



Bad Jam and Nibbled at Lettuces

by Daniel Judd

May Veal had everything in life she'd ever wanted, save someone to share it with. She'd had that once, but she'd lost it.

At first it was just missing in action, but since it wasn't there anyway the wholeness remained intact. From where she was standing anyway. Bolted down in Boulton Bee.

But then the letter came and with it a whole chunk of wholeness had been swallowed up. Missing believed dead in black and white. There was little wiggle room for doubt. Little chance of hope to bleed through the words, not in May's mind.

The confirmation came in human form. Group Captain Gilmore. The wholeness was shot to pieces, literally. And there was no going over the words for any wiggle. The bleeding had stopped.

She filled the hole of the now not wholeness with God, bad jam and nibbled at lettuces. There was no time for silly things that got in the way of doing good deeds. No tears.

She succeeded in her mission. Completed the wholeness. A home, a church, the little bit of garden. Convincing no one she now had everything she ever wanted.

Sadly, the wholeness came with a pudding of guilt. She couldn't cry. Not one tear, not even when the nice man had finished his cup of tea and made his excuses.

It wasn't that she was devoid of emotion it's just that her head was too full of common sense and practical things. How to French knit, when to plant the lettuces, all the verses of For Those in Peril on The Sea.

And it wasn't that she couldn't cry, she just saved it for happy things, the receiving of rings, unexpected fuchsias and badly drawn birthday cards. She could do guilt, though. That time with the beach pyjamas, being caught with the aniseed twist and pear drops of the not-so innocent, and now.

Then, unexpectedly, there was a knock at the door. Two knocks. The first tentative, as if the wood was too embarrassed to bother her, to shatter the silence. The second with a swagger, more determined. Summoning herself up with a sigh, she went to bring back the bolt and open the door.

An everyday action but not usually at this hour and rarely for May, these days. And with it the outside was ushered in, along with it her future. She now had everything. Not that she knew it yet.