

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Saying Things

by Rosalyn Hurst

The rain lashed at the windows and listening carefully she heard the moment of traffic just outside, or perhaps could only feel the vibrations of the buses and trucks, their smooth journey disrupted by traffic lights, absent minded pedestrians or even worse cyclists. She let herself imagine the verbal exchange, the hostile looks, the gathering anger and frustration, leading, perhaps, to thoughts of murder most unpleasant to be inflicted on those that caused mayhem.

Around her, constant movement, officious movement, movement that was done with theatrical intent, while she was inert unable to move. She watched the men and was reminded of her childhood in church. She considered with interest, that men in robes, swagger. Is it because once high office is achieved with rites of long robes more like dresses, they fear to walk like women, who achieve such movement with poise and charm?

The smell, better here than in the basement. Here it was a mixture of institutional bleach and cheap furniture polish. She noticed the brass had not been touched time, how careless to let it blacken and add to the gloom of the area. And then the immediate noise, the confidential exchanges on the floor, the uneasy muttering in the public benches suddenly broken with a sharp cracks and “Be upstanding,” which signalled another day in court.

Day two of the submission by the prosecution. She had been accused of plotting to murder her uncle. She was perplexed by this charge, she loved Uncle Harry, still alive, still alert and still suffering in that dreadful care home. She was accused of smuggling him in a few bottles of Glenlivet at least once a month. They had had enormous fun finding hiding places, which he could access based on his experience of undertaking drug raids when he was in the Met.

“You are the only one that cares for me,” he often said to her, and more unwisely not holding back on who was his favourite to the others in the disparate dysfunctional family.

It was her cousin Kevin, who called in the police. He had found Harry giggling in front of an appalling afternoon TV programme and realised he was on 'substance abuse' the search revealing the stash.

"She knew it was contrary to his medical advisers," it was reported, "it could have shortened his days."

She looked up as Kevin entered the courtroom and sighed. He was definitely going through a late middle-age crisis, or worse, he was nearly sixty, for he didn't help himself, the suit looked hired, like those that are hired for weddings, a strange purple tone, a pink shirt and a yellow spotted tie. He tried to avoid looking at her, tried in vain to focus on the barrister, tried in vain to look at the jury, tried to wink at his latest squeeze in the public gallery, but every four minutes returned to her.

"I heard her say, I'll see him off, I can't wait for him to kick the bucket, might give him a little push off his perch," he continued, "oh yes she said when he went belly-up she'd get the loot and she said I could pay for the funeral, She is one mean b...." He was stopped by the judge.

She gasped, she almost laughed, and then choked. Her barrister turned, "are you alright?" he asked quietly.

She said, "I can't believe I said those things, I'd never use those words, I love Harry I have never meant him harm."

"Remind me," said the barrister, "how old are you? He didn't wait for an answer, "thirty I think? Yes."

He continued to take notes while she pondered Kevin's words. They reminded her so much of her Dad, the word dead had never passed his lips and buckets and perches had formed much of communication of death of friends, while her mother preferred passing or falling asleep or being with the angels.

She was drawn back to the courtroom. Her barrister had called a professor of linguistics.

"How do the millennials refer to death, do they use such euphemisms which call in for a knowledge of perches and buckets?"

The jury smiled. The jury found her not guilty. She and Harry sank a bottle of Glenlivet to celebrate while watching Liverpool play Brighton. As the final goal was scored Harry dropped the glass, passed, perhaps on, but not out.