



The Year without a Summer

by Richard Rewell

I stood on the cliff top with Glen, a Welshman so large, hard and tough that even Tyson Fury would have thought twice before laying a punch on him.

I peered down into the bay, shivering as the temperature collapsed to an even zero.

“Looks like a giant has bitten out a lump of the coast and swam off with it,” said Glen.

“Lovely though,” I said, admiring the sculptured geology.

“Pity about the sharks.”

I nodded and watched six black triangular fins scudding through the bay’s flat grey water.

I unslung my rifle, took aim and pretended to fire.

“Not in this light mate,” laughed Glen, “it’s three thirty and will be dark soon. It’s June and we’ve got great whites in Porthcurno Bay. The world’s gone crazy.”

He was right it, was mid-summer’s day, the temperature was plummeting, darkness was approaching, and it began to snow.

“This happened before. Not because of that up there,” gestured Glen to the black, smoke-filled sky above, “no, when I buried my family. For me, that crazy year had no summer.” He unslung his shotgun and cradled it in his massive arms and got me thinking to when the plague had slaughtered my family back in Eastbourne.

There had been no summer. Not really. I had walked robotically through the streets and along the sea front of a people free Eastbourne, avoiding the occasional body. There was no sound of laughing children, no shouting Mums, no awful tribute bands, squawking seagulls, no entwined couples on the Western Lawns, no Airbourne and, no the bloody 'Dotto Train'. And how I longed to hear "Greensleeves" being belted out from an ice cream van while waiting by our gate with the kids to buy their 'Ninety nines'. And now we were experiencing another summer-less year, under a smoke polluted sky.

Glen and I headed up the slope to the old weather station, our home along with the other survivors of the plague. Fifteen of us. Perhaps there were more somewhere. But between here and Eastbourne I saw none.

In the comfort of the weather station, Roger, an ex-pharmacist said, "these bits we taste in the air, is the fall-out from what we think is smoke. I've used the station's tracking equipment, and sadly confirm this smoke stuff is world- wide. It's everywhere. There's another thing, I've tested the bits. Their chemical make-up is extraordinary, unknown to me. It's almost as if, well it was from another world."