

**Bourne**  
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## Room 101

by Sue Thompson

“Ere Fanny are you up for that meeting tonight?”

“Nah I don’t think so not my cup of tea, a load of men ranting and raving bout nout”

Fanny and Martha were sitting by the hearth brewing a cuppa whilst the bairns slept upstairs, this was the only time in the day they got to sit and contemplate the goings on in the little Hamlet called Heage, in Derbyshire.

Fanny was a rotund woman with a rough worn out face even though she had just turned 31, her hair tied up in a bun, with strands falling down over her face. Not an unattractive woman by any means, but having seven children in almost as many years had taken its toll. Martha on the other hand was as slim as a twig, with long glossy hair falling easily over her shoulders, maybe because she was slightly younger and only had two youngster’s she had managed to keep her figure and her looks, so far.

“I heard from the local rag man that John Reeve had gone and put a curse on the Quakers meeting house, damning them all to hell” Fanny said rocking back and forth in her rocking chair.

“Aye and Samuel came home last night telling me a story of them believing that Heaven was exactly six miles above the earth, separated only by the sky” Martha and Fanny rock around laughing hysterically holding onto their bellies until the tears poured from their eyes. “Stop it I am going to wet myself in a minute” Cries Fanny.

With that a bairn starts to cry and Fanny jumps to her feet to go and fetch it before it wakes the rest up.

Later that night Samuel returns home and tells Martha he is going to give the meeting one more chance, he says that the 'Muggletonians' could be the next biggest religion in the Country and he wanted to be part of it, they could make their fortune if they were in it right from the start. Martha looks at him in amazement, how could this man she has loved for so many years be such a fool!

Samuel tells her about the meeting room and gives her instructions about how to get there, the meeting would be at 7pm sharp and Martha was to get the old woman down the road to come and sit with the bairns. He has not given her much choice, she knows from his tone it is an order rather than a request, so she gives him his dinner and waits until he leaves for the drinking house before she gets herself ready.

Fanny is also at her house having a similar discussion with her husband. She too gets dressed and makes her way to Martha's. The two of them trudge through the muddy lanes until they reach the corner pub and enter the back door and head for Room 101 where the 'Muggletonians' meeting is under way. There is raucous singing, laughter and lots of debates about life and God the man who lived in Heaven six miles up in the sky!

Martha and Fanny looked at each other and both agreed that room 101 was much better than spending an evening at the Quaker house where they sat in silence!