

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Psychic Distance

by Miriam Silver

When the police force relegated me to Traffic after one too many misunderstandings, I set up on my own. Currently I find lost relatives, follow two timers for divorce work, a lawyer friend of mine puts my way, or as my former employers are quite amicable, do some of the work the cops don't want to do.

Being my own boss has advantages, especially when clients are thin on the ground. That is when I do my paper work, practice avoidance technique, go on a daily run, reluctantly pay bills especially rent for my two roomed office which is where I went yesterday and was surprised to find a lady waiting outside.

"Are you the private detective?"

"By appointment," I replied opening the door.

"Please excuse me appearing like this, but I didn't want anyone to see me"

At this, my antenna went on alert, I asked her to wait, pointed to the only chair just inside, murmured, "must check," and went to clear my desk noticing this middle-aged lady looked worried, plain appearance wearing a brown matching jacket and skirt and clutching a bulky handbag.

Satisfied my office was tidy I brought her in. I asked if she'd like a drink and was relieved she said no because I'd have to go out along the passage for water.

"Please, I'd like to explain," she started nervously, "I haven't much time, I'm due at work, in the library you know, I've been so very stupid."

I smiled encouragingly as she swallowed, dabbed her eyes and carried on.

Her tale was one of cruel deception, about which she'd give me details as soon as she was sure I would not disclose anything to anyone, and wanted to know my charge for recovering some of the very large amount she'd sent to a man she had never met.

I assured her that what passed between us stayed here which encouraged her to tell me that she had responded to an advertisement in her lady's magazine for a pen pal thinking correspondence with someone living in a different country would widen her horizons.

This turned out to be an introduction society for which there was a membership fee. She happily contributed and began a correspondence with another member who was living in Sardinia, travelling around Italy researching the Roman Empire.

Over a period of two years this correspondence developed into real friendship with a man who signed his letters, 'affectionately Anthony'.

"He sounded so sincere, which of course I loved, I'd had nothing like that in my life before," my client tearfully described, adding, "regretting he couldn't afford to come to England to meet me, but would, as soon as he accessed his bank account here."

Yes, that's what she did, sent him his fare. Subsequently over a further eight or nine months she sent substantial amounts to cover, medical treatment for his mother, hospitalisation for himself after an accident, his son's cancer treatment, all of which he promised to repay, he would come to England soon, 'my financial situation is nearly sorted' he continually promised.

To this date she had given him over £400,000 which she'd raised by remortgaging her house.

After following dead ends I eventually had to tell her that 'Anthony' didn't exist neither did the original Introduction group.

Currently with the aid of modern technology I'll eventually recover some of her money. She is assured that my erstwhile employers are aware of this fraud, and together we will catch those disgusting organisations that prey on lonely people.

