

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

## A New Beginning

by Stuart Carruthers

Nobody paid any attention to the young ginger haired girl as she wandered among the bustling morning crowd. The cries of the market stall holders as they beckoned their customers failed to grab the attention of Rosie MaCracken. With no money to spend until her boys returned at the weekend she bided her time waiting for the curtains at No 89 River lane to open.

Approaching the steps that led up to the imposing red door, Rosie carefully removed the book from her bag and lovingly kissed its hard leather cover. Reaching out to engage the large brass knocker, her stick-bone fingers shock violently as she announced her arrival. Stepping inside she was struck by the long corridor and its many paintings that adorned its walls. As the old lady politely asked her a few questions, Rosie smiled nervously and wondered if she had made the right decision.

At the back of the house next door to the kitchen was a small room that led into the garden. Seated around a circular table, Rosie joined her unknown friends and waited for the arrival of Mrs Finnegan. Too scared to talk they sat in silence staring at the floor, nervously avoiding eye contact in case it lead to unwanted conversation. Rosie quickly noticed that she was the only one who had a brought a book.

“Let’s sit in the garden,” announced Mrs Finnegan as she swung open the glass doors and marched out onto the lush green surface. As the morning sun lovingly covered their frail bodies, Mrs Finnegan observed their tattered clothes and unwashed faces. Beckoning the old lady from the kitchen, they set about cleaning up their students before serving them breakfast.

It soon became clear to Rosie that the majority of her new friends could neither read nor write. As they followed their fingers across the page their inability to pronounce the words correctly made Rosie very sad. She suddenly remembered the advice her mother had given her on those winter evenings when she would read to her while the others were out.

As Mrs Finnegan circled the group carefully listening to their every word she noticed Rosie helping the young boy sat next to her.

“Would you like to come again?” she asked as her pupils gorged themselves on the bread and jam sandwiches. The muffled sound of a collective ‘yes,’ brought a smile to everyone’s faces.

As they walked in silence along the corridor, Mrs Finnegan placed her hand on Rosie’s shoulder and asked her to stay behind for a minute.

“Can I ask what’s in the book Rosie?”

For a moment Rosie couldn’t say a word as she gripped the book tightly to her chest. Sitting down on the bottom step of the stairs Mrs Finnegan began to tell Rosie her story and why it was she had invited her into her new her home. Opening the book to reveal her hidden secret Rosie carefully placed it on Mrs Finnegan knees.

As she turned the pages a smile appeared across her face. When the old lady joined her on the step, Rosie kneeled before them both. The warm summer air drifted down the hallway and Rosie turned her back to feel its full effect.

“There is no place like home Rosie, is there?” said Mrs Finnegan closing the book and smiling at Rosie.