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Rumour has it

by Victoria Cooper

The news spread swiftly through the village. It was just like that epidemic of flu that took out old Mr Ridley after a week of coughing. Mother cancelled my fly fishing magazine subscription after that; she refused to stand in the post office queue. I could see her point. I think it was also then that she started wearing white cotton gloves in bed when she read the newspapers. She sits high upon a summit of pillows and broadsheets with Timothy the Highland Terrier on sentry duty by her feet. I still have a crescent shaped scar on my nose from when I wanted the Society pages. The undertaker even refused to visit us after that debacle with Father's cravat. Mother should never have suggested it, she knows how Timothy detests yellow.

Mother is always reading. She has an entire Georgette Heyer collection, just like Princess Anne apparently. When my magazines ceased arriving I did try one out, but it was all petticoats and heaving busts. I am not a fan of romance. I prefer a good war.

Anyway I digress, the news of my father's cousin, Percy Stroud marrying that school teacher was everywhere. News travels fast in Pidley Bottom, when there are no real stories to get in the way. Percy is in his eighties so I suppose it surprised most people, him being a bachelor all his life, as well as a keen ornithologist. That's where they met, according to Mother. He helped her to untangle their binocular straps in a hide on Rye Harbour. I wonder if it will last.