

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Sebastian

by Sho Botham

When I walked into a room, I knew others saw me as a plain Jane. A boring person with little to excite the conversation. I'm sure this trait came from being threatened when growing up with, the fear of God, if ever I stepped out of line. The weight of this threat weighing heavily upon my shoulders. Life for me, trundled by, meandering along monotonous paths. The fear of God keeping me on the straight and narrow.

Then I met Sebastian.

Sebastian was different. He made up stories, told little white lies or great big whoppers depending on his mood and none of these had any impact on him whatsoever. His laissez-faire approach to life was in complete contrast to my own. He was charming, in his own way and, in comparison to my highly disciplined up-bringing, scarily impulsive almost all of the time.

Sebastian had a unique sense of humour. He could be somewhat cruel. But usually, he just liked being impulsive. It was as if he wanted a dopamine hit from his behaviour in a similar way that a drug addict might want their next fix.

He only saw the fun side of life. He liked doing things that worried me to death. It was, as if, he lived for instant gratification. He had no comprehension of how his antics affected me and wasn't interested when I offered to explain how frightening I found them. And yet, I couldn't resist his reckless charms telling myself that for the first time, I was really living.

I tried to see the lighter side of the tales he regaled me with. But deep down I found his irresponsibility concerning. He didn't care that he broke promises. His debts gave him no concerns, blaming them on others who gave him bad advice. To my surprise, I began to hanker after my familiar, monotonous existence.

I tried not to get upset when Sebastian resisted following even the most basic of rules. It is too worrying for me to park on a double yellow line but when given the choice, Sebastian chose this in preference to any paid parking space just a few metres away. His joy of joys if we got back to the car and there was no parking ticket. Even if there was a ticket stuck to the windscreen he simply ripped it off, sat in the passenger seat and tossed the parking ticket over his shoulder, onto the back seat. I would find myself paying for his escapades like this time and time again. He wanted me to bin the tickets but I couldn't – I had to pay them.

I stupidly forgave Sebastian's irresponsible behaviours because I thought he loved me and I wanted, so much, to be loved. It was when my mother became seriously ill and I spent a lot of time at the hospital that I discovered I was wrong. Getting back earlier than usual one evening, I opened the front door and bumped straight into two people kissing passionately, their arms tightly wrapped around each other. I was shocked. Sebastian immediately starting making up lies about why he was standing in the hallway kissing another woman. He even said, that the woman had taken advantage of him.

Sebastian couldn't see what my problem was. He couldn't understand why I felt so hurt. After a week, he actually asked me why I was still angry with him – it had happened a week ago. He wanted to know how much longer I was planning to be angry with him. This was the wakeup call I'd needed.

I looked forward to, once again, meandering monotonous paths, on my own.