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## Betrayal

by Richard Rewell

My old garden sloped steeply upwards, heading for a cluster of trees through which lay the crest of the Downs. It was October and nature was turning brown.

Standing in the garden's I turned and looked down on the roof of my house and on towards the lower end of Old Town and beyond through a light blue fuzzy haze that masked Langley Point, the Marina, the sea and then Bexhill. Smoke hovered over Hastings, it was on fire.

I heard crispy golden-brown leaves scurrying across stone and looked down at my feet at the concrete slab. My memorial to my wife, daughter and son. Victims of the plague.

"Heading west" I said to the slight surprise of my two dogs who briefly glanced up at me before returning to their excited survey of my garden. A garden which I still visited five or six times a year. Just to keep it tidy. And the house too. No point really. But, I did it.

Before the plague, our garden had been a little haven. Us four usually. Sometimes Dad. Sometimes Sophie's partner, sometimes one of Tom's friends.

Debates, arguments, discussions. Sometimes, just stupid stuff. But always good spirited banter with only the occasional loss of cool.

"Remember the last one?" I said to my wife's name on the slab at my feet.

"It was the biggest one. Well, after who was the greatest rock band and what was the greatest movie ever made and what's wrong with Marmite. Yes love, the last one. The one about Brexit."

I can honestly say I had no problem with anyone who voted Brexit and nor did the majority of the electorate of course. After all, tell me what's wrong with not wanting to have some faceless pen-pusher in Luxembourg tell me to spend fifty thousand a year repackaging the sea bass my boats caught with a daft statement saying, 'Contains fish.' What a wanker. He probably had never seen the sea and I'm certainly unfamiliar with Luxembourg's world-famous coastline. Equally I had no problem with Remainers especially their point about maintaining a strong political and military Europe in the light of, in those distant days, of a would-be expansionist Russia. Very fair point.

Let the Remainers and Brexiteers argue healthily with each other as my family did, let each side play the martyr and attempt to occupy this mystical place "the moral high ground."

What stuck in my gullet, what choked me about that whole sorry pile of dung was the betrayal. Not of the protagonists in the Brexit debate but those who we looked to for knowledge, truth and guidance. Parliament. All 650 of them. They let us down and betrayed us. And it was this bunch who betrayed us a second time when they dithered, fumbled and failed to facilitate the distribution of the plague's antidote. Bastards, all of them.

I felt a breeze and turned to face Hastings again. Yes, I could see smoke. Probably from my trawlers. Well, I set them alight.

"Come on dogs. Let's go. Time to move on."

Both dogs gave a happy bark and we headed up the garden, through the cluster of trees and onto the Downs, a warm autumn sun caressing my back. Goodbye Eastbourne.