

Bourne
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creative writing
workshops

Life

by Garf Collins

While Vicky was waiting for her counselling session, she wondered if she was there for the right reason. It had started as a way to sort out her feelings about Brian. It wasn't his career or her involvement in the art gallery, which caused them to drift apart. It was deeper. She just didn't feel right as his wife.

Her counsellor began, "Last time you seemed to be quite uncomfortable when we talked about school. Can we examine that?"

"Yes, it's all been flooding back. I was the best artist in the sixth form. We had an outstanding teacher – Miss Thompson - who took an interest in me, and she offered to tutor me in her studio."

"How did you respond?"

"I was very ambitious. So, of course, I went. Miss Thompson said that I needed practice at figure sketching. We couldn't afford a model so I would have to make do with her."

"So you agreed?"

"Yes, it was great. When I had finished my sketch, she would suggest improvements. It was a masterclass. After a couple of sessions, she said that I needed practice with the nude. Again she offered to model."

"Didn't that seem a little strange to you?"

"Well, yes, but I had no reference points. She said it was necessary to understand the underlying muscles and sinews etc. She would place my hand on her arm, her leg, or some other part of her body to emphasise the point. She also said I needed.. to get a realistic feel for the soft tissues."

"Didn't this begin to feel odd?"

"Well, yes, but she was a brilliant teacher. She then suggested I should model for her. I was shy at first but soon got used to her looking so intently at me.

Her drawings were fantastic, and as she analysed them, she would stroke my body to illustrate her points. Then a terrible thing happened. She had a hand on my waist, and she was touching my lips to explain something. Suddenly she pulled me against her and kissed me passionately.”

“What did you do.”

“I wrenched myself away and grabbed my clothes. As I put them on in the foyer, I trembled with shock, but I remember wanting to go back. Instead, I went to see Brian – then, my new boyfriend. I desperately wanted him to make love to me.”

“So you suppressed those memories until now. I wonder if they have any relevance to your current situation?”

Vicky’s thoughts were in turmoil. She was beginning to see the connection with her marriage. Suppose she had always had a latent attraction to women, and her life with Brian had been an elaborate pretence? She squirmed in her seat as she began to confront this. Back then, she had been secretly thrilled by her teacher’s attention and hadn’t minded the physical contact at all until she was kissed. She had panicked, but now she recalled that feeling of wanting to go back. Perhaps she was the cause of the whole thing and not the victim?

“I’m sorry to be so upset, but I think I’ll need to embrace a terrible idea. No, not terrible, marvelous. Perhaps I’m going to find out who I really am.”