

## Mia - Storyteller for Scarborough Stories

Mia's story is about her experience of lockdown & friendship.

**\*Content warning: References to suicide\***

I've got this ring. It's shiny. I like it. I love it. Let me tell you about how I got it.

It's the first day of lockdown and I don't have a clue. I go to the shop to try and top up my phone, and everything is closed. Ok, I should probably start watching the news shouldn't I.

At first I'm in denial, this isn't happening. Suddenly I'm stuck alone in a foreign country and I don't want to admit it but I'm fucking scared. I'm pretty sure everybody is to some level functioning in survival mode so I can't blame other people for everything that happened no matter how much I would like to.

So I say I was alone, but actually, there was this guy. It's something that never would have happened in any other circumstance. I was, well not, to be bitter but way out of his league and he was kind of ugly.

So I started sleeping with him and he would tell me while we were in bed together how he wants to sleep with my best friend at the time (I know) and he would go behind my back telling all our friends that I'm a psycho making it all up in case I ever tell anyone about our little affair (he didn't want his girlfriend to find out). But I was scared and the world was falling apart and this was the only form of human contact I had so I just sat down and took it.

I have this sinking feeling in my chest, it's tight and feels like darkness is spreading from my heart through my whole body. I didn't know that's what this feeling was at the time but it does make sense now. It was fear.

I'm scared because I've no idea whether I'll have enough money to pay rent or eat. See since I'm a foreign student I'm not eligible for a maintenance loan so my entire income relies on me getting furloughed by my zero hours contract job. (thanks Boris).

And as for the guy. I wish I could say I blocked him and never spoke with him again but nope... he ghosted me which helped in the long run but at the time ....

One night it's like, 3am, I'm sat on the sea wall on Marine Drive for about half an hour. There are no cars around. I'm shaking. Then a police car pulls up and starts to ask me questions, he doesn't want to leave me alone, in case I... He asks me what I am listening to, and just at that moment Taylor Swift comes on, I mean Taylor Swift, come on, out of everything I was listening to that night, I think it was the song from 50 Shades of Grey - just ridiculous.

I didn't tell him much, and he left eventually but he gave me his badge number, so I could call him at the station if I needed to. I never did, but I kept the details on my phone. A comfort in a way.

When I tell my friends what had happened, instead of being nice to me, like the police officer, they lose their temper, get angry with me for scaring them, make it all about them and decide the best course of action it to kick me out of the house share three weeks before we were going to move in together.

Throughout this whole time there is one person who even bothered to check in and ask if I'm ok and now she's the only person that matters.

Delacie was my roommate since the first day I moved here for uni. We weren't that close at first but she was always there, sat in the kitchen, ready to chat, friendly and kind. During lockdown she was the only one who cared and stuck with me through all my breakdowns and I am so happy and honoured to be able to call her my friend. Just being with her makes me feel warm inside.

And it's because of her that I have this ring.

When all was burned

From the pressure and ashes a diamond survived

And shined more than ever

Where fire once raged

a single flower of friendship now blossoms.

She had one first. First time we met after lockdown she showed me it and I wanted it cause it was pretty and shiny and so she gave me her employee discount at warren james, where she worked, and I went and got one too.

I wear it everyday.

It makes me feel strong because I know she's there with me.

So tits up, one foot in front of the other and on we go.