

Vicious Circle

This scene takes place in a twin-bedded room in a young offenders' detention centre. LAURA is a new inmate but Hollie has been here for months and has a reputation as a bully. Until now, Laura hasn't spoken to any of the inmates about why she has been detained. When Hollie asks about a photograph, pinned to the wall by Laura's bed, she reveals the chilling story of her crime.

LAURA: That's Amy. She was my best friend. The times we had together! You wouldn't believe some of the things we got up to... or maybe you would... I can trust you can't I?

Well, it happened last summer. I heard that Amy had been seeing my boyfriend David behind my back. I asked her if there was any truth in the rumours and she said "Yes." It was as though my feelings counted for nothing. You've no idea how hurtful that was. I didn't care about David – it wasn't serious – but that was no excuse for the deception. Every time we'd talked and laughed, like friends do, she'd been lying. A whole month of laughing and lying and laughing and lying. I just wanted to talk to her. I wanted her to see how hurt I'd been. One Sunday, when I knew that she'd be walking her dog down by the river, I waited for her on the bridge. There she was, carefree and happy in the sunshine. *I'd lost weight. I'd shut myself away.* I ran after her. Her pathetic little dog kept snapping at my heels. I wanted to kick it but I was trying so hard to be reasonable! Then she turned her back on me. Nobody does that.

(LAURA's mind is now on the riverbank, reliving the memory of what happened)

I watched her walk away. I ran at her with all the speed I had in me. I slammed my hands into her back and she screamed and fell forward, sprawled out on the footpath. She struck her head on the stone slab at the edge and went over into the water. She floated in a standing position. Her head just above the surface, her arms out to her sides, she was just staring. Then she gasped for air and her eyes came

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alive. She started screaming and thrashing about. Someone was going to hear the commotion so I moved to the edge of the path and placed my foot on top of her head. I pushed down smoothly and she sank. It took longer than I expected for the bubbles to stop coming from her mouth but when they did she was completely still. My leg ached. I lifted my foot and she stayed there, her hair spread out around her. I saw my reflection in the water...

(LAURA's mind is back in the room)

Someone saw it all from the bridge. Some stupid kid, who couldn't mind his own business. You may have noticed that I like to have things facing me. My little ornaments. See? Everything really. *(Looking at Amy's photograph and smiling)* Amy will always face me now.

(Turning to Hollie, her face suddenly fixed with a serious expression) You are going to be a friend aren't you? You'd never turn your back on me would you? Because if you can't be trusted, you'll remind me of Amy and, well... that wouldn't be good for *either* of us... would it?

by Nick Teed