

# Bourne toWrite...

creative writing  
workshops

## The Match

by Sue Hitchcock

Why the University arranged for Hedda and Phoebe to be room mates is unknown. They were both first year Fine Art students, but whereas Hedda came from a farming community, Phoebe had grown up in one of the poorest areas of London. Still, they had one thing in common – the desire to forge a new route through the grey, male hierarchy of the nineteen fifties.

The first challenge was the Freshers' Ball, known as the "heifer sale", where older students assessed the first year students for talent. To look pretty the girls would wear wide-skirted summer frocks, but that was the first rule Hedda and Phoebe had to break. Hedda, a child of the earth, had a tight, brown dress and Phoebe, who considered herself an Existentialist, had a black one. Combined with stiletto heeled shoes and black eye-liner, they were a terrifying sight, like a pair of tarts. They made an impact, but few boys had the courage to ask them to dance.

Some of the young ladies in the Hall of Residence decided they must be lesbians, though they had male friends. They made each other laugh and went to classes together. They joined the jazz club and found other clubs in town. There were differences, of course. Hedda, earthchild, was aggressive and passionate, looking for a Heathcliff to swear undying love. Phoebe on the other hand was tolerant, easy-going, even easy, you might say.

The first point went to Phoebe on account of her sexual experience, but the second point went to Hedda when she caught the attention of one of the Art teachers and her fame spread. She used to spend time at his house, even overnight, despite the presence of his girlfriend.

After the Hall of Residence ball, both girls stayed the night at the teacher's house and had to sneak back home in long dresses. Students were meant to be back home by eleven o'clock, when the doors were locked. A key could be borrowed from the warden, if an exceptional late night was expected, but it had to be returned to her by nine the following morning. Phoebe laughed to see Hedda roll out of bed just in time, and return a key to the warden with her nightie showing under her frock and her scarecrow hair, uncombed, a pair of socks, used to puff out her beehive hairdo, poking out conspicuously.

Another point to Hedda.

This was the beginning of a twenty-year relationship, which could be described as love, but it was a competition too.