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It's Catching

by Miriam Silver

"It's catching, her enthusiasm I mean, she's so keen," I said to my colleague who had stopped by my desk to ask if I'd seen Janet's text.

"Need something like that, to get us out and about again," Lizzie said as she offloaded some bulky looking files.

"Let's do it, I'm ready to go along with anything," I replied then added grumpily, "thanks, must get on."

Before lockdown our mutual friend Janet was the one who knew the best films to see, the best wine bars, always looked great, and now, although we're back, working in the office, we seem too busy, too tired to think about anything except keeping on top of the never ending contributions and getting back home.

It seems we've become so used to not socialising, the frequent breaks while working from home, to say nothing about having all day and night for meeting deadlines. All that time our only entertainment being emails or texts, hardly a giggle. Back in the office, with real people, listening, responding, concentrating, has had to be learnt all over again.

Janet's next text suggested meeting after work at the reopened bar across the road.

"Let's give local businesses our support," she advised, "no staying late, no excuses see u soon."

That's what she's like, cheerful, encouraging, just what we need.

We were so happy to be with real people, we gabbed almost incomprehensibly, chatted, drank and planned all sorts of exciting escapades.

Lizzie came up with a boot camp, that's where we could learn outward bound things like climbing, canoeing and even boxing. Wonderful chance to meet someone new.

“Have to do all that you know, with a partner, all about trust,” she explained, “never know who you’ll meet!”

“Not for me,” I was quick to say.

“Oh! come on Fiona, it’ll do you good!” the pair of them shouted.

So, before they could come up with something equally awful I said, “how about a nice cheap few days in somewhere like Patagonia?”

That, they considered too academic, anyway none of us knew where Patagonia was.

By now we had made up lost time and were onto our third bottle when Janet suggested taking a castle or stately home, employing caterers, eating local food, enjoying their local talent and activities of course.

“Ok, ok, not a stately home, just a cottage or villa or at least something in the sun with a pool,” I said, offering a reasonable alternative.

No one came up with anything else, so we sat there, a trifle morose, drinking, when Janet mumbled, “let’s rob a bank, or become...” she didn’t have time to finish because we woke up.

“You can’t be serious!” I said instantly, joined by Lizzie’s emphatic nod.

“Of course not, you dopey lot, just thought I’d get your attention.”

“Actually, what we all need are some nice fellows,” she added in a speculative fashion, with which we agreed by saying nothing.

“Seriously though, we do need something new, or as my mother would advise, ‘join a club!’ which isn’t an option, but we could change jobs, do something worthwhile, even dangerous.”

At that I sat up, looked thoughtful and said, “funny you should say that, I’ve often felt I’d had enough of magazine work, how about going green, you know, live the Good Life?”

This was greeted in a somewhat no-comment fashion.

Finally, when we’d finished the fourth bottle even irrepressible Janet could only suggest that we wend our deflated way home suggesting, “think about it!, more ideas please, tomorrow.”

