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## Ladies Laughing

by Sho Botham

Three women who looked as if they should know better came tumbling out of the coffee shop. Their laughter could be heard as far as Mr Crossford's front gate at the end of the village. The three bumped into each other as they jostled along the pavement to where their car was parked.

Mrs Caruthers, Mrs Lionel Caruthers, resplendent in a dark navy suit, tutted as she waited for them to pass. The three giggled and chortled as if they'd had a few too many. But that was the thing. All they had drunk was skinny latte's in the coffee shop.

Piling into the car they headed to the other end of the village where they all lived in Greenacres Way. They didn't see the lorry coming towards them. They were too busy laughing. They all survived but their injuries meant it would be some time before they could meet up again in the coffee shop.

About two months later Mrs Caruthers met her sister-in-law in the coffee shop. They dissolved into unladylike laughter as they left the coffee shop. This was not like them at all. But just like the three women before, they got into their car and laughed so much they didn't see Farmer Bill's tractor coming along the High Street. Mrs Carruthers laughing seemed very inappropriate as her sister-in-law didn't survive the accident. But still Mrs Caruthers laughed. Her husband Lionel didn't know what to make of her when she got home.

When the police visited they asked Mrs Caruthers if she had been drinking skinny lattes in the coffee shop.

She nodded in confusion wondering what they had to do with anything. The police seemed overly interested in the skinny lattes. They didn't ask about anything else, not even about her laughing.

The Morning Chronicle, a few days later, explained how the new waiter at the coffee shop had been adding his own liquid laughter to the skinny lattes. He tried to make out that he'd just wanted to liven up the old dears but admitted he hadn't worked out the correct dose. Once ingested, the laughing ladies were accidents waiting to happen. He hadn't meant to unleash a monster into the skinny lattes. He hadn't thought of the consequences. Not time to do that now, not where he's going.