

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Modern Love

by Noel Winnow

The Man

The music came to an end on the quietest of chords, and in that 3-second pause of magical stillness, before the conductor lowered his baton and the orchestra lowered their instruments, and before the audience burst into applause; in that delicate, hanging-in-the-air shimmer, that breath-holding anticipation, the man thought:

This is what can take her place now. He would give up the embarrassing on-line dating attempts after three dismal, failed meetings, and just accept that as a middle-aged man with protuberant eyes and a receding chin, who found it impossible to refrain from talking about the wife that cancer had stolen from him two years hence, he simply wasn't going to attract a new life-partner.

He would sink all his energy and passion into the orchestra where they had met and rehearsed together, he on violin, she on clarinet. He lowered his bow, sighed, and rose with the orchestra to acknowledge the applause.

The Girl

A girl breathed in the warm, delicious sent of her horse's coat, just brushed to a smooth, gleaming, rich brown perfection. She flung her arm round his neck, admiring the powerful, warm, well-muscled feel of it.

Why couldn't everything be perfect like him? School was stupid, her parents were stupid, boys were stupid. The only person whose company she enjoyed was her friend who shared her passion for horses. Her horse tossed his head, impatient to get moving and joyously she rode him into the woods.

The Mother

She held her baby tight, reluctant to hand her over to the child-minder. Her heart contracted with pain as she tried not to cry. She could feel the milk leaking from her breasts. Her whole body was screaming at her: Keep her! Nurture her! She needs YOU!

She turned away, knowing that she had to leave her and go to work, for them both to survive.

The Young Man

He knew he should be studying, but he could not tear himself away from the loft, where his passion lay, - his train set. Whenever he came up here, his worries evaporated, he no longer felt the odd-one-out, mocked by his peers at school. Having Asperger's may have helped him achieve outstanding marks in Maths, but didn't help him learn how to make friends.

Up here he could order his engines, create the landscapes they ran through, and feel a deep, peaceful contentment.

The Old Couple

The pub was noisy, busy, jostling, full of loud Friday night bonhomie. In a far corner recess were two battered but deep and comfortable arm chairs, where an elderly couple were sitting companionably with their drinks.

He is thinking: How will I bear it if she dies before me? Who will know my ways, laugh at my jokes, eat with me, as she does?

She is thinking: If he dies before me I shall die of a broken heart. They say there is now a medical term for dying of a broken heart.

They smiled at each other, chinked their glasses, and settled down to watch the eager crowd.