

Bourne
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What?

by Paul Hunter

“Did you hear that?” asked Jenny, his long suffering wife.

“What?” This had become Brian’s automatic response to any question.

“That scream.”

“Ice cream?”

“Did you hear that woman screaming?”

“You’re going to start the cleaning?”

“Oh forget it!”

“Did you hear that?”

“What?”

“The rain”

“The drain?”

“The rain on the window!”

“Placido Domingo?”

“Yes, Placido Domingo is outside singing in the rain. He called round Tuesday and now he’s back for an encore.”

“Singing in the rain, that was Gene Kelly.”

“Yes, that's right. I'll put on the telly.”

Jenny was slowly losing patience with her husband. She knew his hearing was bad and he often refused to wear his hearing aids. At the back of her mind she prayed it wasn't the start of dementia. Brian had not kept in contact with any work colleagues after he'd retired. Covid had put pay to the local groups he hoped to join. She had quite a big social circle but his was nonexistent. He was becoming very socially isolated. He said he was really not bothered but Jenny was not sure.

"Do you have to have the telly so loud? No wonder you are deaf."

"I can't hear you love, the telly is on."

"Oh God give me strength, you'll drive me to drink!"

"A drink, yes whiskey, a large one."

"Oh you heard that, what a surprise!"

"Mince pies? That would be nice."

"There are no mince pies! Christmas is over, now it's cream eggs!"

"Ok, Ok there's no need to shout."

Brian found it difficult to understand why his wife was getting exasperated. He had only asked for a mince pie to go with his whiskey and she knew he didn't like cream eggs.