

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Betrayal

by Sho Botham

The body of the message was a single sentence: Now everyone knows who you really are.

Her hand trembled as she showed the message on the screen of her phone as evidence. It was the third, anonymous text she had received that week. She barely glanced at the first one on Tuesday assuming it was sent to her in error. Thursday's message threatening to reveal her secret caused anxiety. But today's message saying, now everyone knows who you really are, frightened her.

A million and one questions raced through her head. Why? What? How?

She looked into the green eyes staring at her from across the brightly painted table in the Corner Café. She couldn't tell if they were honest. She'd always believed they were. But now she didn't know. Could these eyes betray her? She didn't want to believe they could. But someone knew. Someone had eyes of betrayal.

The green eyes were full of pity as they gazed at her one final time before leaving.

She stared intently at the brightly painted table, as if to disguise the tears pricking at her eyes. Unconsciously she started scratching at the royal blue, paint with her expensively varnished nails. The waitress stopped, resting her round tray, on one hip as she watched the smartly dressed women scratching the table. She asked if she could get her another coffee and was surprised when the woman looked up directly into her dark eyes and nodded before going back to scratch at the paint.

With a fresh, hot cup of coffee sitting on its colourful saucer, she paused her scratching, barely noticing how chipped her nail polish had become. Her pale blue eyes had a wistful, faraway look in them as if remembering something from a very long time ago. From another life perhaps. The waitress watched her from behind the till. She felt sorry for the woman with the weight of the world on her shoulders.

The coffee had grown cold by the time, she returned to the present. But still she drank it. Staring at her nails, she seemed puzzled at the damage she had done to them. A loud ping, made her alert and panicky.

Shaking, she put her hand into the black, soft leather, bag on the floor under the table and took out her phone. She pressed her finger to the home button and the screen lit up. There was one new text. She looked up and glanced round the café at the other customers enjoying drinks and cakes and chatter. She wasn't sure if it was safe to look at the message. Like the others, it was anonymous. But it was the second text in one day. That worried her. Looking at the screen she read the message to herself. Now everyone knows who you really are.

She looked around again, almost wishing that someone would stand out as the anonymous texter. But no one did. She couldn't understand why they had sent her the same message again.

The door of the café squeaked as it opened and she looked in its direction. She was surprised to see the familiar green eyes of her friend who left over an hour before. She still wasn't sure if she could trust her. She still had no idea who was doing this to her, or why.

Without saying a word, green eyes, sat across from her and handed over a large, slim, open envelope. She took it but her eyes remained on her friend, hunting for any signs of betrayal. There were none.

Looking into the envelope she could see a newspaper clipping. She pulled it out and dropped it on the floor. Green eyes, quickly picked it up and gave it to her friend. She knew it was difficult for her to look at it.

“But I was only a baby when it happened. I'm not to blame. This should've stayed in the past,” she said as her shoulders slumped forward. Will I ever be free of what my birth family did?