it, I’m finished, golf can go stuff itself.” The near apoplectic, ruddy faced middle aged man of average height and build, and no worse than average golfing ability, breathed out as he seemed to finish his diatribe, which all his friends had heard before, most Saturday mornings in fact, sometimes on Wednesdays as well. Then, with a fresh breath, he started in on the golf bag, clearly a major source of his misfortunes, with three well aimed vicious kicks, stopping only to hop about because the big toe of his right foot really felt the last one.

His three partners were in paroxysms of laughter, as they were most Saturday mornings, and sometimes on Wednesdays as well. “That’s not golf you play though is it, it’s another game called swish fuck,” one of them managed to spurt between gasps of laughter.

“That shot was shit,” the golf bag assaulter claimed, resuming ranting.

“It wasn’t as good as that Sandy,” his tormenter replied, setting off more laughter among the group.

“Stuff you as well then,” Sandy said. “That’s it, me and golf are finished after this, it can get sent to Room 101 for all I care, and bloody stay there.”

“Maybe you should throw yourself in Room 101 Sandy,” said chief tormentor Roger, still falling about.

“I think you’re in Room 101 already,” chipped in another of the fourball, Ken. “Apart from that television programme Room 101 is a room that George Orwell made up in a novel where you would be taken to be exposed to your greatest fear, which in your case Sandy must be that you don’t have even a half decent swing.”

“What are you talking about?” Sandy replied, “you would have to go into the television Room 101 to find a swing any worse than your own, probably dumped there by a man with no arms. What’s your greatest fear then? Getting caught at the bar and having to buy a round?”

“Oooooohhhh,” the others mocked.

“Seriously,” Sandy said, “what is your greatest fear? Death? Illness? Getting your handicap cut? No, I don’t think so, otherwise you wouldn’t spend hours on the practice area, pay a fortune for new clubs and bags and lessons and golf clothes and golf balls at £4 a time.

“Spending time at home, that’s what you’re frightened of, but I’m not, and that’s it, I’m off, goodbye,” and with that Sandy, with all the nonchalance he could muster, sauntered off down the fairway towards the club house for the last time, bypassing the bar for the first time, heading straight to the car park and home.

Not his own home. That big mouth Ken and the others will take another four hours to finish the round and have a couple of drinks, he thought. That leaves plenty of time for him and Jane to rekindle that fling they had after Ken first started golf all those years ago, 1984 in fact. Her Room 101 fear was getting caught, but too many lonely Saturdays, and sometimes Wednesdays also, were overcoming that, she told him last week. “Stuff golf and Room 101,” thought Sandy. “It’s a brave new world for me.”