

Mother's Little Legacy

by Richard Rewell

I was enjoying my garden, observing with wonder the squadron of bumble bees fussing around the lavender bushes like tiny helicopters on some military manoeuvre, then the delight of three magpies sipping from the stone bird bath beneath the pink blossom of the cherry tree. Also, I listened to a duet being sung by a couple of partridges from somewhere behind the high yellow stone boundary wall. It was all rather lovely. Until I got the call.

The opening bars of Jagger and Richards's 'Jumpin' Jack Flash' screamed from my pocket. I snatched my mobile, thrust it against my ear and heard the dreaded words to which I responded 'Shit' and one of those rough, salty lumps lodged in my throat and I held back the tears. My mother had died.

By the time I got to my son and daughter-in-law's apartment night had arrived and the grandchildren were in bed. All was quiet and sombre.

"Cup of tea father?" asked my son.

"Please."

"Darling I'll get it" said my daughter-in-law giving me a hug and adding "And you must eat something. Bacon sandwich?"

"Why not" I smiled thinking that how strange it was that when experiencing grief and I've had my share, I could still eat.

Many cannot and do not eat for ages, until the grief passes. But I do. I eat. Weird how you think about such details when a personal trauma hits you.

To the accompaniment of the grandfather clock behind me, my son asked "Do we tell grandfather?"

"No. He's lost the plot. In fact, my dear boy, he can't even find the script."

"Love him" smiled my son. "And I agree with you."

"Bloody Hell I'm going to miss her" I said holding back the tears for the second time that day and sensing that wretched lump in my throat again.

We sat down on the two white sofas facing each other across an expansive coffee table and I could see my boy fighting back tears before blowing his nose and saying

"I found the note grandma used to talk about. And after you and I spoke on the telephone I had a look at the will again and she's put that bit in it."

'Good' I said.

"Just tell me what you want to do father. I'll do what you wish."

"Thank you." I replied.

The funeral came and went. But that note referred to by my son and written on the back of the betting slip from Derby day is still in the back pocket of my gardening trousers. I treasure it.

Scribbled in biro, in my mother's writing was my passport to freedom. My mother's little legacy if you wish. Which was that I could retire and step aside to allow my son to take over the family business. Leaving me of course to spend more time in my beloved garden and allowing my dear boy to be king of England.