

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

## Betrayal

by Miriam Silver

It was my son's fault, he forced me into that friendship. I would never have chosen her as a best friend, it was my baby's choice, he fell for her son, that first day when Jake, who had his favourite packet of crisps clutched in his little hand, was hurrying to get away from his Mum so he could consume them, knocked Nathan flying, then had to offer the bag to his victim as an apology. I'd felt so relieved at this diversion from my Nathan, who was having a first day at nursery problem, separating, I took the opportunity to leave so he wouldn't see my tears. My son was leaving home, I was bereft.

Superficially she was a wonderful friend and we did share a lot of interests, though reluctantly by my husband, we were not in their income bracket, Waitrose, new cars, interior decorators and boozy parties at which canibas was smoked, embarrassing us, wasn't in our dna especially as we were into diy, flat pack and Tesco's.

The boys' friendship saw them through to secondary school when Jake went to the local Public School and Nathan to the local Comp. meeting now only when school holidays overlapped. We girls continued to coffee, gossip and swap news re boys.

My online business flourished, Nathan won a place at Oxbridge while news of Jake became less, I didn't push Beth, she'd tell me when she was ready, she knew I was a good listener. I kept our conversation away from the boys.

One day when Nathan was home briefly during vacation, he expressed a concern about Jake who had apparently visited him at University, having taken time off from his job in the bank. It appeared he'd got into serious debt. Then Nathan dropped a bombshell, Jake owed money to the dealers who'd been supplying him with drugs, he'd been selling them 'on' and now was being threatened not only for the money but for encroaching on their territory.

He made me promise not to tell his parents and said he'd look out for him couldn't tell his family he'd promised. He was in daily with him. I said I'd ask to keep us company, emphasise how much we missed Nathan especially at dinner time.

He didn't come, I tried to contact him, I told Nathan to find him and heard nothing more until, well, I can't bear to think about it really, Jake had been found stabbed, another victim of the drug trade, this time it was a boy I'd known since he was a baby.

Police investigations revealed he'd been in touch with Nathan, that I'd invited him to dinner. Inevitably, Beth and Charles accused us of betrayal of friendship, trust, their grief insurmountable. We should have told them.

They moved away, couldn't bear to be around any memories of their beloved son. We will feel interminably guilty, unable to forget or forgive ourselves for not doing more for Nathan's best friend

