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Tutor: Enza Gandolfo

Ali-G

By Alisha Poor

Letter to the Editor

Offset Press 2007

Dear Editor,

I would like to submit my short story for consideration in the Offset Press 2007 publication.

Ali-G is an insight into the life of young girl, a fish out of water, who tries to find herself and her way outside of the harsh family traditions of the suburban crime world. A story that takes you underwater into the confused the spontaneous and the transient life of Ali. Based on true events and experiences.

I am 24 years old and enjoy writing young teen and adolescent fiction.

I have always been interested in writing for young audiences and have been writing prose and short stories for a couple of years. I am currently enrolled in Victoria University studying, Multimedia, Professional Writing and Psychology.

Yours Thankfully,

Alisha Poor.

Workshop Critique.

My story was liked overall in the workshop and most of my feedback was positive. In some parts however the story was unclear and some of the characters were confusing such as Ali's relationship with her 'Mafia' parents. Contrary, Ali the main character was understood, the problems with herself and with her friends and family.

Some parts such as her dream, the starfish, the car driving between Ali and SD and the Cyclic ending was quite popular and favourable amongst my workshop. However the story contained many grammatical errors with spelling mistakes and run-on sentences, in much need of editing. In parts there were problems with tense and structure, i.e. making it clear what is a dream, what is reality and who is I, being Ali after she wakes up.

Whilst redrafting the story I looked at many of the things stated above, most of which should make the story more clear overall. Some parts should be a little less ambiguous such as Ali's suicide, which with the separation of paragraphs should make the start and end, 3rd point of view more obvious in terms of its differences in respect to Ali. Much editing has been done to correct punctuation, grammar and spelling mistakes.

Ali-G

Courtney heads down to the bedroom at the end of the hall, enters and looks down to where Ali is sleeping. Courtney throws off the covers, she is curled up, breathing softly, a teddy is held tightly in her arms trying to get free. She is smiling and giggling, goose bumps appear and her feet begin to waggle. 'Wake-up Ali!' yells Courtney as she begins shaking her. 'Yes I'm awake!' Ali exclaims.

When I get to my feet I wander out and take a seat opposite Madison at the breakfast table. 'How did you sleep?' asks Courtney from in the kitchen, 'Good thanks' I reply. I look up at Madison, who is playing Jenga with the newspaper, trying to separate the advertisements with one hand whilst quaffing coffee with the other, there is an awkward silence. 'So what is everyone up to today then?', I ask enthusiastically. Courtney appears from behind the kitchen and places Coco Pops and my medications on the table and replies 'We're at work of course' I look back towards Madison who laughs. I smile and reach for my glass of OJ.

Courtney returns again and takes a seat. Madison finishes sifting through the newspaper and hands me the comics and crosswords section. I take the section and smile sarcastically, 'Thanks' I set it next to me and pretend to look interested. Courtney frowns at Madison and gives her a 'don't encourage her kind of look'. I lift my spoon to my lips and become paused, hypnotised by the popping sound. 'So when do you start back at university?' Courtney asks. Pop, pop, pop, pop. 'Ali did you hear me?' Courtney exclaims impatiently. Reluctantly I place the spoon back into the bowl. 'Next week', I reply. 'Maybe you should be doing something other than watching cartoons all day', she says. Her hand reaches over to mine and

taps' me on the wrist. Like a fish behind glass, it infuriates me, I can't stand people touching me. I am Pisces after all.

I reach over the table and take the Biro from Madison's mouth, circle the date on the top of the paper and hand it back to him, 'this is yesterday's and the mind jumble answer is where's the love? I get up and head into my room. I throw off my PJ's and get changed into my black pinstriped pants, white lace singlet and black hooded sweater, mafia girl. I jump on my bed with my laptop and start chatting away to friends as my long blunt brown hair sways to the R&B of Gwen Stefani, Cassie, Nelly and 50cent. Soon after I fall asleep.

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During the winter-time, my favourite time, when the curtains are open, I stand at my bedroom window, looking out over the slippery foggy streets bellow. Rain streaks over the windows, as flames flicker on the communication poles in the distance, it's quite romantic. Sometimes I imagine holding a black cat in my arms, stroking its warm fur, as I watch people commute to and from work and school just like a crime boss would do. Unfortunately, I'm just the crime boss's daughter. St Albans is a multicultural Manhattan with the sound of London bells in the morning, the streets of Istanbul in the afternoon and the New York subway, with sirens and screams at night.

Madison is the boss and every Friday night he drags me along to his poker games either to serve drinks or just to look good by his side. Occasionally he would let me play, if he was feeling lucky or just tired. One time he let me play his chips and at the end of the night I turned \$4,000 into \$13,000. Unfortunately I'm a stupid girl, as he keeps reminding me and I lost it all after the next few hands. 'A flush always beats a straight', he keeps saying. That night he cracked one of my ribs and broke my ankle in two places. I couldn't walk for weeks.

Occasionally I see some of my west-side friends. Mostly they are the same age as myself. There's 'Snoop-dog' or 'SD' as I would call him. He pulls up into the driveway below with the rest of his street friends with their systems up. Wannabe rappers accompanied by slutty skirts step out wearing knee high fluffy boots, NY, Brooklyn, Von Dutch, Dada and FCUK hooded jackets. Their hair braided tightly back. SD steps up, lifts the bonnet of his bronze Supra and calls out from below 'Where's Ali-G' he yells, 'G', meaning girl, he found it extra cute that it was also the name of a comedian that he liked too. Another is slinky G' because of my anorexic appearance, he would then look up at my window.

