

The Big Bang

I wrote this as a prologue to introduce Peter and explain why he was moving to the Jurassic Coast. It was meant to be humorous - with the extraordinary TV report on in the background, being completely ignored by Peter and his mother!



“An enormous explosion devastated an ancient college in the city of Cambridge this afternoon. We go over to our reporter live at the scene.”

“The historic north wing lies in ruins. At four thirty this afternoon a powerful explosion tore the building apart. With me now is a college porter who witnessed the scene.”

“I can’t believe it. It’s terrible, terrible. Who would do

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such a thing?”

“What exactly did you see?”

“I was walking through the Old Court. There was a terrible noise. I was thrown to the ground. There were stones and glass flying about everywhere and purple smoke, I couldn’t breath.”

“Purple smoke?”

“Ay, it was purple, smelt terrible.”

“Peter, tea’s ready.”

“Can you bring it in here please, mum?” I said. “There’s a good program on telly after the news.”

“Thank goodness the explosion happened during the Easter vacation when all of the students were away. Miraculously there are believed to be no casualties.”

“Peter, turn the TV down please.”

“Is dad going to be late?” I asked, reaching for the remote control. “He promised he’d help me with my History project.”

“I’m afraid he has to work late at the office tonight.”

“Again!”

“Yes, I’m afraid so. But he did have some very exciting news.”

“Do we have any ketchup?”

“No, sorry, we’re out. Peter, listen, please. I’ve got something really important to tell you. Dad’s been offered a promotion – it’s a much better job and he’s very pleased about it! It means we’ll be able to move out of this small flat and buy our own house with a garden. You’ll be able to have a decent sized bedroom at last.”

This was good news indeed! My room was so small that the bed barely fitted into it. And it would be great to have a garden to play in with my friends!

“Brilliant!” I cried excitedly. “I can have Tom and Martin over. We’ll build a tree house in the garden!”

“I’m afraid that won’t be so easy,” my mother replied in

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a quieter voice. “You see, Peter – dad’s new job isn’t in London.”

“The cause of the mysterious explosion is still unknown. The college, built in the fourteenth century...”

“Peter, did you hear what I said?”

“Yes,” I said glumly, “we’re moving again!”

We had moved every few years with my father’s job. I was just beginning to feel settled here in London. I had made some good friends at school and I really did not want to start over again.

“Where is it this time?” I asked.

“Dad’s new job is in Dorset on the south coast. We’re going to live by the sea.”

“When do we have to go?” I sighed.

“In the summer, at the end of term.”

“Oh,” I said, not feeling at all happy about this news.

“Listen, Peter,” my mum said, gently taking hold of my hand. “I know how you feel. I know it’s been really difficult for you changing schools so often. But things are going to be different now. This is the last time we’ll be moving, I promise. We’re going to settle in our new home. You’ll love being by the sea. Remember when we went on holiday to Weymouth two years ago, we had such a great time?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Well, the place we’re moving to is only a few miles from there – it’ll be great!” she said putting her arm round me. “You’ll soon make new friends. And your old friends can come and visit in the school holidays if you like. It will be like being on holiday all the time!”

As I began to remember what a great holiday we had had, my mother continued, “And we have to move from this small flat soon. There isn’t room to swing a cat.”

“What about a dog?” I asked.

“A dog?” she said puzzled.

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“I mean, can I have a dog when we move to the new house?”

“Well, I’ll have to think about that and talk it over with your dad.”

“Please, mum,” I urged. “You know I’ve always wanted a puppy and it’ll be great at the new home, we can go exploring and play on the beach together.”

“All right, I’ll give him a call,” she said, leaving the room.

“With me is the Master of the college, Sir David Wotherington-Fotheby. Sir David, do you have any idea what caused the explosion earlier this afternoon?”

“It is too early to speculate. A full investigation is underway.”

“Well, can you comment on a report I’ve received? It seems that the explosion may have been caused by one of your science Fellows, a Professor P.”

“Professor P?” he said sharply. “What about him?”

“Apparently he was conducting experiments into a new form of energy, cold fusion.”

“Impossible! Absolutely preposterous,” Sir David exclaimed. “Cold fusion has been conclusively and repeatedly proven to be utterly impossible. I can assure you that no such research has been authorised. Even if it had been, Professor P would not have conducted such experiments in his college rooms.”

“Will you be taking any disciplinary action against Professor P, Sir David?”

“I have no further comments to make,” he replied sharply and strode off.

“Good news,” my mum said as she returned. “I’ve spoken to your dad and he says you can have a dog!”

“Brilliant!” I cried, leaping up to give her a hug.

“It has just been confirmed that Professor P has been sacked after he admitted responsibility for the accident

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which destroyed part of an historic Cambridge college earlier this afternoon. Professor P, a brilliant but unorthodox scientist was the youngest person ever to be awarded the Nobel Prize in physics. He has also made major contributions to many areas of environmental science and computing. Professor P was unavailable for comment.”