

Bourne to Write... creative writing workshops

Just Doing Good

by Miriam Silver

In William's opinion no one understood him not even his mother who usually could see things his way, so he decided he'd reinvent himself.

The idea came to him after he'd spent an unwelcome amount of time in the school hall where there was nothing to look at except the headmaster's room and the boards which displayed past pupils who had done good deeds, for which they had received rewards.

He of course wasn't going to receive anything except a warning relating to his inability to go to school without his pet mouse, and would he please, "try and stay out of trouble."

On this occasion the headmaster added, "perhaps try some good works, your family would like that," he explained

Catching up with his gang, Henry, Douglas and Ginger, William breathlessly shouted, "I've gotta plan!"

Only to be almost ignored with derisive, "we've heard all that before," and "your plans only get us into trouble."

When they stopped for breath their erstwhile leader took the opportunity to say, "I'm gonna do what the head suggested."

This brought the boys to a standstill and before they could decry his idea he came out with, "I'm going home now and will offer to do some shopping or cut the grass, oh! yer know, do something good."

And off he went to frighten his mother, who when she saw him said, "oh William, look at the state of you," which he ignored only to appear shortly afterwards, brushed up and clean.

"Err, mother, can I help you with anything?"

This was said quite loudly at the tea table and caused his cynical father to look up and say, "he must be ill , take my advice, he's up to something."

His mother, who wanted to present her youngest in a better light said, "all right dear, perhaps you could go to the shop..."

"Certainly mother, just give me a list," William said, quick with his offer.

"I just can't go anywhere, this back is giving me trouble, we need some fish for our evening meal."

"That's fine," her eager son assured her adding, "can I get a few pear drops, I'll bring some back."

With every good intention he put the shopping list in his pocket.

He did mean well, that is until he came to the sweet shop. Temptation couldn't be resisted, and he was soon the owner of a generous portion of pear drops. Walking along contentedly sucking he remembered that his mother had entrusted him with the shopping list for which he immediately searched. The only things in his pocket were the remaining pear drops, no list, he'd lost it and could only remember he'd said he'd bring some sweets back, had no memory of what was on that list.

"Gosh! What now?" he said nearly swallowing his last sweet. He'd been entrusted with buying the evening meal and genuinely meant to be helpful. Then, as was his wont, never down for long, had an idea.

"Sausages, best meal ever, I'm sure that's what's she wanted."

And sausages is what he bought, racing home to deliver them to his mother, who gratefully took the proffered shopping. William didn't wait for her to undo the parcel, just called out, "everyone loves those!"

Running upstairs, not waiting to hear his mother's reproach.

He knew he'd got it wrong again, and was sure his name wouldn't ever be written on the school honour boards. Doing good just wasn't in his DNA.