

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Asking for Trouble

by Victoria Cooper

The Common Room smelled as usual of burnt toast and scrambled eggs from the School Canteen. Schoolbags and lever arch files defied me the salvation of sinking to a seated level, even the gum-splattered linoleum floor now looked preferable.

At first the jaw-dropping stares had reassured; this was a naïve and incorrect interpretation. I was usually one of them; admiring the newly scabbed pierced ears, the teetering heels or tarantula styled mascara brought to school for their premiere. The reception party was supposed to gasp, crow or even gush at the cauldron of attention, as they were circled by a coven of teenage girls. The first bell tolled and the magic circle broke and the new idol should have been paraded to class.

These faces were not providing me with the buoyancy expected. These faces were watching the ship go down. Within the icy silence the stifled giggles and whispers began to build. The butterflies that had flown in my stomach had laid eggs and the caterpillars were crawling along my insides.

I wondered if I was too young for a heart attack.

“Oh ... my ... God!”

Those three words were not meant for me, they indicated shock not admiration and were breathed behind ink-stained fingers, a soliloquy to the jubilant audience. Each syllable a car alarm to my ears.

“Did you have that done at the weekend?” was thrown at my feet. Meant as a gauntlet I accepted it like a great shuffling seal ineptly taking a fish; no dignity, just grateful for the distraction.

Rose, pink, crimson, scarlet the blooming shades were deepening upon my cheeks.

“It’s a bubble,” I miserably attempted.

“Perm?” the voice sneered and popped like a champagne cork allowing the sniggers to gush forth as guffaws, dowsing me in shame.

The bubble curls bounced a little and, in that moment, I realized my grave mistake.

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Asking for Trouble Too

by Victoria Cooper

Asking for trouble forced the blankness of the page
The blinking cursor
Fingers poised so inevitably it is the very last that pushes through
The dissolving aspirin succumbing and the dirty washing sinking
The untold heart-stories that fight their way through, with the loudest voices
My hand firmly clamped over my mouth, yet somehow fingers on the keyboard let me down.

My broken heart sings loud and I long to kiss your dimpled fingers and make you laugh again, like before.
But the punch to my face, bloodying nose and breaking teeth is the thought:
No number of kisses will mend this.
I feel defeated before I begin
Losing someone before they have left the room is so familiar to me now
It feels like an old friend pouring my tea

Running in the rain is the release as tears mingle.
I am your first breath, your first embrace and memories of your angry, red limbs still dangle before me

Was that asking for trouble?

To look at you and feel everything for another
To run out of breath from you and yet yearn to wake you so I can feel breathless again and again and again.

I will do it.
Always.
I will ask for trouble if trouble brings you back.