

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

The Message

by Miriam Silver

The body of the message was a single sentence,

“Now everyone knows who you are.”

“Ok, I know I know, I’m a grass,” I said at the interviewing copper as he pushed a piece of paper towards me, not really bothering to read it.

“Read that,” he snarled.

“What’s that then?” I asked, playing for time.

“ I know you think you’re a clever sod, get writing, you help us and we’ll help you...” he didn’t finish.

I didn’t like the look on his face, “Why am I here?” I asked, playing the simple.

“I’ll give you one guess,” he said staring at me.

I knew he had a good argument ready that would keep me there so thought I’d best tell him as much as I knew then perhaps the judge would appreciate my cooperation.

I was useful, but only in Witness Protection, give me time to sort out my story, maybe able to make something out of it, money I mean.

I'd become involved from the moment a chum of mine from my early days in the juvenile detention place found me. I'd been trying to go straight for the sake of my family but things in the outside world involved certificates and references, and I didn't have any of those.

I fell for it, didn't have any real skills to contribute so became the 'goffa' the guy who kept everyone in food and drink while keeping an eye out, the look out in other words.

While the rest bought the tunnelling gear I learnt the details of the proposed operation, walked everywhere, only using coffee shops miles away, didn't tell anyone anything, kept completely schtum.

Come the long Easter weekend, everything was closed from Good Friday, except the tube station nearby and although I knew I shouldn't, I bought coffee and buns there, took it to them, using the bell as if I was a delivery man and strolled back to the look-out van around the corner.

It all went to plan, I even met-up with one of them later, who reassured me that I would receive my share, eventually, when the heat was off.

And here I am, a grass, sitting in a small, hot house, bored, minding my own business waiting for the trial to begin. Identified me they did, by a camera at the Tube.

I'm all they've got. They think I can give them details of a robbery. The newspapers said millions of unidentifiable goodies have disappeared from a safe deposit building, funny money and jewellery kept there I suppose.

I must sit it out here. I've gotta give them names. That's all. Hopefully it'll get me a lighter sentence.

It was the heat, made me careless, again when I left the house to have a quick paddle. Was enjoying a last bit of fresh air as I pushed the back gate, when I heard,

"Gotcha!" and was pushed flat onto my face and held down by a booted foot.

"Wot the hell!" was all I managed before an iron fist or something hit me.

"The pigs be back in a minute, only went to get some fags," I got out as they hit me again.

“You’re lucky you are, just tell us where it is?” he demanded while holding his fist at my face.

They went on threatening, bashing me while I kept shouting and protecting myself.

“I don’t know nuffin’ was only...”

“Hurry up, get ‘im to talk, someone’s coming.”

“It’s all on the way to Argentina,” I managed to gasp, rolling out of their way.

They were very amateurish, rattled easily, desperate I suppose.

“I can see someone, they’re coming.”

Scared stiff, they made their way out and over the fence, leaving me, battered and bruised wondering who sent boys to do a man’s job?

Fooled ‘em, stupid idiots, was all I could think through a haze of pain. Maybe I could, yer know, make a run for it.

Nah! Nothing to lose, better wait until I’ve done my time, think big, I’ll find them, after all I was at all the planning meetings.

