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## Deceived by Appearances

by Penny Humphrey

The noise was getting louder, whoosh whoosh whoosh like counting seconds. The sun meanwhile was getting lower and appeared blindingly round the side of the mountain. Whoosh whoosh a young man in a yellow ski suit was coming straight for him, but then at the last minute he veered, hit a ledge of snow and leapt feet into the air, narrowly missing a fir tree as he came back down.

'Idiot, exhibitionist,' Tom thought, 'drives a Porsche and lives off the bank of Mum and Dad no doubt'.

He spat on the snow before trudging on and upwards dragging his toboggan behind him. He was heading for the base of the Eiger, not for him the Gondolas, the cable cars or the train.

He reached the soft snow he had been aiming for. No footprints, no ski tracks, nothing. He looked up at the familiar sight of the Eiger and remembered when he had headed down the black track, the most dangerous ski run imaginable. He had done it twice, so exhilarated by the first time that he just had to do it again the following year but he lost his footing over a steep crag and hurtled into a rocky outcrop. Six months later he came out of hospital mended with bits of metal and care but never to ski again.

He sat heavily on the toboggan, digging his feet into the snow for a moment before sliding off, slowly at first and then picking up speed as he manoeuvred his way along ledges and through trees.

The snow was plentiful that year and he was able to slide right into Wengen before stopping on the shale. He picked up the toboggan and headed for a bar where he leant it against the wall outside with the propped up skis before entering the dark interior. He asked for brandy while staring around the room getting accustomed to the dim light. There was a group of young men drinking and being loud at the other end of the room and then he spied the man in yellow, sitting up at the bar and drinking on his own. He wasn't very tall and wore thick spectacles, not the sort of look Tom had imagined. He had the feeling he had met him before but could not place where. How often had his mother warned him not to be deceived by appearances, how often she had been right.

He felt badly for his envious thoughts when the man had skied past him and he sidled up to him to say Hello.

The man looked a bit awkward as if he was surprised anyone should bother to talk to him.

"Hi," said Tom, "I saw you on the mountain just now, I'm Tom."

The man smiled back. "Michael, Michael Edwards."

Suddenly Tom knew just where he had seen this man before

"Oh my God," he said, "you're Eddie, Eddie the Eagle"