

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Daniel

by Sho Botham

A coaster displaying an image of Buckingham Palace sat under the uneven leg of the old kitchen table. Daniel got up from the only chair in the rundown bedsit mumbling to himself, "I love acting. It is so much more real than life. Some might call it lying but me, I prefer to think of it as acting. Acting the life I want instead of the life I inherited. When I look in the bedroom mirror I see a suave sophisticated man with chiselled good looks and a body that wears clothes well. In real life, the mirror would say something different."

On the back of the door hung what could only be described as a very nice suit. A shirt in palest pink hid the brand new pair of Ralph Lauren trunks lying on top of the untidy Spiderman duvet cover, thrown over the narrow single bed. Daniel pulled off faded baggy jeans and T-shirt leaving them where they landed on the threadbare rug and dressed himself in the very nice clothes. He retrieved a bag from under the bed containing dark leather, slip-on shoes and eased his feet into them. He looked out of place walking down the three flights of stairs to the street.

Daniel arrived at The Ritz in a taxi. He talked to other guests attending the event as if he knew them and somehow managed to pay for nothing all evening. His suit blended easily with the other suits in attendance. Confident women made eye contact with him making their interests clear. But Daniel wasn't interested. Around ten o'clock he stood as if in a dream, staring at the grand chandelier in the middle of the ceiling and holding an empty glass in his hand. A tall elegant man appeared at his left shoulder, his fingers closed around the glass and asked if sir would like a refill. Daniel shook his head.

Slipping away unnoticed Daniel arrived back at his bedsit before eleven. He swapped his very nice suit and palest pink shirt for the grubby jeans and T-shirt left on the floor earlier. He left the Ralph Lauren trunks on. A pair of worn trainers and a hand messing up his neatly combed hair completed his transformation.

Shuffling down the three flights of stairs Daniel went out into the night. He gulped the gritty London air into his lungs, stuffed his hands into his pockets and headed towards the river. He knew when he got there, he would meet real people. Genuine people. People who lived tough lives. People who knew what life was all about. His parents had no idea about Daniel's other life. His nights away from their palatial home in Belgravia were simply explained with a wave of the hand and a single word, business.

Daniel hoped to see the brown-haired young woman with the dirty fingernails. There was something about her that attracted him. Her realness, her poverty, he could change it all for her tonight if she wanted to be with him. And afterwards they would walk together hand-in-hand by the river where he would end her life and then let her slide lifelessly into the cold dark water. He would sleep easy tonight knowing once again he'd given himself to a young brown-haired woman before she died.