

## *Duke's Heartbreak & other stories*



Beatrice Holloway

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### *Duke's Heartbreak*

Tonight I resigned from my job. From now on I shall play dumb, refuse to obey and then they will have to retire me. I really loved my work until tonight. Never again do I want to be tested in such a cruel manner.

I don't remember my mother as we were parted when I was a six weeks old pup. What I do remember was being tucked inside Mike's zip-up jacket.

Mike would have been about fourteen years of age then, 'All arms and legs,' his mother often said. When I came to him, he was shy and lonely, no real friends to speak of and had braces on his teeth which didn't help his shyness. He was so quiet but I knew he loved me.

Best of all for me, was his smell, I'd know it anywhere. It was a scent I would go to the ends of the earth for. It was very special to me.

From his smell I could guess his moods. I knew his PE days and I knew when he played football. I used to snuffle around his school bag. I could tell by the boots or trainers what the day's sport would be.

I knew when he was happy. Mostly when we were in the woods playing hide and seek. Of course, I always found him quickly, it was that scent of his that gave him away. I knew when he was cross, when he came home from school, a door would slam, but he was never cross with me. Sometimes I knew he was upset by the drag of his feet on the floor. I used to prick my ears up and learned it was something to do with teachers and exams.

Mike would carry me about in his jacket when I was small, unzipping it so that my head would poke out. He told everyone my name was Duke. He told them about my family tree and about my special food and our games. My bed was a cardboard box in the kitchen, or so mother thought but it was at the bottom of Mike's bed I liked best. It was warmer and there was his lovely scent.

We went for long walks through fields and woods where I enjoyed

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