

Bourne toWrite... creative writing workshops

The Notebook

by Ivor John

She wasn't really asleep, more dozing, half listening to her audiobook. 'Redhead at the Side of the Road', but in her hypnagogic state she would have to go back and try to find the point where she could remember it. As her awareness gradually returned, she realised that the bright white spotlight on her neighbour's drive was on. It was on a movement sensor, so she must be going out.

Overcome by an overwhelming anxiety, she quickly pulled aside the duvet to sit up and looked out of the window. Her room was very small, she could pull the curtains back without needing to get out of bed. Remembering to turn off the little shaded lamp on her bedside cabinet so that she wouldn't be silhouetted, she put her face to the corner of the window and peeped out trying to stay hidden behind the net curtain.

The light, as she knew already, illuminated her neighbour's drive. Looking out, she was just in time to see their blue Audi A4 being driven off of the drive and out of the cul-de-sac. She ran her hand across her dressing table fumbling for an A5 spiral bound notebook. She looked at her bedside clock, and without putting the light on wrote down in the notebook, 02:37 Audi. In the notebook, were several pages of similar entries. She also recorded when their other car, a red Mazda MX3 was driven. Or if on the rare occasions she left home herself, she would record if either car was not on the drive when she came home.

Ananya and Sahil were in their early thirties and had moved into Oak Apple Close several months ago. In fact not very long after Jackie's mother Ivy, had died. She had dementia, for a long time, but she died of heart disease. Myocardial Infarct (MI) the death certificate had starkly spelled out. A heart attack. Ananya was a pharmacist, she worked in Boots in the town centre.

When she went out more, she had often seen her there, in that little room behind the counter, wearing a white lab coat, and nodding as assistants presented packages to her to check them. She thought how attractive she always looks. Long black shiny hair, shiny, often in a plait or in a ponytail. Convenient for work she imagined. She wore smart clothes,

business clothes, an elegant skirt maybe, court shoes, often with a kitten heel. She rather admired her. Often she would go into the store, nearby to the pharmacy counter were the over the counter products. Non prescription pain killers, travel sickness pills, ointment for haemorrhoids. She would spend a few minutes there, where she could watch Ananya, working behind the counter. But that was when she could go out.

Sahil was an accountant, he worked in a small office building on the edge of the town centre. She had visited a number of times. Once she had tried to speak to somebody about her inheritance, so that she could see inside. But the receptionist had explained that this was not the sort of work they did. They did corporate and business accountancy. She had suggested she speak to Butterworths in the town centre and had given her a contact number.

Sahil usually drove the Audi to work, leaving every morning, usually around 7:30. Sometimes he would be a bit later and then he would leave with Ananya, she assumed dropping her off at work. He always wore a suite, nice shoes. He was a handsome man she thought, they were an attractive couple. But Ananya she thought was particularly attractive. She had taken photographs of them, when they were in the garden. They were not very good. Her window was too far away and she only had her phone to take pictures with.

As she wrote in her notebook, she wondered who had been driving the Audi. Sahil she imagined, but where was he going in the middle of the night. How could she find out? There was a light on in the bedroom, perhaps she would see Ananya and know that things were alright. That there was not a problem.