

MARJORIE BOLTON

I've been living in Little Setley for ... *counts*...Twenty five years next March. As you can tell, I'm not what you might call local; I grew up miles away. My George was an engineer you see, and he got offered a job as a foreman in factory down here that made pistons and it were too good a chance to turn down, so no sooner had he got me up the aisle then we moved down here lock stock and barrel. Well as you can imagine I wasn't exactly pleased about it - have you seen round here? Nothing but sheep. And the locals - well, they made their feeling quite clear. First Saturday we moved in we went down the Filly; that was when it was run by old man Taylor - Oh he was a miserable old bugger, never had a good word to say about anyone. His wife was nice enough, I don't know how she put up with him for all those years, although I did hear that she was had a bit of a ding dong with Farmer Parsons, although that was before that thing happened with the scarecrow.

Anyway, that first night when we walked into the filly, well you could have heard a pin drop. It didn't bother me, but my George was really upset - he was working with some of them blokes and thought that they were his mates. I told him that it was because he was foreman now so he was *management* so maybe it wasn't right for him to be drinking with the workers. I didn't let on though that things were difficult for me too.

I'd been a member of the W.I. for years back home so when we moved down here I wanted to join up. But they couldn't be more different than the girls back home. There it was all bit of laugh but down here they took all really seriously; they were a proper Jam and

Jerusalem brigade and they all looked down their noses at me, you could tell. Except Nell. I think she felt bit of an outsider amongst that lot too although for different reasons; she just wasn't very good at W.I. She always forgot the words to Jerusalem and made jam that was so hard the vicar lost a crown on it. As for the outfit she wore for the summer fair - well it was supposed to be a rabbit, but...

Well, through the W.I. I became friends Nell, and she invited me up to tea at Stargrove where I met Mrs Millington. Oh she was lovely, Mrs Millington was, made me feel quite at home, and had none of those airs and graces that those stuck up cows at the W.I. had. So I became quite a regular visitor to Stargrove, mostly to see Nell of course, but Mrs Millington always made a point of saying hello when I was there. And of course there was little Eve who was still in nappies then, oh she were a beautiful little thing. Nell was her nanny but I helped out here and there, to give Nell a bit of a break like, and everything seem to settle down. Once the locals could see that me and George were in with the Millingtons then things started to change, I can tell you. The lads would be buying George drinks in the pub and those snobs down at the W.I. soon changed their tune. Most of them are dead now - except June Saunders and Grace Blake - although she's been going a bit do -lally these last couple of years.

Then Mrs. Millington died in that car accident. It were terrible terrible thing - it was like an earthquake hit the place. The whole village turned out for the funeral, you know. After that, Colonel Millington came back from India, and I started helping him out

around the house a bit more, you know, cooking the odd meal, and a bit of housekeeping. The Colonel, well him being a proper gentleman always remained brave throughout, but he still misses her, to this day. A woman can tell these things, you know. And he were very good to me when my George gave his life in Normandy...*get upset in a Les Dawson style*

So, I carried on helping out for a bit until I fell pregnant with my Jeremy, Little Eve went off to school and Nell got a job up in London. He got a proper Housekeeper after that, Mrs Jarvis and it was me of course who showed her around the village so she knew who was who and which shops to go to and which to avoid. I don't like to tell tales, mind, but that Mr Giles the butcher, well I swear his scales aren't accurate, if you know what I mean, and Arkwright's grocery is always more expensive than Mr Price's, although Arkwright does carry a better range, in my view so it's best to get what you can from Price and the rest from Arkwright.

Anyhow, I carried on visiting Stargrove after that for the odd cup of tea with Mrs Jarvis and help her out here and there if she need a spare pair of hands. Occasionally I'd collect Eve from school too, when she was at the little village school before she went off to boarding school. Even after Mrs Jarvis retired and went to live with her son on the Isle of Wight I was always welcome at Stargrove, especially when Nell came to visit. Although that new housekeeper - she's an odd one. She's from one of the funny eastern European places - Poland or Romania or some other place that I can't pronounce. I think the Colonel should keep an eye on her, personally, what with all those communist spies on the loose. I read

about it all in the paper. My Jeremy says that the Government uses the papers to spread lies to keep the proletariat ignorant of their oppression by the ruling classes. I don't know what he means but I know the papers wouldn't lie, would they?