We used to be good friends. We kind of still are but ever since I introduced him to my crib, 360 degrees of G posters, along with medical books, statistics books, fiction novels, journal articles and newspapers, he has been distant. 'I'm too cool for school Ali girl', he would say and we would just wave. Moreover, now that I think, maybe it was when he let me drive his car for the first time That was the same day that I received my beaming semester exam results, I was feeling overly excited that day.

That night he let me drive his car, 'don't be frigid', he said, 'push the pedal further, further, come on, you're so weak Ali!' Reluctantly he pushed me up to 140kmh on a 80kmh road, I was shaking, my heart was beating so fast, faster than it had ever before. It felt like I had left everything behind apart from my skeleton, my bones like glass ready to break at any moment. His hands ran up my thighs and into my panties, I felt so high and was unaware to his advances, when suddenly the lights changed to orange and the cars began stopping up ahead. 'Ali are you going to stop?' he asked. I was in a world of my own, just like in the car games I used to play on my brother PS2. 'Ali!' he yelled, and before I could think I turned into the free lane and instinctively accelerated to make it across the intersection before the

lights turned red, SD's mirror, millimetres away from being lost and before I could finish blinking I had passed through the intersection at 150kmh, and then started breaking. 'Stop the fucking car, you stupid fucking bitch!' he yelled. I looked over towards him as he finished recollecting the rest of his life and that of reality too, 'you fucking this, you fucking that, I felt so high, I couldn't understand what he was saying so I just smiled and giggled instead.

When I stopped the car, immediately he reached over and took the keys from the ignition. He inspected his car, making sure that nothing was scratched. I was dying from laughter from the expression on his face. After looking at his car for a while he grabbed my arm and pulled me out, 'Jesus Ali girl you're fucking insane, you're so stupid, did you ever think about stopping?' I didn't speak another word as we drove back. He seemingly cursed all the way, saying how stupid I was. I fell asleep as soon as I got back into the car and when I woke up he was still cursing. Ever since that night I was grounded from ever touching his car and he insisted that I stay at least four metres away from it.

Every time we go out together with his friends, he makes a joke. He checks his pockets and exclaims in a loud voice 'where's my keys, where's that psycho ditsy bitch Ali, she hasn't run off with my keys and covered my windscreen with a thousand pieces of fucking paper has she, and left the whole fucking metro police department outside?' He then dangles the keys above his head, 'No don't worry everyone, I found them!' I just blush, knowing that everyone in this place is sure to have a criminal record of some kind. I was a bit off the rails then and easily excited. I got myself another Margareta, adding salt to injury. The salt on my lips reminding me of the seashore, reminding me that I should be caring and think of others, like a piscine should do, suddenly I noticed a starfish in my hand, it's goo running down my arm, 'Ahh!' I scream as I flick it away.



I wake up in a cold sweat and find myself not on my bed chatting to friends and listening to R&B but on the couch with my feet on Madison's chestnut table as Sponge Bob dances around on the plasma screen in front of me. I can still feel the starfish goo and I look to my arm, blood is seeping and dripping from under the dressing on my wrist, the cuts from yesterday. I'm naturally hyper sensitive to blood which makes the act of cutting so addictive. Just before you pass-out is the period of pleasure, euphoric ecstasy. It's an easy alternative to drugs and alcohol which are never good for you. I miss SD and my university friends. I don't even have a black cat, who thinks I should have one. Just to please everyone else to live up to the family traditions of cheating, lying and doing everything that is wrong and illegal. One day I'll show them, show them that I can do everything right, 'Ali how can you help others when you can't even help yourself? The only reason you're at university is to keep you out of our hair, where anywhere else you'd be useless, your such a stupid girl Ali' Courtney would say. I would just hold up my stats book with my left hand and place my right hand over my heart and say, 'I'm a prevalent person, patients will prevail and you'll be sorry.' Afterwards my bedroom would be exorcised and she'd be gone.

I add pressure to stop the bleeding. The door closes and I look over towards Madison as he returns from a day at the bookies. 'Ali get your feet off my table, and if I find any blood on my ivory couch I'll have you evicted!' I get up and walk to the kitchen to fetch a fresh dressing and a glass of milk. When I return Courtney is at the breakfast table unloading the daily groceries and correspondence. 'Is there anything for me?', I ask enthusiastically as I collect the letters from the table. 'Why would you think anyone would write something to you?', Only people who pay bills, who work and who have boyfriends get letters'. Courtney smiles as Madison creeps up behind me and places his arms around me, his hands up my top

‘one day she’ll get it.’ Madison says as he begins massaging me. I throw the letters at Courtney, ‘Fuck you! You’re all Fucked up.’ I try to escape from Madison’s grasp, but I can’t do anything. He turns me around and instinctively I flinch as the back of his hand meets with my cheek. The side of my face feels like fire, I dig my nails through his skin, pull away and run into my room and slam the door.

The next morning Courtney heads down to the bedroom at the end of the hall, enters and looks down to where Ali is sleeping. Courtney throws off the covers, she is curled up and still, the teddy on the floor next to her. ‘Wake-up Ali!’, yells Courtney as she begins shaking her. There is no response.