

Small excerpt from later Chapter

Margaret spotted an ice cream van and beckoned me to go and get two as she was still hot and was tired from all the walking. I came back with two cones with scoops of strawberry ice cream and pushed past somebody to get to Margaret.

‘Where’s the ice cream?’ She asked.

‘Eh?’ I looked down and there were just 2 cones in my hand. I had dropped the ice cream out of them somewhere. Margaret looked in front of her where there was a group of drunken rowdy young lads ogling the cheerleaders as they headed the floats.

‘Hi gorgeous.’ One said whilst grinning like a Cheshire cat.

One of the lads had a light anorak on and I then noticed ice cream dripping out of his coat pocket.

‘Let’s get away from here quick.’ I told Margaret.

We moved a 100 yards away quickly pushing by the on lookers. Margaret was in hysterics laughing tears running down her face.

I looked down the line of the crowds and could see the lad with the anorak in the distance. His hand was covered in ice cream and he was looking around but couldn’t see who did it. His mates were laughing at him. Luckily we’d eaten the cones and were safe now.

The choir came down the street next all dressed in red tunics and with the local clergy closely followed by a brass band. Some Morris dancers were next waving handkerchiefs and banging sticks together.

‘I love Morris dancing Margaret.’

‘I do. They look so funny.’ She grinned.

The children followed in fancy dress on the back of a float dressed as cowboys and Indians and then the last float with candidates for the Village Queen, a kind of beauty contest which brought a roar from the group of drunken lads. The crowd then followed the float down the road so we followed too. We were led to a small field which was a hive of activity with numerous raffle and sales stalls, drinks tent and bouncy castle for the kids.

We came across a High Striker game where men were handed a heavy hammer and instructed to hit a pad that launched a small puck up a track to ring a bell.

‘What’s the prize?’ I asked.

‘It’s the large teddy Sir.’ Margaret egged me on to have a go. ‘Take your shirt off John. Show me your muscles.’

I wasn’t 18 years old anymore and that would be too embarrassing but I decided to pay my pound and have a go. I took a huge swing and the hammer only just hit the pad on the edge. The puck hardly moved to a pointer on the scale saying puny weakling on a Strength-O-Meter.

‘Step aside Samson. Who’s next to win the doll for their girlfriend,’ the announcer shouted.

Everyone laughed and Margaret was in hysterics.

We continued looking round the stalls. Margaret bought some homemade jam and I bought her a Sweep like soft cuddly toy dog to remind her of our day. ‘Call him Poodle.’ I told her. She laughed and we jumped in a taxi back to the pub where Wendy made us a lamb Sunday dinner from the carvery.

END OF PREVIEW