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Everything You Know is Wrong

by Stuart Carruthers

“Some of these things are true and some of them lies,” said Ruth as she carefully turned the pages to her father’s diary.

Peter Earthwhistle died a lonely man. Estranged from his family for over forty years, the later part of his life was spent writing his diaries and shredding the extensive government documents he had copied from his time spent working overseas. Peter had secrets on the people he worked for and their superiors.

The circumstances around his death remained a mystery. His body was found behind the driving seat of a van on a quiet country lane in southern Spain. He didn’t drive and his summer home was in Biarritz, nearly a thousand kilometres away. His family only found out when his lawyer Mr Jenkins posted a letter requesting they attend the reading of his will. That’s when the trouble started.

Forty Seven Tuebrook Avenue was an old Victorian house in desperate need of repair. When Ruth and her sister Emily first visited the house, they were shocked that their father lived in such squalor. Every room had piles of black bags full of shredded paper and empty wine bottles. His reading desk was covered in old photographs laid out in the format of a family tree. They visited the house in Spain but only to collect his personal possessions and put it up for sale, neither of them wanted to stay there.

It was the last Tuesday of the summer holidays and Emily sat in the garden surrounded by books and half written diary notes. Her heart was broken. As Ruth emerged from the kitchen she could instantly tell something was wrong. Taking the single sheet of paper from her sister’s hand, she read each line twice. They sat in silence crying for the rest of the afternoon.

“We need to burn everything, this has to remain our secret,” Ruth informed her sister the next morning, “if this gets out, they will come looking for us.”

“Look what I found last night,” said Emily as she placed a black and white photo on the table.

“Isn’t that?”

“Yes it is, everything you know is wrong,” replied Emily.