

Busy Bee

Yesterday I went to a funeral and got stuck by a bee, a big fat busy bee.

It happened after the service while I was standing with Maggie Philpotts, you know the Chairperson of the Children's Hospice Charity, admiring, well she was admiring the floral tributes. I thought they were terribly common, "Mum" spelt out in pink carnations, arrangements in pink lilies with large protruding stamen covered in sticky yellow pollen. I was watching a bee wobbling, dipping and hovering amongst the flowers almost as if it was reading and inspecting the messages. My thoughts turned to Fiona and her well-meaning busy life when the bee suddenly veered over and settled on the lapel of my Stella McCartney. Of course I was terrified it would leave a pollen stain and attempted to brush it off. Too late, it stung me on my collar bone just where the edge of the jacket rubbed against my skin.

The bee seemed to drop in slow motion until it landed on the paving stone beside my foot. I raised the sole of my shoe, turned it slightly to the right and squashed the bee with my Louboutin then carefully wiped the sole of my shoe on the grass until the red sole was once again immaculate.

At first I felt a slight tingling and then an itching sensation but Maggie assured me that there was no mark either on my skin or on my jacket.

Patrick had to head back to the office so I went on to the wake with some of the girls from the Bridge Club.

Fiona's two surprisingly plain daughters and their corpulent corporate husbands welcomed us at the entrance of the restaurant and pointed us in the direction of the bar, where their Father was taking orders for drinks. We all dutifully kissed Raymond's cheek and settled ourselves at the back of the room beside the windows overlooking the gardens.

Murmured conversations ebbed and flowed around us.

'She was so brave, so stoic, so heroic, so cheerful, so positive and always thinking of others.

She had been so stretched, so nipped, so tucked, so lifted and so tweaked to within an inch of her life I thought and then realised, that no, that final inch had finally been overtaken.

We all left at five o'clock. The dutiful daughters back to their suburban mansions and Raymond to his empty penthouse apartment. I went home, showered, changed, left Patrick's supper covered in foil on the kitchen table and went off to meet Raymond as usual.

After all it was Wednesday and life has to go on.

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