

## Telling the Time

by Miriam Silver

I was always slow, didn't walk until I was over two, or cut my teeth at what they thought was the right time, so I couldn't eat solid food like the rest of the family. In fact I always felt an outsider, especially when they laughed because I couldn't tell the time, in fact nursery school taught us to recognise analogues, the family used that 24 hour military system.

I was a disappointment to them from the moment I pushed my way into this world, they had wanted a boy. Also, through no fault of my own, my birth had been difficult and I was held responsible for my mother never providing me with any siblings or my father with a boy to help him on the farm.

My father was a tall, broad thick set man who married my mother in order to keep his home and give him lots of boys, which of course I gradually found out, by his lack of interest in me and his constant look of disappointment, which was increasingly obviously. My mother always ignored me other than provide basic care.

I was a short stocky child with wild hair which no amount of brushing could control. I was left to myself, except at meals when their banter made me smile and ignore the fact that they were jeering at me. What they never realised was that all the time under cover of 'slow learner' I was planning my own back.

Eventually I went to work, the travelling library needed help, the librarian was impressed with my interest. Travelling around with her I learnt how to check the books in and out, chat to customers and enjoy a social life. I was even earning some money.

When I met Ivan I recognised a sympathetic soul, he worked at a farm shop, he loved to read, like me it took him to another world. When he asked me to the village hall Bring and Buy, I accepted and our relationship developed from there.

Turned out, his father owned the farm shop, and the surrounding land on which it stood, including BYO as the asparagus , strawberry and bean seasons developed. Very successful business.

My parents haven't really forgiven me yet for joining such a successful family, but I'll get my own back soon when I introduce them to their first grandson.

