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## Tuesday Tonkin

by Penny Humphrey

Tuesday Tonkin unbuttoned his brown overall and hung it on the hook next to the cash register, as he had done every week day for the past fifty years

It was getting dark as he stepped outside and locked up the shop. He looked up, surveying the early evening sky.

“Storm I shouldn’t wonder,” he muttered to himself as he began the short walk home where Mary would be cooking Star Gazy Pie for his tea.

It had been a steady Tuesday in his small hardware store. Ribs Gilbert came in for the sledge hammer which had been on order. John the Fish came to collect the ten yards of nylon thread he had ordered the week before. A stranger asked for linseed oil, he would have to wait for that.

“Should be here for next Tuesday,” Tuesday told him.

The smell of Star Gazy Pie wafted over him as he opened the back door. He was glad to be back in the warmth.

Next morning the effects of the storm could be seen everywhere, trees were down along with electricity and telephone wires. Slates were missing from roofs and the sea had invaded the little harbour, laying claim to a few unsecured small boats.

Tuesday hurried to the shop early, put on his overall and swept the floor. He moistened a rag and wiped a porthole in the window to the street in order to see who was coming in.

First through the door was Eddy the local builder to buy eight ounces of roof tacks, a yard broom and a bag of cement. The two men talked about the storm while Tuesday measured out the tacks. He then shook his head. Eddy would have to wait until next week for the yard broom and cement. Jimmy Pascoe arrived and would have to wait until next week for his light bulbs and white spirit.

Over the morning came a slow but steady stream of customers, most of them having to wait days for their requirements rather than drive twenty-five miles to the nearest town.

Tuesday closed for lunch each day and today he went to the back room of the store where he pulled out a bag of cement, a yard broom, a box of light bulbs and half a gallon of white spirit, plus all the other things for which customers would have to return next week.

Satisfied with his work he went to the pub for a lunchtime pint, which he took to his customary seat. A curious tourist asked the barman why he called him Tuesday?

“Well his real name is Stanley,” the barman said, “but we call him Tuesday because whenever you go to his shop to ask for anything, it always has to be ordered in and generally it will be here next Tuesday. Although if you say it’s urgent he can usually magic it up.”

The barman and the tourist looked over at Stanley as he peered into the depths of his pint pot.

“Funny that,” the barman said.