

Confucius

A Hive by Landru

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

For five years my mountain climbing had been in the doldrums. I have scarcely climbed a single solitary peak. By September however I was ready to climb again and felt the blood throbbing once more in my veins.

I find that a sturdy pair of boots helps in this sort of recreation... I like the fur-topped variety and the insides warm against my skin..

We began our ascent in the early hours of the morning and continued on till lunchtime, passing the high firs and the snow-line beneath us.

My own part in this most favoured of activities is beyond dispute. We celebrated each crest with a loud fanfare of cheering and jubilation.

The air was sharp and the sun-like radiator hot against my touch.

Like all great enterprises it is really a matter of peaks and troughs. A gentle and persistent rising of the heart. A series of challenges leading us to a higher plain.

I accept my responsibilities with the tenacity of snow-leopard. (We sometimes have to catch our breath before ploughing on again into the clouds).

We opened our lungs with bramble and lace.

I'm lagging behind somewhat. It's par for the course.

Together we troop through the mist, the crystalline passion of life.

It's seven, then we take stock.

Another peak beckons breast-high in the distance.

"More more more!" she screams over the heat of the col.

We like to make our journeys unplanned.

A serendipitous adventure. A ferocious dipping of tongues.

There's not much she doesn't know about rock-climbing.

I'm slow to ascend. I begin my descent.

Seven eight nine, peaks in quick succession, then we pause for oxygen.
I see them in front like a pilot sees rain.
An explosion of hills.
Brookes and valleys, hidden ravines.
A river or two.
We climb the wall with our pick-axes, and shudder, sliding along the scree.
Our glasses are fallen.
My body is covered in dew.
The Sun splashes like a torch over the mountain top, and we are free.



Colin rang

Colin rang me a few moments ago.

I must say, I am getting a bit sick of him stalking me, but today it was about something really important.

He said that he had come by something which would completely change the way I looked at him.

I have ten minutes to finish eating my supper, put the cat out, go to the bog, and see to Rosemary...

Then I have to shoot over to the club. He is going to meet me on the steps.

I hope it's not about the boil on the back of his neck again...

When I arrived at the Wheel tappers and Shunters on Manningham Villas he was sweating profusely and could hardly get a word out. He took me inside and led me down a dark corridor. I could hear a band playing. It was something by Acker Bilk and his jazzmen.

Looking shiftily to the right and to the left he fitted the key in the lock and opened the door to the Snooker hall.

"I have the item tucked away in a drawer!" he blurted.

"I don't want anyone else to find it!"

He sprung open the drawer, and my jaw dropped.

"You swine!" I said.

"Do you mean to tell me that you have brought me all this way to show me a Playtex bra?"

He looked quite relieved, and sat down on a chair, patting his forehead with a handkerchief.

"Where did you get it?"

"You haven't been raiding Rosemary's washing-line again?"

Colin nodded towards the wardrobe. One of the doors was half open. Inside I could see what appeared to be a pair of lady's nylons and a nurse's outfit.

"How long has this been going on Bob, I mean Colin...?" I sighed.

"Do you mean to tell me that this is what you were up to all the time we were in assembly or having a snipe behind the Headmaster's back in the staff room?"

Colin began sobbing and started to look very distressed.

"Please don't tell Sylvia," he pleaded. "This is going to be the very last time. I can't afford to take any more chances."

We could hear footsteps coming down the corridor.
Colin hurriedly shut the drawer, and I went to stand in front of the wardrobe.

The door was flung wide open, and who did we see standing there in the doorway, but Stan Collymore.

He pointed to Colin, who was red faced and doing up his laces.

"If I see you in here again!" he said. "I will ban you for life!"

"This is not something which should be happening on the premises."

I pleaded on Colin's behalf.

I said he had always been first on parade, with a previously unblemished record.

Just then Colin let out a loud bark, and raced towards the fire-exit. We tried to stop him but he was too fast for us.

Before you could say 'Bobs-your-uncle' he was clattering down the steps and out into the street.

We were too late to stop him jumping into the river.

He dived in fully clothed and then disappeared under the water.

I could hear the sound of the river barge as it came upstream.

As the barge drew nearer the spot where Colin had plunged in the water started to froth, and something totally unexpected darted out.

It looked like a large lobster or crayfish.

It crashed against the hull of the barge throwing everyone overboard.

Then I saw Colin appear above the surface once more.

He was waving something in his hand.

I turned round and stormed off in disgust.

Another Simpson

11 Groomcoat Lane,
Red Lion Yard,
Nottingham.

10 February 2013

Dear Mr Simpson,

I'm writing to put you in the picture about a few problems here. I sent a letter in a couple of weeks ago but I didn't address it to anyone in particular because I didn't want to use up any of your precious time. The letter found its way to Louise Harris. It concerned the harassment of one of my neighbours who had been getting abuse from some of the tenants in the vicinity. She has become a personal friend of mine and is not any of the things these women have been saying. The harassment took the form of:

- 1 defamation of character and slander ie calling her a prostitute and a tart etc.
- 2 having her keyhole taped up
- 3 her next door neighbour trying to gain admittance to her house late at night
- 4 her doorbell being rang at all hours of the night
- 5 having abusive notes being handed to me or pushed through her letterbox

My friend lost her husband of thirty-one years just a year ago due to cancer and she nursed him and cared for him without complaint during the later stages of his life.

We think the defamation of character concerns two people in particular. I have heard that the same people pick on a lot of the Residents here and have had one of them in tears many times.

I wrote the letter in defence of my friend.

