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There's always more to it

by Penny Jones

Death at the Pells – a true story

Visiting from inner city Manchester Simon was surprised at the headline in the local paper.

“I thought Lewes was a quiet place where nothing happens”

“Oh no this has happened before. At least three times now.”

“Blimey, what are the police doing about it?”

“Well the first time they arrested a man with a Staffordshire bull terrier that had been harassing the swans and causing a disturbance”

“And after that?”

“The other times it was the pollution that overwhelmed the victims”

“How? Were they swimming in the water?”

“Well yes of course”

“How many?”

“I think it was seven, all grey mullet. Read the rest of the article. There's always more to it”

There's always more to it

The procession approaches. At the front a bright light from a flare lights up the smoke behind the first torch bearer. He is silhouetted in a greenish halo against the flat darkness behind. Flashes of golden fire from torches held by marchers four abreast are winding down the hill. The sound of a brass band vibrates on the smoky air, volume increasing as it draws near. It is impossible to separate sound and smell. The acrid burning of wood, paraffin and sacking mingles with the horns, flutes and xylophones. The marchers start to throw their bangers. The reverberations are at their best in this narrow section.

The explosions echo between high flint walls. You can taste them as you clench your teeth and breathe in the smoke. Trapped, as you turn away in retreat from the sensory overload you know there is always more to it.

There's always more to it

“So what happened when Father left?” asked Louise.

“What do you mean just before or much longer – weeks or months?”

Mother knew the names of all the hedgerow plants. She would tell them to Louise and her brother and expect them to remember. She would answer all kinds of questions regarding geography and history, even if pushed, on the facts of life -“reproduction” she called it. She approached this subject with the same scientific objectivity which she applied in response to all Louise's questions

“I mean what happened at any time...when he was here. Before he wasn't here.”

Her mother looked away. There was clearly no simple answer. The fact was he had gone. The fact was he was no longer here.

Louise suspected Mother was being evasive. She always was when it came to important questions. When the answer would be complicated. Louise knew that there was always more to it.