

Bourne
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workshops

Connection

by Stuart Carruthers

Friday night.

As the wind blew the skeleton-like teenagers down the street, Pete emerged in his brother's jacket. Curling his toes to grip his oversized trainers, he turned up the collars of his jacket and briskly walked in the opposite direction.

Jack Collins knew business was going to be good. Peering out from behind his mother's curtains, he smiled, grabbed his coat and briskly walked across the road. The girls were first. Giggling loudly, Jack smiled, took their money, checked for his cut and pushed open the door into the bright lights of Mrs Creggan's corner shop. After 20 minutes he had earned enough money for next week's bus fare into town.

The orange glow of the streetlights directed the waifs and strays towards the Coconut Club. Inside Dee Dee and his best mate Maria hauled boxes of records and their battered old record player onto the stage. The caretaker leaned against the wall, cigarette dangling from his top lip and cursed at the amount of bulbs that needed replacing in the overheads lights. They had given up asking him to repair them and anyway it made the hall more moody, just what their crowd wanted.

Outside, gangs of teenagers gathered, high on cheap cider and the excitement of escapism. As the hall slowly filled up, Dee Dee turned up the volume, the floor bounced, while upstairs the caretaker slowly drifted off into a whiskey induced deep sleep.

Ashling Burns didn't want to be like the others. She played along with their games and pretended to be drunk. Her father always said she would make a great actress one day.

The girls always stood by the fire exit at the back of the hall, far enough away from the idiots pogoing on the dance floor. The venue was packed.

Stacking the empty crates on top of each other, Pete clambered up and pulled himself through the half opened toilet window. This was his usual access point. Removing the brown bag from inside his brother's jacket, he checked its contents were ok. The wave of heat and noise that greeted him when he opened the toilet door almost knocked him off his feet.

Drunk teenagers, louder than a jet-aeroplane.

Pushing his way to the front, he grabbed Maria's arm. She turned, smiled and accepted his package. Dee Dee was too pre-occupied with the carnage in front of him to notice the skinny boy helping himself to the cans of beer by his feet.

Boys in double denim and checked shirts, Ashling wanted something different.

Pete knew she would know what to play. He wouldn't dance. He enjoyed seeing others react to this choice of music. The majority of the floor emptied. Pete smiled. Out of the corner of his eye he noticed the black haired girl swaying to the music. Her eyes were closed, her arms above her head, she was lost to the sound of The Smiths.

Pete had found someone.