I asked to speak to Mehmet about it but he refused to speak to me at the time.

Only a few days ago we were threatened by one of these women as we were walking out to church. She threatened 'to bash both our heads in.'

I don't know how serious she was.

I have kept the Manager here informed but she doesn't seem to know what to do and is extremely friendly with the women involved.

My letter also concerned a woman called Vera who has been extremely unfriendly to me and has been accusing me of doing my washing after time which I have been very careful not to do. She also chased me up the stairs calling me names and said that 'two Officers would be there to see me on Monday...'

Yet again today Dorothy has been to see me about doing my washing after time, yet I know that I haven't done. Me and Christine think that some of them have it in for us (not all, because one of the ladies from downstairs said that Vera and the Committee had been picking on her too and she had been thinking of getting a petition up).

I am pretty sure that information is being leaked via the management structure about my friend Christine and me (to many different sources), as I was told certain things about her on my arrival here which should have been confidential. I am also pretty sure that someone is reporting on me to the Authorities as they seem to have petty information on me which could only have come from here.

It's as if someone has said something about me before I got here. How can you be treated normally if that's the case?

My next door neighbour told me that they knew all about me before I arrived.

When the harassment matter was investigated by Louise it turned out that the neighbour who had been writing the abusive notes (and signing them!) was not complaining about the noise, but the fact that her neighbour had a 'man in the house!'

Louise asked me to come back earlier if I ever visited her, if I could. At the end of the day Mr Simpson both myself and Christine are mature adults and we are allowed to have a relationship if we want to.

I can assure you Mr Simpson that both myself and Christine P. have been extremely considerate when it comes to sound coming from her bungalow. The sound is always turned down to avoid any annoyance. We are not rowdy disruptive teenagers: quite the contrary. Christine P. has told me she has heard her neighbours falling out and swearing on numerous occasions but she has not reported it because she didn't want to cause any trouble.

I have heard her neighbour (Christine) shouting abuse at her for slamming her door during the day once, when she had only closed it normally behind her.

I have to admit that I did make a bit of noise early one morning with a drill after I had been unable at first to put some coat hooks up due to the hollowness of the door. It lasted a few minutes, was a 'one-off,' and I did apologise to my direct neighbours for any disturbance.

One of my neighbours: 'Harry,' says he never hears a thing coming from my home.

I recently put up a door-bell. It was partly to cover up some holes in the wall outside my door which the previous occupant had left. It may be somewhat unusual but it is not a 'health hazard' or a danger to other residents as it has been alleged and I would like a Housing Inspector to assess it before I am forced to take it down. It was a normal household product sold in a local garden centre.

I asked my next door neighbour if it bothered them and they replied: "of course not!"

(Today I was told by Mehmet that it constituted a danger because it was blocking the doorway, which is nonsense).

I may replace it if I can find a suitable plaque, which was what I had originally been looking for.

In my previous letter to Louise I pointed out some of the faults in the plasterwork which needed repairing and offered to do them myself free of charge.

I also mentioned the state of the surrounding grassland and hedges which is filled with rubbish and offered to go round the whole block with my friend Christine and pick it all up if she would provide the bags. It met with a very Luke-warm response. I also understand that it is a matter of insurance.

I have recently learnt that there has been a complaint made against myself and Christine P. concerning noise coming from her home. It was really only about me closing the door after leaving her home. Mehmet asked me to "change my behaviour."

He said I needed to leave her home without slamming the door and causing a nuisance. I told him that I had never slammed the door, but promised I would try to be more discreet and careful in the future.

I asked the Manager here who had made the complaint but she said she didn't know anything about it, and that Louise was dealing with it. I think the complaint is really a result of someone with an axe to grind against us. I know the person who made it was already picking on one of the cleaners here and had been spreading malicious rumours about Christine P. on the same day I arrived here. I think her complaint was really to get back at us for our complaint about harassment.

I am worried that even if we crept around like mice these women would still complain because they have a vindictive nature, which doesn't bode well for the future. We could end up being accused of making a noise again, when we hadn't done!

(Mehmet also felt it necessary to mention I was on the Register. I told him that I should not be and attempted to summarise why. I told him what you had said about the slate being wiped clean after six months, but he said my name would always have this stigma attached to it in the files as they had a duty of care towards the Residents (who I am obviously a great danger to!).

I just want a quiet life free from confrontation Mr Simpson.

I wish there was a way the atmosphere could be improved as I think this is a lovely place to live. If it was up to me I would speak to the people concerned directly and try to sort it out without your intervention, but the people concerned just don't want to know and seem to be very intransigent.

I am still supporting my mother who lives close by and is caring for my sick step-father.

I just wanted you to know the truth.

Yours Sincerely,
Gudrun

Badges

Order your Badges now; while stocks last!

£50 per bundle

Most popular:

Vice-Admiral

Career Criminal

Saville's Travels

Kiddie-fiddler (1st Class)

Grooming Major

Offender 2nd Class

Offender Primary Class

Le Vell MAJESTY

Please allow sixteen months for delivery due to higher than expected demand.

Sepia toning

Precocious age burlesqued in brown,
I puzzle through the shoals,
for an old man taking snaps,
in singles or in crowds.

Champagne of each frozen trait,
their silver flows of silk,
in the magic tray are stretched,
beneath each lending wave.

Evergreen towards the tide,
sun drenched skins of wine,
each pitchy leaf of gold composed,
in twigs of felted grain.

My finger on the trigger still,
press gently once, then sigh,
I wonder who behind the glass,
is missing presumed dead...