

Endless love – a horror story

by Erik Betten

My father was Humour, my mother Deception. My existence started as a joke, and a cruel one at that. I came close to oblivion shortly after my conception, but my mother helped me survive my early years. My father didn't give me a second look. That's just how he is. Take my word for it: the adage that Humour thrives on repetition is a cruel lie. But even lies have their merit.

My name is Jean de Meung, although the moment I came to life I was called John. Just John.

The fancy part came later. I was her lethal boyfriend who was 'taking a piss', but who would be coming back any time soon. At least, that was what Rose told the unworthy drunk who stumbled out of the toilets and into her. The urinals were made of cracked porcelain, extending all the way to the floor in the shape of opened coffins. The feeble flow of water was no match for the secretions accumulated that night. Or any night, considering the pub we were in. There are better places for a creature to enter the world. At the time, though, I didn't know any better. It could have become my home, but that was not the life she had conceived for me.

She mentioned me later to a friend. She cackled with laughter. 'John? Really? That's the scariest name you can come up with?' Hurtful words, especially coming within an hour of my birth. My Rose stood up for me. 'It's Jean de Meung, if you must know. And he happens to be a professor.' I had matured quickly. The stupid girl kept giggling. 'Ooh, fancy you with an older bloke. And posh as well.' It was obvious our fledgling relationship didn't enjoy the full support of her circle of friends. But they couldn't see what she recognised in me. The ruthless potential. The selfless dedication to her every wish. There was no end to my capacities, and she knew it.